

THE TRAGIC TALE OF TED NUGENT'S FIRST GIBSON BYRDLAND!

GUITAR WORLD

GUITAR & BASS
TRANSCRIPTIONS

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DON'T BACK DOWN

ERIC CLAPTON
DON'T THINK TWICE,
IT'S ALL RIGHT

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BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG
ON HOW DOOKIE JUMP-STARTED THEIR CAREER
AND AMERICAN IDIOT REIGNITED IT
PLUS! THEIR BRAND-NEW ALBUM, SAVIORS!

CODE ORANGE
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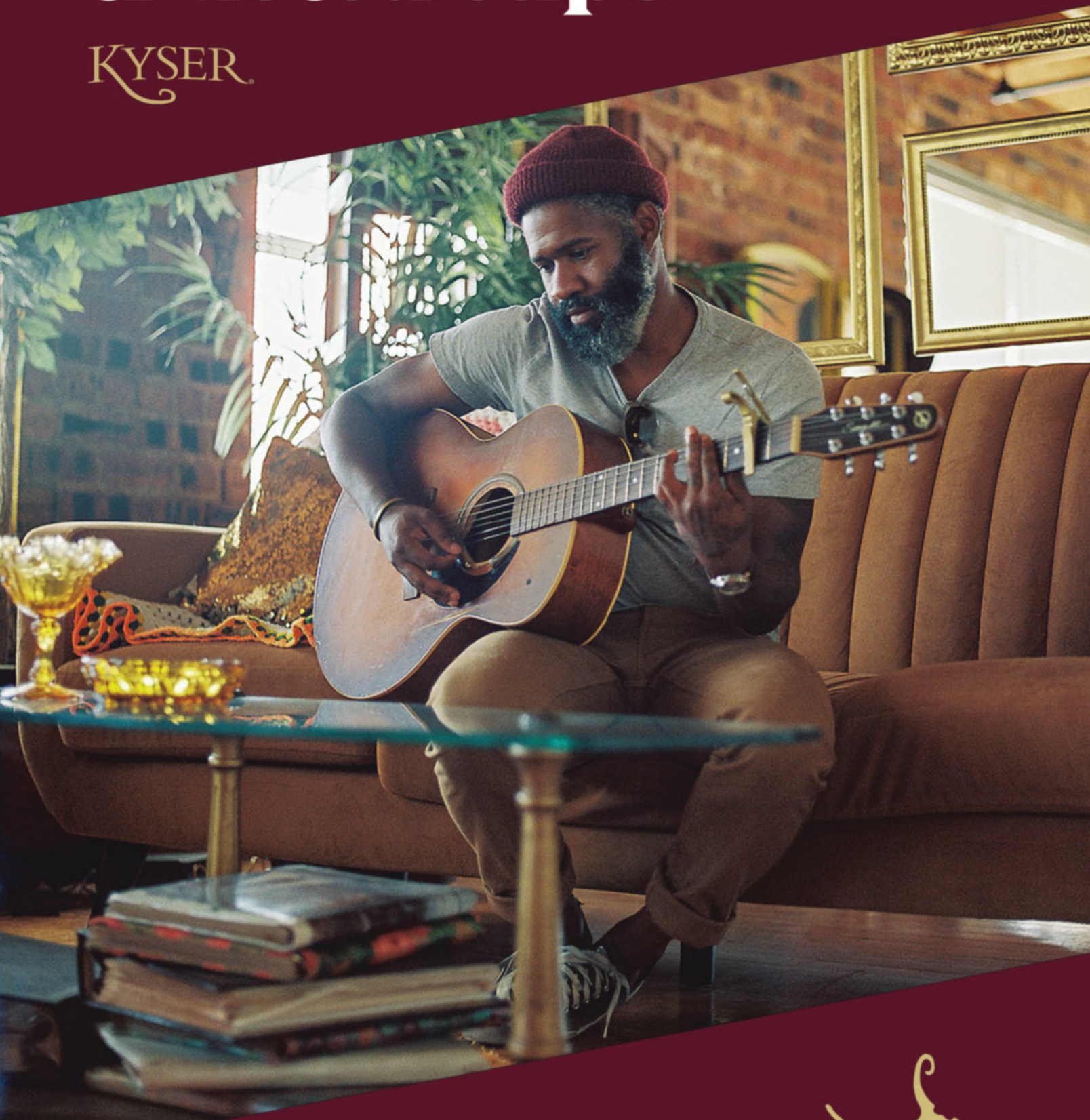
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VOL. 45 | NO. 3 | MARCH 2024

NOT JUST THE BILLIE JOE SHOW

HELLO, AND WELCOME to the final issue of *Guitar World* to be produced in 2023. It's also the first issue to actually come out in 2024, the first issue to feature Billie Joe Armstrong on the cover since March 2017 and the third Armstrong cover — Louis, Lance, Neil or otherwise — during my 13 years at *GW*. It's also the issue that'll be available at the 2024 NAMM Show in Anaheim, California, in January. Sadly, I won't be able to make it to the show this year, so please give my regards to halls B, C, D and E!

With the end of the year so close that I can reach out and smack it upside the head, I'd like to thank our readers — everyone who subscribes; anyone who picks up an issue at a newsstand, book store or Jiffy Lube waiting room; everyone who writes in with opinions, requests, reader art, Defenders of the Faith entries or weird stories about Johnny Thunders. We truly appreciate your being a part of this crazy thing that we do over the course of every four weeks.

As much as I enjoy editing and assembling themed issues (like last month's Eric Clapton special), I really love issues like this one, aka the "everything but the kitchen sink" issues — the ones where at least seven different features are overflowing from the table of contents. It's where/how/when I feel the magazine does the most good in its attempt to cover and mirror the ever-expanding world of guitar — or at least to deliver an enjoyable slice of said world. To that end, I'm loving this issue's mix of characters and topics, from Marty Friedman and his interesting comments on guitar solos, to Johnny Marr (whose new book is highly recommended for gearheads), to Chelsea Wolfe, Adam Jones and Code Orange, over to Ace Frehley, who took the time out to discuss Kiss in the Seventies, to the eternally young-looking Billie Joe Armstrong (Maybe I should try jumping more?), to former NYC session ace Eddie Martinez, who ends a debate and claims ownership of the "Addicted to Love" guitar solo, to Ted Nugent (not to mention Jimmy McCarty and Dan Erlewine), to Bernie Hamburger, the Las Vegas luthier who made a few of George Harrison's favorite instruments, some of which wound up on the final Beatles recordings.

I look forward to much more of this in 2024!

— **Damian Fanelli**



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Gibson, which was definitely on a roll at the time, introduced the ES-335 — the music industry's very first semi-hollow electric model — in 1958, only six short years after the company's first solidbody model, the Les Paul, made its debut.



FUTURE (ES-335)
JEN ROSENSTEIN (ARMSTRONG)

SOUNDING BOARD

Got something you want to say? **EMAIL US AT: GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com**



COMPETELY RANDOM PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Bad Brains guitarist **Dr. Know** performs at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, August 5, 2007. “We had started with the fusiony stuff, but when we heard the aggressiveness of punk, that really hit home with us, because we were kids,” Dr. Know (aka Gary Miller) told *Guitar Player*’s Tom Beaujour in 2021 while discussing about the band’s early days. “And we decided, We’re going to do this. We started to throw little concerts in our basement. And that’s it. The whole D.C. thing, that’s when it all got started, meeting Henry Rollins [of *Black Flag*] and Ian MacKaye [of *Minor Threat*] and playing at this place, Madam’s Organ.” He continued: “I was playing all downstrokes, so it had more oomph, and I was muting with the right hand, which was something I got from Al Di Meola. Van Halen had also just come out, and I was intrigued about how [Eddie] hit the harmonics with the pick. I was like, I’ve got to figure out how to do that. So I did.”



Jimi was not an “influencer”!

Jimi Hendrix was *not* an “influencer” [Holiday 2023] — he was a paragon and an inspiration to guitarists, that motivated them to break musical boundaries and evolve as artists. So-called “influencers” typically are money grubbers who exploit gullible people and appeal to the lowest common denominator to make huge amounts of money (example: the Kardashian clan). Musicians from the classic rock era had a genuine passion for creating and playing music to an appreciative and more sophisticated audience. Making massive amounts of money wasn’t what motivated them; it was secondary.

— Jeff de Baun, Atlanta, Georgia

Let us not forget Willie Kizart

Great article on the electric guitar’s greatest moments! [March 2023] On number 14, “Rocket 88,” the guitar player who used the broken bass amp was Willie Kizart. The guys I play with are all into the little details, and we continue to keep each other informed on the little things that matter!

— Jeff Dagenhardt, Wisconsin

’Tis the 72 Seasons season!

It would be cool if you could trans-

scribe a few songs from Metallica’s 2023 album, *72 Seasons*. Maybe “Lux Aeterna” or “If Darkness Had a Son”? Or you could transcribe “72 Seasons.” I’d also like to see Van Halen’s “Humans Being” and at least one song from the 2018 Nita Strauss album, *Controlled Chaos*.

— Andrew Young, La Grange, Kentucky



Give the punks what they want!

Not only might the July 2023 issue [Zakk Wylde/Pantera] be the best issue of the year, but my agreeing with someone’s idea in the Sounding Board inspired me to write to *Guitar World* for the first time in close to 30 years as a reader. [A transcription of] Dead Kennedys’ “Police Truck” was requested, and it would be great to see it in your pages, along with performance notes. But let’s expand this idea and try to feature more punk every once in a while. Sure, kids today can find music a million ways on the internet, but for those who discover old stuff from your pages, it could change their lives. Thanks for the consideration!

— John Thurmond

[Editor’s note: Interestingly enough, this is basically what we’re trying to do with our occasional “Lost Classics” features in the Tune-Ups section. So far, we’ve featured the Undertakers, Stiff Little Fingers and Buzzcocks; and while all the stories have been a bit “other side of the pond punk”-heavy so far, we aim to mix things up in 2024. Look for the next installment in the April issue. — D.F.]

[above] Dead Kennedys circa 1980

SEND LETTERS TO: Sounding Board, *Guitar World/Future*, 347 W. 36th St., Suite 1700, New York, NY 10018 or GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

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READER ART

OF THE MONTH

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

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



"I DO LEGO BRICK ART VERSIONS OF GUITAR PLAYERS. HERE IS A VERSION OF JIMI HENDRIX [AT] NEWPORT POP FESTIVAL"
— DAN MCAVINCHY



JIMI HENDRIX BY VICENTY

DEFENDERS ⚡ of the Faith



James Orion Minner

AGE: 26

HOMETOWN: Los Angeles, CA

GUITARS: Schecter Omen 6

BASS: Schecter Omen 4

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Metallica "Orion," Megadeth "Holy Wars," Ted Nugent "Stranglehold"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson SG Custom



Jerod Swift

AGE: 50

HOMETOWN: Rockdale, TX

GUITARS: Charvel Desolation series, Martin acoustic

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Ghost "Rats," the Sword "Dream Thieves" and original songs by my band, ItBegins

GEAR I WANT MOST: John Mayer PRS amp



Liam Murphy

AGE: 42

HOMETOWN: San Diego, CA

GUITARS: Gibson '59 Les Paul goldtop, Gibson ES-335, Music Man John Petrucci Majesty 7, Ibanez JPM4

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Aerosmith "Last Child," Incubus "Dig," Prince "Let's Go Crazy," Audioslave "Like a Stone"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Neural DSP Quad Cortex



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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MARY TIMONY

Adam Jones — with his Gibson Silverburst Les Paul — on stage in New York City, June 4, 2017

[right] The Frank Frazetta installment of the Adam Jones Les Paul Custom Art Collection



Serious Art Rock

HOW TOOL'S ADAM JONES CHANNELS HIS PASSION FOR VISUAL ART INTO THE ADAM JONES LES PAUL CUSTOM ART COLLECTION

By Richard Bienstock

WITH ITS STRIKING silver-to-black (and, due to aging, sometimes green-hued) finish, the Les Paul Silverburst is one of the most distinctive-looking guitars in modern six-string history. But over the course of the past year, the eye-catching model has become even more unique — seven times over, in fact. The reason? A one-of-a-kind collaboration between Epiphone and Tool six-string sonic adventurer Adam Jones, which has resulted in the Adam Jones Art Collection of electric guitars.

Jones, of course, is the most visible and impassioned proponent of the Silverburst, and in 2020 he teamed up with Gibson on a limited-edition, note-perfect recreation of his Number 1 instrument, a 1979 Les Paul Custom with the distinguishing finish. This was followed by a U.S. production-line Standard version of the guitar and, soon after, rumors — as well as appetite-whetting online teasers — about a coming Epiphone iteration. When that guitar was finally unveiled in 2022, it was with a host of premium specs that has led many to call it the best Les Paul ever produced under the Epiphone brand name. But there was another →





attraction: each release in the Adam Jones Les Paul Custom Art Collection, limited to just 800 examples, featured a unique piece of artwork personally selected by the Tool guitarist, a visual artist who worked on films like *Jurassic Park*, *Batman Returns* and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* prior to becoming a prog-metal giant.

"The push was, how can we do something that really reflects me?" Jones tells *Guitar World*. "So I suggested, 'Why don't we do art on the back and make something really special?' And then Cesar [Gueikian, Gibson CEO] said, 'How about we make a whole line of them?' I was like, 'Oh my God, that'd be great,' and I started making a list of my top choices. And you know, just like with music, I have really eclectic tastes when it comes to art."

Indeed he does. The Adam Jones Les Paul Custom Art Collection launched with "The Veil of Bees" by acclaimed pop-surrealist Mark Ryden. "He just rips his guts out when he paints," Jones says, "and his thought process and his journey from an idea to the execution is so involved. It was amazing to have him do the first one."

From there, the Collection, true to Jones' eclecticism, spotlighted a wide array of selections — fantasy legend Frank Frazetta's famous "The Berserker," originally created for the cover of the paperback novel Conan the Conqueror; contemporary artist (and Jones' wife) Korin Fought's bold "Sensation"; the mesmerizing "ANTI-LAOKOON 1965" from late Austrian painter and School of Fantastic Realism co-founder Ernst Fuchs; a second Ryden creation, "Queen

"Since I was a kid, music and art have been my way out of the wicked world. That's been my safety net"

Bee"; and two striking "self-portraits" from American artist Julie Heffernan, who Jones calls "one of my favorite contemporary painters. I own a bunch of her paintings and I'm just obsessed with her. So it was a blessing to work with her and all the artists and their estates. Because these paintings mean so much to me."

For Jones, incorporating artwork into a signature Les Paul design had special resonance. "Since I was a kid, music and art have been my way out of the wicked world," he says. "That's been my safety net."

The paintings on the backs of these guitars (and, of course, the Antique Silverburst finish on the top) are just one graphic attraction of the new Epiphones. Each example in the Adam Jones Les Paul Custom Art Collection also sports a special back plate commemorating the featured artist and the name of the work, as well as a Korin-designed insignia on the back of the headstock.

And the exceptional visuals are matched by an absolutely spectacular spec sheet. While the Epiphone expression of Jones'

beloved Silverburst is more affordably priced than the two Gibson versions, it is loaded with many of the same premium features, including a mahogany body with a maple top, a three-piece bound maple neck with a Norlin-era volute (and special "Adam Jones Custom Profile"); an ebony fingerboard with block inlays; PosiLock strap buttons and more.

There's also no shirking in the electronics department, with a reverse-mounted humbucker in the neck — just like Jones' Number 1 — and a Seymour Duncan Distortion (again, reflecting Jones' guitar) in the bridge position. It's a heavy package, both figuratively and literally: the Epiphones themselves, much like first-run Silverbursts, weigh in at well over nine pounds.

"I like a heavier-weight guitar because I use tube amps, I use analog equipment," Jones says. "So if you plug one of my heavy guitars into my setup, with a pickup that is responsive to that side of things, it sounds great. You get great tone. You get great feedback, but you can still control it. You get everything I love. This guitar gives you a piece of me. In fact, I just used one of the Epiphones to do some recording, and I've played them onstage, too."

He continues, "So I hope we do another seven of these. I hope that, with Gibson and Epiphone, we do all kinds of things together. Because there's nothing like music. Nothing compares to it. But the closest thing I've found is art. They've always gone hand-in-hand in my life." And now, with the Epiphone Adam Jones Les Paul Custom Art Collection, in his guitars as well.



INQUIRER TROY MCLAWHORN

THE EVANESCENCE GUITARIST
TALKS KILLER TRENCH COATS
AND THE AMP THAT GOT AWAY

Q: What was your first guitar?

My mom and dad had guitars in the house, and though they didn't play them that much, those were the first guitars I grew up playing on. The one I really started to learn how to play on was my mom's nylon-string classical guitar. I played that for years before they bought me my first guitar, which I picked out in a music store down the street from my house. It had a black Gibson Explorer-style body with a maple neck and was made by a company called Lotus.

Q: What was the first song you learned to play?

"House of the Rising Sun" by the Animals. I figured out the chords and then gave a little concert to my mom and dad. I was around 12.

Q: Do you remember your first gig?

My first gigs were playing at parties. In my hometown, older kids would have what they called keg parties, where they'd buy a couple of kegs of beer and have a band play. So my first gigs were in people's backyards, playing at parties for older people who were getting drunk. One of the earliest bands I can remember being in at the time was Hellrazor. By default, our only payment was beer.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?

I can't think of anything in particular that occurred in Evanescence, but I do remember one embarrassing moment back in the early Nineties when I was in Still Rain. Whenever I performed, I'd wear snakeskin boots and a leather trench coat that went all the way down to the ground. One night, I was playing a solo at the front of the stage and totally rocking out. When I was done, I took a step back, but because my trench coat was so long, I stepped on it and couldn't stand up straight. Each time I tried stepping back, the trench coat got shorter and shorter, until I fell down on stage on my back into the drum kit. I rolled around for a second so I could get my shit together, and I finally got up.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?

One piece of gear that I regret letting go of



Troy McLawhorn
on stage with
Evanescence
in Milan, Italy,
November 10, 2022

was a Mesa Boogie Mark IV. It was a combo that had a beautiful tweed front. As for my favorite, it's my 1985 Gibson Les Paul Custom that was given to me for my birthday by a good friend. It was used when I got it, but it's a beautiful guitar that's got this amazing piece of leather artwork on the front. I've never seen anything like it and it just sounds and plays great.

Q: Suppose the building is burning down; what one guitar from your collection would you save?

My wife gave me a really great American Telecaster for Christmas a few years back. It's one of my favorite guitars to play when I'm at home, and it means a lot to me because my wife gave it to me.

Q: When was the last time you practiced and what did you play?

It would've been last night before the show. I warm up before every show, playing guitar for 20 or 30 minutes. I will usually go through some exercises, and maybe a couple of things in the show that I may have fucked up the night before. I don't really have a routine, as I don't actually sit down and practice all that much when on tour, as I concentrate on maintaining and getting ready for the show I'm about to play. But when I'm home, I practice a lot and like to learn new things.

"I took a step back, but because my trench coat was so long, I stepped on it and couldn't stand up straight"

Q: What aspect of the guitar would you like to improve?

I'd love to have more of a knowledge of music theory. Growing up, I learned everything by ear. I just listened to records and tried to figure out what I could. I think it would be great to have more of an educated knowledge of theory and scales and all that stuff.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

I'd say invent a time machine so it can take you to now, where you could watch YouTube videos! I think it's amazing that kids have YouTube now, because it would've been a whole different thing for me if I had all the knowledge that's on YouTube. I did everything I could by working my ass off. I played in bars five and six nights a week, playing 300 shows a year, playing three one-hour sets every night for about eight years with no record deal. The experience was amazing. I don't know what more I could have done outside of what we did in that time.

— Joe Matera

Cannibal Corpse

ERIK RUTAN AND ROB BARRETT
DELIVER PLENTY OF HELLISH SHRED AND
HARMONIC TENSION ON *CHAOS HORRIFIC*

By Gregory Adams

▶ **EVEN SET AGAINST** 35 years of historically bludgeoning riffage, few Cannibal Corpse moments concave the chest quite like the G#-tuned death march that begins “Blood Blind,” the first single from the act’s 16th fetid full-length, *Chaos Horrific*. Credit this monstrously chunky moment to guitarist Erik Rutan, who has been producing Cannibal Corpse records since 2006’s *Kill* and was fully integrated into the lineup on 2021’s *Violence Unimagined*. He’s been a great fit. As a fan and friend of the band since the release of 1990’s *Eaten Back to Life*, Rutan knows the guiding principles of death metal’s most offal-flinging outfit.

“When I think of Cannibal Corpse, it’s extreme heaviness,” Rutan — a former member of Morbid Angel and the longtime leader of Hate Eternal — says of writing for the gore-obsessed icons. He adds that the lockdown-era bleakness of *Chaos Horrific*’s creation phase was another source of inspiration for the “darkness and despair” he brought into the sessions. “I’m known for technicality and aggressiveness, but with this record I was feeling grim.”

Since Covid measures prevented Cannibal Corpse from touring *Violence Unimagined* when it was first released, songwriters Rutan, Rob Barrett and bassist Alex Webster threw themselves back into the meat grinder to find more horrific soundscapes. Webster and Rutan demoed tales of zombified feeding frenzies at their respective homes before converging upon the latter’s MANA Recording Studios in St. Petersburg, Florida. Barrett opted to fine-tune arpeggiated thrashers like “Vengeful Invasion” in-the-flesh with founding drummer Paul Mazurkiewicz. “I’m more hands on. I actually go to the practice room with Paul and piece everything together with him, just to make sure that he’s comfortable with the speed



“When I think of Cannibal Corpse, it’s extreme heaviness,” Erik Rutan says

of the beats I want to use,” Barrett says. “It’s just more organic, in my opinion.”

While *Chaos Horrific* makes for some Grade-A carnage, when it came to the dissonant chord abstraction and time signature lunacy of Webster-penned pieces like “Overlords of Violence” and “Pestilential Rictus,” Barrett and Rutan admit it took a while to find the right leads for the bassist’s mania.

“I’m not a mathematician when it comes to soloing. I’m usually just a feel guy — so is Rob; we share that,” Rutan says, though the pair still deliver plenty of hellish shred and harmonic tension. They also anchored into their quad-tracked rhythms with newfound bombast after

“I’m known for technicality and aggressiveness, but with this record I was feeling grim”

acquiring longer-scale custom B.C. Rich and Dean guitars that better absorb and intonate the menace of a disgustingly low tuning. “This is fucking 4K shit,” producer/guitarist Rutan says with a laugh of the upgrades that may have just pushed Cannibal Corpse into their heaviest era yet.

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Marty Friedman [left] and Chargeeeeeee do their thing in Nashville, April 14, 2023



One Bad M.F.

**"I HOPE THE TRADITIONAL GUITAR SOLO DIES A SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATH."
GW CATCHES UP WITH MIGHTY MARTY FRIEDMAN**

By Andrew Daly

▶ DATING BACK TO his days alongside Dave Mustaine, Marty Friedman has been searching. As for what he's searching for, that's another matter, as the target he's firing at is perpetually moving. But that's not a bad thing, and it's by design, as when it comes to the new music he's creating, Friedman is as exacting as it gets.

"I spend a lot of time, money and energy on [recorded music]," Friedman says. "I'm [of the mindset that] I must look back on

the music I create and know I love it. So, it doesn't matter how much achievement I feel from that music; I'll start from scratch if I need to. It's not hard to feel satisfied or feel like you've achieved something — but it is hard to be honest with yourself and truly get it right."

Of course, "getting it right" is a phrase that lives within the shadowy areas of Friedman's mind, a place that spouts melodic brilliance, far-flung solos and mutant

creativity. To that end, Friedman is busy doing his thing on "Meteor Shower," which comes from Fusion Syndicate's — a heavy metal, hard rock and jazz fusion project featuring keyboardist Brian Auger, bassist Jah Wobble, guitarist Robby Krieger and more — third record, and second of 2023, *Beautiful Horizon*.

But Friedman is his notoriously evasive self when asked about it, saying, "It's funny because I don't know much about it, other



than the fact that they asked me to play on 'Meteor Shower,' and that I enjoyed doing it. It was a change of pace, but I should probably know more about the project overall." [Laughs]

Regardless, Friedman's fusion licks are as ferocious as his typical metal leanings, making us wonder if Friedman was as in the dark. "There's got to be a reason to have me on the project — [other than just having] someone else on the project," he says. "I try to assess what should go in there by asking myself, 'Why would they choose me for this?' Whatever that is will be what I try to add."

As for what's next, Friedman is working on his yet-to-be-named 15th solo album, and he may or may not end up on stage with Mustaine again, too. But that has yet to come to fruition, and the shape and scope is subject to change. That's the world Friedman lives in since jettisoning himself from the mainstream.

As for the rest of us, we're willing subjects to Friedman's whims. "There are endless possibilities that we can do with melodies. You don't have to have crazy guitar noises like an elephant; it's about creating content that touches people. And that has less to do with technique and more with the intent of the person playing the guitar."

Considering you're known as a heavy metal player, does your approach change much when working on a jazz fusion project?

You'd think so, but no, not really. I don't have a set way that I work on any genre. I take whatever is presented to me and try to find a way to put my stamp on it. But it must be in such a way that it's pleasurable to listen to, not just for me but for anyone. I like to add things that maybe someone else wouldn't necessarily add, right?

Is it possible to describe the player you are to a new fan?

It's impossible to put into words the player I am today. I love anything that excites me, and that has nothing to do with genre. And if it's music I don't like, I can find something to take away from it if it challenges me. For example, I did this piece with the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra that's basically 25 minutes of guitar solos in place of a piano.

There were a lot of unique arrangements to make it happen, and I had to change things to suit my playing. That was a challenge because I'm not a big listener of that music, but I adapted to it and gained a ton. Those things fill in the gaps within my musical personality and are

probably why many people describe my style as "exotic." So, can I describe myself? No, I can't. It's best to let others do that.

Do you think you'll ever get to a place where you find what you're looking for creatively?

No, it's endless. I'm working on my next solo album right now and still doing things I've never done before. I'm on a constant, endless quest to do something I've never dreamed of with a guitar. It was the same thing for all the albums I've made prior with other artists or bands. There will never be an end; I don't see myself conquering music. No one ever has, and I won't. But I've gotten good at taking what's inside of myself and presenting it honestly.

"The obligation to say, 'I need to do something flashy and get out,' killed guitar solos in American mainstream music"

It's been 20 years since the release of your first post-Megadeth solo record, *Music for Speeding*. What's changed?

What remains is the musical sound, for better or worse. When you hear me playing, you know it's me. That was my first decently done solo record compared to previous albums, but I was grasping at many things and learning a lot along the way. *Music for Speeding* was the first album where I got my feet wet regarding making a record and making demos that I could brush up properly. It opened the floodgates for me to do ambitious things and not be afraid of taking a long time to make a record.

And how do you apply that mindset now?

It's the same as what I'm doing now. This process is about taking a lot of time and being willing to throw away a lot of garbage. Because back in the day, I wouldn't throw away anything if I felt I nailed it. I'd get it done to where I was satisfied, put it on the album, and that was it. But then I'd look back and sometimes not be satisfied. So now, I refuse to be unsatisfied with anything I sign my name to. That's the biggest change.

How do you keep from going off the rails and being self-indulgent?

Oh, I think I'm self-indulgent. [Laughs] But I'm self-indulgent in different ways, meaning I'll play these long melodies like a singer, which is very self-indulgent as a guitarist, if you think about it. Usually, the lead guitarist comes in, gets an eight-bar solo, plays a bunch of stupid licks, maybe adds something hot and fancy that will impress, and then they get out. But I'm replacing the vocalist when I'm soloing, meaning I sing with my guitar. So, rather than saying, "Here's the obligatory eight-bar solo," if necessary, I'll be selfish because that's exactly what I want instead of a boring old solo. I think that mindset killed guitar solos in American mainstream music. The obligation to say, "I need to do something flashy and get out," killed it. And even if it's good, that structure is boring. I've avoided it and looked for meaning behind what I do, even if it is self-indulgent.

Is there hope for guitar solos?

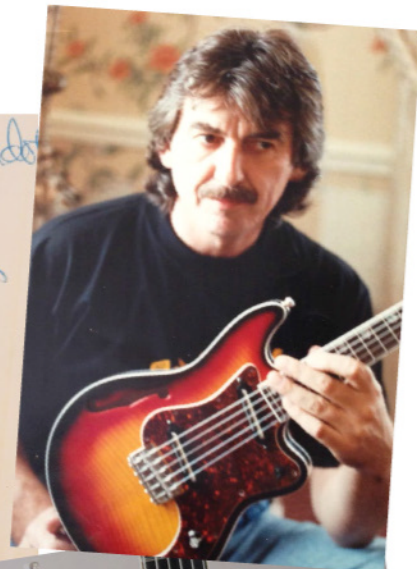
I hope not. I hope the traditional guitar solo dies a slow and painful death. Guitar solos need to be inventive. They need something to keep listeners involved, especially those who are not learning to play and only listen. Because when you're learning to play, you tend to be impressed with anything you can't do, right? And if you're young and just catching the guitar bug, that excitement can be magical. It's like, "How do they do that!?" That element is awesome, and you can find it within traditional solos, but it means less than zero in everyone else's eyes.

In what direction would you like to see the scene go?

The people who aren't learning want to hear something fresh and exciting. We need guitar music that makes those people feel something. It's the responsibility of guitarists to bring something to solos that will achieve that. But things look promising because there's a ton of great guitar work. It's a promising time. There are a lot of exciting approaches out there by people who look at the instrument in cool ways.

And what's brought that on?

It may be because they have time on their hands, but people seem inspired, and that's encouraging. Every time something happens in the world of guitar that's outside the mainstream, that's good for guitar. All that other eight-bar and tapping stuff; that's got to be over. There must be something melodically unique that connects us on a higher level. That's what I'm looking for from guitar today, and I hope it's what young players are searching for, too.



