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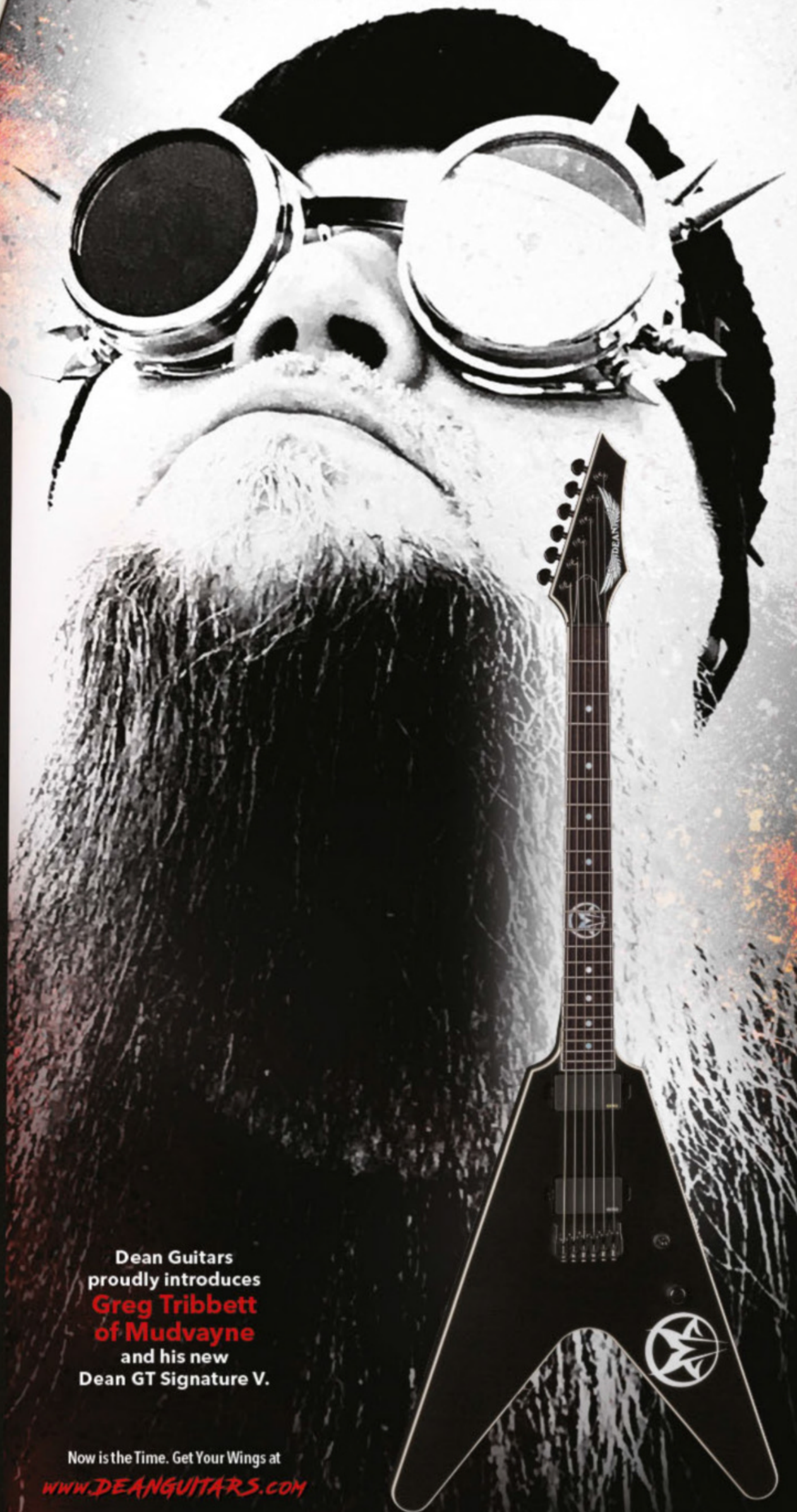


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Megadeth's
Dave Mustaine
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WOODSHED

VOL. 43 | NO. 10 | OCTOBER 2022

MEGA MUSTAINE

WHEN I SEE an artist on the cover of GW, I can't help but recall the first time I ever saw that person on the cover. In the case of Dave Mustaine, my brain goes way back to the December 1991 issue, which was just before I stopped subscribing to GW. Yes, I admit it! I stopped subscribing for a little while in the Nineties; and don't feel bad, Dave — it had nothing to do with seeing you (and Marty Friedman) on the cover! I actually forget why I stopped, but it probably had something to do with school and girlfriends and having no money.

Anyway, here we are, almost 31 years later, and Dave is still a compelling interview, one of those artists about whom you can't help but wonder, "OK, what did he say this time?" This time, of course, we catch up with Dave as he discusses (in detail) his recent bout with cancer — and the brand-new Megadeth album that follows that bout. His experiences leading up to the recording of the album, aka *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!*, make it something of a milestone in the band's sizable catalog. I've known many people who've experienced cancer — some who made it and many who did not — so I feel the gravity of prime Mustaine quotes like this one: "I was praying my butt off and doing everything the doctors said. But there was a serious reality check that took place as well. And I think I might've been a little bit worried that I wouldn't get it done if I got a whole lot worse. So there was urgency and a lot of emotion there to finish it."

And if you pardon the awkward segue, let me take this moment to remind you that Kiko Loureiro — Megadeth's excellent guitarist — released a solo album, *Open Source*, about a year ago (check out the October 2021 issue). Best of all for Megadeth fans, the record features Marty Friedman on one track. "I thought the greatest message would be to have Marty Friedman on *Open Source*, not only because he was the Megadeth guy, but to show that music is not a competition," Kiko told us at the time. Nicely put!



DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

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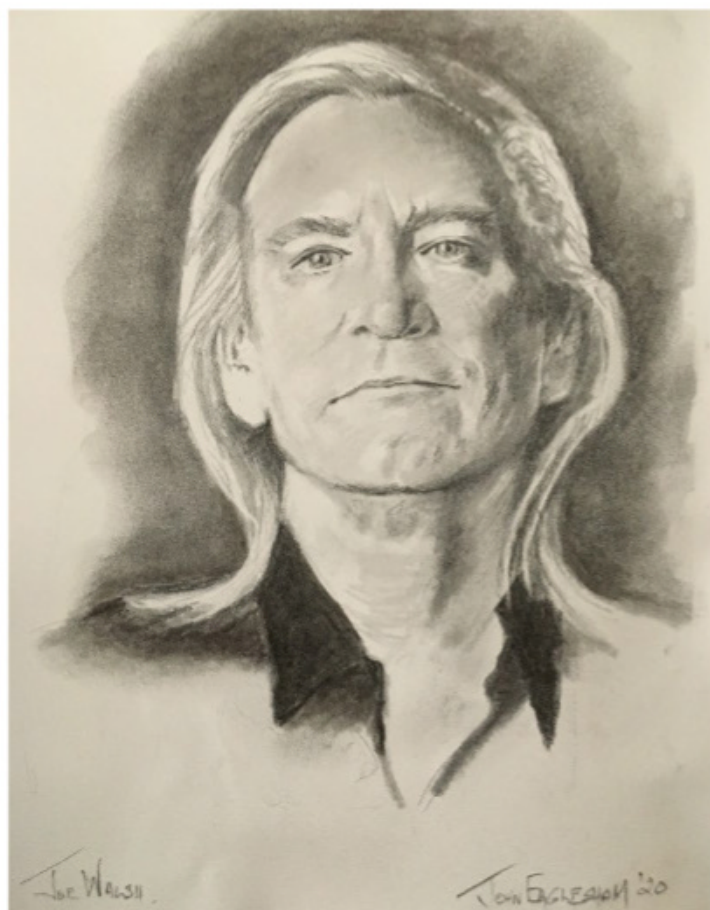
READER ART

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!



DIMEBAG DARRELL BY CARLOS A. ZULUAGA



JOE WALSH BY JOHN EAGLESHAM

DEFENDERS of the Faith



Pigman

AGE: 29 in pig years

LOCATION: Detroit, MI

GUITARS: Fender Stratocaster and Showmaster

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Songs I've written for an upcoming solo release, *I Wish My Brother George Was Here*

GEAR I WANT MOST: More Celestion Greenback speakers. My Efectron shreds them to pieces.



Denny Kidd

AGE: 34

LOCATION: Whitley City, KY

GUITARS: Ernie Ball Music Man Mariposa, Schecter Damien 7, Schecter acoustic (Synyster Gates signature)

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Nita Strauss "Dead Inside," Trivium "What the Dead Men Say" and originals (Instagram: thekiddkave)

GEAR I WANT MOST: Neumann TLM 103 Condenser, Mesa/Boogie Badlander head, Schecter Orleans Stage 7 acoustic



Ken Jackson

AGE: 60

LOCATION: Madison, WI

GUITARS: Fender Strat with glitter, Charvel/Jackson, Marshall amp with 15-inch speakers

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: "Fly Me to the Moon," "The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys" (in drop D) and everywhere in between — and, of course, originals

GEAR I WANT MOST: A mic stand



Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com. And pray!



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This Year's Model

AFTER SERIOUSLY REINING THINGS IN ON THE LATEST OFFERING BY HIS MAIN BAND, FROST*, PROG-ROCK STALWART JOHN MITCHELL BRINGS HIS AX TO THE FORE ON THE NEW LONELY ROBOT ALBUM, *A MODEL LIFE*

By Gregory Adams

▶ THERE ARE MANY great reasons U.K. prog veteran John Mitchell begins his latest Lonely Robot album, *A Model Life*, with a cut called “Recalibrating.” For starters, it’s a ripper — a pulse-quickenning piece of peak pop-fusion-era Police full of vibrantly polyrhythmic piano and the guitarist’s uncanny waggling. The tune takes inspiration from Mitchell having exited a 16-year personal relationship during the height of Covid lockdowns, the musician faced with pushing himself forward and “trying to find [his] way again.” Fittingly enough, *A Model Life* is likewise Mitchell’s return to his Lonely Robot solo project, after delivering last year’s *Day and Age* with his other long-term project, progressive supergroup Frost*. And in terms of his lead chops, *A Model Life* was also a chance to get his bearings back after reining things in on that earlier effort from Frost*.

“I wouldn’t say I was banned from doing guitar solos on the Frost* record, but [vocalist-keyboardist] Jem [Godfrey] and I agreed that — rather like there are no cymbals on *Peter Gabriel III* — there would be no widdly-widdly keyboard or guitar playing,” Mitchell says through a robust laugh. “We said, ‘no, what we’re going to do is sit on our hands for this album,’ which we did. [Outside of] about two bars of slight noodling, there are no guitar solos on *Day and Age*. I just thought [with *A Model Life*], ‘OK... we did that, now I’m going to go in the opposite direction.’” ➔



“I wouldn’t say I was banned from doing guitar solos on the [last] Frost* record,” says Lonely Robot’s John Mitchell



True to his word, Mitchell courses extroverted guitar mania throughout *A Model Life*. In addition to the progressive synchronicity of “Recalibrating” (“It’s not a [*Lonely Robot*] album unless I’ve ripped off a Police song”), check how he revels in the royal pomp of a Brian May-like roil of hammer-ons on the record’s “Starlit Stardust.” That said, while over the years Mitchell has scorched through razzle-dazzle runs with aplomb, he’s also tuned into the fact that sometimes your biggest leads can be your most spacious.

“I really wanted it to be blues-rock guitar solos,” he says of his general approach through *A Model Life*. “I was listening to a lot of David Gilmour and lots of Joe Bonamassa. I got really into that big vibrato — vibrato that you can drive a bus through; you’re not even sure which notes they are anymore, they’re so wide.”

While Mitchell’s evocative wrist-rocking technique is paramount to *A Model Life*’s “Species in Transition” and “Rain Kings,” the guitarist also has an affinity for the similarly undulated tone he finds in a vintage Boss VB-2 pedal. “It’s more subtle than chorus,” he suggests of the effect. “You know, chorus is really up in your face, isn’t it? It says, ‘Eighties!’ — whereas vibrato just sounds like someone got the record and bent it slightly.”

Though often inspired by the wobbling tonality of Andy Summers’ iconic Police work, Mitchell’s *A Model Life* is nevertheless a modern prog-pop vision. Its roots were sewn at the dawn of the pandemic,

the effects of distanced measures perhaps seeping into Mitchell’s psyche as he contemplated isolation (“Island of Misfit Toys”). The existential dread of the era may have initially had him panicked, but music quickly rewired *Lonely Robot* to break out of various “bad habits.”

“I went through a good month of going bat-shit crazy on alcohol — I’m sure a lot of people did,” he says. “I made myself quite ill, [*but*] by the end of it I remember the label rang me up and said, ‘You know that you’ve got to hand in your album in about a month’s time?’ I was like, ‘OK, right... snap out of it, and let’s make a record.’ That was the best thing I could have done at that point in time, because it focused me.” As he tunneled toward *A Model Life*, Mitchell used its “Duty of Care” to reflect on being brought up by adoptive parents. The title track, meanwhile, considers how the perfect life we’re seeking — or at least presenting through social media — is ultimately unachievable. Maybe that’s the beauty of it all. He summarizes: “You spend your life staring at Instagram, and everything’s powder white like an Enya video, [*but*] in actual fact that’s not what life is like.”

Pushing out of long-term relationships during the pandemic was a struggle, even if he feels it’s been for the best. Music, however, is the place where he’s always eager to grow. While *Lonely Robot*’s first few full-lengths centered on astral themes — formally known as “The Astronaut Trilogy” — both 2020’s *Feelings Are Good*

“I got into that big vibrato — vibrato you can drive a bus through”

and *A Model Life* are grounded in real-life experience. Mitchell handles guitar, bass, synths and programming on this latest release — Frost* drummer Craig Blundell also contributes live beats — but his instrument list is ever-growing.

“Going back to the first couple of *Lonely Robot* albums, they were very sci-fi; there was lots of Lydian mode, lots of ambient soundscapes,” he says. “[*With*] this one I wanted to muck around with different sounds. On [*“Digital God Machine”*], there’s distorted cello — I put it through various effects to create new and interesting sounds.” Though newly armed with a litany of instruments, there are some eternal workhorses in Mitchell’s arsenal. His main guitar on the new album is the Japanese Squire Tele he bought in 1989, which remains in fresh-from-the-factory form. While the VB-2 was a factor, the bulk of his gritty drives and gutsy texturing come sculpted out of his GT1000 guitar processor, which has become a plug-and-play mainstay of his live rig, too.

“I used that across the whole record — no sign of an amp anywhere,” Mitchell boasts of his love of the Boss processor. “I’ve embarked upon a modeling career, and I’m never going back!”



INTRODUCING



The Big Deal First Bite (Frontiers Music)

SOUND: Delivering classic rock in the vein of Europe — with rippling synths and ripping, shreddastic soloing from guitarist Srdjan Brankovic — Serbia’s First Bite stars two powerhouse female vocalists. They’re very much a throwback to the glory days of Eighties hair metal, and every track is awash with hooks, bridges and choruses that refuse to leave your head.

KEY TRACK “Top Heaven”



Five Hundred Bucks \$500 (Five Hundred Bucks Records)

SOUND: These Philadelphians deliver melodic punk with hints of Green Day and Blink 182, all of which is laced with a dash of Americana to create anthemic rallying cries of positivity and optimism. Jeff Riddle’s vocals combine warmth with a rough-edged urgency, while his guitar lines embrace familiar rootsy tropes cut through with punk-rock swagger.

KEY TRACK “Too High to Cry”



I Am the Night While the Gods Are Sleeping (Svart Records)

SOUND Finnish black metal from scene veterans who bring a wealth of experience to a new project. Heavily distorted guitars grind out neo-classical lines over pounding double bass drum rhythms. Guitarist Marcus Vanhala’s solos soar above the doom-laden vocals of Solantera to create the perfect soundtrack for a post-apocalyptic dystopian world.

KEY TRACK “Ode to the Night Sky”
— Mark McStea



"The stage is where I'm most at home," Lindsay Ell says. "So it only makes sense that my recorded music matches that"

Lindsay Ell

THE COUNTRY-POP STAR GEEKS OUT ON ANALOG GUITAR GEAR

By Jim Beaugez

NASHVILLE COUNTRY-POP star Lindsay Ell has gotten a real-world education in guitar since playing clubs as a teenager in her native Canada, where her six-string skills led her to link up with veterans Randy Bachman and Buddy Guy.

But after moving to Music City, the chops she showcased opening arenas for star slingers Keith Urban and Brad Paisley took a backseat on her albums and singles, which played more to her songwriting and vocal talents. That all changed when she went into the studio with Jay Joyce, a producer known for his work with Eric Church, Cage the Elephant, Coheed and Cambria and Halestorm.

"The stage is where I'm most at home, and so it only makes sense that my recorded music matches that," Ell says. "And I guess it's just taken me 30 years to find that."

Her latest single, "Right On Time," the first song from her collaboration with Joyce to see release, brings her guitar to

the forefront without abandoning her ear for confection-sweet melodies and infectious rhythms.

"[Jay] has one of the most brilliant brains for really looking at an artist and figuring out what they need to do and what they need to say, and bringing that out in the music," she says. "And so I've recorded the most guitar-forward music that I ever have in my life."

Sessions with Joyce for the official follow-up to 2020's *Heart Theory*, due in fall 2022, coincided with her return to analog amps after a spell using Fractals. She used her time during the pandemic to explore gear and try new pedals, and even

"Being able to play dirty, sweaty clubs and just turning up your amp loud and feeling it in the room ... it's really fun"

design her signature "Klon clone" Etana overdrive with Siren.

These days, she runs her Fender Stratocasters into a Ceriatone Overtone Special amp and a Vox AC-30 in stereo, with three gain stages on her pedalboard — a Wampler Ego Compressor into a Ceriatone Century Professional Overdrive into her Etana into a Vertex Ultraphonix — plus a smattering of extras like an original-era Electro-Harmonix Memory Man. And she's putting it all to work on a club tour this summer during the lead-up to her next release.

"I love playing arenas — there's nothing that tops playing a full arena with thousands of screaming fans," she says. "But guitar tone-wise, being able to play dirty, sweaty clubs and just turning up your amp loud and feeling it in the room... it's really fun."



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Stratocasters
- **AMPS** Ceriatone Overtone Special, Vox AC-30



[from left]
Horsegirl's
Penelope
Lowenstein,
Gigi Reece
and Nora
Cheng

Horsegirl

CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOLERS TEAM UP WITH A TOP INDIE PRODUCER AND CRANK OUT SONIC YOUTH-INSPIRED PUNK-POP GEMS

By Joe Bosso

▶ WHO SAYS YOUNG people aren't forming rock bands anymore? Certainly not Penelope Lowenstein and Nora Cheng, teenaged co-guitarists of the Chicago-based indie rock trio Horsegirl. "Guitar music was meant for young people," Lowenstein says. "I've played guitar my whole life, and I've been playing with Nora for years. We've always liked the raw power of guitars." Adds Cheng, "There's been a number of young punk bands coming out of Chicago recently. It's exciting. I think if you want to be rebellious, there's still nothing better than picking up a guitar."

The two grew up listening to classic rock. As a kid, Lowenstein spent days trying to learn David Gilmour's "Comfortably Numb" solo, while Cheng cites Cheap Trick as her first concert. In their freshman year of high school, they discovered indie rock and bonded over their love of Yo La Tengo, My Bloody Valentine, Sonic Youth and Television. "We realized it was cool to play in alternate tunings, and we could still be shreddy without playing fast licks," Cheng says.

Horsegirl (which also includes drummer Gigi Reece) teamed with celebrated indie producer John Agnello to record their sensational debut album, *Versions of Modern Performance*. Packed with unruly, dissonant punk-pop gems like "Anti-Glory," "Birdnoculars" and "Dirtbag Transformation (Still Dirty)," the album is a commanding and

"I think if you want to be rebellious, there's still nothing better than picking up a guitar"
— NORA CHENG

thrilling marvel of delirious sound and fury, an accomplishment made even more impressive given the fact that the three band members balanced recording sessions with high school studies.

A key element of Horsegirl's sound is Lowenstein and Cheng's use of a Fender Bass VI — depending on the song, the two alternate on the instrument. "We decided we needed a bass, but both of us are guitarists," Lowenstein says. "One day a friend loaned us a Bass VI, and the second I started playing it, it was like this incredible moment. I realized it really worked well with what we were doing. Sonically, it's huge for us. We can write bass parts, but we play them as guitar parts. It really fills things out, but it allows us to sound a little different, which is what we're all about."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender American Ultra Stratocaster, Fender Jazzmaster, Fender Bass VI (Lowenstein); Ibanez Roadstar II, Fender Jaguar, Fender Bass VI (Cheng)
- **AMPS** Fender Twin Reverb, Fender Bassman (both)
- **EFFECTS** EarthQuaker Devices Westwood overdrive, Electro-Harmonix Superego Synth Engine (Lowenstein); Ibanez Tube Screamer, Keeley Electronics Loomer (Cheng)



WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST



BRIAN KOENIG LORDS OF THE TRIDENT

1

"Synchronicity II"
The Police

This song resonates with me on a fundamental level, but the entire album is a game-changer. It's rock and pop music with intelligence, sophistication and undeniable atmosphere. It also has Stewart Copeland, who is my spirit animal and a musical force of nature.

2

"Fell on Black Days"
Soundgarden

For a slower song, there's an undercurrent of intensity and rage threatening to break through the groove at every turn.

3

"Neuromancers"
Scar Symmetry

This song has everything: precision riffing, groove, an anthemic chorus and, of course, Per Nilsson's absolute masterpiece of a solo. It peers into the void, desperate and achingly beautiful with all the right proportions over a "Giant Steps"-inspired set of key changes. I will continue to eagerly await the release of *Phase II: Xenotaph*.

4

"Dancing Mad (Final Fantasy 6)"
Nobuo Uematsu

An absolute magnum opus, complete with Wagnerian-like thematic development and a pipe organ Toccata. This piece slaps so hard, my cheeks are still stinging almost 30 years later. You could choose almost anything from the Uematsu catalog — it's all incredible.

5

"Home"
Dream Theater

The keystone of the greatest concept album of all time (fight me). It is chock-full of the iconic guitar playing that has made John Petrucci the Highlander of shredders and guitarists. It also segues into the "Dance of Eternity." What more could you ask for?

LORDS OF THE TRIDENT'S NEW ALBUM, *THE OFFERING*, IS OUT NOW.



In a Fender mood:
Barteos Strange

Barteos Strange

THIS D.C. ARTIST'S LATEST ALBUM IS A CONVINCING REMINDER TO REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM — WHETHER IT'S THE MUSIC YOU WERE RAISED ON OR THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

By Joshua M. Miller

▶ HE MAY NOT have the Eye of Agamotto, but Barteos Strange — the stage moniker of Washington, D.C.-based musician Barteos Leon Cox Jr. — creates his own kind of sorcery on guitar. Strange — who's inspired by a wide spectrum of musical styles, including rock, blues, country, funk, hip-hop, rap, punk and hardcore — wanders freely between musical worlds and genres. His genre-bending talents are on full display on his latest album, *Farm to Table*.

"Through this whole journey of finding new music and always being curious about how things worked, I just developed this style or taste profile that was all of these things all the time," Strange says. "It was almost easier for me to just be a reflection of what I was hearing and feeling in the world than to reinvent the wheels that have already been built."

He credits bands such as TV on the Radio for inspiring his multi-dimensional sound. "I saw a Black guitar player making contemporary music that was something I could

relate to," he says. "After I saw that, the gates were just open. I felt like I could make things on guitar; I immediately got one and started learning everything I could."

Strange also mixes it up in terms of gear. On "Escape This Circus," he started out with a 12-string Gibson acoustic and doubled it with his Fender Jaguar to get a distinct layered sound. "I was trying to get this woozy, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* kind of vibe mixed with a country shuffle kind of thing — a spacey, ghostly,

"I was trying to get this woozy, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* vibe mixed with a country shuffle kind of thing — a spacey, ghostly, country, dark thing"

country, dark thing," he says. "I was leaning the whole time on the whammy bar on the Jaguar, on every chord, like the Kevin Shields [*My Bloody Valentine*] thing where you leave your hand on the bar and you just play the chords."

After chronicling his experiences in Oklahoma and around the globe on his 2020 debut, *Live Forever*, the U.K.-born Strange decided to focus more on the people closest to him on *Farm to Table*. "I was at a stage in my life where things I had wanted to happen for so long were happening," he says. "There were all these new things and people, but I wanted to make sure there was always space for the people who've been with me my whole life... My foundation became more and more important. [*The album is*] about them and their roles in my life — and how grateful I am to be supported."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** '64 Fender Jaguar, '67 Epiphone Casino, Fender Danny Gatton Signature Telecaster
- **AMPS** '72 Fender Vibro Champ, Seventies Fender Vibrolux, Fender Twin Reverb
- **EFFECTS** Pladask Elektrisk Fabrikat, Source Audio Ventriss Dual Reverb, Roland Space Echo RE-201, various distortions and overdrives



CELEBRATING
40 YEARS OF
PREMIUM TOOLS FOR TONE



SCAN ME

Eschewing formal lessons, Rose schooled herself on YouTube guitar performance videos and tutorials

Lexi Rose

THIS PROLIFIC POSTER HAS AMASSED 500,000 FANS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF SOME OF HER IDOLS. AND ALL IT TOOK WAS ONE KINGS OF LEON CONCERT

By Joe Bosso

▶ FOUR YEARS AGO, Lexi Rose was a 16-year-old rock and metal fan who never considered playing the guitar. Then her aunt took her to a Kings of Leon concert, and everything changed. “I was just knocked out by the band’s power,” Rose says. “I said to myself, ‘That’s it — I have to play guitar.’ I was so excited that the next day I went out and got an Ibanez Gio. From that moment on, I was obsessed and played all the time.”

Eschewing formal lessons, Rose schooled herself on YouTube guitar performance videos and tutorials, and before long she could play along proficiently to one of her favorite Metallica songs, “Nothing Else Matters.” “I was on cloud nine,” she says. “That’s when I knew I could handle anything that I put my mind to.” Digging deeper into guitar, she became enthralled by players such as Slash, Gary Moore and Marty Friedman (“he’s a huge influence on me”), and each time she learned one



“Zakk Wylde commented on some of my videos, which was unbelievable,” Rose says

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** PRS S2, Dean ML prototype and Razorback, Michael Kelly Patriot Decree, Taylor Builder’s Edition 912CE (acoustic-electric)
- **AMPS** Various virtual amp simulators, Marshall JVM210H
- **EFFECTS** Logic, MXP Phase 90, TC Electronic Flashback delay, ISP Decimator II G String noise reduction pedal

of their songs, she posted a video of her progress online.

Today, Rose posts several clips a week in which she expertly nails solos by guitarists such as Dimebag Darrell, Ritchie Blackmore, Neal Schon and others (she even performs a rollicking version of Neil Giraldo’s memorable lead in Rick Springfield’s “Jesse’s Girl”), and she’s amassed a following of 500,000 fans across her social media platforms. To her amazement, she’s even caught the attention of some of her idols. “Zakk Wylde commented on some of my videos, which was unbelievable,” she

says. “Metallica shared a clip of me playing the solo to ‘Master of Puppets’ on their Instagram page. Talk about unbelievable!”

At 20 years old, the Poughkeepsie-based guitarist is weighing her options — she’s split between starting her own band or joining an existing outfit. At the same time, she’s writing her own music and is planning a release of some kind by the end of the year. “It could be an EP or a whole album,” she says. “I’m teaching myself production and engineering, and of course, I practice guitar as much as I can. That’ll never change.”



60 MINUTES

with BRIAN "HEAD" WELCH

Interview by Brad Angle



Korner stones, part 1

KORN'S GUITARIST REVEALS THE SONGS THAT HAVE MOST IMPACTED HIS LIFE

▶ "I GOT A GOOD list for ya! It's unique," says Korn guitarist Brian "Head" Welch. "Well, it's not *really* unique. [Laughs] Now that I look at it, it's more along the lines of metal, but I threw in some atmospheric ones that I can't live without... And you know what's crazy? I picked all these artists and a lot of them are still going strong. AC/DC is bigger than ever, Ozzy is still going strong. Iron Maiden had a massive resurgence the last five years. Journey is killing it. So... I picked the good ones! [Laughs]"

"BACK IN BLACK" AC/DC

Back in Black (1980)

▶ "The album and the song that got me lit with the fire for the passion for rock music. It was my favorite magical Christmas year, when you're 10 years old and everything's magical still. I didn't believe in Santa Claus at all, but just the season of all these new fresh things in your life. I got a stereo that year, a record player, a new bike and *Back in Black*. When I put on 'Back in Black,' something just clicked for me, and I got obsessed. Time has shown that it's one of the best-selling albums ever,

so I guess I had an ear for music... along with millions of other people. [Laughs] That was the year I started to play guitar, and that's the album that got me going."

"FLYING HIGH AGAIN" Ozzy Osbourne

Diary of a Madman (1981)

▶ "'Flying High Again' reminds me of a time in life when it came out. You know when you hear a song and it makes you feel a certain way... in your soul, emotionally, mentally? This one did it for

me. Randy Rhoads was one of my greatest heroes. [AC/DC's] Angus Young opened the door and I wanted more. I was drawn to really play the instrument. Angus is amazing and he can shred and he has his own blues style. But I love melody. And I love the darker classical approach Randy Rhoads took. And that album and that song got me obsessed with Ozzy and Randy."

"DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'"

Journey
Escape (1991)

Welch on Metallica's *Master of Puppets*: "I got into Mötley Crüe and Ratt and I love Def Leppard... So when *Master of Puppets* came out, I was like, 'Ew, what? That's too loud' "





Welch on Van Halen's
"Eruption": "I was like, I
wanna do that. *How do I do
that?* It's mind-blowing!"

 "I was into the heavier darker stuff like Ozzy and AC/DC, but I like the lighter side too. And I got into Journey, a lot. Honestly, I listened to 'Back in Black' and Angus, but I couldn't really play the leads. The first lead I learned was 'Don't Stop Believin'.' I was faking leads up to that point, but once I could nail that one I felt like I had a chance. [Laughs] I'm definitely drawn to Neal Schon's style, tone and melody. You felt something when you heard his solos."

"MORE THAN A FEELING"
Boston
Boston (1976)

 "Dude, I can't live without this song! Even today if I hear that on a classic rock station, I make sure to stop what I'm doing so I can listen to the whole song before I move on to whatever I was doing. If I was on an island, I would definitely want this song. It's got a sound... like nobody else."

"THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST"
Iron Maiden

The Number of the Beast (1982)

 "Iron Maiden were along the lines of Ozzy, as far as, like, the theatrical dark edge and the Satanic vibe or whatever. I wasn't into any spiritual or Satanic stuff, but I was drawn to the dark and I really loved horror movies growing up. And Iron Maiden had it. They had Eddie and the imagery on the cover. And the opening of that song — 'Woe to you, o'er Earth and Sea' — where they speak that whole scripture in Revelation. The drive of 'The Number of the Beast' and [singer Bruce Dickinson's] vocal range... just everything. It makes me feel something

"The first lead I learned was 'Don't Stop Believin'.' I was faking leads up to that point, but once I could nail that one, I felt like I had a chance"

special when I hear it, even now."

"ERUPTION"
Van Halen
Van Halen (1978)

 "Such a crazy piece that Eddie Van Halen invented. I think it was a one-take thing he did... It had to be. I mean, How the hell do you do that? It's just so perfect. I wanna go deep dive and find something that explains the whole recording process. The effects he had on it... it sounded like something from outer space! It's hard to wrap your head around it. But I was like, I wanna do that. *How do I do that?* [Laughs] It's mind-blowing."

"MASTER OF PUPPETS"
Metallica
Master of Puppets (1986)

 "I was a late bloomer on *Master of Puppets*. I got into Mötley Crüe and Ratt and I love Def Leppard... So when *Master of Puppets* came out I was like, 'Ew, what? That's too loud.' [Laughs] But once I gave it a chance, it really got me. It's structured like a classical piece of music, through the metal lens. It's a work of art. James Hetfield's voice at that time, the scratchiness of it... I think most people can relate to the message of that song: falling into something that's mastering you, could be a person, or a substance... Great, great

idea for the whole thing. It's amazing."

"THE REAL THING"
Faith No More
The Real Thing (1989)

 "This is my favorite song by Faith No More. How they put that piece together just blows my mind. It's a work of art. It starts with the drums, and he does those rim-shots with the dark-sounding synths in the back. It's an amazing crossover with a thrash feel on the guitars, but not too much. With [Mike] Patton's freaking bluesy style of singing over very minor music, I thought it was incredible and unique. They were instrumental for me in terms of crossing over into alternative ideas [*and realizing*] the possibilities are endless about how alternative you can get and mixing different styles of music. They were huge for me and Korn."

"IT IS FINISHED"
Soaking in His Presence
& William Augusto
Soaking in His Presence, Vol. 10 (2021)

 "No one's going to know William Augusto. I don't think he's on any major label or anything. I found him on YouTube... He puts out these instrumental pieces and they get millions of views. I love the song and if I was on an island stranded for the rest of my life, I would really want an atmospheric song so I could just center myself. Because life would pretty much suck without any grocery stores or fast-food joints or friends or family." [Laughs]

"TIME"
Hans Zimmer
Inception: Music from the Motion Picture (2010)

 "My god, that takes you on a ride. It helps me when I need to think about life, and myself, and centering yourself on positivity and what matters. For me, with prayer and connecting with Christ, that song really helps me. I don't like organized religion at all, but I love the spiritual aspect of... what I learn about the teachings of the wisdom. This song helps me focus on that and experience that."

The Korn fun continues! Stay tuned for the November 2022 Guitar World and the James "Munky" Shaffer edition of 60 Minutes.

KORN'S 14TH AND LATEST ALBUM, *REQUIEM*, IS OUT NOW ON LOMA VISTA RECORDINGS



“I tried taking a bigger pedalboard with me to put in plane overheads, but I left it in the airport bar — twice”



MY PEDALBOARD REB BEACH

WHAT THE LONGTIME WINGER/WHITESNAKE GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Joe Bosso

▶ “I DO HAVE a big MIDI pedalboard for regular touring, but when Winger does weekend fly-in shows, I bring this little three-pedal setup with me. If my travel bag is over 50 lbs., it costs me an extra \$100, and it’s easy to go over 50 lbs. when you’re bringing stage clothes, cables, a coat and what have you. Actually, I tried taking a bigger pedalboard with me to put in plane overheads, but I left it in the airport bar — twice.

“Fortunately, I don’t need a clean sound or a wah, so this little board does the trick for me — a Boss DD-3 Digital Delay, a Suhr Shiba Drive Reloaded and a Boss TU-3 Chromatic Tuner.

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL:

“If I had to choose one pedal to bring on a desert island, it would be a Suhr Riot [distortion] pedal because it makes any amp sound great, and I imagine the amp on a desert island would suck. A friend of mine did a show with [Aerosmith’s] Brad Whitford, and all they had was a crappy amp. My friend handed him a

Riot pedal, and the sound went from crappy to amazing. Brad freaked out at the difference and bought one right away.”



Wanna see someone’s pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com.



"I'm in a place of simplifying and trying to lean more on my fingers than my gear, and it's been good for me," Charlie Worsham says

Charlie Worsham

HOW THIS SESSION SLINGER AND SINGER-SONGWRITER SWITCHES NASHVILLE'S GUITAR SCENE INTO OVERDRIVE

By Jim Beaugez

NASHVILLE IS FULL of talented guitar players who play on hit records with half their licks tied behind their backs — such is the life of a session musician. But Charlie Worsham, a first-call player for artists like Eric Church, Kasey Musgraves and Dierks Bentley, finds ample opportunities to let his fiercest licks fly.

Worsham, a Berklee College of Music-trained guitarist and songwriter who cheekily catalogs his six-string exploits on a Spotify playlist dubbed "Sh!t I've Played On," champions the throngs of guitarists who live in Music City. He has routinely led themed "guitar nights" at CMA Fest, and he orchestrated a popular residency at Nashville's Basement East club pre-pandemic called "Every Damn Monday," which drew slingers such as John Osborne of Brothers Osborne and Sadler Vaden of Jason Isbell's 400 Unit band.

He also freely shares his techniques

with aspiring players and songwriters. For "Fist Through This Town," a highlight of his 2021 EP *Sugarcane* [Warner Nashville], Worsham posted video tutorials on his chord choices — like why he uses all six strings to play a C chord — as well as how to play the ripping solo, which nearly didn't happen at all. Producer Jay Joyce finally sent him home after a few uninspired takes with an assignment to listen to some music that might light his fire. So he went back to the beginning.

"That next morning, I walked in with my Charlie Worsham-via-Steve Gaines solo,

and I saw a little nod of being impressed from Jay, which rarely happens," Worsham says. "It made me really proud and made me really glad that I grew up in a household with a big ol' stack of Skynyrd music."

Joyce also challenged Worsham to track *Sugarcane* with just a single guitar. Worsham chose his "Excalibur," a 1960 dot-neck Gibson ES-335 gifted to him by Vince Gill. "There was never any doubt," he says. "Whether it's me playing shows live or playing on somebody else's record or my own record, whatever, that's where I start."

The producer's trick had more to do with forcing creative decisions than holding him back. "Right now, while I'm still trying to establish myself to the masses, they maybe can't go eight layers deep. They just need to hear that one guitar, so I'm in a place of simplifying and trying to lean more on my fingers than my gear, and it's been good for me."

This first-call player for artists like Eric Church, Kasey Musgraves and Dierks Bentley finds ample opportunities to let his fiercest licks fly

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1960 Gibson ES-335, Gibson J-50, various Martins
- **AMP** Fender Tweed Deluxe

Meters guitarist Leo Nocentelli [left] and multi-instrumentalist Farees collaborated on a new track, "The Melting," from Farees' new EP, *Blindsight*

The Meter Is Running Wild

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST FAREES AND METERS GUITAR LEGEND LEO NOCENTELLI DISCUSS THEIR DEBUT COLLABORATION, "THE MELTING"

By Joe Bosso

▶ **NEO-FUNK PRODUCER**, spoken-word artist and multi-instrumentalist Farees makes music that defies easy categorization. On his 2015 debut album, *Mississippi to Sahara*, he incorporated an Assouf guitar style to pay tribute to both his Tuareg heritage and the music of Delta blues. His 2020 album, *Border Patrol*, was an eclectic 17-song social-political epic that mixed walloping rock riffs with elements of hip-hop, soul, blues and funk.

His newest release, the six-song EP *Blindsight*, is another fascinating — and thought-provoking — musical journey. Built around his self-described "wall of groove" production style, Farees addresses "fake revolutionaries" and the so-called cancel culture with Stevie Wonderesque exuberance on "Bad Apples," and he celebrates the social movements of yesteryear on the blissed-out gem "Wistful."

There are, of course, ample doses of guitar goodness throughout, most notably on a trippy cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Hey Joe," which sees Farees laying down fierce, wah-soaked rhythms before heading to the outer limits with a turbo-charged solo. And on the widescreen funk masterpiece "The Melting," he's joined by Meters guitar legend Leo Nocentelli, who joyously weaves

a colorful quilt of intricate six-string textures.

Nocentelli notes that he was surprised by Farees' out-of-the-blue invitation to play on the track. "I really didn't know too much about Farees," he says. "I'd heard a few things of his and liked them. He sent me the files and I worked on them. It was really cool. Pretty soon, we got to talking and we found out that we had a lot in common. We knew a lot of the same music and even some of the same people. It was a magical thing. It became more than a musical collaboration; it was a mental connection."

For Farees, asking Nocentelli to play on "The Melting" was something of a no-brainer. "I'm a huge Meters fan, so that makes me a big Leo fan," he says. "He's a legend, a superstar and an innovator. It's been really awesome to be able to play with him and get to know him. In a very short time, I've learned so much from him. This has been such a great experience. This is more than music or business. Our connection goes deep."

Leo, you've guested on a lot of artists' records over the years. What was it about Farees that impressed you musically?

LEO NOCENTELLI: Number one, his music was different, abstract. I like that kind of challenge to be able to perform music that isn't straight I-IV-V chord changes or the straight 2/4 beat. This particular track involved a lot of different time signatures, and that spoke to me. Plus, there were the vocals and the groove, and the percussion sounded African. As I'm part of an African background, that also attracted me.

FAREES: Leo and I both have African ancestors. We have the same idea of rhythm in general — groove. We feel the importance of having something rhythmically solid so that you can put vocals on top of it. We're very similar in our musical philosophy, and rhythm is huge to both of us.

Farees, when you sent Leo the files for "The Melting," did you give him any kind of direction?

FAREES: Not at all. There was no need to. I always go by instinct when it comes to music, and I knew Leo would come up with incredible ideas. The only thing I knew I wanted was Leo.

NOCENTELLI: He didn't tell me anything. He just let me do my thing. Farees knew I could make the track fly. I just tried to pick some spots in it where I could do some



“There’s nobody on two legs who can do what I do. That might sound egotistical, but it’s the truth”

— LEO NOCENTELLI

guitar parts that lifted the track up. All I really want to do is make something better. I mean, sure, I can solo and rock out with the best of them, but what I’ve always been proud of is how I can listen to a track and know what to put on it. There’s nobody on two legs who can do what I do. That might sound egotistical, but it’s the truth.

Farees, you do an inventive cover of Hendrix’s “Hey Joe” on the record. Any trepidation about reworking such an iconic song?

FAREES: Of course. But Hendrix feels like home to me. At the same time, you can hear some Meters on my version. I didn’t want to do a straight-up Hendrix interpretation, so I tried to mix things up. There’s some Leo influence in the track.

NOCENTELLI: See, when I hear that, it’s a big honor. I hear a lot of Hendrix and me going on there — it’s in Farees’ playing. He and I are on the same page. We have the same musical vibe. I think he and I knew each other for a long time, way before we even had a conversation.

Farees, I was wondering if you could expand on Hendrix a bit more. You once called him your “preeminent guitar and music teacher.”

FAREES: Exactly. Growing up, I played a lot of instruments — flute, percussion, bass and drums — but then I heard Jimi Hendrix, and I got into the guitar. That’s when I said, “OK, I want to play this thing because it sings!” Jimi’s guitar playing connected

with my soul; it was a healing sound. So when I started learning to play, I called him my guitar teacher as a joke. I’m self-taught in the basics. I don’t know scales or notes. I just play by ear. Listening to Hendrix opened up my ears in so many ways.

NOCENTELLI: Everybody got something from Hendrix. There isn’t a guitar player around who hasn’t learned from him.

Lyrically, *Blindsight* offers a lot to chew on. Farees, you’ve never shied away from socio-political topics.

FAREES: Music is the most powerful tool we have for bringing about change, all kinds of change — societal, political and even within the music industry. We need more truth and less fake-ass so-called revolutionaries. Even with artists, I think we’re in a new era. It’s not enough to be able to play good guitar or keyboards if you’re a bigot, or if you’re ignorant. More and more, I think people will realize that the person and the spirit behind the music matters.

NOCENTELLI: I agree with Farees. Music has always created change, and it’s the perfect vehicle for anybody who doesn’t have the power otherwise. I’ve tried to do that throughout my career writing for the Meters. Years ago, I wrote “A Message from the Meters.” I voice myself through music. Always.

Speaking of the Meters, Farees, I understand you’re working on covers of Meters songs. Is that right?

FAREES: That’s right. I was in the studio

today, actually, recording “Loving You Is on My Mind” and “Find Yourself” by the Meters.

I assume Leo is going to be on those tracks.

NOCENTELLI: I don’t know...

FAREES: Who knows? Who knows?

Wait... wouldn’t that be a little strange if he wasn’t?

NOCENTELLI: Well, Farees has a new album out now, and it takes time to develop another one. You can’t just record stuff and say, “I’m going to use this person. I’m going to use that person.” You might want a different sound or a different feeling. I would probably do it, but it all depends on what the tracks sound like and what they need.

FAREES: For me, it was more like, “Let’s not bother Leo again.” I wanted to pay homage to him and the Meters.

NOCENTELLI: In other words, you wanted me to beg you. “Please, Farees. I’ve got to play on this, man. Please, let me play!” [Laughs]

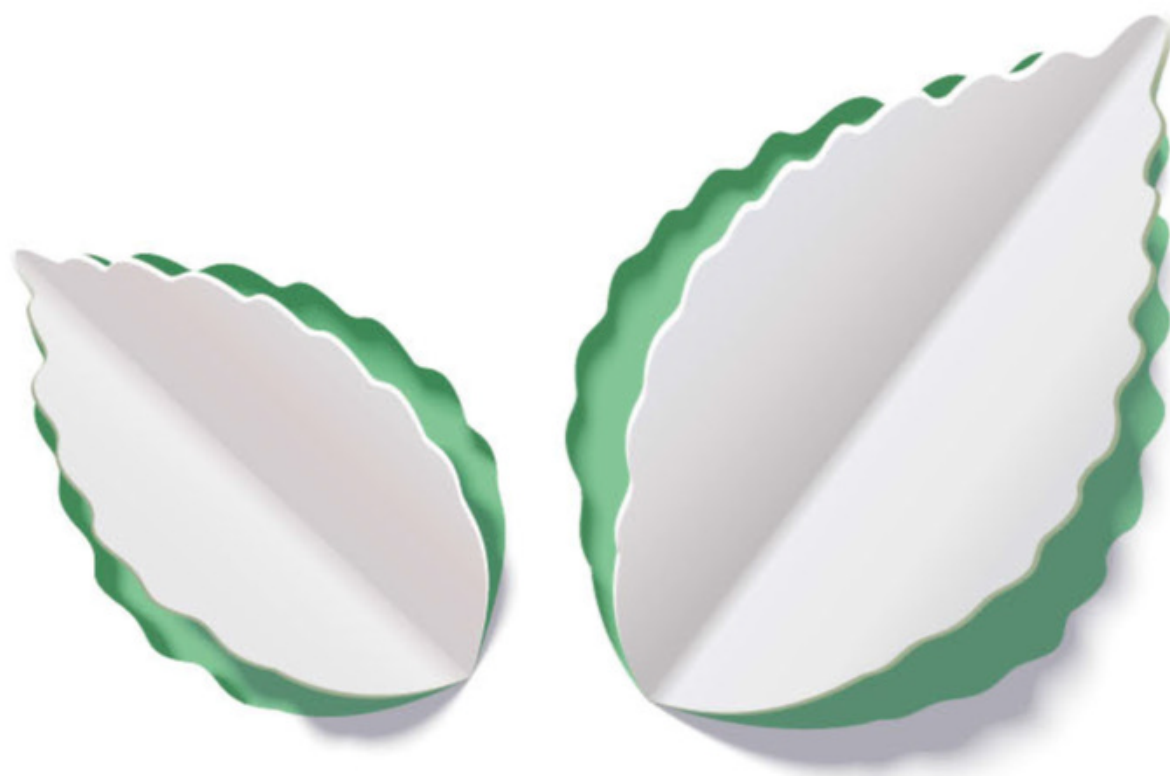
FAREES: No, no. Oh, no... [Laughs]

Leo, which guitar did you use on “The Melting”?

NOCENTELLI: I’m pretty sure I used my signature Gibson 335. That’s pretty much my main guitar, although I do use other models, depending on the situation. When you’re in the studio, some records demand certain sounds, and it might not always be a 335. Sometimes it’s a Strat or Tele sound, so I use whatever I need to get the point across.

Farees, what kinds of guitars did you use on the record?

FAREES: I usually play Squiers, Grecos or Tokais. I love copies and inexpensive guitars, but I turn them out. I change their pickups and circuits, and they become weapons. I don’t go in for the big brands; I’m more of a do-it-yourself kind of guy. That way, you get a sound that’s more individualistic. If you listen to my sound on “Hey Joe,” you can hear what I’m talking about. I recorded that guitar on a small practice amp called a Pathfinder. It’s, like, \$50. That’s all you need sometimes.



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*JUST THE FACTS

MIKE CAMPBELL

Interview by Joshua M. Miller



Where There's Smoke...

FORMER TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS CO-CAPTAIN MIKE CAMPBELL BREAKS DOWN *EXPLOSIVE COMBUSTION*, HIS LATEST ALBUM WITH THE DIRTY KNOBS

THE TITLE

"The first record [2020] was called *Wreckless Abandon*, which is kind of how the Dirty Knobs play. So I carried that through to the second album, *Explosive Combustion*. When we play, it creates some chemistry, and it felt like external combustion. So I heard that phrase in my head and thought, 'That's a good follow-through.' It really describes how the band sounds."

THE GEAR

"I played a '59 Gibson Les Paul for most of the record, and [guitarist] Jason Sinay played a Telecaster. Those two guitars seem to work together pretty well. We mostly stuck with them through the whole record. Sometimes with the Heartbreakers, I'd use different guitars because we had a lot of different types of songs, but with this record I wanted it to sound like the band sounds live and not get too adventurous

with different instruments. We picked the instruments that seemed to work together. I like the Les Paul. It's very versatile — I was able to get all the sounds I needed mostly out of that one guitar. There's a couple of songs where I used the Fender, but mostly it was the Gibson."

THE TUNES

"WICKED MIND"

"The day I wrote it, I wanted an up-tempo song, and I had been listening to a lot of Ramones records. I love that band; I love their energy and their excitement. I wanted a song that sort of captured that feel in the guitar. From that, I came up with the music and threw some words together — and that was it. A lot of the solos were live dur-

ing the take. They're not overdubbed and they're very spontaneous. I just let it happen."

"ELECTRIC GYPSY"

"I used the Telecaster because I wanted a string bender on it. The song was written as the guys were walking into the studio; I finished it, showed it to them and we played it once. The solo at the end is totally unrehearsed — just [a] stream-of-consciousness [thing], but it's got a nice kinetic field to it. It's exciting when you capture the song before you're tired of it — you get it fresh."

"CHEAP TALK"

"This was an older song [from the Nineties] that I had on my old analog tapes that my





The Dirty Knobs
[from left]: Jason Sinay, Matt Laug, Mike Campbell and Lance Morrison

[right] Campbell in action in Inglewood, California

technician had found. I had completely forgotten about it, but when I heard it, it came back to me and I thought, ‘Well, that’s a cool riff. It’d be good to play with the Dirty Knobs.’ So we learned it and recorded it.”

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS...

“Working with **Ian Hunter** was a real pleasure because I’m a big fan of Mott the Hoople. He had called the office and wanted me to overdub [guitar] on his record, so he sent me a couple of songs. I did the overdubs, sent them back to him and he liked it. I asked him, ‘Would you be interested in singing on one of our songs?’

He said yes, so I sent him our recording of ‘Dirty Job,’ and he sang a verse and some harmonies and put some piano on it. He did a terrific job. The song with **Benmont Tench** [keyboards, *Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers*] is called ‘Lightning Boogie,’ which was basically finished — then Benmont came to town at the end of the record. I thought it’d be great for him to overdub on that song, and it came out great. **Margo Price** called my office; she and her husband, Jeremy Ivey, wanted to come by and try to write songs together, which we did. While she was here, I was in the middle of [recording] the album, so I asked her to step into the next room and sing, and she was happy to do it. We became friends.”

THE PRODUCERS

“George Drakoulis was the co-producer with me. He has great energy, he’s really smart and he made it a lot of fun. He put everybody in a happy mood and kind of directed everything. He helped us with the arrangements, and he really helped me with picking the songs — what to leave off and what to leave on. He worked on our first record too. He’s essential to the records.”

THE STUDIO

“I’ve had my home studio for a long time; I’ve always worked at home and made recordings here. Now we’re digital, but the console is an old Neve, which has a great sound. There’s a drum room and a couple of little side rooms for the amps, and it’s easy to record live. That’s what I wanted to do — get the band to play live and record it as a performance, not as a production where you build things up and overdub. We did very few overdubs on the record. The studio is just very comfortable. It’s all set up, so I don’t have to mess around with moving mics or any of that stuff. You turn it on and the sounds are good. You just have to work on the song.”

THE TOUR

“We’ve been waiting for two years! The little tour we have got is sold out, and we’re just dying to play live. I mean we’re going to have heavy protocol with the pandemic going on and all, so we’re not going to be meeting and greeting fans, but we’re going to be tested and vaccinated. We’re going to get in the room, play and take everybody’s minds off the troubles of the world — and have some fun making music.” **GW**

*** Just the Facts will return as a semi-regular feature — usually somewhere in the Tune-Ups section. Don’t you just love these informative tidbits?**



COUNTRY AS F***

Within the pages of the new record's accompanying graphic novel, *GWAR in the Duoverse of Absurdity*, the group find themselves staring into a magic mirror that puts them face-to-face with darker, alternate versions of themselves... The other GWAR is a successful country band.

BACK TO BASICS

"I used the least amount of stuff on this record than any other GWAR record I've ever made," Pustulus Maximus says.



GWAR

PUSTULUS MAXIMUS and BALSAC THE JAWS OF DEATH discuss exactly what you'd expect super-powered outer-space aliens to talk about: old-school vs. new-school gear

By Gregory Adams

GWAR's *NEW DARK Ages* album finds the infamously blood-spilling metal monsters dealing with "the specter of rogue technology" the only way they can: goofily and gorily. The album naturally has co-guitarists BalSac the Jaws of Death and Pustulus Maximus cleaving through barbarically brutal riffs, sometimes while vocalist Blothar putridly pontificates on self-

mutilation ("The Cutter"). There's also razor-sharp smartphone satire in the form of "Venom of the Platypus," where GWAR ask a digital, duckbilled Siri stand-in named Raspy to root out stock tips, free shipping options on sword purchases — and the best place to buy phlegm. The band explains to *Guitar World* that this is all taking the piss out of us lowly humans for "being led astray by a little 3-inch screen in

front of you." Steel trap-mouthed BalSac elaborates on our folly: "No one uses their brain anymore. Just ask your phone and it'll tell you what you want to hear, whether it's the truth or not.

"GWAR is embracing this new, fake intellectualism," he continues, though somewhat self-consciously. "If every human is super-powered by this device in their pocket, then we — who are super-powered aliens from outer space — are a little threatened by that. So we're embracing this new power that the human beings are all flocking to and giving you our take on it."

It turns out tech has been a tough foe to vanquish for BalSac and Pustulus — a necessary evil, even, since both six-stringers link up with *Guitar World* via separate Zoom connections, at least under the guises of their

BRAD PRICE

"WE'RE BECOMING A LEGITIMATE ROCK BAND. WE'RE NOT JUST A METAL BAND ANYMORE,

respective “human slaves,” Mike Derks and Brent Purgason. But while the guitarists share the same disdain for iOS updates, GWAR’s main amp blasters have a difference of opinion when it comes to modernizing one’s tone. This mainly boils down to an ages-old question: to tube or not to tube?

“There’s a war of ‘technology vs. old school’ between the guitarists,” BalSac says, “because Pustulus has the most amazing Marshall collection anyone’s ever seen — he is vehemently all tube, all the time — whereas I’ve got an X/Y midi control pad built into my guitar so that I can control parameters on the Fractal.”

“Some people do drugs; I do drugs and collect Marshalls,” Pustulus quips of the cherry selection of 40-plus Silver Jubilees, JCM800 2204s, Majors, Mosfets and more stashed all over his home. “The foundation of the house is all DSLs; I couldn’t find anything to use ‘em for.”

That difference in tonal aesthetic manifests in other ways across *New Dark Ages*, GWAR’s 15th full-length massacre. BalSac, for instance, is the player gleefully glitching-out stuttered guitar damage with a Meris Ottobit Jr. bit-crusher pedal on “Deus Ex Monstrum,” an ambient piece that also deconstructs the primal chugging of the record’s preceding “Starving Gods” — at the time of their talk with *Guitar World*, Pustulus Maximus had yet to even hear the experimental, album-closing remix. Throughout the sessions, BalSac was hoisting his signature Schecter BälSäc E-1, an Explorer-shaped mahogany body with a lava-burst finish, this referencing a volcanic plot point of the band’s 2019 graphic novel, *GWAR: The Enormogantic Fail*.

For Pustulus’ part, he plugged his Dean Custom Shop ML “Croc-top” and a Tokai Love Rock into those vintage Marshalls and a more tried-and-true set of effects than his GWAR co-guitarist. The deep and gloomy gnarl to slow-mo creeper “Unto the Breach,” for instance, was achieved by chaining a trusty RAT to a Russian transistor Big Muff Pi he’d found on a shelf at Charlottesville, Virginia’s White Star Studio. Beyond that, the guitarist was surprised at the lack of effects he ultimately coursed through *New Dark Ages*.

“I used the least amount of stuff on this record than any other GWAR record I’ve ever made,” he says. “Not that I ever used

an abundance of shit, but we got all the way through [*the sessions*] and I realized I didn’t even use a wah pedal [*on a solo*]. And I enjoy a wah — maybe not as much as Kirk Hammett, but pretty close.”

Pustulus Maximus’ lack of frequency-warbling leads on *New Dark Ages* is nevertheless one of the milder setbacks GWAR have faced over the past few years. Their previous album, 2017’s *The Blood of Gods*, ushered in a new era for the band following the 2014 passing of founding member and longtime frontman Oderus Urungus (a.k.a. Dave Brockie, who tragically died of a heroin overdose). In many ways, GWAR remain GWAR — the group’s notorious concerts continue to find the armor-plated aliens attacking instruments and mutilating mid-set antagonists, spraying gore-thirsty crowds in pools of stage blood along the way. But following the introduction of raspy-throated tenor vocalist Blothar (a.k.a. Michael Bishop, a former bassist for the act), the sonic parameters of GWAR began to shift.

“GWAR has gone through a lot of eras,” BalSac says of the group, which formed in 1984 (Derks has performed as his character since 1988). “We had the original punk rock years; we had the silly, experimental years where we were doing whatever the hell we wanted to; we had the solid section where we actually became a real, legitimate metal band. With this [*latest lineup*], we’re becoming a legitimate rock band. We’re not just a metal band anymore, we’re a full-fledged rock juggernaut.”

Mixing horns-raising originals with a faithful and fitting take on AC/DC’s “If You Want Blood (You Got It),” the monstrosity riffy *The Blood of Gods* was a triumph for GWAR, but just as the tour cycle began, Derks started experiencing significant and concerning on-stage fatigue. After seeing doctors, he was diagnosed with myelofibrosis, a rare form of bone marrow cancer. Fortunately, he found a suitable blood stem donor in his sister and underwent a successful transplant procedure, and has since returned to the stage.

The path to *New Dark Ages* was also complicated by the pandemic, though GWAR kept

themselves busy at the beginning of lockdowns by producing their own fetid livestream variety show, *Undead from Antarctica*, where they shared cocktail recipes and interviewed fellow metal figures like Halestorm’s Lzzy Hale and Hatebreed’s Jamey Jasta. Though they’d slowly been working on their *New Dark Ages* in the background, GWAR also put the focus off new tunes in 2021 when they celebrated the belated 30th anniversary of their 1990 breakthrough, *Scumdogs of the Universe*, with an updated, reverb-removing remaster and a round of North American tour dates.

