

REVIEWED! NEW GEAR FROM PRS, GIBSON, XOTIC & MORE

GUITAR WORLD

MICK

GUITAR & BASS
TRANSCRIPTIONS

AYRON JONES
BLOOD IN THE WATER

JOE SATRIANI
SATCH BOOGIE

CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER REVIVAL
BAD MOON RISING

“Hash things
out with
Mötley
Crüe?
It’s past...
impossible...”

**THE GUITAR WORLD
INTERVIEW**

BY JOE BOSSO



+

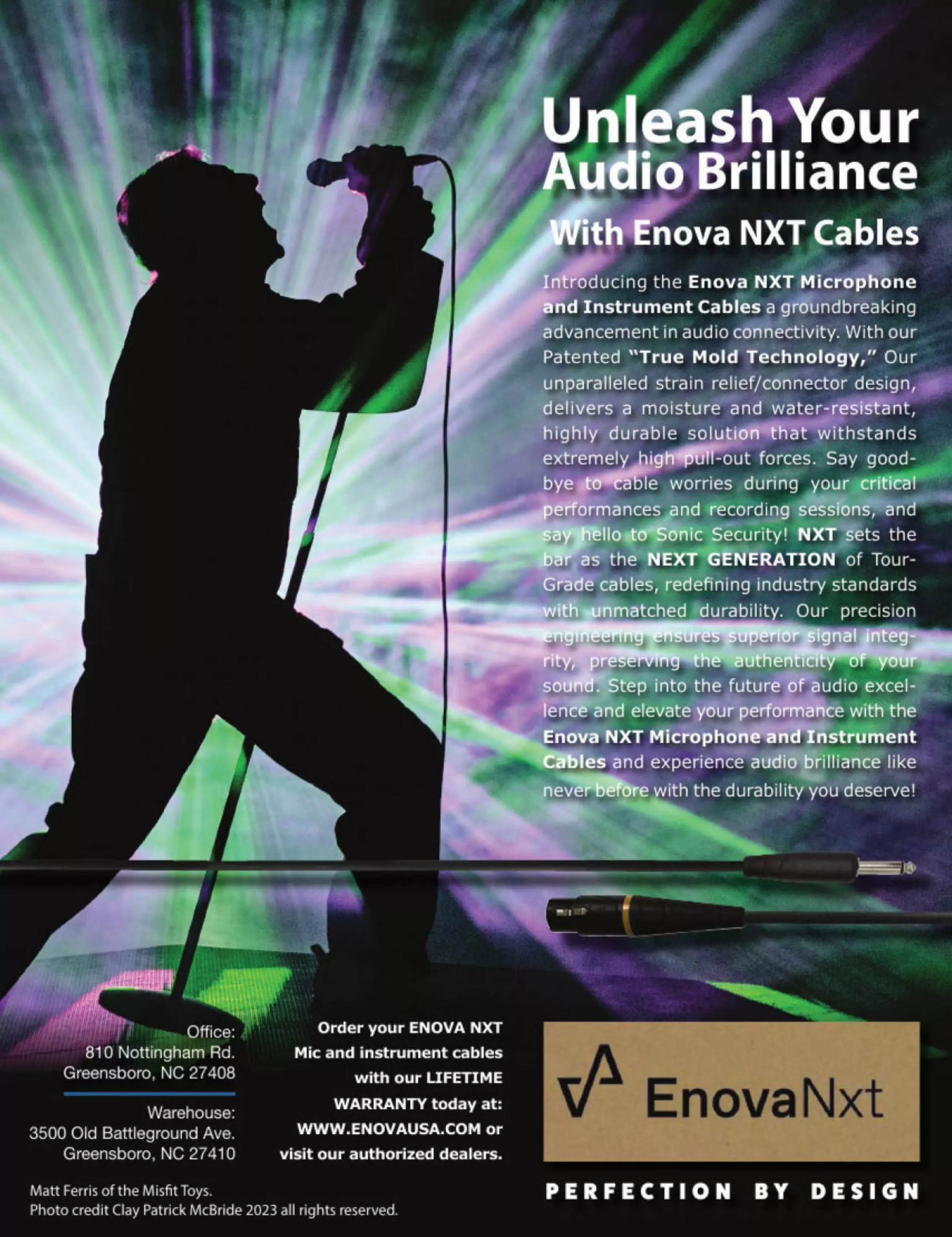
EDDIE KRAMER
JIMI HENDRIX'S
SONIC WINGMAN

U.S. SHOEGAZE PIONEERS
DROP NINETEENS
RETURN AFTER
30 YEARS!

DRAGONFORCE
HAS HERMAN LI
GOTTEN EVEN BETTER?

ADRIAN BELEW
HIS GREATEST
GUITAR MOMENTS

FRANK INFANTE
YARD ACT
STONE MECCA
THE DARKNESS



Unleash Your Audio Brilliance

With Enova NXT Cables

Introducing the **Enova NXT Microphone and Instrument Cables** a groundbreaking advancement in audio connectivity. With our Patented "**True Mold Technology**," Our unparalleled strain relief/connector design, delivers a moisture and water-resistant, highly durable solution that withstands extremely high pull-out forces. Say goodbye to cable worries during your critical performances and recording sessions, and say hello to Sonic Security! **NXT** sets the bar as the **NEXT GENERATION** of Tour-Grade cables, redefining industry standards with unmatched durability. Our precision engineering ensures superior signal integrity, preserving the authenticity of your sound. Step into the future of audio excellence and elevate your performance with the **Enova NXT Microphone and Instrument Cables** and experience audio brilliance like never before with the durability you deserve!

Office:
810 Nottingham Rd.
Greensboro, NC 27408

Warehouse:
3500 Old Battleground Ave.
Greensboro, NC 27410

Order your **ENOVA NXT**
Mic and instrument cables
with our **LIFETIME**
WARRANTY today at:
WWW.ENOVAUSA.COM or
visit our authorized dealers.



EnovaNxt

PERFECTION BY DESIGN

Matt Ferris of the Misfit Toys.

Photo credit Clay Patrick McBride 2023 all rights reserved.

THE ULTIMATE PRACTICE ACOUSTIC AMP

FISHMAN®

MICRO

Loudbox Micro packs 40 Watts of clean acoustic power into a lunchbox-sized acoustic combo at just over 9 lbs.

Featuring two channels with Master Volume, Digital Reverb & Chorus, balanced XLR DI output, Aux input, and a headphone jack for quiet practice.



LOUDBOX MICRO

fishman.com/micro



LEGENDARY WRAPAROUND BRIDGE & FINE TUNER TAILPIECE

**BACK &
BADDER
THAN
EVER!**



HISTORIC BRITISH TONE

30
WATTS



The **NEW** Celestion 100

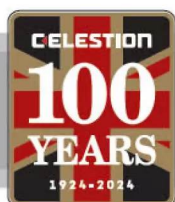
For our 100th anniversary, the new Celestion 100 celebrates the world's first purpose-built guitar speakers. Based on an old 'G12' radio loudspeaker they were developed by Chief Engineer Les Ward and deployed in the legendary British guitar amps of the early 1960s.



