

10
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TUNERS!

JOSH KLINGHOFFER

FROM THE CHILI PEPPERS
TO PEARL JAM



GUITAR & BASS
TRANSCRIPTIONS

GHOST

CALL ME LITTLE SUNSHINE

PINK FLOYD

SHINE ON YOU CRAZY
DIAMOND (Parts 1-5)

THIRD EYE BLIND

SEMI-CHARMED LIFE

THE DAY
HENDRIX
MET SPOCK!

THE WILD LIFE
& TIMES OF
JOHNNY
THUNDERS

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THE GUITAR
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KEVIN SCANLON

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WOODSHED

VOL. 43 | NO. 12 | DECEMBER 2022



IT'S STORY TIME!

IN THIS ISSUE — instead of focusing entirely on new albums — we bring you a collection of intriguing stand-alone stories. There is, of course, the story — as told by Noë Gold — about the now-legendary night that Jimi Hendrix and *Star Trek* star Leonard Nimoy connected in Cleveland and chewed the fat until the wee hours. There's the fascinating (but not incredibly well-known) story about Johnny Thunders' rise and fall with the New York Dolls, the Heartbreakers and beyond (as told by Mark McStea) — and, of course (assuming you've seen this issue's cover), there's the story

of "Ego Death," Polyphia's brilliant new collaboration with Steve Vai, their fellow Ibanez-ax-wielding instrumental miracle worker. The stories are given some very strong visual boosts by illustrator Adam Forster (who also — and totally randomly, by the way — created the artwork on the Walrus Audio Julia Analog Chorus/Vibrato — Limited National Parks Edition/Denali that I picked up on eBay last week) and photographer Kevin Scanlon, who managed to capture incredibly rare images of Vai, Tim Henson and Scott LePage in their natural habitat.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of *GW*! And speaking of *GW*...

The Pick

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TO GET GW'S
NEWSLETTER



D. Fanelli

DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

We are committed to only using magazine paper that is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.

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A nice mix!

I appreciate the nice mix of cover artists — four different people if I'm not mistaken? — in the September issue. Keep it up!

—Gabe

He lives for death metal

Perhaps one page in the magazine could be dedicated to death metal each month? That would be of

interest... And how about a write-up on the new Goatwhore album [*Angels Hung from the Arches of Heaven*]? The new single is a cerebral masterpiece.

—Theo

Are GWAR for real?

This October 2022 issue of *Guitar World* was a hoot — the most diversity in your mag so far. I've been a subscriber for years and have never heard of a lot of these bands and artists. That's all good. I started to read the article on GWAR but couldn't get through it because of uncontrolled laughter. Is this really a band or an anime piece? No harm intended. Just curious.

—Mark J. Shapiro

Women play guitar too, folks

I started playing guitar again about two years ago. I then subscribed to *Guitar World*. Love

the magazine. I've discovered so many great guitarists [and] bought their albums. But in two years, I've never seen a woman on the cover or featured in a cover story. You do realize women play guitar too? Asking for the awesome women guitarists I know.

—Sean Capuano

Why old dudes dominate the cover

I've wondered why *GW* keeps putting the older great artists on the covers and tends to focus their coverage on them. I'm an old dude and don't mind the articles on the great players who have influenced me. But aren't there younger rising stars who can play like crazy? I can attribute this coverage to two things:

1. A demographic with most subscribers being older. I could be wrong. And/or maybe *GW* wants to educate their younger readers about these great artists, which

is a good thing and totally necessary. My son, who is 26 and a very accomplished guitarist and drummer, [gets] all his information from the Internet. He's never subscribed to any guitar magazine and gets his music free from the web. His generation knows all about the younger bands and players through social media, which is why print magazines are struggling to stay relevant.

2. I believe the guitar market has been dying for decades, with the exception of the pandemic, which resulted in a bleep in sales. Many kids just aren't that interested in playing guitar, especially when modern pop music has little guitar in it. Rock has gone underground — and maybe that's a good thing?

For more than 20 years, I've done a lot of buying and selling guitars online, and the market has dried up completely. Been that way for the past 10 years.

—Terry K, White Marsh, MD

DEFENDERS ⚡ of the Faith



Jim Dickinson

AGE: 40
HOMETOWN: Acton, ON, Canada
GUITARS: ESP Flying V, Gibson Les Paul, ESP LTD AX
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Disturbed "Stricken," plus originals by my band, Live Another Day
GEAR I WANT MOST: Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier



Robert Welch

AGE: 53
HOMETOWN: Denver, CO
GUITARS: Epiphone Les Paul Prophecy Custom Plus GX, Gibson Les Paul Standards and Customs, ES-335, Fender Stratocasters
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Krokus "Headhunter," Queensrÿche "Blood of the Levant," Kamelot "Amnesiac"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Epiphone Prophecy Les Paul Custom Plus EX



John Kelly

AGE: 20
HOMETOWN: Martinez, CA
GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Special, Gretsch G5420T hollowbody, Fender Telecaster, Epiphone SG
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Led Zeppelin "Bring It On Home," Cream "White Room," Stevie Ray Vaughan "Scuttle Buttin'," the Grateful Dead "Help on the Way/Slipknot!"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson Firebird

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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!



JIMI HENDRIX BY JAMIE CUNNINGHAM



RANDY RHOADS BY RICH SELE



Tony Tomizza

AGE: 47

HOMETOWN: Bradford, ON, Canada

GUITARS: Dean MAB-1 autographed in 2008 by Michael Angelo Batio in Toronto, Music Man JP, Godin SPN

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

Weezer "The End of the Game, Mastodon "Toes to Toe," Rush "Bastille Day"

— all from recent GW transcriptions

GEAR I WANT MOST: 2020 Music Man John Petrucci Majesty



Kevin Patt

AGE: 74

HOMETOWN: Arundel, MN

GUITARS: Gibson Custom L5-S, Telecaster, Epiphone FlameKat, Luna FauSwift acoustic

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Original songs ("Kisses," "She Put the Rock," "Beauty Lies"), plus Brothers Osborne "All Night," Kenny Chesney "Living in Fast Forward," Bruce Springsteen "Born to Run"

GEAR I WANT MOST: QSC K12.2 12-inch PA speakers and a great set of in-ear monitors



Mark Crespo

AGE: 36

HOMETOWN: Culver City, CA

GUITARS: Fender HM Strat, Epiphone ES-339, Fender HSS Plus Top Stratocaster, Fender American Traditional Strat

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Jeff Beck "Cause We've Ended As Lovers," Joe Satriani "Summer Song," Eric Johnson "Trademark" and rock, funk and ambient music

GEAR I WANT MOST: Mesa/Boogie Triple Crown



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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Light Reading

GW CATCHES UP WITH DEVIN TOWNSEND, WHOSE PREDICTABLY UNPREDICTABLE 21ST SOLO ALBUM, *LIGHTWORK*, WILL SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY LATER THIS MONTH

By Gregory Adams

▶ DEVIN TOWNSEND OFTEN thrives on extremes. From his early Nineties breakthrough singing on Steve Vai's *Sex & Religion*, to the brutalizing industrial death-thrash of Strapping Young Lad, to his coffee-centered prog opera *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, to the drone-heavy ambient daydream of last year's *Snuggles* solo album, the Canadian eccentric isn't known for staying in a specific lane for long. Townsend is just as predictably unpredictable on his 21st solo album, *Lightwork*, which may raise eyebrows from the metal faction of his fanbase over its grandiose, hard-swung power ballads ("Lightworker"), industrial biker rock ("Dimensions") and cactus-scented, electro-acoustic strummers ("Vacation").

"Sometimes people who aren't familiar with my work assume I do these things to be provocative," Townsend suggests of his many musical mood swings, "Like, 'You know what would really throw a wrench in the works is if we do a dusty acoustic song.' But it's not that in the slightest." The reason for the eclecticism is much simpler: Townsend just wants to try new things.

"It's like eating steak all day. You wake up and have steak, and then have steak for lunch, dinner and before you go to bed. Man, don't you get →

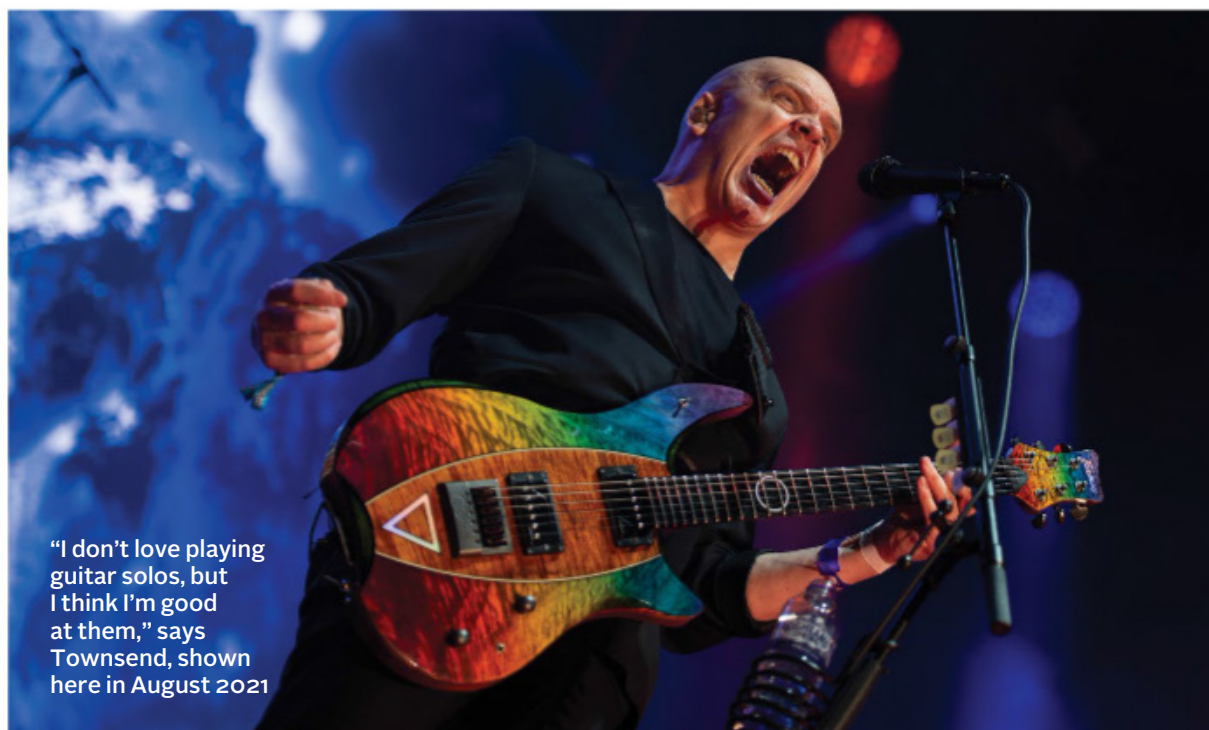


Devin Townsend with his custom signature Framus Stormbender

sick of meat after a while? Every now and then you have a big meaty meal, but other times you want some sherbet, or you have a cookie or eat a salad. Writing, for me, is the same — that’s just what I consider to be healthy, artistically.”

Townsend planned for *Lightwork* to be a straightforward, chill and ultimately optimistic-sounding affair. Structurally and harmonically, it often is. Behind the scenes, however, the record proved to be a challenge. While he began working on the record in early 2020, pandemic anxieties forced Townsend to pause the project and work through the chaos with his more free-form and moody *The Puzzle*. Later on, *Lightwork* sessions with producer Garth Richardson (Rise Against, Rage Against the Machine) were interrupted when a tree fell on the latter’s studio on the scenic Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, knocking out the electricity in the process. And even when Townsend thought he’d put the album to bed, he made a drastic, last-minute tracklist change this summer after finding out a song had to be scrapped over clearance issues.

“We had recorded this song called ‘Honeybunch,’ which has this [*melody*] taken from ‘Barbie Girl’ by Aqua,” he says, adding that his recontextualized take on the Nineties Europop hit also featured some funky guest fretwork from Nile Rodgers. “I thought the loophole was that if you re-record the sample, you could use it because it’s not their version. But it turns out that’s not the case!”



“I don’t love playing guitar solos, but I think I’m good at them,” says Townsend, shown here in August 2021

“Honeybunch” may one day see the light of day, pending approval from Aqua. Its replacement on *Lightwork* is the decidedly chunkier “Heartbreaker,” a detuned outlier full of palm-muted riffery and prog-styled time shifts that had been intended to appear on *Lightwork*’s more experimental bonus disc, *Nightwork*. “It’s not the original vibe; however, on some level I think it makes it better for me,” he says of the sequencing shakeup, further noting, “I’m strangely thankful that at the last minute I got to complicate it a little bit.”

Whatever the direction, Townsend graced much of the record with his signature rainbow-coated Framus Stormbender, though he played a Sadowsky T-style for the out-of-phase constellation of bends he brings to *Lightwork*’s “Heavy Burden.” The record’s most empirically

shredding solo, on “Dimensions,” comes courtesy of longtime collaborator Mike Keneally, whom Townsend gladly brought in to handle the lead.

“I don’t love playing guitar solos, but I think I’m good at them,” he says. “On the older records — [2011’s] *Deconstruction*, [2016’s] *Transcendence* or *Ziltoid the Omniscient* — there’s more ostentatious guitar parts on my side of things, but rarely do I think to myself, ‘Oh, this needs a solo.’ When I do, I usually do it [*in the*] first take.”

“My goal for a solo, rather than thinking ‘OK, what scale are we in?’ is to have the music crescendo with effort. So the solo, if I’m fortunate, is representative of that intent,” Townsend continues, concluding with pragmatic Zen, “And then [*I*] cut it and print it.”



INTRODUCING



The Venomous Pinks *Vita Mors* (SBAM Records)

SOUND This three-piece Arizona band delivers punchy punk with sharp pop sensibilities — somewhere between the Distillers and Joan Jett. The whole album runs at well under 30 minutes — 10 instant, flab-free classics. Guitarist Drea Doll mixes driving, chugging rhythm guitar parts with biting, incisive, memorable solos.

KEY TRACK “Cross My Heart and Hope to Die”



Bad Luck Friday *Bad Luck Friday* (Wilde Fire Records)

SOUND These U.K.-based blues rockers update the two-fisted harp-and-guitar attack — à la Buddy Guy and Junior Wells — for the classic rock age. Swaggering grooves, pounding riffs and screaming solos from guitarist Steve Brook battle Will Wilde’s virtuoso harp attack. Fans of Zep, Free and ZZ Top will be on familiar ground.

KEY TRACK “Low Down Dirty”



Brymir *Voices in the Sky* (Napalm)

SOUND Brymir — who hail from Finland — utilize a unique mix of acoustic and electric tones. Helsinki’s melodic/extreme metal masters deliver epic soundscapes where sweeping guitars and vocals conjure mythical tales of monumental adventures on icy wastes. Joona Björkroth and Sean Haslam’s guitars cut like a double-headed battle ax over pummeling double-bass drum rhythms.

KEY TRACK “Herald of Aegir”
— Mark McStea

FROM LEFT: PROVIDED/PR ROB BLACKHAM JANICA LONN TOP: KATJA OGRIN/REDFERNS



Molly Tuttle
in action
in Indio,
California,
on April 30

Molly Tuttle

EXPERIENCING A CREATIVE RUT? IT MIGHT BE A SIMPLE CASE OF BLUEGRASS TO THE RESCUE!

By Joshua M. Miller

MOLLY TUTTLE WANTS every note she plays to have the most impact. That often means using open strings.

"I like it because the notes really ring out," Tuttle says. "Sometimes I use open strings as a way to transition from down the neck to up the neck. I might throw in an open string to have time to move my hands to a new position.

I really like to cross-pick, and open strings create this really pretty ringing of the notes over each other."

It's also natural to bluegrass, the genre — and playing style — Tuttle grew up with. She recently returned to the genre for *Crooked Tree*, an album she recorded with her supporting band, Golden Highway. While in a creative rut during the pandemic, she realized bluegrass was the answer.

"I had been kind of getting frustrated," she says. "I was writing a lot of songs, but I started feeling creatively stuck. Then I was like, 'I'm going to try to write some bluegrass songs' — and once I started, I couldn't stop."

Which is convenient for Tuttle, since bluegrass is basically second nature to her. "I don't have to think about it. I can just

kind of switch on my bluegrass brain in a way," she says. "The last couple of albums I've done, I've tried to stretch myself musically; they haven't really been bluegrass albums, and that was a really fun challenge. But for this album, it just felt like returning to what I do the most naturally and what I grew up hearing and playing."

One of her favorite moments was playing in the clawhammer style for "The River Knows." "I tune to this modal G tuning," she says. "It's kind of a new take on a murder ballad that me and my friend Melody Walker wrote. It's a banjo style that's kind of adapted to guitar."

Speaking of guitars, on *Crooked Tree*, Tuttle used a Brazilian rosewood Martin D-28 that she picked up in 2019. "They're built to replicate guitars from the Thirties," she says. "To me, it's as close as a new guitar

comes to sounding like an old guitar, and the Brazilian rosewood makes it ring in a really nice way. It almost has a piano-like tone."

Crooked Tree was co-produced by Jerry Douglas and features contributions from Billy Strings, Old Crow Medicine Show, Dan Tyminski, Gillian Welch and more.

"I was like, 'I'm going to try to write some bluegrass songs' — and once I started, I couldn't stop"



WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST



DAVE CARLO OF RAZOR

1

"Mind Over Metal"

Raven

Mark Gallagher is a brilliant guitarist who's capable of scathing, over-the-top heaviness while also delivering soothing acoustic chops on rare occasions. Here he projects total insanity with one of my all-time favorite guitar solos.

2

"First Blood"

AC/DC

Fly on the Wall [1985] was the last flawless AC/DC album, in my opinion. There's no filler; it's solid from start to finish. On "First Blood," Angus Young delivers a killer solo. I love the way he kicks it off. The rest of the band is firing on all cylinders too.

3

"Snaggletooth"

Motörhead

Vic Maile, who produced *Ace of Spades*, returns here and does a brilliant job of making Motörhead sound better than ever. I only wish he had produced more of their work. Tragically, he died in 1989 from cancer at age 45.

4

"In Defiance"

Sacrifice

These guys toured with us, and I watched them throughout the summer and fall of 1990. They delivered killer performances night after night — and this track always stood out. When I'm looking to blow off some steam, this band never lets me down.

5

"I Want Out"

Danko Jones

This track sums up how we all felt during the worst of the pandemic, and it kicks off his latest album, *Power Trio*, in true-to-form fashion. Although there are no duds on this release, "I Want Out" is my favorite track. The album title sums it up nicely — a raw power trio at their best.

RAZOR'S LATEST ALBUM, *CYCLE OF CONTEMPT*, IS OUT NOW VIA RELAPSE



El Perro main man
Parker Griggs



El Perro

WITH THIS NEW PROJECT, LONGTIME RADIO MOSCOW GUITARIST PARKER GRIGGS DOGGEDLY PURSUES HIS GROOVY, PSYCHEDELIC DREAM

By Joshua M. Miller

▶ FOR THE PAST 15-plus years, psychedelic rock has been the bread and butter of Parker Griggs and power trio Radio Moscow. His growling, emotive vocals and prowess on guitar have won over many fans, including the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach, who produced the band's self-titled 2007 debut album. The band's music draws inspiration from Blue Cheer and other deep-cut psychedelic rock influences. ("I'm always digging deep into underground music," Griggs says.)

Recently, Griggs decided to break from his routine, utilize more of his influences (including Black Merda and Funkadelic) and form a new band, El Perro (which also features former Radio Moscow drummer Lonnie Blanton, bassist Shawn Davis and guitarist Holland Redd). He says the songs on the band's debut, *Hair of El Perro*, have a fuller sound that's "a little more groovy than Moscow."

"I'd done the Moscow thing for so long,

and I almost felt forced to [do] a certain style with them, so I wanted to break free... to do whatever we wanted," Griggs says. "Something a little bigger, more people, percussion players, a second guitar player — and more of a melting pot of influences. Stuff from all over — psychedelic rock, funk and soul, and even Middle Eastern music and Turkish rock. We'd grab influences from wherever, mix them up and do our own thing."

The decidedly expanded sound allows Griggs a lot more room to breathe as a guitarist. On "Black Days," the rhythm section's "tribal Latin beat" gave him "room to do all sorts of fun stuff and really build up to solo — until it comes to a big finale at the end."

"It's not all just a free jam," he says of the solo. "It's structured and thought-out. [I] just doubled the solos and got a big sound."

Griggs mainly used a Strat for most of the lead parts, often employing the guitar's

"I'd done the Moscow Radio thing for so long, and I almost felt forced to [do] a certain style with them, so I wanted to break free"

— PARKER GRIGGS

volume knob to achieve fierce swells. The album also features a vintage Danelectro Coral Firefly hollowbody, an early Sixties Rickenbacker Electro lap steel, a 1965 Gibson Non-Reverse Firebird, an electric sitar, a Harmony H75 archtop and a late-Fifties Supro Dual-Tone.

"I just bring a bunch in and see what sounds best for each song," Griggs says.

Dick Dale performs in the Sixties



MY PEDALBOARD SCOTT MCKEON

WHAT TOM JONES' GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Amit Sharma

▶ **"THE FIRST THING** the guitar sees is the SM Fuzz (gray pedal near lower right corner), which is my own signature fuzz pedal, then the Vemuram Jan Ray overdrive. After that we're into the first GigRig switcher, which has the Hudson Electronics Broadcast preamp, Donner Mini Dynamic Wah, Nobels ODR-1 overdrive and the Dawner Prince Pulse for amazing Leslie sounds. There's also an old Fulltone Clyde Standard wah.

"Then there's the second GigRig switcher, which has the Origin Cali76 compressor, Blackout Effectors Cadavernous Reverb, Jam Pedals Delay Llama (which I set to slapback) and the Strymon Flint tremolo. From there I go into the Lehle volume pedal, which is placed after the drives and compressor so I can use it for swells and pedal-steel-type stuff.

"Next up, there's my Dawner Prince Boonar, which is an incredible Binson Echorec-style delay. With the Tom Jones band, I'm using the Strymon Timeline mostly for long atmospheric delays on the few tracks we play to a click, where it's programmed with the bpm. Having the delays after the volume pedal allows the trails to continue. I'm using two Cioks DC10 power

supplies to power the board, and there's a little TC Electronic PolyTune 2 there too. This rig was built with the help of my friend and fellow guitarist Ben Jones."

■ IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:

"The SM Fuzz. It's so sensitive that it can go from a clean boost to full saturation — and sounding like the amp is exploding — just by using the guitar's volume pot. It's nice and loud, too, which is handy because sound guys hate that!"

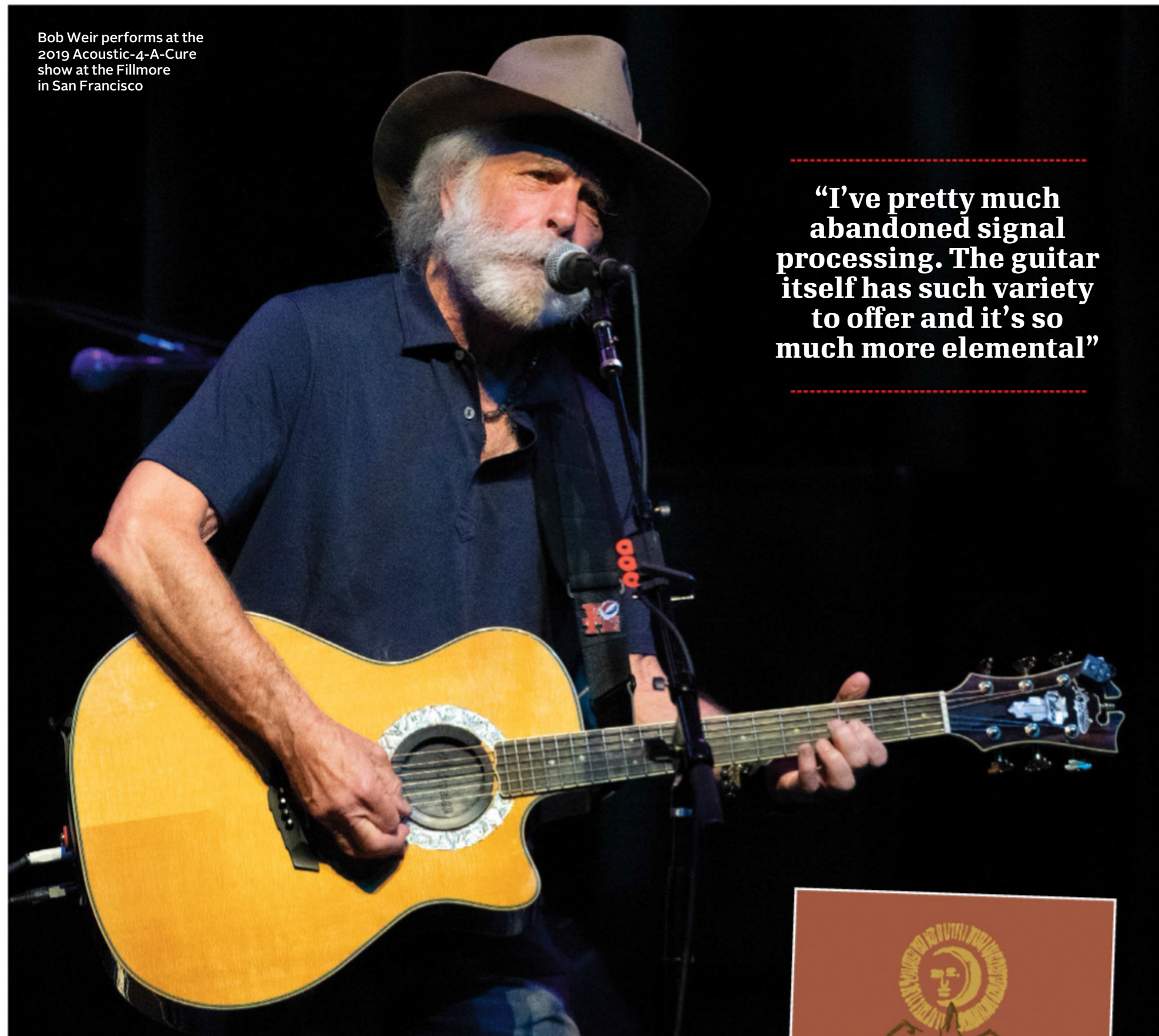


Scott McKeon [right] onstage with Tom Jones

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

Bob Weir performs at the 2019 Acoustic-4-A-Cure show at the Fillmore in San Francisco

“I’ve pretty much abandoned signal processing. The guitar itself has such variety to offer and it’s so much more elemental”



Rocky Mountain High

BOB WEIR AND COMPANY TAKE CLASSIC GRATEFUL DEAD SONGS TO BOLD NEW PLACES ON *LIVE IN COLORADO*, HIS FIRST LIVE ALBUM WITH THE WOLF BROS. ALSO UP FOR DISCUSSION? STAGE FRIGHT!