George Harrison and the Hamburguitar

GRETSCH, RICKENBACKER, FENDER ... HAMBURGUITAR? IN THE BEATLES' MID-NINETIES ANTHOLOGY ERA, GEORGE HARRISON'S GUITARS OF CHOICE WERE BUILT BY A MAN NAMED BERNIE HAMBURGER

By Bill DeMain

BEATLES FANS KNOW George Harrison's guitars as well as they know his solos from "All My Loving," "Nowhere Man" and "Something." There's the Gretsch Country Gentleman, the Rickenbacker 360/12, the Epiphone Casino (with Bigsby), the psychedelic Strat nicknamed "Rocky," the '68 rosewood Telecaster. They're as much a part of the band's visual history as velvet-collared suits and Sgt. Pepper mustaches. But in early November, when "Now and Then" added a new epilogue to the Fab Four's catalog, an unfamiliar guitar came with it. As seen in Peter Jackson's short film about the making of the track, there's Harrison in the studio, playing a double-cutaway electric, cherry red with white trim.

"When it showed up in the video, I

jumped higher than Michael Jordan," says Bernie Hamburger, who built the guitar for Harrison in the mid Nineties — a Hamburguitar Model S. Hamburger also made the handsome emerald green Tele-shaped Model T that appears in the Beatles' *Anthology*-era "Real Love" music video.

To his delight, Hamburger discovered that these were Harrison's go-to guitars during his later years. "After George passed away in 2001, his guitar technician, Alan Rogan, told me that George owned many, many instruments, and all of them were in storage — with the exception of the ones I made for him," he says. "Those were always within reach, plugged into an amp, ready to play. So I guess he liked my stuff."

Hamburger was born in the Bronx and, like many baby boom kids, had his life

forever altered on February 9, 1964, when the Beatles appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. And like many kids, he soon got his first guitar, a "Tesco Del Rey type of thing." But there was a difference. "I didn't like the way it played," he says. "So I borrowed my father's tools, and little by little I got to whittle at it until it played really nice. I was just a kid — but my friends said, 'Hey, can you make my guitar feel like that?' So one thing led to another."

By the late Seventies, Hamburger was modifying guitars professionally, which led to him wondering if he could make one of his own from scratch. "I thought, 'Let me get the stuff to do it,' and I'm not talking about kits," he says. "I got the wood, I did everything hand-carved, put in all the electronics. And that very first guitar, believe it or not, I



[clockwise from left] An autographed photo of Bernie Hamburger with George Harrison (playing his Hamburguitar Model S) in London in the early Nineties; Harrison with his custom Hamburguitar mandolin; Hamburger with Carl Perkins (holding a Hamburguitar Model T); another look at the Model S

sold to Andy Summers from the Police.”

Through the Eighties, he added such high-profile clients as Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden and Howard Leese and Nancy Wilson of Heart. “The customers always call the shots,” Hamburger says of his approach to making guitars. “I shape each guitar neck to their specifications. As for body design, when I got into building, there were certain ones I always loved — the Jaguar, the Telecaster, Gibson Les Pauls and SGs. They’re just great designs, and they work ergonomically. I did also come up with some of my own ideas and designs as well.”

In 1991, Hamburger’s date with destiny arrived, when he was invited to attend a function in London to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Hard Rock Cafe. “I was told that Carl Perkins and George Harrison were going to be there,” he says. “So I randomly grabbed two guitars that I’d recently built and flew over.”

Those turned out to be the aforementioned red and green models.

The guitar-maker met Perkins (who loved both instruments) first; then he set up a meeting with Harrison.

Hamburger says even though he’d “met

a lot of rock stars, meeting a Beatle was a little different.” But Harrison was “friendly and approachable and treated me like we knew each other forever. Next thing I know, I’m sitting there in a hotel room with both of them, and they’re trading licks back and forth, doing [Perkins’] ‘Everybody’s Trying to Be My Baby’ and ‘Your True Love.’” It’s my hero — and my hero’s hero — playing my guitars. Are you kidding me?! I thought, ‘This can’t be happening.’ It was so surreal.

“Then George said, ‘Bernie, this is a really nice guitar. By the way, can you make mandolins as well?’ I’d never made a mandolin in my life. But I told George, ‘Absolutely.’ So he hired me.”

On that memorable day, Harrison took both custom guitars (Hamburger later made another green Model T for Perkins). Fast-forward to 1994, when the three surviving Beatles were fleshing out some John Lennon home demos for the *Anthology* project. “They were in the studio with Jeff Lynne, and George called me,” Hamburger says. “He says, ‘Hi, Bernie. How’s it going?’ And I can hear the chatter in the background, like Ringo’s talking to somebody. George says, ‘I have to tell you about the green guitar. It tracks really well. It stays in

tune and just has a beautiful tone. I’m loving it. I just wanted you to know.”

Harrison could’ve obviously had any guitar in the world, new or vintage. So it’s not lost on Hamburger how incredible it is that he chose his. “The Beatles were always forward-thinking,” he says, “and I think George was the one who experimented with many brands of guitars, many types of stringed instruments — ukulele, sitar, mandolin, you name it. I also think he was more of a gearhead than the other Beatles, and maybe more open to trying out new instruments.”

The association with Harrison led to other high-profile clients, such as the Heartbreakers’ Mike Campbell, who owns several Hamburguitars. “A lot of these artists would say, ‘If it’s good enough for a Beatle, it’s got to be good enough for me,’” Hamburger says with a smile.

In the years before George died, the two maintained intermittent contact. Harrison commissioned Hamburger to make a guitar as a gift for Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. Harrison and his son Dhani sent Hamburger hand-made Christmas cards. And there was even talk of a world tour that never materialized. “My name was on the itinerary as his traveling guitar technician,” Hamburger says. “I would’ve loved to have done that.”

These days, Hamburger lives in Las Vegas, where he plays the occasional gig, does custom modifications and runs his guitar-making business via hamburguitar.com. He also has a YouTube channel with instructional videos on how to play Harrison’s solos (he counts “Old Brown Shoe” and “Cheer Down” as his two faves).

While he is uncertain of what became of the guitars he made for Harrison — Does Dhani have them? Are they still at Harrison’s house, Friar Park? — he still feels a thrill of knowing they played a small part in Beatles history, and that he got to share some memorable moments with his musical hero.

“I’ve met so many rock stars, and several of them have big egos,” he says. “What’s funny about George Harrison is that he just acted like the regular guy who lives next door. That’s such a cool thing. Here’s a legend, someone I worship, and he was such a sweetie. I feel so fortunate that I got to know him. And now, seeing him again in the ‘Now and Then’ video, with my guitar — I mean, it’s unbelievable.”

Phantom SG Junior

PHANTOM PLANET FRONTMAN ALEX GREENWALD SHARES THE BIZARRE TALE OF HOW HE RECONNECTED WITH HIS LONG-LOST EPIPHONE

By Joe Matera

▶ FAMED FOR HAVING *Rushmore* and *Shopgirl* actor Jason Schwartzman in their ranks, five-piece Phantom Planet were one of the standout indie pop-rock bands of the early 2000s. Together with Schwartzman's Keith Moon-esque drumming and the group's anthemic "California" — taken from their breakthrough 2002 album, *The Guest* — which became the theme song to popular TV teen drama *The O.C.*, the band were poised for the big time. But just as they began to lift off, Schwartzman departed to take up acting full time.

"Jason leaving to pursue acting really made us have to restructure," says Alex Greenwald, the band's vocalist and rhythm guitarist. "Also, the music I was making after he left wasn't as commercial as *The Guest*."

The band soldiered on with a new drummer through two more albums before calling an indefinite hiatus in 2008. Despite undertaking a handful of low-key reunion shows in the early 2010s, it wasn't until 2020 that the newly re-formed group — albeit without Schwartzman and original rhythm guitarist Jacques Brautbar — released 2020's *Devastator*. The album showcased the band owning their past while simultaneously moving forward. With the recently re-issued and re-recorded 2023 version of "California," the band is back to full-time duty.

"Two years ago, we started the process of re-recording the songs from *The Guest*," Greenwald says. "I wanted to re-record the album in the same exact way we recorded the original, so we recorded at the same studio and used the same guitars."

Now streamlined to just a two-guitar format with fellow six-stringer Darren Robinson, Greenwald's plans to recap-

[clockwise from left] Phantom Planet's Alex Greenwald [right] — playing his 1998 Epiphone SG Junior — in Melbourne, Australia, July 29, 2002, with Sam Farrar on bass; the same SG Junior today (after being MIA for about 15 years); Phantom Planet's current lineup [from left]: Greenwald, Jeff Conrad, Farrar and Darren Robinson; the back of Greenwald's Epiphone — complete with its telltale "A"



"I had carved my first initial — A — on the back of the guitar, so I asked her to turn it around. And when she did, it was definitely my guitar!"



ture the original's sonic spirit almost got derailed when his \$100 1998 Epiphone SG Junior (which was used on the original album) went missing in action for more than a decade.

"In 2005 I loaned the guitar to a musician friend," he says. "He later told me he had returned it to his parents' house, but they said they never received it, and so it remained lost. In 2019, I randomly walked into a thrift store in the Valley — and behind the counter was my guitar! I told the cash-register woman, 'You won't believe this, but that's my favorite guitar that I

played 20 years ago!' And she was like, 'How do you know it's yours?'

"I had carved my first initial — A — on the back of the guitar, so I asked her to turn it around. And when she did, it was definitely my guitar! The guitar was missing strings and a bridge, so it needed some love. I asked how much it cost, and she said \$25. I paid it and got my guitar back. I asked her when the guitar had come in, and she told me to ask the guy who receives the donations at the back of the store. He said an old man with grey hair had brought the guitar in just before closing time the night before.



I was like, ‘When does this store open?’ He said 10:30 a.m. I had just come in at 11:30 a.m., so it had been behind the counter for only an hour!”

Greenwald feels that his guitar playing has improved by leaps and bounds over the past 20 years. “As I’ve learned more, I’ve played more to the subtleties of the instrument,” he says. “In my 20s, I would just be strumming as hard as I could. Now, though, there are tons of dynamic ranges that are more impactful and where I can balance the quiet and loud dynamics and everything in between.”



Helmet

PAGE HAMILTON BRINGS STACCATO STABS OF FEEDBACK, AVANT-GARDE SHOEGLAZE AND TWISTED BLUES TO THE NYC ALT-METALERS’ LATEST

By Gregory Adams

▶ **IN LEFT**, PAGE Hamilton may have just turned in Helmet’s most political album yet. Above a patented mix of drop-tuned riffs and hard-edged rhythmic displacement, the alt-metal icon sounds off on anything from cyclical patterns of U.S. gun violence (“Gun Fluf”) to the unearned, puffed-chest politicking of the modern-day Republican Party (“Big Shot,” “Dislocated”). Though Hamilton tells *Guitar World* he’s generally avoided standing on a soapbox throughout Helmet’s nearly 35-year career, *Left*’s treatises still speak to a broader trend within his hefty songbook.

“It’s just character assassination,” he explains of a lyrical forte. “My ex-father-in-law said to me, ‘All you do is write ‘fuck you’ songs. They’re really good ‘fuck you’ songs, but they’re still just ‘fuck you’ songs.’ I told him, ‘Well, everybody has to be good at something, right?’”

To be sure, *Left* — the band’s ninth album, fourth since reuniting in 2004, and first in seven years — has Hamilton expressing himself with antagonistic, full-throated fervor. Helmet’s latest is likewise a nuanced, parameter-expanding release for the veteran unit. After a few years focusing on film-scoring projects, Hamilton got back into the post-hardcore groove at the top of 2023 to write the 11-song *Left*. He and co-guitarist Dan Beeman generally juxtapose punishingly percussive rhythms with rich, seventh-and-11th

incorporating chord phrasings — all the more impressive considering Hamilton tracked this all with a broken fretting finger — though the band scale down the sonic bombast for the tender “Tell Me Again,” an all-acoustic, string ensemble-assisted outing inspired by a confidant’s betrayal and the open C6 tuning of Led Zeppelin’s “Friends.”

While 1994’s *Betty* had Helmet taking a jarringly subversive noise-rock swing at jazz standard “Beautiful Love” — a stylistic mashup reflective of Hamilton’s studies at the Manhattan School of Music — the act takes a more traditional pass at John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme* through *Left*’s closing “Resolution.” Transposing Coltrane’s sax sublimity to his six-string, Hamilton exits the album with songbird-like fluidity and a few well-placed blue notes. It’s a standout moment, even if the Helmet leader figures some hardcore fans will wince at the fact that *Left* doesn’t go out with a gain-blaring bang.

“I didn’t get the blues songs on *Led Zeppelin* when I was 16,” Hamilton says through a parallel thought. “I was like, ‘I just want to hear ‘Communication Breakdown,’ man!’ Then later, you realize that’s where they came from; that’s how they became Led Zeppelin. I became this musician because of jazz. I mean, I still wake up every day and work on Charlie Parker’s ‘Hot House!’”

Helmet’s
Page Hamilton
in Cincinnati,
October 10, 2023

Mary Timony

THE FORMER HELIUM AND WILD FLAG D.C. ROCKER CAN STILL UNLEASH SOME DECIDEDLY UNTAME SOUNDS

By Gregory Adams

▶ YOU CAN THANK the sturdy craftsmanship of the Gibson guitar company for some of the richness on Mary Timony's new *Untame the Tiger* project. The U.S. Postal Service? Not so much.

When Timony began conceptualizing her latest solo effort — notably her first in 15 years — the D.C. veteran knew she wanted to explore more unplugged textures than the Dio-by-way-of-Seventies-power-pop stylings of her longtime Ex Hex project, or the twitchy bass rumblings she leans into as part of D.C. hardcore quartet Hammered Hulls. As such, she was reminded of a precious, Depression-era Gibson acoustic that had been tucked away in her late grandmother's South Dakota farmhouse attic for the past 40 years. While an eccentric aunt gladly packed up the vintage piece and sent it on its way, it's a marvel Timony can still strum it in one piece.

"It was just rolling around in this big cardboard box without a case; it got to my house and there was a big hole in the box, but those [guitars] were made so well,"

AXOLOGY

• **GUITARS:** 1966 Fender Jazzmaster, 1931 Gibson L-o acoustic, 1964 Epiphone Sorrento, Newish custom Koll, Custom Mulhauser, 1977 Les Paul Special, Seventies Alvarez 12-string

• **AMPS:** Sixties Bassman, 1970s Fender Champ, Swart STR-Tweed, Orange Rockerverb 50

• **EFFECTS:** Boss Blues Driver, Boss Super Overdrive, MXR Carbon Copy, Ibanez FL9 Flanger, Diamond Tremolo, EarthQuaker Devices Speaker Cranker



Mary Timony with her 1966 Fender Jazzmaster

"It didn't sound right with just one lead, so why not have two?"

Timony says through an incredulous laugh, noting that the six-string was re-intonated, but arrived miraculously undamaged.

Rich, canyon-sized strums naturally reverberate throughout *Untame the Tiger* pieces like "Dominoes" or the C&W-flavored "The Guest," much of this returning to the suspended-fourth-juicing DADGAE tuning the musician has favored, off and on, for decades. But Timony — whose career has additionally included time with Nineties alt-icons Helium, early 2010's supergroup Wild Flag and behind-the-scenes work as a guitar teacher/creative coach — also went through an unlearning process. Her laser-guided EBow layering, for instance, was performed as a pragmatic way to offset the pain in her picking wrist, owing to years of improper positioning.

"I was holding my hand wrong for a

long time, and I was hunching over from teaching, so it was creating a lot of tension in my right arm," she says, adding that a series of chiropractic sessions ultimately set her right. Nevertheless, the relaxed, string-sustaining EBow lines of album finale "Not the Only One" are set against intricately picked acoustic arpeggiation. With "Summer," the album's most untamed moment, Timony bends through a pair of wildly diverging solos inspired by a similarly stacked competition on Gerry Rafferty's "The Long Way Round."

"It made things a little chaotic, which was cool," Timony says of her own multi-versal performance, concluding matter-of-factly, "It didn't sound right with just one guitar lead, so why not have two?"



10 ESSENTIAL DENNY LAINE SONGS

"Go Now," The Moody Blues (1964):

Laine's version of a Bessie Banks song was the highlight of his time with the Moodies (and made for a great concert staple with Wings).

"Mull of Kintyre," Wings (1977): Without Laine's input, Wings wouldn't have scored their biggest U.K. hit.

"Weep for Love," Wings/Denny Laine (1980): One of Laine's finest vocal and six-string cuts; one wonders why this soaring track from 1980's *Japanese Tears* was left off Wings' *Back to the Egg* in '79.

"Say You Don't Mind," Denny Laine

(1967): Laine had weak solo success with this song in '67 (despite John Paul Jones providing strings), but in '72, the Zombies' Colin Blunstone turned it into a top 20 hit.

"Man of Constant Sorrow," Ginger Baker's Air Force (1970): Laine showed up on only a few Air Force tracks, but this one spotlights his vocals and a nifty arrangement.

"Children Children," Wings (1978): Laine helped carry *London Town*, and "Children Children" shows as much through gentle vocals and subtle acoustic sweeps.

"No Words," Wings (1973): The part-time songwriting team of Laine and McCartney got its start with this *Band on the Run* track, had its biggest hit in '77 with "Mull of Kintyre" and came to an end with 1982's "Rainclouds" (which was recorded in 1980).

"All Those Years Ago," George Harrison (1981): Laine provides backing vocals here, making him part of a very small stable of folks who've appeared alongside three Beatles (in this case, George, Paul and Ringo) on a studio recording.

"Deliver Your Children," Wings

(1978): Again, *London Town* doesn't happen without Laine, and "Deliver Your Children" is an example of his importance via solid vocals and an acoustic riff (played by Laine) that really sticks.

"Again and Again and Again," Wings

(1979): For the final Wings album, Laine delivered a soulful vocal performance with some funky-meets-jangly guitar touches.

— Andrew Daly



[from left] Denny Laine, Linda McCartney and Paul McCartney in action with Wings in Aberdeen, Scotland, September 22, 1975

Denny Laine (1944-2023)

THE GUITARIST WHO CO-WROTE MCCARTNEY'S BIGGEST '70S HIT

By Bill DeMain

▶ ONE DAY IN 1977, Denny Laine arrived at Paul McCartney's farm on Kintyre peninsula in Scotland. McCartney was singing the chorus to a song-in-progress called "Mull of Kintyre." Laine grabbed a guitar, and within a few hours, the pair co-wrote what became one of the biggest-selling singles of all-time in the U.K.

For Laine, who died December 5, 2023, at age 79 from lung disease, it was just one stop along the way in a remarkable 60-year career that included fronting the original Moody Blues and riding creative shotgun to McCartney in Wings for a decade of massive success.

"I'm just a normal musician who doesn't really think about the fame side of it," Laine told *Guitar World* in late 2022. "It's all about music for me, moving forward and creating new things."

And his life attested to that. Born Brian Frederick Hines in 1944, he learned guitar, bass and piano, and by his teen years was fronting his first band (alongside Roy Wood and Bev Bevan, later of ELO). His stage surname was borrowed from singer Frankie Laine. Out of Birmingham's early Sixties "Brumbeat" scene of R&B and blues, Laine formed the Moody Blues and sang their landmark 1964 hit, "Go Now." They toured with the Beatles in 1965, and

Laine became friendly with McCartney.

After leaving the Moody Blues, Laine played in a quick succession of groups, including Ginger Baker's Air Force and the much-overlooked Electric String Band. Then in 1971, McCartney called. Wings' seven albums are laced with Laine's contributions — the tasteful guitar work on *Band on the Run*; his own memorable songs like "No Words" and "Time to Hide"; the lush harmonies he added with Linda McCartney. Describing their blend, Laine said, "There was a sound there that can't be mimicked. It was a special part of Wings, and I'm quite happy about that."

After Wings officially split in 1981, Laine worked on McCartney's *Tug of War* (1982) and *Pipes of Peace* (1983), then went his own way. In recent years, he toured regularly, playing a career-spanning set. "I can't live without live work," he said. "There's no substitute for connecting with an audience."

Laine leaves behind a wife and five children. In a statement, McCartney said: "Denny was an outstanding vocalist and guitar player with a fine sense of humor and was always ready to help other people. He will be missed by all his fans and remembered with great fondness by his friends."



HIS FIRST
No Lies (1984)

.....
Akosua... (2018)

HIS SECOND



Eddie Martinez strikes a pose in New York City, March 3, 1989

EDDIE MARTINEZ

The NYC session great recalls his time with Run-DMC, Blondie, David Lee Roth and Robert Palmer. He also sets the record straight about exactly who played the “Addicted to Love” guitar solo (Hint: It was Eddie Martinez!)

By Joe Bosso

THERE’S A TIME when the phone’s ringing and burning up, then there comes a time when the phone doesn’t ring as much. That’s just reality,” Eddie Martinez says. “I think every guitarist experiences that in one way or another, especially when you’re in the studio session scene. You have your period when you’re hot, and then the time comes when you’re not. It is what it is.” For the better part of the 1980s, nobody

was hotter than Martinez. Thanks to his arena-quaking rhythms and paint-peeling solos on Run-DMC’s groundbreaking single “Rock Box,” the guitarist’s prodigious skills — everything from walloping crunch to buttery-smooth grooves to whacked-out, explosive leads — was sought out by the likes of Robert Palmer, David Lee Roth, Steve Winwood, Rod Stewart, Mick Jagger and a host of other music legends.

“It was an exciting time,” says the Queens, New York-born guitarist who began his career in the mid-Seventies playing with the funk-rock band Labelle. “It was the culmination of a lot of years when I played with people like Nona Hendryx, George Duke and Stanley Clarke. A lot of situations didn’t call for frontal guitar, but other opportunities emerged that called for me to crank it up. I was kind of bubbling under the surface for a while, and then it all kind of exploded. It was like a sequence of events that just blew my mind.”

Martinez laughs at the serendipity of it all, especially since he admits that he never had a career path mapped out. “In my early days, I just wanted to work,” he says. “It’s funny — back then, the West Coast guys were attracted to the East Coast studio scene, and guys on the East Coast were enamored with L.A. I was listening to what Steve Lukather and Michael Landau were doing. Larry Carlton and all the other guys were tearing it up in L.A. I was blown away when I read how they had cartage — their gear would be driven out to the studio. They had their choice of amplifiers and trunks full of guitars. And here I was, on the D train with a gig bag and my Boss pedal. I didn’t have all the toys like those guys.”

As the hit records piled up in the Eighties, his toy box grew. “When I started getting busy, I was like anybody else,” he says. “I got the big Bradshaw rig. That was the thing. I had everything from Fender tweeds to Marshalls.” One particular Marshall amp remained a constant: a 50-watt Marshall combo that he purchased in 1977 at Music on 48th Street in Manhattan. “That’s the sound on Robert Palmer’s ‘Addicted to Love’ and a lot of tracks,” Martinez says. “Harry Colby modified it, and it became a beast.”

Martinez’s halcyon days of rocking the charts and big stages are very much in the rearview mirror, and he’s made his peace with that. Now 71, he lives in Portland, Oregon, where he works on music at his own pace and plays gigs with local musicians when the mood strikes. “I came here 22 years ago after my first marriage broke up,” he says. “I’ve since remarried and I’ve got family out here. I made the right choice to

CATHERINE MCGANN/GETTY IMAGES

“OPPORTUNITIES STARTED DRYING UP. PLUS, AGEISM EXISTS IN THIS BUSINESS, AND THAT’S

come here when I did, because I saw the writing on the wall. The record industry was changing and budgets were going down. Now, people can make records anywhere — they don't need big studios. Opportunities started drying up. Plus, ageism exists in this business, and that's a reality. It affected a lot of people I know. I'm certainly not the exception."

Rock audiences might have first noticed you in 1982, when you replaced Frank Infante in Blondie for what was to be their farewell tour. Was that a tense situation?

No, actually, it was amazing. I went to the audition thinking there was no way I'd get the gig. I was like, "Just have fun and make the most of it." I walked into the studio and everybody in the band was there except Chris [Stein]; he was ill or something. Debbie Harry was there, and she was absolutely charming. I dimed the amp and we went through the tunes. It was a blast. Then I got back on the train and went home, and there was a message waiting for me — I had the gig. [Laughs]

Frank told me that one of his big regrets is that he never got to play his "Rapture" solo live with the band.

Oh, yeah... I did play that live, but it's been a while since I heard it. I probably tried to interpret it my own way. I've never met Frank, but I'd like to share stories with him. My experience with Blondie was brief.

A year later came Run-DMC's "Rock Box." How did you get involved with that?

The call came from Larry Smith, the producer and one of the writers of the track. We were friends and played in bands together. I got more into the session thing, and he immersed himself in what was going on in the streets in South Bronx and Hollis, Queens. Larry knew I was a rocker, so he called and said, "Why don't you put some rock shit on this stuff?" It was just a DMX drum machine and his bass guitar. There might have been some raps and a little keyboard. I had a great time stacking guitars and doing my thing on it.

What was your guitar and amp combination on "Rock Box"?

Believe it or not, I used a Music Man amp

with the two 12s. My guitar was a red Hamer. I had a black one when I was with Blondie. It was great, but it got destroyed during a soundcheck when scaffolding fell on it. Joel Dantzig at Hamer sent me a red one, which became the hitmaker. We got some chewy sounds with it.

I read an interview with you in which you talked about recording "Rock Box" and how you channeled Brian May for the guitar harmonies.

I was. I thought of his sound, and I was also treating the guitar parts like vocal harmonies. I layered a lot of guitars to create that sound. All the blowing and harmony stuff, that was me just trying to create an interesting piece of music on this bed of beats and rhymes.

Did you have any idea that the track would shake things up?

I thought it was a good day's work. I never in a million years knew it was going to be as significant as it's become culturally. I thought that I elevated the track and made it more than what it was when I came in that day.

The video for that song — you're standing on the roof of a Cadillac and rocking out on guitar. Does it get cooler than that?

[Laughs] That was hilarious! The Cadillac belonged to Larry Smith. The whole video was crazy, and it was done for so little money. You had Professor Irwin Corey doing this soliloquy at the opening, and then we went into it. We filmed it outside Danceteria — that was cool. The video was an appeal to Middle America — you know, you've got the little blonde-haired kid who's just fascinated by everything. It worked.

Pretty soon afterward, you played on David Lee Roth's *Crazy from the Heat* EP. What was that like?

David was an absolute gentleman. Totally cool. Those sessions were live, kind of like real old-school record dates. We had John Robinson on drums, Willie Weeks played bass, Edgar Winter and Brian Mann were on synths, Sid McGinness played guitar, Sammy Figueroa did percussion... We did it all live at studio A at the Power Station. It was pretty minimal.

Did either David or producer Ted

Templeman direct you for what they wanted, or did they let you go?

They let me go. What was so cool was, even before we played a note, Dave came into the room as we were getting our stuff together, and he just thanked us for being available for the session. It was really kind of contrary to the lore of David Lee Roth. He was a total solid cat. No star tripping at all.

Did David ever discuss going on tour with you or any of the other guys?

He never approached me about it. I don't think he spoke to anybody in that regard, but I could be wrong. The EP was pretty quirky — Louis Prima tunes and Beach Boys songs. It worked conceptually, but I don't think he was thinking of touring until he did the full album of rock tunes. That's when he got Steve Vai and everybody on board.

Riptide marked a significant sonic change for Robert Palmer. What was he looking for when he brought you in?

It wasn't really talked about. I'd recorded with [producer] Bernard [Edwards] before; he knew I was adventurous and liked to get big sounds.

Did they ever refer to the big guitar crunch you got with Run-DMC?

No, they didn't. That sound was in my head, though, and the engineer, Jason Corsaro, was able to facilitate that. Jason was unbelievable. It was a big collaboration with everybody. We wanted stuff to sound big and different.

How did you go about that?

We had my 50-watt Marshall in there. Jason had a different way of recording it, especially for the "Addicted to Love" solo. We spent more time working on the sound of the solo than the actual solo. This was at Compass Point. What we did was, we had the cabinet in what would be considered a live chamber. Most of the big guitars were cut in this room at Compass Point that was just above the main studio. I'd say the room was maybe 10 or 15 feet square, and the amp was in there. Jason took a feed off the cabinet from the microphone and fed it into a tiny Fostex monitor speaker. That got us this real crispy sound; in itself it would sound very strident, but when you blended it with the girth of the Marshall you'd get the

A REALITY. IT AFFECTED A LOT OF PEOPLE I KNOW. I'M CERTAINLY NOT THE EXCEPTION"

definition. That was for the solo only.

Now, clear something up for me. For years, Andy Taylor from Duran Duran has been credited with that solo.

You know, I thought that myth had been put to bed. That's me on the solo, and I did it in one take. Jason Corsaro was there when I did it. He's no longer here, but [keyboardist] Jeff Bova was around when we were recording it. [Drummer] Tony Thompson, Bernard Edwards, the assistant engineers... I know that I played it. Plus, I don't think it even sounds like Andy. Not to disparage him — he's a rocker.

Andy did play some crunchy rhythm things, but it was after we cut the track and after I did the solo. I like what he played on it. It was really cool, and it contributed to the song. He wasn't down at Compass Point to do that. I believe he did that in New York at the Power Station. I haven't seen Andy since the Nineties. I should say I consider him a friend, and I hope he's healing.

That solo is pretty great for one take. It's very bluesy, and you get some good squawks out of your bends.

My mindset for that solo was the great Billy Gibbons. That's what I was kind of vibing on — the Reverend.

Your approach was pretty different on Palmer's "Simply Irresistible." That solo is way shreddy.

[Laughs] I got away with murder on that. I wanted to do something 180 degrees different from what I did with "Addicted." Yeah, I went pretty nuts on "Irresistible."