Les Ward

We've used 100 years of loudspeaker know-how to re-create the tone of these exquisite and historic alnicos. The result is the Celestion 100, a 30-watt, 12-inch guitar speaker, expertly hand-built in the UK.

To find out more, go to [celestion.com](https://www.celestion.com) or check out your favourite Celestion reseller.



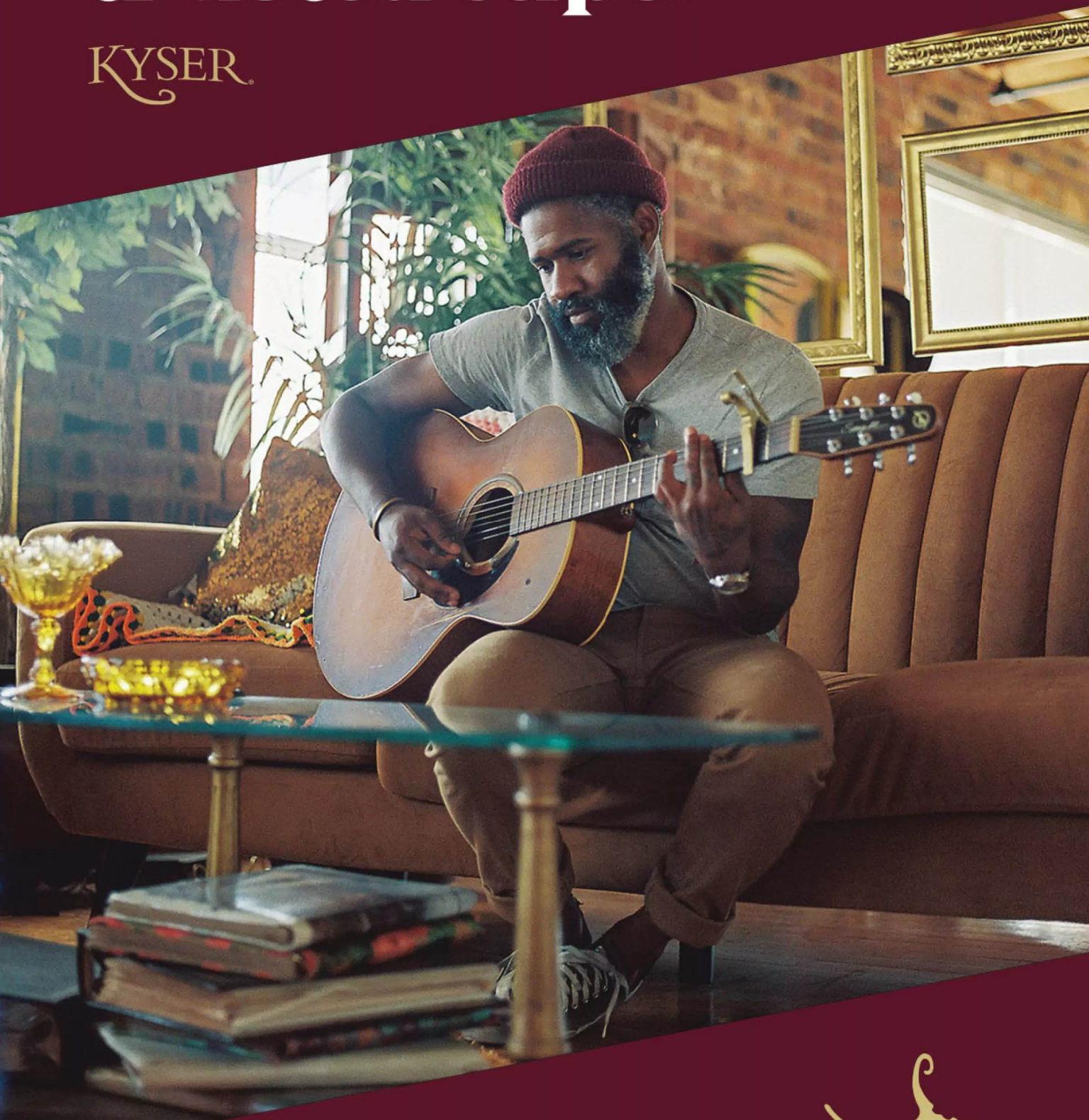
CELESTION

World's most trusted capo.



kysermusical.com

KYSER



Since 1980 • 100% Guaranteed for Life.





A Sweeter Way to Buy Guitars



G&L

Fullerton Deluxe ASAT Special
Electric Guitar
– Purpleburst

NEW!

- Select the perfect guitar from thousands of detailed images from our massive in-house instrument collection.
- Compare colors, wood grain, and weight.
- Pick exactly the one you want to receive — by serial number.

It's the perfect way to choose your next guitar.

Shop now at [Sweetwater.com/guitargallery](https://www.sweetwater.com/guitargallery)
or call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer at (800) 222-4700.



55-POINT INSPECTION

Guitar perfection right out of the box.

Our detailed 55-point Inspection ensures instruments valued at \$399 and above are shipped in factory-fresh condition and ready to play. We have carefully looked over every aspect of your guitar or bass — from the input jack to the headstock — and included a signed certificate of inspection, giving it our personal seal of approval.