Spotlighting the older material apparently rubbed off on *New Dark Ages*, which keeps things similarly scummy via the numbskull chunking of “Bored to Death” or the thrash-mining velocity of “The Cutter,” but GWAR’s latest is likewise a profoundly bizarre foray for the longtime headbangers. Take the record’s drastic swings between discordantly groove-based jazz-metal fusion (“The Beast Will Eat Itself”), digital cutups (the aforementioned “Deus Ex Monstrum”) and cowbell-blaring Sunset Strip sleaze (“Ratcatcher,” a macabre retelling of the Pied Piper fairy tale). Then there’s “Completely Fucked,” a gauntlet-raising lament for this doomed planet that cross-pollinates the sunny chords of SoCal pop-punk with Pustulus Maximus’ aggressively over-the-top tap-and-dive bravado.

“There are a lot of elements to GWAR that are all over the rock ‘n’ roll spectrum. That song in particular has some pop-punk vibes to it, so I thought it was really cool that I was able to shoe-horn in a Judas Priest-inspired solo,” he says, adding of the inspiration, “that opening divebomb is definitely ripped out of ‘Jawbreaker,’ or some shit like that. I’m a huge Priest fan.”

While arguably the most wide-scope GWAR release yet, *New Dark Ages* apparently could have been even weirder.

Within the pages of the new record’s accompanying graphic novel, *GWAR in the Duoverse of Absurdity*, the group find themselves staring into a magic mirror that puts them face-to-face with darker, alternate versions of themselves. Those doppelgangers are then accidentally let loose in our reality, hellbent on conquering humanity. Even

BalSac the Jaws of Death with his Schecter BälSäc E-1 [facing page, left] and Pustulus Maximus with his Dean Custom Shop ML “Croc-top”

WE’RE A FULL-FLEDGED ROCK JUGGERNAUT — BALSAC THE JAWS OF DEATH



more insidious? The other GWAR is a successful country band.

“When we looked on the other side of the mirror, we saw that the GWAR over there had decided to play country music instead of metal. They took over their world because — let’s face it — country is far superior to metal, as far as sales go,” BalSac reports. “If you want to make money, play country instead of metal — we got the bum rap on that. We’re poor and living in Antarctica, while they’re rich and living in the capital of their universe.”

Though there isn’t much in the way of C&W cosplay on *New Dark Ages*, a Southern-fried swerve exists within the new record’s “Rise Again.” The “Freebird”-leaning epic is drenched in Hammond organ melodies and features an epically extended, skies-reaching wobble from Pustulus; Blothar brings a slack-jawed Southern drawl to his lines. Thematically, it’s an eye-raiser of questionable, polarizing taste — again, this is GWAR — imagining a world where felled Confederate statues come back to stage a rising of the South.

“GWAR keeps our human slaves in Richmond, Virginia; we’ve always had a fond place for the capital of the Confeder-

acy,” BalSac reveals with a good dose of smarm. “This was GWAR’s take on the statues coming down on Monument Avenue. In our universe these statues got pissed off, came to life and brought all the zombie corpses of the Confederate soldiers out of Hollywood Cemetery to rise up against the human race, to show that the South will rise again.”

He continues: “‘Rise Again’ is a Southern rock anthem told by some liberal monsters from [outer] space who don’t know that if the South did rise again, it’s going to be ugly. It’s not North and South anymore, [though]; it’s left and right. There might be another civil war coming.” A dark thought, even if caged in the shock-humor conceit of GWAR.

The ultimate fate of the culture wars is debatable, but what’s sure is that GWAR will once again bring their bodily fluid-spewing stage show to fans this year to promote *New Dark Ages*. BalSac is light on the details but notes that the show will “be addressing a lot of what’s going on in the world right now.” As in the past, you can probably expect a few decapitations to be peppered into their satire. Having performed under a tsunami of stage blood for eons, Pustulus and BalSac note they’ve

nearly perfected the art of weather-guarding their pedalboards.

With the new tunes in mind, both Pustulus and BalSac are psyched to drop into the hill-climbing, twin-guitar leads of *New Dark Ages*’ “Berserker Mode.” Though the double-time thrasher is ostensibly an anthem about the life of Blothar — labeled in-song as the “God of Cock and Roll” — the tandem, NWOBHM-styled dual harmony was modeled as a moment for the GWAR guitarists to “stand in front of the lead singer.”

“So many times, the bigger monsters come onstage and push us to the back, but, goddamn it, guitarists are supposed to be taking the spotlight,” BalSac says with contempt. “We wrote a moment where there’s no way that anyone can stand in front of us. You can’t do that lead from the back.”

To that end, Pustulus Maximus is a little more skeptical of the potential spotlight moment, suggesting that their duplicitous, glory-seeking bandmates will somehow ruin the showcase by staging a gore-spurting climax at the same time.

“They’re going to say, ‘this is where the epic battle has to happen, there’s nowhere else in the set that it could possibly be,’” the GWAR ax-wielder theorizes, adding wryly, “and then we’ll have to kill ’em.” **GW**

Pustulus Maximus and BalSac the Jaws of Death on stage at the Regency Ballroom in San Francisco, October 17, 2019

MIKKA SKAFFARI/FILMMAGIC

“I ENJOY A WAH — MAYBE NOT AS MUCH AS KIRK HAMMETT, BUT PRETTY CLOSE” — PUSTULUS MAXIMUS



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JOHNSON

AND

JOHNSON

The Texas guitar great has concocted not one, but two albums bursting with new material — plus a few extras. "It feels good to clear out the vaults and to get everything out there..."

Story by Joe Bosso | Photography by Max Crace

ERIC JOHNSON ISN'T known for flooding the market with product. Since he first began issuing studio recordings in 1986, his average span between albums is four years, and he's been known to sometimes make fans wait five and even six years for a new disc. "I know it might appear as if I'm taking my time," he says, "but whenever I make an album, I usually record another one that I put aside." He chuckles. "Looking at it that way, I'm really not that slow."

During the remainder of 2022, Johnson devotees can revel in an abundance of riches, as the Grammy-winning Texas guitar star will issue not one, but two separate albums simultaneously — *The Book of Making* and *Yesterday Meets Today* — and he's even offering a bonus disc of outtakes (inventively titled *Take-outs*) to fans who purchase both records together.

Interestingly, none of this was in Johnson's plans whatsoever. "I hadn't figured on either record, really, let alone both of them," he says. He explains that the Covid lockdown period from 2020 and into 2021 offered him an unex-





"Once I looked at them as two distinct records with their own themes, the songs seemed to work nicely together," Johnson says. "I'm really happy with all of it"

pected opportunity to comb through his music files and assess the recordings he'd stashed away. "I came up with 28 tracks, three of which were totally embarrassing, so I tossed them. Seven of them would go on Takeouts, so that left me with 18 songs. Some of them sounded really good right off the bat; other ones I needed to work on to bring them up to snuff."

Originally, Johnson considered releasing all 18 tracks as a jam-packed single album, but he had trouble

"I JUST WANTED TO MAKE MUSIC THAT PEOPLE COULD LISTEN TO OVER AND OVER, SO I WASN'T CONCERNED WITH HAVING THIS BALANCE OF GUITAR STUFF"

arranging the songs in a sequence he liked. Sequestering one batch of tunes on one album and a different group on another, however, seemed to solve the problem. "Once I looked at them as two distinct records with their own themes, the songs seemed to work nicely together. It's a lot of music, I know, but I'm really happy with all of it. It feels good to have cleared out the vaults and to get everything out there."

Johnson's angelic and impassioned vocals are featured prominently throughout both records. On *The Book of Making*, there's an array of captivating ballads such as "Love Will Never Say Good-bye," "My Faith in You" and "Bigger Than My Life," while *Yesterday Meets Today* offers tougher fare like the soulful title track and the ZZ Top-flavored rocker "Move On Over." As always, his prodigious guitar skills and that instantly recognizable signature sound are

key elements of each cut. The feel-good instrumental "Soundtrack Life" is classic EJ stuff, brimming with bell-like arpeggios and sweeping leads that take flight and sail to the heavens. "Maha" is another masterstroke, a two-minute jam that crams full-tilt blues, grungy riffing and even a little samba into one tight, two-minute package. And on *Yesterday Meets Today*'s dramatic closer, "Until We Meet Again," he turns in an epic performance, alternating between haunting, reverb-drenched chords and an aching, understated lead that hits an emotional bullseye.

"There's some cool rock stuff and a lot of nice jams that turned into songs," Johnson says, "but for the most part, I wanted to concentrate on the heartfelt stuff. I just wanted to make music that people could listen to over and over, so I wasn't concerned with having this balance of guitar stuff. Being at home, I had a chance to reflect, and that leads to feelings of gratitude for what you have. I think a lot of people have been going through something similar recently."

You've talked a lot about your guitar influences, but who's inspired you as a singer? There are a lot of vocal tunes on these records. Oh, well, Stevie Wonder, for sure.

Those records he made in the Seventies are so iconic. He always sang beautifully, but he never went beyond or above serving the song. I wish I could sing like him. When I'm dreaming, I do — why, the other night I had this great dream in which I was singing really good. I woke up and thought, "If only I could sing like that in real life." Stevie's my favorite, but I also love Paul Rodgers.

As a lyricist, do you draw inspiration from anybody in particular?

Again, there's Stevie Wonder. He's so heartfelt and pure. Then there's Joni Mitchell and, of course, Bob Dylan. Those are three who come to mind. I mean, I don't come close to doing what they do, but they do inspire me.

Does lyric writing come to you as easily as guitar playing?

No, not really. I can be really slow sometimes, but that's when I try to force it. If I'm able to just hang back and get out of the way, it happens quite easily. A lot of times, I write scratch lyrics just to see where it's all going. You develop a base for what you want to say, and then you zero in on the message and refine it. It's a process, just like guitar playing.

Let's talk about your guitar playing on these records. "Soundtrack Life" epitomizes your sound and approach to soloing perhaps as much as "Cliffs of Dover."

Sure, sure. It's "classic me." I think it's just a process that you refine over the years. You learn from all your heroes. If you have varied heroes from different styles, you take a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and then you build this recipe with a lot of ingredients. That's what I did, and I guess I wound up with something that's different and, I guess, probably a little unique.

So yeah, that song is a good representation. It's a basic three-piece with me playing lead and rhythm live. Wayne Salzmann played drums and Chris Maresh played bass, and they both did excellent jobs. I kept some of my original tracks and then redid certain sections to offer different textures. I didn't like some of the lead stuff — I wanted to play it better. I redid the lead and added extra solo stuff.

To paraphrase Mountain, "A Thousand Miles" sounds like the soundtrack to an imaginary western — it conjures desert vistas. There is a little bit of scat singing in there too, but it's mostly a guitar

“I LOVE BILLY GIBBONS’ USE OF HIS BLUES-ROCK THING. HE’S SUCH A GREAT PLAYER, AND WHAT TONE, YOU KNOW?”

instrumental.

Yeah, that was just a jam in the rehearsal hall with [drummer] Tommy [Taylor] and [bassist] Kyle [Brock]. Once I recorded it, I went back and added a bunch of stuff and had a lot of fun with it. We were just making it up as we went along. Quite a few things on the album happened that way.

“Move On Over” has a distinct ZZ Top grind to it. Am I in the right lane?

Sure, I’ll take that. I think that sounds about right. I love Billy Gibbons’ use of his blues-rock thing. He’s such a great player, and what tone, you know? That might have been in my head a bit. I’m still amazed when I hear those records he made. He’s a one-of-a-kind guy.

You play a beautiful flanged solo in the song.

Thanks, but to be honest, that was something [engineer] Richard Mullen put on the track when he was mixing it. That song was mixed years ago; I didn’t do anything new to it. It was just sitting there, so I put it out. It was from that side project I did, Alien Love Child.

The song “Maha”... what does the title mean?

I think it was just me kind of referencing Mahavishnu Orchestra. But as I started finishing the song, it became a little more Spanish flavor than just fusion Mahavishnu, I guess.

It’s two minutes long, but come on — there’s so many musical styles going on there.

Yeah, yeah. It was kind of a short jam. It went on, but I edited it down a little bit, just to be a little more concise. It probably could have been longer, but I like it



Johnson with his signature Fender Thinline Stratocaster

the way it is. And I added some acoustic. It’s got the rock electric vibe and everything else.

A lot of the instrumentals were born out of jams.

Oh, for sure. Most of them are.

“Dorsey Takes a Day Off” — are we talking about Tommy Dorsey?

[Laughs] I don’t know why I named it that, because I don’t know anybody named Dorsey. And it’s not Tommy Dorsey. It was just a completely silly name that came out of nowhere. That was another total jam. I was hamming around with [drummer] Tom Brechtlein, and that’s what happened.

You faded it way too soon. I was like, “Man, this song is going to some cool places,” and then it started to fade.

Yeah, I guess. Truth is, we didn’t know what we were doing, and it started getting a little goosey toward the end. [Laughs] I just faded the song out before it got completely silly.

“Until We Meet Again” is a heart-breaking instrumental. Do you have to put yourself in a proper mental state to do a song like that?

I do. That song wasn’t a jam, as you can tell, I hope, but it did start out as kind of a clean guitar improv, kind of like what I do live before “Cliffs of Dover.” I recorded myself doing an improvisational thing, but afterward I went back and listened, and then I mapped out the chord changes that I

was doing. There’s a definite structure to it. I started adding to it and created an orchestral vibe to it as it unfolded. I think it came out really nice.

Seeing as these albums were several years in the making, no doubt you used a bunch of guitars.

Not a bunch, but a few. On “It’s Just the Rain,” I used a stereo Gibson ES-345 that belonged to a friend of mine. Other than that, I play these nylon-string guitars — Godins. They have built-in synthesizer stuff, and they’re really cool. Most of the guitars are Strats and Les Pauls. I used my new “Virginia” Strat that I did with Fender. And on “Move On Over,” I think I played a 335.

What are your touring plans, and have you decided how to work the new music into your set?

I think the first touring I’ll do will be in February of next year. I’ll probably pick a few things off the albums and work them in with the older stuff that people like to hear. I’m working on some acoustic songs now, so I’d like to see if they can be part of the set. Actually, I’m doing an acoustic show pretty soon just to get back into it. Maybe I’ll do a few acoustic shows — we’ll see.

It’s been a while since you’ve played live. Are you excited to play for people again?

I am. It’s been a few years, which is kind of crazy. I gotta get used to the idea of going out; I imagine it’ll feel a little foreign to me after being off the stage for a few years. I hope people come out. That’d be nice. **GW**

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STARDUST MEMORIES

Hunky Dory and Ziggy Stardust producer (and Beatles engineer) KEN SCOTT recalls the making of two of DAVID BOWIE and MARK RONSON's most iconic albums.

BY MARK MCSTEA

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DAVID BOWIE'S *THE RISE AND FALL OF ZIGGY STARDUST AND the Spiders from Mars*, to give it its full title, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. It's the record that cemented Bowie's status as an international superstar, selling more than 7 million copies, and it is second only to *Let's Dance* [1983] in terms of Bowie's most successful records. Key to Bowie's rise to prominence was the work of guitarist Mick Ronson, the perfect visual and sonic foil for Bowie's unique vision.

At the helm for Ziggy was producer Ken Scott, who'd engineered a couple of Bowie's albums when Tony Visconti was producing. Scott's own story reads as the unlikeliest of tall tales. Applying for an apprenticeship in recording and engineering, his first job after leaving school was working as a trainee engineer with the Beatles. He went on to engineer most of their albums as well as work on countless legendary rock, pop and fusion records. These days, he's a visiting professor in the School of Film, Music and Performing Arts at Leeds Beckett University in the U.K.

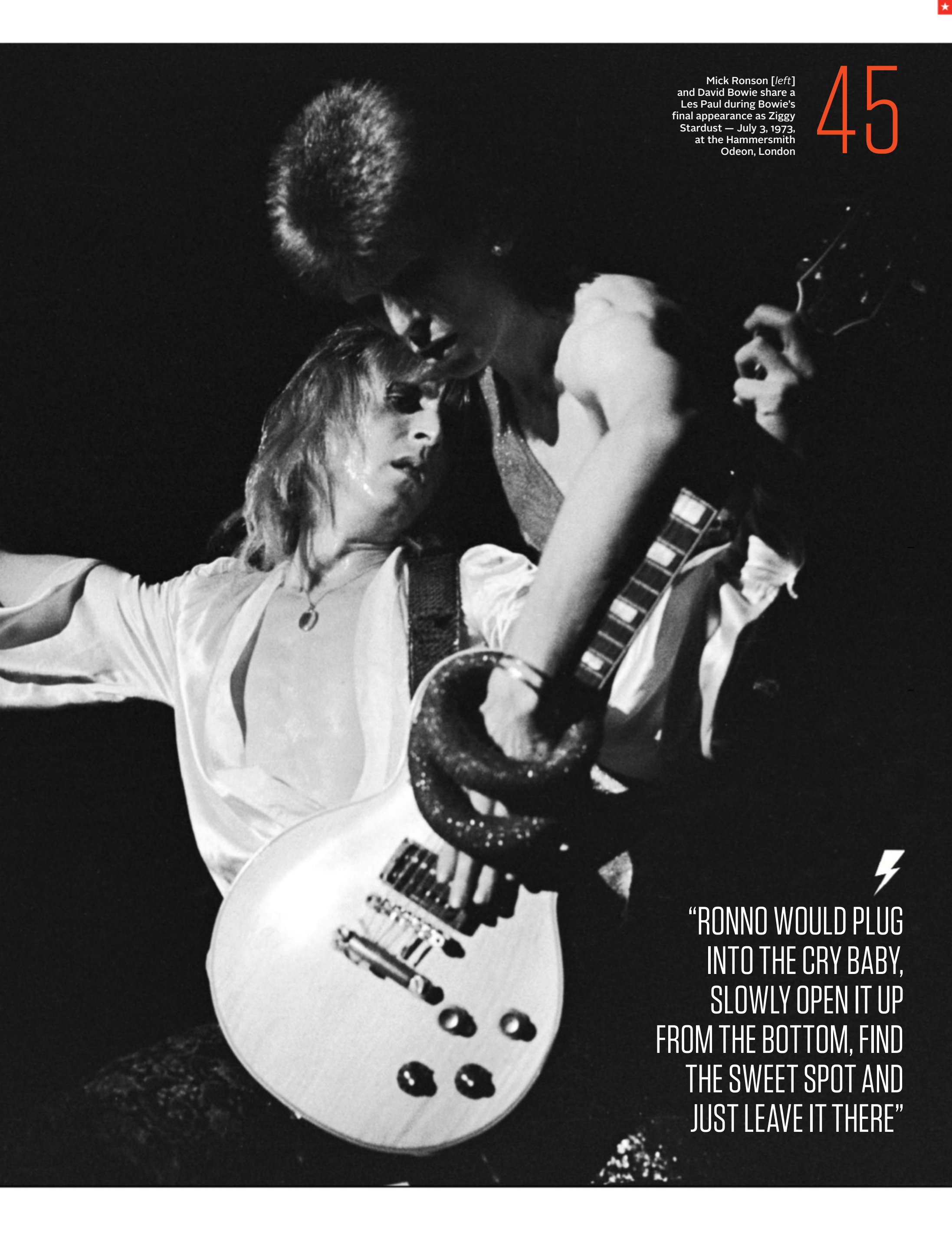
You first worked as producer with Bowie on *Hunky Dory* before producing *Ziggy* with him. Tony Visconti produced the previous two albums with you engineering. How'd you step into the producer's chair?

There's something in general that happens to a lot of engineers where you're sitting next to the producer and you'll make an "artistic" comment, which the producer will put to the band. If it works, it's always the producer's idea; if it doesn't, it's the engineer's idea. [Laughs] We tend to get fed up with that and

I'd reached the point where I was having to think about the engineering process less and less; it had become second nature to me. I wanted to make the move and I happened to mention to David that I was planning to move into production. He said he'd just signed a new management deal and was about to go into the studio and [asked] if I'd like to help him. That was *Hunky Dory* [1971], and we continued for another four albums.

Having worked as an engineer while Visconti was producing, did anything that he did inform your own process?

It did. I worked in a completely different way to Tony. On the first two albums he did with David, Tony was the bass player, the musical director, the arranger and the producer. My feeling about David, having worked on the first two albums, was that he was a really nice guy who obviously had a certain amount of talent, but it ended there because the albums weren't *his*. He wrote the material, of course, but the impression I had was that he had very little say. It became obvious, after David's time off from the first two albums, that he wanted to get things on track. He hadn't had any real success since *Space Oddity* [1969], which was very much focused on David's ideas. I learned my craft as a producer from George Martin and Gus Dudgeon. They always believed very much that the talent was in the studio and that their job was to create, and the producer's job was to enable that to happen. If something didn't seem to be working, I'd just encourage him to put all his ideas out there, whether they worked or not. Of course, I'd say they did work most of the time.



Mick Ronson [left]
and David Bowie share a
Les Paul during Bowie's
final appearance as Ziggy
Stardust — July 3, 1973,
at the Hammersmith
Odeon, London

45



“RONNO WOULD PLUG
INTO THE CRY BABY,
SLOWLY OPEN IT UP
FROM THE BOTTOM, FIND
THE SWEET SPOT AND
JUST LEAVE IT THERE”

David was so good at putting together a team that could convey what he wanted; at that time it was Ronno [guitarist Mark Ronson], Trevor Boulder [bassist] and Woody Woodmansey [drummer]. Later he'd switch things around when he wanted to get more of an American sound and put together an incredible American team. What was interesting about David is that he didn't feel like he needed to control the team he'd put together because he knew what they were capable of and what they'd bring to a project.

Was he more confident in dealing with you than he was with Visconti at that time?

Yes, I think he felt I'd be more receptive and open to things. But I think when you say "confident," I don't think either David or I were confident in the least when we first sat down in the studio for *Hunky Dory*, but as things started to come together and we were thinking that things were really working, we started to gain in confidence. But we were both exceedingly nervous initially.

When David was preparing the songs for *Ziggy*, did you hear them in advance as demos?

The whole *Ziggy* thing was strange. The time that my feelings about David as a talent really increased was when he, his wife and his publisher came to my house and we started going through tapes of demos for our first album together. It became obvious that there was much more to him than I'd seen from the first two albums. I heard a lot of material and we narrowed it down to what became *Hunky Dory*. I may have also heard some of the *Ziggy* stuff at that time, but I don't remember. The thing is that we went on to *Ziggy* so quickly after *Hunky Dory*, maybe a matter of weeks, so there was no time to listen to material. A lot of the time David just came into the studio, talked the band through the song, played it on an acoustic guitar and then they went for it.

Was Bowie a quick worker?

We had to be. *Hunky* and *Ziggy* were recorded in two weeks each. Ninety percent of his vocals on the first four albums were first takes, beginning to end, without anything else needing doing to them.

Did Mick come up with his own parts?

There was the occasional thing David might suggest, but more often than not, Ronno would just go down to the studio and lay down exactly what he thought was needed, and it nearly always worked. When it came to solos, he'd nail them on the first take all the way through. He may have worked on ideas away from the studio, like the harmonic ideas and fills, but when he was there

Bowie (as Ziggy) onstage in Los Angeles in 1973. "*Ziggy Stardust* was recorded in two weeks," Ken Scott says. "Ninety percent of Bowie's vocals on the first four albums were first takes, beginning to end"



he got straight down to business. He was still [using] that big, old Marshall and the stripped Les Paul, going through the Cry Baby. That was basically his live rig as well. He'd plug into the Cry Baby, slowly open it up from the bottom, find the sweet spot and just leave it there. That would be it for the song, and that was basically what he did for every track I saw him record.

You've worked with a lot of great guitarists. How do you rate Ronson?

I think he was very underrated. He was exceedingly important to David's success. David was so talented that I think he would've made it no matter what, but Ronno was a very important part of David's recorded sound and, of course, he looked great on stage with David. Ronno was initially a bit scared of the glam look and the makeup at the beginning, but eventually he came around to it when he realized it didn't stop him getting women. [Laughs]

Fifty years down the line, how do you think the album stands up?

It depends on my mood. [Laughs] Some days I love it, some days I hate it and I want to change the sounds on everything. I think with hindsight there are a lot of things I'd like to change, but I certainly wouldn't ever want to change any of David's performances. Same with Ronno's parts. I think, looking back, the drum sound is the main thing I'd change. Perhaps, though, if we'd done anything differently back then, maybe it wouldn't have turned out so well and we wouldn't be here talking about it half a century later. It's a snapshot of its time. When I listened to it back then, it was an album every six months, and if people were still talking about the previous album by the

time the next one came out, you'd done your job. The life of an album was under a year; nobody ever thought we'd still be listening to those songs 50 years later. Rock 'n' roll wasn't even that old when we recorded it. There are tracks on some of the other early Bowie albums that I think are better than some tracks on *Ziggy*, but that is definitely the album that holds together and works best as a cohesive collection of songs.

You've been involved in countless historic albums, including much of the Beatles' catalog. Were there times when you felt like a frustrated producer, thinking, "I'd do this differently from George Martin"?

No, never. I was learning how to be an engineer at that point, and I'm very much a believer that you need to focus on one thing and do it to the best of your ability and knowledge and take it as far as you can before moving on to the next thing. When I was engineering with the Beatles, I was just trying to learn what the hell I was supposed to be doing. I'd never even been behind a mixing console before I'd worked with them. It wasn't until just before *Hunky Dory* that I started to get fed up with "just engineering."

It must have been quite a shock to the system to start an apprenticeship in the recording industry with the biggest band in the world.

Starting out as an assistant engineer on the sessions — button pushers, as we were called — that feels great, but your job isn't that important, really. You're just loading tapes and hitting "play" or "record." But not long after that, to be actually sitting behind the mixing console helping to get the sounds was absolutely ridiculous, but luckily for me it worked. **GW**

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PLAY ERNEST BALL



Sixty years
ago, a man
named
ERNE BALL →
forever
revolutionized
the guitar string
industry —
and the rest,
as they say,
is history...

PHOTOGRAPH BY
MICHAEL OCHS
ARCHIVES

BY
CHRIS GILL

Ernie Ball plays pedal steel
guitar in the late Fifties

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/
GETTY IMAGES





WHAT PRODUCT IS heard on more recordings than anything else over the last 60 years? Many guitarists, musicians or even casual music fans would probably answer something like the Fender Stratocaster, Gibson Les Paul, Martin dreadnought or even the Fender Precision Bass. Those aren't bad guesses, but the answer is actually something that all of those choices have in common more often than not: Ernie Ball strings.

The success of Ernie Ball strings in and of itself is a remarkable, noteworthy achievement, but it's only one facet of the company's extraordinary history over the last 60 years, starting in 1962 when Ernie Ball first packaged his own branded custom light-gauge Rock N Roll string sets and sold them from his music retail stores in the greater Los Angeles area. Today, Ernie Ball strings and accessories, as well as the company's Music Man guitars and basses, are sold in 135 countries; the brands are internationally recognized icons; and their products are embraced by everyone from the world's best-selling artists to beginners just starting their musical journeys.

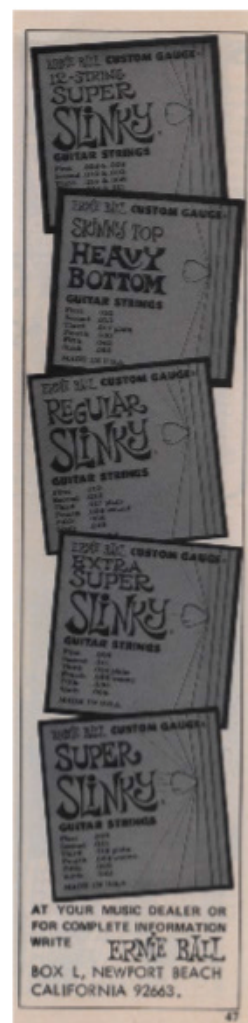
"I'm super proud of the company's 60-year history," says Ernie Ball/Music Man president Sterling Ball. "We've worked with a lot of great people, and a lot of great things happened. It all started with my father. My dad changed an industry. But I'm reluctant to lean on history, because it's too easy to use the past as a crutch. We're focused on the present, and we're thinking about the future. With my son Brian now running the company, we're making new history and continuing to change the industry. One of the main reasons for our success is that we figured out how to serve guitar players. We've consistently been determined to deliver what they want and need, and that is always changing and evolving. Everything is about the player."

Ernie Ball's dedication to guitarists was inspired by his own experiences as a player at first and later as a music retailer. After returning from service in the United States Air Force during the Korean War, he played pedal steel in various bands around Los Angeles before becoming a member of the house band on KTLA television's "Western Varieties" program and doing session work. Around this time he met Leo Fender, and the two became good friends, with Ball becoming an early Fender endorsee and product beta tester in 1953. Seeking a more reliable means of making a living, Ball opened a guitar teaching studio in 1954 and his first music retail store in 1957 in Tarzana, California, located in the San Fernando Valley northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

Ball's store was considered controversial by the traditional-minded music industry during that time because it quite possibly was the very first shop in the U.S. that sold only guitars exclusively, whereas typical music stores of the time also sold brass, woodwind, drums and orchestral instruments as well as pianos and organs. The store struggled at times, but eventually it became successful, and Ball opened additional locations in Canoga Park and Thousand Oaks.