How did you come to work with Steve Winwood for *Back in the High Life*?

I met Steve when he was renting a loft in Soho. I hung out with him; there was a music room with a piano, and I think we played a little bit. Then [producer] Russ Titelman called me to play on some tracks; "Higher Love" and "Freedom Overspill" emerged out of one session. Steve is such a gifted artist and musician and an absolute joy to play with. A real music man.

You played more in-the-pocket stuff on that album.

Yeah. It's interesting — I don't recall him giving me any kind of direction, per se. He



Martinez in Merrillville, Indiana, with his red Hamer, May 16, 1986

was around when I was putting the guitars down, but I was really communicating with Russ. Steve must have liked what he was hearing, so that makes me happy.

Did you ever get intimidated, like, "This guy played with Clapton"?

You need to compartmentalize that shit, because a lot of cats don't get the rock star ego kind of deal. I never came to a session thinking about the veneer of stardom. I just wanted to get to know the artist as a person and what the song is about, and just try to deliver something that elevates the track.

At a certain point, did you intentionally pull back from doing a lot of touring?

Yeah, after my daughter was born in '86. I toured with Robert Palmer in '86, '88 and '91. Those were big world tours. There was a point in there when I was rehearsing with Rod Stewart to go out on the tour, and I kind of backed out of it at the last minute. I knew that Robert had the Heavy Nova album coming out, and I thought I'd rather play "Simply Irresistible" than "Hot Legs."

Wow. You quit a Rod Stewart tour before it began?

I did. It's just one of those things; I backed out of it. Rod's a sweet guy. He wooed me to come out on tour and I agreed, and then I decided not to do it. He said, "Oh, I bet you're going out on tour with Robert." And at that point, I hadn't spoken to Robert. I had no idea that I was going to tour with him because I fundamentally said, "Bye, Robert, I'm doing this." It wasn't easy leaving that situation.

You had quite a bond with Robert.

Oh, yeah. Not only was he a dear friend, but he was also a bad-ass musician. He had such eclectic tastes. We'd listen to Billie Holiday, Jobim, Nat King Cole, Jimi Hendrix, Sepultura — you name it.

Robert Palmer listening to Sepultura — that blows my mind!

He was big into metal. I'll tell you, there was something very special about working with him. He was level-headed and adventurous, and he had a sense of humor. He wasn't burned by "rock starditis." The collaboration that took place on the albums I recorded with him was magical. I may be known more for other tracks I played on through the years, but working with Robert Palmer was the best of times and where I defined my style. **GW**

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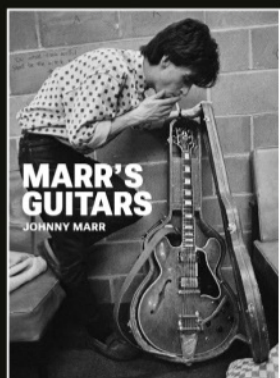
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Johnny Marr — somewhere in North America — with a Gibson Les Paul Custom during the Smiths' *The Queen Is Dead* tour, 1986; [below] Marr — as seen on the cover of *Marr's Guitars* — with his 1960 Gibson ES-355



Citizens of Planet Marr

In a new book, **SMITHS** great **Johnny Marr** traces his entire career through the prism of his amazing collection of guitars. Why don't all our guitar heroes do this?

BY ANDREW DALY PHOTO BY NALINEE DARMRONG

Johnny

MARR HAS long been known as “the man who would

not solo.” But that’s kinda inaccurate, as Marr has soloed, sometimes in decidedly sing-song fashion, like on the Smiths’ “Shoplifters of the World,” for example. So maybe, Marr should be known as “the man who used crystal-clear arpeggios and interesting chord inversions rather than pulling off dive bobs via big-ass amps” instead. Then again, legends via folklore aren’t born through literalism.

Anyway, as per the perpetual positive vibes slung Marr’s way, we can agree that he’s the proverbial king of the antiheroes — regardless of whether he solos. None of that has mattered to Marr, though, as he continues to craft landscape-defining indie music. But beyond that music, Marr’s life has been defined by utter devotion to all things six-string.

Marr is so intertwined with his now-massive collection of curios that he’s decided to celebrate them via *Marr’s Guitars* [HarperCollins, 2023], a 288-page book that reads more like a life story than an art project. To that end, Marr agrees. “I’m glad it reads that way, because it’s basically my life story through the lens of photographing my guitars. The original inspiration came through photo shoots with Pat Graham while he was working on a book called *Instrument*. I recognized his unique way of photographing guitars, which I found very beautiful. Pat takes these close-up, abstract shots that show a bit of rust on the bridge or a scuff on the neck, and I was fascinated by that. I originally wanted *Marr’s Guitars* to be full of abstract photos, but as more guitars were photographed, it evolved.”

If you've been following along with Marr, you'll know he's almost never without his trusty Fender Jaguar. It's under-standable, as he has done some incredible things with the guitar that figuratively and literally bears his signature. When asked what drew him to the Sixties-tinted off-set, Marr says, "The Jag, specifically my signature Jag, is a cross between a Gretsch and a Rickenbacker. And it plays like a Fender, but sonically, it's like playing all three. It's completely custom-made to sound like me. Like the Rickenbacker, the Jag made me play like *me*. When I picked up Isaac Brock's [Modest Mouse] '63 Jag while writing "Dashboard," it was life changing. And here I am still playing the Jag. I don't even like guitar changes in my live set."

Jag devotion aside, putting together Marr's Guitars has re-established Marr's connection with many long-relegated axes in his extensive collection. "When I picked up my Epiphone Casino that I hadn't played in 25 years, I was transported back to the last time I played it. When I grabbed my green Fender Tele I got in '84, I remembered the clothes I wore when I got it. It's hard to explain; guitar players will know what I'm talking about.

That "hard to explain" thing is precisely what Marr's Guitars is about. Sure, Marr has a massive, covet-worthy collection of guitars, but if we step outside the grandeur and dig into the crux of the thing, undoubtedly, one can understand the relationship. More so than any other instrument, a guitar in hand can transport the player to a time when a literal millisecond defined a feeling.

"There's tiny little messages you get from your brain when you put your hand on a neck," Marr says. "You expect it to be slim, and it's not. It's like, 'Oh, yeah, this is like a 1960 neck.' Or you pick up a Tele, and you're like, 'I was expecting this to be much lighter,' but you remember why it's not."

Marr smiles before adding, "And when you plug it in, you hear that sound and the nuances that make old, non-generic guitars different. The pickups are hand wound, and human beings carved out the neck. You forget how individual guitars are and how they get that character — until you pick them up again.

"A vintage guitar isn't rad because it's old and cool," he says. "It's about the unusual things that — as soon as you grab it — make you say, 'Okay, yeah, that's right. I remember that about this guitar.'"

A few photos from Marr's Guitars [clockwise from left]: circa 1984 Fender Telecaster Giffin Custom Korina, green burst; a very well-broken-in 1971 Martin D-28; sunburst 1951 Gibson L-5CES; black 1965 Fender Jaguar; gold 1952 Gibson ES-295; between the frets of a 1961 Silver-tone 1415; a heavily modified 1978 Fender Stratocaster ("When Noel Gallagher and I went to a guitar shop after a long night out, I saw that guitar, and it made total sense to me," Marr says)



Tell me about how you came upon your Rickenbacker 330.

I got it when the Smiths started taking off. It was the first "Does this mean I've made it?" thing I got. Before that, I had been playing a Gretsch [Chet Atkins] Super Axe and constantly snapping strings because I was tuned up a whole step. I was forever snapping strings, and when the band got a deal, I got the Rickenbacker to be my "backup guitar," but that changed because it was better than my "main guitar." [Laughs]

Did you immediately know it was special?

I knew it would make me play a certain way about chords and arpeggios. I knew the strength of the Smiths in those early years was the chord progressions I was using, and I didn't want to do anything that reminded me — or anyone else — of pentatonic stuff. The Rickenbacker steered me in the harmonic direction of unusual arpeggios and chord changes. It was an excellent instinctive choice; I've had friends buy Rickenbackers, and they're never as good as mine. It turns out that in the early Eighties, Rickenbacker made some particularly good guitars.

Have you figured out why?

I used to think it was the finish. But then Martin Kelly [musician, label boss] told me that

John Hall took over Rickenbacker in '84 and spent 18 months getting all the specifications improved. And it's often said that '86 is the vintage year, but I bought mine in '84 when John Hall took over the company, and it's been great. I've always had an instinct that those few years in the Eighties were particularly good, and I was right. Those were the comeback years for Rickenbacker.

And how about the 12-string sunburst ES-335 used during the Strangeways, Here We Come sessions?

At that point, I liked 12-string guitars, but like almost every other player on the planet, I learned that they took some application. I had been playing a Rickenbacker, and a 12-string was a hassle for an impatient guy like me, who was now working with some impatient tech. I had to get used to it, and it was a bitch keeping it in tune, especially those Sixties ones. But when I discovered the ES-335 12-string, I said, "Okay, let's give this a go," and it immediately clicked. It was a big guitar, but the humbuckers were dialed down and a little darker. That was the guitar I gave Bernard [Butler] from Suede, who remains the custodian of that guitar.

Do you subscribe to the idea that we're only temporary stewards of our guitars, as the best guitars will outlast us?

That's a lovely notion, and I agree with that, but that's not why I've given guitars



“When I grabbed my green Fender Tele I got in '84, I remembered the clothes I wore when I got it. It's hard to explain; guitar players will know what I'm talking about”

away. I gave them away because I'm close with people like Bernard, Noel [Gallagher] and [Radiohead's] Ed [O'Brien], and I did it as a sign of respect. It was an act of sharing because I'm close to them. As you can see from the book, I've got a lot of guitars, so it was a way of letting go and letting my friends love them. But I will say the Oasis thing with Noel was different because in the very early days, they'd only played a few shows, and no one knew they'd be so big. I just liked Noel and wanted to help him as he was just starting. When I was starting, I got a helping hand, and I wanted to help a fellow Mancunian, Irish fellow, so I gave him the Les Paul I wrote "Panic" on.

These days, you're most often seen with your Fender Jaguar. Does it carry the same cache as some of the guitars you've had longer?

Oh, there's no competition when it comes to that. No guitar will ever come close to the Jag because I've played it exclusively for years. I've had these moments with the Jag, like doing the [James] Bond thing with Billie Eilish, the *Inception* thing, and playing Glastonbury. When I had 60,000 people singing "There Is a Light That Never

Goes Out" back at me... I'll never forget that because it was so brilliant. As for the older guitars, I became famous for using those through photographs from the Eighties, and they were close to me. But nothing comes close to the journey I've had with the Jag.

Is there one guitar of yours that people don't pay enough attention to?

One guitar that people who have followed me probably know about but maybe don't realize is such a big deal is my '85 Gibson Les Paul. It's the cherry red one I got when the Smiths were about to start recording *Meat Is Murder*. I got it to write on and used it a lot during that album. Before the Jag days, that Les Paul was on more records than any other guitar I owned. Many people think I was doing it all on the Rickenbacker in the Eighties, but a lot of the clean arpeggio stuff was done on that Les Paul.

One oddball guitar I can recall is the nine-pickup Strat used in your "Spirit, Power, and Soul" video.

Ah, yes. [Laughs] That was created by some crazy loon, who I imagine is somewhere in the north of England; they did that to a gui-

tar. I got that Strat in the early Nineties, while I was out with a young Noel Gallagher. Back then, I used to drink, and when Noel and I went to a guitar shop after a long night out, I saw that guitar, and it made total sense to me. But the thing about that guitar is it sounds terrific! There are nine on/off switches and nine out-of-phase positions. She's a guitar tech's nightmare, but I used it on [2022's] *Fever Dreams Pts. 1-4*, and I wrote "Spirit, Power, and Soul" on it.

Are there any guitars or tones you're still chasing?

The answer is not in buying another guitar, only because I bought one a few days ago. But I am sort of working on a sound... I'm chasing a sound I hope to use on the next record. You can have all these things, like a Uni-Vibe; I can have that, but I'll only ever sound like Jimi Hendrix, you know? As the years go by, it gets harder to do things that haven't been done, and you end up sounding like yourself anyway. So there's always a bit of chasing, but maybe the point of it all is adventure. I look around at all this tech, and I remind myself not to let it overtake me. I love adventure, but what I love most is the element of mystery that comes with it. **GW**

WHISPERS

CHELSEA WOLFE and BRYAN TULAO

IN THE

break down the dark, swirling masterpiece that is

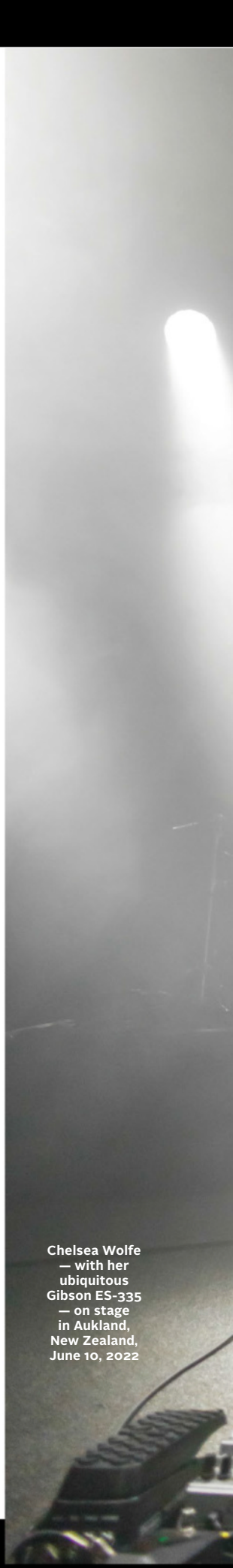
ECHO

SHE REACHES OUT TO SHE REACHES OUT TO SHE

CHAMBER

STORY BY JON WIEDERHORN PHOTO BY DAVE SIMPSON/WIREIMAGE

Chelsea Wolfe
— with her
ubiquitous
Gibson ES-335
— on stage
in Auckland,
New Zealand,
June 10, 2022





WHEN

multi-faceted iconoclast Chelsea Wolfe describes her new album, *She Reaches Out to She Reaches Out to She*, as a “musical rebirth,” she’s not just talking about a radical development in tone and timbre. She means everything from the creative process to the thematic content. And, as a strong, educated woman tapped into music, literature, film, philosophy and spirituality, she’s well aware that birth never comes without pain.

“Pain and struggle on a musical level is never a bad thing because it usually leads to some sort of tension that breaks into something unexpected that maybe no one involved had previously thought of,” she says. “For us, that resulted in a really unique record.”

She Reaches Out to She Reaches Out to She isn’t just a unique release. It seems more like a watershed moment from a musical artist whose creations have previously incorporated elements of doom metal, indie punk, blackened folk and electronic music.

If you picture PJ Harvey, Bjork, Portishead and Trent Reznor being fed nothing but Radiohead’s *Kid A* for a year, that offers a vague idea of how different *She Reaches Out to She Reaches Out to She* is from any of Chelsea Wolfe’s previous albums.

The record marks the first time Chelsea Wolfe have worked with TV on the Radio co-founder and producer Dave Sitek, who took a hands-on approach in the studio.

With Wolfe’s sometimes quite reluctant blessings, Sitek modernized and transformed the raw songs from ethereal demos to haunting soundscapes of deconstructed instrumentation, textural guitars, abundant keyboards, electronic beats and pulsing samples.

There are still remnants of the band's echoey, layered fuzz and the occasional chuggy riffs in songs like "Dusk" and "Whispers in the Echo Chamber," but many of Chelsea Wolfe's recognizable guitar elements are downplayed and woven into a web of atmospheric rhythms, trip-hop beats and digital noise that complement and draw the focus to Wolfe's mystical and heart-rending vocals.

"I feel like I changed so much as a person from the time that I originally conceptualized this album to the point when it actually came into shape in the studio with Dave," Wolfe says. "So I was really open to watching it change and become what it wanted to be. I kind of think of this album as its own being, which willed itself into existence over time through all sorts of experimentation and a willingness to embrace the unexpected."

Wolfe started working on songs for the album way back in 2019, using mostly her 1977 Gibson ES-335 and writing note-by-note melodies that created a framework for her vocals. She and the band continued to work on the compositions remotely throughout the pandemic, and over time, she gradually tapped into other creative techniques that provided more atmosphere.

"In 2021, I did this full-on ritual where I set up a circle of pedals and I stayed inside of it and wrote a bunch of demos," she says. "When I wrote 'The Liminal,' I was using a lot of experimental pedals, like Death by Audio's Echo Dream 2, and I had the Electro-Harmonix Mel 9 Tape Replay Machine, which turned the guitar into this chorus of voices."

Along the way, Wolfe sought inspiration from various unconventional spiritual techniques, including intense meditation, reading moon cycle progressions, tarot cards readings and any number of sundry occult rituals. "I'm not a Wiccan, but I do practice elements of witchcraft, which is essentially ritualizing the way you live and the way you approach things," she says. "It's all very personal stuff to me, and it's not about predicting the future or anything. But if I get stuck on a song, I'll ask the tarot cards for guidance or to help me figure out what the song wants to be about."

While she was integrally involved in assembling guitar parts for the new album demos, Wolfe put away her guitar when the band entered the studio and handed all six-string duties to lead guitarist Bryan Tulao, who joined in 2017, four albums into Chelsea Wolfe's career — she released her first record, *The Grime and the Glow*, in 2010. Separated from his bandmates by the Covid lockdown, Tulao recorded his guitar parts and sent the files to his bandmates. That's when the breakdown in communication began.

"They would send me a really minimal guitar part without vocals or a drum beat, and I would build some ideas around it," Tulao says. "Each time I sent something back, I'd say, 'Well, I don't know if this is what we want. It's just an idea, but there are a million other ways we could go with this.' And I wouldn't hear anything from them for a while. That happened with everything."

Some of the files Tulao worked from included loose drum beats as a guide, but nothing gave him a clear vision for the album. So he kept adding parts and emailing them over. He waited for feedback from Wolfe but... nothing. The more he wrote, the less confident he became. "I thought, 'Man, they hated it.' But it's okay. I'll do some-



thing else." Then, about three weeks after I'd sent them something they'd say, 'Oh hey, that was great.' And I'd go, 'Well, since then I did some other stuff. Can I send you that? And they'd go, 'No, it's really good.' And then they'd give me something else to work on. And it was the same thing — something really minimalist that I could do 100 things with. There were definitely some big wall-of-sound guitar sections I put in there that just disappeared."

While Tulao was wrangling with what type of mood to put on spare compositions that lacked direction, the other members of Chelsea Wolfe

— Wolfe, multi-instrumentalist and co-founder Ben Chisholm, drummer Jess Gowrie — were debating about how much they wanted to alter the compositions, which Sitek felt should be radically revamped and heavily saturated with keyboards. At first, not everyone agreed. Worse, Tulao was left mostly in the dark.

"There was a bit of a contrast between Dave Sitek's desire to go for a very minimalist take on the songs, and then our usual inclination as a band to build layer upon layer," Wolfe says. "The compromise came in creating these pockets of void-like space where there would just be a synth or

two going on with some pattern from the guitars and then contrasting that with these swirling, visceral portals of sound.”

Wolfe worked with Chisholm to cut and paste guitar and drum parts to make the songs more unsettling. Then Sitek took the process further by running Tulao’s passages through a modular synth wall — which rendered them almost unrecognizable — or replacing them completely with new keyboard passages.

“We used The Pulsar 23 drum machine and Lyra-8 [*organismic synth*] a lot. Also, we used this old Behringer Arp 2600 synth to replay something that started as a guitar line,” Wolfe says. “So what began as these guitar songs got transformed into this other stuff, but it was still rooted in guitar. It was a totally new way to work, so there was some clashing. But then, we all saw that these ups and downs in dynamic range and the mix of minimalism and chaos started to make sense and work together in a way that reflected how we were all feeling.”

Since he was the musician most dramatically affected by the transformation, Tulao went through something of an emotional pinball machine. He tried to contribute to the new methodology by using a wide range of pedals, including the Earth-Quaker Devices Palisades overdrive, the Death by Audio Apocalypse fuzz and a Chicago Iron Tycobrahe Octavia octaver. He wasn’t off base. Everything fit into Sitek’s open-concept blueprint, just not as Tulao had originally intended them.

“Initially, it was a bit surprising to hear what they did with my parts,” Tulao says. “During the last couple of days of recording, Dave was doing a rough mix, and I could hear that my guitars weren’t there. I said, ‘Are my guitars going to get added back in there for the final mix?’ And he said, ‘I don’t think so.’ I was a bit taken aback. But I’ve come a long way since then, and now I think all the weird guitar parts sound really amazing, even if you can’t tell they’re guitars.”

Once *She Reaches Out to She* was recorded, Chelsea Wolfe had to figure out how they were going to play the new songs live. They didn’t want to use too many samples directly from the album, so they cherry-picked the

sounds they wanted to trigger with drums and encouraged Tulao to fill in the remaining space with new guitar parts. So the guitarist revamped his pedal board and revised his playing style.

“The first time we got together to rehearse, I came in with some synth pedals so I could emulate the synth parts on guitar. And Chelsea said, ‘You know, the guitars don’t have to sound like synth parts. They can totally sound like guitar,’” Tulao says. “I really liked that idea, and it broadened the spectrum much more for how creative I could be when I reimagined all of these parts for guitar.”

“I love that these things that started as guitar parts became synth parts for the album, and now they’re becoming different kinds of guitar

unconventional tones.

“I like to loop parts and build on them in different ways, using harmonies or unusual tonal stuff,” he says. “I probably drive my neighbors nuts because there are times I’ll spend an hour hitting a C chord over and over and adding reverb and delay to see if I can find exactly the right tone.”

On tour, Wolfe will strap on a guitar for the older songs. She’s bringing her trusted 335, a hollow-body Gretsch and a Taylor acoustic. Tulao also plans to travel with his three favorite guitars — a Fender Troy Van Leeuwen Jazzmaster, a Fender Mustang with P90s and a Dunable Yeti. “I don’t want to be excessive, but I don’t want to keep having to tune between songs,” he says. “And there are a few different tunings on this album.”

Those tunings include D standard and drop C, and Tulao likes to mix them with more unconventional tunings. “A lot of them are tunings in my head,” he says. “I don’t know if anyone else plays them, but I like the way they sound. I mess around with the strings

Lead guitarist BRYAN TULAO has been diving down a rabbit hole of ambience and experimentation. He has pulled out old boxes of BOSS and MXR PEDALS and stacked them with newer boutique effects to generate ambient swells and unconventional tones

parts for the live show,” Wolfe says. “That’s an example of how this album is a reinvention and a rebirth. For me, these songs really demanded to be lived. I would write a song and then something would happen where I really had to live that song out. They weren’t going to let me get away without actually feeling them. I wrote ‘Everything Turns Blue’ about leaving a toxic relationship because I had seen someone really close in my life leave a toxic relationship and she talked to me a lot about it. I wrote that about her experience, and then I experienced something very similar and had to leave a toxic relationship, which was hard for me, but it was really interesting that I had to go through that after I wrote the song.”

To create so many innovative brand new arrangements for the songs live, Tulao has been diving down a rabbit hole of ambience and experimentation. He has pulled out old boxes of Boss and MXR pedals and stacked them with newer boutique effects to generate ambient swells and

until I find a weird sound I like. Sometimes it’s as simple as having a string tuned just a little bit off, and when you play a chord it doesn’t quite sound right. It gives the songs a fuller, more unusual feel and sometimes I play octaves, so they ring out a little more prominently.”

Having just experienced an emotional rebirth with *She Reaches Out to She Reaches Out to She*, Wolfe is excited to push the band’s sonic boundaries even further in the future. She has already mapped out ideas for Chelsea Wolfe’s next album and plans to fully dive into them after the band finishes touring. She is also finalizing plans for a collaboration with one of her favorite indie bands but can’t yet reveal who. Wolfe has always enjoyed working on other projects. In 2021, before the most arduous sessions with Sitek, she collaborated with hardcore band Converge on the record *Bloodmoon*. She also teamed up with Tyler Bates for a song for the soundtrack to the horror film *X*, and she continues to work with multi-instrumentalist Jess Gowrie on the project *Mrs. Piss*, which released *Self-Surgery* in 2020.

“I love writing in the studio,” Wolfe says. “Working in that zone and being all up in my head comes more naturally to me than being onstage. And I love the challenge of sharing ideas with other people and doing different kinds of stuff with them. I think that’s part of the way that I can continue to grow as a musician.” **GW**

“It’s all very personal stuff to me, and it’s not about predicting the future or anything,” Wolfe says. “But if I get stuck on a song, I’ll ask the tarot cards for guidance or to help me figure out what the song wants to be about”



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“IF I KNEW I WAS GONNA INFLUENCE THOUSANDS OF GUITAR PLAYERS, I WOULD’A PRACTICED MORE!”

FIRST KISS

EX-KISS LEGEND
ACE FREHLEY
TAKES A STRUT
DOWN MEMORY LANE

BY ANDREW DALY

WITH NO

musical training and a restless personality, there are a lot of assumptions thrown around when it comes to “Space” Ace Frehley. Some are true, but most, if not all, are unfounded. His detractors would declare Frehley unreliable and rudimentary. But if

we look back, he never missed a single Kiss show. And as far as his playing goes, Frehley is considered a pillar of rock and metal, especially within the guitar community. How’s that for rudimentary?

Through his patented use of “dinosaur bends” and a torrential fury of frenetic notes, a.k.a. total fretboard domination, Frehley created an individualistic sound

PHOTO: ROBIN PLATZER/IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

that’s impossible to duplicate. But that’s not all; he’s authentic as they come as a personality, making him a lovable character that shredders and slow-burners alike aspire to.

But back in the Seventies, when Frehley was a young gun with a beer in one hand and a Les Paul in another, he couldn’t have imagined it. “I’m always flattered when people tell me



Ace Frehley on stage
with Kiss at NYC's
Madison Square Garden,
July 25, 1979

I influenced them," he says. "If I knew I was gonna influence thousands of guitar players, I woulda practiced more. [Laughs] I laugh, but that's the truth. I didn't know I would become this iconic guitar player that so many people would listen to. I've had so many players come up to me and say, 'You are the reason I play guitar,' and I'm always like, 'Wow...'"

Stunning as it is to the 72-year-old Bronx native, it rings true. On the strength of classics like "Strutter," "Deuce," "Strange Ways" and "Shock Me," Frehley unknowingly developed integral style elements that would define the across-the-board progression of rock guitar. But to do that, first, he had to couple up alongside Paul Stanley. When asked what the secret sauce was, he says, "More than anything, it was chemistry. But it's hard to say; it's always that way with those things. I do know that the little things about my style fit alongside Paul's well."

"Paul is a great rhythm player, and I am, too," Frehley says. "When we did chord work together, I'd play an octave up, so I wasn't doubling him. That came naturally, like during 'Strutter,' it's there. Paul is playing the low parts, and I'm doing the octaves. I liked to thicken up the song, which Paul agreed with. It just made sense."

Frehley left Kiss for the second and final time in 2002, but his imprint is scrawled in indelible ink across the band. Some deny it, others ignore it, but the fact remains. Still, Frehley can't be bothered with any of that these days. And with five solo records in the bank since leaving Kiss, and another, *10,000 Volts*, which Frehley calls "the best thing he's done since the '78 solo record," due in February, it's easy to see why.

Looking back on it all, true to form, Frehley doesn't get too deep: "It's a nice sentiment, but I don't look at myself as some brilliant guitar player," he says. "I've never taken a lesson, and my sense of melody came from singing in the church choir. So, whatever I have, it can't be taught. You've gotta have it in you. Either you've got it, or you've got nothing at all."

Did you have a guitar-related vision when you joined Kiss?

My guitar sound hasn't changed after all these years, so the template has stayed the same. If you follow what I do now, you'll get it. But I was always old school, played through a Marshall turned up to 10, and played a Les Paul for the most part. That's my sound, you know? The exception would be when I played one of my smoking guitars; I'd have repetitive delay when I did that.

I assume effect pedals didn't factor in much, as I've never seen them at your feet.

I use them a little, but I'm mostly a guitar-into-an-amp type of player. But when I have used effects, like fuzz, wah and drive, my roadies would run that stuff because I can't have pedals on the floor; I'd trip over them. [Laughs] You'd be hard pressed to find a photo of me playing with pedals on the floor; I'd be shocked if you could find one. It's rock 'n' roll, so I don't need 'em much anyway.

Paul Stanley has often spoken about creating "one big guitar" sound in Kiss's early years. Was that your viewpoint, too?

If you read what many people have written over the years — especially about the early days — most say I was the

sound of Kiss. And the thing with that is I never really worked hard on it. I just took a Les Paul, plugged it into a Marshall, and away I went. I get what Paul means when he says that, but there's more to it regarding how I get harmonics. But to me, it was pretty much a no-brainer to do that.

One thing that's not often mentioned is your use of octaves in Kiss's early music.

Oh, yeah, Paul would play barre chords and introduce the song, and I'd try to play the octave of his part. That would make the whole song thicker, rather than me doubling Paul's parts. Paul and I were cognizant of that, did the octave thing, and it worked well. It's cool that you picked that out; it doesn't get called out too often when people ask me about early Kiss music.

Regarding solos, did you have an approach?

All my solos, well, 90 percent of my solos were off the cuff. As long as I've been doing this, I empty my head, ask someone to tell me what key it's in and go for it. It might take me three, four, five or even six passes, but that's the way I do my best work. If I'm relaxed, and nothin' is botherin' me, and I can empty my head, the solos usually come out great. That's how it was in the Seventies, and it's the same today. If I'm not worried about stuff happening around me, I'm usually fine when doing a solo.

Your solos are thematic to the point that they're songs within the song.