By Alan Paul

▶ BOB WEIR IS ridiculously busy at age 74. The founding member and rhythm guitarist of the Grateful Dead now spends his summers touring stadiums with Dead & Company, the group that also features Dead drummers Bill Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart, guitarist John Mayer, bassist Oteil Burbridge and pianist Jeff Chimenti. Since 2018, he’s also toured with Bobby Weir and

Wolf Bros, a group that began as a trio with bassist Don Was — best known as a producer of the Rolling Stones, Bonnie Raitt, Bob Dylan and many others — and Primus drummer Jay Lane, a longtime Weir collaborator. The band has slowly expanded into a 10-piece juggernaut.

They are captured on their first album, *Live in Colorado*, which features highlights

from a 2021 tour of the Centennial State, which represented their first live performances in front of an audience in almost a year, due to the pandemic. It’s a very strong collection of Dead and Weir tunes, all of which take on a different form in the group, with his distinctive rhythm playing and vocals center stage atop slinky, swirling textures. In October, the group will play

four shows with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., performing a concerto of mostly Grateful Dead music, something they're still hammering out onstage and off.

Weir also has been working with Taj Mahal on a stage musical about Negro League baseball icon Satchel Paige, as well as an opera and a memoir. He's also become an unlikely workout icon, posting his daily exercise routines on social media to the delight of fans. We caught up with him on the phone as he was preparing for Wolf Bros' spring tour.

Your endless activity is inspiring, and the familiar songs on the new live album sound totally renewed. How did Bobby Weir and Wolf Bros come about?

I started a little trio, the Wolf Bros, and it's become a... I guess the word is dectet. There's 10 of us! It can operate in various configurations from three to 10. And now I'm working with a symphony orchestra, which God knows is fairly rewarding. It took a lifetime to crowbar the door open to do all this stuff, and here it is — all the stuff that makes life worth living.

I woke up one morning with this dream in my head; I was playing in a trio with Don and Jay. I just rolled over, picked up the phone and called Don and asked him if he wanted to do this and he said sure. As the band has grown, parts of our show still focus on the trio because we really can do something.

Then you added pianist Jeff Chimenti, who you've played with for years, and pedal steel player Greg Leisz, an absolute master as a soloist and at chordal coloring. How did he come into your orbit?

Don suggested we give him a try. I halfway grew up on country music, so I've always had a soft spot in my heart for pedal steel. The instrument is pretty much relegated to country music, but it's capable of so much more than that. I think you should find it everywhere, but it's so complicated and there are so few pedal steel players. We don't have Greg all the time. Sometimes we use Barry Sless, who's also great.

Then you added the horn section and some strings. Is this all in preparation for playing with the orchestra?

Sort of. We still gotta workshop this, but we selected the guys to tour with us with the idea that they'd develop a library of riffs they would then use to lead their instrumental groupings; the violinist would lead the violins and feed them a line, for instance. We have about six months to figure out exactly how we're going to do this.

They'll be reading, but the section leader will be improvising; we'll be feeding them lines to play and they'll never be interpreted the same.

Is this an effort to merge the symphonic tradition with your love of improvisation?

Yeah, that's what we're up to. The rehearsals we've had with the Marin and Stanford Symphony orchestras have been pretty amazing. It works. Bach was famous for making enormous classical pieces out of folk tunes, which is more or less what we're up to here with Grateful Dead songs. We're taking music that's drawn from the folk traditions and bringing them to full classical orchestration.

Twenty years ago, when I was interviewing you for *Guitar World*, you said, "I never had too much of an idea of what I'm doing." Do you still feel that way about your playing?

I think that through dogged persistence, I've found ways to pull an awful lot of variety out of the sounds an electric guitar can produce. I feel like I'm starting to get a handle on how to bring it all together and make music. I've discovered that certain configurations of instrument design and pickup design will give me a broader spectrum to work with, so I've pretty much abandoned signal processing. The guitar itself has such variety to offer and it's so much more elemental. I don't use delays or envelope filters much anymore because the guitar itself tells me all I want to hear.

You've talked before about how much your style developed by playing with Jerry Garcia and Phil Lesh, who had such distinct approaches to their instruments. [Dead & Company bassist] Oteil [Burbidge] and John [Mayer] are very different players. Do you continue to evolve playing with different people, or do they have to fit in with you at this point?

No, no. We fit in together as best we can, which is essential to our kind of music. We just find the center and go for that. The adaptation has gone both ways. When Oteil is at his best for our music is when he's framing the songs with a bass line that some of them really have never had, because Phil was playing lead bass — a different deal. Some of those songs never really had a traditional bass line. Oteil is able to find that, and I think the songs are thankful and have grown from that.

Live in Colorado is a great example of how you can play the same catalog differently in different settings. One great example is your riff that kicks off "Big

River," which is quite different from the type of thing you usually play.

Yeah. It's more of a traditional lead guitar riff that I found, but it's actually something I got from what Jerry used to play on the song, and then it sat with me for a couple of decades after he checked out. It's my interpretation of that. All this comes from our mutual understanding of what Johnny Cash really wanted with that song.

Are there other songs where Jerry's stuff seeped into you and came out without you really consciously doing it?

That was actually happening even when Jerry was still alive. Like the riff that I do in "Wharf Rat," which I think I pulled out of Jerry's psyche one day when we were rehearsing. When I got that right, I could click with it and he started answering and started framing that, so I stuck with it, and it's stayed with the song for five decades now.

You've said you still have stage fright, which seems amazing. You've probably performed in front of as many people as anyone ever has. Can you describe that?

It's the anticipation, the time before walking out. There is a moment onstage when I think, "Thank God, I'm out of here." I can forget myself, leave the building and let the characters in the songs have my body, my spirit and everything else. I can take a breather and not have to worry about it. As far as the size of the crowd, a living room is the toughest for me. Oftentimes the larger the crowd, the way easier it is for me.

It's less personal. I've heard Jerry had stage fright too.

Oh yeah. And you could make the case that that's what killed him, because he used those drugs to dull the stage fright, to dull the pain of it, because it physically hurt. We talked about it a fair bit. We compared notes on how we dealt with stage fright. It wasn't an ongoing conversation, because there wasn't much new to add to it after the first six months that I'd known him. After we realized we were in the same boat, there wasn't much more to say about it, but we would sometimes give each other looks that said, "It's okay, I got past it. How are you doing?"

Gregg Allman also had stage fright, and to look from the outside it's impossible to imagine that could be possible for the three of you.

People think we can't wait to get on stage. I want to play, yes, but those last few steps on stage are like walking into a torture chamber every time. It's not easy.

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Josh Klinghoffer [left]
and Eddie Vedder perform
Inglewood, California,
May 8, 2021



A Gigaton of Charm

JOSH KLINGHOFFER WAS A RED HOT CHILI PEPPER — AND NOW HE RECORDS WITH EDDIE VEDDER AND PERFORMS WITH PEARL JAM. WHAT IS IT ABOUT HIM THAT ALL THESE (HUGELY SUCCESSFUL) ACTS WANT?

By Joe Bosso

▶ IN DECEMBER 2019, Josh Klinghoffer's world was upended when he was given the stunning and abrupt news that, after 10 years of membership in the Red Hot Chili Peppers, his services were no longer required and that the band's longtime guitarist, John Frusciante, was rejoining. He didn't see it coming, and for a period he felt numb, but given time and space he's been able to process his dismissal and put things in perspective.

"Obviously, it's sad when something is taken from you," Klinghoffer says. "I did a perfect 10 years with them, but for as much as I love those guys and loved playing with them, it was also enormously stifling creatively. They're an established band with an established sound, and I learned

over time how little deviating from that was possible."

Asked to elaborate, he says, "When I first joined, I wouldn't use certain chords when I was writing if they sounded like something John would play. Or if it sounded like a choice they would have made on their last album, I purposely went the other way." He reveals that his efforts in trying to push the band toward new areas of expression proved frustrating at times, saying, "I thought I was doing a good job of writing music with them, but it wound up not kind of becoming part of my story, or if it is part of my story with them, it's a small part. As much as I thought they were up for experimentation, they generally stayed in their

own lane."

Klinghoffer is quick to deem his tenure with the Chili Peppers "a blessing and a beautiful experience," but he's now able to view his departure from the band "the best thing that could have happened to me. I'm free to explore other musical avenues and perhaps find my own sound more than I was able to with them."

It didn't take him long to land on his feet. Shortly after he was cut from the Chili Peppers, he was asked to join Pearl Jam as a multi-purpose touring member, an association that soon led to him writing and recording with Eddie Vedder for the singer's latest solo album, *Earthling*. Interestingly enough, that project — and a short tour coinciding with the record's release —

also included Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith. “It was great to play with Chad again right away,” Klinghoffer says. “It felt so comfortable and familiar.”

Since 2019, Klinghoffer has released solo albums under the pseudonym Pluralone. First there was *To Be One with You*, and a year later came *I Don’t Feel Well*. His latest album under the Pluralone moniker, *This Is the Show*, is a dreamy, largely synth-driven set produced by the guitarist’s onetime Dot Hacker bandmate Clint Walsh. “I was always planning to do my own music even when I was in the Chili Peppers,” Klinghoffer says. “There probably wouldn’t have been so many albums in such a short period of time because I would have had to work around their schedule. Now it’s going to be much easier.”

Most guitarists dream of getting in one big band. You were a Chili Pepper, and now you play with Pearl Jam. What is it about you that all these bands want?
[Laughs] That’s a good question! I think it’s a combination of a lot of things. Some of it’s pure luck and timing, but I also think it might have something to do with my thirst for musical knowledge. I love other people’s music, but I don’t try to emulate anybody’s playing. I’ve never lost this sense that I’m a beginner, and I think that gives me a more primal approach to the guitar, and perhaps that makes my playing sound individualistic.

Also, I never really lost the fan side of me. Whether it’s the Chili Peppers or Pearl Jam, I come at them with the same adoration of any fan who was affected deeply by their music, but I’m also somebody who is now in this position of playing alongside them. I try to be loving and supportive. I think that’s part of what carries me through.

How did the invitation to play with Pearl Jam come about?

Originally, it was like, “Come join us for this next tour,” because at the time the record they were about to release [2020’s *Gigaton*] had a lot of backing vocals and other sounds — keyboards, extra guitars and all these miscellaneous things. They were battling around the idea of having somebody else with them, but they didn’t want to turn it into this huge band. But when I suddenly became available, they thought, “Oh, this is perfect. We like him, and he can play anything we need.” I mean, obviously, no one’s going to be in Pearl Jam except those five guys. They’ve had Boom Gaspar playing keyboards as a touring member for a while. But it’s great. I’m honored to say that these



“I’ve never lost this sense that I’m a beginner, and I think that gives me a more primal approach to the guitar, and perhaps that makes my playing sound individualistic”

guys are my friends.

You hooked up with the Chili Peppers and Pearl Jam when they already had deep catalogs. In each case, did you have to learn 100 songs in a week?

I was already in the Chili Peppers’ orbit before joining them. I was good friends with John, and I toured with the band in 2007 as a second guitar player. I generally knew what they did and didn’t play, so I knew what to work on. Some songs from *Stadium Arcadia* I wasn’t familiar with on the guitar, but I knew *Blood Sugar* backward and forward. In the case of Pearl Jam, I know their catalog from record one to five like the back of my hand. Albums from 2000 onward, I don’t know as well.

You were the sole guitarist in the Chili Peppers. With Pearl Jam, however, you’re one of three, sometimes four, guitarists. What kind of adjustment was that?

It’s certainly nice to not have to solo and to have this kind of musical bed beneath you. When I play guitar with Pearl Jam, it’s very background and supportive. They’ve got their bases pretty much covered. If they need a background vocal or a little guitar or keyboard part, I can focus on that. It’s a different thing entirely, but I enjoyed doing both. Soloing with the Chili Peppers, even though I didn’t grow up soloing and I

didn’t so much care about it, it was always fun. It was always a new experience every time.

You’ve put out three Pluralone albums in as many years, and you co-wrote tunes with Eddie for *Earthling*. Writing doesn’t seem to be a problem for you.

No, not so much. The thing that’s laborious for me is lyrics, but the more I do it, the easier it gets. Actually, the hard part for me is coming up with what to write *about*. There’s so much going on in the world, and there’s tons going on in one’s inner world, and there’s also been so much that has been said before. Trying to come up with a unique way of saying generally the same thing, and doing it in a way that fits rhythmically with the chords you’ve written, that’s the real work for me.

You got to play a lot of rocking guitar on *Earthling*.

Absolutely. It was great to play a lot of guitar on the record. I love my playing on “Brother the Cloud,” which they released as a single. But Andrew Watt does a lot of guitar, too. A lot of the guitar on the record is him.

On the other hand, there’s not a lot of guitar on *This Is the Show*. It’s more of a textural element.

The record was born out of 2020 Covid times, trying to do an album remotely with my old band Dot Hacker. I’d write a song and send it to Clint Walsh, and he would communicate with the rhythm section. But it was hard to get four people to agree, and the Dot Hacker thing kind of fell apart. There were things that Clint and I really enjoyed working together on, so we just decided, “Hey, why don’t we just make this?”

As for guitars, I think we were both in the kind of headspace of wanting to make an album that was more about songs. We didn’t consciously set out not to use the guitar, but it just kind of took shape that way. But having said all that, I feel as if the next album I do will be a return to guitar, because it’s been a while now.

When you tour with Pearl Jam this year, will you be playing any new guitars?

I found a really nice Custom Shop Tele that I used on the *Earthling* tour. It’s a beautiful, very faded Olympic White Custom Shop Tele, and I’m going to put a B- and G-bender in it. That’ll come out with me. And the other day I got a beautiful 1928 koa Martin. I’m a big fan of those little Martins, and I’ve never owned a koa wood acoustic, so that was enough for me to want to get it.

Alexisonfire

DALLAS GREEN AND WADE McNEIL EXPLAIN WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE THE BAND'S LAST ALBUM — FROM 13 YEARS AGO! — INCLUDING THEIR GUITAR DYNAMIC

By Adam Kovac

▶ IN THE 13 years since Alexisonfire released their last full-length album, much has changed. Screamo has gone from being a punchline to a beloved nostalgic era, as evidenced by the huge crowds jamming into Emo Nights across the continent.

But when it came time to get back in the studio, capping off a reunion that until now has generated just a handful of singles to go along with regular touring, capitalizing on nostalgia was the last thing the Canadian quintet had in mind. The result of those sessions, *Otherness*, is a moodier affair. As always, the band is relying on singer/guitarist Dallas Green's angelic voice for the hooks, punctuated by the demonic screaming of George Pettit and gravelly whiskey-and-cigarettes tenor of Wade McNeil. But the album relies less on the fleet-fingered riffing of past releases and more on delay-drenched atmospheric guitar lines to complement the trio of voices.

"The approach over the years has changed to allow everything to have its own space," McNeil says. "I think that's really important. It's more to benefit the song — and finding the most important part that we want people to hold onto."



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Strat, Gibson Les Paul Junior (McNeil); Fender Jazzmaster, G&L Tribute Rampage — a gift from Jerry Cantrell (Green)
- **AMPS** Fifties Fender Princeton (McNeil); Seventies Garnet combo (Green)



Alexisonfire's
Dallas Green
[left] and
Wade McNeil



"On this record, I really became the lead guitar player of the band"

— DALLAS GREEN

Green, whose folky side project City and Colour released several albums during AoF's hiatus, had seen his own guitar playing undergo an evolution. As the band began work on *Otherness*, it was agreed that for the first time he and McNeil would split guitar duties along more conventional roles than ever before.

"On this record, I really became the lead guitar player of the band, just in terms of the way we were doing songs and Dal and my respective interests in guitar playing," Green says. "He was like, 'What I really want to do is play rhythm guitar and sing.' And my interest in guitar over the last few years has moved more toward that kind of stuff anyway."

To that end, McNeil spent the past few years throwing himself into the works of artists that are almost never connected to

post-hardcore, namely the Allman Brothers Band and the Grateful Dead. While that inspiration is more evident in his own side gig, the psychedelic Doom's Children, *Otherness* does have its jammy moments, albeit ones cranked to 10.

"There are a few places where we go absolutely fucking crazy. I think it's a nice sign of where Alexis is at in our songwriting, allowing stuff like that to creep in. This record, I think, shatters a lot of the old rules we had for ourselves for what the band can be, what kind of songs we were writing. I really feel we can do anything at this point, which is a very nice way to feel upon releasing a record."



Pup perform on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, March 20, 2019 — [from left] Steven Sladkowski, Stefan Babcock, Zachary Mykula and Nestor Chumak

Pup

STEFAN BABCOCK AND STEVE SLADKOWSKI REVEL IN THE UNRAVELING OF PUP (THE BAND)

By Mike Huguenor



“We made choices that we would not normally have made and that I should regret, but that I don’t”

— STEFAN BABCOCK

▶ **THE UNRAVELING OF** Pup began with a piano.

“I bought this Fender Rhodes a year ago,” says Stefan Babcock, the band’s singer and rhythm guitarist. “‘Four Chords’ was the first thing I wrote on it because I literally knew how to play just four chords.”

The song, which opens the band’s new record, *The Unraveling of PUPTheBand*, started as a tossed-off joke about the

guitar-based punk band wasting money on a piano. Then, five weeks into their 2021 recording sessions, bassist Nestor Chumak suggested they use the song for real — as the album’s first track.

“My brain kind of melted a little, but the more I thought about it, he was right,” Babcock says. “It made the whole record make sense.”

With its piano motif and frequent surprises (check that trap beat in 11/12 at the top of “Habits”), *The Unraveling* might be Pup’s most surprising record yet. But underneath the new textural elements is the same genre-pushing guitar work and punk energy that has won the band their legion of fans. “Habits” may open with a beat that seems to wobble its way off Soundcloud, but the melody bursting out of the first chorus fits right alongside emo-punk singles like 2014’s “Mabu.”

While recording, the band lived at Peter Katis’ Tarquin Studio in Connecticut, the lengthy session and all-in-one location allowing them to experiment naturally over time.

“We made choices that we would not

normally have made and that I should regret, but that I don’t,” Babcock says.

Steve Sladkowski, the band’s lead guitarist, agrees.

“It really does feel like there was no other way to make this record,” he says.

At times, Sladkowski would play through the same pedal chain as the studio’s Moog synth, or make loops in his bedroom, then pipe them into the live room. Other times, he’d double electric parts with a hollow-body, as on the massive “Waiting,” which includes a ’62 Gibson ES-125 shadowing his normal Jazzmaster, lending the verses additional rhythmic punch, room sound and color as the tension climbs.

“There’s an acoustic-guitar woodiness, but it’s a thrash riff,” Sladkowski says.

During the song’s explosive chorus, the rhythm section bobs in halftime, but Sladkowski and Babcock dig deep into a single octave-chord, driving the tension right back up again. The band might have unraveled, but the songwriting sure hasn’t.



AXOLOGY

- **AMP** Fender ’68 Custom Vibrolux Reverb 2x10 (reissue), Dr. Z Z-Wreck head, Traynor 2x12 cab (Sladkowski); Dr. Z Maz 18 Jr., Dr. Z 1x12 cab, Music Man Sixty-Five 2x12 with Marshall Wolverine speakers (Babcock)
- **EFFECTS** TC Electronic PolyTune 3, Xotic Effects SP Compressor, EHX Freeze, EHX Micro POG, Tym Big Mud fuzz, Lauren Audio Mustang overdrive, Strymon El Capistan delay, Lehle volume pedal (Sladkowski); Boss TU-3 > Strymon Sunset > EarthQuaker Devices Hoof Reaper fuzz > EarthQuaker Tone Job EQ/boost (Babcock)

HOW TO CARRY A TUNE

Ten fool-proof ways to keep your guitar in tune — from floor pedals and clip-on devices to apps

P.32

BY AMIT SHARMA

GW

AT THE END of the day, it really doesn't matter how good a guitarist you are if the instrument you're holding isn't in tune. Only a handful of players have made a living wrestling guitars back into pitch without putting so much as a foot wrong over the years — Jeff Beck arguably being among the finest, considering how much abuse his whammy bar gets on any given night. But for the rest of us mortals, those chords, riffs and leads are just not going to sing as well as they could — or, indeed, as well as they *should* — if our tuning isn't as close to perfect as humanly possible.

There have been all sorts of components invented and reinvented for the guitar to help combat slippage, from locking machine heads and specialist nuts to machines that do the hard work for you, as demonstrated by the robot tuners that controversially became a standard feature for Les Pauls briefly in 2015. External and removable devices, however, such as floor tuners or clip-on units for your headstock have averted many a crisis and proven time and time again to be one of a guitarist's most sacredly valued weapons. Some players might even tell you the most important pedal on their board is the same Boss TU-2 they started out with. It's easy to see why — especially when you factor in just how precious stage and studio time can be for bands in the modern age.

Here are 10 of our favorite ways to check if we're still in tune and sounding our very best.

TC ELECTRONIC POLYTUNE 3

\$170, tcelectronic.com

▶ Unveiled by TC Electronic in 2010, the original Polytune stole headlines for its game-changing ingenuity and provoked a reaction that was, in all fairness, untypically feverish for a pedal that didn't make any exciting noises or do anything remarkable tonally. Being the world's first polyphonic guitar tuner, its arrival meant players could check all strings at the same time and cut down on the time spent doing them one-by-one, as per the monophonic units of the past. Just over a decade on, this latest iteration packs in some updates that have helped maintain its place as the industry standard, such as the inclusion of TC's Bona Fide Buffer circuitry to ensure no loss of brightness, which can also be switched back to true bypass. There's also a new alternate tunings feature, auto dimming to adjust to outdoor stages, plus an ultra precise strobe mode with ± 0.1 cent accuracy — providing users near-absolute precision and peace of mind at little cost.



BOSS**TU-3**\$119, boss.info

▶ It's no secret Boss tuners have seen more studios and stages than any other brand. Bundling bulletproof durability and world-class engineering at a price every player could easily afford, the TU-2 ended up becoming the biggest-selling unit of its kind before being replaced by the TU-3 in 2010. This latest incarnation packs a 21-segment LED meter, a new high brightness mode for outdoor visibility and is even able to tune by string number for seven-string guitars and six-string basses. In 2016 it was joined by the premium TU-3W, found in the Japanese-made Waza Craft range, and the TU-3S, an "always on" half-sized version that cleverly omitted the switch and battery compartment.



SNARK RECHARGEABLE CLIP-ON

\$19, snarktuners.com

◀ Until the beginning of this year, all of Snark's successful clip-on tuners had been coin-cell powered. This latest model has a built-in rechargeable battery that can be connected via USB to any plug, computer or power bank, offering what they promise to be "weeks to months of regular usage" per charge. Given how easy it is to forget to switch your clip-on tuner off (come on, we've all done it!), the all-new Snark makes a lot of practical sense and saves you wasting money on batteries while also staying environmentally friendly. As well as rotating a full 360 degrees, the display is bright, colorful and easy to read in just about any environment you could find yourself playing in. And best of all, just like all clip-ons, it saves an extra spot by your feet.

THOSE CHORDS,
RIFFS AND LEADS
ARE NOT GOING
TO SING AS WELL
AS THEY COULD IF
OUR TUNING ISN'T
AS CLOSE TO
PERFECT AS
POSSIBLE

FENDER**BULLET**\$29, fender.com

▶ Looking more like an attachment for James Bond's sniper rifle than anything designed to keep musicians from hitting bum notes, there's a lot to like about the Fender Bullet. First of all, it's one of the smallest clip-ons ever made and less of a distraction on the guitar itself compared to anything else out there, which is handy if you're holding the kind of instrument that likes to be shown off. There's also a 10-minute auto sleep mode to help preserve battery life — a great inclusion for those prone to getting carried away in the heat of creativity and forgetting to power down. But don't be fooled, despite its stealthy ingenuity, the Bullet is a breeze to read, thanks to the well-lit LED color screen.



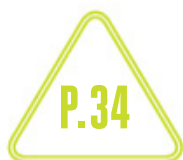


ERNIE BALL VPJR TUNER/VOLUME

\$199, ernieball.com

Buying pedals is all well and good — until you look at your board and realize there's no way you're going to be able to fit everything you need on there.

Thankfully the clever people over at Ernie Ball came up with the idea of combining two units, a volume and tuner, in one simple package back in 2020. Which means you'll have more space for pedals that affect and color your tone — basically, the fun stuff — and keep the more practical tools in one place. The touchscreen monitor and impressive display make it very user-friendly, and there are three modes: one for each pedal separately (the volume rather handily giving you a 1-10 level indicator) and another for both, where the tuner function engages when the heel is down.



ELECTRO-HARMONIX EHX-2020

\$56, ehx.com

Though it's gone up slightly from the headline-stealing launch price of \$39, the first-ever floor tuner from Electro-Harmonix still works out as one hell of a deal, undercutting all the other "classic" brands by some considerable distance. Sure, it might not be as sophisticated as some of the more expensive options on this list, but it's every bit as solid and dependable, with a true bypass tuning range of B0 to B7 and accuracy down to the cent, as is standard for most tuners. It even comes with the power adapter included, which is a big bonus at this kind of price point. Ultra compact, this slimline floor unit will undoubtedly be a big hit with those needing to make every inch of that board count. Simple and straightforward in design, with the company logo in a contrasting white against the black finish, it's as effortlessly cool as it gets.



PETERSON STROBOSTOMP HD

\$149, petersontuners.com

Peterson might not be a legacy brand as far as pedals go, but they're definitely experts when it comes to keeping instruments in tune. The company was founded in 1948, and after initially developing equipment for organs, their strobe tuners of the late Sixties and Seventies were often found in studios and on stages next to guitar players like Jimmy Page, David Gilmour and Eddie Van Halen. A lot has changed, but some things haven't; they're still making the very finest equipment for such needs all these years on. The Strobostomp HD boasts a 0.1 cent accuracy and can even support nine-string guitars, while offering 100 "sweetened" tunings that help you customize your instrument like no other device out there. The company's claims of it being 20 to 30 times more precise than most of its competitors and therefore able to make your guitar sound noticeably better are well justified. One for the connoisseurs of the world.



KORG AW-OTG CLIP-ON

\$59, korg.com

It would be fair to say clip-on tuners have come a long way over the last 20 or so years. This offering from Korg is a prime example, with the same kind of OLED screen technology found on higher-end smartphones yielding ultimate clarity and visibility. It doesn't just look good, either — the AW-OTG is as accurate as they come, thanks to its 0.1 cent strobe mode. The customizable animations make the arduous task of tuning that little bit more fun, including one game where you have to fill up a bath so that a duck can float perfectly at its halfway point. But our favorite feature is undoubtedly the built-in chord finder, which will automatically display the name of the chord you are playing in real time — a great tool for songwriting, learning theory and ear training. Clever thinking from Korg.