"Guitarists knew my dad's store was the place to go," Sterling says. "My dad would set up all of the guitars that he sold. Players would come in from all over Southern California to buy Teles and Strats from us because of that. That's something we still insist on doing today. We spend at least 45 minutes meticulously setting up every Music Man guitar and bass so it performs at its best before we ship them out, which is a lot more effort than most other companies make."

Back then, electric guitars were typically shipped from the factory with .012-.052 or .013-.055 strings with a wound G, and replacement string sets were the same gauges or heavier. Ball noticed that many of his young students and customers struggled to bend strings, and he



Ernie Ball noticed that many of his young students struggled to bend strings, and he also knew that many pro guitarists were using lighter gauge strings on the recordings these kids were trying to imitate

also knew that many pro guitarists were using lighter gauge strings on the recordings that these kids were trying to imitate. After Fender and Gibson rejected his suggestion of offering light gauge string sets, Ball started setting up the instruments he sold with lighter strings and putting together his own packages of custom light gauge string sets by discarding the low E string, changing the fifth through first strings into the sixth through second strings and using a banjo's light-gauge high D string for the high E string.

Ball introduced his first Ernie Ball-brand string sets in 1962. The packages featured eye-catching dayglo colors and bold logos and graphics designed by Rolly Crump. "My dad and Rolly were really good friends since high school," Sterling says. "Rolly worked for Disney, where he became one of Walt's top three art directors and designed the It's a Small World ride. I remember when I was 7, my dad called all of the neighborhood kids down to the store, which was about a block from our home. My dad had a stack of string wallet designs that said 'Rock N Roll' on them and were in different colors and black and white. He asked the kids to choose the ones they liked. The kids all loved the dayglo colors, so that's what he went with. That was how he did his market research."

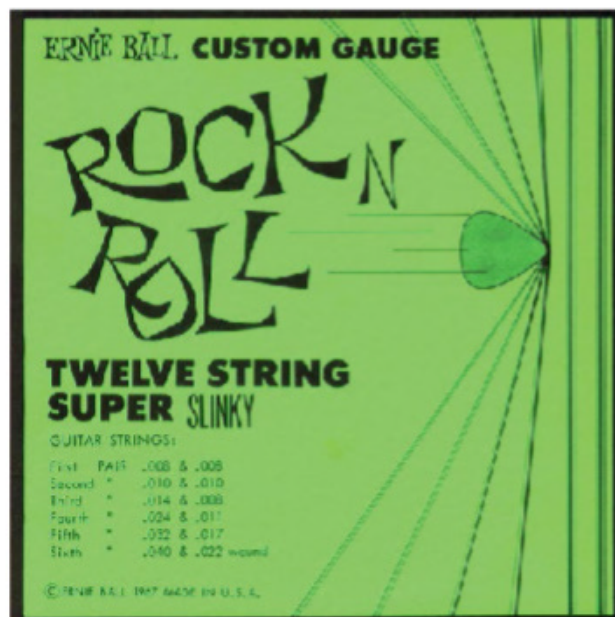
Ernie Ball Rock N Roll string sets were offered in a variety of custom gauges, including skinny top/heavy bottom, rhythm guitar and "slinky." Word about these strings — particularly the light Slinky sets — spread quickly as touring guitarists showed them to other players, and order requests came in from musicians and retailers across the country. Eventually the string production business eclipsed the retail stores' income, and in 1967 Ernie Ball closed his stores and moved to Newport Beach to focus exclusively on making strings and accessories like personalized imprinted guitar picks, cables, straps and more. Another innovation that revolutionized the string industry was the company's retailer packs of individual strings that were sold sepa-

rately, enabling guitarists to put together their own custom sets.

The almost instant impact that Ernie Ball strings had on the sound of music recordings featuring the electric guitar cannot be overstated. In California during the early Sixties the company's Slinky strings played a major role in the surf guitar phenomenon (the Ventures were among the store's customers) and pop/rock records by bands like the Beach Boys and the Byrds, as well as the Bakersfield country sound of players like James Burton, Roy Nichols (Merle Haggard) and Don Rich (Buck Owens). Later in the mid-Sixties when British artists like the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Yardbirds and Cream toured in the U.S., they often returned home with Ernie Ball Slinky strings purchased by the case from music stores.

BY THE BEGINNING of the Seventies, Ernie Ball strings had become the brand of choice for most rock guitarists. But although the company had carved out its own unique niche for most of the Sixties, eventually numerous competitors — including Fender and Gibson, who had initially rejected Mr. Ball's ideas — started to offer sets in the same .009-.038 and .010-.046 configurations popularized by Ernie Ball Slinky strings. The company responded to its growing competition by focusing on diversification and innovation, expanding its selection of custom gauge electric string sets and making strings for a wider range of instruments, including bass and acoustic guitar.

Ernie Ball introduced its acoustic Earthwood brand in a literally big way in 1972. In addition to rolling out the new line of Earthwood acoustic guitar strings, the company also produced its very first instrument: the Earthwood acoustic-electric bass guitar. Based on the Mexican guitarrón but equipped with a fretted neck, the Earthwood bass's revolutionary design included a 34-inch scale length and massive body measuring 24 inches long and between 8 inches (first 1972 production run) and 6 5/8 inches (1973-1985) deep. Its natural acoustic tone was booming and powerful, but even more impressively, it was equipped with a Barcus Berry Hot Dot pickup that allowed it to be amplified. Ernie Ball built fewer than 600 Earthwood basses, but many of them landed in the hands of players like Freebo (Bonnie Raitt), John Entwistle and Brian Ritchie (Violent Femmes). The company



also made a limited number of Earthwood acoustic guitars.

During this period the company enjoyed an impressive spike in sales, thanks to the efforts of Ernie Ball's son Sterling, who was still a teenager. "I had worked for my dad on and off since I was 9, when I first ran the store's cash register," Sterling says. "I started working for the company as a road rep in 1973. My dad had this car in the factory parking lot that no one was using. One day I told the sales manager that I wanted to be a sales rep in Southern California, but he said he didn't need it. I offered to do it for 10 percent of the increase in sales. I took off in that car and visited every dealer I could find. By the end of the year I had set a new sales record for the business."

Somehow, Sterling found free time to play bass in various bands, and he also moonlighted for Leo Fender's first post-Fender venture, Music Man. "I did beta testing for Leo, although

[above] Vintage Ernie Ball string packaging, including Slinky and Rock N Roll sets. "The kids all loved the day-glo colors, so that's what [my dad] went with," Sterling Ball says

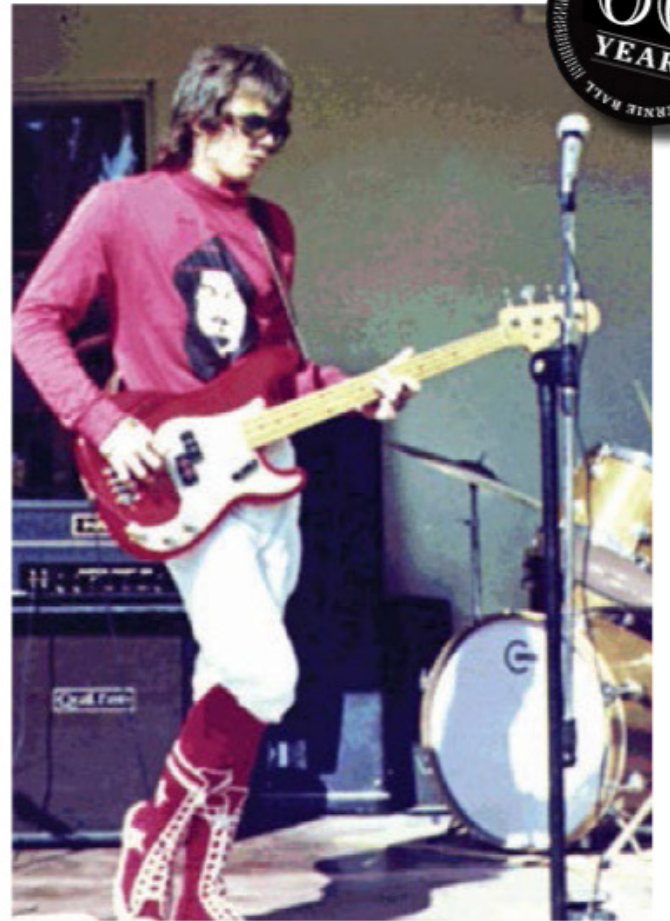
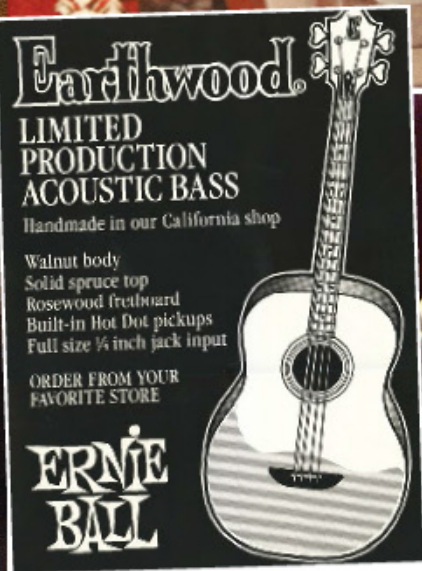
[facing page] A vintage guitar-magazine ad for Slinky strings





we called it ‘bandstanding’ back then,” he says. “Leo and Tommy Walker, who was a good friend of my dad and my godfather, had developed a prototype of the StingRay bass, and I’d play it at live gigs and show it to bass players to find out what they thought of it. Leo wasn’t a musician, so I brought the player’s perspective to the StingRay’s design.” This collaboration would eventually lead to a major game-changing development for Ernie Ball during the next decade. Ernie Ball handed over the full-time responsibility of running the company to Sterling in 1975, and its sales and success continued to grow at a rapid pace. Soon the company outgrew the production capabilities of its facilities in Newport Beach. In 1979, Ernie Ball relocated to San Luis Obispo about 200 miles up the coast in central California, where its main headquarters are still located today.

IN 1984, AN event took place that was as important in Ernie Ball’s history as the introduction of Slinky strings in the early Sixties — the company purchased Music Man. “Music Man was going under,” Sterling says.



[clockwise from facing page, bottom left] Sterling and Ernie Ball at one of the company's early NAMM shows; Ernie Ball's first music retail store in Tarzana, California (two photos); Sterling Ball on stage; the Ernie Ball booth at a vintage NAMM Show; an ad for the company's Earthwood bass

"Leo had left a few years before to start G&L, and the partners were fighting with each other. I realized the company was probably going to end up in the hands of their Japanese distributor, so I went to my dad and suggested we buy the company. It wasn't a very significant purchase — just some inventory, a warehouse and the small amount we paid for the trademarks. It was really more of an emotional decision than a business deal. When the deal closed, I realized we just bought a guitar company but we didn't have a factory. I needed to figure things out fast.

"I never once thought I was picking up where Leo left off," he continues. "It was all about a reverence for the guitar and trying to move it forward. The StingRay bass was our first instrument, because that was the only Music Man product that musicians still accepted at that time."

Every great guitar company needs a great guitar designer, and Sterling found exactly that when he hired Dudley Gimpel. The two first met in 1981 while Gimpel was working in the service department at Knut Koupee Music in Minneapolis and Sterling ordered custom Telecasters for himself and his dad. Gimpel soon moved to California to work for Valley Arts Guitar, and when he heard that Ernie Ball had bought Music Man, he asked Sterling to hire him. Sterling refused to steal an employee from an Ernie Ball dealer, so Gimpel quit before asking Sterling again. Gimpel, along with Sterling and Dan Norton, immediately went to work building and equipping the Music Man factory.

The first Ernie Ball/Music Man StingRay bass hit the market in 1985, followed shortly afterwards by the Sabre bass. Two years later in 1987, Music Man officially introduced its first guitar model, the Silhouette, featuring numerous innovations and enhanced features like a truss rod wheel that adjusts without needing a special tool, a compact headstock with a 4x2 tuner configuration and Molex connectors that allowed guitarists

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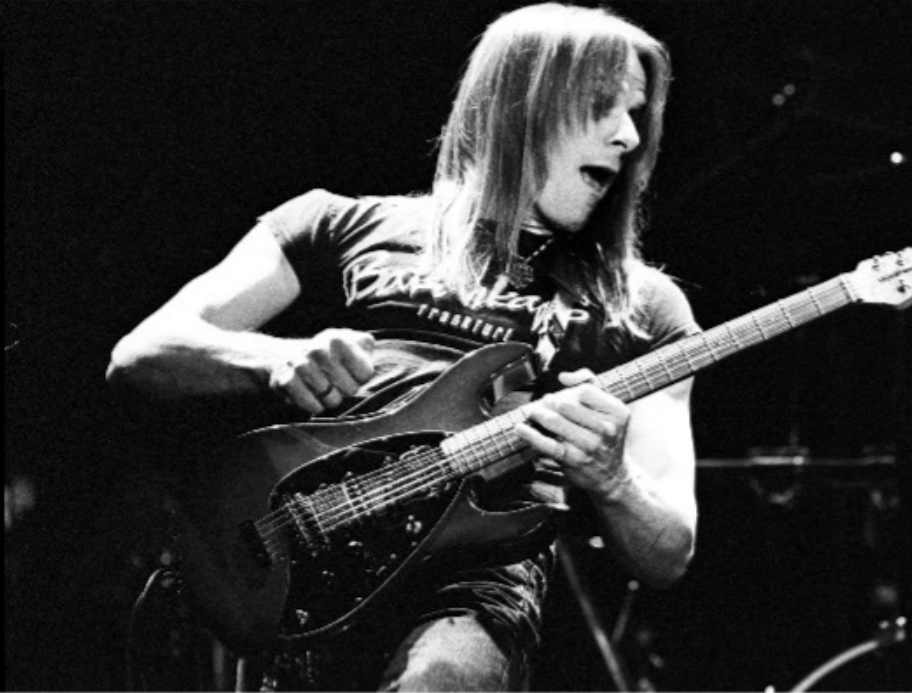
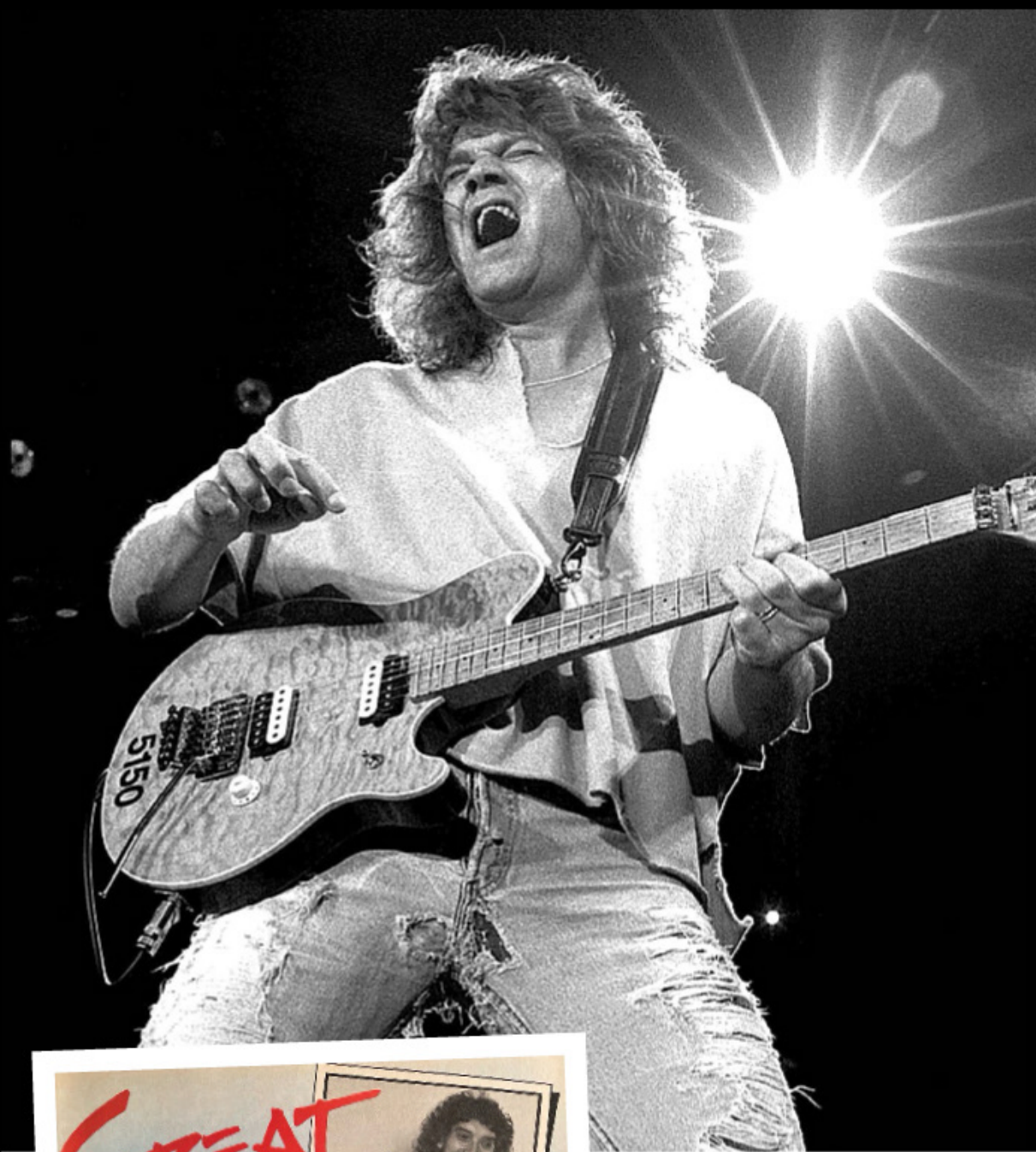
to quickly and easily change pickup configurations by swapping out pickguard assemblies.

"People laughed at the Silhouette at first," Sterling says. "Then Keith Richards started playing it and they called me a genius." Richards not only played the Silhouette; he famously said in a *Guitar Player* magazine interview that it "has the opportunity to become like the Stratocaster or Telecaster or Les Paul, one of the classic electric guitars."

Around the same time, Music Man also introduced its first artist signature guitar, the Steve Morse model. An eye-catching solidbody featuring a modernistic compact angular design called the Axis was often seen in the hands of Albert Lee during this time as well, although that guitar wasn't officially released until 1993 as the Albert Lee model.

With players like Lee, Morse and Richards enthusiastically supporting the brand, interest in Music Man guitars began to grow. However, the next artist to join the Music Man guitar roster — Eddie Van Halen — instantly transformed the response to the company from interested raised eyebrows to dropped-jaw, eyes-wide-open amazement. Although Van Halen famously endorsed Kramer guitars during the Eighties, Kramer never made





a Van Halen signature model. The Music Man Edward Van Halen model introduced in 1991 was Van Halen's very first official signature model, which the guitarist designed in a close collaboration with Gimpel and Sterling Ball.

Demand for the Edward Van Halen signature model was so overwhelming that the company could have easily sold tens of thousands of units every year if the factory were able to produce that many. However, the company's emphasis on maintaining its highest standards throughout the production process

— from the selection of quality materials through the finest details of fit and finish — kept output somewhat limited, and as a result Van Halen eventually jumped ship in 1995 to Peavey, who was more willing to deliver the higher sales numbers the superstar guitarist started to demand.

Although Music Man's relationship with Van Halen was relatively short-lived, its "sterling" reputation, particularly with artists, continues to this day. Shortly after the Van Halen model made its debut, Steve Lukather collaborated with Music Man on his first of many Luke signature models, introduced in 1993, the same year the Albert Lee model finally made its debut (with the Axis name later resurrected for the continuation of the Edward Van Halen model after Van Halen left), and both are still designing Music Man models today. John Petrucci, who first joined Music Man's roster in 2001, has been an especially prolific collaborator, contributing to the design of numerous JP and Majesty models (the latter co-designed by Music Man chief engineer Drew Montell) that include six-, seven- and eight-string versions.

"We don't have contracts with our artists," Sterling says. "I never wanted a piece

of paper to determine whether someone played our guitars or not. I wanted to make sure we always earned that privilege. Most of our artists have been with us a very long time. It's all about family."

Ernie Ball/Music Man has remained focused on meeting artists' needs both by working closely with well-known touring and recording musicians and supporting up-and-coming talent. In 1997 the company started sponsoring its battle of the bands on the Warped tour and has held this event on every Warped tour since then.

"When we started doing the battle of the bands, a lot of people in the industry were saying that the guitar was dead," Sterling says. "We got 32,000 tapes that proved they were wrong about that. The contest became even bigger when my son Brian got involved with it. We met a lot of musicians and gave them a chance to play on the Warped tour. That's where we first met James Valentine, whose band played there before he joined Maroon 5. Post Malone and Katy Perry are just a few of the better-known examples who played on our stages when they were starting out."

Thanks to the efforts and dedication of Sterling's son Brian Ball, who started working for the company in 2000 and subsequently worked his way up the ranks through sales, marketing and artist relations to become CEO in 2019,



[bottom left, facing page]
An Ernie Ball ad from the July 1985 *Guitar World* starring Steve Morse, Albert Lee and Allan Holdsworth

[top left, facing page] Eddie Van Halen in 1993 with his Ernie Ball/Music Man signature model, which the company produced from 1991 to 1995

Guitarists with their own Ernie Ball/Music Man signature models (and/or series) include [from left] Steve Morse, shown in 1992; John Petrucci, shown in 2011 with a JP-15; James Valentine, shown in 2020; and St. Vincent, shown in 2018



Ernie Ball/Music Man has attracted new generations of players, developed remarkable new innovations and increased its sales exponentially. Brian was particularly instrumental in the development and design of the Mariposa (Omar Rodriguez-López of Mars Volta and At the Drive-In) guitar and Tim Comerford (Rage Against the Machine) and Joe Dart (Vulfpeck) bass artist signature models. Most recently he oversaw the creation of the Kaizen, a seven-string multi-scale guitar with vibrato tailpiece co-designed with Tosin Abasi as well as the DarkRay bass featuring built-in distortion, EQ and pre-amp circuits designed by Darkglass Electronics.

In addition to those instruments, Music Man currently offers signature models for a diverse and impressive group of players. Guitars include the Stephen Egerton, Dustin Kensrue, Jason Richardson, St. Vincent (Annie Clark) and Valentine (James Valentine of Maroon 5) models. Music Man also makes signature bass models for Mike Herrera (MxPx), John Myung (Dream Theater) and Cliff Williams (AC/DC). Production models like the Axis, Cutlass, Sabre, Silhouette and StingRay guitars and Bongo, Sterling and StingRay 4- and 5-string basses remain successful perennials. Although Sterling has handed over the reins to Brian over the years, he's remained involved with the co-design of numerous models, such as the St. Vincent (including the most recent Goldie model), Valentine, Majesty and Short-Scale StingRay.

Under Brian Ball's direction, Ernie Ball continues to be a leader in developing innovations in string tech-

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and he also
moonlighted
for Leo Fend-
er's first
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venture,
Music Man**

nology. His contributions have included the high-output Cobalt and M-Steel electric strings, ultra-high-strength Paradigm acoustic and electric strings, revolutionary Aluminum Bronze acoustic strings and half-gauge sets featuring E strings measuring .0085, .0095 and .0105 that further expand players' options.

Ernie Ball/Music Man remains one of the few long-lived, successful, true family businesses not only in the music industry but in the entire U.S. In addition to Brian, Sterling's son Scott is the company's vice president and oversees factory operations. "When most family businesses pass from one generation to the next, its chances of success and growth usually decline with each new generation," Sterling says. "With us it's been the opposite. The growth of this company under Brian has been phenomenal and has exceeded everyone's expectations. He has more than doubled our business since he took the wheel, and he's been the straw that stirs the drink.

"We're very proud of our heritage, and rightfully so, but it's not a pillow we sleep on," Sterling concludes. "We get up every day to support the products we make and to support our artists. We're also focused on feeding the families of our workers. Our primary goal is creating new tools for artists. Growth is a secondary goal. We've never been about growth for the sake of growth. We've grown because we've come up with better ideas and make products that musicians actually need or want as well as things that other companies may be overlooking. We still pay as much attention to making the best strings, picks, straps, cables and everything else as we do to making the best guitars and basses." **GW**

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**"I SOMETIMES
THINK HOW
MUCH BETTER
THINGS WOULD
HAVE BEEN IF WE
WOULD'VE ALL
TRIED A
LITTLE BIT MORE
WITHIN THE
BIG FOUR"
—DAVE MUSTAINE**

LIFE DEATH

THE STRENGTH. THE COURAGE. THE CRUSHING NEW ALBUM.
IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, **MEGADETH** MAIN MAN

DAVE MUSTAINE

— WITH AN ASSIST FROM GUITARIST **KIKO LOUREIRO** —
TAKES YOU DEEP INSIDE ***THE SICK, THE DYING... AND THE DEAD!***

BY JON WIEDERHORN

LIES

THAN 20 MINUTES INTO A LENGTHY CONVERSATION with Dave Mustaine, Megadeth's mercurial frontman has revealed multiple sides of his complex personality. His greeting is warm and sincere, and it isn't long before he's cracking dry, self-deprecating jokes. There are some comments about religion, thoughts on space travel and an informative aside about a new street drug called Krokodil (Desomorphine).

"It's supposed to be like some kind of super-heroin," he says. "It's made from a drug that's been approved, but when you mix it with something else and inject it, it makes your skin rot until your bones stick out. Now, why on earth would anybody do that? It's cheaper than heroin and the high lasts way longer. And the life expectancy of somebody who uses it is two years. Jesus, knowing that just makes me think about how precious life is."

Though it mostly hides under the surface — like a crocodile — there's something irking Mustaine a little more than the thought of kids injecting flesh-melting junk, and while he keeps his cool for a while, he gets a little cranky when asked about the title of Megadeth's 16th album, *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* He doesn't object to the question *per se*; it's the misinterpretation of those who automatically think they know the answer that ticks him off. The song is clearly about the black plague and was written long before the Covid-19 pandemic. And the album cover depicts band mascot Vic Rattlehead standing on a street in an age before electricity, dead bodies lying at his feet, a burning church steeple in the background. Yet some gossip mongers still wrongly assume the album title and song have got to be about Coronavirus or Mustaine's recent battle with cancer. "The lyrics are about infected rats and fleas on a ship of people going from the Black Sea to a port of Sicily [*in 1347*]," he says with a slight growl. "It just frustrates the hell out of me when people write about stuff and they don't do any research."

Mustaine has good reason to be a little irate. Decades after he stopped drinking, drugging and picking fights, and learned to turn the other cheek, naysayers still look for openings to poke and prod him. Strictly from an artistic standpoint, however, it's worked for him. As he's proven throughout his 40-plus-year career, adversity stokes his creative flames and inspires his edgy, angular, attitude-laden songwriting. There's some truth to the idea that Megadeth's main man is at his best when he's at his worst. He has created some of the band's greatest riffs, solos and songs — and Megadeth's most trenchant albums — when

dangling over the precipice, a snapped thread away from a fatal fall. Early in their career, when Megadeth were penniless, practically homeless and battling heroin addiction, Mustaine led the band through such pioneering thrash albums as *Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good!* and *Peace Sells... But Who's Buying?* A few years later, when wrangling with internal friction, pills and the pressures of success, he conjured the seminal technical thrash albums *Rust in Peace* and *Countdown to Extinction*. And after recovering from an arm injury he was told would end his guitar-playing career, he lashed back with a string of records that showcased his exceptional syncopated riffing and rapid-fire lead guitar work. He thinks about this for a moment. "You know, sometimes the best things for me come after I'm told I can't do something," he says. "I'm like, 'Oh, yeah? Watch me!'"

Mustaine's former Metallica bandmates may have penned the line, "What don't kill ya make ya more strong" ("Broken, Beat & Scarred"), but it's Megadeth's main man that has more accurately demonstrated

the grammatically correct aphorism by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Over the decades, substance abuse, exploitation, betrayal, injuries and — more recently — cancer have tested Mustaine's stamina, mental stability and creativity. His faith and determination have not only allowed him to persevere, but, like the sea captain whose storm-tossed ship is being broken, beaten and riddled with holes, the frustration has left Mustaine shouting with rage-filled glee, throwing his fists to the sky and metaphorically shouting, "Is that all you've got?!"

Like a profound discussion with the man behind the tunes, *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* is a multi-dimensional and sometimes prickly endorphin rush — a twisting roller coaster ride brimming with speed, aggression, sonic exploration and lyrics that touch on past glories and failures. Despite being a devoted Christian, Mustaine addresses the occult on "Sacrifice" and emphatically writes about addiction on "Junkie" and "Life in Hell." In addition, he cheekily injects songs with references to catalog tunes by Megadeth and other thrash titans, and theatrically heightens the record with spoken-word snippets, dramatic production effects and dialog snippets that belie some of the brutality.

"I don't think I've ever wanted a record to be totally brutal," Mustaine says. "I don't think this record is all hateful. I think people that like this band will find it a fun listen."

The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead! is the second Megadeth album to feature ex-Angra guitarist Kiko Loureiro, a classically trained player who resembles a hybrid of Marty Friedman and Randy Rhoads. Unlike his playing on the Grammy Award-winning *Dystopia*, the Brazilian-born Loureiro graces *The Sick, The Dying... And the Dead!* with an abundance of neo-classical and vintage metal chops that blend well with Mustaine's earworm hooks and frantic thrash leads.