Sweetwater

Music Instruments & Pro Audio

(800) 222-4700



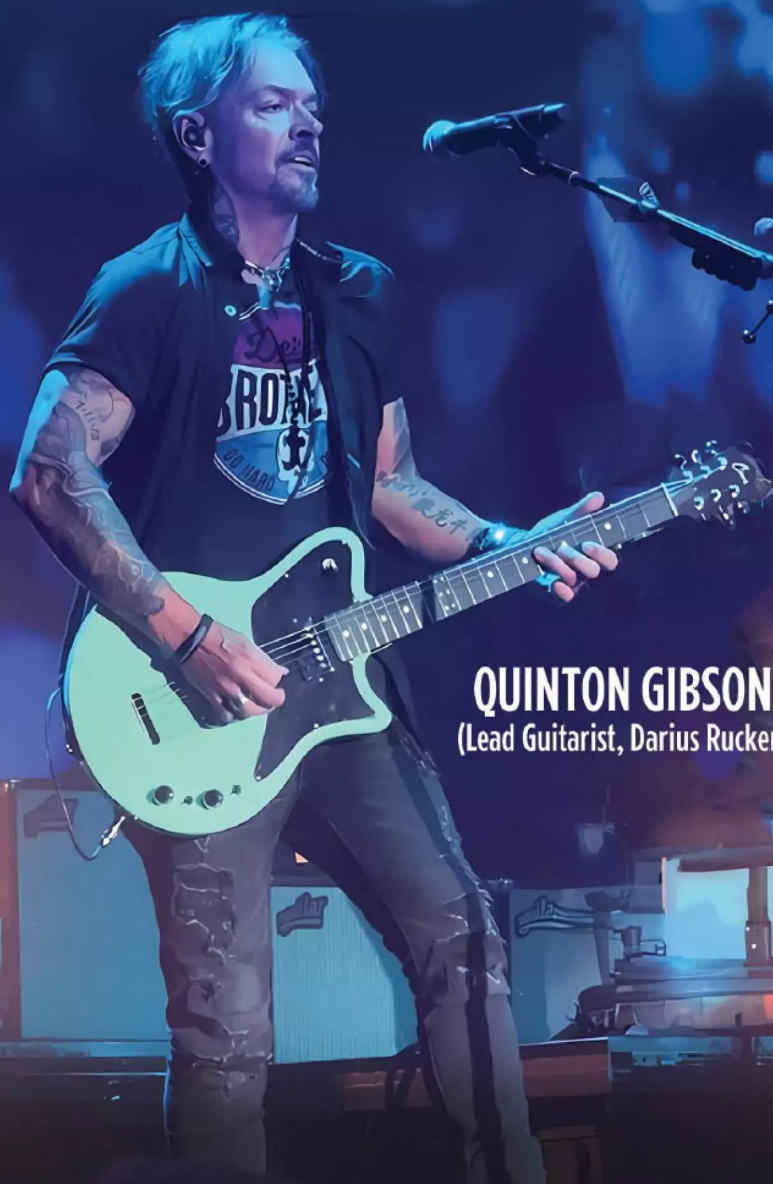
Shop Guitars



Ciari GUITARS

STAGE READY

PRO-PLAY QUALITY, STRESS-FREE FOLDING CONVENIENCE



QUINTON GIBSON
(Lead Guitarist, Darius Rucker)



THE ASCENDER STANDARD™
THE PRO PLAY GUITAR
THAT FITS IN A BACKPACK



Martin & Co.
EST. 1833



the
remastered
X SERIES

Pick one up. You may never put it down.

WOODSHED

VOL. 45 | NO. 4 | APRIL 2024

HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YA...

 **BACK IN NOVEMBER**, I was having dinner at Locanda Verde — one of Robert De Niro's restaurants in Manhattan — along with the gang from *Guitar World*, *Guitar Player*, Martin Guitar and a bunch of other people, including celebrity chef (and guitarist) Tom Colicchio. (Sorry for all the name-dropping, but it was a fun night at a great place!) Anyway, someone at the table raised an interesting question (and I'm totally paraphrasing here): "Why don't kids and new guitarists just start out with open tunings? True, they wouldn't have a grasp on the fundamentals like standard tuning and all those nice, important chord shapes that go with it, but they would make sounds that are essentially 'musical' right out of the box. They could even play I-IV-V songs on the first day! The first seven minutes! They could even play Elmore James-style slide within the first hour! The fun would start ASAP, which might help get them hooked earlier!" BTW, I don't know why I'm adding all these exclamation points; no one was screaming that night...

Anyway, my reaction (probably fueled by red wine and rustic potatoes) was something like, "Are you serious? Even Picasso knew how to paint realistic portraits years before he started messing around with Cubism and all that surreal stuff. New guitarists should work on the basics first — then they can, you know, wander off into nearby neighborhoods and experiment with slide, original tunings, open tunings and playing guitar underwater like Herman Li."

But the thing is, I immediately felt like an old fuddy-duddy — like someone in a YouTube video of New York City from 1896 who strolls by with a top hat and monocle. I was sort of getting the vibe (from at least a few vocal people at the table) that the important thing is just *getting people to play guitar*, getting them hooked, making them part of the guitar playing universe — traditional 440-tuning nonsense be damned!

What's your take on this? Should new guitarists go the traditional route — or at least a traditional route? Let me know your thoughts, but please keep your replies brief and full of exclamation points!

— **Damian Fanelli**

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

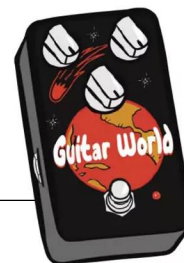
All contents ©2024 Future Publishing Limited or published under license. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a license to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

GUITAR WORLD (ISSN 1045-6295) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue, by Future US, INC., 135 West 41st Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Phone: 212.378.0400. Fax: 917.281.4704. Web Site: www.futureplc.com. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by CMG. Subscriptions: One-year basic rate (12 issues) US: \$17.95. Canada: US\$42.95. Foreign: US\$42.95. Canadian and foreign orders must be prepaid. Canadian price includes postage and GST #R128220688. PMA #40612608. Subscriptions do not include newsstand specials. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Guitar World, P.O. Box 2024, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957. Ride-along enclosure in the following edition(s): None. Standard enclosure: None. Returns: Pitney Bowes, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Entire contents copyright 2024, Future PLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Future PLC is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in Guitar World. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Guitar World. Products named in the pages of Guitar World are trademarks of their respective companies. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. SUBSCRIBER CUSTOMER SERVICE: Guitar World Magazine Customer Care, P.O. Box 2024, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957. Email help@magazinesdirect.com. BACK ISSUES: www.magazinesdirect.com. REPRINTS: Future PLC, 135 West 41st Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

GUITAR

WORLD



EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Damian Fanelli
(damian.fanelli@futurenet.com)
SENIOR MUSIC EDITOR Jimmy Brown
TECH EDITOR Paul Riaro
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Andy Aledort, Chris Gill
PRODUCTION EDITOR Jen Roberts
MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONIST AND ENGRAVER Jeff Perrin
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Gregory Adams, Jim Beaugez,
Joe Bonamassa, Joe Bosso, Andrew Daly, Joe Matera, Mark McStea,
Ryan Reed, Jenna Scaramanga, Josh Smith, Andy Timmons,
Jon Wiederhorn

ART

SENIOR DESIGN DIRECTOR Mixie von Bormann
ADDITIONAL PAGE DESIGN Damian Fanelli, Eva Garis, Richard Genet,
Richard Hood, Brad Merrett
IMAGE MANIPULATION MANAGER Gary Stuckey

PHOTOGRAPHY

CONTRIBUTORS Getty Images, Alamy and other individually credited photographers, public relations firms and agencies. All copyrights and trademarks are recognized and respected.

VIDEO

VIDEO EDITOR Alan Chaput

ONLINE

DIGITAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Michael Astley-Brown
DIGITAL ASSOCIATE EDITOR Jackson Maxwell
DIGITAL STAFF WRITERS Matt Owen, Matt Parker

CIRCULATION

HEAD OF NEWSTRADE Tim Mathers

PRODUCTION

HEAD OF PRODUCTION Mark Constance
SENIOR AD PRODUCTION MANAGER Nicole Schilling
DIGITAL EDITIONS CONTROLLER Jason Hudson
PRODUCTION MANAGER Nola Cokely

ADVERTISING

HEAD OF INDUSTRY: MUSIC Brian Preston
brian.preston@futurenet.com
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Robert Dye
732-241-7437, robert.dye@futurenet.com
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Jeff Donnenwerth
678-427-1535, jeff.donnenwerth@futurenet.com

CONSUMER MARKETING

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT Sheri Taubes

MANAGEMENT

MANAGING DIRECTOR (MUSIC) Stuart Williams
GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Scott Rowley
HEAD OF DESIGN (MUSIC) Brad Merrett

SUBSCRIBER CUSTOMER SERVICE

Guitar World Magazine Customer Care, P.O. Box 2029,
Langhorne, PA 19047-9957, 1-800-456-6441
EMAIL: help@magazinesdirect.com, help@mymagazine.co.uk (renewals)
SUBSCRIPTION DELAYS: We rely on various delivery companies to get your magazine to you, many of whom continue to be impacted by Covid. We kindly ask that you allow up to seven days before contacting us — at help@magazinesdirect.com — about a late delivery.
SINGLE-ISSUE SALES: www.magazinesdirect.com/guitarworld

PRINTER Kodi Collective

LICENSING Guitar World is available for licensing and syndication. To find out more, contact us at licensing@futurenet.com or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com.
HEAD OF PRINT LICENSING Rachel Shaw

GUITAR WORLD EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING OFFICES

347 W. 36th St., 17th Floor/Penthouse, New York, NY 10018

FUTURE US, INC.