D'ADDARIO MICRO SOUNDHOLE

\$22, daddario.com

Sure, they make guitar strings — but D'Addario has also been making tuners for quite some time now. In 2016 they introduced the Micro Soundhole, designed specifically for acoustic guitars and ukuleles. The device comes with a non-marring universal mounting clip that makes installation simple and straightforward without damaging your precious instrument — which is reassuring if you're lucky enough to own any boutique or vintage acoustics. It's also very small, so there's no need to worry about any change in your guitar's sonic profile from its presence in the chamber; your acoustic will sound exactly as it did before. Once fitted, the device looks up to the player from inside the soundhole with a bright multi-color display for easy viewing.



ANIMATIONS MAKE
TUNING THAT BIT MORE
FUN, INCLUDING ONE
GAME WHERE YOU HAVE
TO FILL UP A BATH SO A
DUCK CAN FLOAT...

FENDER FENDER TUNE APP

\$0, fender.com

Released in 2016, the five-star-rated Fender Tune app can turn your smartphone into a tuner, free of charge. It also comes with options for alternate tunings, basic tips for beginners and a whole host of options to upgrade for extra features, such as their pro tuner or extensive databases on chords and scales through Fender Play. If you arrive at rehearsals only to realize you've left your tuner at home, or if you ever find yourself running out of batteries before the big show, this app from the Big F could very well end up saving the day.



WHEN JIMI MET SPOCK

IN 1968, **JIMI HENDRIX** BROUGHT THE HOUSE DOWN — ALMOST BURNED IT DOWN, IN FACT — IN CLEVELAND. BUT THE STARS WERE IN ALIGNMENT THAT DAY FOR A MIND-MELD WITH ANOTHER COSMIC AVATAR, **LEONARD “MR. SPOCK” NIMOY**

BY NOË GOLD

BEING A MUSICOLOGIST

is like being a detective, especially when you’re tracking the artifacts of legendary performers who have passed. You research not in musty libraries but often in conversation with the survivors and cohorts of genius, following leads that take you down sonic wormholes and cultural tributaries. I’ve always compared dig-

ging up the truth about a legend like Jimi Hendrix to the journalist in *Citizen Kane* who searches for his quarry’s Rosebud. It’s like foraging for runes in the Great Pyramids, except instead of sarcophagi, you dig up priceless Stratocasters, rare minutiae of photographs and sagas of performances long since silenced.

That’s how it went when I interviewed the disc

ILLUSTRATION: ADAM FORSTER

jockey who brought Jimi Hendrix and Leonard Nimoy together — and also when I spoke with Spock before he passed. I was working on a chapter of my forthcoming book, *Hendrix Now! Backstory of a Legend*, in 2015 and things were going well. I got my first chapter written about Jimi’s days in the Village in New York City, where I encountered him for the first time and



"FREDRIK IS THE MAD GUITAR GENIUS, SO FOR HIM TO COME BACK WAS NATURAL AND MADE ME WANT TO GO ON WITH IT, TOO"

—Mårten Hagström

[from left] Jens Kidman,
Fredrik Thordendal,
Tomas Haake,
Dick Lövgren and
Mårten Hagström

we sat on a stoop on MacDougal Street comparing notes about blues records; I was set to begin the book's second chapter. As I announced giddily in the final hours of a Kickstarter campaign for the book, Nimoy had been in touch and asked for some guidelines from me so that he could write something apropos for the book's foreword. And then that February... Spock left the planet. I was distraught, not only for the loss of a hero and friend but because Leonard's passion had left such a huge hole in my universe, a terrible disturbance in the Force.

We had a common interest in things spiritual and musical — the Kabbalah, Shlomo Carlebach and the origins of that Vulcan hand signal he devised from his memories of going to the synagogue in his youth. In his 1975 autobiography, *I Am Not Spock*, Nimoy, who was Jewish, wrote that he based it on the Priestly Blessing performed by Jewish Kohanim with both hands, thumb to thumb in this same position, representing the Hebrew letter Shin, which has three upward strokes similar to the position of the thumb and fingers in the gesture. The Vulcan sign became so well known that in June 2014 its emoji character was added to version 7 of the Unicode standard as U+1F596. We also had a common interest in Yiddish.

And then there is the "Mind-Meld Experience," the day that Jimi, a renowned traveler through space, time and dimension, encountered Nimoy, another astral musical voyager.

Here, then, is WKYC Radio disc jockey Chuck Dunaway's fascinating account of a wild night with Jimi and Leonard Nimoy in Cleveland on March 25, 1968. It is Chuck D.'s story of that day, illustrated with a few rare artifacts, some of which I published in the March 1988 *Guitar World* [Special Collectors' Edition: *Hendrix Lives! Tribute to a Genius*] and others from Chuck's personal archives.

First, let me get some journo business out of the way before I tell you why you should care about what Jimi and Spock had to say to each other during their night of debauchery, philosophy and music. As I write this, I've just had a rambling phone conversation with the 86-year-old retired radio personality and station owner — known for his work with a number of popular radio stations in Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma and New York City — on his birthday, December 1. On page 82 of the March 1988 *GW*, there's a pair of photos credited to "George Shuba/Commerce Studio" documenting Hendrix's visit to Dunaway's radio show, ostensibly to have a 30-minute interview and talk about music, which turned into the aforementioned tear-ass through Cleveland with Nimoy and Noel Redding and a couple of groupies. The caption read: "Frequency Adulation: Jimi leaves WKYC, a Cleveland radio station on the day of a performance in that city, March 26, 1968. The deejay is Chuck Dunaway. Note worshipping onlookers."

So why do you care about what happened in Cleveland that day? For one thing, as I've just experienced after listening to Jimi's performance at the Music Hall in Cleveland in March 1968 (which is available on YouTube as of this writing), the Stratocaster master was in rare form that night. Shuba took a bunch of great photos that day for a *Time* magazine article. His eyewitness description says it all:

"I spent pretty close to almost eight hours with him throughout the day. I knew nothing about Hendrix

except that we went on the WKYC radio and the Chuck Dunaway show. Jimi and one of the members of his band [Redding] went on and talked about different things. They were promoting the Spirit album [their self-titled 1968 debut]. I have photos of him with Chuck and the Spirit album.

"The thing I remember about Hendrix is that the first concert was at 7:30 [p.m.] and the second was at 9:30. I watched the first concert. But just prior to the concert, I remember the master of ceremonies coming out and saying, 'We think there is a bomb underneath the seats in the hall, so could everybody stand up and lift up your seats to look and see if there's a bomb?' Like a fool, I lifted up my seat. I could have blown up. Fortunately, there was no bomb.

"I had never seen anyone play like [Jimi]. The music that came out of that guitar was unbelievable. He was on fire. At one point he played upside down. And at one point he took his guitar and smashed it into his amps. He couldn't bust that guitar. He was having a tough time with it."

The crowd was fired up, too. "Take off the hat!" one kid shouted. "I'll take my hat off if you take your pants off!" Jimi fired back.

Dunaway tells me that the fire marshals were concerned when they saw the lighter fluid in Jimi's hand, and Chuck went over to Jimi to ask him to cool it. Bomb threats always add a little edge. Said Hen-



drix to the crowd: "I'm the only one who can burn the house down." And he did, with a set that led off with "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and "Fire" and climaxed with the aforementioned pyrotechnics on "Wild Thing."

So now we come to another iconic image in the Hendrix hagiography. I've had this pic in my collection for some time, given to me by Hendrix historian David Pearcy — a copy of a copy. But it wasn't till I met up with Dunaway that I got ahold of the high-res version and an oil painting that he had made from it, which to this day is framed in a place of honor on his wall next to the trophies and accolades from his illustrious career. It chronicles a meeting in Cleveland on March 25, 1968, the night before Jimi was already in town and played at Otto's Grotto jamming with local band Good Earth. The Experience played two shows on the 26th, and Nimoy was in attendance. Later on, they met at the club and talked for hours. They even continued into Jimi's hotel room and talked again until 2 or 3 a.m.

[facing page] Leonard Nimoy flashes his famous Vulcan salute in 1980. The symbol was inspired by the Priestly Blessing performed by Jewish Kohanim with both hands, thumb to thumb, representing the Hebrew letter Shin, which is shown [below left] on a dreidel

[this page] Jimi Hendrix — at the height of his powers — on stage in the U.S. in early 1968, about a month before crossing paths with Nimoy



Megadeth Concert
In Oslo
OSLO, NORWAY
- JUNE 05: (L-R)

This photo [page 40], taken in Cleveland on March 25, 1968, shows Redding (second from left), Nimoy (center) and Hendrix (third from right). Nimoy was at a dinner in Cleveland to promote his album, *Two Sides of Leonard Nimoy*. Earlier in the day in the Statler Hotel there was a press party for the Experience. Noel Redding, wandering around the hotel, stepped into one of the other ballrooms and found Nimoy promoting his second album as a composer and singer. In Redding's 1996 book, *Are You Experienced?*, the bassist talks

about bumping into Nimoy, skipping out of the event and going back to Noel's room to party. "We snuck up to my room for a joint and commiserated over the utter boredom generated by press affairs," Redding said.

Dunaway revisited the events from memory on the phone to me.

"I interviewed Jimi on the air in the afternoon, and we walked from the studio to the entrance to the hall and went into the stage door entrance," he said. "It was to have been a 30-minute interview, and he stayed for the entire show... introduced records, spoke in

that smooth, gentle voice about all kinds of rock 'n' roll banter.

"Nimoy was in town for a convention, and he was there to promote his record on the radio. Leonard was excited to meet Hendrix." Hendrix was likewise keen to meet Spock. An autographed copy of a Nimoy album was found in Jimi's record collection.

Nimoy recalled what that meeting was like. "I was out doing some promotion in my illustrious singing career in Cleveland for an album that had just been released, *Two Sides of Leonard Nimoy*. The promo people said there will be a dinner for you this evening and there will be a lot of record people there; we were in a private room at the hotel where Hendrix was staying. So [Chuck Dunaway] says, 'Hendrix is in the next room — he heard you were here and he'd like to come in and say hello.' I thought about it for a nanosecond, and I said sure, bring him in. He was charming and very nice and we had our picture taken — he and Noel Redding and a half-dozen other people who rushed to get in the picture. He was a true genius — a great artist. A tragic end. He died much too soon, much too young."

Dunaway says they went to see Hendrix and the Experience play a show and went to dinner after that. "Nimoy and I hit it off, talking politics for hours in his hotel room. Leonard said he had heard of Hendrix and decided to stay in Cleveland another day, joining me at the Hendrix 'impromptu' guest shot with the local band. We met Jimi at the club that night, and the three of us began talking politics. We were all on the same wavelength, wanting to see the end of the war in Vietnam." They hung out till 3 a.m., finally ending up in Hendrix's hotel room.

"After the photo op, we spent the rest of the night and into the early morning hours in Jimi's suite talking politics and stuff. Jimi suggested he come to my radio program the next day, and he showed up exactly at 3, which was when I went on the air. A photographer for the *Cleveland Press* had taken the pictures and brought them to the studio where Noel and Jimi signed them. After the radio show we walked to the venue, which was a block from the radio station."

So here, now, in his own words, Chuck Dunaway sets the record straight about the day Jimi and Nimi did their mind-meld:

"Since I'd only been in Cleveland a couple of months, I had no idea who the local promoter was or if anyone locally was working the city for shows. I asked around and was told that the Belkin Brothers, Mike and Jules, who owned a neighborhood clothing store, had promoted Gary Lewis and the Playboys to entertain in their parking lot. I called the brothers and spoke with Mike. They knew nothing about Hendrix since it was so early in his career. None of us knew how big Hendrix was becoming, but Ron Sunshine's insistence that the concert was money in the bank convinced us to do the deal and buy our advertising from WKYC. As soon as I mentioned the Hendrix concert, the phones at the station were on fire. The kids knew.

"Joe Eszterhas, a writer for Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer*, and I had become friends. Joe was given an



Mårten Hagström in the recording studio during the *Omens* sessions



LEFT: GEORGE SHUBA/COMMERCE STUDIO
RIGHT: GEORGE SHUBA/BILL NITOP COLLECTION, USED BY PERMISSION

assignment for *Time* to cover Hendrix coming to Cleveland a day before his scheduled concert to play a right-handed-strung guitar with his left hand. He had done this in the past and it was good publicity. Jimi was going to sit in with a band called Good Earth at Otto's Grotto, which was a club in the basement of the Statler Hotel downtown. No publicity was given to the fact that Hendrix was coming to Cleveland a day early. Otto's wasn't big enough to handle a massive crowd, which it would have been.

"The night of Monday, March 25, we congregated at the club in anticipation of seeing Jimi do his thing. Nimoy and I were sitting close to the stage. Noel was working the room. Jimi and Noel got to the club early and came to our table and we began to talk. Jimi had a suite in the hotel where the club was located, so coming downstairs for the guest shot was easy.

"After about an hour of conversation Jimi asked me if I knew any of the ladies at the bar. I did know a couple and he wondered if I would ask them to join us in his suite after the guest stint and some picture taking for Joe's story. That was no problem, and we settled in for Jimi's guest shot playing a guitar strung for a right-handed player — only Jimi played it perfectly with his left hand.

"After the photo op, Leonard and I went to Jimi's suite with three women. When we went to the rooms Jimi disappeared with the ladies into his room and the rest of us sat on a couch and talked. After a short while Jimi emerged, told the girls goodbye and settled into our conversation. We spoke of politics and war and all things hippie. We agreed that if we could harness the energy of the anti-war protesters into a political movement it would be gigantic. Sounds like dope

talk, but it wasn't — Jimi never did any drugs in front of me that night. We talked from about 1 to 3 a.m. We were about to leave and Jimi walked us to the door. He asked what time I was on the air that day and I said 3 to 6 p.m. He asked if I'd like to have him and Noel drop by for a visit on the air. I said yes, but I felt that was something that wasn't going to happen."

NIMOY TOLD ME BEFORE HE PASSED

that spending those hours talking about politics and spirituality, musical influences and philosophical touchstones was a high point of his career. He was struck by the dichotomy of Jimi — the wild man on the stage flying about in a purple haze versus the soft-spoken, sensitive guy who rarely raised his voice — and didn't have to — in order to be heard.

Dunaway picks up the narrative.

"I got to the station at about 2 and began to lay out my program. The studios were toward the front of the building on the second floor. I walked to the window and saw a limo with Jimi and Noel getting out. I introduced my first record and by the time it was over, Jimi and Noel had been brought to my studio. I got into my second song and had the engineer set up mics for Jimi



[clockwise from left] Jimi Hendrix and Noel Redding join disc jockey Chuck Dunaway at WKYC radio in Cleveland; Jimi is holding Spirit's 1968 debut album

Redding (second from left), Dunaway (third from left), Nimoy and Hendrix — with local musicians — at Otto's Grotto; Hendrix and Redding autographed the photo for Dunaway

Dunaway sent writer Noë Gold this framed painting of the historic meeting just before he passed away in March 2022

Hendrix and Redding — surrounded by fans — leave WKYC

Hendrix in action in Cleveland, March 26, 1968



and Noel so we could have a brief conversation, as they had to get to the venue for a sound check. We began talking about Jimi's career and music. I asked Jimi what group he was interested in now, and he said Spirit.

"I had someone go to the music library and get Jimi a copy of their album, which I gave to him. I also had the promotion person for the station get me some love beads to give to Jimi and Noel. After we were on the air for about an hour, the photographer from *The Plain Dealer* came to the studio with the developed photo from the night before at the club. Jimi and Noel signed the picture and before they left, we posed for another picture in which Jimi is shown holding the beads and the Spirit album. That photo was featured in the '75th anniversary of radio' feature in *USA Today* and in other publications, including *GW*. Noel and Jimi enjoyed being on the show so much that they blew off a sound check. That was amazing to me.

"The concert hall was half a block down the street and the backstage entrance was at street level on that side of the building. We left the studios at about 6:15 and strolled to the concert hall. We got there in time for Jimi to have a very quick meeting with the road manager before going on.



"With about 30 minutes left in the first show, a group of Cleveland bomb squad personnel came backstage and told us to shut it down while they looked for a bomb. There had been a bomb threat called into the police station. Jimi's road manager told me to go on stage and tell Jimi what was happening and stop the show. I was a little leery, as roadies tend to sweep folks off the stage who show up unannounced. But I was assured that wouldn't happen. Jimi was about to light the guitars on fire. He had the lighter fluid can in his hand; when I whispered in his ear what was going on, he stopped immediately as the crowd began to boo. As instructed, I went to the mic and told them to look under their seats for a brown paper bag. While this was going on, the bomb squad guys were sweeping backstage. After 30 minutes or so, we were told to finish the show. Jimi picked up where he left off, and the

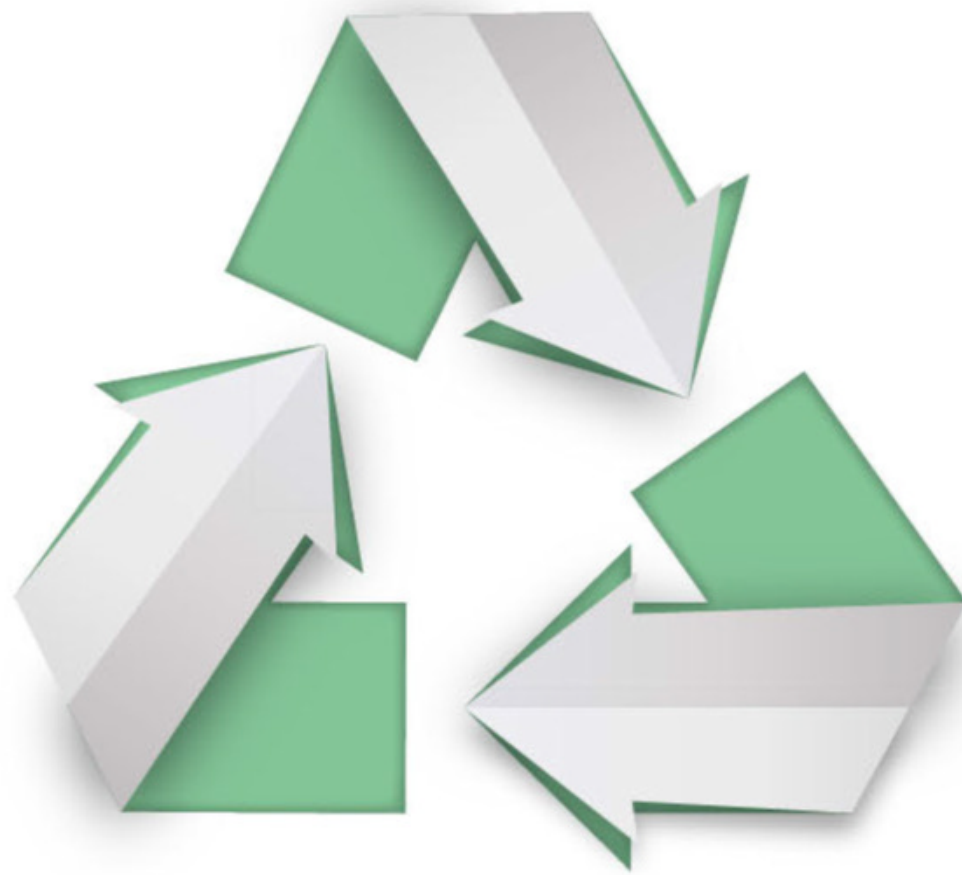
second show — and the night — went off without any more drama.

"As for Joe Eszterhas' story in *Time*... there was nothing about the guest guitar playing at the club. It was all about the bomb threat. To quote the first paragraph of the *Time* article, 'Midway in rock singer Jimi Hendrix's concert at Cleveland's Public Hall last week, the master of ceremonies asked the audience to check under their seats: there had been a bomb threat. But as it turned out, the only explosion that night was onstage. Said Hendrix, 'Nobody but Jimi burns a house down.'

"The picture of that night at Otto's Grotto continues to be a topic of rock 'n' roll conversation. The events that surrounded the famous picture are exceptional."

Adapted from Hendrix Now! Back-story of a Legend, coming soon from a major publisher. GW

ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY OF CHUCK DUNAWAY
PHOTOS: GEORGE SHUBA/COMMERCE STUDIO



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Polyphia

On *Remember That You Will Die*, instrumental prog-rock's resident devils achieve startling new levels of intricacy and wow-factor mayhem. Below, Polyphia's Tim Henson and Scott LePage talk gear, practicing, their Steve Vai collab — and the album with the feel-good title of the year

BY JOE BOSSO. PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN SCANLON

Provocateurs

AGITATORS. MERRY PRANKSTERS. TIM HENSON AND SCOTT

LePage, the diabolical guitar duo and main drivers of the Dallas-based progressive band Polyphia, own up to all of it. Over the course of the group's 12-year career, the two ax wizards have delighted in busting balls and messing with their fans' heads (who can forget the band's aptly titled 2017 EP, *The Most Hated*, on which the celebrated virtuosos purposely featured nary a lick of fretboard theatrics?), and in preparation for the release of their new album, *Remember That You Will Die* — their first studio offering since 2018's *New Levels New Devils* — they came up with their most devious plan yet: the grand fake-out.

"First, we made everybody wait a really long time," Henson says. "We teased that we had a new album in 2019, and then we kept teasing it. Pretty soon, people started joking that the new album didn't really exist, so we went with it. We even made some merch that said, 'The new album is a myth.' We wiped all of our socials clean, and everybody went crazy." He laughs. "That's when we dropped the song 'Playing God' on them."

As a preview of the new album, "Playing God" caused fans to flinch at first. Featuring Henson and LePage blitzing merrily on nylon-string guitars (in this case, custom-made, soundhole-less Ibanez Talman nylon-string models), the track was a wildly entertaining sonic and stylistic mélange of flamenco, bossa nova and trap. It marked the first time the two musicians played nylon-string guitars on record, but judging from their acrobatic and deeply soulful leads, along with their impossibly cool and casual badassery, one might easily assume they'd been born with the instruments in their hands.

At the time of this writing, the sumptuous video for the track ("We filmed it in the booziest mansion we could find," cracks Henson) has racked up nearly 10 million views on YouTube — clearly, the mad genius behind the band's anti-marketing tactics delivers results. "I guess the people missed us after all," LePage jokes.

Henson and LePage's penchant for hubris has been well documented. In a 2019 interview with *Guitar World*, Henson pulled no punches: "I think we're great. If I were a kid, we would be my favorite band. That's how cool our music is." Reminded of his comments, he now laughs and says, "We were in our shit-ass period back then. Now we're older and we want to let the work speak for itself. We know we're doing pretty cool stuff; otherwise, we wouldn't be so excited to share it with everyone." He pauses, then adds, "I don't know. I feel like I've got less to say about it now."

LePage weighs in, saying, "We still feel like we're hot shit, but we've learned that we don't have to be silly geese about it. What hasn't changed is that we just make music we want to hear. I guess that means we like some pretty cool music. It's been working for us. We try to filter out stuff that isn't great."

In stark contrast to how they recorded previous albums, Henson and LePage, along with bassist Clay Gober and drummer Clay Aeschliman, took advantage of the extended Covid lockdown periods and concocted *Remember That You Will Die* in a more leisurely, freewheeling manner. "The time off the road was like one big snow day from school," Henson says. "It was a nice change of pace that allowed us the opportunity to really figure out what kind of record we were making."

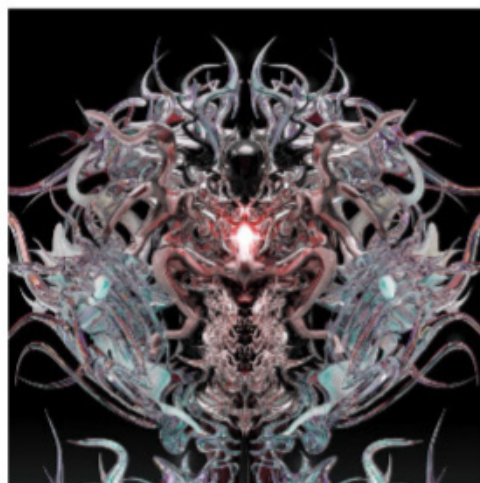
The album's core production team remained as it did on *New Levels New Devils* — Henson and LePage, along with longtime collaborators Judge and Y2K — but whereas that record featured a smattering of guests, this time out the band unfurled the welcome mat for a dizzying array of talents. There's R&B-hip-hop production duo Brasstracks, Canadian keyboardist Anomalie, pop-R&B vocalist Sophia Black, emo rapper and singer Killstation and Deftones frontman Chino Moreno, among others. And what do you know? There's even an appearance by a certain guitarist known as Steve Vai. "It was a dream come true getting Steve on the record," Henson says. "I mean, c'mon, he's a fucking legend."

Let's get right to it: *Remember That You Will Die* is a true original of our period and an across-the-board motherfucker. The artistic reach of the genre-bending band appears to

know no boundaries, and the sophisticated manner in which they construct their material, matched with their highly charged instrumental prowess, makes for a thrilling and, at times, shattering listening experience. The soothingly sensual, electronica-laced "The Audacity" lulls you in before it explodes with walloping riffery and hyperspeed soloing. Henson and Page pepper Sophia Black's sunny vocals on "ABC" with smooth rhythmic jabs, but before you know it, they're somersaulting over themselves in a whiplash-inducing assault on the senses brimming with sheets of fleet-fingered fretwork runs. On the horn-driven R&B groover "Genesis" and the Seventies soul stunner "Reverie," the two guitarists make their instruments sigh and swoon, but at unexpected moments they dish out showstopping leads that turn the music on its head.

Both "Chimera" (featuring Delaware-based rapper Lil West) and "Bloodbath" (featuring Chino Moreno) could qualify as the album's standout guitar moments — the former blends flamenco with hallucinogenic psycho metal, while the latter features a foot-on-the-monitor arena rock solo for the ages. But the true *tour de force* here is the devastating closer "Ego Death," an orgy for guitar fans that zips through so many moods and textures that it's hard to take it all in on just one listen. Henson and LePage claw and gnash their way through each space left by their nimble rhythm section — at times, the guitarists' parts are tightly woven; other times, they're bursting from a popcorn maker — and then Vai arrives, in full-fledged rock god mode, painting the walls with majestic colors that glow and burn. He darts across the scene, obviously relishing every second of it as he creates a mini opera of whammy wails and searing melodies that builds to a breathless climax.

But for all of the wondrous guitar playing on the album, both Henson and LePage take issue with a certain word affixed in the parlance of their fretboard community. "I wouldn't call what we do 'shred,'" Henson says. "It's more like 'a lot of notes.' You'll notice one or two motifs in each song, and then it expands to a lot of notes before going back to the main motif."