**"DAVE PLAYS
AGGRESSIVE AND
DIRTY. I HAD TO
LEARN TO PLAY
HIS WAY"
—KIKO LOUREIRO**

Kiko Loureiro with
one of his signature
Ibanez KIKO models

During a shining spring day in Nashville cooled by soft gusts of wind that feel like an oscillating fan on low cool, Mustaine and Loureiro talk about the trials and tribulations that led to the ultimately triumphant *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!*

***The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* is a heavy, eclectic record that captures the urgency, desperation and even some of the hope of the years in which it was recorded.**

DAVE MUSTAINE: I think that's a really important point. I've talked about my battle with cancer and I don't take getting sick lightly. I do believe it was well-wishers and people who prayed or sent good thoughts my way that really helped me. Of course, I was praying my butt off and doing everything the doctors said. But there was a serious reality check that took place as well. And I think I might've been a little bit worried that I wouldn't get it done if I got a whole lot worse. So there was urgency and a lot of emotion there to finish it.

You received the tongue cancer diagnosis from an oral surgeon after experiencing tooth problems on the Experience Hendrix tour with Zakk Wylde.

MUSTAINE: I got a root canal to fix one of my bottom teeth on the left side, but it kept hurting. So I went to see the oral surgeon. I'm sitting there in the exam room and he opens up my mouth and goes, "Oh, I think you got the Big C." I thought to myself, "What the fuck did he just say? The Big C? Has he ever heard of having a bedside manner?" It was tongue cancer. I went back to my car and sat there with tears running down my face for what seemed like 10 minutes. Then I picked myself up, got a great team of doctors together and we came up with a plan to beat this. And now I'm in full remission.

During the time you worked on *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!*, you endured nine sessions of chemotherapy and 51 radiation treatments, and while you took the required mediation and medical advice, you didn't take much time off. Did working obsessively on the album help distract you from the medical procedures?

MUSTAINE: I think it did, to a degree. The toughest part wasn't the process of going through all the radiation and the chemotherapy. I had two really bad days when I was throwing up all day, and I thought I was gonna have to go back to the hospital and stay there. The rest was everything from okay days to good days to great days. A lot of the cancer medication they gave me fucked with my memory really bad. They call it chemo brain, so I've been having a hard time staying in the moment, but it's getting better. Every day is a little better.

Did you have any other symptoms aside from nausea and confusion that made it difficult to work on the new album?

MUSTAINE: I used to be so physically unstable. When I would walk through a doorway I would usually hit the door frame because I had no balance. I would run into stuff all the time and fall because my balance was just shot. That was a bit of a problem, but if anything, it gave me the willpower to work even harder. If you have the

will to fight and you don't give up no matter what, I believe you're gonna be really surprised by the outcome.

When you were throwing up for two days straight and falling down, did you ever worry you might not win the battle?

MUSTAINE: I never thought I was going to die because I had already died once before [*when I overdosed on Valium in 1993 and was resuscitated*]. And even though I knew I was really sick, I wasn't scared because I wasn't afraid of dying. I was ready [*just in case I didn't make it*]. It's very comforting when you get to that place in your life where you're so happy and you're so full of love that you're ready. You've made peace with everything and everyone. And that if your time is now — today — it's okay. If that happened, I would have peace with that and be ready to go.

Kiko, where were you when you heard Dave had cancer?

KIKO LOUREIRO: I was driving and my phone rang. It was Dave and he started telling me he had cancer. I said, "Wow, that's awful." I was devastated. I told him I couldn't talk because I was driving and to hold on a second. I pulled over and said, "Tell me again what they said." He told me and then he said, "Don't worry. We're going to keep our schedule. I still want you to come here to Nashville because everything is booked." I was like, "Okay, if that's what you want, but if you want to take some time off that's okay." He said, "No, we're going to keep everything the same."

Dave, when you were under treatment and taking meds for your condition, did the doctors tell you that you might have numbness in your hands or that there could be other side effects that would affect your dexterity and challenge your ability to play?

MUSTAINE: Doctors told me that when I had the "Saturday Night Palsy" episode back in 2001. I had fallen asleep on my [*left*] arm, which was draped over a chair. [*Editor's note: The amount of time he spent in that position caused a nerve in his left bicep to become severely compressed, making the arm completely numb*].

Afterwards, I was seeing a doctor in Texas and he said, "You're going to get 80 percent use of your arm back." I said, "80 percent of my playing back?" And he said, "No, you are never gonna play again." I grabbed my stuff and said, "You don't know who I am" and walked out. I flew home and met with another doctor, who put me on this radical shock treatment therapy. I had to wear these crazy contraptions, and there's still a little bit of damage to the arm. But having 80 percent use of my arm and never playing again versus shredding my ass off and having a little clicking sound... Yeah, it's a good thing I started with a piece-of-shit car. I'm used to all kinds of clicks and cracks when I drive. So, having made it through that, I was pretty sure I wasn't going to let cancer affect the way I played.

Kiko, did Dave's perseverance make you all feel like you were taking adversity by the horns and flinging it to the ground?

LOUREIRO: Yeah, definitely. I could see he was tired. He was coming from chemo and he was still showing up for work every day. When you see him doing this, you're like, "Fuck yeah, let's work on this album, man!" It was very inspiring to see him come in and pick up his guitar and not slow down. The songs, the whole thing. Everything was there. Nothing can destroy this guy, you know? We were like, "Are you sure you want to work today? If you go home, we can still work on some stuff." And he'd always say, "No way." He wanted to be there. And he put everything into the songs.

MUSTAINE: It was great to work with Kiko and [*drummer*] Dirk [*Verbeuren*] for three months in Nashville in the summer of 2019 to make these demos into songs. I would get to the studio and they would all greet me with hugs, high fives and pats on the back. All I got was encouragement. I'd play something and it was: "Great solo, Dave." Just encouragement, encouragement, encouragement. And I think besides making a great record, we've made a great band.

How long before you were diagnosed did Megadeth start working on songs for *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!*?

MUSTAINE: When *Dystopia* came out in 2016, we started touring a lit-

tle bit with [ex-Lamb of God drummer] Chris Adler, who played on the album. And then Dirk came in and everything started to get wonderful with the band. The addition of Dirk and Kiko increased our level of creativity, and they were really great and productive. There were several different times we were out on the road that we put a little piece together here or pieced something together there. And then we came back home and I really got inspired. We would go into my home lab and work on ideas and sections of songs for hours and hours. We finally got enough stuff put together where it was time to start assembling the full songs.

The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead! includes strong melodies, complex rhythmic shifts, abrupt tempo changes, acoustic passages, sound effects and spoken bits. It's epic, it's cinematic, it's infectious. It's Megadeth! Did you know what kind of record you wanted to make when you started writing, and did you create the bulk of the songs during a certain time period?

MUSTAINE: I'm always writing and coming up with stuff, so I never go into an album saying, "I want it to sound like this." These songs all had different lengths of germination for them to actually get finished. I wrote some of the riffs years before we started working on the album. Some were finished in the middle of the session before we took a break. We'd jam on stuff when we were on the road. Then we had the pandemic, the cancer thing. The guys all went home for a little bit. And we worked together when we could, but when we weren't touring, the process was slower because we don't all live near each other. Kiko's in Finland, Dirk's in L.A. and I was in San Diego at the time.

The Megadeth rhythm sound is largely dependent on the style of picking and palm muting you do. So no matter what riff you play, whether it's delicate and melodic or fast and heavy, it sounds like you.

MUSTAINE: A lot of the technique is in the right hand. It's not what the left hand is doing at all. Yeah, sure, there are notes threaded in there, but I think it's the way they're picked that makes them exciting. Doing that and having the right sound is the name of the



Mustaine on stage in Austin, Texas, August 20, 2021

"YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES THE BEST THINGS FOR ME COME AFTER I'M TOLD I CAN'T DO SOMETHING. I'M LIKE, 'OH, YEAH? WATCH ME!'"
—DAVE MUSTAINE

game with Megadeth. You don't have to understand exactly what's happening; you just have to let the music take you where it goes.

Kiko, this is the second Megadeth record you've worked on. Did you find it easier to write for this album than for *Dystopia*?

LOUREIRO: When I joined the band in 2015, I went straight to the studio to record *Dystopia*. I knew the music, of course, and I had ideas for songs. But it's really hard to work with a band until you really get to know them as people. And it's only after you tour that you really get to know their style. After a lot of touring, we created this bond so I had more confidence to show them my ideas and participate more. I contributed writing to five songs on the album, including the

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acoustic parts for “Dogs of Chernobyl” and the beginning part of “Night Stalkers.”

Dave, did you have more confidence in Kiko as a songwriter this time?

MUSTAINE: Yeah, because I’ve played with him a lot and he knows the process. When we have an idea for something, we talk about it and then we work on it together in pieces. When we did “Night Stalkers,” for instance, it’s a song about a bunch of helicopter pilots that fly at night under darkness. So, there’s this spy-versus-spy excitement going on that you need to capture. The wrong music with the wrong lyrics would be a catastrophe. So we talk about what the lyrics mean and what the solos should feel like if the solo had words.

Kiko, how do you bring your songwriting ideas to the band?

LOUREIRO: It doesn’t really work to just go in and say, “Hey, check this out” and play a whole riff. It’s hard for the other guys to understand how something you’ve written will work within a song when you do that. So I made a computer folder and filled it with a lot of riffs. I named each of them and kept them short. Each file was just the good part of the riff — the main idea. I think of it like the headline. Dave doesn’t want to read the story. It’s more like, “Just read me the headline and let me see if it’s catchy or cool enough.” Then co-producer Chris Rakestraw helped me rate the riffs as well: “Okay, this is great. This is more Megadeth. This is not so Megadeth.” Then we put some of the riffs together and started to make them into songs.

Dave, Kiko is trained in music theory and comes from a technical playing background. You’re more like a self-taught street brawler who developed a classic style but who doesn’t follow the “rules” of music. Did Kiko have to learn to play “the Megadeth way”?

MUSTAINE: Well, yeah, but they all have. I’ve said to everyone over the years that we sing solos when we make the records. And it’s funny how quickly they forget that. The solos say words, just like the lyrics do, and that’s something I don’t think a lot of guitar players take into consideration when they go to do their solos. When you read the lyrics and then try to compliment them with what you’re playing, I think solos can be way more effective.

LOUREIRO: For me, it wasn’t so much about the solos. It was more about the riffs. Dave is very particular. He has his way of playing riffs as one of the founding fathers of this kind of music, and, for me, it’s very important to respect the style that creates those sounds, even though it’s not the way I learned to play. I played a lot of classical guitar and learned theory and all that. So every time I played, I used as minimal hand effort as possible and I tried to be as clean and accurate as possible. Dave is the opposite. He plays aggressive and dirty. I had to learn to play his way, and that includes the way you pick the strings and the chords with the right touch, the way you mute the strings — all those fine details of the rhythm guitar that Dave brought to Megadeth to get that powerful guitar sound. So when I joined the band, that’s when he went, “Let me show you the way we do things here.”

“I LIKE TO DO THIS THING CALLED HAND ECONOMY, WHERE I KEEP MY HAND ON ONE PART OF THE GUITAR BECAUSE I’M SINGING AT THE SAME TIME AND I WANT TO BE IN THAT AREA” —DAVE MUSTAINE

Your rhythms blend together well. Are there differences between the way you set your guitar tones? For instance, do either of you scoop the mids?

LOUREIRO: I like the mids. I think guitar has to have a lot of mids because the bass has a low end and a top end as well. That’s very characteristic for Megadeth from the bassist playing with a pick. So you need the mids so the guitars can fit right in that unfilled region of the sound. So neither of us scoop the mids. But my guitar sounds cleaner than Dave’s. He has more gain and I like a signature DiMarzio pickup that’s based on the P-90, so it’s classic sounding. It’s not as hot as a lot of players.

Dave, what’s the trickiest element of your rhythm playing?

MUSTAINE: I like to do this thing called hand economy, where I keep my hand on one part of the guitar because I’m singing at the same time and I want to be in that area. I don’t want to have to be all over the neck and looking at my guitar and not singing right because I’m looking sideways and singing out of the side of my mouth. That’s why I’ve sung funny like that before.

With the two of you on the same page, did the songs come faster than usual?

MUSTAINE: We worked really well together, so we *thought* we would finish it quickly. The problem was, it wasn’t getting finished. Every time we would work on something, it would get just a little bit better and then we’d have to make adjustments.

Is that one of the drawbacks of having extra time to work on an album?

MUSTAINE: I don’t know. I just know I listened to what we did over and over and I kept finding new things that would make something

better. And because this part got better, it made the corresponding parts or any of the subsequent parts, maybe, not as good anymore. So now there were these other things we had to go back and listen to carefully. And sometimes, a part we thought was fine before suddenly needed a little TLC with a new hook or riff so that it would live up to the level of the other new parts we were playing.

LOUREIRO: I did most of my stuff in Tennessee with Chris Rakestraw. Dave likes me to record first. I had the demos to work from so I recorded rhythm guitars and then the solos and acoustic guitar and some keyboards. Then Dave started recording his guitars. But it’s never that easy. I get a call, “Do you mind coming in to change this riff or this note...?” It can be the smallest detail. You can’t imagine; like, “Let’s start this chord with a slide.” OK. We both record it. And then Dave goes, “You know what? I liked it better before.” So, it’s minimal stuff but every little detail is carefully thought out before it ends up on the record.

Kiko, did you have to adapt to a certain style when you tracked leads?

LOUREIRO: Not really. Everyone is okay with my way of playing as long as it fits in with the band. I have some solo albums where I explore more styles and more different scales. I have to find the right spots to add those elements with Megadeth and I play them where it fits. And I have opportunities to do that because of the styles of past players like Chris Poland and Marty Friedman, whose solos are different from that basic pentatonic rock ‘n’ roll solo. So that leaves some open doors for me to experiment.

Have any Megadeth guitarists, despite their skill, lacked the right feeling and attitude when they did a lead?

MUSTAINE: I’ve always believed we should give the guitar player an opportunity to do a solo that he feels is right for the song. If someone plays something that doesn’t work for the part, then I may make some suggestions. If it’s still not happening, I might say, “Okay, this is



“IN THE PAST, I WAS LIKE, ‘I CAN’T SAY ‘FLYING V’ BECAUSE I’M NOT WITH GIBSON. I’VE GOTTA SAY ‘XYZ, THE ELECTRIC V’ OR SOMETHING.’ NOW I CAN FINALLY SAY ‘FLYING V!’”

Gibson’s Dave Mustaine Collection includes [from left] the Dave Mustaine Flying V EXP Artist, the Dave Mustaine Flying V EXP Rust in Peace and the Dave Mustaine Songwriter



The Badass Ambassador

DAVE MUSTAINE DISCUSSES HIS “BRAND AMBASSADOR” RELATIONSHIP WITH GIBSON — AND LET’S NOT FORGET HIS TWO NEW SIGNATURE FLYING V’S!

BY JON WIEDERHORN



VER THE YEARS, Dave Mustaine has had working relationships with Jackson, ESP and Dean. Since he was a kid, however, he’s had a special love for Gibson. “I saw the first Kiss album and it said, ‘Kiss use Gibson because they want the best,’” Mustaine says. “I thought, ‘Well, fuck, I want Gibson ‘cause I wanna be the best!’”

Mustaine ended his 13-year endorsement deal with Dean in late 2020, and in February 2021 he finalized a Brand Ambassador deal with Gibson. “I heard they were in the market for an ambassador,” Mustaine says. “I asked them, ‘What’s an ambassador?’ And I was told it meant that you represent all brands for the Gibson franchise. I said, ‘I can do that.’ So

now I represent Gibson, Epiphone and Kramer.”

To date, Gibson has issued three guitars. The **Dave Mustaine Songwriter** acoustic features a slightly thinned walnut Songwriter body with a cutaway, a 24.75-inch scale mahogany neck with a 24-fret ebony fretboard (their first acoustic to feature 24 frets).

The **Dave Mustaine Flying V EXP Artist** model has a 25.5-inch scale mahogany neck with an ebony fretboard featuring a compound fretboard radius, 24 medium jumbo frets, mother-of-pearl “teeth” inlays, an Explorer-style headstock, Grover Mini Rotomatic tuners with Kidney buttons and a Graph Tech nut. There’s also a Tune-O-Matic bridge, a Stop Bar tailpiece and a pair of Dave Mustaine’s signature Seymour Duncan Thrash Factor pickups. The guitar is available in Antique Natural and Silver Metallic finishes.

“It seems to be the rage that when you don’t have a real Gibson, you get a copy [of a Gibson],” Mustaine says. “I’ve done that over the years, and

now it’s so crazy for me to be able to say ‘Flying V!’ In the past, I was like, ‘Okay, I can’t say Flying V because I’m not with Gibson. I’ve gotta say XYZ, the Electric V or something like that.’ And now I can finally say ‘Flying V,’ and it’s like, ‘Yes! Fuck! My Flying V.’”

On June 21, Gibson added the limited-edition **Dave Mustaine Flying V EXP Rust in Peace** to the Dave Mustaine Collection. The guitar has the same specs as the previously released EXP, except the finish is called Alien Tech Green.

“We got that concept from the *Rust in Peace* album, and the green gemstone that our mascot Vic Rattlehead is holding up above the alien in the cryogenic chamber,” Mustaine says. “It looks alive when you move the guitar. It’s really fantastic.”



The fact that Mustaine lives in Nashville, home of Gibson since 1984, made him especially desirable for the guitar company, which has undergone a major revitalization in recent years following severe financial hardship.

"I think if you've got somebody who's gonna have a role in the company, you're going to want that person to be able to come in and visit the shop, and come back in and tell the company what's going on out in the marketplace because salespeople and store people are all unique in their own way," Mustaine says.

The guitarist's 40-plus years of experience building relationships with musicians across the world is another asset for Gibson. "As a player, going out and coming across other players out there, I think I have a different way of talking to people about guitars and what we all like about them and helping to get them excited about what's gonna be happening with Gibson," he says. "So Gibson is open to doing a lot of things with me, and I'm excited about all of that." **GW**

what I want you to play here." So it's "His Way. Our Way. And if it doesn't work it's My Way." If a lead totally doesn't work then I'm going to do the part myself. That's what happened in "Breadline." And Marty Friedman quit over the solo in "Breadline" [from the 1999 album *Risk*].

What happened?

MUSTAINE: When we were in the studio, Marty was really excited to do a solo on that song. Then, when we went to mix the album, management didn't like Marty's part. They wanted "Breadline" to be a single and they didn't think the solo Marty recorded was right for that. I said, "Well, you have three choices. Either you mute the solo completely, have Marty come back and redo it, or I do it." And then I said, "If I do it, you'd better tell him." Well, I redid it and nobody told Marty." So we're in there listening to the finished album and the solo comes on. It's my solo, not Marty's... I looked at him as tears ran down his face and I knew right away that nobody had told him. And I knew that was probably going to be the end of Marty Friedman.

Couldn't you have explained that it wasn't your call?

MUSTAINE: Having been a partner with Marty for so many years, as much of an enigma as he was, I could tell he was really upset and he had had enough. What happened to Marty was definitely not okay. Our management was supposed to tell him and, for whatever reason, they didn't do it. I think that was a terrible thing to do to him.

Some multi-guitar bands have one player record all of the rhythms. Did you and Kiko work that way for *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead*?

MUSTAINE: No. In the very beginning, when Chris Poland was in the band, I did the majority of the guitar work. I would do a track on the left and the right and then he would do one in the middle. It was kind of the same way with Jeff [Young] and Marty. With Al [Pitrelli], we may have doubled one in the middle. I can't remember. With Chris [Broderick], there may have been two tracks and that may have led to what we're doing now with Kiko. For this album, we each recorded our own main rhythm and harmony parts.

It's encouraging to hear a rallying thrash song like the first single, "We'll Be Back." In addition to being a kick in the face in the best possible way, the lyrics suggest you're not near ready to hang up your boots.

MUSTAINE: You know, I still have my own hopes and dreams, and there are things that I still need to accomplish in my career in order to have touched all bases. I feel like I'm kind of rounding third right now, and I feel like this record is a great opportunity for me to reach some of the goals I still have.

At least you got the Grammy bucket-list item out of the way with *Dystopia*.

The Grammy was very important to me when we got it. But I've got to say it was kind of odd because it felt like a lifetime achievement award and right now I don't want to be recognized for a lifetime achievement. I want to get an award for something I did, I'm doing and I'm gonna do, not something I used to do and I'll never be able to do again. At the same time the past few years have made me really appreciate the time I have left and the friends that I have. And I certainly don't wanna leave the planet with the experience that I have and the things that I've learned without passing them on to somebody else.

How do you plan to do that?

I sometimes think how much better things would have been if we would've all tried a little bit more within The Big Four. The four of us still have so much authority and power and we could do so many great things. It would be great if we could get together and have a meeting of the minds as these four figureheads — the metal Mount Rushmore — and think of something special we could do to really benefit young bands and musicians and artists. It would be great to help them avoid some of the situations we got into with contracts and substances. Because most bands make their mistakes right at the beginning of their careers. I'd love to be a mentor to some of these guys and to really help them out. That would be a really good way to give back. **GW**

MEGADETH: TRACK BY TRACK



The Quick and the Dead

DAVE MUSTAINE BREAKS DOWN EVERY TRACK ON MEGADETH'S NEW ALBUM, *THE SICK, THE DYING... AND THE DEAD!*

MEGADETH'S 16TH ORIGINAL studio album starts with the sound of swooping wind and mournful cries of "bring out your dead." A suitably ominous mid-paced arpeggio sweeps from left to right before the band rips into a chugging riff underpinned by melodic, harmonized and layered hooks. Augmented with a delicate undistorted mid-section, a thrashy middle eight and multifaceted leads, any questions about whether or not Megadeth are still relevant are instantly vaporized by the title track of *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* The follow-up to Megadeth's Grammy-winning *Dystopia*, the new album reunites the band with co-producer Chris Rakestraw. *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* is steeped in the technical thrash riffs of Megadeth classics like *Peace Sells... But Who's Buying?* and *Rust in Peace*, but updated with the pristine sound and production effects of digital technology.

But the heart of *The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!* lies as much in its motivation as its sound. Mustaine talked to *Guitar World* about the life events and thoughts that inspired every song on the album.

"The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!"

A LOT OF people were saying that this was about Covid, but I started it before the pandemic. It's about the plague. If you read the lyrics, it's pretty clear. It mentions infected rats and fleas on a ship of people going from the Black Sea [to] Sicily, which pretty much tells you what time period it's about, how the disease got transmitted and who

[from left]
James LoMenzo,
Dave Mustaine
and Kiko Loureiro
in action in Oslo,
Norway, on
June 5



it got transmitted to. I don't know that the song was meant to be the first track. I think it came down to the attitude of the song, not so much the performance. If we were going to start with song based on performance we would have used "Night Stalkers" or "Killing Time" because they're so fast. But this album took on a life of its own and "The Sick, the Dying... and the Dead!" seemed like a good way to start it all off.

"Life in Hell"

THERE WAS a lot of turmoil that took place in the band, and it wasn't just my cancer. Everybody had something personal going on except for [drummer] Dirk [Verbueren]. He's rock solid. The song starts out, "Busted, you're caught red-handed again/ You can't be trusted." There were a lot of people I know that were celebrities at the time and their marriages were falling apart from the whole "Me Too" thing. Now, I did *not* write about the Me Too movement. That was not the intention. But the song has to do with people I know and people my fans may know, but I don't know. I didn't call anyone out 'cause I think that there need to be more people that stop to think for a second: "Is what I'm about to share gonna benefit anybody but myself?" 'Cause I know if I spoke a lot about certain things, it would only hurt people [It

would] hurt me, hurt them, hurt somebody. If you're ever saying anything back in retaliation, you're doing it to hurt people. But I don't think I've ever really had those kinds of problems because there have only been a couple people that I've ever had any kind of tension with and I seem to be good with those guys right now — at least I hope I am.

"Night Stalkers" (with Ice-T)

I THINK THAT'S the fastest song we've ever done — 190 bpm — and it took a while to get working up to that speed. The song just needed that frantic pace because Night Stalker is a secret helicopter division of the military. They fly missions at night and no one knows what they're gonna do until it happens. Ice-T does some great [acting] parts in the song. I've been friends with Ice-T for a long time. When we first met in Los Angeles he told me he was an Army Ranger, so it was only natural that I would get him to do this because I wanted to get a great musician who has cred as a military guy. I asked him if he would do a spoken part and he gave me so many good ones it was hard to pick which one to use.

"Dogs of Chernobyl"

THAT SONG IS BASED on this cheesy [2012 horror] movie [Chernobyl Diaries]. A guy goes with his girlfriend to an extreme travel



agent in Ukraine and they take a trip to Chernobyl. It's not a good, well-produced thing, but I came up with an idea for the song because I remember scenes of characters going down by the water and these crazy fish floating up in the water. And then these people look across the banks at these dogs. That made me think about how fucked up it was that the people who fled Chernobyl left all their pets behind. In order to leave your dog behind, you need to be made of steel. I couldn't do it. So there's a lyric in "Dogs of Chernobyl" that goes, "the girl left me behind like a dog in Chernobyl." I was like, man, that's harsh, dude! You must have really fucked up for her to do that.

"Sacrifice"

IT HAS A lot to do with some of the subliminal stuff that you learn when you fool around with dark magic. It could be as simple as something like an Ouija board or divination with a divining rod. Without meaning to, you could open doorways to dark passages because as much as there's good in the world, there's bad. There are people who are mean-spirited and "Sacrifice" talks a lot about the difference between them and other people and how that meanness kind of backfires. I studied a lot about jinnis and jinns, which is really fascinating. So, "Sacrifice" is kind of an open-minded look at

magic but not getting too specific about it.

"Junkie"

THAT'S A FUN song. I was kind of thinking of Eric Church's "Creepin'." I thought "Junkie" had a cool energy. There were parts in there that seemed like they were easy to write, but they weren't. I was trying to picture how people who were straight-edge, hardcore or metal might like this song. And the three were so far apart from one another that it really confused me. I thought, "Well, now what do I do?" So I just did what came to me and I think it works. Of course, "Junkie" is about being addicted, which I know something about. I thought about that scene in [the 1978 movie] *The Deer Hunter*, with [Christopher Walken] as a heroin addict who plays Russian roulette. What I get most out of the song is that even if you have the lifestyle of a junkie it's not something you want to live for. You never hear someone go, "Oh, cool, a junkie." It's more like, "You junkie! What a mess." I do have a platform to stand on to talk about it, but then again I don't because I know what works for me and it sure as heck isn't someone pointing their finger at me.

"Psycopathy"

THAT'S A REALLY short, simple song. It's about a war in the brain. And one of the ideas in there is about a doctor struggling with these guys coming in to talk to him and they just don't tell the truth.

"Killing Time"

IT'S ABOUT WAITING for something to take place. It's not about it being time to kill people. It's actually more about it being time to die. There are many people in my life that get fear or trepidation when I release records. It's like, "Okay, who's he singing about now?" That's not really what I'm doing here. It's about a specific person, but because of the nature of this person and how typical being a turd is with a lot of people now, the way that he behaved isn't unlike what other people would do. So, I would say, "Oh, this song is about Bill, but you know what? It's about Bob, too. And it's about Bill's brother and Bob's brother. It's about everybody, right?" But I know who it's about and I've had other people ask, "Is that about this person?" So I'll just say it's about whoever you want it to be about.

"Soldier On"

THAT'S BEING LOOKED at as one of the stronger songs on the record. And it's so funny because it's the ones that we don't try the hardest on that usually are the strongest. It was that way with "Symphony of Destruction"

and "Peace Sells." For me, "Soldier On" is about gathering your strength and saying, "Wait! Not anymore. This may have happened. It may still be happening. But right now it stops and I'm gonna soldier on." I love that sentiment. What gave the song a lot of credibility was having the guys from Fort Campbell come down for the part at the end when everyone's marching. These guys are amazing heroes. We couldn't list the names of a lot of the guys because they're still operatives but they just came and did it for fun. When it was over, we all celebrated and talked and laughed and I actually flew a helicopter simulator. I only crashed it twice. Oh boy, it sure was fun, man — a multi, multi, multi, multimillion-dollar helicopter ride.

"Celebutante"

THAT'S ABOUT SOME of the overindulged little brats that are blowing around. There's a huge thing going on with Megadeth right now and a lot of the reality TV people. Recently, I saw a girl who was very attractive and she was wearing this T-shirt material dress and it said, "Megadeth" in big giant logos. I saw her and I went, "Hey, hey! That's me! That's my band!" She kept walking. I backpedaled and said, "No, no, stop! It's me on your dress and I just want to get a picture." She ignored me. There was a photographer with me and he caught up with her. Then he came back and said, "Dude, she's so fucking rude and she's an asshole." I went, "Oh, God, what's she saying?" He told me there's a store down the street and that's where she bought the dress. But she doesn't know the band and she doesn't want a picture. So, I'm kind of making fun of her.

"Mission to Mars"

THERE'S A "PEACE Sells" mentality to the song. I like the irony. A guy from Earth goes to Mars and when he gets there he sees it's all wrecked and that everybody on Mars has left to go to Earth. It made me think of the *Twilight Zone* episode where Martians have a giant book they're trying to decipher and a guy comes and tells them it's a cookbook.

"We'll Be Back"

THAT'S A TYPICAL metal anthem about the band that's not going anywhere. When I got sick I had been talking a lot about playing out a little less. Now, if anything, I want to tour more and just carry on until the end when I actually can't do it anymore. I'm not talking about the time when I don't want to do it anymore. I mean when it's not possible for me to do it. When I can't do it, that's when I'm not gonna want to do it.