That's a good point. If you listen to how my solos come out, meaning if you listen to how I play closely, you'll hear that I'm a blues-based player. And for me, that goes back to being a huge fan of guys like [Eric] Clapton and [Jimmy] Page; those guys played solos that you'd be humming for days while you're walking around, you know?

So there's an element of intent to what you're doing, then.

Those guys I mentioned had solos you could hum, but they also had these moments where I'd go, "Wait... what was that?" I learned that if I could make thousands of

people turn their heads when I played a solo by being able to hum it but also by having speed and agility, that I was doing something right. But that doesn't mean it's always about playing fast, either. I was good friends with Eddie Van Halen but knew I could never play like that. So having a lot of melodic sense was important, too. I'd play fast in the *right* spots, let it rip in others and slow down when needed.

You mentioned using a Les Paul, but it's said that you used an Ovation Breadwinner on the first Kiss record. Why was that?

I don't know what people are talking about when they say that. I've seen that for so long, and I don't know who first said I used the white Ovation guitar on the first Kiss record [Kiss]. I played that guitar during Kiss's early shows, and it was the guitar I used when Bill Aucoin came to see Kiss before he signed us, but I didn't use it on the first Kiss record.

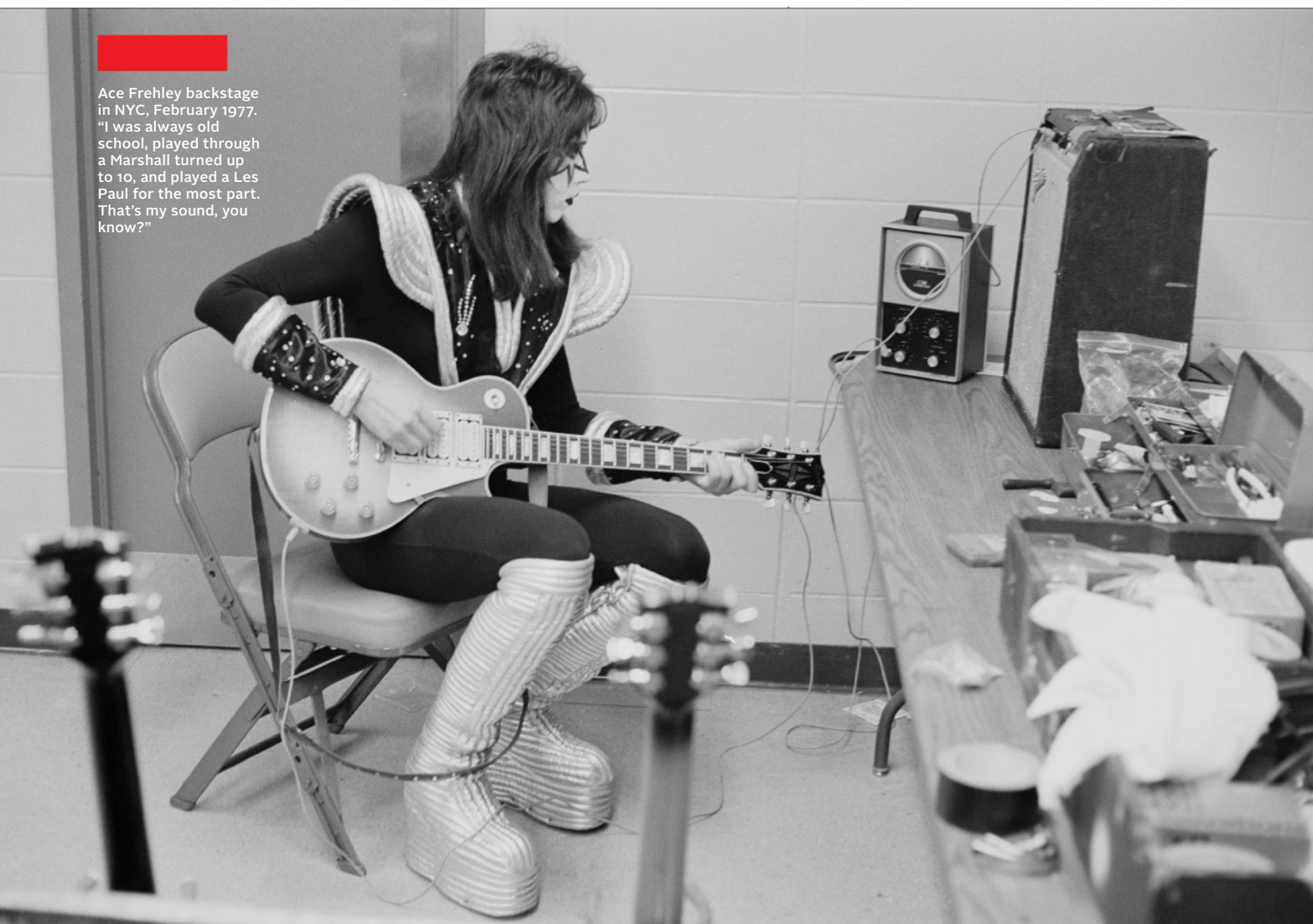
You've just debunked a long-standing narrative about the recording of Kiss's first record. What guitar did you use, then?

I had been playing the Ovation, put humbuckers in it, and grew to like that sound. I thought it was cool, which is probably part of what drew me to Les Paul guitars, with the other being that a Les Paul has a 6 percent neck angle in reference to the body. You can't lay a Les Paul flat on the table because of that arch, and when you tighten the strings, there's tension and body resonance — especially if it's made of good wood. That aside, I probably played my red Epiphone double-cutaway, the same one Steve Marriott played [Coronet].

I've seen that you didn't come upon the tobacco sunburst Les Paul until after Kiss was recorded. But you're saying you bought it before and that you used it during the recording, then?

I'm sure I used my tobacco Les Paul on the first Kiss record, along with the red Epiphone, and maybe even a Strat. I liked the Ovation because it had a neat shape and how it sounded with the humbuckers. But I wanted something cooler like the guitars Clapton and Page played. So, the minute Kiss signed the contract with Casablanca [Records], I went to Manny's Music in New York City and bought

Ace Frehley backstage in NYC, February 1977. "I was always old school, played through a Marshall turned up to 10, and played a Les Paul for the most part. That's my sound, you know?"



the tobacco sunburst Les Paul. And then, later, I converted that to my first smoking guitar before I turned it into a double cut.

What's the definitive guitar moment from Kiss's early Seventies era?

It's hard to say; honestly, I rarely think about things in those terms. Most people would say my solo from *Alive!* was great. But it's a tricky question; I've recorded hundreds of solos, but from the first three albums, I'd have to go with "Deuce." That was the first song I played with Kiss during my audition. I came in with a Gibson reverse Firebird with banjo tuning pegs and a 50-watt Marshall. I remember ripping through "Deuce" with them and thinking it was great, but they told me, "We'll get back to you in two weeks." But Paul later told me, "We knew you were the guy; we just didn't want to tell you right away." [Laughs]



"PAUL LATER TOLD ME, 'WE KNEW YOU WERE THE GUY; WE JUST DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU RIGHT AWAY'"

Were you comfortable making a regimented record like *Destroyer* as an off-the-cuff player?

People don't always say as much, but me and [producer] Bob Ezrin got along most of the time. But sometimes, I showed up late because I had a hangover from the night before. Everybody knows I was an alcoholic, and luckily, I just celebrated 17 years of sobriety, but back then, it was different. Bob was a guy who liked to get things done quickly, probably because he had a mountain of cocaine and a bottle of Remy Martin on the mixing desk with him. But, of course, Paul and Gene [Simmons] never mention that.

I take it you weren't informed that Dick Wagner would be subbing for you on "Sweet Pain."

No, I wasn't. Later, I was told Bob did that because he felt my solos weren't as great as they should have been, so he had Dick play them. But it was more about punishing me for not being on time. I see it as partially my fault but also partly Bob's fault. But the thing that bothered me most was that I wasn't told he had replaced my solos; I had to find out after I listened to the record at home on my turntable. That bothered me for a long time.



[from left] Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley and Paul Stanley in action in the Seventies

Bob did have a hand in releasing the *Destroyer Resurrected* version of “Sweet Pain” with your solo in 2012. I found your solo to be better than Dick’s.

I’d have to listen to it, hang on [Ace pauses to listen to his version of “Sweet Pain”]. You like my solo better than Dick’s, huh? Well, Dick was a great player, and he did a great solo, but I don’t think there’s anything wrong with mine. [Laughs] But I’ll be honest — I don’t remember recording it. [Laughs] I think they took my solo out to punish me for being late. It was a political move that Bob Ezrin made when he said, “Ace has got to be taught a lesson,” and Gene and Paul followed him like puppets. They were always control freaks, and I was always the dude who drank too much and was late too many times. But even with all the nonsense, we were still friends and did get along to that point.

I wanted to touch on your late-Seventies live sound. I’ve read that while you had Marshall cabinets on stage,

you had Fender amps beneath the stage. Any truth to that?

That is true. [Laughs] I liked the hot sound of Fender amps, and I had an old Fender Champ that I had souped up with an even older Jensen C12 speaker. And I had a Linear Power Boost [LPB-1] by Electro-Harmonix that I loved. I used that, along with the Champ, because I liked the sustain I got. I’d have that mic’d up while I had these big Marshall cabinets behind me. If you listen to *Alive II*, you can hear the enormous sound I got from this little Fender amp running through the PA. Whatever works, right?

I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention “Shock Me.” Can you recall recording the solo?

Oh yeah, sure, I do. I played all the guitars and bass on “Shock Me.” But as far as doing that song... it just happened. I’m the kind of guy who likes to fly by the seat of his pants, and I’d be lying if I said “Shock Me” wasn’t like that. I don’t like to think too hard or ponder about stuff. That’s what drove me

crazy about *Destroyer*; we’d sometimes do 25 takes of a song, and they’d get worse and worse each time. I would tell the guys, “Look, let’s call it a day because this song has lost all its spontaneity.” And I was right because we’d come back the next day and nail it. So, when I was doing “Shock Me,” I did that thing where I emptied my mind, and there it was.

Did you have any idea you’d recorded a solo that would be considered iconic?

No. [Laughs] I was just happy I got it done, and I moved on to the next song. Like I said, I don’t like to overthink solos beforehand, and I don’t look back on them when I finish. I get one done, and I’m on to the next song.

Do you have a favorite solo from Kiss’s Seventies era?

One solo that always sticks out is “Strange Ways” from *Hotter Than Hell*. I had been recording all day and was frustrated. I remember saying, “I’m just gonna stand in front of the Marshall and let it fucking go.” And this crazy solo with a massive dinosaur bend came out. But like I said before, there’s “Deuce” because it was the first time I played with the guys, and then, there’s “Shock Me.” I consider those the bookends between the early and late-Seventies Kiss. As far as my playing goes, those are the definitive ones. **GW**



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Reba Meyers in action
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PURE ORANGE EXTRACT

**"I JUST WANTED TO HEAR MORE HONESTY
IN MY GUITAR PARTS"**

CODE ORANGE'S REBA MEYERS AND DOM LANDOLINA
SHIFT LANES WITH *THE ABOVE* (WHILE STEVE ALBINI
AND SMASHING PUMPKINS' BILLY CORGAN
COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE)

AGGRESSIVE METAL AND teeth-grinding tension go together like energy drinks and vodka — in more ways than one. They're likely to ramp up the intensity and energy levels of a band, but they also can lead to emotional turmoil, instability and crippling volatility. The six touring members of Code Orange — guitarists Reba Meyers and Dom Landolina, vocalist Jami Morgan, bassist Joe Goldman, multi-instrumentalist Eric "Shade" Balderose and drummer Max Portnoy — don't need caffeine and booze to feel jumpy. Theirs is an anxiety born from ambition, insecurity and a little chemical imbalance, and working together simultaneously feeds their neurosis and gives them an outlet to purge their poisons.

"We're not five stereotypical rockers trying to put our

best ass-kicking shit out there and show you our killer chops," Meyers says. "It's not really about that. It's more about figuring our shit out and coping with stuff. For me, that's the whole point. I love playing guitar, making music and doing shows. I love being in the band, but all that's the icing on the cake."

On albums like 2017's *Forever* and 2020's *Underneath*, the challenges that motivated Code Orange yielded a turbulent, off-kilter mix of hardcore, metalcore, nu-metal and industrial. The cathartic torrents of sound were as effective as primal scream therapy and twice as noisy. And there was no shortage of contorted guitars or jarring pedal-driven effects — or rage.

"I used to be really angry and have blowouts and see red all the time," Meyers says. "I still get upset a lot. But I'm not as bad as I used to be, and I think being in this band has really helped me get through that."

BY JON WIEDERHORN PHOTO BY THEO WARGO/GETTY IMAGES

At the same time, being in Code Orange has caused a sometimes palpable friction between the band members. Since Morgan, Meyers and Balderose formed the group in high school in 2008 as Code Orange Kids, the three founding members have evolved from a bunch of impulsive teenagers to one of the most creative bands on the modern metal circuit. Focusing obsessively on their band for 15 years and being together nearly non-stop has made them as close as family members, and occasionally as flustered as family members working in the same office day and night.

“We’re five individuals with an intense amount of strong writing ability and an intense amount of passion and personality,” Meyers says. “We’ve all grown into ourselves, but the more we know who we are, the harder it is to know what the band’s identity is. And the more we struggle to have our voices heard and make our mark.”

Code Orange started working on their new album, *The Above*, shortly after releasing 2020’s *Underneath*, which was written and recorded largely during the pandemic lockdown. They started by recording demos, most of which were scrapped. Then they recorded seven songs, which they also discarded since they didn’t fit the tone they wanted for the new album. Considering how hard they searched to find the right voice for the album and how much material didn’t meet their criteria, fans might have expected another brutal machine gun blast of low, serrated guitars, slamming beats and feral vocals. While some of *The Above* is jarring and furious, it’s far less savage and musically complex than the band’s previous four releases, tempering primitive, staccato bursts of guitar with simple open-chord arrangements and textural flourishes, and even including the melancholy pop-rock song “Mirror” and a nuanced duet with Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan, “Take Shape.”

“I love brutal music more than anything, and I consider myself the metal riff guy in the band,” Landolina says. “But at the same time, after releasing a bunch of albums that were heavy as fuck, it’s like, ‘Okay, maybe it’s time to try something a little different.’ How many more insane mosh parts do we need to write?”

During an unseasonably warm New York afternoon in early fall, Meyers and Landolina discussed the self-imposed challenges they faced working on *The Above*, Code Orange’s unyielding determination to grow and expand their musical

Code Orange’s Dom Landolina performs at the Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival in Indio, California, April 22, 2022



reach, the physical and mental scars that keep them motivated, and working with two legends in the music business, Corgan and producer Steve Albini.

Right from the start, did you want *The Above* to be less chaotic and more commercial than *Underneath*, to appeal to a more mainstream audience?

REBA MEYERS: For me, it truly was not anything about the audience. I just wanted to hear more honesty in my guitar parts, and the best way for me to do that was to simplify my playing. That allowed me to get my personality into the songs more easily.

Did some of the more complex and aggressive parts on past albums get in the way of what you wanted to express?

MEYERS: If I’m dealing with too many parts, sometimes I feel like the emotion is getting lost because I’m just playing a bunch of notes. I enjoy that sometimes for heavier music, but for this record I wanted

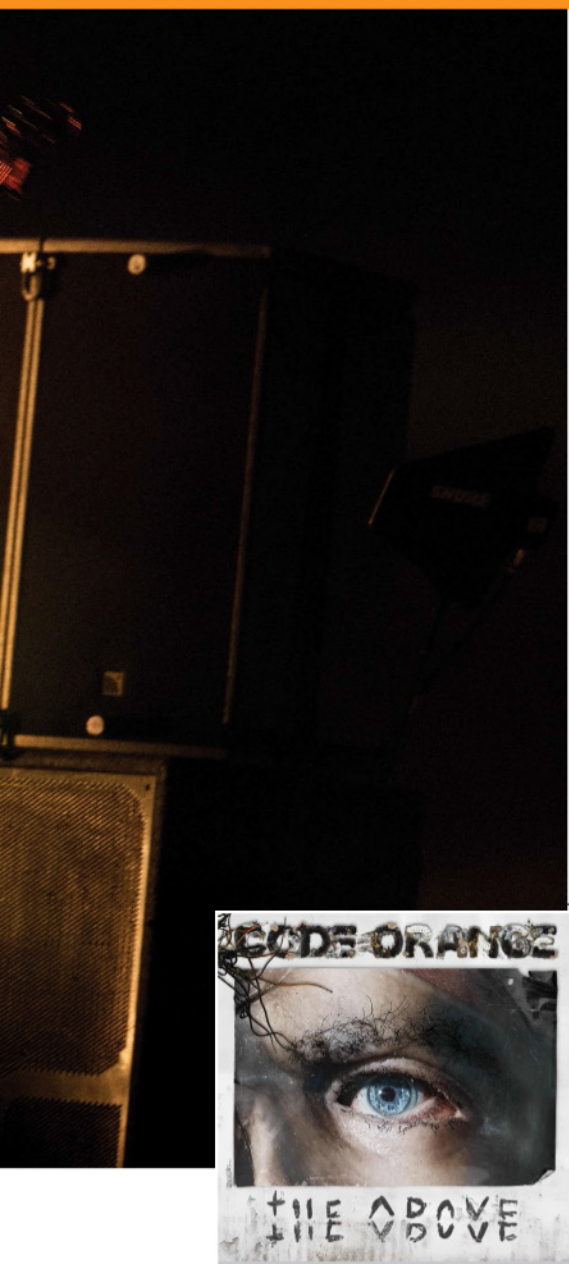
to play fewer ideas and I almost wanted to be a little sloppier, so the music didn’t sound too perfect.

What about you, Dom? Did you want to approach the album differently?

DOM LANDOLINA: Every time we do an album, I’m the guy that’s always pushing for the heavy riffs. That’s where I’m different from the other people in the band. They like to leave space and let the songs breathe. I like to fill everything with all these parts.

It sounds like you had different goals. Did you and Reba write together and then merge your styles to make them sound cohesive?

LANDOLINA: Sometimes. We wrote about 25 songs while we worked on this album. So, we had two or three albums’ worth of songs to choose from. And they were written in all kinds of ways. We came up with some parts separately, and we worked on some of them together. I worked with



chugging followed by slower, vibrato-laden riffs and pinch harmonics. Then it goes rhythmically off the rails with a skittering rhythm and electronic enhancements.

MEYERS: Most of that entire song was Dom's riff. I heard it and loved it, so we kept it like that. I just didn't see anything I could add to it to make it better. And then there are songs like "Theater of Cruelty," where it's more of this weird collaboration of different styles and dynamics.

LANDOLINA: "Theater of Cruelty" is a great example of how we work together. There's a pinch harmonic-centric riff that comes and goes and riffs through the whole song with the chorus. Then you get to the end of the song and there are a lot of fast pinch harmonics. That's my thing. A lot of the other parts are less heavy and more melodic, which was more Reba. I guess I think about what I want to play as a guitarist, and maybe the rest of the band thinks about the whole song.

Maybe it's that contrast between you and them that makes the music diverse and

Do you think your longtime fans appreciate the nuances you're weaving into the songs with the electronics and creative, melodic atmospheres?

MEYERS: I don't know, and it doesn't matter because we're not thinking of them. We're doing this for ourselves — I guess because we need to. We're not trying to sound like anything else, or not sound like anything else. We just want to express who we are. If we were trying to make songs that would appeal to certain audiences, we wouldn't do something like "Grooming My Replacement" because that song gets pretty fucking weird. I don't think anyone from the mainstream universe would ever understand what I'm trying to do with that. But to me, you just pay attention to the aggression and it's more about the mood than about the song. And the heavy things are interesting because they go through so much of a process of bringing everyone's ideas in more than the more melodic ones do.

LANDOLINA: I think those are the harder ones to write because each person is bringing their own thing to the table, and it all goes into the grinder. And then we all end

"IT'S LIKE, 'OKAY, MAYBE IT'S TIME TO TRY SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT.' HOW MANY MORE INSANE MOSH PARTS DO WE NEED TO WRITE?"

DOM LANDOLINA

just Jami on some stuff. So the songs all came together differently. We did some of them in two days, and others were pieced together over a long period of time.

MEYERS: I was trying to encourage people to get in a room together because we hadn't done that in a while. Like, on "Splinter the Soul," me and Dom worked with each other and pulled from all this stuff we had been fucking around with and merged all these parts together. I think that song's really cool because it has both of our voices in it. But you can't listen to it and go, "Oh, this is Dom's riff, that's Reba's riff." We molded our styles together in a really cool, cohesive way.

One of the heavier songs, "The Game," features rapid staccato, Slipknot-style

creates a duality between the more textural parts and the heavier, more aggressive sections.

LANDOLINA: Yeah, but I just feel like those guys are probably better at writing songs than I am. I just like to see what I can play on guitar that sounds cool. But when Reba and Jami put a song together, I just sit back because I don't know shit about chords. That's just not how my brain works. But Reba's perfect for that.

Reba, do you consider yourself a metal player?

MEYERS: I enjoy metal, I don't consider myself a metal player. I write metal occasionally and use it to inspire me. But I think of myself more as a songwriter that uses guitar to help tell my story.

up wrestling with it to get it right and get everyone's personal stamp on it. You really have to go through a million versions. There's a riff in "The Game" that we workshopped at five different times over two years.

Do you both use pedals to create additional noise and texture?

MEYERS: I love pedals to help create different elements for the music. We all brought our pedal boards into the studio, and I had two of them connected to each other.

LANDOLINA: On this album I was less reliant on pedals, which goes back to what we were saying a minute ago. We have our own ways of doing things, and I'm all about riffs. The more open-chord rock songs like "Snapshot" were done with

me out of the picture.

Reba, the structures on *The Above* are simpler than the ones on *Underneath*. Did playing less complex rhythms give you more space to shape the songs?

MEYERS: I just feel like if you don't have too much happening in the song, you can really hear what your hands are doing, and it's easier to tap into a groove that way. That's the most important thing for me. The effects and other stuff are fun to put in after you know what you want to say with the music. A lot of the problem I have with connecting with a lot of music that's being put out today is that people seem to be so worried about putting in all the notes and making sure they're playing stuff that's complex and technical enough to show how good they are. They're not worried about the feeling and the mood and just being themselves.

Do you write the frameworks for your songs before you add the effects?

MEYERS: I like to see what I can do with just the songwriting because that's where the power is coming from. And then the pedals can amplify that to an insane degree. Once we have something, I like to mold the tone to my liking. I've been using more fuzz pedals because I've found that they work great as a tonal tool. But you don't always need some crazy piles of effects. I already went through that phase, and I still like to do it sometimes. But making new albums should be about growth. I don't want to repeat what I already did.

Did you start writing *The Above* right after you finished *Underneath*?

LANDOLINA: We did them both pretty close together. When Covid happened, we realized we were going to have that extra time. We thought that maybe we should write an EP. And then we started coming up with ideas. And then more ideas started coming. We kept working and working, and eventually you have 25 songs on your plate, and you realize you could do a double album, so why do an EP?

MEYERS: We've been writing this damn thing forever. That's why I feel so good to finally be able to let these songs out. "I Fly," "Take Shape" and a couple more are freaking three years old at this point. That's a long time for a song to be sitting there. It gives you too much time to think about it and too much time to fuck with it. You don't want to over-paint the painting.

You wrote a bunch of demos and recorded seven full songs that you



[from left] Max Portnoy, Reba Meyers, Joe Goldman, Jami Morgan, Eric "Shade" Balderose and Dom Landolina

threw away before you recorded anything you were all happy with. In the end, you had 25 songs you had to whittle down the 14 on the record. Did you feel creatively stifled?

MEYERS: Not at first, because there was so much shit coming out of us that in the beginning, it was fun. We were figuring out the identity of the record and it was taking shape. But for me, it did get pretty frustrating after a while. Some of the guys in the band enjoy the process and throwing shit at the wall for a long time until it forms into this masterpiece. But I got tired of that.

There were times I said, "Okay, isn't this enough? Let's just look at what we've got and take a snapshot of the moment." But that's hard because there are so many identities within the band. There's literally multiple bands within this one band.

You've been working on *The Above* for a long time — and you had a few stops and starts. When did the vision for the album come together?

MEYERS: I don't think that ever happened, which is funny. Jamie would text me and go, "Reba, why aren't you sending more

songs?” And I would literally have to say, “No, that’s it! I’m not sending anything else because we’re done, and that’s it! We have to put a cap on this.” We all tunneled in deep on this record and became like moles burrowed into the ground. We needed to dig our way back out.

Smashing Pumpkins founder Billy Corgan sings on “Take Shape.” How did he get involved?

MEYERS: At one point, we shared management. It was cool because he had a genuine interest in the band. He’s a very creative person and he understood that we had some commonalities. He could see we were a very odd bunch, and we were trying to use our strong personalities to shape the music.

Did you contact Billy, or did he ask you if he could be involved?

MEYERS: It started off as us sending him the songs and talking about them, like a lot of musicians do with one another. That led naturally to us getting in a room together, which wasn’t originally part of the plan, but he wanted to do it. He had an acoustic guitar and he started playing

LANDOLINA: I knew it was going to be great, but the first time I heard it, I was not so sure it belonged on the album. I listened to the demo and thought, “Wow, this is really good, but is this a Code Orange song?” In retrospect, I’m really glad we used it. We added it to the set at some of our shows and it feels really great when we play it.

Reba, what were you upset about when you wrote “Mirror”? Were you frustrated that the album was taking so long or wasn’t progressing the way you wanted it to?

MEYERS: No, no. It was really personal shit. Honestly, I get upset a lot. I’m less upset now, and I think creating the album helped me figure out some things about myself that I needed to figure out, which is the whole point. I’m not going to go into the details, but when you’re in that position, you try to use those feelings to your advantage to figure out what is going on inside. I’ve never been that verbal of a person. I’m not great at talking about my feelings. I’ve been that way since I was a kid, so it’s been helpful to

“[BILLY CORGAN] HAD AN ACOUSTIC,
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IT FELT MAGICAL — LIKE CLASSIC
SMASHING PUMPKINS”

REBA MEYERS

this little melody for the bridge of “Take Shape” and sang the part that he does on the record. It felt magical — like classic Smashing Pumpkins.

“Mirror” is a different kind of song for Code Orange. The guitars are rooted in open chords and single notes, and there are a lot of musical embellishments, including strings, background effects and keyboard samples. It’s almost a melancholy pop song.

MEYERS: I was feeling a lot of tension and pressure around the time we did that. The guys knew I was upset, and they encouraged me to use that frustration instead of crawling under a rock and moping. Sometimes it’s hard to sit down and write when you’re upset. But I took their advice and sat down and did what I consider to be one of my favorite songs. It represents a moment and is very pure.

have an outlet to create and deal with my shit. And then when I look back at it, I can say, “Oh, I see what I was going through.”

What was the greatest musical obstacle you faced while working on *The Above*?

LANDOLINA: I have a different challenge than Reba. By choice, I put myself in a box. I want to be the riff guy, and that’s a big role to take on. When you sit and write riffs all day long, and you’ve got the same five frets you’re working with — because nothing’s that heavy once you go past the fifth fret — you’ve got the same little tricks you can do with pinch harmonics. So you’re sitting there all day with your back against the wall, and then eight hours later you come out and realize you have absolutely nothing. Or, by accident, you wrote the exact same thing you wrote the day before.

You recorded the album with Steve Albini. Was that a positive experience?

MEYERS: It was great, but he’s not a typical producer. He tries to be invisible, and I think we needed someone who would let us do our thing and encourage us to play in the room together at the same time and just help us with the sound. He did that, and it brought out the best in us.

LANDOLINA: He was so extremely not a voice in the room. It was almost funny. He has no opinion. Once we were there long enough, we established a bit of a rapport where we could joke around with him. One time, one of us asked him, “What do you think of that song, Steve?” And he said, “I’ll tell you when it’s out, ‘cause I don’t know.” And he was being serious. You never see him smiling or nodding his head when he’s recording something. He’s like a human computer. He has all the facts for you. And that’s all he does. And that’s exactly what we needed.

It makes sense for a band like you to record everything together as if you’re onstage. In the past, did you take a more traditional approach in the studio?

LANDOLINA: It was always us tracking in the control room with a guitar, and the amp was a mile away. This time, we were all together like we are onstage, and we didn’t worry about everything being totally perfect. There’s a section at the end of “The Above,” where Reba and I play a harmonized lead together on our wah pedals. When we were tracking it, the volume made my notes feed back. We did a bunch of takes, and I remember being bothered by it. Now when I hear it on the record, it sounds real to me. And it sounds live in a great way. If we had recorded that during the *Underneath* era, we would have made it perfect-sounding, which wouldn’t have been as good. There’s stuff like that all over the record.