135 W. 41st St., 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036, www.futureplc.com

©2024 Future PLC. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of Future PLC.



Future plc is a public company
quoted on the London Stock
Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Jon Steinberg
Non-Executive Chairman Richard Huntingford
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer Penny Ladkin-Brand
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

CONTENTS

VOL. 45 | NO. 4 | APRIL 2024



30 FRANK INFANTE

GW catches up with the former Blondie guitarist

34 YARD ACT

Ladies and gents, Sam Shipstone and his sidewinding riffs!

38 ADRIAN BELEW

The King Crimson star's 10 greatest guitar moments

42 DRAGONFORCE'S HERMAN LI

"Finding a balance between shredding and keeping the subtle nuances apparent is always a challenge"

48 DROP NINETEENS

A fascinating story about some Boston shoegazers — and where they've been for the past 30 years...

56 EDDIE KRAMER

The legendary engineer discusses past projects with the Kinks, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Kiss and more

62 MICK MARS

The former Mötley Crüe guitarist has a blistering new album — and a whole lot to say about his former band

TRANSCRIBED

"Satch Boogie"

by Joe Satriani

PAGE
86

"Blood in the Water"

by Ayron Jones

PAGE
94

"Bad Moon Rising"

by Creedence Clearwater Revival

PAGE
102

DEPARTMENTS

12 SOUNDING BOARD

15 TUNE-UPS

Robin Trower, Robby Krieger, Stone Mecca, Adam and the Ants' Marco Pirroni, the Darkness' Dan Hawkins, Sue Foley, Logan Ledger, Alena Ciera, Ryujiin's Ryoji Shinomoto and Alex Skolnick's pedalboard, plus Introducing and Playlist

75 SOUNDCHECK

- 75. PRS SE Series SE Custom 24 Quilt and SE Swamp Ash Special
- 77. Shed Pickups HA-59 PAF Set
- 78. Soma Cosmos Drifting Memory Station
- 80. Xotic XW-2 Wah - Red Limited
- 81. Gibson Falcon 20

82 COLUMNS

82. In Deep

by Andy Aledort

83. Tales from Nerdville

by Joe Bonamassa

84. Melodic Muse

by Andy Timmons

85. Live from Flat V

by Josh Smith

93 PERFORMANCE NOTES

110 POWER TOOLS

Introduced in 1974, the MXR Phase 90 was certainly the smallest and arguably the simplest phase shifter of its time, which accounted for much of its success and subsequent longevity. Best of all, getting a good sound was (and is) easy.



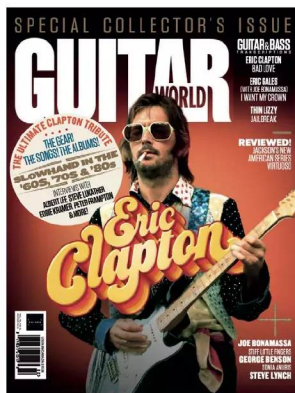
SOUNDING BOARD

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



COMPETELY RANDOM PHOTO OF THE MONTH

July 25, 2007: **Geezer Butler** [sitting] and **Tony Iommi** share a moment at Rockfield Studios in Wales during the recording sessions for Heaven & Hell's only studio album, 2009's *The Devil You Know*. The album, which spawned "Bible Black," "Atom and Evil" and "Breaking into Heaven," also stars drummer Vinny Appice and vocalist Ronnie James Dio (1942–2010). "Getting back together with Ronnie this time is a totally different thing," Iommi told GW's Chris Gill in late 2008. "We give and take a lot more all around. If you become too stubborn in these things, they don't last. It just blows to pieces. We definitely realize that this is it. We've dropped all of our egos and we're getting on with it. It's been great this time." — D.F.



Nice Eric Clapton tribute, but what's with his setup?

Thank you so much for the in-depth coverage of one of the truly greatest influences on electric blues and rock guitarists the world over (including myself), Eric Clapton [February 2024]. The long-overdue coverage more than makes up for E.C.'s general absence from these pages. From "Clapton is God" to "a yacht-rock-leaning softy" who "mainly provided records to use as white noise for lazy drives through the countryside," *Guitar World* lays it out, thoroughly detailing, from a guitarist's perspective, one of the longest musical careers ever. But perhaps the most amazing thing of all is that cover photo. Please, you've got to tell me — when and where did he appear onstage in that getup? And more importantly, why?

— Mike Trehus

[Editor's note: According to some online research, Michael Putland's cover photo was shot June 29, 1974, at the Spectrum in Philadelphia.

Sadly, that only takes care of the "when" and the "where"! — DF]

David Sinclair's opening paragraph on Eric Clapton changing and basically upgrading today's guitar approach in 1966 — and E.C. being in denial in the Seventies — is an historical fact to me. Sinclair made a righteous statement. Young guitarists only seem to

know "Cocaine" or "Layla" (both fine playing, no doubt), but E.C.'s marriage of a Marshall amp with a Gibson Les Paul changed everything (along with his smooth vibrato). Also I believe he did the same thing with his Brownie Strat in (the 1st/2nd position) with his first solo album and with Derek and the Dominos. And just think about how Clapton revolutionized the "vintage guitar era"! Also, Clapton was the first to have a guitar on display at the Hard Rock Cafe. Anyway, excellent writing and research from Sinclair.

— Guy Lee

Regarding the Eric Clapton issue: Why no mention of the Nineties, and particularly how the *Unplugged* album came to be? It was his best-selling album!

— Arneh Babakhani

Loving the solo-guitar "Riders on the Storm" arrangement

Thanks so much for including Andrew Eliot Zohn's version of "Riders on the Storm" [January 2024]. While searching YouTube for this version, I found another cool fingerstyle version by Panos Konstantinou. I believe that anyone can learn to play rock guitar and solo with distortion. The true mastery of the instrument is with jazz, classical and fingerstyle guitarists with classical and fingerstyle being the way the guitar was meant to be played. Very few compared to anyone fit into this category.

— Terry Kempler, White Marsh, MD

I want to give you a big thank you for the solo arrangement of "Riders on the Storm." As a guitar picker who mostly plays for his own enjoyment (on acoustic), I hope you will do more arrangements like this in the future.

— Jay Andy Mill

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

All subscription queries must be emailed to guitarworldmag@icnfull.com. Please do not email the Sounding Board with subscription matters.

STAY CONNECTED WITH GUITAR WORLD ON



AND GET THE LATEST GUITAR NEWS, INSIDER UPDATES, STAFF REPORTS AND MORE!



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 .jpg or screenshot of the image.

And (um, obviously...), please remember to include your name!



EDDIE VAN HALEN BY PATRICK S.