A portrait of Tim Henson, a member of the band Polyphia. He is shown from the chest up, holding a custom Ibanez AZ electric guitar. He has long, dark, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He has visible tattoos on his neck and left hand. He is wearing a dark, textured jacket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“A lot of these songs are our
most difficult things ever”

— TIM HENSON

Polyphia's
Tim Henson
with a custom
Ibanez AZ model...

LePage agrees. “I’m dancing around the word ‘shred’ myself,” he says. “It wasn’t in my head when we were making the record, but on certain songs I thought, ‘What would any crazy guitar player do here?’ It’s not shred for the sake of playing a lot of notes; it’s playing the right notes to complement the music — but in a faster way.”

How does your perception of your music change after you’ve brought it out into the world?

SCOTT LePAGE: It changes big-time. We’ve had songs on our records that we thought would be really popular, but they got overlooked. And vice versa; we have other songs that we don’t think much of that become very popular. It’s strange.

TIM HENSON: Once the music is released, I stop thinking about it. We finished “Playing God” three years ago, and it’s just been sitting there. I’ve heard it way too many times. I remember showing the video to some friends, and they were like, “This is so cool!” I kind of didn’t care about it anymore, but their reactions reignited my interest in it. Two weeks later I went back to being bored of it.

A few years ago, you released the decidedly non-guitary EP *The Most Hated* that had your original fans scratching their heads — and some ran away. Have you noticed them coming back?

HENSON: With that release, we sort of weeded out the pretentious “We’re here first so we own you”-type fans. We knew they were going to like our prior stuff, and that was fine. What happened was, we got new fans. It wound up being our biggest period of growth; it was a shift from being an amateur band to what we are today. Even now with this record, half of our fans might hate it, but the other half of the record is very much fan-served.

What’s your process for collaborations? Do guest

artists sometimes sound like a good idea but they don’t work out? How does this all happen?

HENSON: We’ll sit there and do a song a billion times till it works. We’ll make a collaboration work if we really want it to happen. Sometimes I’ll do studio work outside of Polyphia, and I’ll work with a producer and a collaborator, and then I’ll say, “Hey, this is really cool. Can I have this for Polyphia?” Most of the time they say OK, and it becomes a Polyphia thing. Sometimes you stumble into it.

LePAGE: On “Playing God,” we had a ton of things on that song that didn’t work out.

On that song, you guys use nylon-string guitars for the first time. Do you listen to much flamenco or bossa nova music?

HENSON: Not really. Some people have made comparisons of this song to Al Di Meola and Paco de Lucia, but I’ve never listened to them. The way the song happened was, we were in Cologne, and I found this nylon-string, S-shaped Ibanez guitar. I texted Ibanez and asked them what it was, and they said it was a failed project from 1998. I bought it, plugged it in and started messing with it, and it was right when I rediscovered the harmonic minor scale. If you play that scale on a guitar like that, it sounds very classical or Spanish influenced. The great thing about the guitar is its thin neck and its upper-fret access;

you can play stuff like you would on an electric.

We had Ibanez make new ones that are semi-hollow bodied. After we tweeted us playing the nylon guitars, we got so many comments from people: “Where can I buy that? I’ve gotta have it.” I sent screenshots and a demo of “Playing God” to Ibanez and said, “When we drop this song, if you don’t make this guitar, you’ll miss out on a lot of sales.” [Laughs] For a while, we were talking with Tosin Abasi about doing an Abasi nylon guitar. When we told Ibanez about it, they were like, “No, it’s cool. We’ll make you one.” [They both laugh]

You two seem to exist in your own world. How do you stay pure? Obviously, you listen to a lot of artists...

LePAGE: Oh, yeah.

HENSON: We listen to a lot of things outside of what we do, so it’s not easy to keep that stuff out. We’re not leisurely listening; we’re absorbing. With the years of guitar playing we have under our belts, we have a lot of influences that we put into our Polyphia generator, and it becomes something else.

LePAGE: That’s a big part of the challenge — finding a way to implement guitar in new ways. We’ve got rap songs on the record, but we still fill them with guitar — and really interesting parts throughout. That’s the fun bit.

You said a few years ago that you don’t practice —

HENSON: Yeah, fuck that! [Laughs]

LePAGE: We practice now. We have to.

HENSON: We practice so much now. Before we had this “We are the most unprofessional professional band” shtick, but now that we’re older and this is very much our livelihoods, we take it very seriously. Our stuff is very difficult to play, and we don’t want to disappoint our fans. The last thing we want is to bite ourselves in the ass. Saying we didn’t practice was one of those shit-ass statements we made a long time ago.

So what do you practice now? What do you have to get better at?

HENSON: We have to get good at playing our own songs. [Laughs] A lot of these songs are our most difficult things ever. Some of the vocal tunes

POLYSCI: LICK 1

Here we’re combining, Polyphia-style, a simple bass line with natural harmonics (N.H.) and numerous string skips and wide intervallic jumps. The natural harmonics are performed by picking the string while lightly touching it *directly above* the indicated fret with the flat “paw” of one of your fretting fingers (think barring on the fret without pressing the string down to touch it).

LIICK 1

♩ = 125 (Cmaj7) (A6-9) (G6) (Em) (play 4 times)

elec. gr. w/clean tone N.H. — — — N.H. — — — N.H. — — — — N.H. — — — —

For audio of these licks, go to GuitarWorld.com/december2022



You can then instantly lift the fret-hand finger off the string, and the harmonic(s) should continue to ring. The challenge is to allow the harmonics to ring as you continually shift your fret hand up and down the neck without inadvertently muting them (especially the ones on the 1st string). Practice playing just the harmonics at first, then adding the bass notes.

A portrait of Scott LePage, a man with long, wavy brown hair and a light beard, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt. He is holding a custom Ibanez electric guitar with a gold body and a white pickguard. The guitar has two humbucker pickups, a bridge pickup, and a control plate with three knobs and a switch. The background is a plain, light gray.

...and Scott LePage
with a custom
Ibanez of his own

“That’s part of the challenge
– finding a way to implement
guitar in new ways”

– SCOTT LePAGE

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are pretty easy, but the rest of the stuff, the instrumental songs, are by far the hardest things we've had to play; they require a lot of attention to detail.

LePAGE: "Playing God" is the obvious one. "Neurotica" is another one — it's got a crazy-fast solo part. The rest of my parts are very expressive, and I try to stay within the picked harmonics. I try to stay true to what I did on the record, and I want each part to come off with its own sound when I play live.

The song "Reverie" has a bouncy, Seventies R&B feel. There's some great soloing passages with harmonized effects, some of which sound like vintage Prince. Am I in the right lane here?

HENSON: Yeah, sure. The original idea for the song started with a soul sample, and then we spun it into a "Go Hard" beat. Then I did some thumping parts on it after Tosin showed me how to do that. Scott took more of the melodic leads. It ended up being very super-R&B and soul. So yeah, I can see the Prince reference.

"ABC" with Sophia Black has some wild solo runs and cross-cutting rhythms. The music is all over the place; it sounds like it's jammed into a Cuisinart.

HENSON: That one started when I played the riff of this super-popular TikTok sound, which I think was made by a Vocaloid. It's a VST that you can use to make vocal sounds by programming it. I made a TikTok of it and it really popped, so I wanted to recreate it as an original piece of music. I did a session with Sophia, who's half-Japanese, and the Vocaloid vocal part I had was in Japanese — it's like a vocal riff. I asked her to sing a syllable for every note, and she asked me how many parts were in it. I said, "There's 26 parts," and she said, "Oh, like the alphabet."



POLYSCI: LICK 2

Bands like Polyphia and Unprocessed have taken clean-tone riffing to new heights in recent years, by doing cool and innovative things like seamlessly incorporating natural harmonics (N.H.) into intricate chord-melody riffs. When performing

the harmonics, heed the same advice offered for those in Lick 1. This passage may be played either fingerstyle or with a pick (the best option for the fast strummed octaves in bar 3), or with pick and fingers (hybrid picking).

LICK 2

♩ = 110
(Em)
elec. gtr. w/light dist.,
reverb and delay

N.H. N.H. N.H. (play 4 times)

She's such an incredible writer. She worked out the whole song in three hours. Y2K took the riff and structured it throughout the song, and then Sophia wrote the verses, so we had this super-bare-bones pop song with this crazy riff at the beginning. Then I handed it to Scott, and he added a guitar solo and little nuances.

LePAGE: He said, "Remix it," so I did. It came out pretty crazy.

"Memento Mori" with Killstation is so groovy and spacey. There's a brutal guitar solo that features snarling riffs and harmonic swoops, but it's all so melodic.

LePAGE: Honestly, I don't like to think of that part as a solo; it's more like "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana, where Kurt Cobain played the melody part on guitar. That's what I was thinking. It's like you have this awesome vocal song, and then you have this great guitar part speaking to you in the same way as

the vocals. At least I hope that's how it comes off. It's a pretty cool guitar section.

HENSON: I prefer to think of it like "Purple Lamborghini," the Skrillex-Rick Ross song. The drop is instrumental.

LePAGE: Yeah, that's a good example.

"Bloodbath" with Chino Moreno is the most straight-up rock track on the record. Who busts out that old-school metal solo?

LePAGE: That's me. It's funny, because that song was less rock in its earlier stage. We did a session with Chino, and after we got his vocals I said, "This isn't right." I redid the guitars except for Tim's parts to make them fit the vocals. Then I added that solo because it would sound badass.

HENSON: That's my favorite Scott solo ever. I think he channeled Dimebag, Wes Hauch and even a bit of "Planetary Duality" by Faceless [guitarist Michael Keene].

LePAGE: It's got the heavy whammy pulls and shit like that. Yeah, Wes Hauch. His guitar work on the Alluvial album *Sarcoma* is incredible. I listened to the shit out of that.

And, of course, there's the epic "Ego Death" with Steve Vai. How did that all come about?

HENSON: We knew going into it that it would have to be important. We've had this idea since 2019. Steve invited us to jam with him at a NAMM show; afterward, we asked him about being on one of our songs. Throughout the next few years, we tried to find the right song, and this one ended up as the last one we did. It was one of the craziest, "notey" songs we had, but the challenge was figuring out how it would work with Steve. We worked up different sections of it but made it in a way that it sort of starts over, if that makes any sense. It became something really intense, and then we sent it off to Steve.

We went to visit him at his house, which was so fucking cool. His studio is like a children's storybook library; it's super-magical, with plants and a loft. We played him three songs before we played the one we wanted him to



POLYSCI: LICK 3

Henson and LePage frequently use a clean-tone, jazz-like approach in many of their prog-rock riffs. In this example, inspired by this style, we employ *legato phrasing* — hammer-ons, pull-offs and finger slides — as

well as economy picking (the two-string mini-sweeps) and, with the final Cmaj9 chord, some fingerpicking, in order to attack the three open-string notes simultaneously, keyboard-style.

LICK 3

♩ = 130
N.C. (Fmaj9)
elec. gtr. w/clean tone, reverb and delay

Cmaj9
let ring — — —
a m i

be on. For some reason, his iTunes was too hot for his speakers — and he's got really big speakers — and the track was clipping like crazy. We had no idea why it sounded like that, but he thought it was really cool. There was this heavy 808 drop in the song, and it blew out his speakers! [Laughs]

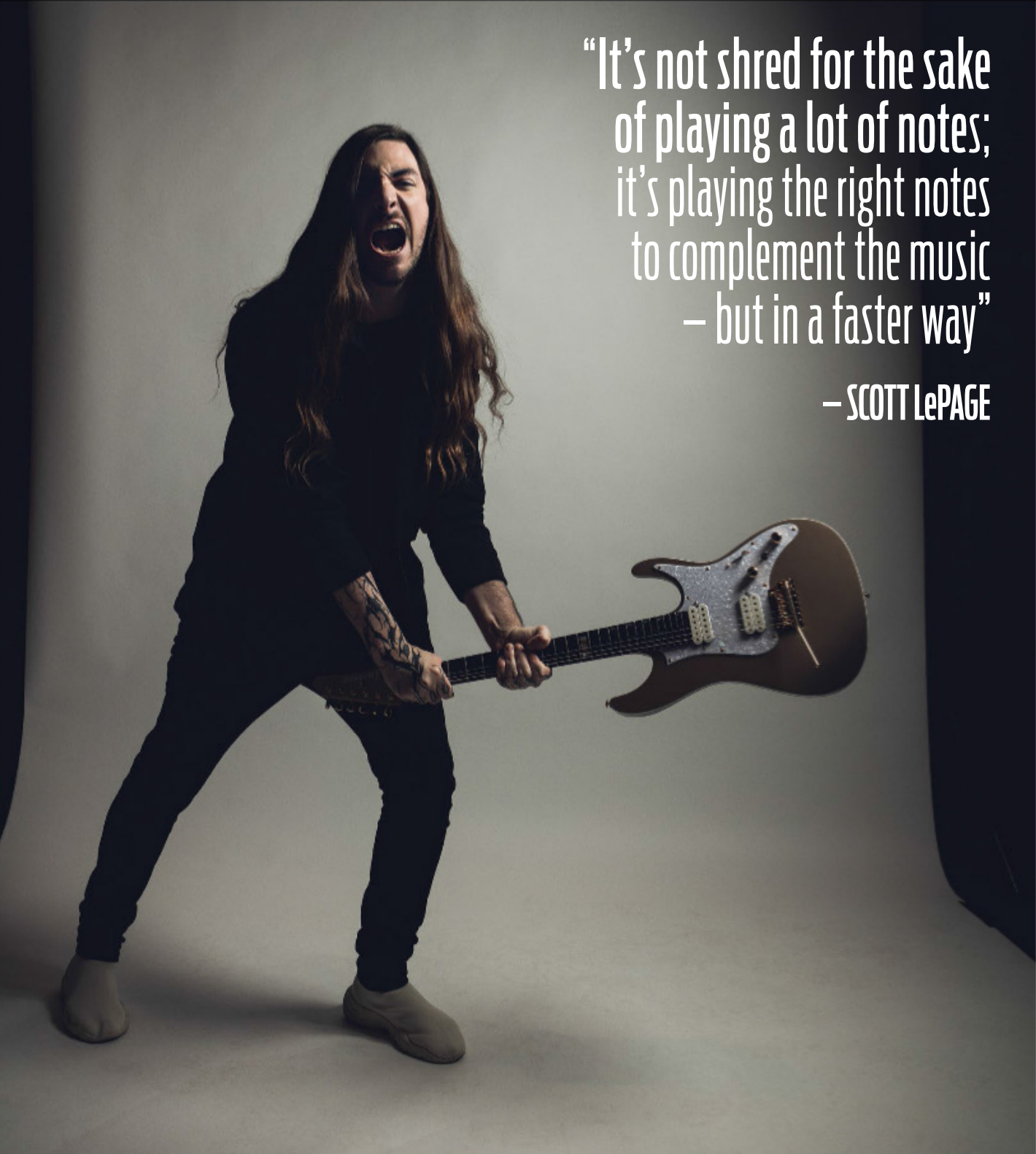
LePAGE: Really big speakers, like six feet tall.

HENSON: He got visibly agitated, and he called in his engineer to fix it.

LePAGE: We were like, "Fuck. Did we just blow out Steve Vai's speakers?"

HENSON: We asked him about being on that part, but he didn't quite know what he would do.

LePAGE: He almost said no, but not because he didn't want to do it; he just didn't know what he would do



“It’s not shred for the sake
of playing a lot of notes;
it’s playing the right notes
to complement the music
— but in a faster way”

— SCOTT LePAGE

that was worthy. He’s like that. He cares about the art so much.

HENSON: He gave us this open-ended response, like, “We’ll see.” So we left, and while we were driving we realized, “Fuck, we didn’t get a picture with Steve Vai.” We were so bummed. I pulled over and we debated what to do. Finally, I texted him: ‘Hey Steve, we didn’t get a picture with you. Can we come back?’ We felt so silly. We sat there and waited — it was the longest 15 minutes of our lives. I started driving again, and I got a text: “Oh, yeah, sure. Come back.” We U-turned and went back, and we got this shitty, horrible, grainy picture with him, but it was worth it.

A few weeks later, he said he’d worked on the track. He sent it over, and it blew us away. It was so awesome to hear a Steve Vai solo on our music. But we realized that it needed more from the backing, so I sent it to Ivan [Jackson] from Brasstracks, who lined the song with these heavenly horns. We kind of chopped Steve’s parts up because that’s what we do.

LePAGE: We told him that’s what we were going to do.

HENSON: No, no, no. Steve said, “Do whatever you want

with it. This is my gift to you.” So we chopped his stuff up and sent it back to him. It took him a few days to respond. I think he was pretty taken aback. He said, “I didn’t expect to hear myself so Polyphia-ized.” We really chopped his shit up, which I don’t think anybody had done before. We ended up going back and making it true to the original, only because we wanted him to be really happy with it. We meant no disrespect — we just like to try things. [For more about “Ego Death” and Vai, check out the feature on page 54.]

These songs are so intricate and wild. How on earth are you going to play them live?

LePAGE: That’s what we’re figuring out right now. I’d say we’re going to

play half the new record live. The songs we’re doing aren’t impossible — they’re just really difficult. In the past, we recorded some songs we knew we wouldn’t play live, so our attitude was, “Let’s just make it sound cool and do some crazy weirdo shit on it.” We didn’t really do that on this album.

HENSON: I would say we did, but we figured out ways around it. If there’s a will, there’s a way. And we have the will. We get there by practicing a shit ton every day.

The album title — *Remember That You Will Die*. Not exactly a feel-good notion.

LePAGE: Humans are self-aware of the inevitability of death, and they use their limited time alive to invent things that can exist eternally. Artists create things to carry on their legacy through the likes of their imagination, to be embedded into history forever. With the invention of artificial intelligence and its application to art and technology, the chances of dying out become less as people find ways to bridge the gap between human tendencies and computer thinking. Connecting the two ultimately leads to the perpetuity of the human experience, which is the closest humans have come to immortality. The album title ties into the art.

Wow. OK, mind blown. So let’s go through the guitars you used on the record.

LePAGE: Sure. I used the black Ibanez AZ seven-string and my Ibanez signature, the red SLM10. There were some AZ six-strings, and I did the nylon stuff... Oh, and the Ibanez RG8 and an S. I definitely used an Ibanez Iron Label Xiphos. That guitar inspired “Bloodbath” to be so heavy. I probably played a couple of Tim’s guitars.

HENSON: We did a bunch of out-of-state sessions, and we brought a shit ton of guitars with us. I left, like, six guitars in Detroit; they’ve been there for two years. I used an Ibanez SC500N and the nylon guitars. I played my signatures — the THBB8 and the THBB10. There was an AZ seven-string and an AZ prototype. Oh, and I played my new signature prototype, but I can’t talk about that right now. **GW**

[from left] Scott LePage,
Steve Vai and Tim Henson
enjoy a bit of fresh air
in Los Angeles in July



Polyphia

Want **Steve Vai** to play
on your album?
Polyphia's Tim Henson and
Scott LePage (and Steve Vai!)
tell you how it's done. Behold
the epic saga of "Ego Death"

BY JOE BOSSO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN SCANLON

After taking

LISTENERS ON A NONSTOP THRILL RIDE THROUGHOUT

Remember That You Will Die, Polyphia guitarists Tim Henson and Scott LePage knew that their album closer, “Ego Death,” had to be a doozy of a definitive statement. And who better to aid them in their conquest than a guy who knows a little something about knockout grandeur — their guitar hero, Steve Vai?

“When Steve agreed to play on our song, it just blew my mind,” Henson says. “You know, right there I could just check off a box on my ‘dreams come true’ list.”

“And then it actually happened. We got the track back, and we’re like, ‘Yep, that’s actually Steve Vai playing on our music,’” LePage says. “You’re listening to it and you think, ‘OK, it doesn’t get much cooler than that, does it?’”

Seated beside them is Steve Vai himself. He looks down, smiles appreciatively and appears to blush. “Oh, my God. That’s so sweet,” he says. The guitarist has just returned from a whirlwind tour of Europe, his first time out on the road since 2019, and as it turns out, Polyphia are just days away from starting their first tour in as many years. Despite the tight time frame in their schedules, the three gathered together during a summer afternoon at Vai’s own Harmony Hut home studio for a *Guitar World* photo shoot, after which they sat down for a Zoom chat about their recent collaboration.

“You know, these guys talk about being honored to have me play on their song, which is very nice to hear,” Vai says, “But the truth is, I’m also honored. It’s definitely a two-way street here.”

Now it’s Henson and LePage who are blushing. It’s as if they still can’t believe this is all happening. “You can call us fanboys,” Henson says with a laugh. To which LePage adds, “I will allow that for myself as well.”

HENSON RECALLS THE FIRST TIME HE HEARD VAI, BACK

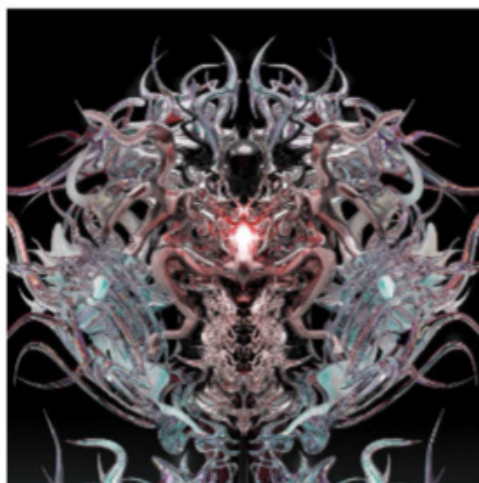
when he was 10 and just starting on the guitar. “My dad showed me *Crossroads*,” he says. “This was right after I saw *School of Rock*. When that little kid Zack shredded a guitar solo, I was like, ‘That’s so fucking badass.’ My dad said, ‘You like that? Watch *this*.’ So we watched *Crossroads*, with the guy from *The Karate Kid* playing guitar, and there was Steve as the devil’s guitar player. It just blew me away. From there, I just went down the rabbit hole. Steve’s ‘Tender Surrender’ video — I still watch that today. Yeah, big fanboy here.”

Oddly enough, LePage’s first exposure to Vai also came about because of his father. “My dad started playing guitar as a teenager,” he says. “He would buy records and he’d get tablature books to go with them. He did that whole thing where he’d pick the turntable needle up, go back to a part and learn it. He’d even slow records down. He told me he did that with Steve Vai and Randy Rhoads records. Then when I started playing guitar, that’s the stuff we listened to.”

Henson and LePage admit they were intimidated at first to meet Vai — their initial encounter occurred at a 2019 NAMM show — but within moments they realized their hero wasn’t some aloof, cooler-than-thou figure; he was friendly and approachable, and perhaps more important, he was interested in what they were doing. “Something else struck me at that NAMM Show,” Henson says. “It was the way everybody talked about Steve — they all had such great things to say about him. It made me think, ‘I’ve got to stop being such a shit ass.’ I wanted people to talk about me the same way.”

Vai is well aware of the pedestal young guitarists put him on. He’s dealt with it for years, starting from the time he joined Frank Zappa’s band at age 19. “At first, people come up to you and they’re all freaked out,” he says, “You think, ‘Why are they acting so weird?’ But then you realize that what you’re doing means something to them. It matters in their lives.” As for how he attempts to demystify his persona and put people at ease, he says, “I just try to be as normal as I can. I’m just Steve.” He laughs. “Despite everything people might see on the outside, I’m really just a normal family guy.”

He looks at Henson and LePage.



“You guys will get your share of that,” he says. “You’re developing a whole new vocabulary on the guitar, and there are people who are hungry for that. I’m old enough that I’ve been able to see a couple of evolutions go by, and it’s time for a new evolution.”

Henson and LePage nod thoughtfully. They look ready for what comes next.

Tim and Scott, can you elaborate a little on how Steve Vai figured into your development as guitar players?

TIM HENSON: Like I mentioned, the “Tender Surrender” video is one of my favorite videos of all time. I watch it and try to emulate the circular vibratos. Even Steve’s facial expressions — when you watch my videos, I’m pretty stoic, but when I’m on stage and I’m doing solos from old songs, that’s where you’ll see that come out of it. I get that from Steve.

SCOTT LePAGE: If I hear anybody doing something cool on the guitar, like if I scroll on Instagram and see a guitar video, I’ll stop and go, “Wow. How did that get that sound?” When it comes to Steve, I think the biggest takeaway I got from his playing was his use of harmonics and the whammy bar, the way he can make it sing in tune with one fret. He can bend it any which way and still hit the right notes. It’s not just how some people make it go “Woo-woo!” With Steve, it’s way more musical. It’s a composer thing.

STEVE VAI: You guys are very good to me.

Steve, you’ve certainly listened to a lot of guitarists in your time. What were your first impressions of Polyphia when you first heard them?

VAI: What struck me was how surprised I was, but also how wrong I was, about where I thought things might go. When I was younger and was learning from people who were influencing me, I had visions of how I thought the guitar might develop. I always felt like there was always going to be an underground movement of people who wanted to do extraordinary things on those damn

“I couldn’t quite figure out how they were doing it. I watched the videos and I saw that it was real”

— STEVE VAI



Bittersweet Symmetry

A User’s Guide to Polyphia



Inspire EP (2013)

Polyphia had only been around for three years when a play-through video for “Impassion” started racking up some serious views as viewers watched and shared footage of a 19-year-old Ibanez-toting Tim Henson and 20-year-old Jackson-armed Scott LePage using a smorgasbord of techniques to dazzle and stun. Naturally, it drew great attention to the self-released debut EP’s five tracks, which — as promising as they were — would end up being just a mere taste of the guitar acrobatics to come...



Muse (2014)

After making quite an impactful first impression, the group were then able to tap players like Aaron Marshall, Jason Richardson and Nick Johnston for the genre-splicing *tour-de-force* of inventive guitar that became their debut full-length. Songs like “87” and “James Franco” have remained firm fan favorites in the years since, though it’s third track and Nick Johnston collaboration “Champagne” that’s appeared on the setlist more times than anything else they’ve written — and with good reason.

{continued on page 60}



[from left] LePage, Vai and Henson shoot the breeze at Vai's pad. "I think people are attracted to seeing other people being their quirky selves, because it's encouraging," Vai says

six strings — or seven or eight. I didn't know how it would evolve, but when the seven-string and eight-string thing started, along with that whole underground, djent-heavy movement — that real shred-shred stuff — I thought, "Yeah, that makes sense."

Then I heard these guys, and it was just completely from left field. It was obvious to me that somebody was approaching it outside of the box, outside the norm, because they were mixing so many different elements — clean tones, fingerstyle, interval skips, dynamics, incredible depths of dynamics, syncopation that was unique and unheard before. I thought, "This is a monolith kind of a shift that's happening."