MEYERS: That real and natural thing is the message of the record. I look at *The Above* as a true expression of this band, and I think, “Man, this is the way we should have been working all along.” There’s no reason for a band like us to be isolated in a control room. We’re not fucking pop musicians. If it sounds good and it’s real, who cares if there are mistakes in the songs? If someone listening to it can’t tell that something is not what it was originally supposed to be, and it sounds cool and adds to the feel of the record, is it really a mistake? **GW**



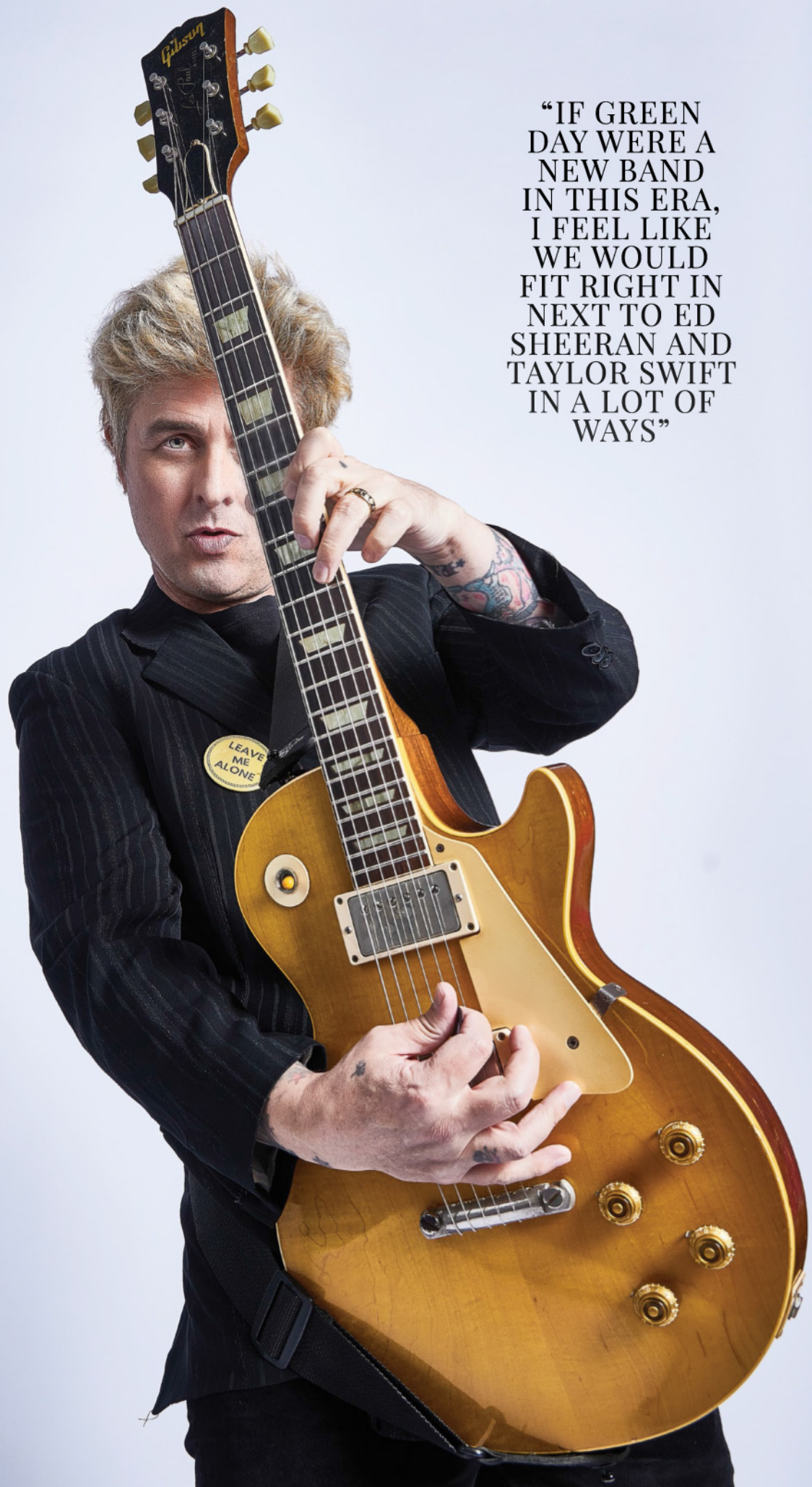
PUNK TO THE RESCUE!

GREEN DAY'S **BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG** REVEALS THE ORIGIN STORY
BEHIND **SAVIORS**, THE PUNK SUPERHEROES' FIRST NEW ALBUM
IN FOUR YEARS, AND LOOKS BACK ON THE MAKING OF 1994'S **DOOKIE**

WORDS BY
RICHARD BIENSTOCK

PHOTOS BY
JEN ROSENSTEIN

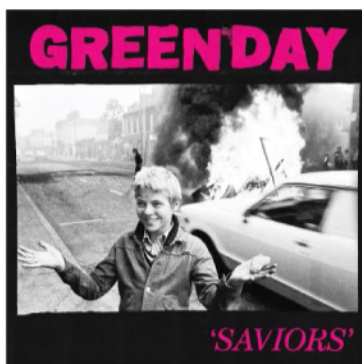
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GREEN DAY BURST ONTO THE SCENE

— or, at least, the mainstream scene — 30 years ago with *Dookie*, the multi-platinum monster of a record that was largely responsible for dragging punk rock out of cramped clubs and dingy DIY venues and into the world of sold-out arenas, glossy magazine covers and near-constant radio and MTV rotation. And while the trio — singer and guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong, bassist Mike Dirnt and drummer Tré Cool — remain by far the most commercially successful punk band in history, they've also spent the last three decades taking a torch to any conventional ideas of what punk actually is.

Unless, of course, you ask Armstrong, who never subscribed to conventionality in the first place. “Punk, to me, has always meant freedom,” he tells *Guitar World*. “Maybe there’s some people where it’s just about being an aggressive punk-rocker and saying, ‘fuck society’ and falling into all those sorts of clichés. But that’s not my definition. For me it’s about getting into the deep end of the water as an artist. All that other stuff is just limitations.”



From the smash acoustic ballad “Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)” to the nine-minute, multi-movement epic “Jesus of Suburbia,” to the ambitious, ultimately era-defining concept album *American Idiot* (and its ensuing Broadway stage adaptation), Armstrong and Green Day have continually defied stock perceptions of what is and isn’t punk rock. Their last album, 2020’s somewhat divisive *Father of All Motherfuckers*, largely eschewed their characteristic sound in favor of a more Motown-, soul-, garage-rock- and hip-hop-influenced approach (with Armstrong even trying out his best Prince-style falsetto on the title track). And their new and 14th studio effort, *Saviors*, is yet another pivot, this time toward something that is both a return to form and a further pushing out on punk’s perimeters.

In the latter category would be tracks like the celestial, widescreen “Coma City,” the Eighties-style heshier-rocker “Corvette Summer,” the Fifties-rock pastiche “Bobby Sox” and the glammy, chest-beating album closer (and real highlight), “Fancy Sauce.” What’s more, Armstrong also opted to tweak his lead guitar approach on the record, adding in Angus Young-style double-stop-spiked phrases to “Living in the ’20s,” spacey, heavily effected lines to “Fancy Sauce” and a soaring solo to “Good-night Adeline,” among other standout six-string moments, all of which con-

trast with his characteristic octave-style melodic work.

That said, there’s still plenty of Green Day’s archetypal amped-up, caffeinated power-chord throttle throughout *Saviors*, from the ram-paging “Look Ma, No Brains!” to the hard-charging aggro-rock of “Living in the ’20s,” to the anthemic, *American Idiot*-like culture-skewering opening track and first single, “The American Dream Is Killing Me.”

Throughout, Armstrong paints a maddening and madcap portrait of a world gone crazy, ranting and railing about TikTok and taxes, commies and cocaine, assholes in space, grandmas on fentanyl and superheroes playing pretend. It is, in his words, a “paradise for locos,” where everyone is racist, he’s fucking his robot senseless and the Uber, apparently, is always running late.

If it all feels a bit chaotic and ludicrous, well, that’s just a reflection of the times. “Whether it’s social media or influencers or war or Trumpism or political correctness, it just feels like we’re all over the place right now,” Armstrong says. “It’s just kind of...” he pauses, then laughs. “It’s just really fucked up.”

There’s an argument to be made that the contemporary music scene can seem similarly hard to make sense of — especially for an act that built its name on three-chord guitar-rock anthems. But here as well, the 51-year-old Armstrong is confident about Green Day’s place in the modern world.

“If Green Day were a new band in this era, I feel like we would fit right in next to Ed Sheeran and Taylor Swift in a lot of ways,” he says. “Because I just feel that if it’s good songs — if it’s *great* songs — you can

bust through any genre or any sort of popularity contest. So I just always go to where I'm strongest, and that's good lyrics, good melodies, good songwriting." And, as Armstrong mentioned previously, ignoring limitations. "You have to throw yourself curveballs sometimes," he says. "Or else you get bored, you know?"

Just days after premiering new songs from *Saviors* at a series of concerts in Las Vegas, Armstrong sat down with *Guitar World* to discuss the making of the record, the state of the world — musical and otherwise — in 2023 and, of course, guitars and gear.

He also took time to look back on the making of the landmark *Dookie*, which was recently issued in a massive *30th Anniversary Deluxe Edition* set that, along with indelible singles like "Longview," "Basket Case" and "When I Come Around," is packed with unreleased four-track and cassette demos, outtakes and live recordings from the *Dookie* world tour.

"We were just three dipshits that were along on this crazy ride," Armstrong says of the record that has now sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. "We made something we were really proud of, and we knew that we made something that we would love and people would love. We just didn't know how *many* people would love it."

Saviors is Green Day's 14th studio album overall. As the primary songwriter in the band, did you have any particular intention as far as what you wanted to do this time out?

You know, the intention kept changing. There were times where I just wanted to make a straight-up punk-rock record. And there were times where I wanted to do sort of stadium-rock, Britpop-sounding songs. And then there were a lot of false starts. So with all of it, I was almost kind of confused. But then we went into the studio with the songs we loved the most and everything seemed to come together. It was almost like the lightbulb went off as we were recording it. Like, "Oh, now I know what we're doing!"

Was there any particular song which sparked this new batch of material?

There were a few. One was the song

"Saviors." And then also "Look Ma, No Brains!," "Goodnight Adeline" and "One Eyed Bastard" were there, too. Then later on, I had an old demo of "The American Dream Is Killing Me," and that seemed to just sort of bring the whole thing together.

Was there a reason that you chose "Saviors" to be the title track of the record?

Well, in addition to being one of the first songs I wrote for the album, I also felt like, "Man, this *sounds* like the first song off an album." Eventually that first song became "American Dream," but when we were trying to figure out what we wanted to call the album as we were mixing, I was listening to "Saviors" and really hearing the sort of desperate cry for help that the song has. It's trying to make some sense of the world. So I was like, "We should call the album *Saviors*." Because I think everybody's looking for something or someone to hold onto, and to believe in.

To that point, "The American Dream Is Killing Me" taps into that feeling of being untethered from modern society, and trying to find your way in a chaotic world. It's something that you also addressed on *American Idiot*, which is now celebrating its 20th anniversary (See page 60). Could you have imagined, when you were wrestling with these sorts of issues back then, that you'd still be doing it two decades later?

I actually think our country is more divided than it's ever been. And the thing about the American dream, the original idea of it, is just sort of lost on me at this point. On top of that, now we're all sort of set on this algorithm that we're being fed every day. I'm a victim of it, too. The stuff that I see online or on Instagram or YouTube, it just feeds the thing in your brain that your brain wants to see. You think you're being informed, but really you're retreating more into your own bubble.

On the other hand, there's tracks on the new record like "Corvette Summer," which revel in total escapism. You just want your power chords and record stores, and to shut out the outside world.

Totally. You definitely need to have some kind of escape from everything, whether it's going to your favorite record store, hanging out with friends in person or just doing something where you're not sitting in front of a screen the entire time. For me, I still listen to punk rock every day. I'm always looking for cool new bands, or maybe I'll go down the rabbit hole of trying to find power-pop stuff that you can't find anywhere except for on Discogs or specialty record stores. I do still have that escapism that I've had ever since I was 12 years old. So something like "Corvette Summer" is saying, "I just wanna feel good for a minute." Or, you know, two-and-a-half minutes. [Laughs]

On your last record, *Father of All Motherfuckers*, you worked with producer Butch Walker. This time you returned to Rob Cavallo, who helmed *Dookie* and *American Idiot*, among other classic Green Day albums. What does Rob bring to the equation?

Rob is really smart and knowledgeable. And he's really musical — he can play the shit out of the piano, play the shit out of the guitar. He understands how to connect with the band as far as getting a really good take and gluing everybody together. And he just has non-stop energy. There would be times where I would start to get tired and I would shut down, but then you've got Rob, who will give me a second wind. And not by force, but just by creating a good vibe in the studio and having a good time and focusing everything on the positive. And being like, "I want to kick ass!" in a way. He's like a coach: "Let's get out and beat people's ass with this next song!" And then you go, "Fuck, yeah, let's go!" [Laughs]

***Father of All* diverged pretty far off of Green Day's characteristic sound and was a polarizing record amongst fans. How do you regard it in hindsight?**

I think you make records sometimes where you have to learn more about yourself. To me, *Father of All* was this record that was like [Green Day side project] Foxboro Hot Tubs or something like that. Kind of garage-y. I love that stuff. And at the end of the day I'm just trying to come up with good melodies and really take my time with writing lyrics and make sure there's nothing left unsaid. So I plan on making records like *Father of All* in the future, for sure. Everyone's gotta make records that are their "id records" or something, you know?

On *Saviors*, one thing that feels a bit different for you is your approach to guitar solos. For starters, there's more of them.

Yeah. I kind of put on my "rock god" hat and just started soloing a lot. Actually, I think I soloed more on this record than any we've ever done. And not in a shredder kind of way, but just more like, you know, I love [late Pretenders guitarist] James Honeyman-Scott and [late David Bowie and Ian Hunter guitarist] Mick Ronson and guys like that, who play those really melodic solos that fit with the melody and what the song is calling for. Plus, it's fun to just kind of go off and rip a guitar solo. Like "Fancy Sauce" — I'm playing that "ghost-sounding" solo where it kind of comes in and out, and "Living in the '20s," I wanted to have a guitar solo like "I Can't Explain" or an old Kinks song, where it just has that kind of haywire feel to it. It's also very Angus [Young]-

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OLYMPICS”



sounding. You're bending strings and wiggling 'em around. [Laughs]

What were your main guitars on *Saviors*?

I used my '56 Les Paul Junior a lot. A Les Paul 'burst that I've been using for years, that's on a lot of the solos. A '59 Les Paul Standard that I used quite a bit. I also had a '53 Telecaster and a '60 Esquire. You can hear the Tele for sure on the solo on "Living in the '20s."

How about amps?

I have this one amp, a *Dookie* amp that I haven't used in a while, since maybe [1997's] *Nimrod*. That was the main one. It's a Marshall 100-watt Super Lead [1959SLP] that was modified by Martin at CAE [Armstrong is referring to the late Martin Golub of Custom Audio Electronics and later L.A. Sound Design]. I used that a lot for the bigger, crunchier parts of the songs.

Is this the modded Marshall we've come to know as "Pete"?

Yeah, it is that one. I put "Pete" on it because I named it for a friend.

What's Pete up to these days?

Oh, he's hanging around somewhere. I haven't talked to him in a while. [Laughs]

Were you using any effects in the studio?

I know I used my Klon [Centaur overdrive], but there wasn't too much in the way of pedals. Just some boost type things. But there were some other amps for different tones — one I got on Craigslist, an original Roland Jazz Chorus that belonged to someone from Oingo Boingo or something. It's on the song "Suzie Chapstick," which has that Pretenders kind of sound to it. And then for some of the clean things, like on "Bobby Sox," I used Mike [Dirnt's] amp, actually, his '63 Fender Bassman.

How would you characterize your approach to the guitar these days?

When I was a kid, I loved Eddie Van Halen and Angus Young and Randy Rhoads. And then something happened where it was like you had to be in the guitar Olympics. If you wanted to play, you had to be as good as those guys and be able to play as

fast as Yngwie Malmsteen. And I was like, “Man, then I’m just gonna end up sitting in my room for the rest of my life. I’m never gonna be in a band, ever!” That’s when my tastes started changing and I started getting more into punk music and alternative, where it was more about rhythm playing. And also still about great guitar sounds and great solos, but not like the heavy metal thing, which started to become kind of a parody.

So what happened was I got more into being an anti-solo guitar player, especially for *Dookie*. But I think as time went on after that, I became less bashful about saying, “Okay, this is stuff that I had learned along the way, that dates back to when I was 13 years old. Let’s let that free now to try to put a spotlight on a little bit more of what I’m capable of, and not be afraid of making a bad noise.” I’ve gotten to a point where I know my limitations, but at the same time I’m really pushing myself to be a better guitar player.

All that said, does it feel like in 2023 people still want to hear guitar bands, in particular in a mainstream context? How does Green Day fit into that landscape?

I mean, if we were a new band in this era, I don’t know if trying to sign to a major label and doing all that would be the right place for us. But since we have all this history of having big songs and big records and a lot of mainstream success it’s a different story. I also feel that we continue to generate new fans, just because there’s something about the energy of Green Day that I think a lot of young people flock to every time we put out a new album. Our fans are all ages — and I’m talking, like, 11-year-olds to 65-year-olds in our audience.

Regarding Green Day’s longevity, 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of *Dookie*. In addition to putting together the *Deluxe Edition* package, you recently played a small club show at the Fremont Country Club in Las Vegas, where you performed the full album from front to back. When you think back to that time, what comes to mind for you?

That record was just massive, and we were all, like, 21 years old. So it was such a crazy era for us. But the

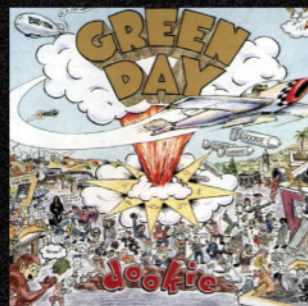
great thing about *Dookie* is when we were rehearsing it [for the Vegas show], it still felt fresh. It didn’t sound dated. And all our favorite records, whether it’s the Beatles’ *Revolver* or the Who albums or the first couple of Van Halen records, one of the things that makes them great is you’re like, “Oh, this feels like it was just made yesterday.” And *Dookie* still feels like that.

One interesting thing in listening to the four-track demos included on the *Deluxe Edition*, they’re pretty close to what we hear on the official studio versions. Some of the cassette demos veer off stylistically, but by the four-track recordings everything sounds fully realized. Is that the way you guys were working back then, with everything really tight and ready to go by the time you hit the “record” button?

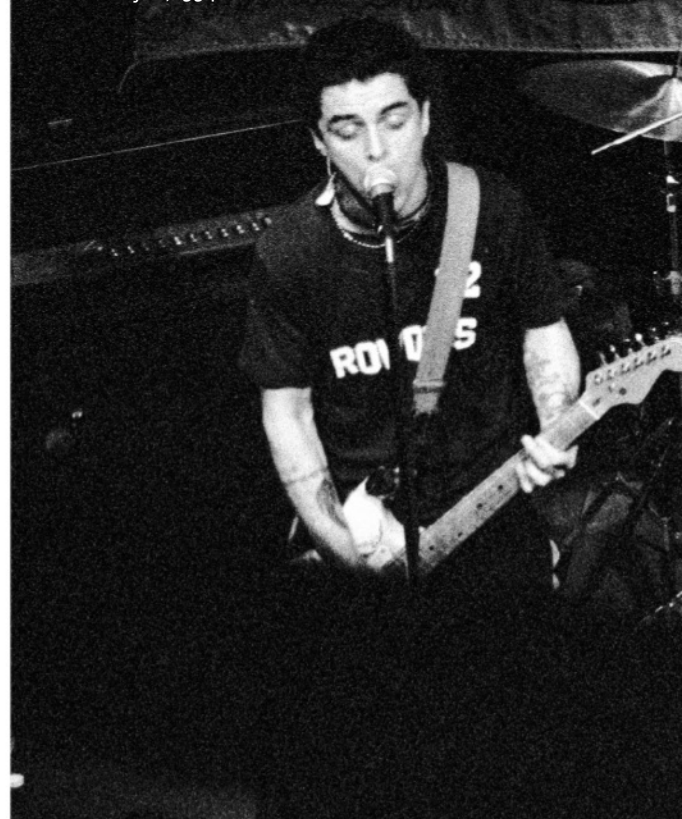
Definitely. Because we didn’t want to change our sound. Although we did want to make everything sound bigger, with fatter guitars and a bigger sonic range overall. Because our first couple records, the first one [1990’s *39/Smooth*] was made for 700 bucks, and the second one [1991’s *Kerplunk*] was made for, like, 2,000 bucks or something like that. And in a small studio. So we wanted to expand on that and have a little bit more time to get better sounds. But also, we were really adamant about the fact that we grew up hearing bands go from their original sound to the big, gated reverb snare that just washes everything and makes records from the Eighties sound like shit. We didn’t want to do that. For us it was, “We want to reflect what we sound like live, but just make it larger.”

In 1994, an album like *Dookie* would not necessarily have been pegged as an obvious hit. That was the era of grunge, when guitar rock was not exactly bright and shiny and unashamedly melodic. Did you feel out-of-step with the mainstream at that time?

I think so. But you know, grunge had also started becoming really watered down. You could hear a lot of people were just being imitators of Nirvana and Pearl Jam. And so we were like, “Well, let’s just be *anti*-that.” [Laughs] Maybe not necessar-



The *Dookie*-era Green Day — [from left] Armstrong, Tré Cool and Mike Dirnt — perform at the Paradise Lounge in San Francisco, February 16, 1994



ily “anti,” but, “Let’s be the other side of the coin.” And then there’s the other side of *that*, where if you’re going against the mainstream grain, you could fall flat on your face, too. There’s definitely that fear. You don’t know what’s gonna happen. But we knew we made something we were really proud of, so we had that.

And once you achieve success, then you have to contend with being perceived as sellouts. Which was a big thing in the Nineties. In fact, Green Day had to deal with it even before *Dookie* was released, just due to the fact that you had signed to a major label, Reprise, prior to recording the album. Looking back, does it seem a little insane how worked up people could get about that sort of thing?



COVER FEATURE

It was weird. It was crazy. I mean, I definitely feel like we were sort of the guinea pig. It's like we were like the first pancake, you know? [Laughs] Other bands that came after us that were punk and got popular, they didn't get the kind of backlash that we did.

But the area we come from, it's the East Bay, it's the home of [incendiary punk and hardcore zine] *Maximum Rocknroll*. So I think it was a combination of being from the area we came from and also being the first one.

But it makes you start to really understand who your real friends are. I remember getting in fist fights with people over this shit, you know? Now, I don't think it would really ever happen. I mean, I don't know the scenes today, whatever their rules are, but it was crazy for us. But I know we made the right choice.

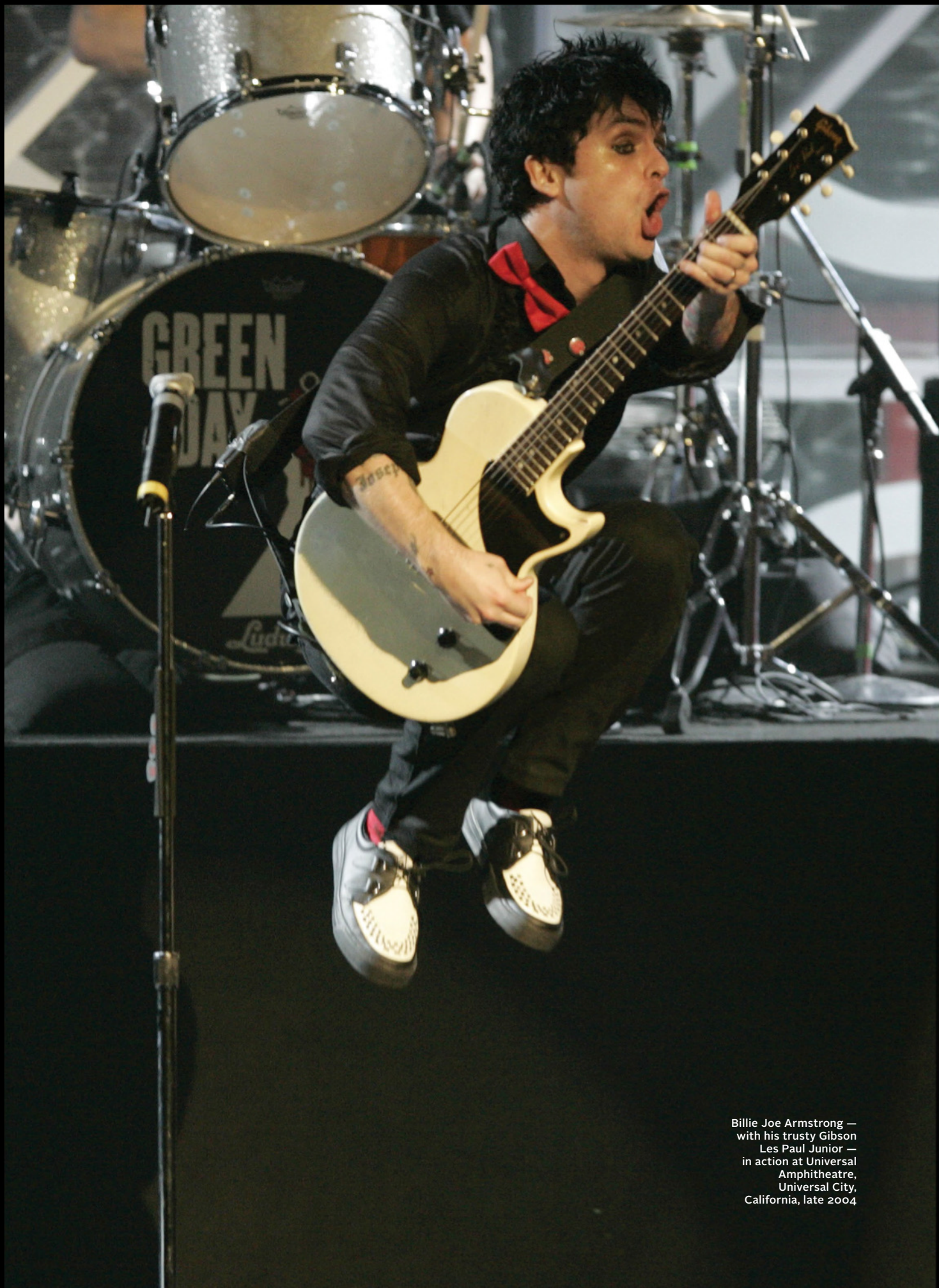
A few days after the Fremont Country Club show you headlined the When We Were Young Festival in Vegas, where you performed alongside bands like Blink-182, Good Charlotte, Sum 41 and dozens of other acts that, to various degrees, incorporate elements of that Dookie approach into their sound. Do you hear the influence?

Yeah, for sure. I mean, a lot of it is just because bands

have told me, to my face "If it wasn't for that record..." [Laughs]

There's actually a whole musical universe that Dookie helped to create.

It's like when I listened to Generation X or the Replacements. All those big bands for me — I guess it's what Dookie is for a lot of other bands. And I couldn't be more grateful for that. For people to be like, "You put something out there that had an impact on someone else's future"? It's an amazing thing. **GW**



Billie Joe Armstrong —
with his trusty Gibson
Les Paul Junior —
in action at Universal
Amphitheatre,
Universal City,
California, late 2004

PUNK ROCK OPERA

**BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG RECALLS THE MAKING OF GREEN DAY'S
MONUMENTAL COMEBACK ALBUM, 2004'S AMERICAN IDIOT**

Green Day began the 1990s as a trio of snot-nosed Bay Area-punks, but they ended it as one of the biggest rock bands in the world, with three consecutive multi-platinum albums (led by the mega-smash 1994 effort *Dookie*), a string of hit singles (including the prom-dance staple “Good Riddance [Time of Your Life]”) and numerous sold-out tours.

But at the dawn of the new millennium the band was at a crossroads. Their 2000 effort, *Warning*, which saw them move in a more pop- and folk-influenced direction, was, at least for Green Day, a commercial disappointment — in part due to an unenthusiastic response from fans, and also the fact that its songs leaked onto Napster weeks before its release. Furthermore, personal relationships between Billie Joe Armstrong, bassist Mike Dirnt and drummer Tré Cool were at a low, with Dirnt admitting to *Rolling Stone* at

the time that “breaking up was an option.” Nevertheless, Green Day soldiered on, and by 2002 were 20 songs into a follow-up album, titled *Cigarettes and Valentines*. And then the demo master tapes were stolen.

“We didn’t know what we really wanted to do,” Armstrong tells *Guitar World*. “We’d been around for, like, a decade and a half, and we were just indecisive.” A lesser band might have elected for the breaking-up option. But rather than calling it a day at the ripe old age of 30, Armstrong and his band mates chose a different path, helped in no small part by some good advice from Green Day’s long-time producer, Rob Cavallo. “He said something to me that was really inspiring,” Armstrong says. “He was like, ‘Let’s make something that’s just monumental. Do things that you haven’t done before. Just fucking go for it and make an epic statement.’”

WORDS BY
RICHARD BIENSTOCK

That “something” became *American Idiot*, not only the most epic statement of Green Day’s career, but also the most epic statement of any rock band in 2004 — let alone a supposed three-chord punk-rock outfit. A quasi-rock-opera celebrating and lamenting the disillusioned and disenfranchised in a post-9/11 America in the throes of the Iraq war, George W. Bush’s divisive presidency and all manner of cultural and social dysfunction, the record incorporated big ideas into even bigger musical statements. Armstrong and his bandmates took inspiration from rock operas and concept albums like the Who’s *Quadrophenia* and *Tommy*, David Bowie’s *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*, but also musicals like *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Grease*. They blasted out punk anthems like “Holiday” and the title track, but also extended multi-movement epics like “Jesus of Suburbia” and “Homecoming,” the latter “a sort of ‘A Quick One, While He’s Away’-type of suite,” Armstrong says.

Regarding how it all came together, Armstrong says, “We had access to a recording studio 24 hours a day, and we were just fucking around, doing it for fun. And I remember the response from Rob was, ‘This is it.’ And then we were like, ‘Oh, fuck, it is!’ I was getting to make the music I’d always wanted to make and the record I’d always dreamed of.”

In essence, that meant pushing everything to the hilt — including his guitar approach. “I wanted to play more guitar solos and let that part of me come out,” Armstrong says. “And I was messing with different pedals and working to get the best sounds and to do it with confidence.”