EDDIE VAN HALEN BY LILA DURHAM

DEFENDERS of the Faith



Tal Caron

AGE: 17

HOMETOWN: Kenora, ON

GUITARS: Custom Jackson Dinky, Fender 60th Anniversary Strat, Charvel Pro Mod So-Cal, 1974 Fender Musicmaster, Schecter Demon-6, Ovation Celebrity
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Stevie Ray Vaughan "Pride and Joy" and "Scuttle Buttin'," Stone Temple Pilots "Sex Type Thing," Ozzy Osbourne "No More Tears," Alice in Chains "Dam That River"



Richard Kotsko

AGE: 67

GUITARS: Gibson SG Modern, ESP LTD EC401, Charvel "Strat," Chapman "Tele," Guild acoustic

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Originals for my band Siirenata, plus Argent "Hold Your Head Up," Dream Theater "You Not Me"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Custom Sully Trella



Frank Kowalski

AGE: 63

HOMETOWN: Alpine, CA

GUITARS: Stable of Les Pauls, PRS McCartys, Fender Stratocaster

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Led Zeppelin "The Lemon Song," Robin Trower "Too Rolling Stoned," Pat Travers "Rock 'N' Roll Susie"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Original Marshall JCM 800 amp, because that's what I had when I started playing 47 years ago



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

LISTEN TO NAPALM'S LATEST RELEASES NOW: OPEN SPOTIFY, SEARCH AND SCAN!



Dragonforce

WARP SPEED WARRIORS



**The world's fastest band, GRAMMY nominated power metal legends
DRAGONFORCE, are back with Warp Speed Warriors!**

OUT 3/15 CD | VINYL | DIGITAL | LIMITED EDITIONS
AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY VIA NAPALMRECORDSAMERICA.COM

📍 /NAPALMRECORDS
📺 /NAPALMRECORDS

📍 /NAPALMRECORDSOFFICIAL
📺 /NAPALMRECORDS

visit our online store with music and merch
NAPALMRECORDSAMERICA.COM



TUNE-UPS

ROBIN
TROWER
18

20
MARCO PIRRONI

THE DARKNESS
22

24
ALENA CIERA

RYUJIN
25

26
ALEX SKOLNICK

SUE
FOLEY
27



ROBBY
KRIEGER
28



Stone Mecca
with his B.C. Rich
in Austin, 2019

Stone Free

HOP-HOP SESSION ACE STONE MECCA TALKS GEAR, WU-TANG CLAN, SNOOP DOGG AND THE MERITS OF BEING ENTIRELY SELF-TAUGHT

By Andrew Daly

▶ WHILE GUITAR ISN'T often associated with hip-hop music, for Stone Mecca, changing that narrative has been a critical element to a career spent flipping the script. Dating back to the Nineties, Mecca has appeared on albums by Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube, Eazy-E, Wu-Tang Clan and RZA, becoming a go-to session player whenever the best of what the West Coast had to offer needed six-strings added into the mix.

Steeped in hip-hop as he is, it was rock music that first caught Mecca's ear. "I loved

rock," he says. "But I always listened to hip-hop, too. And then, after I learned to play guitar, I got to do a session with Ice Cube, and that's when the whole hip-hop guitar thing out on the West Coast kicked off for me."

It's an interesting dynamic, given that most within the hip-hop community forsake the guitar, which can be frustrating. When asked where the disconnect comes from, Mecca says, "A lot of these guys were sampling this music first — and they didn't

know anything about this stuff as it pertains to the guitar. They didn't know anything about instruments or scales, so there was a misunderstanding. A lot of hip-hop guys know about guitar based on what they think they've seen, but they don't understand where the distortion comes from, for example."

Despite the challenges, Mecca's passion reigns supreme. His desire to inject subtle flourishes, twangy riffs and heavy metal structure into hip-hop is endless. And it's ➔

a good thing because, despite his understanding of the rigors, things can get dicey.

"I remember going into a session with Ice Cube where he wanted me to remake an entire song," he says. "I'd play a guitar part, and they'd say, 'That sounds like some kind of country thing.' And I'd say, 'No, it's not; it's within the song, and it was always there, you just couldn't hear it.' They wanted it out, but it's only because their understanding of the importance of guitar wasn't there. Most samples have guitars; they just don't know it. So I've got to be able to play different types of guitar things. Whatever it is, I've got to be able to show up and do that each night."

What piqued your interest in the guitar?

I started on drums when I was around nine. Then, when I saw Eddie Van Halen playing alongside David Lee Roth, the way he played, man, it was just really sexy. I figured, "He must get all the women. I'm gonna learn guitar, too."

As I understand it, you're self-taught. Did that impact your viewpoint?

It helped me develop my feelings on the instrument. Teaching myself made it to where I devised exercises to build my fingers up. It helped me learn different scales and got me to a place where things sounded right rather than only focusing on what others were doing. Teaching myself made me an individual on guitar.

Once you dug into session work on the West Coast, you ended up in the



INTRODUCING



Sir Prize & the Tomorrow Knights

Glitter Gum & Bubble Pop (Bandcamp)

SOUND: L.A.'s Tim Izzard, who handles all musical/vocal duties, is the prime mover behind this project, sharing the songwriting with DandyGregory. Capturing the essence of Sixties bubblegum, filtered through Seventies rock and U.K. glam, every song captures the spirit of Bowie, the Archies and T.Rex, with witty lyrics and crunching guitars à la Mick Ronson.

KEY TRACK: "American Satin Circus"

"Their understanding of the importance of guitar wasn't there. Most samples have guitars; they just don't know it"

studio with Snoop Dogg.

On the Snoop album [1999's *No Limit Top Dogg*], I did that when the West Coast guys brought in many samples, which gave us more control over the mixes because everything had to be separated. I'd go in many times and try things, and I had a lot of freedom. I would play something based on what I heard and add what I thought the songs needed.

What gear did you use while recording with Snoop — and while working on Eazy-E's *Str8 off tha Streetz of Muthaphukkin Compton*?

All I had was a Telecaster from the early Nineties. That was my first real guitar, which I had for many years. I only use it when I want the particular sound that that guitar brings. I also had a DOD Envelope Filter [FX-25] and one of those Zoom effect pedals the size of a Sony Walkman. I don't remember the model, but it was from the late Eighties or early Nineties.

What led you to work with Wu-Tang Clan and RZA?

RZA came first; I met him around 2004 after he came to my show, and he said, "I'm interested in signing you," which is how it kicked off. That music is rebel music. It's got that rebellious teenage spirit throughout, and that's who a lot of the fanbase is, so it opens us up to rock out. But I add even more of those elements when playing live instead of in the studio because I have more freedom in concert.

How so?

I'm the musical director with Wu-Tang, so that makes a difference. Any band can play the music, but not just any band can take what fans hear on the albums and add something in the live setting to where people go, "Oh, wow." With that in mind, I'm always looking for ways to take what's there and enhance it while always playing for the song.

What guitars do you lean on most now since you don't often use the Tele anymore?

I found a B.C. Rich Bich from the Eighties, and it was a mess. I ended up building it out and making it my own. I used a lot of ancient Chinese secrets to make it unique. [Laughs] Just kidding. I installed a floating whammy bar and some special-wound pickups just for me, but it was so long ago that I can't remember their names.