— Jon Wiederhorn

GUITARIST PRODUCER TONE HUNTER

POLYMATH

ADAM 'NOLLY' GETGOOD SIGNATURE HUMBUCKER SET

"The Polymaths can truly do it all -
rich clean and crunch tones, outrageously
chunky high gain rhythms and beautifully
vocal leads."



Bare Knuckle

bareknucklepickups.co.uk

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40th Anniversary
Telecaster
Gold Edition

High Concept

JACKSON CONCEPT SERIES RHOADS RR24 HS
AND SOLOIST SLAT7P HT MS

By Chris Gill

▶ EARLIER THIS YEAR Jackson Guitars introduced its new Concept Series with the release of four new models: a pair of Soloist models (the SL Walnut HS and SLAT7P HT MS) and a pair of Rhoads models (the RR24-7 and RR24 HS). The overall “concept” behind this series seems to be rather loosely defined and open, but the overarching premise is premium hardware, pickups, finishes and other features usually found on Jackson’s custom models but without the higher custom model price. Some of the models also offer compelling variations from Jackson’s regular lineup, such as the 7-string Rhoads RR24-7 or the humbucker/single-coil pickup configuration of the Rhoads RR24 HS and Soloist SL Walnut HS, while the Soloist SLAT7P HT MS offers a more upscale alternative to Jackson’s popular multi-scale Soloist models.

We took a look at two Concept Series models: the Rhoads RR24 HS and the Soloist SLAT7P HT MS.

FEATURES The Concept Series Rhoads RR24 HS features the iconic asymmetrical V-shaped Rhoads model body built with neck-through-body construction where alder body “wings” sandwich a three-piece maple neck. The ebony fretboard with pearloid sharkfin inlays, 25.5-inch scale length and 24 jumbo frets are also time-honored Rhoads features, as is the body’s ivory white gloss finish with black pinstripe accents outlining the top bevels. Pro details abound, including Luminlay side dot markers, a 12-16-inch compound fretboard radius and gold-plated hardware, including the Floyd Rose Original double-locking tremolo system and Gotoh sealed tuners.



Jackson
Rhoads
RR24 HS





Jackson
Soloist
SLAT7P
HT MS

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$1,999.99 (either model)

MANUFACTURER:

Jackson, jacksonguitars.com

- The Concept Series Rhoads RR24 HS features a slanted single-coil-size Hot Rails Strat SHR-IN humbucker at the neck and full-size JB TB-4 humbucker at the bridge.
- The Rhoads' Floyd Rose Original tremolo sits in a deeply routed pocket that allows players to raise pitch dramatically in addition to the usual dive bombs.
- The Concept Series Soloist SLAT7P HT MS comes with a pair of Fishman Fluence Modern PRF-MH8 humbuckers that provide a selection of two distinct tones.
- The Soloist's multi-scale 25.5-to-27-inch neck has a slim, flat profile that provides outstanding playability and comfort.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Both of these Concept Series models deliver the superior construction, attention to detail and pro electronics/hardware of Jackson's custom models while also offering slightly different tonal character for players who prefer to stand out from the crowd.

The pickup configuration is a key item of interest. Although it's described as "humbucker/single-coil," technically it's a pair of humbuckers, with a full-size Seymour Duncan JB TB-4 at the bridge and a single-coil-size Hot Rails Strat SHR-IN humbucker at the neck. Controls consist of a three-position pickup selector toggle and master volume and master tone knobs.

While the Rhoads RR24 HS tips its headstock to the beginnings of the Jackson brand, the Concept Series Soloist SLAT7P HT MS focuses on its future. This model marries the deep sweeping cutaway body shape and sleek contours of the Soloist model to a 25.5-to-27-inch multi-scale 7-string neck. The neck-though-body design incorporates a five-piece maple (center and outer layers) and wenge (inner layers) neck with ash body wings and a satin-finished layer of burl poplar covering the entire top. Neck features include a bound ebony fingerboard with a 12-16-inch compound radius, 24 jumbo frets, Luminlay side dots and pearloid "piranha tooth" inlays.

The hardware is all top quality, consisting of a Hipshot 7 fixed bridge, black dome-style knobs and Gotoh tuners. The electronics include a pair of Fishman Fluence Modern PRF-MH8 humbuckers (ceramic bridge, alnico neck) with master volume and master tone controls, the latter with push/pull switching to active voice 1 or 2. A three-position blade switch accesses the usual bridge/both/neck pickup settings.

PERFORMANCE Both Concept Series guitars are serious, pro-quality instruments with flawless construction and a smooth, sexy feel that delivers impressive playability. The Rhoads RR24 HS provides a bold, assertive hard rock voice with barking midrange. Because the Hot Rails neck pickup has a narrower magnetic field than a full-size humbucker, its overall tone is more focused and the pickup angle keeps the lower notes from sounding overly flabby or dark. The bridge pickup sounds bold and beastly, providing stellar definition and punch, and both pickups are dead quiet even when using a distortion pedal and high-gain amp setting. The only improvement I would have liked was a coil-splitting function, but users handy with a soldering iron can easily perform this mod, if desired.

The Soloist SLAT7P HT MS is sure to inspire the most technical lead shredders and heavy-handed aggressive rhythm players alike. Setting 1 on the Fluence pickups is more defined and crisp, making the bass exceptionally tight and round while treble notes exhibit shimmering metallic spark. Setting 2 boosts the output, making the overall tone more compressed, fat and full-bodied, ideal for single-note lines and solos or rhythm parts that fill the sonic soundscape rather than dominating a more focused range. The multi-scale neck with its slim, flat profile is outrageously comfortable to play, and the larger Soloist body shape is very well balanced and keeps the neck solidly in playing position.

As Good As It Gets

BARE KNUCKLE POLYMATH HUMBUCKING PICKUPS

By Chris Gill

▶ **ADAM “NOLLY” GETGOOD** is one of those magnificently talented bastards who excels at everything he’s obsessed with, whether as a multi-instrumentalist (he’s probably best known as a former bassist for Periphery), producer/engineer/mixer (with credits for Animals as Leaders, As I Lay Dying, Devin Townsend and more), software designer behind the awesome Get-Good Drums plug-ins, drum libraries and groove packs or pour-over coffee-brewing connoisseur/mad scientist. When the similarly obsessed pickup designers at Bare Knuckle announced their collaboration with Getgood on his own signature Polymath humbucking pickups (Adam had previously helped design acclaimed Bare Knuckle models for other artists), expectations were rightfully high. The end result is a pair of impressive pickups that exceeds the previously perceived limitations of a traditional humbucker design.

FEATURES Like all Bare Knuckle humbucking pickups, the Polymath is available separately for bridge or neck positions or as a set, in 6-, 7- or 8-string configurations, covered, radiator, TVS or open coils (with numerous options for each), pole screw options, four- or two-conductor wiring, short or long mounting legs and 50mm or 53mm pole spacing. We auditioned a 6-string set featuring etched Polymath design nickel covers. Bare Knuckle categorizes these as “Contemporary” style pickups (compared to Vintage and Vintage Hot), with DC resistances of 14.2k ohms (bridge) and 11.9k ohms (neck). The magnets are Alnico 5, and Bare Knuckle does not specify the gauge of the copper coil wire.

PERFORMANCE Our Polymath pickups were installed in a Chapman MLI Pro superstrat featuring an ash body with maple top, maple neck-through-body with ebony fretboard, fixed bridge and custom BKP CTS 550k master volume and tone pots.



Played through a variety of amps, the Polymaths delivered phenomenal tone with a pleasant, vocal midrange, tight and lively bass and surprisingly full-bodied treble without harsh overtones. Attack is instantaneous and intoxicatingly percussive and chunky, enhancing the definition of every pick stroke or finger pluck. The overall sound, particularly when using generous amounts of distortion, is dialed in, focused and refined, as if crafted by a talented recording engineer.

I was honestly floored by how well these pickups enhanced my playing, inspiring me to play new licks and making my usual riffs, rhythms and solo noodling sound clearer and more refined than ever. Even at high gain settings on a Friedman amp, note combinations that would normally smear

or clash rang out with incredible detail and clarity. The midrange is the sweetest and most musical I’ve heard from a pair of humbuckers, and the 2 (bridge) and 4 (neck) parallel tones (from the 5-way switch) sound like really, really good vintage single-coil Strat pickups even though they are actually humbucking tones.

Although Bare Knuckle Polymath pickups aren’t cheap compared to competing products, the overall effect is similar and arguably better than using an esteemed clean boost overdrive like a Klon Centaur. These pickups simply bring out the best, most desirable frequencies, fatten up the body of individual notes without losing clarity and deliver expressive dynamics. The investment is similar to the cost of a boutique stomp box and entirely worth it.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICES:

£155 (bridge or neck only, about \$190 US); £299 (set, about \$370 US)

MANUFACTURER:

Bare Knuckle, bareknucklepickups.co.uk

● Polymath pickups are available with a comprehensive variety of options, including custom bobbin colors, covers and 6-, 7- or 8-string configurations.

● The pickups feature Alnico 5 magnets and provide DC resistances of 14.2k ohms (bridge) or 11.9k ohms (neck).

THE BOTTOM LINE

The clarity, dynamic response and impressively refined, musical tones of the Bare Knuckle Polymath humbucking pickups designed in collaboration with Adam “Nolly” Getgood are simply as good as it gets.

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Heavenly Light

BLACKSTAR AMPLIFICATION ST. JAMES 50 EL34 HEAD & 6L6 COMBO

By Paul Riario

WITH MORE GUITARISTS eschewing back-breaking amplifiers for plug-and-play floorboard modelers from Fractal to Kemper, Blackstar has doubled down on tube amps by addressing weight issues, notching up powerful tone and adding advanced functionality with the release of their neatly trimmed St. James series of amplifiers. Debuting at the 2022 NAMM Show, with catchy phrases like “The weight is over” and “Let there be light,” much focus was directed over the models’ shockingly reduced weight, making their portability distinctly enticing. But we all know that’s not nearly enough, which is why with a new look, a new logo and ushering in classic and modern tones that approach the divine, the St. James line of all-tube combos and heads reflect a new mark of brilliance for Blackstar — and I don’t say that lightly.

FEATURES The St. James series is available as a 1x12 combo or amplifier head with a matching vertical 2x12 cabinet. And yes, they are pleasingly lightweight! The combo clocks in at 28 lbs., and the head and cabinet read 14 and 30 lbs. respectively, with the combo and cabinet outfitted with lightweight Celestion Zephyr (not a Neo-design) speaker(s) based on a Vintage 30. However, the bigger issue to ponder will

be tube choice — EL34 or 6L6 — which determines the look and sound of these flexible and intuitive dual-channel amps. A regal fawn tolex with white piping covers the combo, head and cabinet for the EL34 model, while a handsome black tolex and black piping arrives for the 6L6 versions. Both EL34 and 6L6 models possess a linear mid-Sixties-style clean sound on Channel I with tightly wound, high headroom. The EL34 design uses a British “Class A” tube preamp topology for more of the low-to-medium “classic” output gain on Channel II, making this version ideal as a pedal platform for either channel. But if “modern” preamp gain is your preferred calling card, then the 6L6 model’s Channel II circuit deals a robust combination of cascaded hi-gain tube overdrive with a “British” style passive tone stack EQ. The St. James amps have identical and straightforward controls along with a Voice switch on Channel II (10dB clean boost for EL34, and revoiced saturation for the 6L6) and a selectable Power switch (50W full power, SAG setting and 2W low power).

The St. James amps also feature cutting-edge technology with Blackstar’s Cab Rig simulator and switch (with three presets) that reproduce the detailed sound and feel of a mic’d-up guitar cabinet from

the XLR or quarter-inch output. You can further tweak and save numerous combinations of cabinets, microphones and room emulations using Blackstar’s Architect software (for Mac/PC) and Cab Rig app (accessible from the amp’s USB connection to a computer). Furthermore, for convenient recording applications, an internal reactive load mimics the response of a speaker for authentic power-amp tones at home or in the studio. Finally, an integrated series effects loop, studio-quality reverb and footswitch provide even more versatility.

PERFORMANCE Forget the fact that these are probably the lightest amps I’ve ever encountered; I’m floored by how doggedly defined they sound in contrast to Blackstar’s flagship amps with similar tube complements. If anything, the St. James series are the more fleshed-out amplifier incarnations of their Dept. 10 pedals with brilliant warmth and touch-sensitive dynamics. What’s noticeably absent is Blackstar’s proprietary ISF (infinite shape feature) control, but no matter; along with some clever engineering between the power supply and mains transformer, it seems Blackstar is now allowing tubes to reclaim their inherent voice. And that seems to be



CHEAT SHEET



the point here. Both the EL34 and 6L6 models do share similarities — especially in Channel I’s warmly stout and bright cleans, but switching over to Channel II is where you ignite a bonfire in gain response, depending on which St. James tube model is your flamethrower of choice. The 6L6 is, by far, the most fearsome in toothsome crunchiness and searing lead tones, closely sparking the kind of controlled gain you’d find in EVH and modded Marshall-style amps with pure definition and substance (even at its 2W setting!). But if you’re like me, you’ll love the ability to have gradations of overdrive, and this is where the EL34 model excels. Here, you can run the gamut of Vox-like chime or cranking up gutsy Fender-style breakup, and adding your own gain pedals only enhances the overall character of the amp. I can attest that the Voice switch — as well as the SAG setting on the “Power” switch — on both models are akin to a “feel” switch — so use accordingly. The reverb is fab for gentle ambience but not “surf” guitar wash, and the only difference between the combo or head and cabinet choice is I find the latter pushes a little more air for a wide-open sound, but hey, that’s just physics, and once you use the fantastic Cab Rig technology for recording or live use, it all becomes equal.

STREET PRICE: 1x12 Combo, \$1,299.99; Head, \$1,199.99; 2x12 Cab, \$749.99

MANUFACTURER: Blackstar Amplification, blackstaramps.com

● For recording and live applications, all St. James models offer built-in Cab Rig speaker simulator technology, Reactive Load for silent recording tone, and power options (50W, SAG dynamic compression, and 2W).

● Incredibly lightweight and portable, the all-tube St. James amps come in EL34 or 6L6 dual-channel designs and come equipped with a custom Celestion Zephyr speaker.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE** Light in weight but heavy-on-tone, Blackstar’s sumptuous St. James series are uncompromising boutique-style tube amplifiers with advanced built-in tech for studio and stage.



Buzz Bin Squier 40th Anniversary Telecaster Gold Edition

DO YOU KNOW what’s 40 years old in 2022? For perspective, music lovers may be unaware that Iron Maiden’s *The Number of the Beast* and the Clash’s *Combat Rock* turn 40 this year. Feel old yet? And surprisingly, for musicians like me, I had no idea Squier is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year — because, if you ask me, the entry-level instrument brand is far from over the hill, but rather, coming of age. To commemorate the company’s Ruby Anniversary, the budget brand has released two collections of Fender’s most iconic guitar models in Vintage and Gold Editions that genuinely prove that Squier keeps getting better with age. I had the opportunity to wield Squier’s *très chic* 40th Anniversary Telecaster Gold Edition.

Some will say Squier has often been unfairly maligned yet also widely praised for offering the same upscale Fender guitar models at a fraction of the price with fantastic playability and similar tones. And honestly, that’s precisely the case here for this Anniversary edition with Midas touch adornments of gold-plated hardware and bridge, gold anodized aluminum pickguard, bound Indian laurel fingerboard with pearloid block inlays, vintage headstock logos and engraved 40th Anniversary neck plate — all of which make this Telecaster a true collectible. And if you don’t dig the glossy black finish, the guitar also comes in a classy Sherwood Green.

The Squier 40th Anniversary Tele is instantly charming with its black-and-gold motif, making it look a lot like a very blingy companion to my Marshall JCM800. The guitar has a player-friendly setup with low action that, I felt, is spot-on. It’s also refreshingly lightweight and the comfortably slim “C”-shaped neck profile will appeal to all players. So far, so good. However, I find the Fender-designed single-coil pickups with Alnico 5 magnets sound merely decent, dishing out serviceable Tele-twang for the bridge and airy roundness in the neck, but some players may want to swap them out for pickups with more pep at some point. Also, the vintage-style tuning machines look authentic but are prone to slippage, so you’ll need to keep an eye on tuning. Now, none of this takes away from the fact that this is a well-made and memorable guitar that I love playing, but I believe with a few minor upgrades (that most players tend to do), this Anniversary Gold Edition can be poised to become a beast of a Telecaster. — Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: \$599.99

MANUFACTURER: Fender, fender.com



IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/october2022

CATFISH BLUES

Improvising on the Muddy Waters classic, “Rollin’ Stone”

MUDDY WATERS IS widely revered as being one of the most important musical figures of all time and the “father of modern Chicago blues.” His great many recordings, spanning from 1941 to 1982, are among the most important and influential of all time. His 1948 single for Chess Records, “Rollin’ Stone,” set the template for many of his hit records to follow. In the early Sixties, certain young Englishmen joined forces based on their love of Chess Records, blues and rock and roll to form a band, taking their name from this early Muddy Waters hit, dubbing themselves the Rolling Stones, doing their part to ignite the soon-to-come British Blues explosion. By the end of the Sixties, guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and Johnny Winter had used the influence of Waters to forge completely new, trailblazing sounds in modern music.

A great place to start exploring Muddy’s signature guitar style is this track, “Rollin’ Stone.” The song is built around a simple riff in E, based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D). As shown in **FIGURE 1**, the riff is played in $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, with a pickup of a slightly bent low G note on the 6th string’s 3rd fret followed by E, on the 2nd fret of the 4th string. On beat two of bar 1, an A note on the G string’s 2nd fret is bent up a whole step and released, followed by a pull-off to the open G string and a fretted E note. As shown in bars 2 and 3, this riff repeats with slight variations, as open strings and other rhythmic accents are added. The bent-and-released A note serves as the “hook” in the lick, and Muddy would always place it on beat 2 as the song progresses. You’ll hear the very same thing happening in Jimi Hendrix’s classic song “Voodoo Child (Slight Return),” which was directly influenced by this Muddy Waters recording.

This type of slow $\frac{12}{8}$ blues in the key of E is great for devising improvised ideas, as evidenced by the many great versions of “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)” recorded by both Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Muddy himself had a “part two” to “Rollin’ Stone,” which he called “Still a Fool,” and both Hendrix and Winter took the liberties to combine “Rollin’ Stone” and “Still a Fool”

FIG. 1

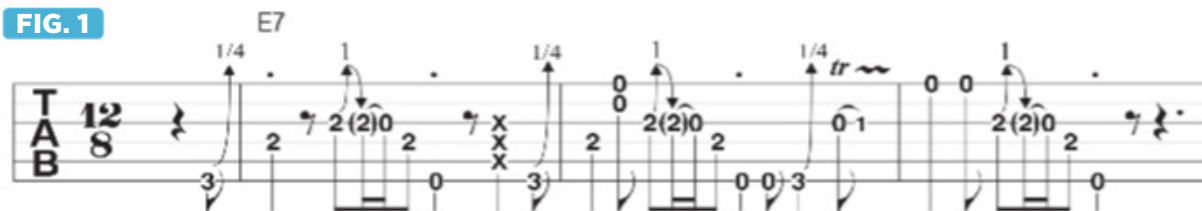


FIG. 2

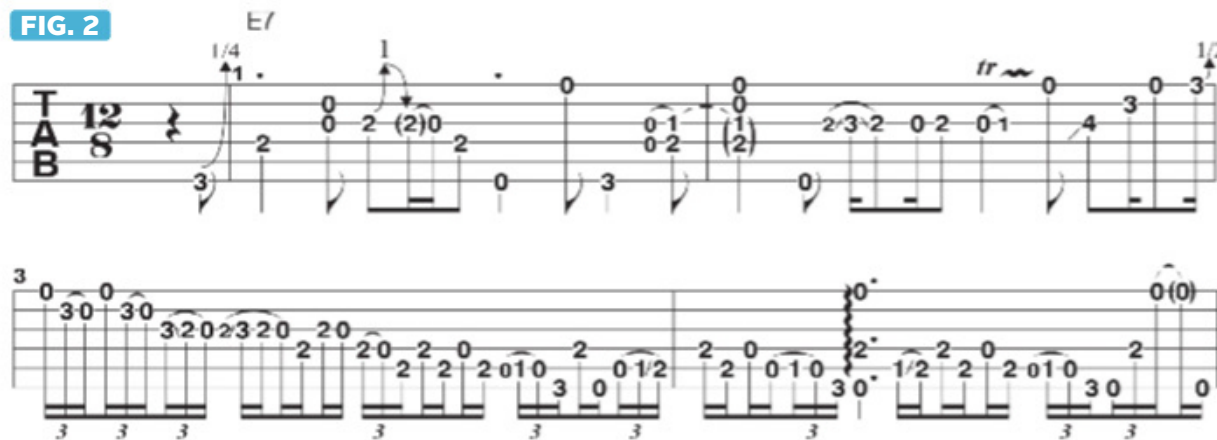


FIG. 3

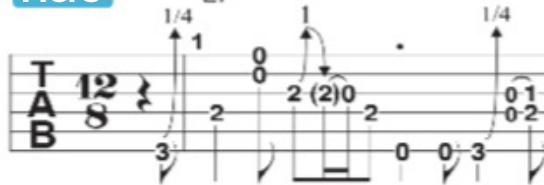
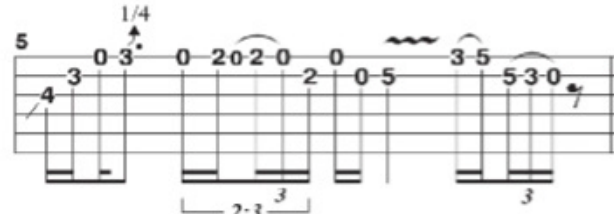


FIG. 4

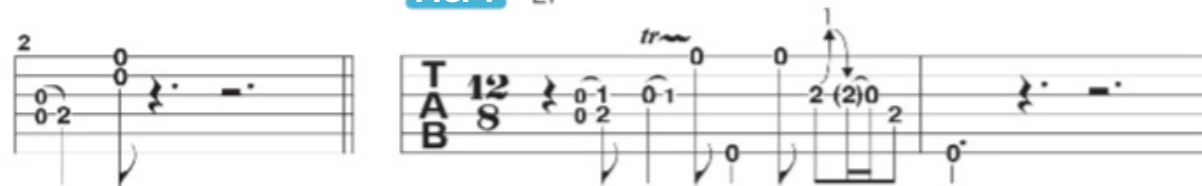


FIG. 5



into a song that they both called “Catfish Blues.” Be sure to check out these incredible recordings!

In **FIGURE 2**, I build off of the original lick by moving through different ideas based on the E blues scale (E, G, A, B $\flat$, B, D). A simple twist used by Muddy, as well as Jimi, on songs like “Machine Gun,” is to hammer on E and G $\sharp$ together, as in **FIGURES 3** and **4**.

Before moving into more soloing approaches, let’s lay down a basic guitar accompaniment for the tune’s verse sections. As shown in **FIGURE 5**, the phrase introduced in **FIGURE 1** lays the foundation, with slight variations added that support the vocal melody.

Next month, we’ll explore more ways to improvise on “Rollin’ Stone.” See you then.

GW 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. His new album, *Light of Love*, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/october2022

McCRA Y'S WAY

String bending, à la blues great Larry McCray

I RECENTLY HAD the honor of producing a record with my friend Josh Smith for a great blues guitarist from Michigan named Larry McCray. Over the last 35 years, Larry has always been one of my favorite blues players out there. Getting to work with him not only as a singer and a songwriter but as a guitar player, I was able to pick up a few pointers from him, as he would show us some cool stuff when we weren't recording.

A signature element in Larry's style is that he has a very distinct and unusual bending technique where he will "marry" two bends within one long phrase. Now, I can't perform the technique quite as well as he does — he invented it! But I love this approach and have worked out a few ways to incorporate it into my own soloing ideas.

If one were playing in the key of B, Larry might string together two bends in the way demonstrated in **FIGURE 1**. We begin with a line based on the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F#, A), moving up from B to D, E and F#, and then the F# is quickly bent up a whole step and released, followed by a slide up to A which is then adorned with whole-step bend and vibrato. **FIGURE 2** offers another tasteful way to utilize this technique. Here, three bends are joined into one phrase, as the E note on beat 2 is bent up a whole step and released, followed by a slide up to F#, which is then bent up one and a half steps to A and released. This is followed by a slide once more up to A, which is bent up a whole step and vibrato-ed.

It's fun to try and find different ways to apply string bends and vibratos in spots where they may be unexpected. For example, in **FIGURE 3**, I begin with essentially the same phrase as **FIGURE 2**, but then add to the idea in bar 2 by additionally sliding up higher, to B, and bending and releasing that note one and a half steps, followed by another whole-step bend, from A to B, with vibrato. The phrase then concludes with a descending line heading back down to a low B note on the 6th string.

FIGURE 4 offers an even more elaborate way to weave this idea into a more complex phrase. Here I begin with faster, SRV-style lines in bar 1 through beats 1 and 2 of bar 2, and then I bring in the "Larry-ism" at the end of bar 2 before wrapping up the

FIG. 1 B



FIG. 2 B

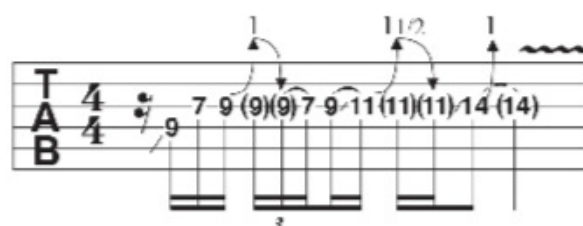


FIG. 3 B

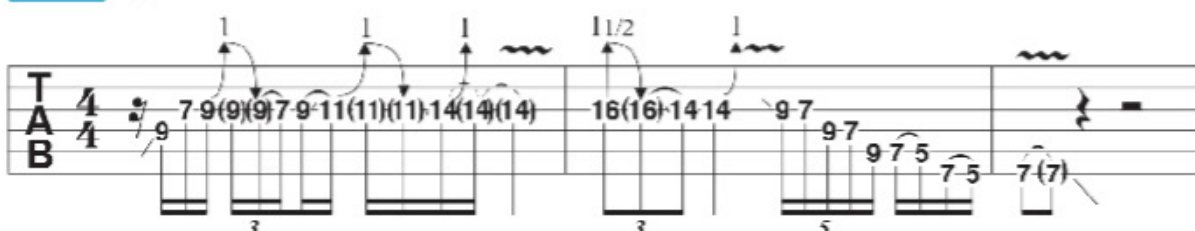


FIG. 4 B

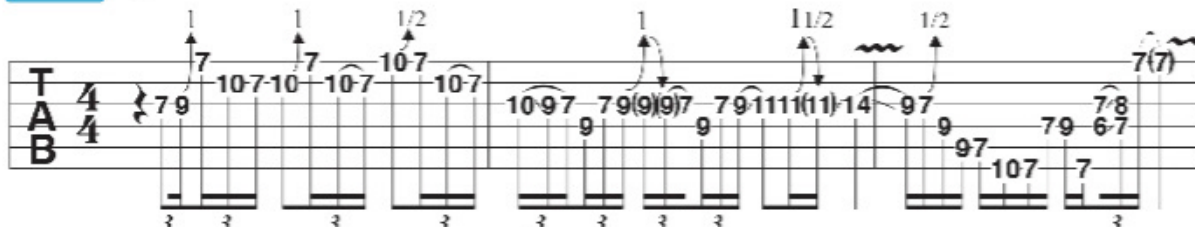


FIG. 5 E

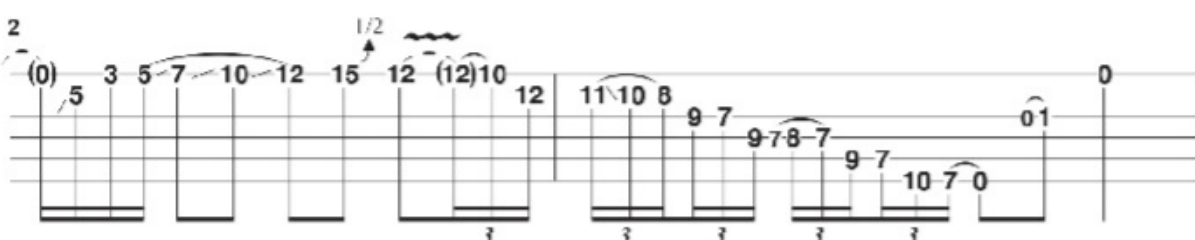
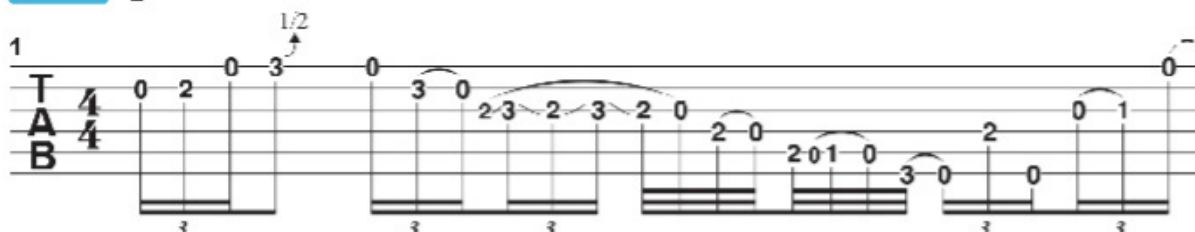
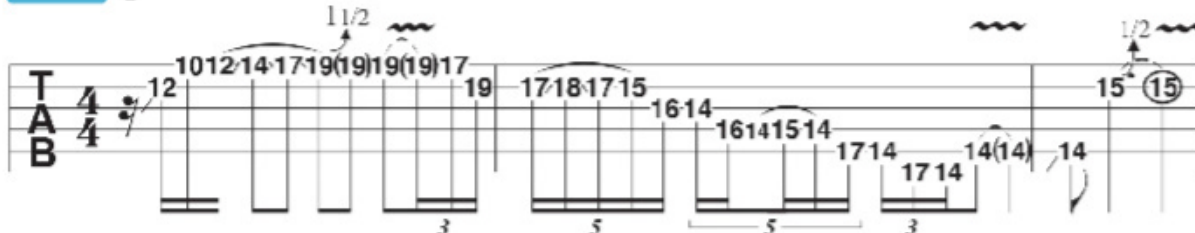


FIG. 6 B



line in bar 3.