Those sounds came courtesy of

two primary six-strings — Armstrong’s trusty Gibson Les Paul Junior, and a Les Paul Standard he refers to as “Boobie” — and also two modified amps: a Marshall known as the “Idiot Amp,” which was modded with an extra gain stage for a crunchy, excessively thick sound, and a 50-watt Park 75 with a version of Armstrong’s “Dookie” mod in it. A tweed Fender Tremolux was also employed for clean tones, as well as “smaller” tones like those heard on the intro to “American Idiot.”

When Green Day emerged from the studio, it was as a band transformed. Whether anyone would appreciate that transformation, however, remained to be seen. “We were known for writing two-minute punk songs, and here we were doing these eight-minute opuses,” Armstrong says. “There was a part of us that was like, ‘God, what are people gonna think of this?’ Then it just got to a point where we said, ‘Fuck ‘em. This is where we wanna be,’ you know? ‘Give us an A or give us an F — there’s no in-betweens.’”

The band got their first taste of how things could go down before the album came out, when they were doing pre-production at the Grand Olympic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles and decided to invite a crowd to come and watch.

“EVERY BAND WANTS TO HAVE A SGT. PEPPER’S TYPE OF MOMENT. AND *IDIOT* WAS THAT MOMENT FOR US”

“We talked to KROQ and put out the word, filled the place up and did a little concert,” Armstrong says. “That was the first time that we played ‘Jesus of Suburbia.’ And I remember there was almost shock in the crowd, where people were like, ‘What the fuck did I just hear?’ I don’t know if that was a good thing or a bad thing, but it felt like a moment where we could say, ‘Okay, we’re on the right track. This feels good...’”

Things, of course, proved to be really good. Released September 24, 2004, *American Idiot* not only revived Green Day’s career, but went on to become their first Number 1 album and one of the biggest rock records of the decade. It spawned five hit singles — the title track, “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” “Wake Me Up When September Ends,” “Holiday” and an edited-down “Jesus of Suburbia” — and was nominated for seven Grammy awards, winning for Best Rock Album (*American Idiot*) and Record of the Year (“Boulevard of Broken Dreams”). In 2009, a stage adaptation of the story premiered in Berkeley and eventually made its way to Broadway. To date, *American Idiot* has sold an astonishing 16 million units worldwide — a number that, for most bands, would easily rank it as a personal best-seller, but when

Green Day’s Billie Joe Armstrong, still jumping — 20 years after the release of 2004’s *American Idiot* (albeit with a different Gibson Les Paul Junior)



you’re Green Day, and one of your albums is *Dookie*, makes it number two on the list.

As for how the experience of *American Idiot* compared to that of its mega-selling older sibling?

“With *Dookie*, we were so young, and the success part threw me for such a loop that I didn’t know how to respond to it,” Armstrong says. “Life had changed so quickly that I was always feeling like, ‘Did I enjoy that moment enough?’ So I think that with *Idiot*, it was, ‘Let’s get the most we can out of this moment as far as feeling gratitude and feeling like we did something special.’ Because we always wanted to have what our heroes had, like the Who making *Tommy* or something along those lines. Every band wants to have a *Sgt. Pepper*’s type of moment. And *Idiot* was that moment for us.”

It’s a moment that Green Day will revisit on this summer’s stadium tour in support of the new *Saviors*, which will also see them celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Dookie* and 20 years of *American Idiot*. Regarding what the band has in store for the shows, Armstrong says, “Well, we play a lot of songs off *Idiot* anyway, but we’re gonna add some more. So in addition to the bigger ones you’ll hear songs like ‘Letterbomb’ and a few others. We’ve just got to get in and rehearse everything to kind of see what makes sense.”

He continues, “But we definitely plan to celebrate those anniversaries for sure, and play more off *Dookie* and *American Idiot*.” Armstrong laughs. “And then at the same time, of course, do plenty of stuff from *Saviors* and, you know, the *other* records.” **GW**

JEN ROSENSTEIN





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• • •
Ted Nugent in action
with "Blondie," one
of his many current
Gibson Byrdlands,
in Estero, Florida,
December 1, 2022



• • •
[facing page]
Nugent donates
his original Gibson
Byrdland to the
Hard Rock Café
in New York City,
April 8, 1986



Guitar World
page sixty-five

THE BYRD THAT SOARED

Words by
Phil Gajewski

Photograph by
Mark Peacock

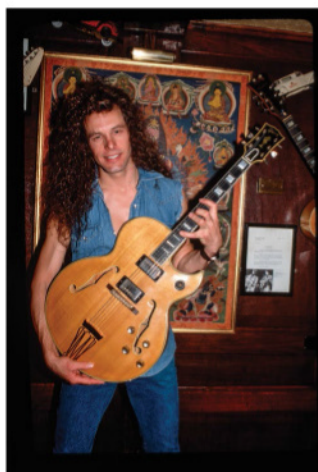
*How TED NUGENT accidentally destroyed
— and later gave away —
his first GIBSON BYRDLAND*

LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY (RIGHT)

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD Ted Nugent was on top of the world. In 1965, his band, the Lourds, had won the Michigan Battle of the Bands, beating out 60 other Detroit-area combos. To seal their win, Nugent jumped on the judges' table to play his guitar solo. As the winning band, the Lourds got to open for the Supremes and the Beau Brummels at Detroit's Cobo Hall on June 13, 1965. They played a medley of "High Heel Sneakers," "Walking the Dog" and "Shake Your Tail Feather."

"I was smokin' in Detroit," Nugent says today. "The Lourds were just kickin' ass... We were getting ready to open up some shows for the Stones."

Unbeknownst to Nugent, the Lourds were about to end abruptly.



In the fall of 1965, H.K. Porter Co. transferred Nugent's dad to Chicago for work. "It was horrible," Nugent says. "I didn't want to go." But despite young Ted's protests, Warren and Marion Nugent and their four children — Ted, his brothers Jeffrey and John and his sister Kathy — moved from Redford Township in suburban Detroit to Hoffman Estates, a small suburb outside of Chicago.

Nugent wasted no time forming a new band, the Amboy Dukes, who began playing at The Cellar in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights, among other venues. The Amboy Dukes quickly became one of the hottest bands on the Chicago scene, competing with the Shadows of Knight and the Ides of March for the mantle of the city's top band.

March 2024

THE CALL OF THE BYRDLAND

PRIOR TO MOVING to Chicago, Ted had the opportunity to see Billy Lee & the Rivas at the Walled Lake Casino near Milford, Michigan. Led by vocalist Mitch Ryder and guitarist Jimmy McCarty, the Rivas were an early incarnation of Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. McCarty played a Gibson Byrdland.

"Oh boy! How I love revisiting these spine-tingling memories of my Motor City guitar youth," Nugent says. "The Lourds opened up for Billy Lee and the Rivas, Gene Pitney and Martha and the Vandellas at the Walled Lake Casino outside Detroit in 1964. And there was Jimmy with a gorgeous Gibson Byrdland plugged into a blackface Fender Twin Reverb, sounding like a dozen fire-breathing guitars with the most wonderful, widespread, full, rich, dynamic tone I could have ever imagined. At the time, I was playing a white Fender Duo-Sonic through a beige Fender Bandmaster and had a pretty cool sound myself, but the Byrdland was love at first sight/sound."

"It was a sunburst," McCarty says today. "It had like a three-quarter scale neck. I loved the short-scale neck thing at the time, but it was mainly the humbuckers — that was the first guitar that introduced me to humbucking pickups. Plug a humbucker into an old vintage Fender amp and I'm basically home. The Byrdland is a beautiful instrument. I also love the fact that it wasn't the full hollowbody, like an L5 or a Super 400; it was a slimmer hollowbody, so it was more comfortable for me. I think we used that for pretty much the remainder of the Mitch Ryder/Detroit Wheels stuff."

Suffice to say, Nugent wanted a Gibson Byrdland. However, it would not be until his family's move to Chicago that Ted's dreams of owning a Byrdland would be realized.

"Moving to the Chicago suburbs in 1965 and starting the Amboy Dukes, I got an Epiphone Casino and was really happy with it," Nugent says. But, despite the Casino's popularity in the hands of the Beatles, Stones and Kinks, Nugent had his sights set well beyond his current guitar. "When I heard of a blonde Byrdland at the Roselle School of Music down the road, I got there as fast as I could. Eight hundred dollars may as well have been a million dollars, but the fine gentleman — Mr. Lyle Gillman — had faith in young Nuge and let me trade my Casino and \$100 for her and make monthly payments of \$100. Good Lord, the sonic adventure I was on!"

THE AMBOY DUKES MAKE THEIR MOVE

AFTER HE GRADUATED from high school in 1967, Nugent moved back to Detroit, bringing his Amboy Dukes bandmates and '65 Byrdland with him. The Dukes signed with Detroit's Mainstream Records and released their debut album, *The Amboy Dukes*, which featured their cover of the blues standard "Baby Please Don't Go." The album was purportedly recorded in one night on a four-track recorder.

In 1968, they released their best-known album, *Journey to the Center of the Mind*. Nugent's original Byrdland delivers its trademark sounds throughout. The album's psychedelic title cut reached Number 16 on the *Billboard* charts. The album also featured the *tour de force* "Flight of the Byrd" — Nugent's ode to his beloved Byrdland — along with the sweet instrumental "Scottish Tea."

DETROIT ROCK & ROLL REVIVAL

IN THE LATE Sixties, outdoor pop and rock festivals began springing up around the U.S., and Detroit was no exception. In 1969, the First Annual Detroit Rock & Roll Revival festival took place Memorial Day weekend at the Michigan State Fairgrounds, just outside the Motor City. With 35 bands appearing over two days, this was one of Michigan's biggest rock festivals.

The festival was produced by Russ Gibb, who ran Detroit's Grande Ballroom, home

to the MC5, the Stooges, James Gang and 20-year-old Ted Nugent's Amboy Dukes. To ensure a big turnout at the festival, Gibb wisely shut down the Ballroom for the weekend. While the actual attendance is unknown, the festival is speculated to have drawn at least 25,000 to 30,000 concertgoers over the weekend.

Rain showers dampened Saturday's performances. At one point, the Amboy Dukes led a "Fuck the rain!" chant. However, as the Amboy Dukes closed out their set, tragedy struck Nugent and his treasured Byrdland.

"You may have noticed I get rather uppity when unleashing my beloved guitar music, and young Ted was not well versed in the controlled discipline realm when it came to exploring athletic acrobatics as the music drove me wild," Nugent says.

"I get so damn possessed by the music that I find myself leaping from amp tower to amp tower, to drum riser and back and forth, here, there and everywhere on stage. At the Detroit festival I was wearing a long-fringed white jumpsuit, and as we crescendoed for the umpteenth time that day, I let the mighty Byrdland feed back ferociously against my Fender amp wall, bowing down to the howling beast, and backed off to do my end-of-set flying leap over the amps, when for some stupid reason, my fringe snagged on something in mid-air and I crashed headlong into a Twin and the whole wall of amps collapsed onto my beautiful blonde Byrdland! I must admit, it



looked and sounded phenomenal, but the poor girl was crushed to smithereens as I climbed out of the pile. I'm sure I made it part of the show, but as the adrenaline subsided, I was totally heartbroken as I gathered the shards of spruce and Gibson shrapnel into a box.

"I took the box of assorted pieces to master luthier Dan Erlewine, and he told me there was little hope of fully restoring her, but he did the best he could do. Tragically, she never was really playable again, dammit!"

Erlewine recalls the project: "I saw and heard Ted play pretty early on as a 'new guitar-slinger' in town, and the word was out on him. I heard he played a Byrdland, and that intrigued me because he's the only rock player I'd ever known to play one; I loved Byrdlands and had wanted one for some years — still do. Back in those days in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Gibson player/repes would come to Grinnell's Music — a Michigan chain music store that sold Gibsons — and demo some of their finest guitars. One was a natural Byrdland just like Ted's, and we got to play it and hold it when the demo was over. Otherwise, the Gibsons were in a glass case that was locked and had a sign that said, 'Do not touch — you break it, you bought it.'

"I cleaned and glued the large open split areas and long cracks with Titebond aliphatic-resin glue. There were many small chips of wood free from the guitar with finish clinging to them that I glued in place. However, where there were missing pieces, I used both clear and amber 'stick lacquer' to melt into the empty spots and then level and polish them into the existing finish. Frankly, the repairs were done so long ago that I can't remember much more than days of slowly patching the areas. I'd love to see the guitar in person, as I'm sure a lot would come back to me. I do know I repaired that guitar in my basement shop outside Ann Arbor.

"I did my best for Ted; if the photos of the Byrdland shown here are of his first Byrdland (and I think they are), it looks better than I remember it. I can't believe I could have done it that well at such a young age. It was shattered — just like Ted said!"

Nugent got the repaired Byrdland back in late 1969 and began using it again onstage with the Amboy Dukes. "I tried, but [I] chose against using my original baby on any future recordings or gigs due to its condition," Nugent says. "Dan did a great job, but she was never the same."

Nugent was forced to eventually move on to other Gibsons. "I went out and got another Byrdland, thank God, from Joe



[above] Nugent's original Byrdland, as seen at the Hard Rock Café in Detroit in 2014

[left] Nugent with Dan Erlewine at a mid-Eighties NAMM Show

**"ONLY BECAUSE
I AM A VERY STRONG
INDIVIDUAL AM
I EVEN ABLE TO
DISCUSS THIS..."**

Massimino from Massimino Music — a sunburst, a beautiful guitar," he says.

As Nugent's solo career evolved, the sunburst "replacement" Byrdland played a prominent role at concerts and appeared on the cover of Nugent's self-titled 1975 debut solo album. By 1979, Nugent owned more than 20 Byrdlands. "Quite honestly, I have used any number of my Byrdlands on various recordings and gigs over many years."

THE BYRD LANDS AT THE HARD ROCK

IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, it became *en vogue* for rock stars to give their guitars to the Hard Rock Café (a practice that continues to this day). Eddie Van Halen famously gave one of his red and white striped Kramers to the Hard Rock in 1985. Nugent was no different; on April 8, 1986, he gave his original Byrdland to the Hard Rock at a ceremony in

LAND O' PLENTY

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE GIBSON BYRDLAND

DURING THE MID 1950s, sales of Gibson archtop models declined dramatically. Players were frustrated by the archtop electric's bulky dimensions and tendency to feed back, but at the same time many were also displeased with the heavier weight and less-resonant acoustic properties of Gibson's solidbody models. In response, Gibson introduced its first "Thinline" models in 1955, which offered a sort of "Goldilocks" solution where the traditional archtop's depth was reduced by about half. Gibson's first thinline model was the Byrdland, followed shortly afterwards by the somewhat similar ES-350T.

The Byrdland's name combined the surnames of two pro guitarists, Billy Byrd and Hank Garland, who helped conceive the model. Byrd was a prominent country guitarist who played in Nashville's Grand Ole Opry house band and was a member of Ernest Tubbs' Texas Troubadours.

Garland was a Nashville session player who later appeared on dozens of legendary country and rock 'n' roll singles by artists like Elvis Presley and Patsy Cline and recorded the classic 1960 instrumental jazz guitar album *Jazz Winds from a New Direction*. "Billy and I told Gibson that we'd like an instrument like the L-5, but with a thinner body and a bunch of other stuff," Garland told *Guitar Player* in 1981.

The Byrdland's features included a solid spruce top, maple back and sides, round Venetian cutaway, laminated maple neck with ebony fingerboard and pearl block markers and pearl "flowerpot" headstock overlay inlay, all inherited from the L-5CES. Its major differences included the reduced 2 1/4-inch body depth (compared to the L-5's 3 5/8-inch depth) and smaller neck with a 23 1/2" scale length (as opposed to 25 1/2" for an L-5) and narrower 1 5/8-inch nut width. The Byrdland also featured a 22-fret fingerboard, instead of 20 frets, as seen on an L-5 or ES-175.

Gibson initially offered the model with a sunburst finish for \$550 or in a natural finish for \$565. It underwent various changes over the years, including a switch from single-coil P90 pickups to humbuckers in 1958, a sharp Florentine cutaway from late 1960 through 1969 and standard 1 11/16-inch nut width in 1969. The Byrdland remained a standard production model from 1955 until 1993, when it became part of Gibson's Historic Collection available for special order through the Gibson Custom Shop until 2018.

— Phil Gajewski

A 1955
Gibson
Byrdland



New York City.

"Only because I am a very strong individual am I able to even discuss this very painful, royal clusterfuck! Being the ultimate dumbass, having no clue of the potential value of a Ted Nugent original Byrdland, and since she would never make music with me again, I foolishly donated her to the Hard Rock. Somebody, please shoot me! We did try to get her back over the years, but to no avail. Thank God I can improvise, adapt and overcome tragedies, because that asinine decision could really haunt me if I were to let it."

("I find it hard to believe he would get rid of that," McCarty adds...)

LIFE AT THE HARD ROCK

AFTER NUGENT PARTED with the guitar, the first detailed, professional photographs of Nugent's original Byrdland were taken. In the late Eighties, photographer John Peden shot the Byrdland for *Guitar World's* monthly Collector's Choice centerfold poster. Similarly, the Hard Rock had the instrument professionally photographed, presumably for archival purposes.

Like several other prized instruments owned by the Hard Rock, the newly acquired Nugent Byrdland seemed to have gone into hibernation in the HRC archives



Nugent's original Byrdland, photographed by John Peden shortly after Ted donated it to the Hard Rock Café

[left] A 21-year-old Nugent — with his freshly repaired Byrdland — photographed by Frank Pettis backstage at the Eastown Theater in Detroit, February 1970. Note the cracks running through the spruce top of the guitar

NIGEL OSBOURNE/REDFERNS (LEFT) FRANK PETTIS (CENTER) JOHN PEDEN (RIGHT)

for more than a decade, waiting for a new home. In November 2003, the Hard Rock Café opened a location in Detroit. On the face of the building entrance hung a 36-foot-tall replica of Nugent's famous blonde Byrdland. The three-story neon guitar provided a guide path for what lay inside; Nugent's original Byrdland was proudly displayed in his hometown. The venue drew lines of patrons and fans for weeks.

Given its history, and despite Erlewine's impeccable surgical efforts, the guitar shows many scars. Noticeable cracks are evident in the seams of the spruce top. Stress fractures and pick scratches mar the face of the guitar. There is a terrible crack running through the blonde spruce on the left side of the old axe.

Modern-day relic enthusiasts would marvel at the aging: metal parts show signs of corrosion and the tailpiece is rusted. The words "volume" and "tone" are barely legible on the knobs. Present is a standard Nugent modification — an old Gretsch strap button used as the toggle switch cap.

Unfortunately, after 15 years of operation, the Hard Rock Café in Detroit closed its doors as its building lease ended in 2019. The Nugent Byrdland once again

"I TRIED, BUT [I] CHOSE AGAINST USING MY ORIGINAL BABY ON ANY FUTURE RECORDINGS OR GIGS DUE TO ITS CONDITION. DAN ERLEWINE DID A GREAT JOB, BUT SHE WAS NEVER THE SAME"

disappeared into the Hard Rock vaults.

The Hard Rock's Giovanni Taliaferro — VP of Memorabilia and Design — picks up the story: "We do have Nugent's Byrdland," he says. "It's a very cool piece in the Hard Rock's collection. The guitar is not currently on display; it is being safely held in the Hard Rock's secure storage facility. The Hard Rock *does* have future plans to display the guitar; It would be part of a very cool project, but unfortunately, I am not able to share any other details at this time. We are hoping to have the guitar featured in a new construction, potentially shooting for 2025."

THE BYRD FLIES ON

ON THE VINTAGE market, the going rate of

a mid-1960s Byrdland is well over \$8,000; Taking into account the prices fetched from other famous guitarists selling off their main instruments, one has to wonder what amount the original Nugent Byrdland could command at auction.

Nugent has become as synonymous with the Gibson Byrdland as Hendrix is with the Stratocaster or Jimmy Page is with the Les Paul. His use of a hollowbody jazz archtop in a high-energy hard rock framework was truly ground-breaking.

"It's all about tone, after all, right?" Nugent says. "That porous, breathing, living spruce has a voice all its own, especially in my hands through the never-ending experimental amplifiers I feed them through. I am miraculously blessed to increase my passion for guitar music every day, and the patterns, licks, grooves, bastardized chord structures, sounds and feedback turn me on more today than ever. Say Hallelujah! My guitar theme lines and licks erupt with a life of their own every time I plug in, so the song development process is as out-of-body organic as anything in life... The Byrdland's hollowbody spruce feedback threshold forces my hands to work in a certain way to milk a delivery of percussiveness, blaring, sustain, staccato and feedback that is indescribably inspiring." **GW**

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SOUND CHECK

UAFX Lion '68 Super Lead Amp pedal

By Chris Gill

THE MARSHALL JMP model 1959 Super Lead produced from the late Sixties through the early Seventies is a bucket list amp for many guitarists. This was the amp that defined the sounds of early hard rock, including Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton with Cream, Billy Gibbons with early ZZ Top, Van Halen, AC/DC, the Ramones (the latter two during their classic mid- to late-Seventies era) and countless other acts. Unfortunately, obtaining the real deal is an unlikely prospect for all. Still, for the most deep-pocketed collectors/hoarders, prices for an unmodified late-Sixties JMP 1959 Super Lead now exceeds \$10,000 — if you can even find one in the first place.

Over recent years, several boutique amps, pedals and amp modelers have done a damn good

job of duplicating the tones of a classic Marshall Super Lead, but the new UAFX '68 Lion Super Lead Amp pedal promises to deliver “the most authentic emulation of a 100-watt late-Sixties plexi head ever placed in a stompbox.” UA actually understates its ambitions as the Lion pedal provides emulations of three plexi Marshalls — a Super Lead, Super Bass and “Brown” (a not-so-subtle nod to Eddie Van Halen’s “holy grail” 1968 Super Lead with variac voltage reduction and bias adjustment).

The UAFX '68 Lion features the same form factor as the company's previous Dream, Ruby and Woodrow amp emulator pedals, providing six knobs, three toggle switches and two footswitches on its top panel. Here, the controls





mostly correspond with those found on a Marshall Super Lead: Volume I, Volume II, Bass, Middle, Treble, plus the addition of Output (overall volume level control). The lower three knobs double as Presence, Room and Boost controls when the center toggle is in the “Alt” position (normal controls are engaged in the toggle’s Amp setting). The Boost function combines emulation of an Echoplex EP-3 preamp with gain that increases up to the 10 o’clock position where the control adds a Boss GE-10 graphic EQ emulation midrange boost curve (for mid-1978 EVH live flavor).

The Cab toggle provides Dynamic Speaker Modeling emulations of 4x12 cabinets loaded with vintage Celestion 25-watt greenbacks, 30-watt greenbacks or a combination of two 25-watt greenbacks and two JBL D-120Fs that very likely was the combination Eddie Van Halen used when recording Van Halen’s debut album. Additional 1x12 EV, 2x12 Celestion G12M-65 Creambacks and 4x12 Celestion Vintage

30 models are available after registering the product. Speaker emulation can also be bypassed altogether. The toggle switch on the right engages Super Bass, Super Lead or Brown settings.

Other key features include mono/stereo ¼-inch inputs and outputs and a USB-C jack for downloading firmware updates via the UA Connect desktop computer app. The pedal communicates with a mobile iOS or Android device and the UAFX Control Mobile app via Bluetooth to provide access to deeper editing functions and access factory and artist presets.

Because Lion is a true amp emulator that also includes speaker emulation, it sounds best connected to a live mixing console or a digital audio recording interface. If you prefer to use it with a standard guitar amp, I recommend bypassing the Lion’s preamp section by plugging the Lion’s output into the amp’s effects loop return jack only and bypassing the speaker emulation.

Does Lion live up to its promise of

delivering the “most authentic emulation of a 100-watt late-Sixties plexi head ever”? For me, it’s a definitive “yes.” The tones are very harmonically rich, with roaring mid-range crunch, gut-walloping bass and crystalline, cutting treble, plus dynamic responsiveness and feel that is just like driving a plexi Super Lead flat out, but accessible at lower volume levels — and won’t cause permanent ear damage. Pardon my French, but this is “the shit.”

I did initially encounter a few glitches when switching between the preset and standard settings, but this was fixed with a firmware update (so make sure to always check for updates). The tone stack is truly a replica of that of a vintage Marshall, so it has the same limitations but also the same desirable sweet spots. One cool feature of note is that the Volume I and Volume II controls are simultaneously active, so the pedal functions like a Marshall head with a jumper cable connecting the treble and normal channels.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE
\$399
MANUFACTURER
Universal Audio,
uaudio.com

● **PROS:** Truly authentic emulations of three desirable circa 1968 Marshall plexi Super Lead/Bass amps; UAFX Control Mobile app makes it easy to download and store a wide variety of presets; cabinet emulation is spot on.

● **CONS:** Many users probably would prefer plate or hall reverb over the Room tone (ambient room-mic model); only one Preset sound is accessible (in addition to Live mode) via the pedal’s footswitches.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

The UAFX ‘68 Lion goes beyond its promise of providing the most authentic plexi tone from a pedal by providing emulation of three killer bucket list late-Sixties Marshall amps that players can enjoy at any volume level and for about the price of one new old stock Mullard EL34 tube.

Ernie Ball Music Man Luke 4 SSS

By Chris Gill

MUSIC MAN RELEASED its first Steve Lukather signature model — the Luke — back in 1994, and over the years the Luke model has evolved with various Luke II and Luke III models. To celebrate the Luke's 30th anniversary, Music Man has introduced the Luke 4 30th anniversary model with an HSS pickup configuration similar to the original, plus new Luke 4 HH and SSS models. The 30th anniversary version is a hot-rodged super strat, but the SSS model we reviewed is more of a “superb” strat, based on the traditional triple-single-coil Fifties standard solidbody that guitarists all know and love, but packed with a ton of high-performance upgrades, refinements and modifications.

The Luke 4 SSS has a figured roasted maple neck that has become a regular feature of Music Man guitars for a while now, made to specifications that include a 25.5-inch scale length, 12-inch radius and 1 5/8-inch nut width. The rosewood fingerboard sports 22 low profile, wide nickel frets. A new twist is that the alder body is roasted as well to provide the lighter weight and resonance of a vintage guitar that has naturally dried over several decades. The body is finished with high-gloss polyester in a selection of Scoville Red, Diesel Blue or Bareback (natural) color options, while the neck is protected by a gunstock oil and hand-rubbed special wax blend finish.

The newly designed Music Man HT single-coil pickups were developed using technology derived from the technology behind the creation of Ernie Ball's Cobalt and M-Steel strings, and they are voiced to provide outstanding clarity at high output while maintaining body at lower volume levels. Controls consist of a five-way blade pickup selector and master tone and volume controls, the latter featuring a push/push function that activates a built-in

preamp boost circuit. Boost is set at the factory to +12dB, but a trim pot inside the control cavity allows users to adjust output between 0 and +20dB. Internal trim pots also enable adjustment of silent circuit's hum reduction and the balance between the blade position 1/3/5 bridge, middle and neck single-coil settings and the 2/4 parallel bridge/middle and neck/middle settings.

The vintage-style tremolo has bent steel saddles and is set up in a floating configuration. The spring tension from the factory is somewhat light, resulting in buzzy trem warble when the strings are aggressively snapped, but extra springs are provided for players who prefer less buzz. The trem arm is a little slim and light for my preference, but it seems suitably sturdy and solid.

Most Strat connoisseurs should find that the pickups deliver the tonal qualities of their dreams. The mid-range dip is right in the sweet spot to accentuate percussive treble snap and bouncy bass while still providing full body and depth. All of the classic Strat tones are here, including Clapton, Hendrix, Knopfler and SRV and even Beck, with the tone knob rolled down about 3/4, and you can punch it up to searing Luke leads with the preamp boost engaged.

At \$3,199, the Luke 4 SSS is not cheap, but most players would need two or three Strats to cover all of the tonal nuances and character the Luke 4 provides. The materials and immaculate craftsmanship, refined playability, balance and comfort and tech upgrades like the preamp boost and adjustable silent circuit also significantly up the ante in the model's overall value. For players whose ax of choice is of the triple single-coil variety, the Luke 4 SSS is worth the investment as it delivers classic Strat tones with modern refinement along with playability that will satisfy discriminating players for a lifetime.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$3,199

MANUFACTURER:

Music Man,
music-man.com

● **PROS:** HT single-coil pickups deliver highly desirable classic tones; adjustable Silent Circuit ensures noise-free performance; preamp boost output is adjustable up to +20dB.

● **CONS:** Tremolo arm may feel light to players used to heavier arms; plus it's expensive.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Music Man Luke 4 SSS is truly a “superb” strat packed with innovations and refinements of every detail to provide a wealth of first-class tones and true pro performance.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$487.49

MANUFACTURER:

Stage Right by Monoprice,
monoprice.com

● **PROS:** Quality components and premium tubes, high-grade transformers, housed in a rugged, road-worthy chassis; 100 watts of power; two-channel clean/drive design with reverb, effects loop; transparent, high headroom cleans; hard and heavy crunch with sustain; huge bang for the buck.

● **CONS:** Drive channel voicing leans more toward hard rock and '80s metal rather than modern metal chug; footswitch has a slight crossfade hiccup when changing between clean to drive channel.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** For a 100-watt amplifier head with tube-driven power, the Stage Right by Monoprice SB100 punches above its weight in affordability, feature-rich versatility and crushing tones.

Stage Right by Monoprice SB100 100-Watt All-Tube Two-Channel Guitar Amplifier with Reverb

By Paul Riario

▶ THERE HAVE BEEN many overseas brands that have been churning out guitar gear in the last few years that have been astonishingly comparable to many legacy name brands. From pedals to multi-effects modelers or from amps to guitars, the overwhelming influx of gear has been startling, to say the least. The one recurrent question has always been, “Is it good?” I have to admit that it’s not only good; a great deal of it has been great.