What's next for you?

I've got more shows with Wu-Tang Clan, and I'll be working on a new solo project soon. I'm always busy, man.



Hawxx

Earth, Spit, Blood and Bones (Hawxx Records)

SOUND: With members from across Europe, Hawxx pool their influences into a melting pot of thunderous beats and explosive solos from Anna Papadimitriou and Hannah Staphnill. Think Meshuggah with catchy melodies. Their mission is to embrace the changing landscape of rock, making their shows a safe space for women, trans and non-binary fans alike.

KEY TRACK: "Embrace the Ugly"



Dominum

Hey Living People (Napalm Records)

SOUND: This German band is self-described as "horrific power metal." Their song titles conjure images of doom and misery, but musically they're much more in line with melodic metallers Europe. Guitarist Tommy is more of a riffmeister than a shredder, but he knows exactly what it takes to raise each track to another level.

KEY TRACK: "Cannibal Corpses"

— Mark McStea

Logan Ledger [left] on stage in New Orleans with Nick Bockrath, July 25, 2023



Logan Ledger

IT TURNS OUT THIS GOLDEN-THROATED NASHVILLE-VIA-CALIFORNIA SINGER-SONGWRITER PLAYS A MEAN B-BENDER

By Jim Beauguez

▶ THE NASHVILLE SINGER-songwriter scene is as crowded as ever, but Bay Area transplant Logan Ledger has a few more licks up his sleeve than the typical cowboy-chord strummer. And on *Golden State*, his second and latest album, Ledger lets his love for bluegrass and country virtuosos Tony White, Norman Blake and Clarence White shine.

"I always loved Clarence White's flat-picking, but I got super fascinated by the B-bender in my early twenties," he says, referring to the Telecaster mod that Gene Parsons created for White circa 1968 that allows players to raise the pitch of the B string by tugging at the neck. "[In] the little footage of Clarence that exists, he's always so relaxed with it; he's not jerking it around. He's almost swaying with it."

Ledger's own B-bender playing on "All the Wine in California," a *Golden State* standout, is fluid and unhurried, a gentle

undulation of the notes instead of a dramatic pull. But just as strong are the acoustic guitar techniques he uses throughout the album, switching from straight strumming to a hybrid picking technique he developed in part by watching Merle Haggard.

"Merle played leads with the pick, but when he was singing he would tuck it in between his fingers and use his thumb to play rhythm, which is a great way of not having to work the tone and volume on an electric guitar and still get kind of the same effect," he says. "I tend to rely on my hands to be dynamic and change tone more than I do on knobs. It's just instinctual."

Such versatility and economy are native to the Bakersfield balladry Ledger explores on the poised and shuffling "Midnight in L.A." and the loungey, jazzy "Till It Feels Right." He cranks up his Fender Princeton on "There Goes My Mind" and "Court of Love," though, grabbing the vibrato arm of his Jazzmaster on the latter to pull off the song's signature surf-rock licks.

"I do feel that people should really do their homework and learn about the history of music and what came before whatever style or whatever you wanna do," he says. "I feel like it's important to know your influences and how modern music came to be the way it is."



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1963 Fender Jazzmaster, 1948 Martin D-18; 1936 Epiphone Broadway, Gretsch White Falcon
- **AMPS** Sixties Fender Princeton



WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST



JAMIE VAN DYCK OF EARTHSIDE

1

"Legion"
Tesseract

War of Being feels like Tesseract's creative triumph to date, and a huge part of that is how far Daniel Tompkins has pushed the limits of his vocal performance and writing.

2

"River Man"
Nick Drake

The fact that this record is from 1969 does not compute to me. His writing and sense of harmony feel decades ahead of their time, with almost an Alice in Chains-like rainy, haunting gloom over the Sixties production.

3

"Built to Bow"
Anchor Thought

Sarah Draper (AKA Sarah JoAnne, joanne_music and sloppyjo67) is a rising star among shredders on the interwebs. What makes her stand out is her songwriting and vocal chops, as well as her creative sensibilities within her woodshed context that serve the song rather than just using a solo as an opportunity to show off.

4

"All It Takes"
Karnivoool

They're arguably my favorite band at this point, and this track shows them firing on all cylinders. The guitar/bass riffs have so much oomph and groove.

5

"Trials"
Soen

When it comes to modern guitar players, Cody Lee Ford is the pinnacle as far as effortlessly making his guitar absolutely wail. I tend to gravitate toward players like Gilmour and Cantrell, who are about feel and making their guitar sing. Cody is their descendant.

EARTHSIDE'S NEW ALBUM, *LET THE TRUTH SPEAK*, IS OUT NOW ON MASCOT.



INQUIRER ROBIN TROWER

THE GENIUS BEHIND *BRIDGE OF SIGHS* TALKS FLAMING AMPS, FAVORITE STRATS AND WHY HE STILL PRACTICES EVERY DAY

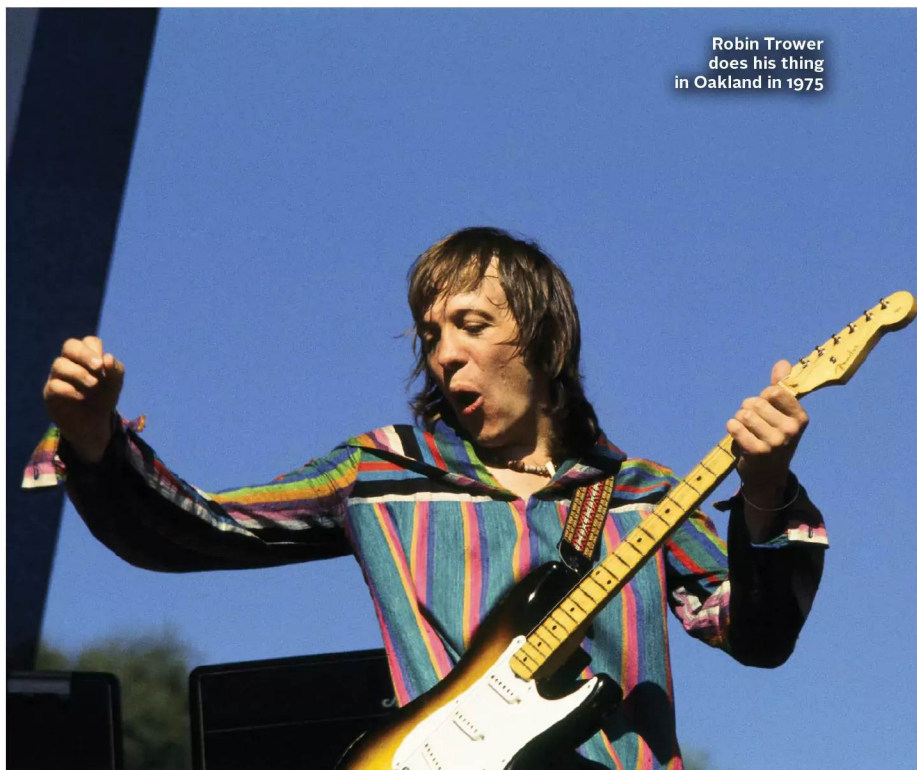
Q: What was your first guitar?
A Rosetti cello F-hole guitar. My dad bought it for me for Christmas when I was 14. It cost him seven pounds, 10 shillings. Eventually I got a pickup for it, so I plugged it into the back of the radio and started to play through it. That radio was my first amp.