McCray also has a really neat way of stringing bends like this together when playing in the key of E, as I demonstrate in **FIGURE 5**. This phrase begins with some fast licks based on the E blues scale (E, G, A, Bb, B, D), utilizing a generous amount of open strings. In bar 2, the phrase ascends quickly up the high E string with a series of

finger slides, culminating in a bend on the high G note at the 15th fret, followed by an equally quick descent back down the scale. **FIGURE 6** presents another challenging phrase utilizing these approaches.

Look for opportunities to add these types of multiple string bending ideas into your own solos, as many unusual and distinct phrases can be crafted.

Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular and successful blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues (and of the guitar in general).

MELODIC
MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/october2022

MORE SHUGGIE

How to play “Shuggie,”
part 2

LAST MONTH, WE dove into the track “Shuggie,” which is my ode to late Sixties/early Seventies guitar master Shuggie Otis that’s included on my latest album, *Electric Truth*. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Otis, he’s a brilliant guitarist whose two seminal albums, *Freedom Flight* and *Inspiration Information*, were released in the early Seventies. *Freedom Flight* included “Strawberry Letter #23,” which was a hit for the Brothers Johnson in 1977.

In last month’s column, I detailed how to play the two-part harmonized lines that highlight the song. This harmonized section is played over the chord progression Gmaj7 - B♭maj7 - Fmaj7/A - A♭maj7. When it comes time for the guitar solo, I play over these same changes, which will be the focus of this month’s column.

In looking at this four-chord progression, we find some unusual movement. Our tonic (or “home”) key is G major, as described by the initial Gmaj7 chord. We then move up one and one half steps to B♭maj7, which, although it is outside the key of G major, sounds great in offering a slight twist to the harmonic environment. We then move back down chromatically via Fmaj7/A and A♭maj7, after which the progression repeats.

FIGURE 1 presents an improvised solo played over these changes. In bars 1-4, I stay on the B and G strings, devising relatively simple melodies that clearly outline each chord as it arrives. For example, we begin over Gmaj7, and on beat 1, I bend an A note up a whole step to B, which is the major 3rd of G. In bar 2, over B♭maj7, I begin by sounding the unbent A note, which serves as the major 7th of B♭maj7. In a very subtle way, I’m connecting the two chords with this A note.

I address the Fmaj7/A chord in a similar way, playing E, the major 7th of F, on the downbeat of bar 3, after which I bend up to E♭, the 5th of A♭maj7 in bar 4. This type of chord tone awareness informs the remaining bars of the figure, as I rely on the technique of *voice leading* to smoothly set up each chord change as it arrives.

FIGURE 2 shows the chord progression itself. My recommendation is to first strengthen your musical mindset for each of these chords by familiarizing yourself with the associated scales for each. **FIGURE 3**

FIG. 1

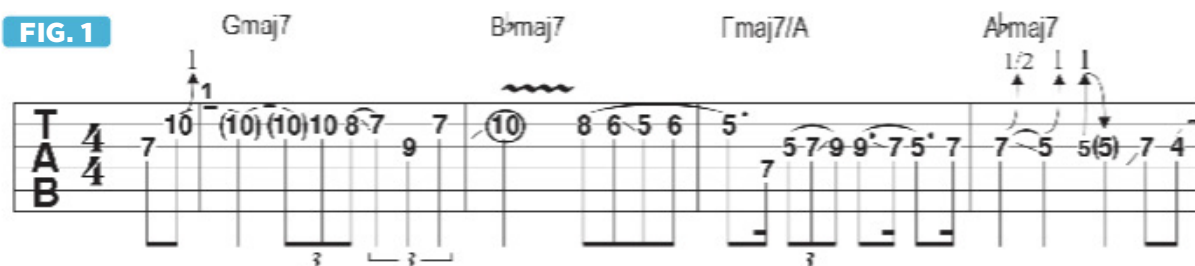


FIG. 2

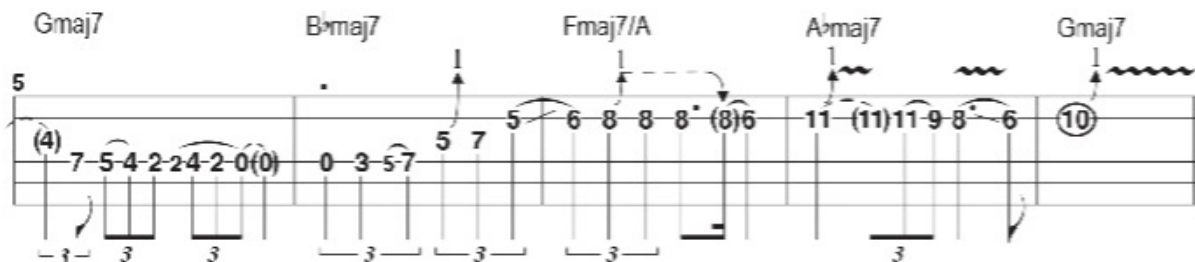


FIG. 3

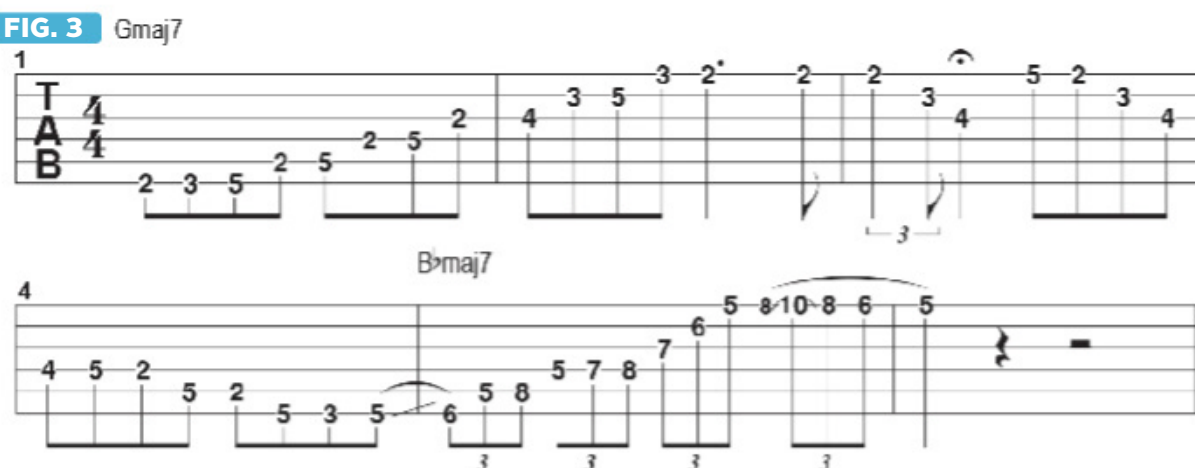


FIG. 4

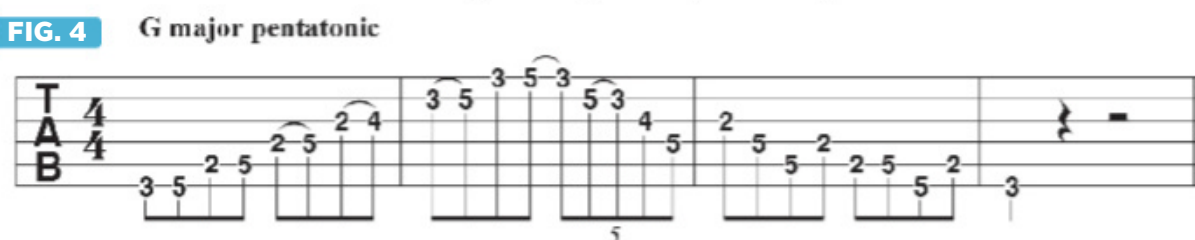
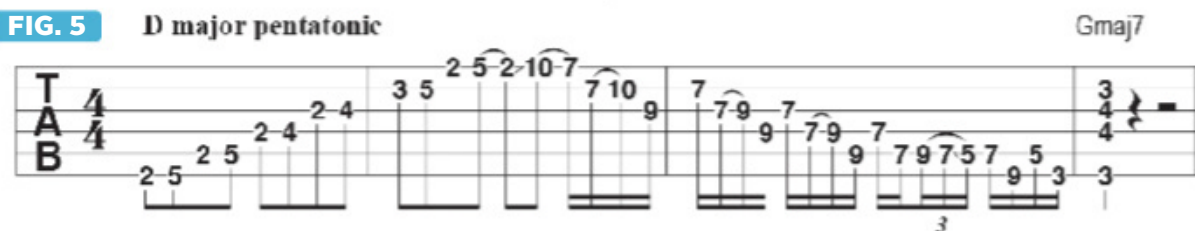


FIG. 5



begins with lines based on the G major scale (G, A, B, C, D, E, F♯), and in bar 5 the line transitions to B♭maj7, with notes based on the B♭ major pentatonic scale (B♭, C, D, F, G), with the inclusion of A.

I find the major pentatonic scales to be very useful. **FIGURE 4** illustrates G major pentatonic (G, A, B, D, E), and I also like to use D major pentatonic (D, E, F♯, A, B), as shown in **FIGURE 6**, over Gmaj7.

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His new album, *Electric Truth*, is out now. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases.



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/october2022

LET IT RING

How to play “Triple J Hoedown,” part 2

LAST MONTH, WE started talking about my tune “Triple J Hoedown,” specifically the version from the *Live at the Spud* album. We made it all the way up to almost the bridge, which leads the way into a long unison lick, played by both guitar and bass, which is then followed by the funk section of the tune. So, as a composition, we transition from “bluegrass-fusion” to a funk groove.

To recap, last month’s column ended with the ascending lick that sets up a restatement of the melody, or “head,” which is in the key of G major, after which the tune moves on to the aforementioned bridge. **FIGURE 1** illustrates this ascending lick. In bars 1-3, I arpeggiate a series of arpeggiated triads on the A, D and G strings, which I articulate with hybrid picking (a combination of flatpicking and fingerpicking). Be sure to allow all the notes of each triad to ring as much as possible. Bar 4 introduces the II7 chord, A7, and bars 5 and 6 are built from pairs of 6ths that move from A7 to the V chord, D. The figure ends in bars 7 and 8 with a return to the head.

From there, the song goes back to the intro, shown in **FIGURE 2**, which is followed by **FIGURE 3**, which is essentially played in unison by the guitar and bass. Utilizing the same approach as in **FIGURE 1**, hybrid-picked triads are played on the A, D and G strings, but here we move from one triad to the next on each beat, outlining the chord progression C - A/C# - D7 - B/D# - E7 - A - C - D.

For each of the triads in this ascending pattern, the lowest note, fretted on the A string, is picked, and the two subsequent triadic tones, fretted on the D and G strings, are fingerpicked. Play through this phrase slowly at first, paying close attention to initiating each triad squarely on each quarter-note downbeat.

After the “flurry” of activity, the figure ends with some none-too-subtle G5 and F5 power chords. **FIGURE 4** shows this two-chord idea that ends the section, which is played four times while drummer Gary Novak goes crazy playing some wild fills.

This G5 - F5 power chord figure sets up a modulation down one whole step, to the key of F, which is the key of the next section of the tune. **FIGURE 5** illustrates how

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

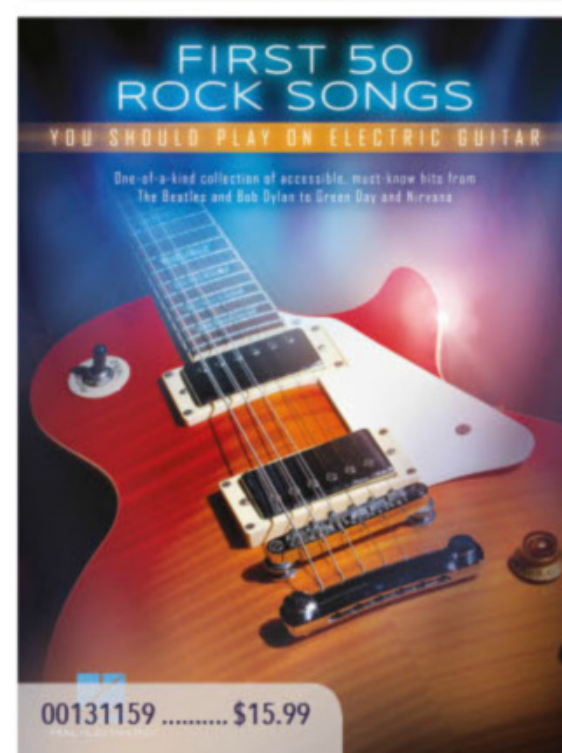
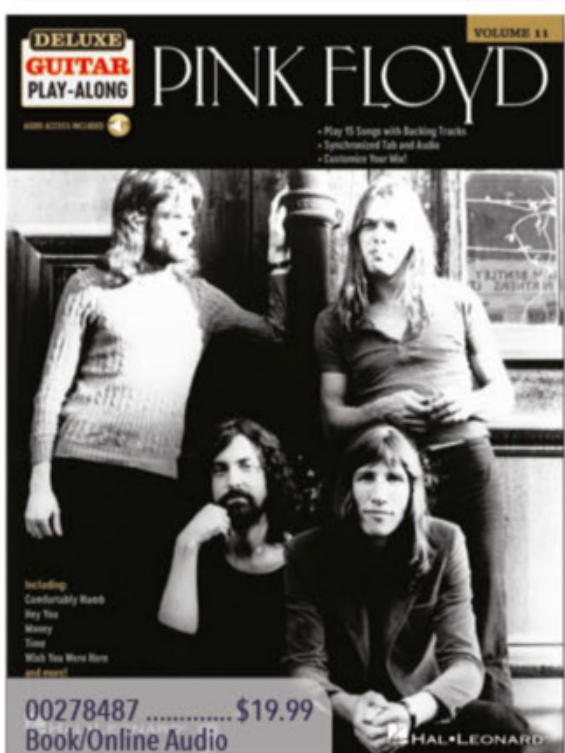
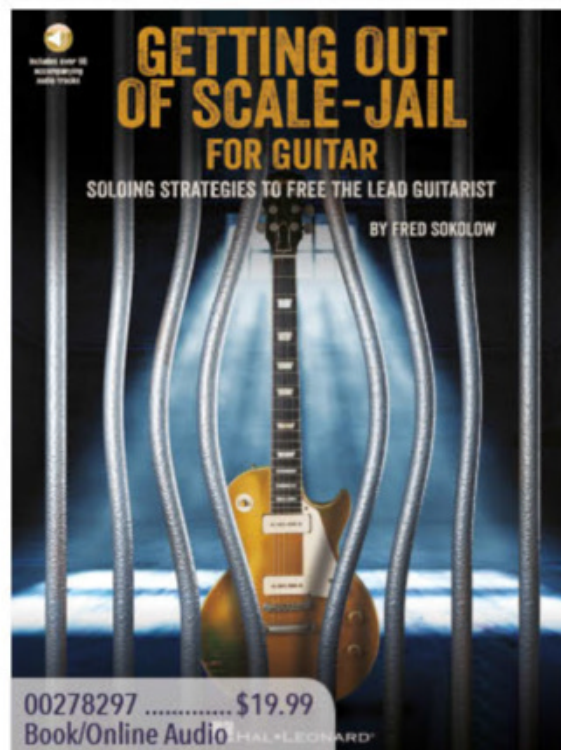
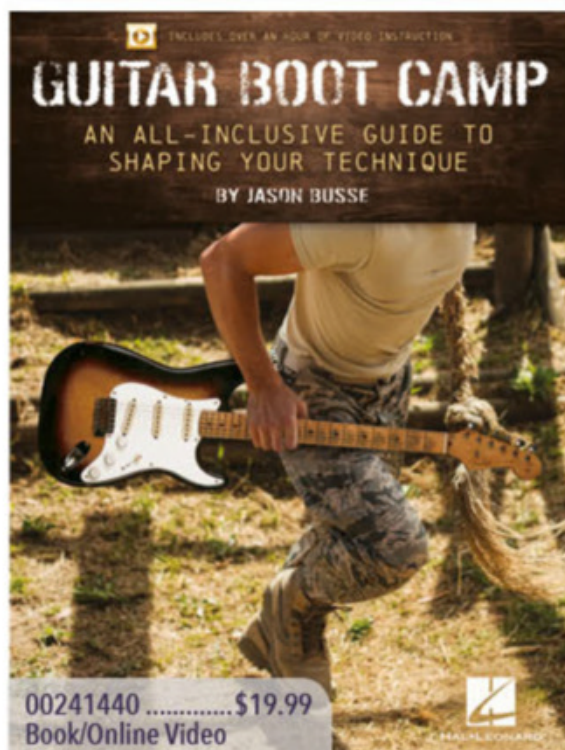
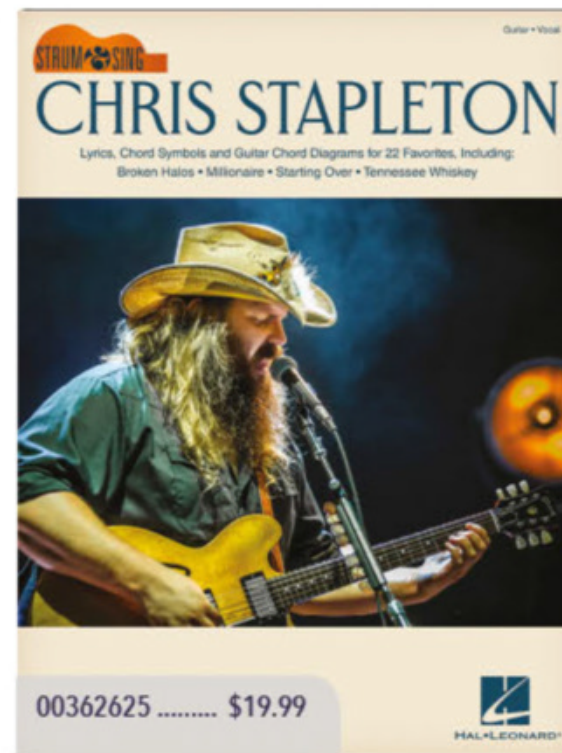
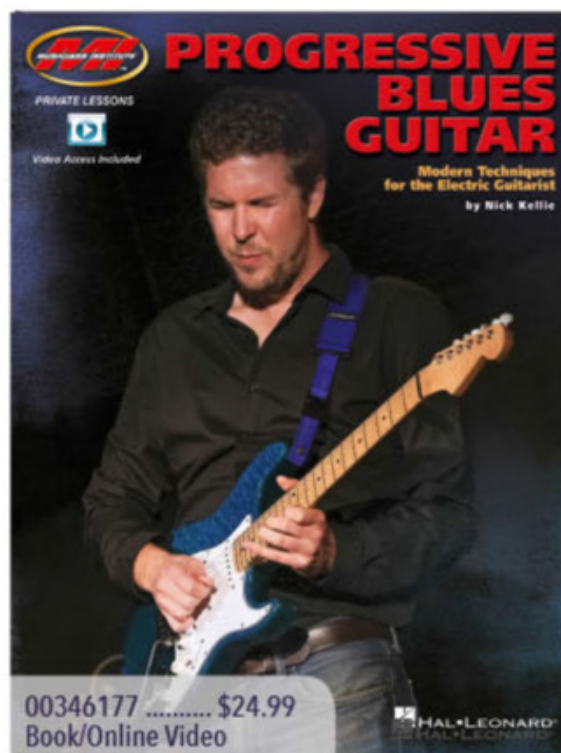
I initiate this section, playing an F7 chord voicing in a syncopated 16th-note funk-style rhythm. This type of funk rhythm guitar is heard in the music of James Brown and the incredible rhythm guitar work of his guitarists Jimmy “Chank” Nolen and Phelps “Catfish” Collins. Following the

initial F7 chord, I switch to F13 and F9 at the end of the two-bar phrase. After grooving on this for a bit, we move into the drum solo section and play the one-bar melodic figure shown in **FIGURE 6**.

Next month we will dive into the guitar solo section, so see you then!

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard (not to mention an effective instructor). His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now. For more info, check out joshsmithguitar.com.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown



"SCARLET CROSS" Black Veil Brides



THIS POPULAR NEW theatrical/ glam-metal song features melodic single-note and power chord riffs that are both heavy and catchy, with well-written and

-arranged parts, compliments of guitarists Jake Pitts and Jinxx. Using drop-D tuning down a whole step — what many refer to as “drop-C” tuning (low to high: C, G, C, F, A, D) — the guitarists make great use of the perfect-5th interval between their 6th and 5th strings to craft parts that are both convenient to play, with easily moveable one-finger power chords, and tight- and full-sounding.

Notice the guitarists' deliberate and intermittent use of pick-hand palm muting (P.M.) for the single notes played on the 6th-string (especially the open notes) throughout the song's intro and verse sections, as well as during the rhythm part behind the guitar solo (see sections A, B and H). This kind of “on-off” palm muting helps tighten up the lines and gives them added clarity and punch, while emphasizing the higher, unmuted notes, making them “pop” effectively and creating a nice musical contrast between them and the lower, muted notes. When playing these parts, pick or strum all the eighth-note rhythms with consecutive downstrokes, for a uniform attack, reserving the use of upstrokes for the occasional pairs of 16th notes, employing a down-up combination for these “gallop” rhythms.

Jake's guitar solo (see section H, Gtr. 3) offers a great study in melodic shredding, as he targets notes that effectively relate to the underlying chords, using a combination of scales and arpeggios, while locking-in his phrasing with the rhythm section's syncopated accents. In his harmony-leads tapping phrase that begins in bar 76, Pitts creates his own syncopation, superimposing a repeating “1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2” accent pattern with a series of triad arpeggios over a stream of steady 16th notes. This rhythm within a rhythm produces an exciting, compelling melodic line that's sweetly harmonized in diatonic 3rds and 4ths by a second lead guitar playing lower arpeggios (see Gtr. 4). For the picked 16th-note phrases (see bars 66, 67, 71, 74 and 75), you'll want to follow Jake's lead and use alternate (down-up) picking, applying palm muting to the notes played on the lower strings during these runs, as indicated.



"AMERICA" (PT. 2 OF 2) Yes



PICKING UP WHERE we left off in part 1 of this massive transcription, at 6:11 on the recording, we continue with guitarist Steve Howe, bassist Chris Squire

and drummer Bill Bruford getting into a funky, intimate “power trio” jam in the key of A. Again, notice Howe's deft use of crosspicking (one note per string) in many of his licks here, which demonstrate the guitarist's richly diverse range of musical and guitar playing influences. Notice how he combines Chuck Berry-style rock and roll double-stop licks (à la “Johnny B. Goode”) with lines that bring to mind the traditional bluegrass, country and rockabilly stylings of such legendary players as Lester Flatt, Chet Atkins, Merle Travis, James Burton and Scotty Moore. Howe brilliantly combines these elements with his classical and jazz influences (such as Andrés Segovia, Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian and T. Bone Walker), via his signature quick position shifts, wide-stretch fingerings and artistic use of various chord inversions up and down the fretboard, all of which give his playing its celebrated dynamic flair and unique touch.

Sections V and W recall Steve's highly musical application of such techniques as hybrid picking (pick and fingers) and banjo-style crosspicking that he had used previously on “Starship Trooper” and his solo guitar masterpiece “Clap” (both on *The Yes Album*).

This epic arrangement and performance concludes with the exciting double-time jam that begins at section X, which features Squire tightly locking-in with Bruford's fierce 16th-note drum groove and laying down a relentlessly pummeling stream of alternate-picked 16th notes on his growling, bright-toned Rick-enbacker bass. Notice how Squire crafts what may be thought of as a walking bass line (moving quarter notes) with “quadruple picking” (each different note rapidly picked four times).

Throughout this transcription, and as we had done in part 1, we've added extra, non-guitar chord names in parentheses, in order to help convey the big-picture harmony, taking into account the accompanying chords played by keyboardist Rick Wakeman, as well as Squire's creative use of inversions in his bass lines (such as playing the 5th of the chord instead of the root).



"PAINT IT, BLACK" The Rolling Stones



ONE OF THE Stones' most creative-ly unique early masterpieces, from 1966, this dark, compelling uptempo ballad of heartache and despair features guitarist

Keith Richards nimbly fingerpicking a clean electric guitar and co-guitarist Brian Jones playing acoustic, with both guitars capoed at the 3rd fret. So while the song is notated as if it were in the key of D minor, which reflects the way the guitarists thought of it, it actually sounds in the concert key of F minor, due to the minor-3rd-up capo transposition. You'll notice throughout our transcription that we've additionally included the concert-key chord names, above the bass part. Interestingly, bassist Bill Wyman played this part not on bass guitar, but rather on the foot pedals of a Hammond B3 organ, hammering the pedals with the bottom sides of his fists!

Jones additionally overdubbed a sitar part, which doubles singer Mick Jagger's vocal melody during the song's verses. Notice how Richard doubles the melody too in his Gtr. 1 part, weaving it into a pedal-tone figure and playing the melody notes in alternation with the notes thumbpicked on the D string. Doing so requires continual skipping over one or two strings in a quick eighth-note rhythm, which is something that would otherwise be much more difficult and arduous to do using only a plectrum. By instead using his thumb and fingers to pick the strings, Richards greatly economizes his pick-hand movements here, making his parts fun and not too difficult to play.

Jones' acoustic Gtr. 2 part during the verses similarly toggles back and forth between two strings on each eighth note. Fortunately, playing this part with a pick isn't unreasonably arduous, as there is no string skipping involved, with all the notes falling on the adjacent A and D strings. Using alternate picking here (down-up-down-up) results in what's known as an “outside the strings” picking pattern, which flows much better than the dreaded “inside the strings” pattern, which would occur if you were to pick up-down-up-down here.

Regarding the fret hand, note the use of a quick quarter-step pre-bend and release in bars 11 and 15. This decorative embellishment really helps give the line an East Indian flavor.

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“SCARLET CROSS”

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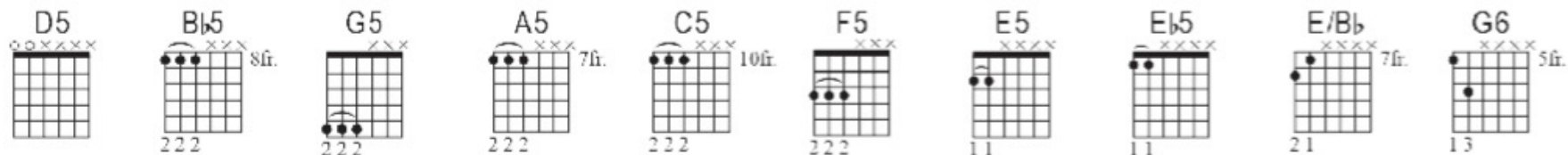
As heard on **THE PHANTOM TOMORROW**

Words and Music by ANDY BIRSACK, JAKE PITTS and JEREMY FERGUSON • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are in Drop-D tuning, down a whole step (low to high: C, G, C, F, A, D).

Bass tuning, low to high: C, G, C, F.

All music sounds in the key of C minor, one whole step lower than written.



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 126

N.C. (D5) (F5) (C5) (D5) (F5) (G5) (E5) (D5)

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

(drums) 1 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

TAB 4/4

BASS

Bass
*Bass Fig. 1

*Take 2nd ending when recalled as Bass Fig. 1

1. 2.

(F5) (C5) (D5) (Bb5) (F5) (C5) (D5) (G5)

Gtr. 1 3 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.H.

Gtr. 2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.H.

Bass end Bass Fig. 1

B 1st Verse (0:17)

My mind remains my pain I'm tied down to this chain

D5 Bb5 G5 A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

7 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

It spirals as I ache to find holy embrace

D5 Bb5 C5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

end Rhy. Fig. 1

11 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. Gtr. 2

Bass

Gtr. 1

Stay with me I'm afraid of my soul Blackened and left in control

D5 Bb5 G5 A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 7)

Bass

15 Bass Fig. 2

Cannot be free and you can't deny the end is coming

D5 Bb5 C5

end Bass Fig. 2

19

The end is coming Will we live

N.C.

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

Fill 1

23

Gtr. 4 (elec. w/dist.)