I couldn't quite figure out how they were doing it. I watched the videos and I saw that it was real. I had a conversation with Tim, and he told me about how he started to develop some of these techniques and flavors. And it was exactly what I thought — out-of-the-box thinking for the sake of being creative. That's really the only way to truly evolve. You have to be able to follow your independent desires without any excuses or fears that it's not going to work. The other thing I would mention is that all of this is fine and good, but it's limited unless there's melody. With these guys, I hear sublime melody, and that really lit me up. I heard it from the beginning.

A lot of that out-of-the-box spirit comes from you, Steve. You might not realize it, but you're a real influence to guys like Tim and Scott.

VAI: I think people are attracted to seeing other people being their quirky selves, because it's encouraging. I think maybe they saw some of that, but I see it in them, too. It's a dual mentoring of sorts. It always is, because you can't see another performer and not somehow be influenced or inspired.

But with you, even though some players want to emulate elements of your style, you give them the inspiration to be themselves.

VAI: Well, yes. If somebody was interested in being like me, the best way to do that is to find out who they are. Because you don't want to play like me — there's no authenticity in it. If somebody's interested in doing that, fine, but some people just don't have a choice. These guys, when they're creating, they have to be authentic to their

true selves. We're all standing on the shoulders of everybody who came before us. I'm just a little flavor in their massive palette of colors.

You don't guest on many records, Steve. Do you have any kind of criteria for collaborations?

VAI: It's changed through the years, but these days my go-to thought is, "With the remainder of time I have left, I'm only doing my music," because that's what fills me up the most. That is, unless something comes along that's interesting and extraordinary and I feel that I can contribute to it in an effective way. Also, if somebody is interested in having me do something, they have to know I'm not good at taking direction. We know that: "OK, this is Vai and we don't know what's going to happen here." When the invite came down from these guys, I was so tickled, man. I was like, "I don't care what it is, I'm playing on it." They're doing such beautiful and unique stuff — I wanted to get a little piece of it somehow.

But I thought you were initially hesitant. You loved the track "Ego Death," but you didn't know what you would do on it.

HENSON: There was a time concern, because you were about to leave for a tour.

VAI: Yeah. And nothing takes me five minutes, especially on something like this. They gave me this big, long section.

HENSON: It was huge.

VAI: And they said, "Do what you do and build it up." And I thought,

"OK... " I'm such a different player, because their stuff has such smooth but sharp edges — it's really sparsely and clean. And I'm just a delay-drenched, singing guitar melody guy, so I didn't want to do something that was inappropriate for them. This was special, but the way we play is so different, and I didn't want to give them something that would pollute their track.

LePAGE: We didn't feel that way at all.

HENSON: We were ecstatic.

VAI: But this is the way I was thinking. I wanted to give them something that worked. And then I thought, "Well, maybe that's it. The difference in the playing, I should exemplify that." So when I started laying stuff down, I just thought, "Do that long legato stuff you do, and it'll add a nice contrast." And it did.

HENSON: I think we did tell him, "Like 'Tender Surrender,'" just because we love that song so much. [Laughs] As for any other direction, because the whole thing builds and drops, we were just like, "Build it up so that you can go fucking crazy on this part." It was kind of vague. At the end of the day, we wanted Steve to be Steve. That's what we were looking for.

Steve, how many passes did you do on the track?

VAI: It took a while because it was special to me. I had to decide what I was going to do that wasn't just going to be the same thing that I would normally do. I wanted it to be dimensional. I listened to the track quite a bit. As I mentioned, one of



the things I love about what they do is their delicate, hidden melodies. They're so charming and touching. I listened very carefully and I took a bunch of those melodies. Everything I did had some kind of a shadow of melodies I found in the track, the whole first [*he sings a part*] — that's them, basically, with me just mangling it a bit. I thought that was a nice way to fuse things. [*Laughs*] And then they put it through the Polyphia blender.

HENSON: Yeah, we did! [*Laughs*]

I understand you were taken aback by how much they chopped your parts up.

VAI: Well, what happened was, usually when I do something for somebody, they just take it the way it is. These guys are very creative, and they like to manipulate things. Which is fine. I told them, "Do whatever you like. Here's what I've got."

HENSON: He did say that. In his email, he wrote, "Do whatever you'd like with this."

VAI: I wanted them to do it. It didn't really matter — it's not sacred. It was chopped in a way that met their creativity demands, and I wouldn't want them to do anything else. When I first heard it, though, it was so different. I thought, "Maybe they didn't like what I did." [*Laughs*]

HENSON: Oh no! That wasn't it at all.

LePAGE: No, not at all.

HENSON: We just had so many new things.

VAI: And then I thought, "No, this is just the way that they work." At first, I felt uncomfortable say-

ing, "Featuring Steve Vai," because I thought, "Well, I didn't really do anything." I didn't feel like I really contributed something, and then when I listened to it again, I said, "Of course. It was just a stupid humility kind of a thing," so I apologize for that.

HENSON: No, that's all right.

LePAGE: It actually helped us complete the song. Once we got his part and messed around with what he did, we wrote more to it.

HENSON: Yeah. Because what we sent him was the first half of the song, which was done. The second half of the song was an empty beat. Once we had his stuff, then we realized we needed to back him up. It's like puzzle pieces, or like you're chiseling away at a marble sculpture. We don't really know what we had until we got Steve's part, and then we realized, "Oh, shit. Here we fucking go." And then we started going away at it.

LePAGE: At first, it was like, the first third of the song was Tim's section, the second third was mine, and we knew the third section was going to be Steve's.

But as you guys told me earlier, the finished version on the record wasn't so massively chopped up.

HENSON: This is part of the creation process; you can go a ways and then come back in a tasteful way. Once we realized we changed too many things, we put it back the way it was, but we still changed it just a little bit. We needed to get it to where we could add our stuff, and once that was there, we could revert it back.

LePAGE: It's almost like a hybrid between the original and what we sent you, Steve.

VAI: Oh, OK.

HENSON: We brought it backwards to be closer to the original.

VAI: And you're happy with it?

HENSON: Oh, we love it.

LePAGE: Oh yeah. It's fantastic.

VAI: I listened to it and I love it. I love it! It sounds like we're playing together. It's not just "Steve playing along on a track." It really feels integrated.

HENSON: It's one of our best songs.

VAI: Really? Wow!

HENSON: We thought we were going to film the music video, and we were like, "Fuck, we've got to learn this crazy fucking song." And Scott said, "Dude, you know we're gonna have to play it live."

LePAGE: It is one of our best songs.

Have you been rehearsing it? Are either of you going to play Steve's parts?

HENSON: Well, right now, at the time we're speaking, it's before the album comes out, so the tour we're doing in a few days won't be the *Remember That You Will Die* tour; it's just a tour where we get to preview new music, which means we won't have to perform "Ego Death." We probably won't play it till November when we'll be in Europe. Obviously, we'd love to take Steve with us, but he's got his own obligations. What we'll probably do is end up splitting Steve's parts between us: "I'll take this section. Scott'll take this section," and vice versa until we complete.

VAI: Hey, if I'm ever in the same town, I'm there, brother.

LePAGE: Yeah!

Steve, when I spoke earlier with Tim and Scott, they told me the greatest story about the first time they came to your house. They were so excited to hang out with you, but after they left they realized that they didn't get a picture with you —

VAI: Oh, right! And they texted me like, "Can we come back?" [*Laughs*] To tell you the truth, I should have thought of it myself. In fact, I did think that, but oddly enough, I didn't want to intrude. I know that sounds odd. So when they texted me, I said, "Yeah, sure, come back. That'd be great."



Renaissance (2016)

Album number two saw the Texans scale back on the metallic tones and riffs to create more sonic room for other influences, cross-pollinating different elements of jazz fusion, modern pop and rap into their orchestra of unorthodox. Tracks like “Culture Shock” and “Ivory” offered some of the heavyweight grooves we’d grown to expect, while deeper cuts like “Nightmare” and “Amour” felt thrillingly dynamic, unfolding in the most mysterious of ways.



The Most Hated EP (2017)

Taking their explosive math-rock to new melodic heights on their second EP, with ideas that often felt every bit as lyrical as the human voice, it’s easy to see why tracks like “Goose,” “Icronic” and “40oz” are among the band’s most popular to date — the latter involving some devilishly wide-stretch sweeps on the clean channel. Anybody who’s tried getting them up to speed will probably tell you they’re not for the faint-hearted and among the most challenging from the guitar duo to date.

New Levels New Devils (2018)

For their third album, Henson and LePage went even deeper



Says Vai to LePage and Henson: “You have what it takes to be in this business for a long, long time”

HENSON: I can’t believe we had the audacity to do that fucking text.

VAI: It was great. It was great. Oh, but I have a story. *[Looks at Tim and Scott]* Can I...?

HENSON: Yeah, go for it.

[Vai gets up and goes to another part of the studio.]

HENSON: This is so cool... *[Vai comes back holding a stunning, futuristic-looking solid-body guitar covered with what appears to be artfully applied streams of solder.]*

VAI: Isn’t that something? They had it delivered to my house while I was on tour. I didn’t know anything about it. It sat for a while until *[Vai’s engineer]* Greg *[Wurth]* opened the case. I looked at it and said, “What is that?!” And then I read the inscription and it was so kind. *[Vai turns the guitar around. On the control cavity plate are Tim and Scott’s signatures in silver marker. Above them, it reads: “To Our Guitar Hero, with Love.”]* But here’s the real charm of the story: They had to go to a store and buy a silver marker so that they could write this.

LePAGE: We didn’t have one laying around. We were like, “All right, let’s go to 7-Eleven.”

VAI: That’s so funny to me. That’s amazing.

What a brilliant-looking guitar. It looks like something from Alien.

HENSON: It’s a prototype of my new nylon signature. The custom face plate armor for the guitar was done by Nusi — he just goes by Nusi. He’s an incredible artist — he designed the clothing Beyonce wears on her new album. I reached out to him because he posted

one of his guitars that he blinged out, and I was like, “Dude, I have an idea. Can you take what you’re doing for pop stars and do it on one of our guitars?” He loved the idea and he made this. It’s so special.

In our email thread, Steve has given us so much golden life advice, and we didn’t know how to repay him. We wanted to send him something, but what do you send to a dude who has everything? We have a song called “40oz,” which is about malt liquor. We were going to go to a 7-Eleven and buy a 40-ounce and then sign it and send it off. Then we looked around the room and saw the guitar. We were like, “Dude, this thing is crazy. Steve should have it.”

VAI: Oh, that’s so special.

LePAGE: It’s such a crazy gift.

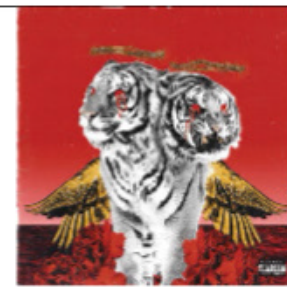
VAI: It is. It’s going to live on the wall of the Harmony Hut, and every time I see it, which will be every day, it’ll remind me of this whole special situation with these brilliant guys. I’m touched, really. Thank you so much.

HENSON: We’re glad. You fuck with it.

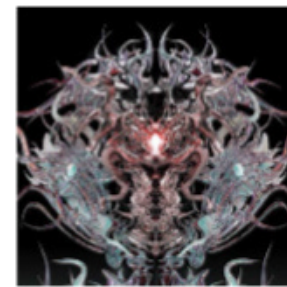
VAI: I’ll do my best. Let me just close with something. Here’s what really impresses me about you guys: You have what it takes to be in this business for a long, long time. You have the attitude you’ll need to go far. It’s a vision thing. You don’t know the word “no.” If you can hear it, you’ll find a way to play it. You guys understand that. I have no doubt you’re going to be fucking stuff up for as long as you desire.

HENSON: *[Laughs]* Wow. Well, what can I say? We’ll try.

LePAGE: We like what we do, so that’s what we’ll keep doing. **GW**



down the rabbit hole of EDM, trap and electronica — enlisting producers like Judge and Y2K to enhance their less guitar-centric influences in the most extraordinary ways. They teamed up with Richardson again for “Nasty,” as well as enlisting the talents of Ichika Nito, Mateus Asato and Yvette Young elsewhere with some truly remarkable results. “G.O.A.T.” now stands as their most-played track on Spotify, demonstrating just why they’ve become guitar heroes for a new generation in three and a half unforgettable minutes.



Remember That You Will Die (2022)

The first bite from this year’s fourth full-length arrived just before summer in the form of “Playing God,” with Henson and LePage wielding Ibanez nylon strings to fuse trap rhythms with finger-twisting flamenco parts, employing open strings and natural harmonics to cover vast amounts of sonic ground as they have so often done in the past. Other tracks like second single “Neurotica” show the pair experimenting even further with complex rhythm and curious melody, reinventing the fretboard one riff at a time and boldly continuing their evolution as modern-day masters.

— Amit Sharma



CELEBRATING
40 YEARS OF
PREMIUM TOOLS FOR TONE



SCAN ME

The New York Dolls' David Johansen [left] and Johnny Thunders perform on the Dutch TV show *TopPop* in December 1973



DECEMBER 2022

GUITAR WORLD

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
Johnny Thunders,

THE NEW YORK DOLLS AND HEARTBREAKERS GUITARIST WHO
CRYSTALLIZED THE ESSENCE OF STREET-COOL ROCK 'N' ROLL

WORDS BY MARK McSTEAD

PHOTO BY GIJSBERT HANEKROOT

The first time

I saw Johnny Thunders — with the New York Dolls on U.K. TV in 1973 — I immediately connected with the reckless abandon that was apparent in every gesture, every guitar-hero pose he struck. And then there was the rawness of the band's approach at a time when mainstream rock was still mired in the keyboard-laden pomposity of prog and the tired blues-rock tropes that had become the standard fallback for many so-called "serious" bands of the time. As a huge fan of British glam rock, particularly T. Rex and Slade, here, at last, was an American band unafraid to transcend the predictable and the expected, to deliver their own brand of shock rock 'n' roll. Even 50 years later, when taking a solo, if in doubt, I'll ask myself, "What would Johnny Thunders do?"

The mystery is why Thunders remains relatively uncanceled, yet the artists who have admitted his influence — including John Frusciante's gushing comments in the June 2022 issue of *GW* — dominate modern rock music. It's time to address Thunders' legacy and restore him to his rightful place in the pantheon of rock 'n' roll.

Thunders was the embodiment of the "live fast, die young" guitar hero mythology. With his low-slung Les Paul Junior, leather jacket and shock of black hair, he became an instant cultural icon when the New York Dolls started to attract attention. Unfortunately for Thunders, addiction issues dogged him from the early Seventies; while fellow Heartbreaker Walter Lure managed to kick the habit in the late Eighties, Johnny was never able to do the same and was to meet an untimely end in a New Orleans hotel room in 1991. The cause of death? It was officially an overdose, but mystery surrounds the details.

The HUGE INFLUENCE of Thunders in particular, and the New York Dolls and the Heartbreakers, is apparent from the legions of fans who've gone on to form successful bands, citing the mystique of Thunders as a prime motivator in their own desires to forge a career in music.

Born John Anthony Genzale in Queens, New York, in 1952, Thunders formed his first band, the Reign, when he was 15. By the time he was 17, he was a familiar face at shows around NYC and was even to be seen in the audience at a Rolling Stones show at Madison Square Garden, captured forever in the 1970 film *Gimme Shelter*. Spotted by future New York Dolls Sylvain Sylvain and Billy Murcia, who were instantly drawn to his street-cool image, they invited Thunders to join their band, the Dolls, in 1970. Sylvain didn't care whether Thunders could play or not — it was the image that mattered most. Recruited to play bass, under Sylvain's instruction, Johnny soon figured out that the lead guitarist gets the girls and the glory; he insisted Sylvain teach him how to play guitar.

The Dolls fell apart after about six months, and Thunders joined bass player Arthur Kane's band, Actress, which quickly recruited Murcia. Thunders was now playing guitar and singing. Demos were recorded, with many of the songs to resurface under different titles in future

New York Dolls and Heartbreakers sets. Allowing for the poor sound quality, the raw power was already clearly apparent, with Thunders' distinctive voice bringing a unique mix of excitement, sensitivity and edge to the songs. For all the digs at the NYD's musical chops, the musicianship, writing and arranging skills displayed on the demos reveal a band overflowing with confidence, panache and an unshakable faith in their own talents. After a few months fronting the band, Thunders decided he no longer wanted to sing, and David Johansen was recruited. The lineup was completed with the return of Sylvain, and the rechristened New York Dolls played their first show in December 1971.

Becoming regulars on the NYC club scene, particularly Max's Kansas City, the Dolls were often chaotic live, but by 1972, they had already become a major influence on many of the acts that would go on to form the NYC punk and new wave scene. Even Kiss' Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley took in shows by the band, although ironically, they drew their inspiration from their belief that if the New York Dolls could do it, anybody could. New York was a down-and-dirty city in the early Seventies, and the New York Dolls were the perfect embodiment of that, with Thunders appearing particularly feral at times. There were many New York bands who clearly aspired to an intellectual artiness, but the Dolls approach was, "Fuck art — let's dance."

Thunders already had the wise-ass street attitude down pat, as the late Alan Merrill recalled in a discus-



sion about Thunders: "I can remember an encounter with him at a 48th Street and Broadway guitar shop in 1972. My band mate, Jake Hooker, was trying out a Les Paul. Thunders came up to him and said, 'You sound pretty good, man.' Jake looked up and said, 'Thanks.' Then Johnny lowered the boom and said, 'How long have you been playing guitar, two weeks?'"

As interest in the band started to build, with press interest in the States and overseas, in 1972 they managed to snag an invite to support Rod Stewart and the Faces at Wembley Stadium in England, followed by shows around the U.K. — huge exposure, having only previously played club dates in New York. Even more surprisingly, the band scored a spot on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, the only U.K. rock music TV show at that time, lip-synching to "Jet Boy." The show's host, British radio legend Bob Harris, dismissed them derisively as "mock rock" when the song ended. That may have been one of the key triggers in the early swellings of the U.K. punk movement — you either got it or you didn't, and Harris clearly didn't.

Mick Rossi, from first-generation U.K. punks Slaughter and the Dogs, remembers watching the show: "I would zone in on anything exotic; I loved Mick Ronson, David Bowie and Marc Bolan. When I saw the Dolls I thought they were outrageous, dangerous, sexy and a mess all rolled into one." [Laughs] Sylvain recalled Harris' comment in an interview shortly before his death in 2021. "We had to mime to an edited version of 'Jet Boy,' and we really didn't do that as a band normally. I guess if we'd played live, he might have had a different take, but ya know, I suppose, fuck you, Bob!"

As was typical of the Dolls, and indeed Thunders' career, triumph quickly turned to disaster while in the U.K., when Billy Murcia died, aged 19, from a fatal Champagne-and-pills combo. Returning to America, the band's stock had risen, having toured in Europe, and ironically, they also benefited from the shock of Murcia's death by enhancing their dangerous and wasted vibe.

Continuing to generate interest and a rabidly loyal hardcore following from their live shows, in 1973 they managed to snare a record deal with Mercury, releasing their self-titled debut album the same year, with Todd Rundgren handling the production.

"WHEN I SAW
the Dolls,
I THOUGHT THEY
WERE OUTRAGEOUS,
DANGEROUS, SEXY
AND A MESS ALL
ROLLED INTO ONE"
—MICK ROSSI



Thunders on stage with
the New York Dolls,
October 29, 1972, at
the Wembley Festival
of Music at the Empire
Pool, Wembley, London

The cover shot of the band, sporting full makeup, looking like transvestites from Mars, was too much for American audiences; but across the pond in the U.K., glam rock was huge at that point, with many of the bands looking even more outrageous than the Dolls. The U.S. was totally unprepared to embrace the Dolls' brand of androgyny, which was the reason so few of the British glam acts were to enjoy success Stateside, even though they were selling millions of records everywhere else in the world.

There was to be one more NYD album, the prophetically titled *Too Much Too Soon*, released in 1974, with a similar mix of songs to the first album and a live cover shot of the band, which perfectly captured the unpredictable excitement of a great Dolls show. Sales were poor and they were dropped by Mercury. Without a label, and with the band starting to pull in different directions, Thunders and Jerry Nolan, Murcia's replacement on drums, left to form the Heartbreakers in 1975. Richard Hell, the original bass player, was replaced by Billy Rath when Hell went on to form the Voidoids. The iconic lineup was completed by the addition of Walter Lure to share guitar and vocal duties.

The music the NYDs had made was a celebration of everything they'd grown up hearing on the radio, with elements of Fifties rock 'n' roll, blues and Sixties girl groups, the same basic formula that informed Thunders' work for the rest of his career. His guitar style was already fully formed on the Actress demos — a raw, urgent combo of Chuck Berry and Keith Richards, cut with Thunders' distinctive glissandos. Steve Conte, who took Thunders' place in the reformed New York Dolls, expressed the same view: "I grew up loving Chuck Berry and Keith Richards — they were two of my biggest influences, and to me that's what Thunders was — a combo of those two, which made it real easy to fit into the band at that time."

Johnny's weapon of choice, the Les Paul Junior in TV yellow, was the perfect axe — minimal, direct and cut-through with the essence of rock 'n' roll — basically the blueprint for Thunders' own ethos. That guitar became an object of desire for the Cult's Billy Duffy: "I lusted after his TV yellow Les Paul Junior. [Laughs] I finally picked up my own Les Paul Junior in 1979, though it was a wine red one. I couldn't find a yellow one in England at that time!"

Rossi remembers his band supporting the Heartbreakers on a number of U.K. dates: "The sound he got was so uniquely *his*; the combination of the Junior and a Twin Reverb, cranked to the max and with a ton of reverb was what rock 'n' roll should sound like. He was a lovely guy; my amp was crap at that time, so Johnny generously let me use his on our dates together." Rossi toured for three years with Lure's LAMF Band, from 2017 until Lure's death in 2020, and is now fronting Mick Rossi's Gun Street (with an album due this year). During this period, he got an extra insight into the two-guitar dynamics of the Heartbreakers, replicating Thunders' role every night on tour. "Walter loved to tell stories about Johnny. You could tell he really admired him as a musician and as a person, in spite of Johnny's chaotically unpredictable nature. Many of Johnny's solos were so perfect that you just had to reproduce them exactly as they were on the records."



Finders Keepers

IS THE
HEARTBREAKERS'
L.A.M.F. THE
GREATEST ALBUM
OF THE PUNK ERA?

THE HEARTBREAKERS MADE only one studio album, but it was to be one of the most influential albums of the Seventies. *L.A.M.F.* showcased the best that Johnny Thunders had to offer. In tandem with Walter Lure, the Heartbreakers deliver killer riffs, crisp, economical soloing and 12 songs that refine the essence of New York street cool, unashamedly romantic yet tough and streetwise. While U.K. punks were singing about boredom and disillusion, the Heartbreakers were mining a rich seam of musical history to deliver an album that could've been recorded at any time, from the Fifties to today.

The original 1977 release suffered from a muddy sound that numerous attempts at remixing were unable to fix; it was later realized that the problem lay in a mastering fault. Thunders himself, with the help of Tony James, tried to remix it in 1981. James: "A pointless exercise when I look back at it. Like remixing [*the Stooges'*] *Raw Power* to give it a modern sound, so it loses the moment, and the moment is the essence of what makes great rock 'n' roll."

The HEARTBREAKERS' MUSIC was a tougher version of the Dolls' sound; Thunders and Lure shared the spotlight out front, each usually soloing on, and singing the songs, that they wrote. In Lure, Thunders had found the perfect foil, bringing a sense of stability to Thunders' chaotic live appearances. The Heartbreakers had amassed a set of killer songs that sounded simultaneously old and new. In 1976, when all around were preaching the message of nihilism, destruction and boredom, the Heartbreakers were unafraid to sing songs about love and girls (and, on a couple of occasions... drugs). With the U.K. punk scene ready to burst, the Heartbreakers were invited to appear on the ill-fated Anarchy tour in 1976, with the Sex Pistols and the Damned. On the day the Heartbreakers arrived in the U.K., Pistols' frontman Johnny Rotten and Steve Jones had outraged a nation of TV viewers by engaging in an exchange with the show's provocative host, taking the bait and calling him a "Fucking rotter" (and a couple more insults) on primetime TV. As hard as it is to believe 45 years later, the uproar led to the cancellation of the vast majority of the U.K. dates.

With the band living in the U.K. in 1976, where they were to remain for a couple of years, Thunders' self-sabotage streak reared its head when Jerry Nolan mooted the idea of renaming the band the Junkies. Thunders was pressing hard in support of the idea, but Lure knew it would be commercial suicide; "We could have only done that if we were actually not junkies. Anyway, a record company would never have accepted it. Johnny liked the idea of pushing things as far as he could sometimes."

The Heartbreakers had arrived in the U.K. as punk royalty, largely on the back of Thunders' reputation and a British love for the music of the Dolls that they'd never experienced in their hometown. The Heartbreakers had no equal as a live act when they were on fire. Their incendiary live shows led to a contract with Track Records, and their only studio album, *L.A.M.F.*, was released in 1977. Plagued by a muddy mix (see sidebar), the album received mixed reviews but stands out as one of the few albums from the punk era that sounds as valid now as it did when it was released. Playing out like

"I REMEMBER,
WHEN I WAS ABOUT
15, LOOKING AT THE
COVER, THINKING
the Heartbreakers
WERE THE COOLEST
MOTHERF*****S"
—DUFF MCKAGAN



Megadeth Concert
In Oslo
OSLO, NORWAY
- JUNE 05: (L-R)

Thunders (with his
Les Paul Junior)
in action with the
Heartbreakers
in 1977 and [facing
page] 1978

a stack of singles, every song hit the mark, with Thunders and Lure trading solos and riffs; many of the songs came in at under three minutes, not a wasted moment on the record. The lack of hard politicization, so prevalent at that time in many of the contemporaneous punk bands, removed the time capsule element of other artist's albums, leaving it to stand as a timeless classic.

L.A.M.F. was as influential for its cover shot as it was for its music. Says Duff McKagan: "I remember, when I was about 15, looking at the cover, thinking the Heartbreakers were the coolest motherfuckers. In fact, I'd say their style still influences me and plenty of others even now, 40 years later." Michael Monroe, former singer for Hanoi Rocks and now working as a solo artist (his new album, *I Live Too Fast to Die Young*, is out now) remembers: "That was such a cool album cover; the image was for real, almost like a gang of wasted junkies — catch them while you can. It was real New York street stuff."

The sound problems that plagued the album began to frustrate the band, desperate to get the record released, and under pressure from Track to have it in the stores for Christmas. It seems like all of the band had a hand in trying to get the sound right, but to no avail. Walter Lure: "We'd been listening to it for many months. The problem was that whenever we listened to it in the studio, on the tape, it sounded great, but whenever we pressed it onto vinyl, it lost all the brightness. We must have mixed it a hundred times — that wasn't the problem, but Jerry felt like it was, and [he] ended up leaving the band in frustration. I think it was a mastering issue that did it."