Take, for example, the Stage Right by Monoprice 30-watt tube amplifier and 1x12 speaker cabinet bundle that I had reviewed a few years ago, which, for less than \$600, far exceeded my expectations in sound and construction. Monoprice, the massive online consumer electronics retailer, boasts an enormous pro audio division and musical instruments brand known as Stage Right by Monoprice. This time

around, they offered me the opportunity to check out their fire-breathing SB100 100-Watt All-Tube Two-Channel Guitar Amplifier with Reverb. Once again, I’ll go out on a limb to say the SB100 head is flat-out fantastic for a tube-driven 100-watt head that you can snag for less than \$500 and that delivers impressive clean and high-gain tones.

By all appearances, the SB100 looks rather commonplace and very much like an import amplifier head, covered in black tolex with white piping, contrasting white control knobs and pedestrian “SR/Stage Right” plastic faceplate. That’s not necessarily a knock at it, it’s more about stating the obvious, and to be frank, many noteworthy-brand amplifiers are being made overseas anyway. But regardless of its generic looks, the SB100’s pro-quality build emerges once you start peeking around back at its output section; it’s comprised of a quartet of premium JJ Electronic 6L6G power tubes, four 12AX7 and one 12AT7 preamp tubes, a pair



of high-grade transformers, and capacitors and resistors to deliver 100 watts of power. It's all cleanly presented in a solid-built chassis with tidy connections, a channel/reverb footswitch jack, five impedance-matching speaker outputs and an effects loop. Also, considering the SB100's very literal model name, there are no surprises here — it's exactly a straightforward, no-nonsense two-channel amp design with reverb. Moreover, it's loaded with modern features many players require, like independent volume and EQ controls for each channel, master volume, reverb and presence controls, channel select switch, channel/reverb LED indicators, a bright switch on the clean channel, separate gain control on the drive channel and High and Low 1/4-inch inputs. An optional two-button footswitch is available to toggle between channels and on/off for reverb.

I'd like to preface that it wasn't until my early twenties that I bought my first 100-watt tube amplifier and here, for roughly the same price I paid for a solid-state combo when I was a teenager, the SB100 makes me shake my head at how powerfully good it sounds. If you're a pedal guy, I'd pick it up just for its incredibly high headroom clean channel that effectively translates your drive and time-based effects the way they're meant to be heard. And it's a loud sparkling clean — where I had the level control

nearly maxed out, and chords remained firmly defined without getting flabby. On the flip side, the effects loop is also wonderfully transparent to run your effects through without any tone-sucking loss. The bright switch is a necessary inclusion for the clean channel; however, for my purposes, I found it to be a little too cuttishly bright.

Moving over to the drive channel, I will say that its voicing will be a matter of preference, but with some basic sculpting using the EQ and Gain controls, you can easily dial in more aggressive or classic tones. Make no mistake, it's a super crunchy channel with a hi-mid EQ slice that's meant to appeal to both metal and hard rock players. It has plenty of bark, reminiscent of Eighties heavy metal and to an extent, hair metal, and it nails that dirty sound with a hair-raising, heavy crunch. I found if I scooped the mids way down — and I mean way down — I was able to achieve the kinda chug many modern players would approve of. It's not perfect, but I'll assume if you add some drive pedals of choice here, you'll achieve many of the tones you're looking for. And despite that I may have inadvertently positioned the SB100 as an affordable, entry-level head, by any stretch, it's still an exceptional amplifier with modern features and tone that can handle any gig.

THE SPECS



- **TYPE:** Tube guitar amplifier
- **NUMBER OF CHANNELS:** 2, Clean and Overdrive
- **OUTPUT:** 100 Watts
- **INPUTS:** 2x 1/4" Guitar (High and Low), 1x 1/4" Effects Return, 1x 1/4" Foot Switch
- **OUTPUTS:** 3x 1/4" Speaker (1x 8Ω, 2x 16Ω, and 1x 16Ω), 1x 1/4" Line Out, 1x 1/4" Effects Send
- **PREAMP TUBES:** 4x 12AX7 (V1-V3), 1x 12AT7 (V4)
- **POWER TUBES:** 4x 6L6G
- **EFFECTS:** Spring Reverb
- **EQ (DEDICATED PER CHANNEL):** Bass, Middle, Treble
- **CABINET MATERIAL:** MDF
- **DIMENSIONS (WxDxH):** 24.41" x 10.24" x 10.24"
- **WEIGHT:** 34.16 lbs.

Buzz Bin Revv Amplification Tilt Boost

By Paul Riario

▶ **NOT ALL BOOST** pedals are created equal. Of course, they're great for boosting volume to be heard, but some can do more than just increase your signal. For example, some boosts can start clipping into juiced-up drive if you turn them up enough, while others can be tailored to enhance your overall tone with onboard EQ. What if I told you Revv Amplification's Tilt Boost can do all that and more? Session guitarist extraordinaire and influencer Shawn Tubbs stumbled into something good when he partnered with Revv Amplification to release his signature Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive pedal, which featured dual footswitchable overdrive and boost. What happened next was seemingly unexpected; Tubbs discovered that many players who had been using the pedal had become enamored with its boost side, with some foregoing the overdrive altogether and having the boost always on because of its tone-shaping abilities. Well, if all you need is boost and so much more, Revv Amplification has got you covered with the Tilt Boost, which is essentially the extracted boost portion of the Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive, but with additional tone-shaping capabilities that push it far beyond other mere boosts.

Much like the Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive, the Tilt Boost's simplified control set is divided between its boost and Tilt EQ functions. On the left side, the Boost control adjusts output level and the two-position drive switch activates boost (up to 20dB of clean boost) or engages touch-sensitive clipping (fat, medium-gain overdrive). For the right side, the Tilt EQ control simultaneously attenuates bass and treble frequencies by adding more fullness and low-end clarity while cutting high end as you move it clockwise, and introducing chime and brightness if you dial it counter-clockwise. The three-position Tight switch is a clever addition for swiftly attenuating the low-end content independent of the Tilt EQ control with a flick of the switch. In other words, set the Tilt EQ where it sounds best and, depending on your pick attack and amp tone, you have three settings to refine bass response (if you need it) without changing your tone stack. The pedal is true-bypass, featuring top-mounted 1/4-inch jacks, and operates with a 9VDC center negative external power supply only.



Shawn Tubbs describes the Tilt Boost as a means to “wake up” your existing rig, and I think that’s an apt characterization for this pedal. It’s a wonderfully refined boost pedal that, once engaged, makes your rig more “alive” and present. Needless to say, where you place it in your signal chain makes a noticeable difference because its utility can be applied in several ways — as a true tone-shaper for your sound, to push an amp, or as a transparent, clean boost. As an “always-on” pedal, the Tilt Boost adds analog liveliness to your rig without altering your base tone — even if you’re using modelers. I found it can also kick up some missing frequencies or tighten bass response where you need it, and most audibly, accentuate your pick attack. If you’re looking for a little more edge from your amplifier, engaging the Drive switch and pushing the boost introduces a harmonically rich overdrive for fattening up leads. For me, I use boost pedals to make myself heard by increasing volume, and I’ve always found that most boost pedals tend to introduce a strident high-end once you engage them. What’s great is the Tilt Boost allows you to tailor that boosted volume with its Tilt EQ control that tames unwanted frequencies and smooths out any harshness so that your solo tones don’t end up sounding piercing.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$169

MANUFACTURER:

Revv Amplification,
revvamplification.com

● **PROS:** Up to 20dB of transparent, clean boost; intuitive flexibility in shaping bass and treble response; organic medium-drive character in drive settings; compact design.

● **CONS:** Boost can sound squashed in extreme settings.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Revv Amplification Tilt Boost is essential for incrementally sculpting your boosted tones with clarity or as an “always-on” tone-shaping pedal that enhances any rig with touch-sensitivity and punch.

Squier Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster

By Chris Gill

TEMPTATION, THY NAME is Squier. Over the last few decades, Fender's Squier brand has blossomed from a line of low-budget entry-level models into an affordable series of instruments that serve the need of all walks of players from beginner to pro. Whereas Squier guitars often were a bit drab and ho-hum compared to genuine Fenders, today the brand offers models that are quite impressive, versatile and even sexy, like the new Squier Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster.

Squier's Paranormal series is the brand's more experimental line of guitars, offering features like custom pickup configurations and hybrid body and neck characteristics. The Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster is a great example of that mix-and-match aesthetic, featuring a Stratocaster-shaped poplar body with Custom Tele-style top and back binding and "slab" construction without contours plus a Tele-style pickguard. The bolt-on maple neck also has a Strat-style headstock and features a laurel fingerboard, 25.5-inch scale, 9.5-inch radius, C-shape profile and 21 narrow/tall frets.

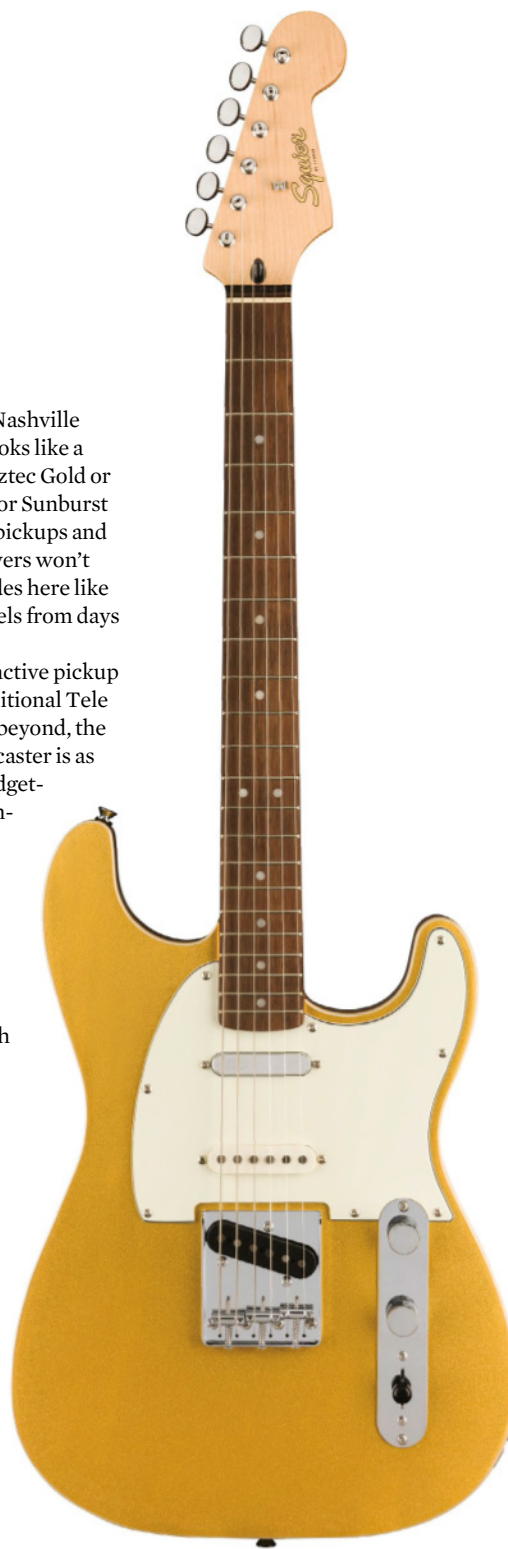
The Strat/Tele hybrid configuration really comes into play with the pickups. The single-coil bridge pickup is angled and mounted in a string-thru-body Tele-style bridge plate with three chrome barrel saddles; the neck pickup is a Tele-style neck single-coil with a chrome cover; the middle pickup is a Strat-style single-coil; and all three pickups feature alnico magnets. Controls are mounted on a Tele-style chrome control plate and consist of a Strat-style five-position blade pickups selector, master volume and master tone control that pulls up to engage the neck pickup when the blade is in position 1 (bridge, for a Tele-style bridge/neck combination) or position 2 (bridge/middle, to provide a custom setting with all three pickups).

Although the Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster costs less than \$500, it looks like a million bucks thanks to its dazzling Aztec Gold or warm, sophisticated Chocolate 2-Color Sunburst finish options. The finish, hardware, pickups and construction are all impressive — players won't need to budget extra bucks for upgrades here like was often necessary with Squier models from days of yore.

Providing seven different and distinctive pickup settings that encompass all of the traditional Tele tones, Strat "in between" sounds and beyond, the Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster is as appealing to gigging pros as it is to budget-conscious beginners looking for a competitive advantage. The pickups are dialed in for traditional Tele twang that shifts to gritty growl through an amp driven into overdrive. The tones are expressive and aggressive and downright satisfying.

The playability and construction's attention to detail are right in line with production models coming off of the Fender line. Our example was perfectly set up and even came out of the box perfectly in tune. Even the tuners have the same smooth feel and solid stability of those found on more expensive models.

If you've been feeling gear acquisition pangs but inflation has got you down, the Fender Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster has everything a guitarist needs to cure the new guitar blues. And with the versatility it offers you may not feel the need to get another new guitar for quite some time.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$429.99

MANUFACTURER:

Fender,
fender.com

● **PROS:** Super versatile hybrid Tele/Strat pickup wiring with seven combinations; very affordable; deluxe-looking finish options.

● **CONS:** The poplar body and laurel neck aren't the most exotic tonewoods, but you can't beat the value.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Squier Paranormal Custom Nashville Stratocaster provides maximum bang and twang for your buck with its totally deluxe looks, outstanding playability and versatile pickup wiring configuration.



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2024

SING THE SONG, PART 3

More on mimicking vocal melodies

IN THE LAST two columns, we investigated some ways to emulate the phrasing and articulation of vocal melodies on the guitar, using the Elmore James blues classic “It Hurts Me Too,” as a guide. This month, we’ll continue to explore this single-note soloing tactic, this time with a look at Howlin’ Wolf’s vocal phrasing on his classic track “Commit a Crime.”

Singers often utilize seamless pitch glides between notes. Once landing on a specific pitch, vibrato is often applied to it, to add expressiveness. As I pointed out previously, one of the great things about the guitar is that it enables the player to emulate these vocal effects via the use of string bends, slides, and vibratos. Many of the greatest guitarists mastered this technique. Blues giants B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King and Albert Collins all display a deeply expressive vocal-like quality in their single-note solos, as do Duane Allman, Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck and many other legendary players.

A great way to develop this technique is to mimic the vocal phrasing and articulation of a specific artist and song. Howlin’ Wolf was one of the most expressive blues singers ever, utilizing unusual phrasing and inventive melodies with his deeply powerful voice on every track he recorded.

“Commit a Crime,” also known as “I’m Leavin’ You,” a.k.a. “What a Woman!” is a song Wolf recorded a few times throughout his career. A fan favorite is the one he cut for his 1971 album *The London Howlin’ Wolf Sessions*, which features Eric Clapton, Hubert Sumlin, Charlie Watts, Bill Wyman and Steve Winwood. On this version of the song, Wolf alternates his four-bar vocal phrases between a two-bar primary guitar lick. The example presented in this lesson follows this format. As illustrated in **FIGURE 1**, a primary lick is set up in bars 1–4. This riff is based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) with the inclusion of the major 3rd, G#, and the major 6th, C#. The addition of the major 3rd pulls the lick closer to the song’s E7 tonality, and the inclusion of the 6th adds depth to the implied harmony.

Bars 5 and 6 introduce the “vocal” melo-

FIG. 1 (E7)

Triplet Feel ♩ = ♩♩♩

dy. The line in bar 5 is played in a “three-on-two” rhythmic phrasing, with three evenly spaced notes sounded across beats 1 and 2, as quarter-note triplets. The same approach is taken in beats 3 and 4. A similar rhythmic phrasing is used in bars 7, 11, 13, and 19.

All of these “vocal” licks are played low on the fretboard, with the open high E string utilized as a drone, which helps fill out the sound of each phrase. Hammer-ons, pull-offs, bends and slides are employed

throughout, to help deliver a sound close to that of Wolf’s voice.

After all of this “vocalizing,” I end the figure by sliding up to 12th position in bar 21, where I offer another approach to fortifying the rhythmic groove of the song. The figure wraps up in bars 23 and 24 with a fast 1st-position lick built from quick hammers, pulls and slides, along the lines of phrases heard in many solos by Jimi Hendrix, Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

GW associate editor Andy Aledort’s latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2024

SHOUT OUT

Tools of the Trade, Part 12, and how to play “I Want to Shout About It”

A **TRACK** I covered on my new album, *Blues Deluxe Vol. 2*, is “I Want to Shout About It,” originally recorded by one of my favorite guitarists, Ronnie Earl. Ronnie recorded the song with [Ronnie Earl &] the Broadcasters for their 1990 album, *Peace of Mind*.

Ronnie plays in a traditional style that I refer to as “East Coast blues,” as exemplified by Ronnie, Duke Robillard and a few others. To me, it has a very specific vibe that’s predominantly a Fender Stratocaster sound. The guitar I’m using to play this month’s examples is the Howard A. Reed Stratocaster, which was built specifically for Howard in 1955 and is the earliest known black Strat in existence. At the time, Howard was the guitarist for Gene Vincent and the Blue Caps.

I first saw this guitar in 1988, when I was 11 years old. *Guitar World* featured it as the “Collector’s Choice” centerfold poster. I fell completely in love with this guitar and put the poster on my wall. I didn’t have *Sports Illustrated* models or Daisy Duke on my wall; I had guitar posters!

The first time I saw the guitar in person was in 2002, while getting a tour of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I freaked out and said, “I can’t believe I’m in the same room with this guitar!” The person giving the tour said, “You are one of the only people that even knows what this is,” and I said, “*Guitar World*, April 1988 — this is my dream Strat!”

Cut to 11 years later, Bill Blackburn, who bought it from Howard’s family in 1979 after Howard died, put the guitar up for sale at Gruhn’s in Nashville. I got a text from my friend Matt Koehler saying that this guitar was available. He earned the “most expensive text of the day” award!

It’s a November 1955 black Strat that weighs about nine pounds, which is rather heavy for a Strat. I called Gruhn’s, made the deal to buy it and picked it up on the day that I made my debut at Nashville’s Ryman Auditorium in 2013. That was a very special day, and it’s a special guitar because, for me, it represents my journey in music. When I was 11, I decided I wanted to be a guitar player and to try to make it in music, and this guitar represents my journey from back then until today.

FIG. 1 middle and neck pickups (toggle switch position 4)

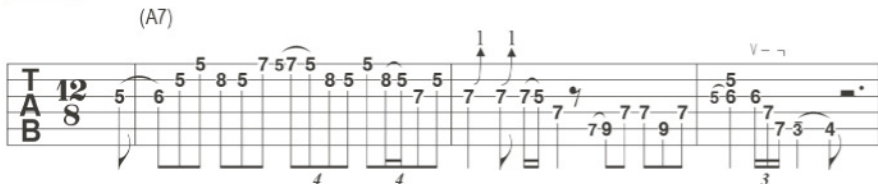


FIG. 2 (A7)

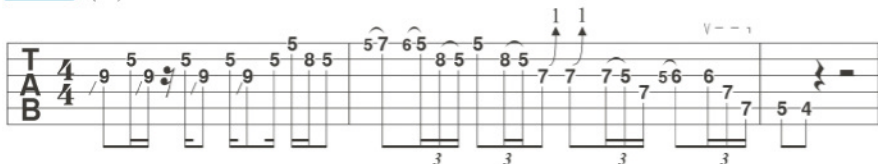


FIG. 3 F13/C E9 Eb9 (D7)

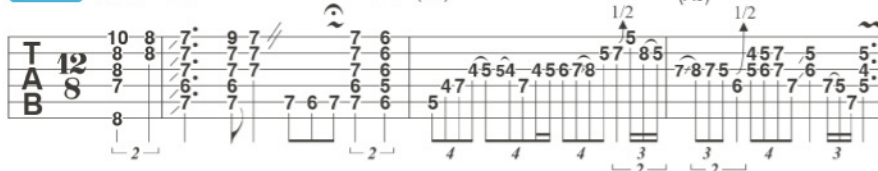
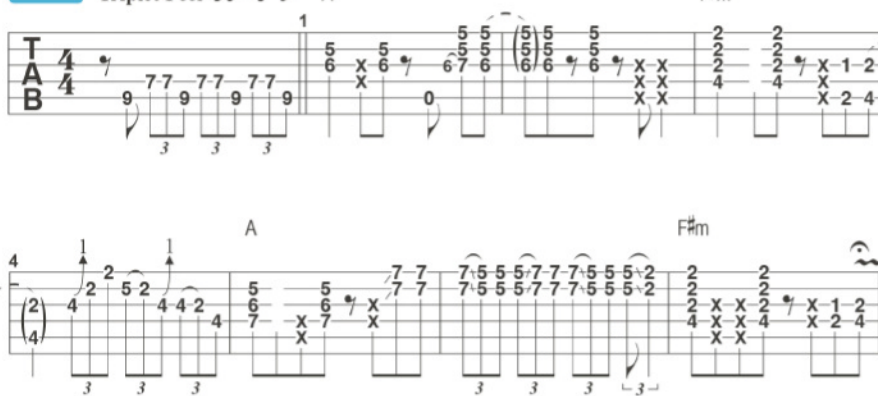


FIG. 4 Triplet Feel ♩ = ♩♩♩ A F#m



Ronnie Earl is a master of the Stratocaster, and likes to use the #4 position on the toggle switch, which is the sound of the neck and middle pickup together. **FIGURE 1** is a classic slow-blues type riff played in Ronnie’s style in the key of A.

Ronnie is a student of T-Bone Walker and utilizes phrases in T-Bone’s style, as exemplified in **FIGURE 2**. A riff I always steal is bar 2 of **FIGURE 3**: coming off the V (five)

chord, E7, in bar 1, I play a D7 arpeggio in bar 2 into more standard blues licks in A.

FIGURE 4 illustrates the beginning of “I Want to Shout About It.” After the one-bar pickup, the progression is two bars of A followed by two bars of F#m, with little licks added between the chords.

Next month I’ll be back with more on my approach to “I Want to Shout About It.” 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/march2024

NEXT LEVEL

Building a powerful arrangement, and how to play "Ghost of You," part 2

LAST MONTH, WE began exploring my tune "Ghost of You." This month, we'll look at the heavy chorus, interlude and second verse, presented here in **FIGURE 1**.

When we hit the chorus, there's an increase in *attitude*, with the heavy repeating riff that moves from a low G note on the 6th string's 3rd fret, which I pick with a downstroke and pull-off to the open low E, followed by E on the 4th string's 2nd fret, which I pick with an upstroke. To give this riff some power, I switch from my guitar's neck pickup to the bridge pickup and also engage heavier gain via my JHS AT+ boost/distortion pedal, used in conjunction with the Keeley Super AT Mod distortion pedal.

To me, this feels like a "Jimmy Page/Led Zeppelin"-type lick, with attention to articulation and the variations on subtle pinch harmonics that I can get to jump out as I pick the strings. Rhythmically, I try to add some "swing" to the riff, even though it's played over a straight rock beat. For example, at the end of bar 1, I add an upstroke on the open D and G strings on the last 16th of beat 4 to add a little noise and aggression to the riff. In bar 2, on the upbeat of beat 3, I add a quick hammer/pull between the low G and open E notes to propel the shift into the D chord.

In bar 4, I embellish this lick slightly, with sliding 4ths on the D and G strings that pull-off to the open strings; this functions as a sort of turnaround that takes us back to the top of the riff. And in bar 7, I add extra emphasis to the pick attack at the end of the phrase to sound a high pinch harmonic, à la Billy Gibbons. Oftentimes, I'll get a major 3rd pinch harmonic above the G note, B, and I'll bend that up a whole step or more.

Bar 8 ends with a transition riff on the low E string that carries us into the interlude. Following a bend and release on A at the 5th fret, I follow a low G with a slide up from A to B and a D, at the 5th fret on the A string, after which we arrive at the first bar of the interlude, in bar 9.

I built the interlude into the song to provide a transition from the heavy chorus before heading back into the verse figures. The interlude begins with a root-5th E5 dyad (E, B). This slides up to a D/F# dyad, and then the F# slides up one fret to G, forming

FIG. 1

ing a G5 chord. The D then hammers up to A, yielding D5.

The two-note root-5th idea continues through bars 11 and 12, and the interlude wraps up with phrases based on the E Aeolian mode (E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D).

When I restate the verse melody in bar 17, I embellish it by first adding a variation in bar 18 into bar 19. Once we hit bar 20, I introduce a completely new melodic theme that pushes the intensity of the tune, in order to carry us back to the heavy chorus.

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. Check out his new instructional course, "The Art of Story Telling."



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/march2024

CUFF 'EM

Applying “handcuffs” as a soloing device

FOR THE LAST couple of months, we’ve been talking about how I employ repetition as one of the three tools I like to use in order to strengthen my “melodic narrative” in the development of an improvised solo. The other two tools are what I like to call “handcuffs,” where I force myself to play within a specific position, and “call and response,” where I will play a phrase and then “answer” it with the subsequent phrase. This month, let’s apply the “handcuffs” approach.

One of the things I really like about these three approaches is that, to me, it’s less about the specific notes and more about how to pull the listener in with a more thematic type of musical development.

With the handcuffs approach, I aim to paint myself into a musical corner and then try to find an interesting way out. I lock myself in a “box,” so to speak, meaning I limit myself to one area of the fretboard, and force myself to play a meaningful solo with very few options and variations in available information. For example, let’s say we’re playing a swinging blues solo in the key of A. In **FIGURE 1**, I play a full 12-bar solo without deviating from the A blues scale (A, C, D, E $\flat$, E, G) in 8th position, sticking with the top three strings only.

As you can see, I’ve painted myself into a corner by only having this small handful of notes and amount of “information” available, yet the solo tells a story through the use of similar melodic shapes and themes. Not only do I force myself to create something that sounds musical within that one area, I also highlight each chord change as it arrives, making clear reference to the IV (four) chord, D7, and the V (five), E7, in bars 5 and 9. By limiting myself to that little box, I’m forced to strengthen my narrative drive. Then, when I open up the whole fretboard, I’ll have more tools at hand to push the story forward.

Once you’ve set the precedent of improvising an entire chorus in one spot, a great idea is to then move to another spot and continue with the same “handcuffs” mindset.

In **FIGURE 2**, I play another full chorus on a standard blues form, but this time I’m playing within the 10th position “B.B. box,” named after blues legend B.B. King and his

FIG. 1 Triplet Feel ♩ = $\frac{1}{4}$ (A7)

FIG. 2 Triplet Feel ♩ = $\frac{1}{4}$ (A7)

preference for playing in this position, with the root note sounded on the B string, fretted with the index finger.

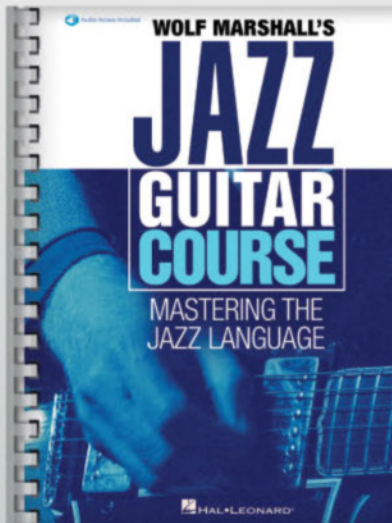
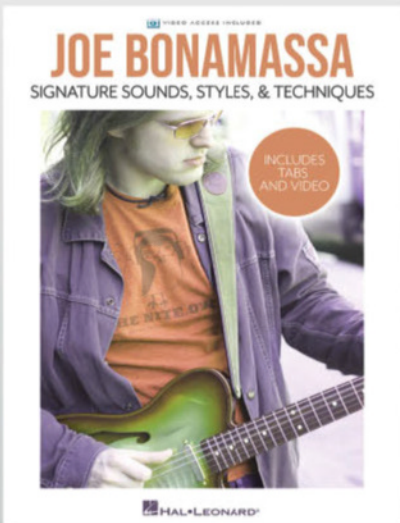
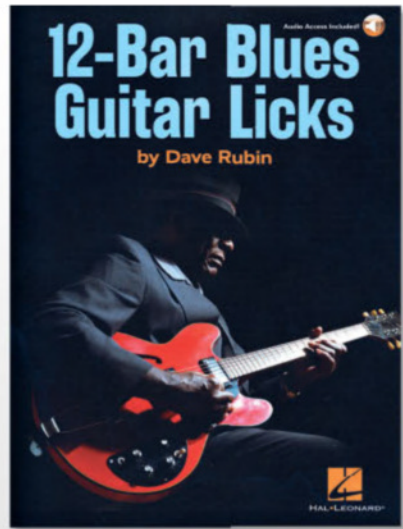
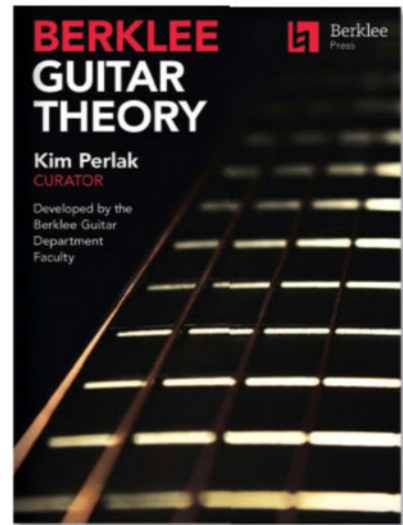
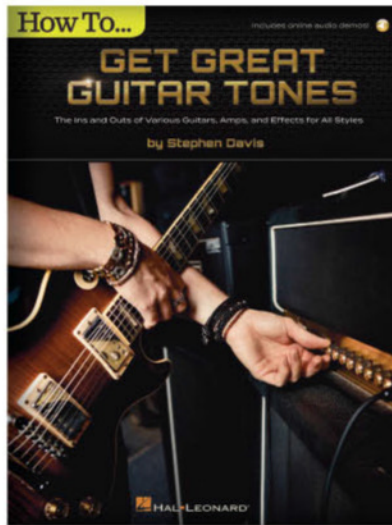
Once again, I set up a melodic theme in bar 1 and then subtly develop it with slight melodic variations, telling a musical story as the solo progresses through the 12-bar

form. When I reach the IV chord, D7, in bar 5, and the V chord, E7, in bar 9, I tailor the line so that it will allude to these changes in a musical way.