Q: What was the first song you learned to play?
It might've been an Everly Brothers song that I tried to work out, but I don't think I ever got it. My mind never ran in that way, where I was learning other people's songs. I was just fooling around on the instrument until I was 16. That's when I started to get songs off and play them through completely, together with a friend of mine, Chris Copping.

Q: What was your first gig like?
Chris and I did a tiny little gig to about 10 people with my brother Mick singing. I think it was maybe in some sort of bar or something. It was a long, long time ago. The first proper gig, though, was when I had my band, the Paramounts, in the early Sixties with Gary Brooker, Chris Copping and Mick Brownlee.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?
Not sure if it was embarrassing, but it was certainly one of the weirdest. I was playing a gig with Jack Bruce, and one of my amps suddenly burst into flames! I think I was driving it a bit too hard. A stagehand who was part of the crew ran out with a fire extinguisher. Luckily enough, my guitar tech stopped him from spraying it, which would've completely ruined it. I did get it repaired later and started to use it again.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?
My Strat. I've had the custom shop at Fender make my signature model, and it's



Robin Trower does his thing in Oakland in 1975

got everything I like about Strats — all in one guitar. It's got a Fifties reissue pickup in the neck position, the middle pickup is a Sixties reissue, and in the bridge position, it's got a Texas Special, which is slightly higher gain than the others.

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

It would be this beautiful custom Strat knockoff that my guitar tech created for me. And again, because I've always been into automotive stuff and drag racing, it's painted metal flake green, which is almost like an automobile finish on the outside. It's got a maple neck and is also fitted with a Sustiniac. So I can stand there, play the guitar and get feedback all day — or until the batteries die!

Q: Which signature model means the most to you?

It's the one I call Mr. Cream, which has been my favorite guitar for many, many years. There are definitely two or three others that I really like as well, but I tend to always go back to the cream guitar. It is a cream-colored Strat signature model, and like all my signature models, it has the larger headstock because I thought a bit more wood might give the guitar more resonance.

Q: When was the last time you took the time to practice guitar, and what did you play?
I practice every day. Though I wouldn't actually call it practice, because usually it

"I was playing a gig with Jack Bruce and one of my amps suddenly burst into flames!"

involves working on new songs — but that encapsulates a bit of practicing as well, because when I'm working on new songs, I'm working on the lead parts and the backing parts.

Q: What aspect of the guitar would you like to be better at?

I'm pretty happy with what I do, actually. I don't think of myself as practicing to get better. I'm practicing to work things out. For instance, if I'm working on a new song, I'm working on the lead to try and find what the best melodies are. So I am always reaching, so to speak...

Q: What guitar-centric advice would you give your younger self if you had the chance?

To practice. [Laughs] The thing is, when I was younger, I never used to practice at all. I used to just play for fun and then pick it up. For instance, when I was in Procol Harum, I'd only pick it up for a gig or in the studio. I never used to play the guitar in between because at that time, I didn't know you had to practice.

— Joe Matera

The Ultimate Experience In Music Education!



STUDY & JAM IN FLORIDA WITH:



Matt Schofield



Andy Timmons

Plus GWP faculty and more!

Winter Session

Fort Lauderdale, Florida February 22-25, 2024



Summer Session Dates

San Diego Session: June 23-28, 2024

Nashville Session: July 7-12, 2024

Toronto Session: July 14-19, 2024

PAST GUEST ARTISTS INCLUDE:

**JOE SATRIANI • ALEX LIFESON • STEVE VAI
ROBBEN FORD • RANDY BACHMAN • ALBERT LEE
TOMMY EMMANUEL • BILLY SHEEHAN
JOHN PETRUCCI • VICTOR WOOTEN
ANDY SUMMERS • ERIC GALES • RHONDA SMITH
NITA STRAUSS • JOHN SCOFIELD • MIKE STERN
... AND MANY OTHERS!**



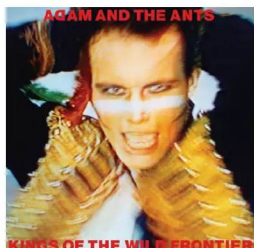
**CLASSES FOR
ALL LEVELS,
AGES, AND STYLES!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

**905.567.8000 OR
www.guitarworkshopplus.com**



Marco Pirroni [left] on stage with Adam and the Ants at the Ritz in New York City, April 8, 1981



LOST CLASSICS Adam and the Ants

GUITARIST AND CO-WRITER MARCO PIRRONI DISCUSSES THE MAKING OF THE BAND'S ERA-DEFINING 1980 ALBUM, *KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER*

By Mark McStea

▶ ADAM AND THE Ants released *Kings of the Wild Frontier* at the tail end of 1980. By the end of the following year, they'd become the biggest band across pretty much the whole world, with *Kings* selling 8 million copies. It seemed that only the U.S. was resistant to the waves of hysteria that "Antmania" generated.

Prior to teaming up with Adam Ant, U.K.-born guitarist and co-writer Marco Pirroni had been active on the early British punk scene, playing with Siouxsie and the Banshees at their first-ever show (with Sid Vicious on drums). He'd also been in indie bands the Models and Rema Rema, but he'd enjoyed only modest success. Meanwhile, Ant — with the original lineup of Adam and the Ants — had become a fixture on the U.K. indie live circuit and had built a cult following — but he seemed to have peaked. Pirroni agrees. "The music Adam was making was entirely different from what we came up with," he says. "This change in direction was a deliberate move on Adam's

part to reinvent himself. He wanted to completely change everything. His band had hit a brick wall. They were doing well in terms of live audiences, but things weren't growing. I don't think they could have ever been a chart-topping act."

How did the creative process work when you got together?

Virtually everything was newly created between us, except "Ants Invasion," which he already had on hand. There were a few tribal things he'd been working on, but we didn't use those, more the ideas behind them. He'd paid [impresario and Sex Pistols manager] Malcolm McLaren what you could almost think of as a consultancy fee, and [McLaren] suggested some concepts that Adam was hesitant to apply. But I told him that he'd paid for them, so he was at liberty to use what he wanted. Probably the only really useful thing was McLaren's suggestion that using the idea of Burundi tribal beats could be interesting. There was

an album called *Warrior Drums of Burundi* that was quite influential on what we came up with. So I would usually have a chord sequence, Adam would have some kind of tribal chant, and we'd go from there.

It seemed like the perfect outlet for you to channel all of your influences — Link Wray, glam rock, Mick Ronson, etc.

It definitely was. Everything I'd been dying to do for years came out in the process of working those songs up with Adam. Pretty much everything I came up with made the cut; we were both very much on the same page. Burundi beats and Link Wray seemed to be a perfect match — they were both really raw. I can't really think of much that Adam *didn't* think worked.

There's a real art to taking a bunch of influences and producing something unique that doesn't sound like you're just recycling.

When we stuck everything together, even

though we were possibly, at times, even *trying* to make an influence obvious, it came out as something else, which was the magic of the sound we created. I don't know how you plan to do that; it just worked.