Nolan's departure upset the chemistry in the band, and Thunders left six months later in 1978, to pursue a solo career. *So Alone*, the first fruits of his solo direction, received fantastic reviews and sold relatively well. Among the list of guests in the studio were Steve Marriott, Chrissie Hynde, Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott, Wilko Johnson from Dr. Feelgood and Steve Jones from the Sex Pistols. The record featured one of Thunders' most enduring songs, the melancholy "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory," later to be covered by McKagan and Monroe on their respective solo albums. Monroe: "Although people

might think we were influenced by the New York Dolls, I think musically we were more influenced by the Heartbreakers. We even took our name from the song 'Chinese Rocks' just making it Hanoi instead."

Without a permanent band by 1981, Thunders recruited former Generation X bass player Tony James for a series of dates in Europe. James remembers the chaotic times: "Johnny just turned up at my door with Jerry Nolan and asked if I wanted to play with them that night! Obviously the answer was yes, a dream come true for a Dolls and Heartbreakers fan." James saw the unpredictable side of Thunders when, later that night as the band were waiting over two hours for him to arrive: "Three friends carried Thunders, unconscious, into the dressing room and proceeded to revive him for the show."

The common theme in every story from people who knew Thunders was that he was, in spite of the public perception, an extremely caring guy who would go out of his way to help a friend. James remembers, "For all the bad things, turning up wasted, missing shows, etc., there was the other side — a sweet, funny, uncompromising person." Monroe agrees: "When I finally got to know him and we became friends, I realized he had a heart of gold. I shared an apartment with Johnny and Stiv Bators in London in 1984, just after our drummer in Hanoi Rocks got killed in a car crash in L.A. As you can guess, there was never a dull moment. [Laughs] Johnny loved to sit around playing acoustic guitar and writing songs."

So Alone should have reset Thunders' course and brought him to the level of acclaim that he deserved, but his drug use was beginning to have a detrimental effect on his ability to manage the practical aspects of keeping a band on the road and maintaining his career. There was more great music to follow, but the momentum that should have been generated by the profile-raising response to *So Alone* became lost. Permutations of the Heartbreakers would still reform sporadically for a handful of shows. Lure: "We'd often do shows because the money we could get going out as the Heartbreakers was much better than any of us could get in our own right."

Thunders recorded a couple more great albums, *Que Sera Sera* in 1985 and *Copy Cats* in 1988, a collection of duets on classics with Patti Palladin. The state of Thunders' catalog was as disorganised as the lifestyle he was leading, with numerous official, semi-official and unauthorised albums constantly turning up. The vast majority were live recordings and many were of bootleg quality. Thunders got his own back on the bootleggers by compiling a set of albums capturing the best of the bootlegged shows and naming it *Bootlegging the Bootleggers*.

By the Nineties, Thunders' career as a recording artist had stalled, with only the never-ending stream of live albums turning up in record stores. Live, Thunders was still a great draw, although given the parlous state of his health in the latter years of his life, there was sometimes an element of macabre voyeurism about the live shows. As if his struggle with addiction wasn't debilitating enough for him, he developed leukaemia toward the end, something he never revealed, but which came to light after his death. Thunders had started to look worryingly unwell, and presumably the disease played its part in his demise. Given



"I HEARD 'PIRATE LOVE' BOOMING OUT OF MY 16-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER'S ROOM. SHE DISCOVERED IT ALL ON HER OWN, PROVING THAT A GREAT RECORD WILL ALWAYS LAND IN THE RIGHT PLACE"
—DUFF MCKAGAN

Until now, the gold standard has been *The Lost '77 Mixes*, which delivered much of the punch that was missing. However, in 2020 a tape was found in the archives of Tony Secunda, co-producer of *L.A.M.F.*, which turned out to be a crystal-clear copy of the album. After so many versions of the record, it'd be tempting to think there was little to add, but the album, released as *The Found '77 Masters*, in 2021, surpasses all previous efforts, with more space around the instruments, greater clarity in the vocals and the guitars restored to their full sonic magnificence.

The quality of the songwriting and performances could never have been ruined by a poorly mastered album, and the fact that so many notable artists cite *L.A.M.F.* as a favorite is testimony enough. Says Michael Monroe: "Every track is great — all killer, no filler."

Duff McKagan agrees: "One of my greatest joys as a father was when walking down the hall of our home, I heard the familiar strains of 'Pirate Love' booming out of my then-16-year-old daughter's room. She discovered it all on her own, proving that a great record will always land in the right place no matter how old or new it is."

— Mark McStea

L.A.M.F. - The Found '77 Masters is available as a double CD with a bonus disc of demos and outtakes. There are also limited-edition, separate vinyl editions of the album and the demos collection.

Thunders' adherence to the "school of Keef circa 1970," he spent a lot of time looking to score and running the inherent risks that incurred. Lure summed it up succinctly: "Johnny couldn't survive without drugs, indeed they actually defined him, in his own mind anyway."

Had Thunders lived, it is tempting to wonder what direction he may have gone in. A Heartbreakers reformation, perhaps? Lure again: "I really doubt it would ever have happened. John never really wanted to reform — he really needed to be in control. Unfortunately, as long as John was on drugs, he couldn't play to a consistent level and he could never quit the drugs. That being said, I think he was a genius, a maverick. I was probably a better guitarist technically, but Johnny had instant identifiability, something that I guess I never had. Being a drug addict myself back then, I know how hard it was to get clean. I didn't get out of that mess until early 1988. Ten years wasted on that stuff."

While the legacy of Thunders is clearly apparent across the spectrum of loud, wild rock 'n' roll, with many acts not even realizing they are indirectly channelling his spirit. Perhaps the reason that the mainstream still doesn't acknowledge his significance is tied up in the thorny issue of the glorification of junkie culture, and the fact that for many, with only a superficial knowledge of his work, the drug stories always stole much of the oxygen from the music. Monroe: "He was just too cool to be in the mainstream; he didn't really care about fame. He had chances to do things to be a bigger name, but that was never what Johnny was about; success for him was to do things on his own terms. He never wanted to play the music business game, he was about the art."

Thunders crystallized the essence of street-cool rock 'n' roll. The drugs, the craziness and the chaos are all irrelevant, what matters is the music, and the music that Thunders created speaks for itself. The rock cognoscenti have always been hip to the magic of Johnny Thunders. Widespread recognition is long overdue. **GW**



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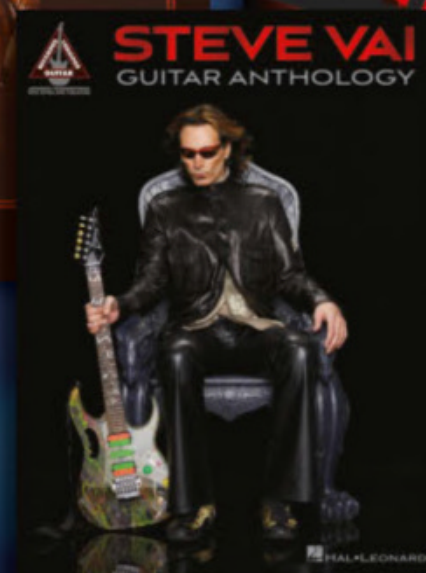


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*the gear
in review*



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40W 1x12 Combo



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Royal Flash

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN MAJESTY 8-STRING

By Chris Gill

▶ ERNIE BALL MUSIC Man's long-standing collaboration with John Petrucci has resulted in the fascinating evolution of both his original JP signature model and the innovative Majesty model, the latter introduced in 2014. The new Music Man Majesty 8-String represents the pinnacle of Petrucci and Music Man's collaboration to date, offering incredible tonal versatility, the performance advantages of a multi-scale design, refined playability and sleek, modern styling. The Majesty 8-String is ideal for guitarists seeking to expand their expressive capabilities, but unlike many other 8-string models, which are "specialty" instruments that most players will only use for a few songs, the new Majesty makes an ideal main instrument that can fulfill the roles of several guitars.

FEATURES Featuring a solid body that is two inches longer than the 6- and 7-string electrics and an overall weight of less than eight pounds, the Music Man Majesty 8-String instantly feels familiar and comfortable. The construction consists of a Honduran mahogany neck-thru-Basswood wings body with figured maple "shield" in the center of the body encompassing the pickups and bridge and finished in a variety of vivid color options (Okelani Blue, Emerald Sky, Wisteria Blossom and Sanguine Red). The multi-scale 25.5-to-27-inch neck features 24 slanted medium jumbo stainless steel frets, a flat 17-inch radius, ebony fingerboard, 2.25-inch nut width, compensated melamine nut, signature Music Man truss rod adjustment wheel above 24th fret and thin, flat profile with





a smooth high-gloss polyester finish. Smoothly rounded cutaway, forearm and belly contours as well as a deep recessed neck heel ensure optimum playing comfort. Hardware includes a slanted string-thru body hardtail bridge with chevron-shaped cover for comfortable palm muting, Schaller M6-IND locking tuners and custom black metal dome-top knobs with rubber grip inserts.

Sophisticated electronics deliver an incredibly versatile palette of tones. Pickups consist of custom slanted DiMarzio Rainmaker (neck) and Dreamcatcher (bridge) humbuckers and a piezo bridge pickup. A recessed three-position toggle located below and between the humbuckers provides series neck and bridge humbucking settings and a parallel middle/both setting. The magnetic pickup tone control's push/push function can also engage only the inner single coils in parallel when the selector is in the middle position. An additional three-position toggle on the upper cutaway horn selects magnetic pickups only, both piezo and magnetic pickups or the piezo pickup only. The magnetic pickup volume control's push/push function can engage an active preamp that delivers up to +20dB boost. The third control knob located nearest to the output jack is for piezo volume. Trim pots adjustable via holes in the back control plate allows users to tweak the maximum output of the preamp boost, the magnetic/piezo pickup balance and piezo bass and treble EQ, while a small push switch engages mono or stereo output.

PERFORMANCE The Majesty 8-String's

body is close to standard size, while the neck is considerably wider and longer than a standard six-string neck, but the instrument is remarkably well balanced, keeping the neck solidly in optimum playing position without any neck dives. The overall playing comfort is impeccable — some players may need time to adjust to the fanned frets, but once you do the fingers will fly with ease from the highest to lowest registers. I particularly liked the added twang and definition of the sixth (low E) string with its 26.5-inch scale length, as well as how tight and punchy the seventh and eighth strings sound.

The Dreamcatcher bridge pickup produces a distinctive vocal-like midrange that sounds exceptionally fat and full when playing single-note lines but also blends well with the treble and bass frequencies when playing chords. The Rainmaker neck pickup sounds more scooped in the midrange, producing vibrant, bouncy rhythm tones. The piezo pickup sounds remarkably acoustic-like through a standard guitar amplifier, but when the magnetic and piezo pickups are split in stereo and the piezo output is routed to a PA or acoustic-electric amp it sounds even more rich and harmonically complex.

The range of tones is remarkable, from standard to baritone electric, humbucking and single-coil, and outstanding acoustic-style sounds. Being able to shift from massive, heavy distorted lower range tones to sultry, singing acoustic textures at the flick of a switch is a revelation, particularly for players who prefer to play a single ax all night long.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$4,199

MANUFACTURER:

Ernie Ball Music Man,
music-man.com

- The sleek neck-thru-body design, deep cutaways and rounded contours provide exceptional playing comfort.

- DiMarzio Dreamcatcher (bridge) and Rainmaker (neck) humbucking pickups deliver harmonically complex electric tones.

- A piezo pickup mounted at the bridge produces rich, realistic acoustic tones that can be split from the magnetic humbuckers via a stereo output setting.

- The push/push function of the magnetic pickup master volume control engages an active pre-amp that provides up to +20dB boost.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

With its incredibly fast and comfortable playability and impressive variety of electric and acoustic tones, the Music Man Majesty 8-String makes an ideal main instrument for players seeking unlimited expressive range

Rockin' Role Model

EVH 5150 ICONIC SERIES 40W 1X12 COMBO

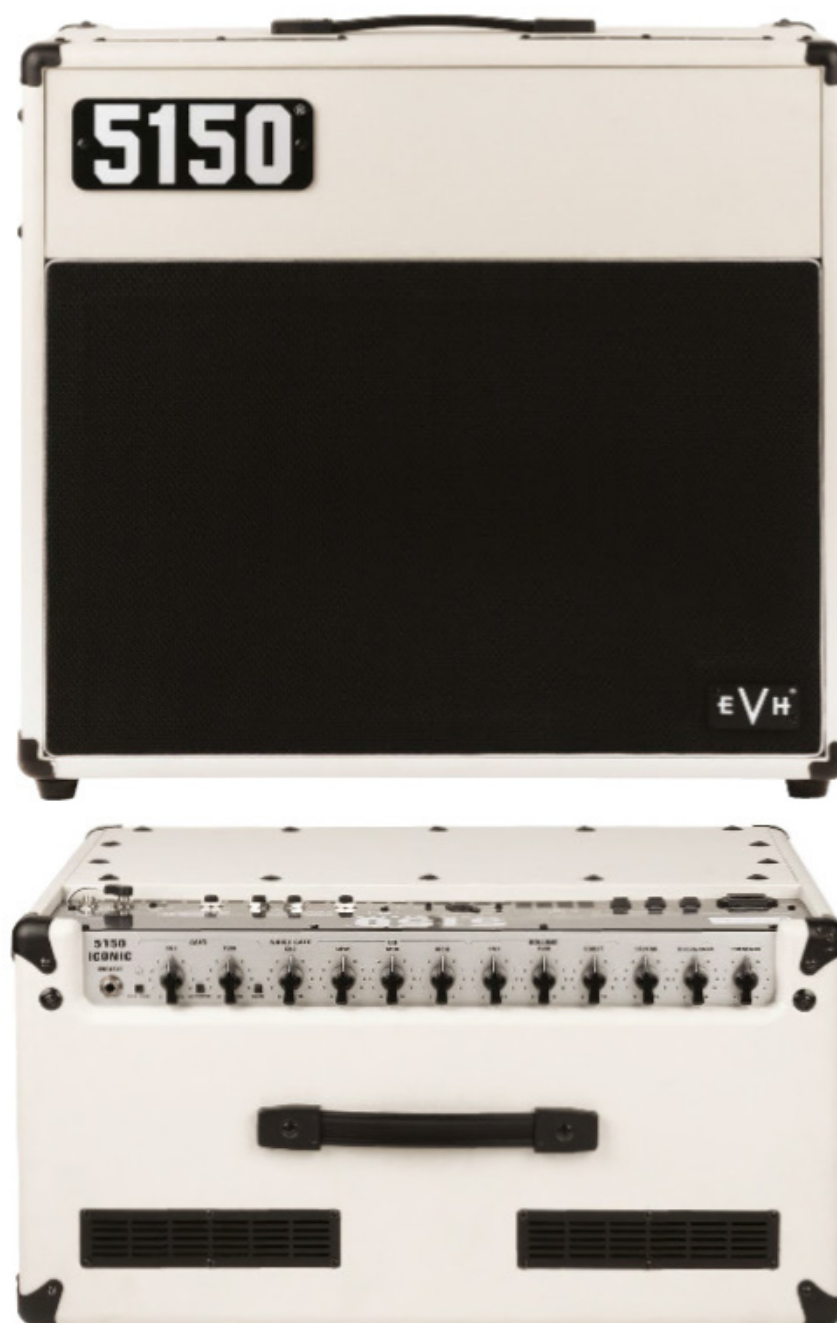
By Chris Gill

▶ WHEN EVH NAMED its new 5150 amps the Iconic Series, they hit the nail on the head. The original 5150 Eddie Van Halen signature amp introduced three decades ago is a bona fide classic that shaped and defined modern guitar tone for hard rock, metal and several other genres of popular music. Although EVH's 5150 Iconic Series products are designed by James Brown, who collaborated with Ed on the original 5150 and 5150 II, the new amps are not reproductions but rather original designs that deliver all the tones of the predecessors along with a wider palette of Van Halen's signature tones and beyond. Featuring a straightforward two-channel design, numerous pro features and a street price below \$1,000, the EVH 5150 Iconic Series 40w 1x12 combo promises to deliver incredible bang for the buck.



FEATURES The 5150 40-watt combo's amp section is built around a pair of 6L6 power tubes and two ECC83 (12AX7) preamp tubes in a hybrid, multi-stage circuit that delivers exceptionally high gain from fewer tubes. The control panel is top-mounted, and the closed-back cabinet, made of medium-density fiberboard (MDF) with a plywood baffle and covered with black or ivory textured vinyl, houses an EVH Celestion Custom 12-inch speaker. Top panel controls consist of individual gain controls for channels 1 and 2, noise gate level for channel 2 only, low, mid and high EQ (shared by both channels), volume for channel 1, 2 and the boost function, reverb level, resonance and presence, plus push switches for channel 1/2 selection and overdrive (channel 1) and burn (channel 2) voicings. The rear panel is packed with pro features that include a full/one-quarter power (40- or 10-watt) switch, speaker emulated XLR direct output with power amp mute (for direct recording or PA connection) and ground lift switches, 1/4-inch preamp output jack and effects loop. The included channel/boost footswitch connects to a 1/4-inch footswitch jack, and a pair of speaker outputs and 4/8/16-ohm switch allow connection to a wide variety of additional speaker cabinets.

PERFORMANCE Hands down, the EVH 5150 Iconic Series 40-watt combo is the biggest sounding combo selling for under \$1,000 available on the market today. This is a fire-breathing powerhouse of an amp with serious volume output, massive bass and gut-punching high-gain grind. But equally impressive is how versatile the amp is. Channel 1's clean tones are sparkly and spanky, although the volume output sometimes struggles to keep up with that of its high-gain brother channel 2. The output increases with the overdrive voicing switch engaged, which also pushes the amp into plexi territory with a satisfying crunch that nails SRV tones with a Strat and Angus Young punch with an SG



or Les Paul.

Channel 2 dives headlong into high-gain insanity from the get-go. The Burn voicing switch delivers the truly iconic metal guitar tones we all know so well from the last 30 years, while the regular setting is more like the red channel of a new EVH 5150 III. The EQ controls cover a wide range of tones, with the mid-range voiced more towards upper mid frequencies. Particularly notable is how dramatically both the resonance and presence controls can shape the tone, even at lower volume levels. The resonance control in particular can dial in mammoth bass woof with remarkable tightness that can handle 8-string and baritone guitars with ease.

The 5150 combo pairs well with a variety of guitars — single-coils, vintage and high-output humbuckers, etc. — but when I plugged in an EVH USA Wolfgang it was like the scene in *Ratatouille* when Remy the rat first tasted cheese with strawberry. The pairing is utter perfection. Bravo to the entire EVH gang.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$899.99

MANUFACTURER:

EVH,
evhgear.com

● Overdrive (channel 1) and Burn (channel 2) switches modify the tonal personality of their respective channels to deliver classic 5150 tones.

● A built-in noise gate eliminates hum and buzz without adversely affecting channel 2's attack or sustain character and response.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The EVH 5150 Iconic Series 40-watt combo delivers unbeatable value, including huge sounds in a portable package, an abundance of pro features and a wide variety of iconic tones.



The Cort of Public Opinion

CORT G290 FAT II

By Paul Riario

THE SILVER LINING of guitar snobbery is that it can easily be swayed by great guitars that nip at the heels of the establishment. All it takes are a few solid examples that are on par with “ivy league” brands in fit and finish and come complete with all the necessary upgrades that many players desire and at a price that fits within most working musicians’ budgets. As proof, Cort has made countless guitars for other manufacturers, yet their namesake instruments have been largely overlooked. Not anymore. Tapping into key features and ergonomic designs, Cort seems intent on overshadowing its competitors with their own models that are more than just the sum of their parts. And it is this galvanizing synergy that makes the Cort G290 FAT II a serious and worthy electric that has all the potential to be on the radar of many discerning players.

FEATURES Upon inspection, it’s impossible not to notice the top-notch componentry and woods on the guitar — that this is something entirely different from Cort. From its alder body with a gorgeous flamed top (in trans black burst, antique violin burst and bright blue burst) and one-ply white binding to its roasted maple neck and fretboard, everything about the G290 FAT II appears elevated. It also leads me to note that it feels so solidly built and airtight that

you could probably drop this guitar and it would still play itself.

The offset body feels snug pressed against you, with a generous belly carve and soft forearm contour that provides hours of playing comfort. Though it sounds like a misnomer, the Ergo-V neck profile is not a V-shape neck, but rather, a palm-filling profile that’s closer to a fuller “60’s” “C” shape with a soft satin finish on the back of the neck. The neck also sports glow-in-the-dark Luminlay side dots, an easy-to-burn-on 12-15.75-inch compound radius with 22 immaculately dressed frets, a Graph Tech Black TUSQ nut, Cort staggered locking tuners and an accessible spoke nut Hotrod truss rod wheel. The G290 FAT II’s articulate and detailed tones come courtesy of its Voiced Tone VTH-77 direct-mount pickups (in brushed nickel) merged with a custom pickup wiring to the 5-way switch that offers single-coil sparkle in the 2nd and 4th positions, and full-body humbucker roar in the other positions. Rounding out the guitar is Cort’s smooth traveling and floating CFA-III tremolo bridge mounted over a recessed cavity.

PERFORMANCE It’s hard not to draw comparisons of the G290 FAT II to vintage Ibanez Roadstar II guitars, but whereas the Roadstars of yore always felt bulky and a bit clumsy to me, the G290 FAT II looks more like an instrument you’d find in the hands

of a professional session player. And that is exactly how I regard the G290 FAT II — a very measured and dialed-in instrument. Its approachable playability that promotes effortless bending and chording is the result of a low-action setup that’s exactly where it needs to be — without any choke-out points — and also where intonation is miraculously spot-on. In addition, Cort’s stainless steel tremolo has an evenly tempered up or down throw and stays remarkably in tune as long as you don’t treat it like a hammer.

I’ll go out on a limb and assume the guitar’s “FAT II” moniker is a reference to the sound of its Voiced Tone humbuckers. For sure, humbuckers “fatten” tone, but what I find is the VTH-77 humbuckers sound more “full” than “fat,” meaning, there’s more definition, which is what I’d rather hear. The direct mount of the pickups adds fluent body and depth, with the bridge pickup having an expressive midrange and the neck humbucker projecting a throaty response. Even rolling the volume down, the pickups retain clarity as you throttle the taper between your rhythm and lead tones. I also dug the in-between split-coil positions for sounding singularly sweet and bright and offering a delicate contrast to the full-on humbucking brawn. There’s much more praise to heap on the G290 FAT II for being a studio-ready and gig-worthy guitar, but you only need to come by one.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE: \$799.99

MANUFACTURER:

Cort Guitars,
cortguitars.com

● Cort's Voiced Tone VTH-77 pickups paired with custom wiring provide high-output humbucking and split-coil tones with clarity and edge from the 5-way switch.

● The roasted maple neck and fretboard along with a 12-15.75" compound radius and Ergo-V profile neck encourage rapid-fire playability and enhanced comfort.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

The Cort G290 FAT II is an undeniably versatile and pro-level instrument, with studio-quality tones and playability that far exceeds its competition.

Buzz Bin

Fender Paramount PD-220E Dreadnought



WHEN IT COMES to mid-priced acoustics, your choices are boundless. And to make matters more complicated, once you've set your sights on a particular brand or model, along comes one of your trusted guitar-playing buddies to make a strong case for another. Well, let me be that friend for a moment.

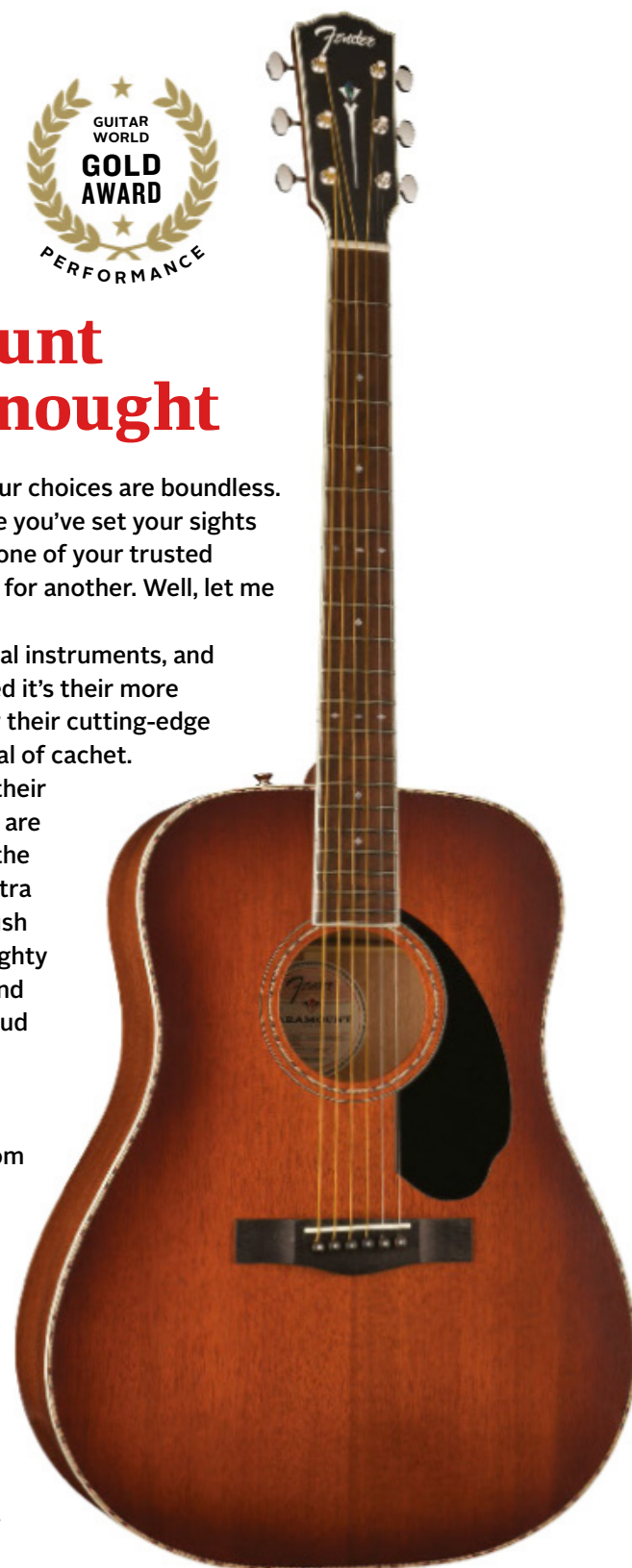
Fender makes a dizzying amount of musical instruments, and if there's one category that's often overlooked it's their more traditional acoustics that get passed over for their cutting-edge Acoustasonic, which has garnered a great deal of cachet. Fender aims to change that perception with their excellent Paramount Series of acoustics that are not only budget-friendly, but also include all the classic body styles of a Dreadnought, Orchestra and Parlor. For a few weeks, I was able to brush up on my (poor) bluegrass chops with the mighty Fender Paramount PD-220E Dreadnought. And after digging into its nimble playability and loud projection, I might persuade you to seriously consider this acoustic over anything else in a room full of dreadnoughts.