Now that you have the idea, try applying this type of “handcuffs” approach when devising solo explorations of your own.

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-round tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

"DON'T BACK DOWN"

Mammoth WVH



GIFTED AND TALENTED multi-instrumentalist Wolfgang Van Halen shines on this well-conceived and -produced modern rock song that fea-

tures his myriad talents and sole duties as songwriter, arranger, singer, bassist, drummer and, of course, guitar player.

Set to a head-banging hard rock shuffle groove — based on an undercurrent of eighth-note triplets and swinging eighth notes — the song is built around a suite of catchy drop-D-style riffs, with easily fretted and quickly shiftable one-finger power chords and single notes played high up on the neck. Many of the riffs “bounce” off the open 6th string, with notes fretted as high as the 18th fret, such as during sections G and H, which creates interestingly angular wide intervallic jumps between the open low D and the fretted notes. Combined with a liberal use of pull-offs and hammer-ons, these riffs are fun and for the most part delightfully easy to play.

There are, however, some quick and potentially tricky position shifts in certain parts, such as in bar 12, where you need to move from the 10th fret on the 6th string down to the 5th fret. While it's tempting to grab the low G note with your index finger, as it's the closest digit, moving in that direction, you're better off using your middle finger to fret that note and also barre it across the 5th string. Doing so will then enable you to hammer-on to the 6th fret with your ring finger then reach down to the 3rd-fret F with your index finger without having to shift again. This needed fingering becomes obvious later in the song, during the outro, in bars 83-86, where Wolfgang repeats the melodic idea a bunch of times.

Another quick, precise shift is required for the cascading triplets lick in bar 51, where you need to go from the 10th-position D blues-scale box shape down to the 8th fret on the 5th string to grab the F note. After playing the second 12th-fret D on the 4th string at the end of beat 3, you'll want to displace the middle finger at the 11th fret on the 5th string with the ring finger. Then, on the following downbeat (bar 52), shift back up, then drop down again.

"DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT"

Eric Clapton



RECORDED LIVE IN 1992, this inspired, Chicago blues-style reading of Bob Dylan's celebrated folk song, set here in the key of F, features Eric Clap-

ton singing and going to town on his richly overdriven Fender Stratocaster. Backed by a “dream team” blues-rock rhythm section consisting of the one and only Booker T. Jones on organ and veteran sidemen, including Steve Cropper and G.E. Smith on guitars and Donald “Duck” Dunn on bass, Slowhand has a solid accompaniment for presenting his beefy version of the musical story and is obviously feelin' it here, playing with a fluent and relaxed yet aggressive touch and pouring out seemingly effortless streams of soulful 16th-note licks over the arrangement's medium-tempo $\frac{12}{8}$ groove.

Particularly noteworthy is the way Clapton, with impeccable timing, neatly interjects lead fills between his vocal phrases during the song's verses. Per his signature M.O., the guitarist makes great use of the key's parallel major and minor pentatonic scales — F major pentatonic (F, G, A, C, D) and F minor pentatonic (F, A $\flat$, B $\flat$, C, E $\flat$) — providing moments of both “light and shade” as the song progresses.

At the beginning of his main solo, at section G (bar 62), the guitarist starts out in 13th position, playing notes in an F major pentatonic box pattern before switching to F minor pentatonic licks in the same position. At the end of bar 65, Clapton moves up to the 18th position and proceeds to wail away in the so-called “B.B. box,” which is a widely used blues guitar fretboard pattern popularized by the legendary B.B. King and based on a major pentatonic shape centered around a 2nd-string root note, in this case, F. Interestingly, notice how, in bars 67, 69 and 70, Clapton reaches way up to A at the 22nd fret on that same string to perform lofty one-and-one-half-step bends up to C, in each case returning back to the aforementioned B.B. box. When performing these high bends, avoid the temptation to use your pinkie (for an easier stretch) and instead employ your more sure-footed ring finger, supported one fret below by the middle.

"FOLSOM PRISON BLUES"

Johnny Cash



PERFORMED FOR A lively audience of convicted criminals, at the very institution that inspired the song's lyrics, this rousing live version of Johnny Cash's hit

from over a decade earlier helped reignite the country singer and poet's flagging career and is widely regarded as the definitive and most enduringly popular rendition of the song.

Johnny was joined onstage that day by his longtime comrades the Tennessee Three, comprising Luther Perkins playing a Fender Esquire electric guitar, Marshall Grant on upright acoustic bass and W.S. Holland on drums. Perkins kicks off the song with its catchy, singable instrumental intro (Gtr. 1 part), with Johnny (Gtr. 2) and the rest of the band joining in on the downbeat of bar 1. Per his signature self-accompaniment style, Cash strums full open chords in the key of E on his Martin D-28 acoustic in a flowing eighth-note rhythm, mostly laying down a pattern of alternating low and high strings that's commonly referred to as either “boom-chick” or “boom-chick-a,” depending on the use of eighth notes on the second beat — the “chick-a” — which are strummed down-up. Note that Cash would habitually strum close to the guitar's neck, oftentimes over the higher frets, which produces a mellow, almost harp-like attack. Perkins, on the other hand, played mostly quarter notes throughout the song and employed a more conventional picking and strumming posture, closer to the bridge. He also palm muted his lower strings during the song's verses, keeping his twangy alternating bass notes subdued and crisp behind Johnny's vocals.

For his solo (section C), Perkins kept things simple and melodic, making tastefully effective use of repetition and development as he faithfully outlines the underlying chord progression. Notice how, over the A chord in bars 38-40, the guitarist makes convenient use of his open B and high E strings to provide musical cover as he stealthily shifts his fret hand up the neck to higher inversions of an A triad on the top three strings before seamlessly jumping back down to an open E chord grip in bar 41.

"DON'T BACK DOWN"

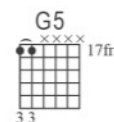
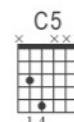
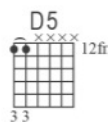
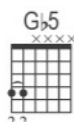
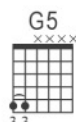
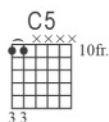
Mammoth WVH

As heard on **MAMMOTH WVH**

Words and Music by **WOLFGANG VAN HALEN** • Transcribed by **JEFF PERRIN**

All guitars are in Drop-D tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G, B, E).

Bass tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G).



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately Fast with Shuffle Feel ♩ = 140 (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

D5 N.C.

D5 N.C.

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen)

Tab for Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen):

1 3 17 0 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 5 6 5 3

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen)

Tab for Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen):

17

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen)

Rhy. Fill 1

Tab for Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) (Wolfgang Van Halen):

0

Bass (Wolfgang Van Halen)

Bass Fill 1

Tab for Bass (Wolfgang Van Halen):

0

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fill 1 twice (see bar 1)

5 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Tab for Gtrs. 1 and 2:

0 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 0 10 0 12 (12) 0 10 0 16 (16) 0 10 0 5 6 5 3

Bass

Tab for Bass:

0 5 6 5 6 5 3

Thrown aside now you know that you want to They don't know better anyway
 Time to go need to know that you're in Take a stand don't hesitate
 Now you're done I don't think that you need to They N.C. won't know

25 D5 N.C. G5 F5

*Omit notes on 3rd verse.

D Chorus (0:48, 1:23, 2:59)

Yeah Everybody's goin' crazy
 * N.C.(D5) (C5) F5 G $\flat$ 5 G5 (D5) (C5) F5 N.C.
 Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Rhy. Fill 1 third time (see bar 33)
 Gtrs. 1 and 2

29

*Chords in parentheses implied by bass guitar.
 Substitute Bass Bass Fill 2 third time (see bar 33)
 Bass

3rd time, skip ahead to **J** (bar 73) 1st time, go back to **B** (bar 17)

Yeah Won't be long until we're dead and gone
 N.C.(D5) (C5) F5 G $\flat$ 5 G5 (A $\flat$ 5) (G5) (F5) (C5) D5 N.C.
 Rhy. Fill 2

33

Bass Fill 2 Substitute Bass Fill 3 second time (see below bar 33)

Bass Fill 3 (1:35)
 N.C.(C5) D5 N.C.

Rhy. Fill 3 (2:09)
 Gtr. 2 (D) (F $\sharp$ /C)

E (1:37)

(w/half-time feel)

D5

C5

37^{*} Gtrs. 1 and 2

57

*Composite: Multiple guitars arr. for one part.

Bass

(end half-time feel)

D5

C5

N.C. (F5)

41 Gtrs. 1 and 2

The image shows a musical score for guitar and bass. The guitar part (Gtr. 3) is on a six-string staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of notes: a whole note chord (0 0 0), a half note chord (0 0 0), a quarter note chord (0 0 0), a quarter note chord (12 12), a quarter note chord (10 10), a quarter note chord (3), and a quarter note chord (3). The bass part (Bass) is on a four-string staff with a bass clef. It features a sequence of notes: a whole note chord (0 0 0), a half note chord (0 0 0), a quarter note chord (0 0 0), a quarter note chord (5), a quarter note chord (5), a quarter note chord (0 0 0), a quarter note chord (5), a quarter note chord (3), a quarter note chord (3), and a quarter note chord (3). The score includes various musical notations such as accidentals, dynamics, and articulation marks.

F (1:50)

Don't back down just don't back down

Don't back down just don't back down

(Hold

on)

N.C. (D)

(F#C)

45 let ⑥ ring

$$\text{N.H.} = \frac{1}{2}$$

let ⑥ ring

- , ^中Gtr. 2[illegible]

Don't back down just don't back down Don't back down just don't back down

(D)

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

49 let (6) ring

N.H.

1/2

pitch: C# F#

Gtr. 3

fdbk.

pitch: D

Bass

G (2:04)

(D)

*Gtrs. 1 and 2

N.H.

1/2

(F#/C)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 3 (see below bar 35)

53

*Gtr. 2 w/slight flanger effect (next 8 bars only).

Bass

pitch: F# C#

1/4

(D)

N.C.

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 (see bar 20)

end Riff A

57 Riff A

*N.H.

1/2

pitch: F# C#

*Substitute notes in parentheses when Riff A is repeated below.

1/4

H (2:18) (w/half-time feel)

(end half-time feel)

Don't back down just don't back down

Don't back down just

don't back down

(D)

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Riff A (see bar 57)

61 Gtr. 3

1/2

Bass

1/4

goin'

crazy

Yeah

D5

C5

F5

N.C.

D5

C5

F5

G♭5 G5 D5

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 3 twice (see bar 75)

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 3a twice (see bar 75)

77 Gtrs. 1 and 2

77 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

Won't be long until

we're

dead

and

dead and gone

(A♭5)

(F5)

D5

(C5) D5

G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

81 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Gtr. 3

Bass

2nd time: Dead and gone

N.C.

D5

C5

F5

D5

85

*Gtr. 2 plays bottom note only.

(pick scrape)

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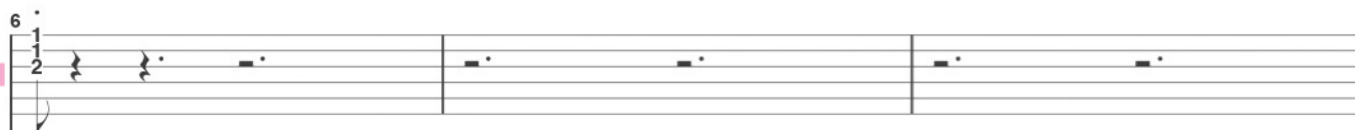
Words and Music by **BOB DYLAN** • Transcribed by **JEFF PERRIN**

B 1st Verse (0:16)

Ain't no use to sit and wonder why babe

It don't matter anyhow

F A D7 B_b



Rhy. Fig. 1

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

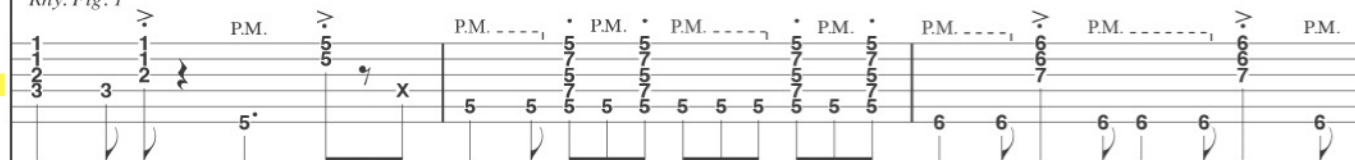
P.M.

P.M.

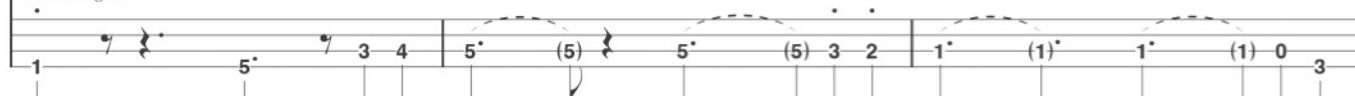
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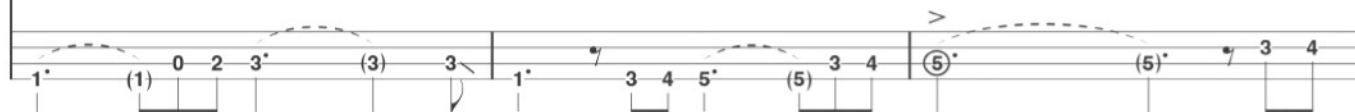
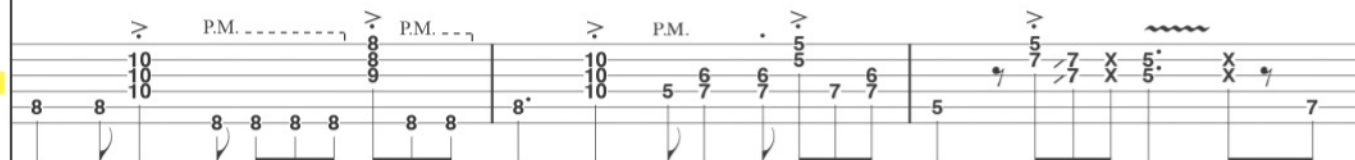
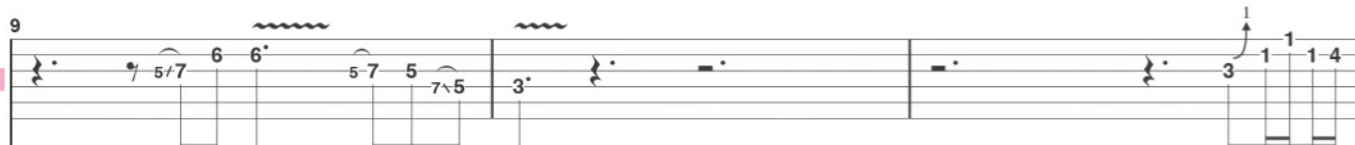


Bass Fig. 1



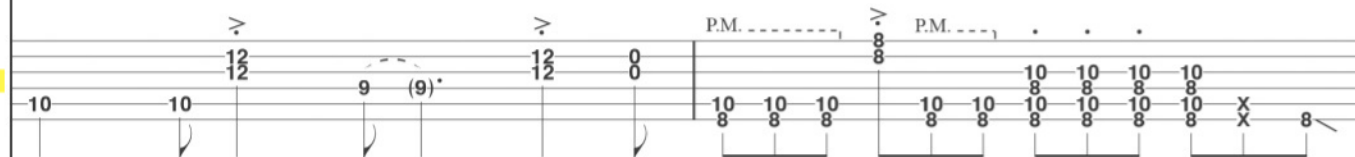
Ain't no use to sit and wonder why babe

F C F A D



If you don't know by now

G C C7sus4



When your rooster crows

at the break of dawn

Look out your window baby

14

F

B $\flat$

P.M.

I'll be gone

You're the reason

I've been travelin' on

Gadd9

F

A $\flat$ 7 A7

Dm

C

B $\flat$ B6($\flat$ 5)

17

Don't think twice

it's all right

N.C.(F)

(C)

(F)

C7

20

N.C.(F)

(C)

(F)

C7

P.M.

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1

C (1:08)

Chords: F5, A $\flat$ 7 A7, Dm, C, B $\flat$, B($\flat$ 5)

22

Rhy. Fig. 2

Bass Fig. 2

Chords: F, C, F, C9

24

P.M. (Palm Mute)

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

D 2nd Verse (1:21)

It ain't no use in turnin' on your light babe

Light I never knew

Chords: F, A7, D9, B $\flat$, C6

26

I'm on the dark side

you would do or say

We never did too much

[illegible]

talking anyway Don't think twice it's all right
 Dm C B $\flat$ B($\flat$ 5) F5 C9 F N.C.(C9)

39

E (2:13)

F5 A $\flat$ 7 A7

Gr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 w/ad lib variation (see bar 22)

Gr. 1

42

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 w/ad lib variation (see bar 22)

44

F 3rd Verse (2:25)

It ain't no use in callin' out my name babe

Like you never did before

F A D7
Gr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)

46

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)

Ain't no use in callin' out my name babe

49

Lord I can't hear you anymore

I'm thinkin' and a-wanderin'

52

all the way down the road

I once loved a woman

a child I'm told

B $\flat$

Gadd9

55

Gave her my heart but she wanted my soul Lord

Don't think twice it's all right

F

A $\flat$ 7 A7

Dm

C

B $\flat$ B6($\flat$ 5)

N.C. (F)

(C)

(F)

C7

58

G Guitar Solo (3:18)

F

A

D7

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)

62

*Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)*B $\flat$

F

C

64

F

A

D

66

G

C

C7sus4

68

F

70

H 4th Verse (4:09)

Walkin' down that long lonesome road babe

where I'm bound I can't tell

F A D7 B $\flat$ F C
 Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)
 78
 Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 6)

Goodbye's too good a word babe

So I'll just say fare thee well

I ain't sayin' you treated me unkind

You could have done better babe but I don't mind

The musical notation for the guitar solo in 'The Sound of Silence' is shown across three systems. The first system is in the key of F major, starting at measure 86. It features a wavy line indicating a vibrato on the first note (F), followed by a series of notes and rests. The second system is in the key of Bb major, continuing the melody with various fingerings and a triplet. The third system is in the key of Gadd9, showing the final notes of the solo with fingerings and a wavy line.

You just kinda wasted

my precious time

Oh but don't

The first system of the musical score for 'The Sound of Silence' is shown. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked 'Ad libitum'. The first measure contains a whole note chord of F major (F, A, C) with a 1/2 note value. The second measure contains a whole note chord of A7 (A, C, E, G). The third measure contains a whole note chord of Dm (D, F, A). The fourth measure contains a whole note chord of C (C, E, G). The fifth measure contains a whole note chord of Bb (Bb, D, F). The sixth measure contains a whole note chord of B6(5) (B, D, F, A, C). The notation includes a wavy line above the first measure, a dashed line above the second measure, and a solid line above the third measure. The notes are written on a five-line staff.

1

1

1

"FOLSOM PRISON BLUES" (LIVE, 1968)

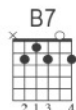
Johnny Cash

As heard on **AT FOLSOM PRISON**

Words and Music by JOHN R. CASH • Transcribed by HEMME LUTTJEBOER and JIMMY BROWN

All guitar parts are performed with a capo at the 1st fret and sound in the key of F, one half step higher than written.

All guitar tablature positions and chord shapes are relative to the capo, meaning "+1."



(0:05)

A Intro (0:06)

Country "train beat," "in 2" ♩ = 114

Hello, I'm Johnny Cash

1. I

Chord names in brackets indicate concert-key harmony

Gr. 1 (clean elec.)

Gr. 2 (acous.)

N.C. (B) B7 E

N.C. *[(C)] [C7] [F]

Bass (upright arr. for elec.)

B Verses (0:10, 0:34, 1:22, 2:09)

(1.) hear the train a-comin' It's rollin' 'round the bend And I ain't seen the sunshine since
(2.) was just a baby my mama told me "Son Always be a good boy Don't
(3.) bet there's rich folks eatin' in a fancy dinin' car They're prob'ly drinkin' coffee And
(4.) freed me from this prison If that railroad train was mine I bet I'd move it on a little

E

P.M. -----

5

*Rhy. Fig. 1

[F]

*Bass Fig. 1

*w/slight variations on repeats

(1.) I don't know when I'm stuck in Folsom Prison and time keeps draggin'
 (2.) ever play with guns But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him
 (3.) smokin' big cigars Well I know I had it comin' I know I can't be
 (4.) farther down the line Far from Folsom Prison That's where I want to

A

P.M. 11

[Bb]

(1.) on But that train keeps a-rollin'
 (2.) die When I hear that whistle blowin'
 (3.) free But those people keep a-movin'
 (4.) stay And I'd let that lonesome whistle

B7

P.M. 17

[F] [C7]

1. 4th time, skip ahead to **D** (bar 51) tone

(1.) on down to San An -
 (2.) I hang my head and
 (3.) and that's what tor - tures
 (4.) blow my blues a -

E

E

P.M. 23

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1

[F] [F]

E
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 5)
Gtr. 1

Out. 1

29. 9 7 10 7 10 (10) 7 (7) 8 9 7 10 7 10 (10) 8

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 5)

[illegible][illegible]

(1st time) **Sooey!**

[illegible]

Go back to **B** Verse (bar 5)

4. Well if they

[illegible]

E **Outro** (2:33)

way

E

Gtr. 1

P.M. -

51

[illegible]

Gtr. 2

[illegible]

[F]

Bass

[illegible]

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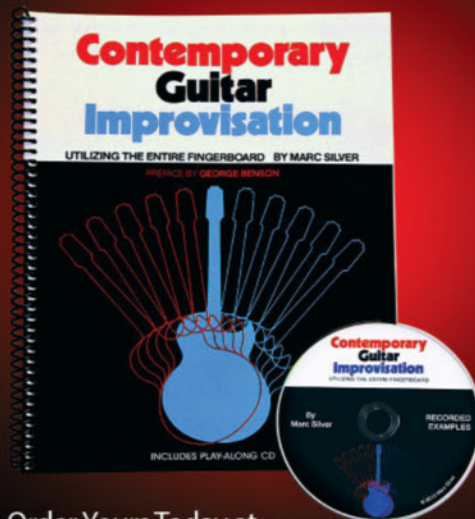
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C. 1958-PRESENT GIBSON ES-335

CATEGORY: SEMI-HOLLOW ELECTRIC GUITAR

DURING TED McCARTY'S tenure as president of Gibson from 1950 through 1966, the company developed some of the greatest and most enduring electric guitar designs of all time. In fact, literally every electric model Gibson offers today was designed by McCarty and his team during this golden era, including the Explorer, Firebird, Flying V, Les Paul and SG. These are all timeless models, but McCarty's semi-hollowbody design for the ES-335 and its numerous variants may be his greatest achievement of all time.

Gibson introduced the ES-335 — the music industry's very first semi-hollow electric model — in 1958, only six short years after the company's first solidbody model, the Les Paul, made its debut. The 335 was a natural progression of ideas sparked by input from players, who wanted a “best of both worlds” instrument that combined the best features of solidbody and hollowbody electrics, namely the former's ability to be amplified to generous volume levels without feedback and the latter's warm, round tones and acoustic-like resonance. Gibson's thinline models like the Byrdland introduced in 1955 [as seen on page 68] were a first step toward this goal, but the semi-hollow ES-335 was the ultimate refinement and, as a result, became an iconic electric guitar model.

The 335's key feature is a solid block of maple extending through the body underneath the strings from the neck joint to the tail block, providing a truly solid center. This block is encased inside a slim hollow body, dividing it into two resonant chamber “wings” on either side of the strings. A generous double cutaway design allows easy access all the way up the neck to the 22nd fret, something even the “radical” new Fender Stratocaster model didn't quite offer back in the day. The crowning touch was a pair of humbucking pickups, which had just started appearing on Gibson guitars around this time.

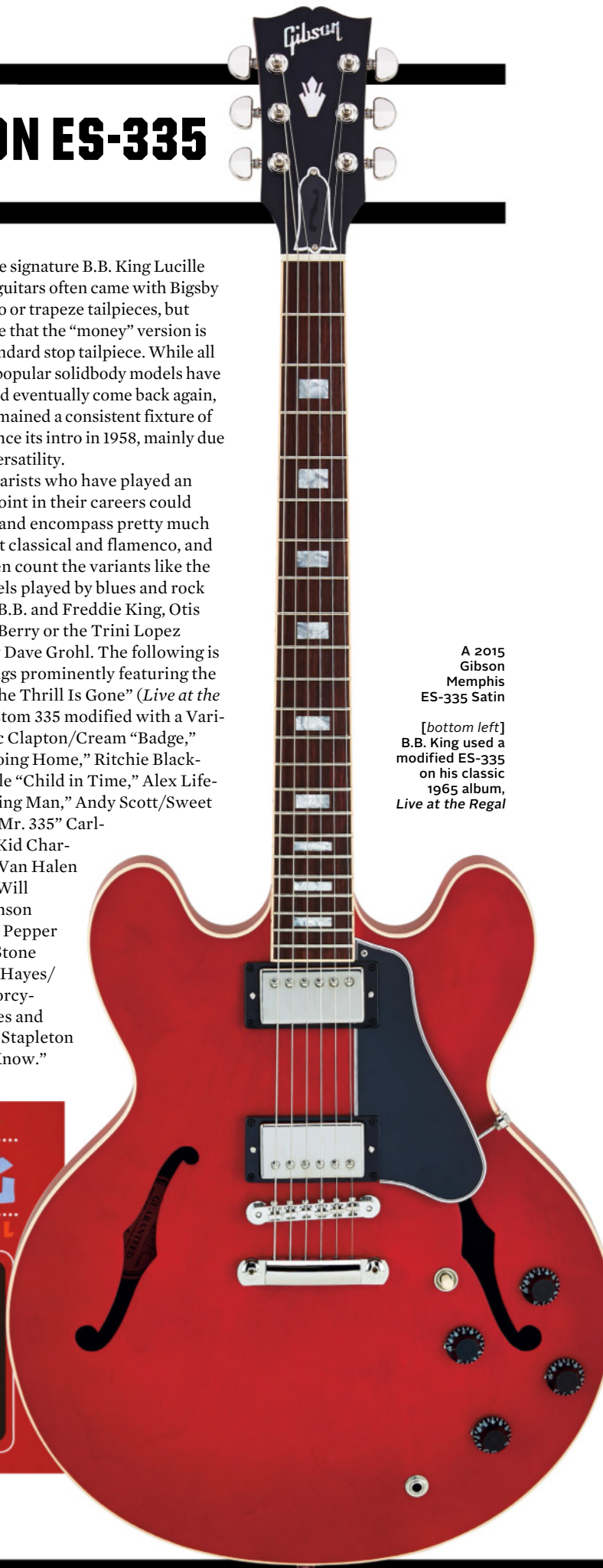
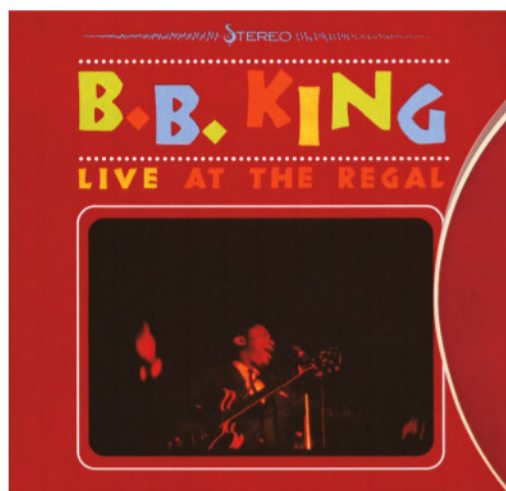
The 335 became the blueprint for several successful variants, like the fancier ES-345 and ES-355, one of two Trini Lopez models introduced in the mid-Sixties

and much later the signature B.B. King Lucille model. Early 335 guitars often came with Bigsby or Maestro vibrato or trapeze tailpieces, but most players agree that the “money” version is the one with a standard stop tailpiece. While all of Gibson's most popular solidbody models have come and gone and eventually come back again, the ES-335 has remained a consistent fixture of its product line since its intro in 1958, mainly due to its incredible versatility.

The list of guitarists who have played an ES-335 at some point in their careers could fill several pages and encompass pretty much every style except classical and flamenco, and that wouldn't even count the variants like the ES-345/355 models played by blues and rock 'n' roll icons like B.B. and Freddie King, Otis Rush and Chuck Berry or the Trini Lopez model favored by Dave Grohl. The following is a select list of songs prominently featuring the 335: B.B. King “The Thrill Is Gone” (*Live at the Regal*, using a custom 335 modified with a Vari-tone switch), Eric Clapton/Cream “Badge,” Alvin Lee “I'm Going Home,” Ritchie Blackmore/Deep Purple “Child in Time,” Alex Lifeson/Rush “Working Man,” Andy Scott/Sweet “Action,” Larry “Mr. 335” Carlton/Steely Dan “Kid Charlemagne,” Eddie Van Halen “And the Cradle Will Rock...,” Eric Johnson “Cliffs of Dover,” Pepper Keenan/Down “Stone of the Crow,” Peter Hayes/Black Rebel Motorcycle Club “Red Eyes and Tears” and Chris Stapleton “Second One to Know.”

A 2015
Gibson
Memphis
ES-335 Satin

[bottom left]
B.B. King used a
modified ES-335
on his classic
1965 album,
Live at the Regal



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