Fill 1A

(w/tremolo effect)

C Chorus (0:51, 1:48)

when we die

Just keep

on

saving

our

goodbyes

The

fear

D5

B $\flat$ 5

C5

G5

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

end Riff A

25 Riff A

Gtr. 3 (top note)

Gtr. 4 (bottom note)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

end Bass Fig. 3

2nd chorus, skip ahead to **F** (bar 55)

and the cost

The world

will

stain

us

with

a scarlet

cross

D5

B $\flat$ 5

C5

29

Gtr. 3 (top note)

Gtr. 4 (bottom note)

D (1:06)

N.C. (D5)

(F5)

(C5) (D5)

(F5)

(G5)

(E5)

(D5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

33

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

(F5)

(C5)

(D5)

(G5)

(A5)

(F5)

35

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

E 2nd Verse (1:14)

A symbol for my shame The color of your name

D5

B $\flat$ 5

G5

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 7)

37 Bass

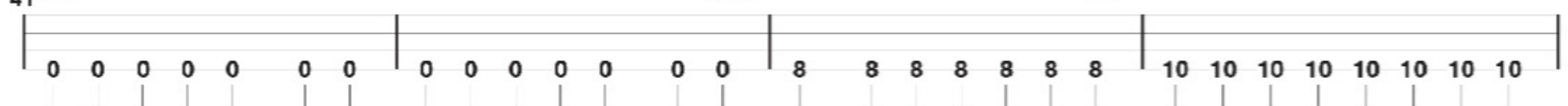


It's how they see you break and live with my mistake

D5

B $\flat$ 5

C5



Sin for me cast away from it all Watching every letter fall

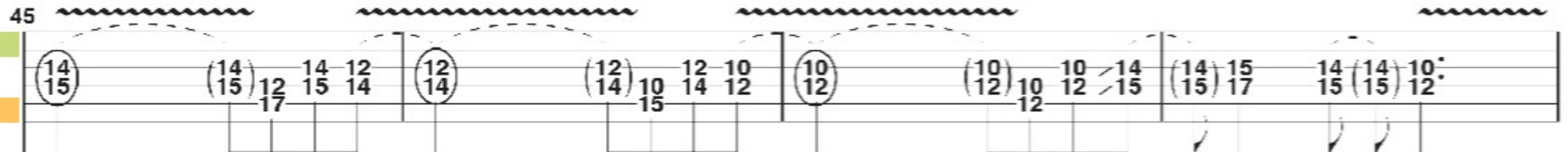
D5

B $\flat$ 5

G5

A5

Gtr. 3 (top note)



Gtr. 4 (bottom note)

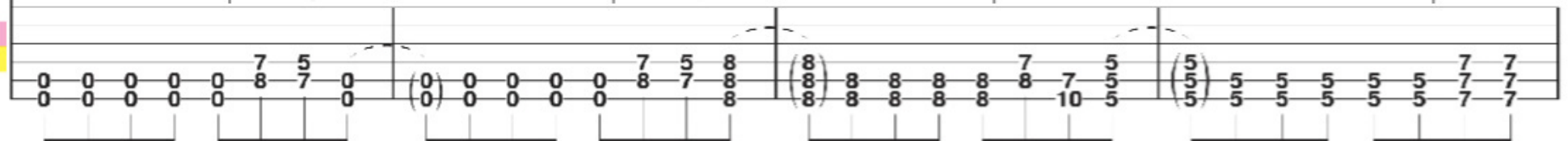
Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.



*Gtr. 1 plays bottom note, Gtr. 2 plays top note.

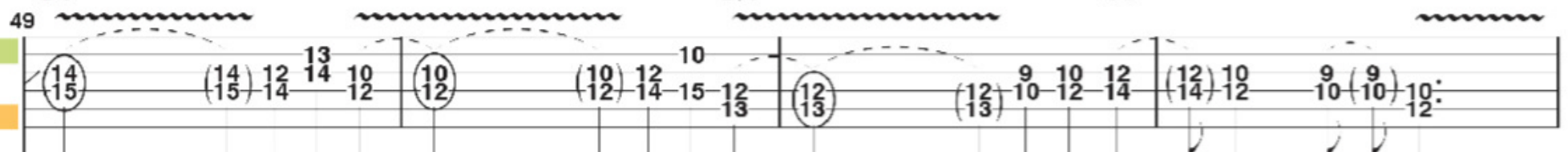
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 15)

Hold on to me and I can't let go The end is coming

D5

B $\flat$ 5

C5



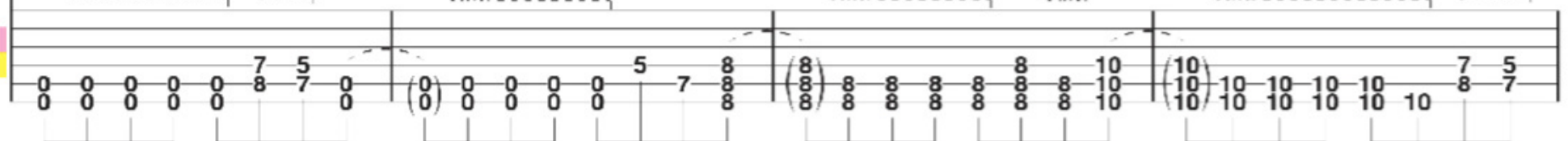
P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.



*Gtr. 1 plays bottom note, Gtr. 2 plays top note.

Go back to **C** Chorus (bar 25)

The end is coming

Will we live

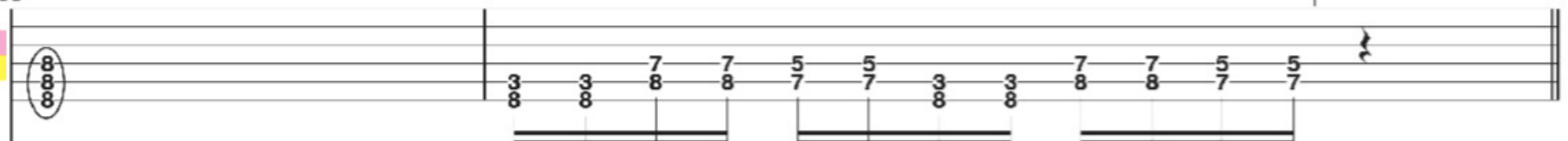
B $\flat$ 5

Gtrs. 3 and 4 play Fill 1, Fill 1A (see bar 23)

Gtr. 4 (top note)

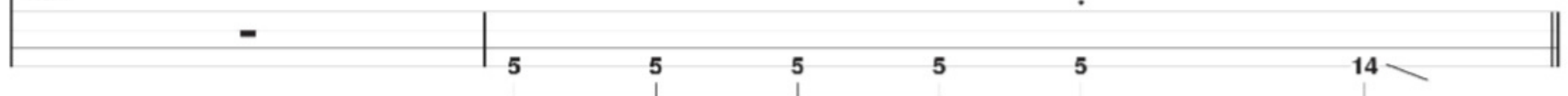
53 Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.



Gtr. 3 (bottom note)

Bass



F (2:02)**G** (2:04)

a scarlet cross (Oh oh oh) With the fear

C5 G5 D5 B $\flat$ 5 C5 G5 F5 D5

55

Gtr. 3 (top note) (Gtr. 3) Gtr. 3 (top note)

Gtr. 4 (bottom note) Gtr. 4 (bottom note)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass Bass Fig. 4 end Bass Fig. 4

and the cost The world will stain us with a scarlet cross

B $\flat$ 5 C5 N.C. D5

60

H Guitar Solo (2:19)G5 F5 E5 E $\flat$ 5 D5 G5 B $\flat$ 5 D5 G5 F5 E5 E $\flat$ 5 D5

64

Gtr. 3 w/bar w/fdbk. -1/2 P.M.

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

Gtr. 1

Bass Bass Fig. 5

G5 A5 B $\flat$ 5 A5 E/B $\flat$ B $\flat$ 5 E/B $\flat$ B $\flat$ 5 E/B $\flat$ B $\flat$ 5 G5

Gtr. 3
67 P.M. -----

8 7 8 10 9 7 11 10 8 10 11 8 10 12 12 (12) (12) 13 15 17 13 (13) 15 13 (13) 15 13 12 10

Gtr. 4

15 17 18 15 (15) 17 15 (15) 17 15 17 15

Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. end Rhy. Fig. 2

(0) 0 5 5 0 7 8 7 7 (7) 8 8 8 8 8 8 7 8 8 8 8 7 8 8 8 8 5

Bass

(0) 0 5 0 7 8 7 8 (8) 8 8 8 8 8 (8) 8 8 8 8 8 5

end Bass Fig. 5

G6 N.C.(D5) F5 E5 N.C.(D5) F5 E5 D5

70 (10)* 10 10 12 13 12 (12)* 17 19 17 18 20 17 18 19 20 21

(15)* (15) 15 13 15 13 (13)*

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

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

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

G5 F5 E5 E $\flat$ 5 D5 G5 B $\flat$ 5 D5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 64)

Gtr. 3

72 (21) (21)* 1/2 (21)* 22 1/2 (22) (22) (22) (22) 17 (17)*

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 (see bar 64)

74

G5 F5 E5 E♭5 D5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5 E/B♭

13 10 13 15 10 13 13 10 13 10 13 10 13 12 10^{*} 14 15 17 14 15 17 15 17 18 15

Gtr. 3

76

B♭5 E/B♭ B♭5 E/B♭ B♭5 G5

17 13 10 17 13 10 17 13 10 17 13 10 17 13 15 12 8 15 12 8 15 12 8 15 12 8 15 12 8 15 12

Gtr. 4

13 10 6 13 10 6 13 10 13 10 6 13 10 6 13 10 12 8 5 12 8 5 12 8 12 8 5 12 8 5 12 8

Will we live

78

G6 A5

18 15 10 18 15 10 18 15 18 15 10 18 15 17 14 15 14 15 14 12 14 15 14 15 17 18 17 15

Gtr. 4

15 10 6 15 10 6 15 10 15 10 6 15 10 6 15 10

Gtrs. 1 and 2

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

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

Bass

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

I Breakdown / Outro Chorus (2:49)

when we die

Just keep on saving

our goodbyes

The fear

N.C.

Gtr. 3

80

(15)^{*} (15)

and the cost

The world will stain us with a scarlet cross

D5 Bb5

C5

G5

Gtr. 3 plays Riff A (see bar 25)

84 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 25)

(Oh

oh

oh)

With the fear

D5 Bb5

C5

G5

F5

D5

88 Gtr. 3

Gtr. 3 (top note)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Gtr. 4 (bottom note)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 56)

and the cost

The world

will

stain

us

with

a

scarlet

cross

Bb5

C5

G5

Gtr. 3 plays Riff A twice (see bar 25)

92 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

(Oh

oh

oh)

With

a

scarlet

cross

D5 Bb5

C5

G5

(Oh

oh

oh)

With

a

scarlet

cross

D5 Bb5

C5

G5

F5

Gtr. 3 plays first three bars of Riff A (see bar 25)

Words and Music by **PAUL SIMON** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**

A7(no 3) 1	A5 1 1	A5 2 1 1	Am7 4 2 1	D5 1	B7 1 2 3	B7/F# 1 2 3	E 2 3 1	A 1 2	
A6sus4 3 2	D 1 3 2	D6sus2 2 1 3	D7 3 2 1	D7 3 2 1	A6 1 1 1 1	A 1 1 1	B 1 3 4 2 1 1	E/G# 3 1 1 1	Emaj7 4 3 1 1 1
G#m/D# 3 4 1 1	C#m/G# 1 1 3 4 2 1	B/D# 3 1 1 4	A6 3 2 4 1	G6 3 2 4 1	A6 3 2 1	G6 3 2 1	A6 3 3 3	G6 1 1 1	

2 111

1.

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/light overdrive)

[illegible]

2.

The musical score for 'Bass Fig. 4' consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes marked with 'X' and others with '0'. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes marked with 'X' and others with '0'. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first measure of the top staff has a '3' above it. The first measure of the bottom staff has a '7' above it. The score ends with a double bar line and a '15' above it.

6 Gtr. 1 P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. --- P.M. ---

0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 four times (see bar 5)

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R (6:32)

*A5

(w/pick and fingers)

8 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. 1/2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

*Chord symbol reflects overall harmony.

N.C.(E5) (F#5) (E/G#)

10 Gtr. 1 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass

A

12

Am7

14 let ring 1/2

Am7 Am6 Am7 Am6 Am7

17 1/4

S (7:08)

N.C. (D)

Am6 Am7 Am6 Am7

20

5 7 9 8 10 12 5 7 8 10 12 8 10 12 17 17 17 (17)* 17-15-17-15 (15) 16*

22

17 17 (17)* 17 15 17 15 (15) 14 10 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 8 (8) 7* 10 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 8 (8) 7*

(A)

25

17 17 (17)* 14 15 14 15 14 (14) 14* 17 17 (17) 15 17 15 17 15 14 (14) 17*

(E)

27

(17) 17 (17)* 14 15 14 15 14 (14) 14* 15 14 15 14 (14) 14* 15 14 15 14 (14) 14 13 (13) 13 (13)

(F#5) (G5) (G#5) (A)

30

(w/fuzz pedal)

2 0 1 1 0 2 3 0 4 5 0 4 7 0 8 9 0 8 9 10 9 10 9 10 9 8 (8) 15 4 X 5 (5) 4 4 5 5 5 7/9 7 7 7 7 7 9 7

T (8:01)

*
A5

D5

A5

40

12

*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

N.C. (A5)

(D5)

42

1/2

(A5)

(D5)

44

1/2

1/2

1.	2.
----	----

(• = 88)



W 4th Verse (8:45)

Kathy I'm lost I said although I knew she was sleeping

A A6sus4 A A6sus4 A D D6sus2

Gtr. 1

55 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

**Overall harmony*

I'm empty and aching and I don't know

D7 D7 A6 A6sus4 A N.C. (F#5)

58

why I'm counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike They've

(E) E

61

all gone to look for America

B E/G# B Emaj7 G#m/D# C#m/G#

64

All gone to look for America

B E/G# B Emaj7

67

(B) (E/B) (B) (Emaj7/B)

All gone to

B E/G#

70

(G#m/B) (C#m) (B/F#) (E/F#)

look for America

B/D# Emaj7 G#m/D# C#m

73

(B/F#) (Emaj7/F#) (G#m) (C#m)

X (9:38)

(♩ = 139)

N.C. (D) (C/D) (D)

76

79

(F/D) (D) (C/D)

0 2 3 0 2 4 5 2 4 5 3 5 (5) 3 5 5 7 (7) 7 8 7 5 3 5 3 5

12 12 12 12 12 16 16 17 19 16 17 19 19 (19) 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 7 7 5 7

(D) (F/D) w/fdbk. pitch: A

82

7/8 7 5 3 5 5 7

5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4 5° 6 6 6 7 4

7 7° (7) (7)° 7 7 7 7

$$|\mathbf{Y}| \quad (9:52)$$

The image shows a musical score for a piece with two main sections, A6 and G6. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The 'A6' section (measures 1-12) features a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The 'G6' section (measures 13-24) continues the melody and bass line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

88

A6

G6

3 9 X 9 X 9 X X 9 9 9 9 9 7 7 7 7 7 X 7 7 7 7 7 7 9

4 10 X 10 X 10 X X 10 10 10 10 10 8 8 8 8 8 X 8 8 8 8 8 8 9

5 11 X 11 X 11 X X 11 11 11 11 11 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9

5 5 6 7 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 7 5 5 6

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It features a guitar part and a vocal line. The guitar part is written in A6 and G6 tunings. The vocal line is written in 90 BPM. The score includes a key signature change from one flat to two flats.

Guitar Part:

- A6 Tuning:** The first system of the guitar part is in A6 tuning. It consists of a single note (14) on the first string, followed by a double bar line, and then a series of notes (14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14) on the first string.
- G6 Tuning:** The second system of the guitar part is in G6 tuning. It consists of a single note (14) on the first string, followed by a double bar line, and then a series of notes (14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14) on the first string.

Vocal Part:

- 90 BPM:** The vocal part is written in 90 BPM. It consists of a single note (7) on the first string, followed by a double bar line, and then a series of notes (7, 7, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 8, 9, 9, 9, 11, 11, 11, 12, 12, 12, 14, 14, 14) on the first string.

Z (10:06)
N.C. (D) (C/D)

92

17 (17) 17 17 17 15

5 5 5 7 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 7

94 (D) (F/D)

17: (17)(17) (17) (15)

12 12 14 15 12 14 16 12 14 16 14 15 14 15

5 5 5 7 4 2: 4 5 5 5 6 7

17 17 17 17 17 16 16 17 17 19 16 17 19

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled '96', contains measures 1 through 6. The second system contains measures 7 through 12. The score is written for a single melodic line on a five-line staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system is divided into two measures by a repeat sign. The second system is divided into two measures by a repeat sign. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

System 1 (Measures 1-6):

- Measure 1: (19) (19)
- Measure 2: 5 5 5 7
- Measure 3: 4 4 4 4
- Measure 4: 5 5 5 6
- Measure 5: 7 7 7
- Measure 6: 5 5 5 5

System 2 (Measures 7-12):

- Measure 7: 7 7 7
- Measure 8: 5 5 5 5
- Measure 9: 7 7 7 7
- Measure 10: 5 5 5 7
- Measure 11: 7 7 7 7
- Measure 12: 5 5 5 7

[illegible]

"PAINT IT, BLACK"

The Rolling Stones

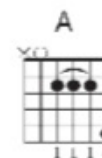
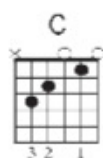
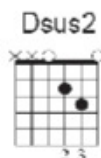
As heard on **AFTERMATH**

Words and Music by MICK JAGGER and KEITH RICHARDS • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are capo 3.

All chords shapes and tablature positions are relative to the capo ("0" = 3rd fret).

All music sounds in the key of F[♯] minor, one and one half steps higher than written.



A Intro (0:00)

Freely

Dm

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/clean tone)
fingerstyle
let ring throughout

1

T 4/4

A 4/4

B 4/4

3 0 1 3 1 0 3 2 3 2 3 5 0 2 3 0 3 2 0 2 2

0 0 0 0 0 2 1 1 1

3 3

ritard

Moderately Fast Rock ♩ = 158

(drums enter)

Dsus2

5 Gtr. 1 (doubled by sitar)

5

Gtr. 1 (doubled by sitar)

Dsus2

Gtr. 2 (acous.)

Gtr. 2 (acous.)

0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2

Bass

*[Fsus2]

Bass

*[Fsus2]

8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8

* Bracketed chord names indicate concert-key harmony.

B Verses (0:15, 0:39, 1:03, 1:52)

1., 4. I see a red door and I want it painted black
2. I see a line of cars and they're all painted black
3. I look inside myself and see my heart is black

Dm

A

Rhy. Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 1

9

3 3 0 1 1/3 1 0 3 3 (3) 2 3 0 3 2 0 (2)

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Rhy. Fig. 1a
light P.M.

end Rhy. Fig. 1a

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 3 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 3 0 2

[Fm]
Bass Fig. 1

[C]

end Bass Fig. 1

8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 10 8 10 8 11 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 11 8 10

(1., 4.) No colors anymore I want them to turn black
 (2.) with flowers and my love I both never to come back
 (3.) I see my red door I must have it painted black
 Dm A

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1a (see bar 9)

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fig. 1 on all repeats (see bar 9)

Gtr. 1

13

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 9)

C Chorus (0:27, 0:51, 1:15, 1:40, 2:04)

(1., 5.) I see the girls walk by dressed in their summer clothes
 (2.) I see people turn their heads and quickly look away
 (3.) Maybe then I'll fade away and not have to face the facts
 (4.) If I look hard enough into the setting sun

Dm C F C Dm

Gtrs. 1 and 2

17

On 1st and 2nd Choruses, go back to **B** (bar 9)

On 3rd Chorus, continue to **D** (bar 25)

On 4th Chorus, go back to **B** (bar 9)

On 5th chorus, skip ahead to **E** (bar 33)

(1., 5.) I have to turn my head until my darkness goes
 (2.) Like a newborn baby it just happens every day
 (3.) It's not easy facin' up when your whole world is black
 (4.) My love will laugh with me before the morning comes

Dm C F C G A

21

Rhy. Fill 1 (0:54, 1:18, 2:07)

Dm

Gtr. 1

TAB

Rhy. Fill 2 (1:42)

Dm

Gtr. 1

TAB

D Breakdown (1:27)

No more will my green sea go turn a deeper blue

Dsus2
Gtr. 1

25

Gtr. 2

[Fsus2]
Bass

[C]

Go back to **C** Chorus (bar 17)

I could not foresee this thing happening to you

Dsus2
Gtr. 1

29

Gtr. 2

E Outro (2:16)

Hmm...

Dm
Gtr. 1

33

Gtr. 2
light P.M.

[Fm]
Bass
Bass Fig. 2

[C]

(play 3 times)

(play 3 times)

(play 3 times)
end Bass Fig. 2

Hmm...
wanna see the sun

blotted out from the sky

I wanna see it
I wanna see it

Dm
[Fm]

A
[C]

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1a until fade (see bar 9)

Gtr. 1

37

Bass plays Bass. Fig. 12 until fade (see bar 33)

painted
painted

painted

Painted
painted

black

Painted

Black as
black

night

Black as
Yeah

coal

I

Dm
[Fm]

A
[C]

41

Hmm...

Dm
[Fm]

A
[C]

45

Hmm...

Dm
[Fm]

A
[C]

49

Hmm...

Dm
[Fm]

A
[C]

53

(repeat and fade)

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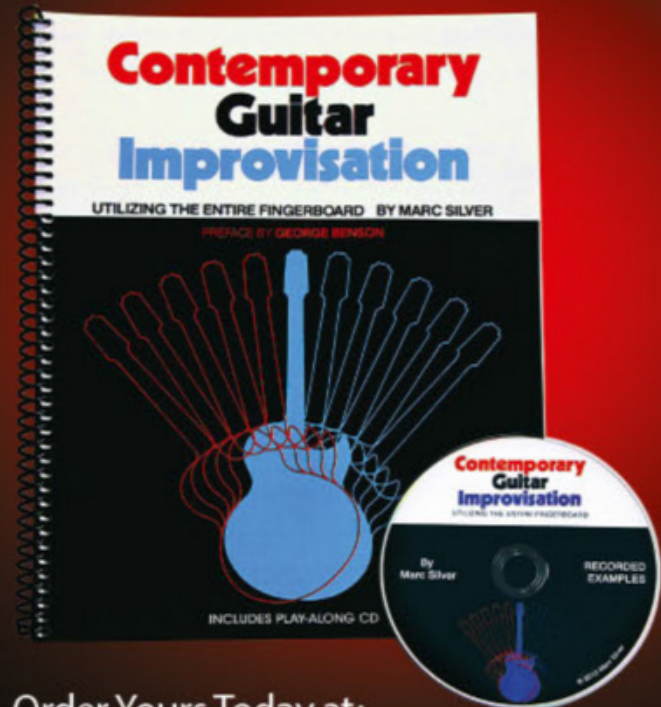
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MAESTRO ECHOPLEX EP-3

CATEGORY: EFFECT

CONVENTIONAL BIAS IN the guitar universe dictates that tubes are always better than solid state. However, when it comes to the differences between the tube-driven Maestro Echoplex EP-2 tape echo produced in the Sixties and the solid-state EP-3 model introduced in 1970, it's really more a matter of preference than any blatantly obvious sonic superiority. While the EP-2's tube-driven preamp delivers echo effects with a distinct warm, dark and sometimes even murky character that can sound hypnotic with clean guitar/amp tones, the EP-3 is more often favored by players who want more clarity and definition from the echo repeats — particularly by guitarists who plug directly into the input of an amp driven to distortion.

The EP-3's controls consist of sustain and volume control knobs, a slider that moves the playback head to adjust delay time and a toggle switch for echo or sound-on-sound modes. In addition to input and output jacks, there are footswitch jacks for echo on/off and playback functions. Generally, the delay times cover a range from about 80 to 800 milliseconds, although due to the mechanical nature of an Echoplex these times can vary from one unit to another. The sound-on-sound feature, introduced on a few EP-2 models built during the late Sixties, made the Echoplex one of the earliest looper devices, although it can be very tricky to use this feature during live performances. An added bonus is the EP-3's built-in solid-state preamp, which slightly boosts the output, sweetens the treble and fattens the mids. Many players have used an EP-3 for its preamp alone while bypassing the echo effect.

Despite having a relatively simple set of controls compared to most of today's digital delay pedals, the Echoplex EP-3 is a wonderfully versatile tape echo effect unit that delivers much more than simple echo/delay repeats. The sliding playback head allows users to adjust delay times for tight reverb-like textures, vintage rockabilly slapback, dotted eighth rhythmic patterns and even short repeating phrases. Some well-known examples include the slapback effects Jimmy Page often used to fatten his lead tones, Eddie Van Halen's single-repeat 300ms delay for "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love,"

SUGGESTED SETTINGS



VAN HALEN, "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love"

Echo setting,
Echo Repeats: 1,
Echo Volume: 2,
Echo Delay: 12
(approximately 300ms)

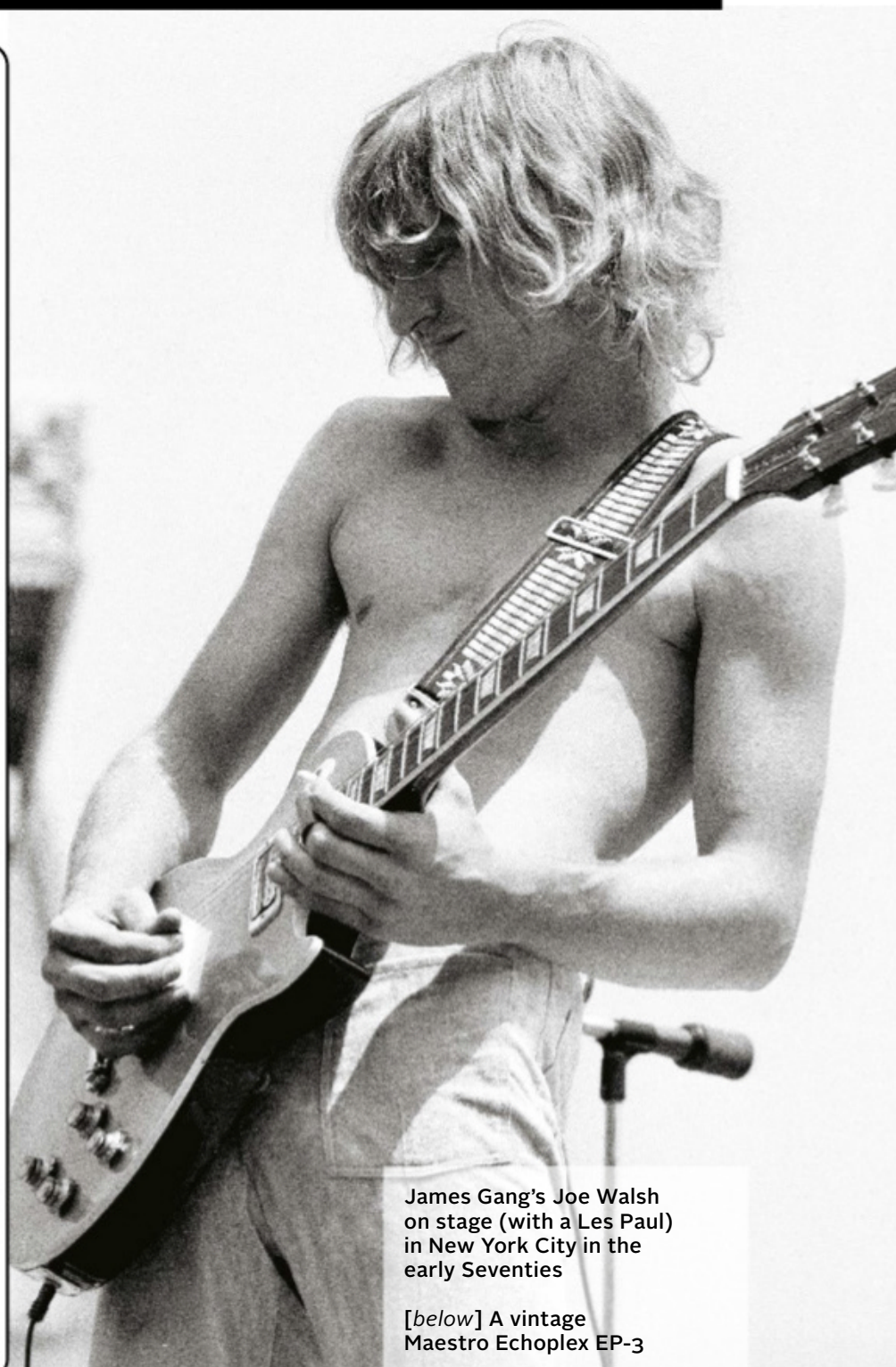
TIP: Plug effect directly into the input of an amp pushed to distortion. Use palm muting and play percussively to get the delay to counteract rhythmically.



JOE WALSH, "The Bomber"

Echo setting,
Echo Repeats: 4,
Echo Volume: 3,
Echo Delay: 25
(approximately 500ms)

TIP: Use a slide and alternate between percussive notes for pronounced echoes and sustained notes for moody, reverb-like ambience.



James Gang's Joe Walsh on stage (with a Les Paul) in New York City in the early Seventies

[below] A vintage Maestro Echoplex EP-3



East Bay Ray's trailing long delays on the Dead Kennedys' "Holiday in Cambodia" and "Police Truck" and the dotted eighth effect on Pat Travers' "Heat in the Street." Brian May also used a pair of modified

Echoplex's for creating the stacked three-part harmonies heard on Queen's "Brighton Rock."

While the Echoplex delivers an impressive variety of traditional musical delay effects, it also excels at unorthodox special effects that even the best digital modeling units don't quite replicate. Tommy Bolin was a master of manipulating his Echoplexes during live performances, cranking up the sustain control to oscillating feedback and raising or lowering pitch by moving the delay slider. These effects were also popular with dub reggae producers, who made the Echoplex into an instrument unto itself.

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