The PD-220E aesthetics seem to draw from the Dust Bowl era of folk instruments and wouldn't look too out of place as a guitar held by Woody Guthrie. With a choice of either solid spruce (three-color vintage sunburst and natural finishes) or solid mahogany (aged cognac burst) top, the PD-220E comes paired with solid mahogany back and sides, an ovankol bridge, black or tiger stripe pickguard (depending on finish), bone nut and saddle, open-gear tuners and a slim-taper mahogany neck with snowflake-shaped Pearloid inlays decorating the ovankol fingerboard. The guitar's top displays ornate feathered-style purfling and rosette, and flipping it over you'll find that same trimming for its backstrip. The guitar also includes a Fender and Fishman-designed Sonitone Plus preamp with soundhole-mounted controls for volume and blend. And uncommon for acoustics at this price, the PD-220E comes with a deluxe hardshell case.

One of the first things you'll notice on the PD-220E is how incredibly featherweight it is once you grasp it and how the texture of the body's ultra-thin satin finish is not far from a raw wood feel. It's solidly built, with a powerfully bright, mid-ranged voice that has thunderous volume for a budget dreadnought (you can most likely attribute that to its optimized X-bracing, which seems to enhance resonance and projected volume). The delightfully low-action setup combined with its fast-feeling neck is primed for fingerstyle playing and flat-picking, and there's a pleasant brassy chime to the guitar if you pick softly. Also, the Sonitone Plus system works well in making amplified tones sweep from mellow-bodied to a bright snap using the blend thumb-wheel. As a fan of many square-shouldered classics, I can't say the PD-220E shares the same complexity as other renowned dreadnoughts, but for its price, the Fender PD-220E is a fantastic D-style acoustic to regard because it ticks all the proper boxes in sight and sound — and that's paramount. — Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: \$829.99

MANUFACTURER: Fender, fender.com



IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/december2022

IN THE OPEN

Incorporating open-string drones into an improvised solo

IN THE PREVIOUS two columns, we looked at the basic elements that make up Muddy Waters' rhythm guitar playing and approach to single-note lines and solos on his blues classic, "Rollin' Stone." This month, we'll add another essential element to the mix, which is the inclusion of open-string drones.

On guitar, a drone is most often played as an open string that is sounded and allowed to ring along with the performance of an additional melodic line. One of the reasons the key of E is used so often in blues guitar music is that both the open low and high E strings can conveniently be used as drones in order to fill out the sound while also serving to emphasize the tonic, or home key, of E. Let's look at some examples.

In **FIGURE 1**, I fingerpick the open high E string with my ring finger while playing, on the lower strings, an improvised melody based on the E minor scale pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D). In bar 1, I attain unison high E notes by hammering-on from D to E on the B string while additionally fingerpicking the open high E. In bar 2, I drop this idea down an octave as I hammer-on from the open D string to E at the 2nd fret while fingerpicking the open high E string.

This technique can easily be applied to both melodies and solo ideas. In **FIGURE 2**, the song's melody is approximated and sounded on the lower strings with the open high E drone added to the majority of the melodic line. **FIGURE 3** presents another approach to a vocal-like melody, this time filled out with the inclusion of both the open B and high E strings.

As I mentioned in the previous two columns, Jimi Hendrix and Johnny Winter both recorded fantastic versions of "Rollin' Stone," dubbed, "Catfish Blues" by both of them, and — of course — both Jimi and Johnny added a barrage of brilliant musical ideas to the basic Muddy template. For example, Jimi would often craft phrases along the lines of **FIGURE 4**, repeatedly sliding up to B and D on the G and B strings while adding the open high E-string drone and additionally developing more complex rhythmic syncopations along the way, such as those in bar 3.

FIG. 1 (E7)
*w/hybrid picking let ring throughout
*all examples

FIG. 2 (E7)

FIG. 3 (E7)

FIG. 4 (E7)

FIG. 5 (E7)

During the "chorus" of "Rollin' Stone," Muddy adds an unusual syncopation to his vocal melody, which he mimics on the guitar. **FIGURE 5** exemplifies this type of phrasing.

You'll find many more twists on this stylistic approach to blues guitar in the playing of other essential artists like Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker and Robert

Johnson, all of whom were huge influences on Jimi and Johnny, as well as every blues and blues-rock guitarist that followed and helped to develop and push the genre forward. All of the "first generation" blues guitar giants will continue to inspire for generations to come, so be sure to listen to them all, as every recording illuminates what blues guitar is all about.

GW associate editor Andy Aledort's new album, *Light of Love*, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/december2022

IN THE CARDS

Revisiting Fleetwood Mac's "Lazy Poker Blues" for *Blues Deluxe, Vol. 2*

AS I MENTIONED last month, I recently recorded a follow-up to my 2003 album *Blues Deluxe*, titled *Blues Deluxe, Vol. 2*, for which I used a similar template, covering a handful of my favorite blues classics. One of the songs featured on *Vol. 2* is Fleetwood Mac's "Lazy Poker Blues." I'm, of course, referring to the original incarnation of the band that included the great British blues guitarist Peter Green. I'm a huge fan of his, especially his sort of nonchalant performance approach of, "Let's just wing it and see how it goes!"

"Lazy Poker Blues" is a standard blues shuffle in the key of E, featuring a signature lick along the lines of **FIGURE 1**. Played with a triplet feel and swing eighth notes, the song follows a 12-bar form consisting of four bars on the I (one) chord, E7, followed by two bars on the IV (four), A7, then two bars on the I, leading to single bars on the V (five) chord, B7, the IV, the I and, finally, the V, which "turns the progression around," setting up its repetition, "from the top."

FIGURE 2 presents an improvised solo of mine that's inspired by Peter's style, borrowing a few of his characteristic phrasing moves. In bars 1-3, I repeatedly pre-bend the D note at the 15th fret on the B string up a whole step, to E, with half-step pre-bends, from D to D $\sharp$, played between the whole-step bends. I'm using the bridge pickup on my Les Paul here and picking aggressively, to emulate Peter's signature attack.

The majority of these licks are based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), but in bar 4 I drop in the 6th, C $\sharp$, which functions as the major 3rd of the IV chord, A7 (A, C $\sharp$, E, G). I play a bit freely through the remainder of this chorus, resulting in a slightly truncated 10-bar form. Bars 11-22 represent the standard 12-bar blues form detailed earlier.

In bars 11 and 12, I repeatedly sound unison bends on the top two strings, fretting the high E note (1st string, 12th fret) along with the D note on the 2nd string's 15th fret, pre-bent up a whole step to E. This technique is another hallmark of Peter Green's blues vocabulary.

For the next six bars (13-18), I remain in

FIG. 1

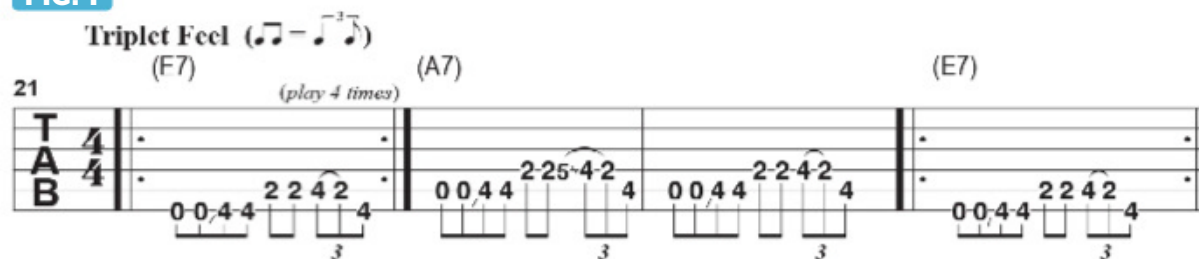
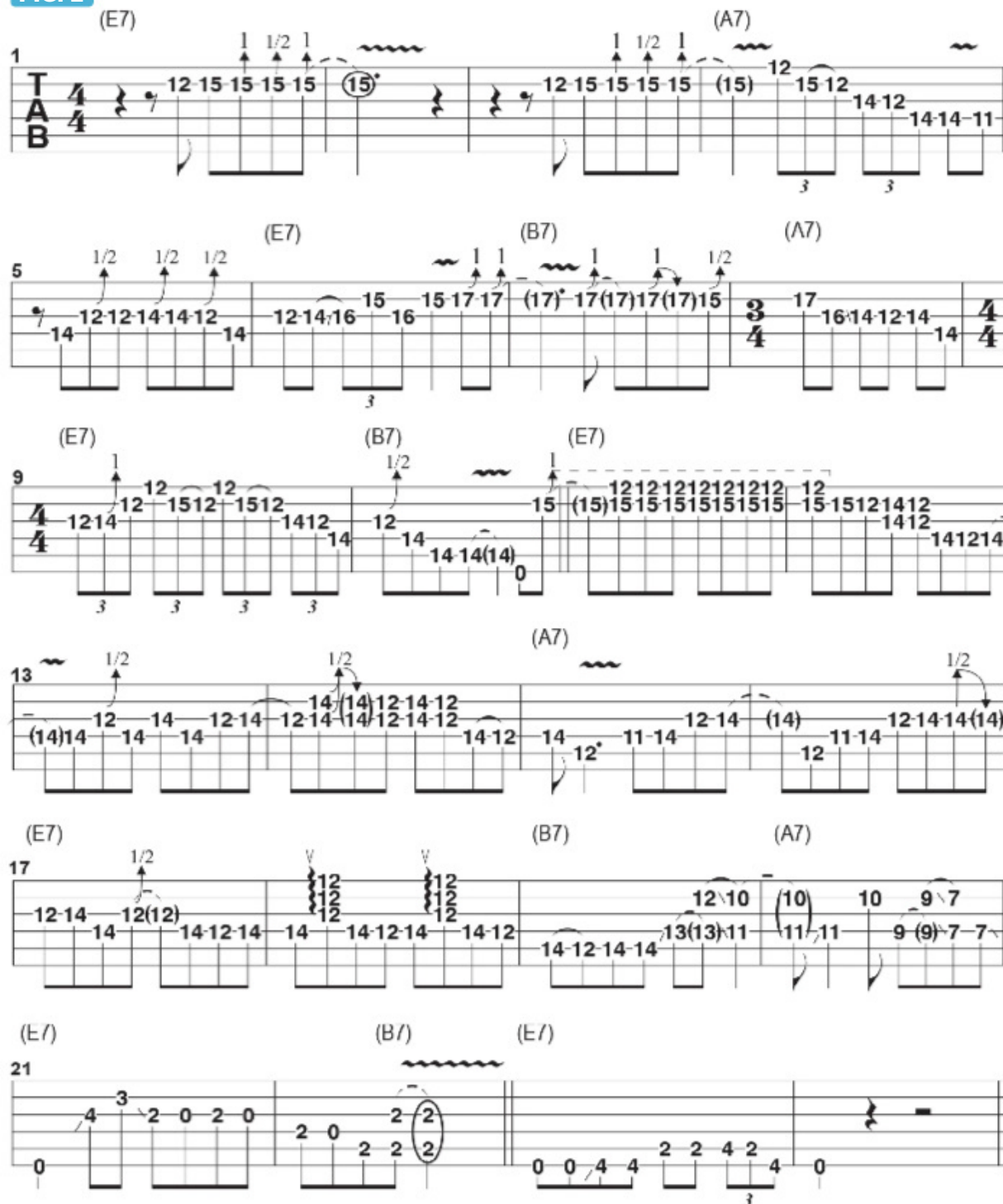


FIG. 2



12th position and get a lot of mileage out of that handful of notes. In bars 19 and 20, over B7 and A7, I use 6th intervals, or 6ths (pairs of notes six scale degrees apart) as a means to move down the fretboard as I wrap up the solo down in 1st position.

Just take a sunburst Les Paul, plug it into an early Marshall amplifier, set to "stun," and you will most likely be well happy with the results.

Next month I'll be back with "Peter Green, part two." See you then!

Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and de facto ambassador of the blues.

MELODIC
MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/december2022

THE BENDS,
PART 2More approaches
to expressive string bending
techniques

THIS MONTH, I'D like to continue exploring a topic that's near and dear to my heart — using string-bending techniques and related phrasing approaches to craft emotionally expressive melodic lines.

I've had many great guitar playing influences along the way, and all of these brilliant musicians continue to provide inspiration to me every day. I recently had the opportunity to see a dear friend of mine, Steve Lukather, perform with Toto, who came through Dallas playing on a double bill with Journey. It was a sold-out show in an arena packed with enthusiastic fans, which, as always, was wonderful! Truth be told, I have probably gotten more from Luke than any other player; he has been that big an influence on my own approach to the guitar and soloing.

I had a great hang with Luke before the show, and when I saw him perform that night, every time he bent a note, the sound and feeling was so expressive that I could feel it directly in my heart. He literally brought me to tears. And I could kind of hear myself, because I've learned so many things from Luke as a player. He's a human "textbook" for finding the center of the pitch, which is a topic we talked about last month. Larry Carlton is another master string bender, and he was an immense influence on both Luke and me. Larry's first solo album encapsulates everything you need to know about "string bending 101" and beyond. And the great Jeff Beck is, of course, another master of string bending techniques and musical applications.

A great way to hone your precision string bending technique is to practice playing through a given scale and then bending up from each note, or degree, to the next higher one. For example, **FIGURE 1** illustrates the C# Dorian mode (C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A#, B) played entirely on the G string, starting on B and the 4th fret. Pick each note in the scale individually, as shown in bars 1 and 2, then pick the string once and slide up to the next higher note, as shown in bars 3 and 4.

As I described earlier, let's now play a note in the scale and then bend up to the next higher one. In **FIGURE 2**, I sound B,

FIG. 1 C# Dorian mode



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5

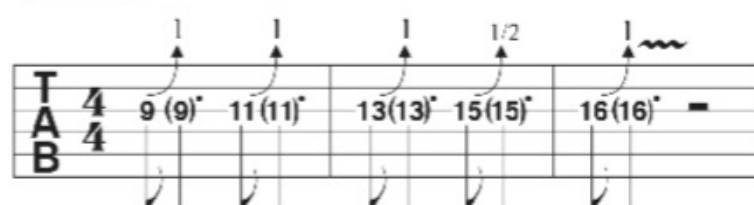


FIG. 6

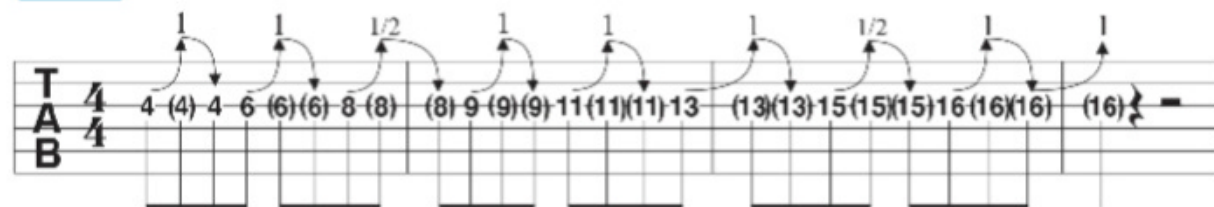
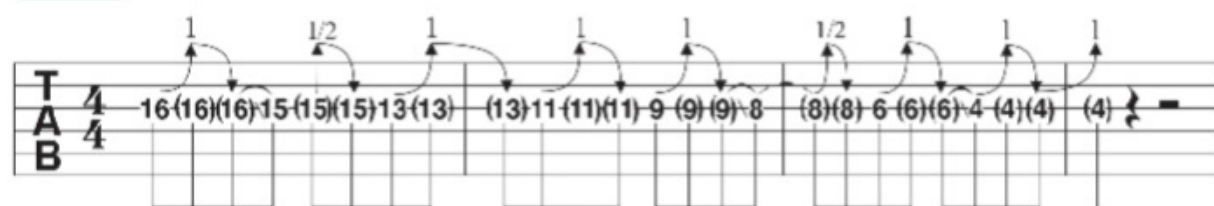


FIG. 7



which is the minor, or "flatted," 7th (b7) of C# Dorian, and then repeatedly bend that note up a whole step to the root, or tonic, C#. In bar 2, I repeatedly bend and release the string to sound both pitches, using my ears to regulate how much "push pressure" to apply to the string with my fingers.

In **FIGURE 3**, I move up to the next higher scale degree, C#, and repeat the process, bending that note up a whole step, to D#. In bar 2, I connect the two bends, bending from B to C# and then from C# to D#. **FIGURES 4** and **5** continue the process up the

string through the remainder of the scale, using whole- and half-step bends.

One can easily explore creative ways to incorporate these "scale degree" bends into syncopated melodies. **FIGURE 6** demonstrates this with an ascending phrase, and **FIGURE 5** flips it over with a descending one.

Now that you have the concept, try moving freely and randomly through the notes of this or any other scale while applying whole- and half-step bends that remain diatonic to it, meaning staying within the scale.

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/december2022

SOLO HOEDOWN

More on the live version of “Triple J Hoedown”

THIS IS THE fourth installment on the live version of my tune “Triple J Hoedown,” featured on my latest album, *Live at the Spud*, recorded at the infamous Baked Potato in Los Angeles. Last month, we looked at the section that precedes my guitar solo and features drummer Gary Novak and myself freely improvising on the groove with no strict adherence to any chord progression. I’d now like to talk about what I play in the tune’s solo section.

This section is essentially a basic 12-bar blues in the key of G with a ii - V - I (two - five - one) turnaround. At this point in the song, the groove shifts to “cut time,” or $\frac{2}{2}$ meter. As a result, the 12-bar form becomes elongated to 24 bars: 8 bars on the I (one) chord, G7, followed by four bars on the IV (four), C7, four bars back on the I, and then two bars on the ii (two minor), Am7, two bars on the V, D7, and three bars back on the I, capped off by a turnaround on D7, which sets up the repetition of the entire form.

I like to throw it all at this solo — blues, country, bebop, country/western swing, hybrid picking, flatpicking, legato phrasing built from hammer-ons and pull-offs, and what have you. **FIGURE 1** presents an improvised solo played over the entire 24-bar form.

In bars 1-4, I start off with licks played in “open G,” meaning I emphasize the use of open strings while playing lines based around the G Mixolydian mode (G, A, B, C, D, E, F). One can “boil down” G Mixolydian to G major pentatonic (G, A, B, D, E) or G dominant pentatonic (G, B, C, D, F), and it’s useful to look at the broader Mixolydian mode in this way.

An equally useful approach is to imagine the inclusion of passing tones that are either a half step below or above one of the scale tones. For example, I’ll often slide up a half step from the minor, or “flatted,” 3rd (b3), B $\flat$, to the major 3rd, B. I’ll likewise often slide down a half step from the flatted 5th (b5), D $\flat$, to the 4th, C. Utilizing passing tones in this way is integral to this style and approach to soloing.

For example, in bar 2, I move up chromatically from B $\flat$ to B, C and C $\sharp$ on my way up to the 5th, D. When I get to the IV chord

FIG. 1

Triplet Feel ($\frac{1}{3}$ = $\frac{1}{4}$)
w/hybrid picking

(G7)

1 1/4

TAB

4/4

0 2 0 2 3 0 0 2 0 3 5 3 4 5 6 3 5 3 4 5 5 2 0

4

3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 3 4 5 (3) 3 6 5 5 3 6 5 3 5 5 2 3 4 5 5 3 5

(C7)

8

3 4 3 6 3 5 0 1 2 3 3 2 1 3 2 3 4 0 4 3 1 2 0 1 3

(G7)

12

3 5 3 5 6 3 5 5 3 6 5 4 3 5 3 4 5 5 2 2 5 3 3 5 3 5 6 6 3 4

(Am7)

16

5 4 3 5 3 4 5 5 7 5 8 5 6 7 5 7 6 5 5 8 9 6 7 8 7 6 5 5 3 4 3 4 5

(G7)

21

3 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 2 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 4 3 3

(D7)

(G7)

(C7) in bar 9, I use a standard 1st-position C7 voicing as a framework for a country/blues-type lick in C, which “marries” the flatted 3rd, E $\flat$, to the major third, E, sounded on the open high E string.

When we perform the song, I’ll play two

choruses along these lines before we move on to the next section of the song. As I mentioned earlier, I’ll try to throw as many different ideas, approaches and melodies in there as I can, and it comes out differently every night, which is always fun.

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.

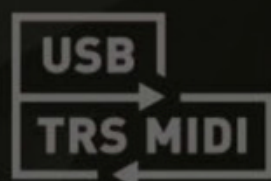


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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown



"CALL ME LITTLE SUNSHINE"

Ghost



BEHIND ALL

THE theatrics and elaborate makeup presented by Ghost frontman Tobias Forge (a.k.a. Papa Emeritus) and his band of "Nameless

Ghouls" (with some very capable contributions from guitarist extraordinaire Fredrik Åkesson) you'll find well-crafted songs and rock guitar parts, with this recent single from the band's latest album, *Impera* (2022), featuring great riffs and melodic lines.

When playing the Intro riff that kicks off the song, make sure your fretting fingers "stand tall," so as to not inadvertently mute the open-string notes, which should be allowed to ring. You'll notice how, in bar 5, when the tone switches from clean to dirty (w/dist.), some of the notes are played on different strings. This heavy incarnation of the riff reappears in the song's chorus (see section E) and includes a couple of uncommon fingerings for G5 and A5, as illustrated in the frames at the beginning of the transcription. Also unusual are the voicings and fingerings for Am and A $\flat$ m in bars 9, 29 and 67, which feature metal-approved "dark 3rds power chords."

The song's pre-chorus and chorus riffs (see sections D and E, respectively) require some quick, precise position shifts. Practice these parts slowly at first, to acquire the proper muscle memory for the shifts, as well as for the targeted finger slides to and from the 10th and 12th frets on the 6th string, then work the parts up to tempo.

The repeating 16th notes at the beginning of the guitar solo (see section H) are most effectively articulated with consecutive downstrokes, for a punchy, uniform attack. The tempo is slow enough that this shouldn't be too difficult to do, and the passage will provide a good exercise in down-picking. When you get to the 16th-note triplets in bar 42, switch to alternate (down-up) picking. This is followed in bars 43-47 by a short and sweet harmony-leads passage that features three single-note lines forming a triad on every single melody note (see Gtrs. 3, 4 and 5). Some tasteful and musically effective guitar arranging indeed!



"SEMI-CHARMED LIFE"

Third Eye Blind



THIS MUSI-

CALLY UPBEAT but lyrically serious smash hit from Third Eye Blind's eponymous 1997 debut album is built around a fairly

simple and mostly repetitious progression of open chords, which have a rich, vibrant "jangle" that serves the song well. In the studio, guitarists Stephan Jenkins and Kevin Cadogan decorated their parts with lots of contrasts in dynamics (volume and density) and tonal colors, using a variety of guitar and amp configurations. As Cadogan informed writer Nick Bowcott in a lesson article that appeared in *GW* November 1998: "The thick, multi-layered guitar textures were crafted with the help of an Epiphone Casino, a 12-string Hamer electric, a Gibson J-200 acoustic and a Gretsch Country Gentleman. The assortment of amps on this song is equally diverse: a Matchless 30 into a Mesa/Boogie 4x12 cabinet, a Mesa/Boogie Heartbreaker head, a Vox AC30 combo and a '69 Marshall plexi Super Lead head into a Marshall 4x12 loaded with 25-watt Greenback speakers. Reverb, wah-wah, tremolo and flange effects were also used in places."

We've chosen to streamline our transcription by consolidating the production's numerous overdubbed guitars into a smaller handful of parts, to help facilitate live performance in a two-guitar band. Notice the layering of the open C and Cadd9 chords in the song's main riff (see bars 1 and 2, Gtrs. 1 and 2). If you had to choose only one part to play here, I suggest going with Gtr. 2's Cadd9 voicing, since it already contains the foundational C root note, plus the add9 "color tone," D.

Faithfully performing this chord riff, with its numerous "holes of silence" (the eighth rests) requires perfectly timed string muting with both hands, as you'll need to "choke" both the open strings and fretted notes to abruptly stop them from ringing. These "invisible" techniques are not notated in the tabs and need to be integrated into your strumming technique. Practice doing this slowly at first, and be sure to use down-up strumming for the 16th-note rhythms.



"SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND (PARTS 1-5)"

Pink Floyd



PINK FLOYD'S

DAVID Gilmour is one of rock guitar's finest and most revered string benders and "feel" players, with unfailingly impeccable intonation,

touch and tone. When recreating his many bends in this epic classic rock masterpiece, in each instance hook your thumb around the top side of the fretboard and push the string away from your palm with your ring finger, supported one fret below by the middle finger (3+2). This *reinforced bending* technique will make it easier to zero-in on the target pitch of the bend while also helping you prevent the string from accidentally slipping out from under your ring finger.

Another key element of Gilmour's soulful lead guitar voice, one that is also gloriously displayed throughout this piece, is the way he adorns many of his bent notes with a smooth, even, vocal-like vibrato, which he will often produce by using his Fender Stratocaster's custom "sawed-off" whammy bar to gently dip the pitch of the note in a steady rhythmic pulsation. Another way to achieve this sound, without the use of a whammy bar, is to use the technique of *bend vibrato* — applying finger vibrato to a bent note. In each case (see bar 1, for example), you start by bending the note up to the target pitch, then proceed to partially and repeatedly release the bend, by about a quarter step, and restore it to its peak pitch, taking care not to overshoot it. For a wider, more dramatic bend vibrato, you can release the bend by more than a quarter step, closer to a half step. A great example of this technique and sound is the final bend Gilmour plays in bar 48.

Also masterfully demonstrated throughout this piece is Gilmour's use of the *pre-bend*, which involves silently bending a string before picking it, as indicated in the tab notation by a vertical arrow. This technique takes practice to master, as your ears need to train your fingers to apply just the right amount of push pressure to the string in order to anticipate the desired pitch rise and acquire the muscle memory to perform the move accurately every time.

"CALL ME LITTLE SUNSHINE"

Ghost

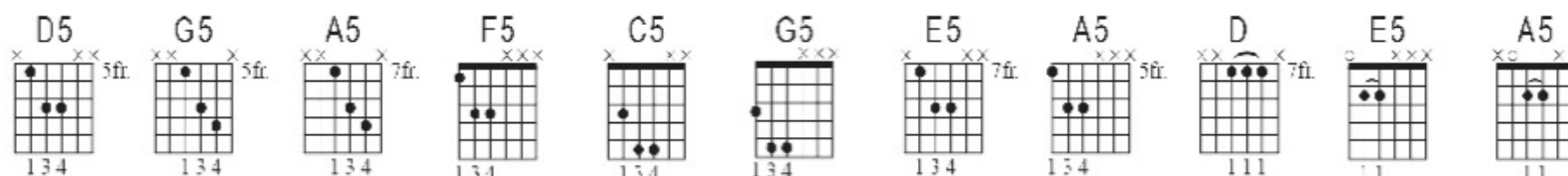
As heard on **IMPERA**

Words and Music by TOBIAS "A GHOUL WRITER" FORGE and MAX GRAHN • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one whole step (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D).

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

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



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 88

N.C. (A5) (C5) 2 1 1 1 (D5) (A5) (C5) (F) (Gsus4) (G)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/clean tone)

(hi-hat) 1 let ring throughout

B (0:24)

(A5) (C5) D5 N.C. (A5) (C5) G5 A5 N.C. (Am) (A♭m)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/dist.)

P.M. - 1

1/4

P.M. - 1

P.M.

Gtr. 1 (top note)

"CALL ME LITTLE SUNSHINE"

WORDS AND MUSIC BY TOBIAS "A GHOUL WRITER" FORGE AND MAX GRAHN.

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(A5) (C5) D5 N.C. (A5) (C5) F5 N.C. (C5) (G5)

Gtr. 1
10 P.M. -

Gtr. 2
P.M. -

Bass

C Verses (0:46, 1:52)

1. Call out in the middle of the night
2. Light up in the middle of the day

For when else would I hear you
For how else could you see me

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

Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone)
Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

Fall out in the cold starlight
Ease up to the hunter from the prey

I can save you if you choose
And transform indefinitely

(A5) (C5) (A5) (C5) (D5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/dist.)

Rhy. Fill 1 (2:22)

G5
Gtrs. 1 and 2

TAB 4/4

G (2:43)

H Guitar Solo (2:46)

Sunshine

F5 C5 G5

F5

C5

G5

E5

A5

38 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 2

Bass

41

C5 G5

(10) (10) 10 12 10 12 12 12 12 12 (12) 10 12 (12) 10-12-14 10-12-14 10-12-14 12 13 15 15 6 6 7 7

Gtr. 3 (top note)

Gtrs. 4 and 5 (Bottom note)

end Rhy. Fig. 2

F5

C5

G5

E5

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 39)

Gtr. 4

43

6 5 5 5 (5) 5 10 10 10 8 8 8 (8) 8 17 17 17 15 16 17 (17) 17 17 15 16 17 17 17 19 20 17

Gtr. 3

7 5 5 5 (5) 5 6 6 6 5 5 5 (5) 5 8 8 8 7 8 7 (7) 7 8 9 9 8 10 7 10

Gtr. 5

7 5 7 7 (7) 7 7 7 5 5 5 (5) 5 14 14 14 12 12 14 12 12 14 14 12 14 15 13

Bass

1 1 7 7 7 7 7 3 3 (3) 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 3 2 0

45

C5 G5

I Breakdown (3:08)

You will never walk alone You can always reach me You will never ever walk alone

N.C. (Csus4/G) (C/G) (Gsus4) (Am) (C) G5

47 Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.

You will never walk alone You can always reach me You will never ever walk alone

(Csus4/G) (C/G) (Gsus4) (G) (Am) G5

51

J 3rd Pre-chorus (3:30)

You will never walk alone You can always reach me You will never ever walk alone

F5 C5 G5 E5 A5 C5 A5 G5 P.M.

55

Even when you're dead and gone you can always reach me All you gotta do is call

F5 C5 G5 E5 A5 C5 E5 P.M.

59

me Call me

62

P.M.

K 3rd Chorus (3:54)

Call me Little Sunshine Call me Call me Mephistopheles

N.C. (A5) (C5) D5 N.C. (A5) (C5) G5 A5 N.C. (Am) (A-m)

Gtrs. 6 and 7 (elec. w/dist. and sub-octave effect)

64

P.M.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 26)

Gtr. 6 (top note)

Gtr. 7 (bottom note)

Gtr. 1 (top note)

Gtr. 2 (bottom note)

1.

Call me when you feel all alone just call me Little Sunshine

(A5) (C5) G5 D N.C. (A5) (C5) F5 C5 G5

68 P.M. ---

P.M. ---

P.M. ---

2.

call me Little Sunshine

N.C. (A5) (C5) F5 C5 G5 A5

72 Gtr. 4

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 5

Gtrs. 6 and 7

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

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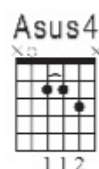
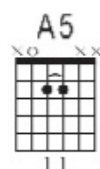
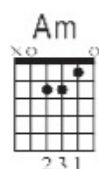
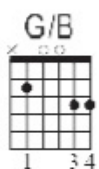
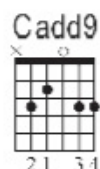
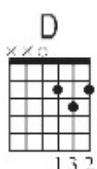
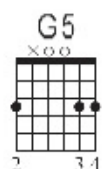
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"SEMI-CHARMED LIFE"

Third Eye Blind

As heard on **THIRD EYE BLIND**
Words and Music by **STEPHAN JENKINS** • Transcribed by **JEFF PERRIN**



A Intro (0:00)

Moderate Funky Rock ♩ = 102

3rd time: Doo doo doo Doo do - do doo Doo doo doo Doo do - do doo
Doo doo doo 1. I'm packed and I'm

G5 D Dsus4 C

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/overdrive)

Rhy. Fig. 1

(play 4 times)

(drums)

Tablature for the Intro section, showing guitar (T, A, B), bass, and drums. The guitar part includes Gtr. 1 (elec. w/overdrive) and Gtr. 2 (elec. w/overdrive) playing Rhy. Fig. 1a. The bass part includes Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) (First two times only) and Fill 1. The bass line is labeled Bass Fig. 1.

B 1st Verse (0:20)

holding I'm smiling She's living She's golden She lives for me Says she lives for me Ovation

G5 D Dsus4 Cadd9

Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone)

light P.M.

Tablature for the 1st Verse section, showing guitar (T, A, B) and bass. The guitar part includes Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone) playing light P.M. The bass part includes Bass Fig. 2.

D (1.07)

Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo	Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo	
Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo	Doo	doo	doo		2. The	sky	was gold
G5			D		Dsus4	Cadd9						

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

Gtr. 2

23 *Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)*

E 2nd Verse (1:17)

It was rose I was taking sips of it through my nose and I wish I could get back there Somewhere back there Smiling in the pictures you would take

G5	D	Dsus4	Cadd9	G5	D	Dsus4
----	---	-------	-------	----	---	-------

Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 w/clean tone and light palm-mute, four times (see bar 3)

25 Gtr. 3 (w/light wah)

20

12 12 12 12 10 12 13 (13) 12 13 12 13 12 10 12 (12) 12 12 12 10 12 9

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 3)

Doing crystal meth will lift you up until you break It won't stop I won't come down I keep stock with the tick - tock rhythm A bump for the drop And then I

Cadd9	G5	D	Dsus4	Cadd9
-------	----	---	-------	-------

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fill 1 (see bar 11)

28 let ring -----, *Gus: 1 and 2 play 10y: 1 in 1 (see bar 17)* let ring -----

(9) 10 8 9 8 9 8 10 8 | 12 12 12 12 10 12 13 | (13) 12 13 12 13 12 10 12

bumped up I took the hit that I was given then I bumped again then I bumped again I said

G5 D Dsus4 Cadd9

31 Ctr. 3

(12) 12 12 12 10 12 9 (9) 10 8 9 5 7 5 4 (4)* 5 4 0 5
 Bass
 3 5 3 X X 5 7 5 X X 3 5 3 (3) 3 3 5 3 3 3 5 3

F 1st Pre-chorus (1:36)

Go back to **C** Chorus (bar 15)

How do I get back there to the place where I fell asleep inside you How do I get myself back to the place where you said

D C D C D C D

22 Gtr. 1

[illegible]

I (2:41)One
brokenAnd you hold me
Still it's

and we are

all that I want to do Just a little now

G/D

Cadd9

G/D

Cadd9

G5

Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone, tremolo, and flanger effect)
(w/pick and fingers)Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/dist.)
(w/pick)

49

*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

Bass

J (2:51)

Feel myself

heading off the ground I'm scared

I'm not coming

down

life

No

no

And I

won't run

for my

But nothing it's alright

She's got her jaws now locked down in a

alright

And

G5

D

Dsus4

C

C

52

G5

D

Dsus4

Cadd9

Cadd9

Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

K Breakdown (3:10)

I want

something else

to get me through this

life

baby

G5

D

C

G5

D

C

*Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone, tremolo, and sub-octave effect)

55

*Composite: Multiple overdubbed guitars arranged for one part.

Gtr. 5 (12-string elec. w/clean tone)

Bass

Bass Fill 1 (2:11)

Bass Fill 2 (4:08)

I want something else Not listening when you say Good -

59 G5 D C G5 D

L (3:29)

bye Good - bye Good -

C G/B Am C G/B Am

Gtrs. 1 and 4

Rhy. Fig. 3

63

Gtr. 5

Rhy. Fig. 3a

64

Gtr. 3 (w/flanger effect)

65

Bass

66

bye

Good -

C G/B Am

Gtrs. 1 and 4 play Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 65)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3a (see bar 65)

Gtr. 3

67

Bass

68

M **Outro** (3:43)

bye

Doo	doo	doo		Doo	do - do	doo	Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo
	it was	rose	I was taking	sips	of it	through my	nose	And I	wish I could get	back there	Someplace	
(Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo	Doo	doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo)
Doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo	Doo	doo	doo	doo	Doo	do - do	doo

G5

D

C

[illegible]

Doo	doo	doo		Doo	do - do	doo		The sky	was	gold
back	there		in the	place we	used	to	start			
(Doo	doo	doo		Doo	do - do	doo)				
I		want		something		else				
(Doo	doo	doo		Doo	do - do	doo)				

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'G5' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Cad9'. Both staves have a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The top staff features a melody with various intervals and a final measure marked '(play 4 times)'. The bottom staff features a bass line with various intervals and a final measure marked '12'. The score is written in a style that uses a combination of standard musical notation and a simplified notation system for intervals.

Substitute Bass Fill 2 third time (see below bar 57)

N (4:20)

(grad. decrease tempo)

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the song 'The Rose Tree'. The first staff is for voice, with lyrics 'The Rose Tree' written below it. The second staff is for guitar, with chords 'C', 'G/B', and 'A5' indicated above it. The third staff is for bass, with chords 'C', 'G/B', and 'Asus4' indicated above it. The notation includes notes, rests, and bar lines, with some notes circled to indicate specific rhythmic values.



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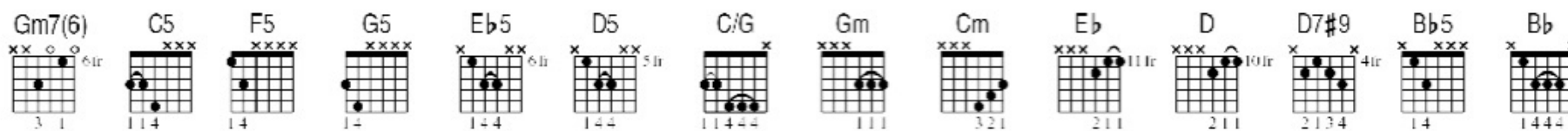
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“SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND (PARTS 1-5)”
Pink Floyd

As heard on **WISH YOU WERE HERE**

Words and Music by **ROGER WATERS, DAVID GILMOUR and RICK WRIGHT** • *Transcribed by* **DAVE WHITEHILL and JEFF PERRIN**



Part I

{0:00}

A 1st Guitar Solo (2:09)

Freely (♩. = 44-52) $\ast$ Gm

**Gtr. 1 (elec. w/clean tone)

(synth. intro)

[illegible]

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see below)

*chord symbols reflect overall harmony

****neck pickup**

2 111

Bass Fill 1 (2:09)

(synth arr. for bass gtr.)

The second system of musical notation continues the melody. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 12/8. The melody is written on a single staff. The notes are: a half note G4 (circled 3), a half note A4 (circled 3), a half note B4 (circled 3), a half note C5 (circled 5), a half note D5 (circled 5), a half note E5 (circled 3), a half note F5 (circled 3), and a half note G5 (circled 3). The system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Very Slowly ♩. = 46

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C

Gm7(6)

Gtr. 2 plays Riff A (see bar 22)

35

Gtr. 1

Bass

37

C

G5

Gm7(6)

39

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 4

Bass

E $\flat$ 5

D5

42

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 4

*chords doubled by Gtr. 2

58 $E\flat$ D Gm Cm Gm D7#9 *end Rhy. Fig. 2*

end Rhy. Fig. 2a Gtr. 1 (w/dist. and Univibe)

end Bass Fig. 1

E 3rd Guitar Solo (7:38)

Gm

Gtr. 3 repeats Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 49)

Gtr. 4 repeats Rhy. Fig. 2a simile (see bar 49)

Gtr. 1

62 *full* 18^{*} 15 18 15 18^{*} (18) 3 3 6 5 *full* 5 (5) 3 5 3 5 (5) 15 (15) (15) *full* (15) 11 12 12^{*} 11 18 18 (18) *full*

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 49)

65 *full* 6-5 6-7 6-8 (8) 15 (15) (15) *full* 15 17 (17) (15) 17 17 15 17 17 17 15 17 (17) (17) *full* 3 6 5-5-3 3 3 5 3-2 3

Gm $E\flat$ D

68 *full* 5 3-5 3-5 15 (15) (15) (15) 0 18 18^{*} 0 18 15 18 15 18 (18) 15 18 (18) (18) 17 15 17 15

$E\flat$ D Gm Cm Gm D7#9

71 *full* 17 17 (17) 16 16 17 16 14 16 17 16 15 17 (15) 3 3 6 5 (5) (5) 5 (5) 3 5 3 5 5-3 1 12 8 3 (5) (5)

**Overdubbed gtr. doubles first six notes then plays higher harmony notes. 3*

Fill 1 (10:09)

Gtr. 1 *full* (Gm)

Gtr. 1 *full*

Gtr. 2

TAB 12 8 (3) (3) (3) (3)

Fill 3 (10:46)

(F)

Gtrs. 1 and 3

TAB 12 8 13 13 13 10 8 1 (1)

Fill 2 (10:25)

(F)

Gtrs. 1 and 3

Gtr. 1 *full* *full* *full* (Gm) (Gb) Bb

Gtr. 3 Gtrs. 1 and 3

TAB 12 8 1 3 3 3 (3) 1 1 2 8 (8) (8) (8) 6 5 3 5 3 (3) 3 3 3 3

Part III

F Verse (8:45, 10:09)

1. Remember when you were young you shone like the sun Shine on you crazy diamond
(2.) reached for the secret too soon you cried for the moon Shine on you crazy diamond
N.C.(Gm) (G♭) B♭5 E♭5 D5 C5 B♭5 F5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Fill 1 second time (see previous page)

Gtrs. 1 and 3 substitute Fill 2 second time (see previous page)

75 Gtr. 1 (phaser off) full Gtrs. 1 and 3

Bass Bass Fig. 2 end Bass Fig. 2

Now there's a look in your eyes like black holes in the sky Shine on you crazy diamond You were
Threatened by shadows at night and exposed in the light Shine on you crazy diamond Well you
N.C.(Gm) (G♭) B♭5 B♭ E♭5 D5 C5 B♭5 N.C.(F)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Fill 3 second time (see previous page)

79 Gtr. 1 full full Gtr. 3 Gtrs. 1 and 3

caught in the crossfire of childhood and stardom blown on the steel breeze Come on you target for faraway laughter
wore out your welcome with random precision rode on the steel breeze Come on you raver you seer of visions
(Gm) (D+/F#) (B♭/F) (C7♭9) (E♭) E°7 let ring

83

Part IV

(2nd time) skip ahead to **II** Sax Solo **G** 2nd Interlude (9:48)

Come on you stranger you legend you martyr and shine
Come on you painter you piper you prisoner and
B♭/F Dm D Gm G♭ B♭

86 Gtrs. 1 and 3 full full full

Gtr. 4

Bass Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 75)

go back to **[F]** Verse

2. You

89 **E $\flat$** **Gm/D** **Cm** **E $\flat$ /B $\flat$** **F**

Gtrs. 1 and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ full full full full

Gtr. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ full full full full

[H] Baritone Sax Solo (11:12)

shine

N.C.(Gm) Gm7(6)

91 Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/clean tone) Gtr. 1 *trance* Riff B. Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/Univibe) (play 5 times)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 49)

95 **E $\flat$ 9** **D7 $\flat$ 9**

Gtrs. 1 and 2 Riff C.

Bass

[I] Tenor Sax Solo (12:04)

Gm13

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Riff B 12 times (see bar 94)

Bass

97

101 **C11**

105 **Gm13**

109 **E $\flat$ 9** **D7 $\flat$ 9**

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Riff C simile (see bar 95)

[J] (12:45)

(♩ = 48)

Gm13

Gtrs. 1 and 2

play 4 times and fade

113

Bass (play 1st time only)

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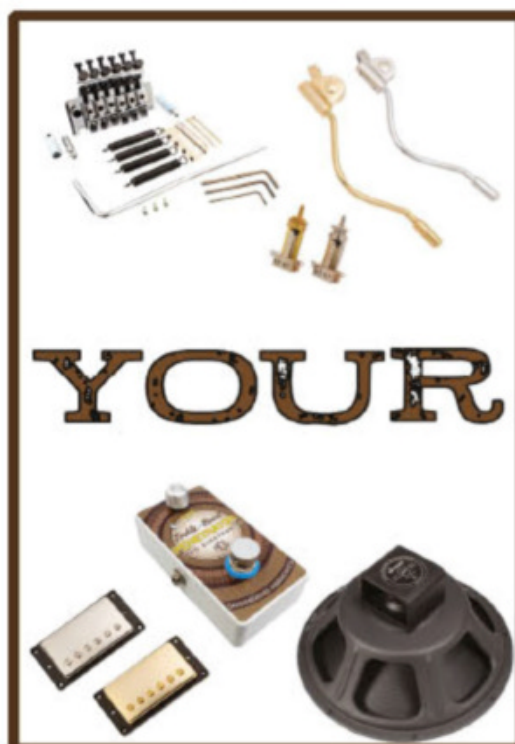
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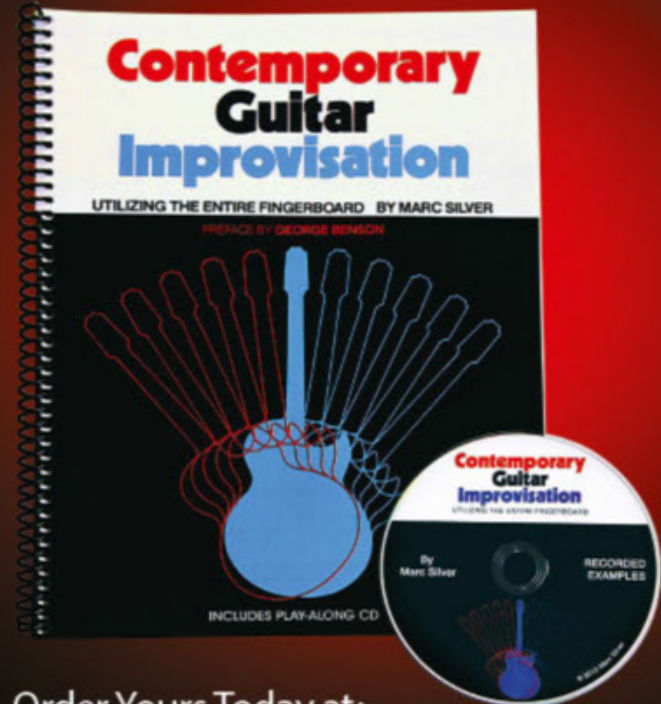
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C. 1981-1990 MARSHALL JCM800 2203

CATEGORY: AMPLIFIER HEAD

MARSHALL INTRODUCED THE JCM800 series in 1981, eventually producing 15 different amp models that included 50- and 100-watt lead and bass heads, various 1x12 and 2x12 combos and channel-switching models. However, when most guitarists mention a JCM800, they usually are referring to the model 2203 100-watt master volume head, which dominated the Eighties as the amp of choice for probably 95 percent of the hard rock and metal bands who recorded and toured with Marshalls during that era.

Marshall initially produced the JCM800 2203 from 1981 through 1990 and reissued the model in 2002, which is still available today. At first, the JCM800 2203 was internally identical to the JMP 2203 100-watt master volume head introduced by Marshall in 1975, with the only difference being a rather significant cosmetic makeover. One other important difference is that JCM800 2203 amps exported to the United States were equipped with 6550 power amp tubes (instead of the usual EL34 tubes) due to the U.S. distributor's concerns about reliability and meeting UL standards. The sound of a 2203 with 6550s is more aggressive and chunkier, with bigger, tighter bass, negligible sag and compression, more clean headroom and faster, more percussive attack, which players like Kerry King and Jeff Hanneman of Slayer and Zakk Wylde put to good use.

The 2203 underwent a few gradual changes over the years, and by the mid Eighties the model was no longer a near-exact clone of its earlier JMP iteration. In 1984, Marshall added a 1/4-inch DI output to the rear panel to allow players to link several heads together like they previously

could do with Marshall's four-input heads (the 2203 had only a pair of high- and low-sensitivity inputs). In late 1984, the vertical configuration of the two input jacks shifted to a horizontal configuration. In 1985, Marshall removed one of the filter caps (going from six caps to five) and further reduced the number of filter caps to three the following year as a cost-cutting measure. The effect of the filter cap reduction generally is only noticeable when playing with the output fully cranked — some players think the sound is tighter and more aggressive, while others find it thin and muddy. Also in 1986, EL34 tubes returned on amps exported to the U.S.

The Marshall JCM800 2203 and its “little” brother, the 50-watt 2204 master volume head, were the last of the “simple circuit” classic Marshall amps before the company shifted to more complicated designs with channel switching, effects loops and other features modern guitarists demanded. Players still argue the virtues of a 2203 with EL34s vs. 6550s, but to me it's like the difference between an oven-roasted prime rib and a grilled ribeye — both are the same cut and both are great; it's just a matter of which flavor one desires at the moment. For players who prefer the classic hard rock tones of the Seventies, the meaty midrange and singing, compressed, juicy lead tones of EL34s is the way to go. If you're into harder, heavier sounds, the big beefy bass, mouth-watering chunk and sizzling harmonic squeals of 6550s seals the deal. Perhaps the best solution for those who can't make up their minds is using a 2203 with 6550s for rhythm and a cranked 50-watt 2204 with EL34s for leads.



AC/DC's Angus Young performs (in front of a wall of Marshall cabinets) at the Los Angeles Coliseum in 1984

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(horizontal input, 6550):
High Sensitivity input,
Presence: 9, Bass: 8,
Middle: 6.5,
Treble: 6,
Master: 3,
Preamp: 10

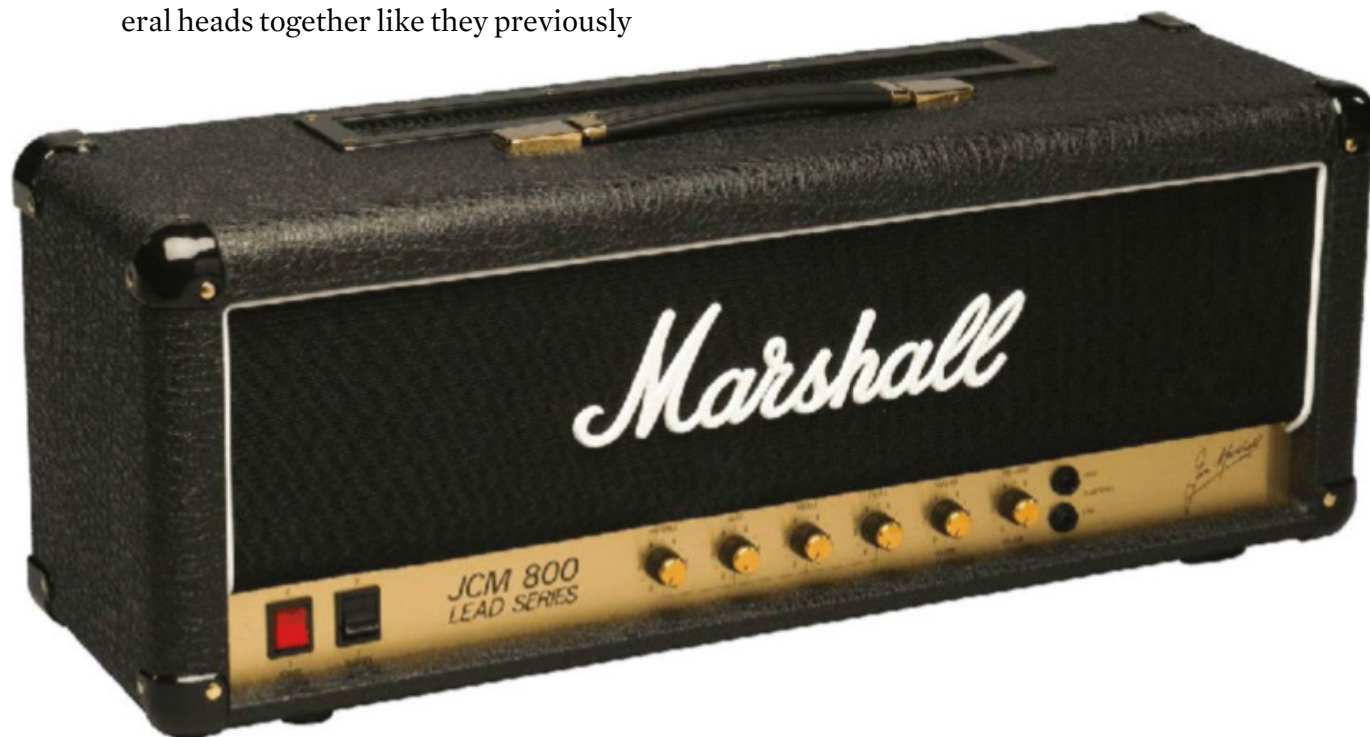
Tip: Hanneman and Kerry King used Boss 10-band graphic EQs to boost mids and hit the input with additional gain.

ANGUS YOUNG LEAD



(vertical input, EL34):
High Sensitivity input,
Presence: 3, Bass: 10,
Middle: 5,
Treble: 9,
Master: 4,
Preamp: 10

Tip: Technically, Angus usually used a late-Seventies JMP 2203, but since the JMP and JCM are virtually identical the tones are too. A 4x12 with 25-watt Celestion Greenbacks sounds sweeter than the 65- to 75-watt Celestions preferred by most Eighties players.



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