Did you have everything ready to go before you went into the studio?

Everything except "Dog Eat Dog," which was when the label did that thing where they say they haven't got a single, so Adam and I came up with that one lunchtime. We made a demo of it, which, unfortunately, doesn't exist anymore, as we taped over it.

I'm surprised "Antmusic" didn't sound like a single to them.

I'd agree, but at the time it didn't seem obvious, and we didn't really have an idea what would be the ideal first single prior to coming up with "Dog Eat Dog."

How long did you spend recording the album?

It was about six weeks. Everything was first takes, as we constructed the tracks in the studio. We'd never played any of those songs live, so I hadn't envisioned what it would sound like when it was completed. It was just something that grew and evolved.

A lot of the tracks feature layers of textured guitar noise and feedback as part of the overall sonic stew. Had you planned out what you were going to do for those parts?

No, I'd never done that before. I had so many ideas in my head that I just had to put them all down. I have since learned to try to edit myself and rather than put five tracks down maybe keep it to two or three at a maximum. There is a lot going on and it's actually very dense in terms of guitars. I suppose with hindsight I might have put fewer tracks down, but then people are always saying they'd have done things differently years later.

What guitars and amps did you use to record the album? You got a lot of different tones and textures.

All I had was a Marshall and a Fender Twin, and for guitars, I had Adam's Fender Telecaster and my white Les Paul Junior; I don't know what year it is though, because it's been resprayed and had God knows what done to it. I think the mix of the single coil on the Telecaster and the P90 on the Junior is great. They work really well together. I'm in love with Juniors; the P90 is my favorite pickup.

There's a clear nod to Link Wray on "Killer in the Home," isn't there?

Yes. It's a borrow rather than a steal. [Laughs] At that time, nobody had really heard of Link Wray in the U.K. I bought the *Early Recordings* album with the yellow cover just because I liked the album jacket; I didn't know what the music was going to be like, but when I started listening to it I connected with it. I remember thinking, "I can actually play all these riffs." [Laughs] He was very much an unknown figure to me. I felt like I must have been the only person who knew who he was at the time.

Were some of the great B-sides from that period recorded at the same sessions as the album?

"Fat Fun" and "Fall In" were on the same sessions, and "Physical" was recorded while we were mixing the album. They were very much punk songs, and we recorded them with a rawer approach than the rest of the album. If they'd been on the record instead of some of the lighter tracks, it would've had a very different feel overall.

"Kings of the Wild Frontier" has a great, epic riff. Who came up with that?

That was Adam's riff, and I came up with the chord sequence. He played it to me, and I knew it had something about it that was very cinematic. I'd been a huge Ennio Morricone fan at that time — *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* soundtrack was a particular favorite of mine and was a big influence on the album, as was John Barry.

Who were the artists that made you want to play guitar?

Slade were the first band that really made me want to play. That was quickly followed by Mick Ronson and the Who. Roxy Music became my favorite band, but I guess they're not really very guitar focused. The first guitar I got was a very cheap, brown Arbiter SG copy with a bolt-on neck and a tremolo arm that didn't really work. The first good guitar I had was a Gibson Les Paul Signature, which I used with the Banshees at the 100 Club [in London] in 1976 [the band's first show, with the aforementioned *Sid Vicious*]. It was pretty bad. I swapped that for a Les Paul Custom that got stolen. After that I got a white Junior, which was just to be like Johnny Thunders. I felt like I was channeling Johnny with the Junior; I tried to channel Mick Ronson when I had the Les Paul, but I couldn't get on with Les Pauls.

Did you go on a spending spree when the big money started coming in?

Oh, yes. [Laughs] I bought a couple of old Firebirds, one of which I had painted red. I got loads of old Juniors. Then I was in

"Link Wray was very much an unknown figure to me. I felt like I must have been the only person who knew who he was at the time"

Gruhn Guitars in Nashville, and I asked if they had any Juniors, and they said they didn't put them on display as nobody wanted them, so I bought six on that visit. [Laughs] I don't really have many acoustics. I have one of those 12-strings like David Bowie's. I think maybe in total I've got about 60 guitars.

How did you come to acquire the iconic John Birch "Super Yob" guitar, which used to belong to Dave Hill of Slade?

We were doing a run of shows in Birmingham, and I went out for a walk and saw it in this music store window. I couldn't believe it was real, but anyway, I went in and asked how much it was, and they were really condescending and said, "You can't afford it, son." I insisted I could, so they said it was £500 — which was quite a lot 40 years ago. Anyway, I said I had £50 in my pocket, so I left that as a deposit and said somebody would pay the balance and pick it up later. I had one of the roadies go get it. The guys in the shop had no idea who I was, though when the roadie told them, I think they must have really kicked themselves. I'm sure they'd have asked a lot more if they'd known. We were probably the biggest band in the U.K. at the time.

Didn't you also buy a Gretsch White Falcon from Brian Setzer?

He rang me up late one night asking if I wanted to buy some guitars. I bought that and a really good Gretsch 6120 off him, which I've still got. I sold the Falcon, though, as I didn't really like the sound, although it is a fantastically cool-looking guitar. I got made an offer I couldn't refuse. [Laughs] Adam used it to pose for the press shots for *Vive Le Rock* [1985].

Do you ever listen to KOTWF?

No, but I am going to go back and listen to it now that we've talked. I think *Friend Or Foe* [1982] is actually my favorite Adam and the Ants album — the one we did without a band. [Laughs] *Kings of the Wild Frontier* is up there, and its success was literally life-changing for us, so you really can't knock that.

The Darkness in July 2003; [from left] Frankie Poullain, Dan Hawkins, Justin Hawkins and Ed Graham



From Out of the Darkness

DAN HAWKINS REVISITS THE MURKY MUSICAL LANDSCAPE THAT SOMEHOW GAVE WAY TO THE DARKNESS'S 2003 BREAKTHROUGH RECORD, *PERMISSION TO LAND*

By Andrew Daly

▶ BEFORE DAN AND Justin Hawkins became modern-day gods of glam with the release of 2003's *Permission to Land*, things hadn't gone to plan. That's not to say that Dan, who was working as a session player, and Justin, his older brother, who was making waves in the jingles game, had failed. It's more to say that the dream of becoming heroes via hedonism hadn't yet materialized.

"It's probably important to remember that we'd pretty much given up by the time we started this band," Dan says. "We'd been in all sorts of different bands, and there were a few different incarnations of the Darkness before we were the Darkness. We always seemed to be chasing the tail of what was popular, but it just wasn't working out."

In retrospect, Hawkins' admission of near-defeat is hard to fathom, given the breakneck success he'd experience in the

wake of *Permission to Land*. Then again, the Darkness were literal outliers in the early 2000s, when boy bands, the garage revival and the sad tail end of nu-metal reigned supreme.

"We weren't being true to ourselves," Hawkins says. "We weren't being honest, so we decided to try one more time, but this time, we'd do the stuff we loved. This was the stuff we were brought up on, like Seventies glam rock. Don't get me wrong — I loved Radiohead, and Coldplay put on a great live show, but that dominated the U.K., and that was the big reason we hadn't done what we loved. A lot of miserable-sounding stuff dominated the scene, and what we wanted to do wasn't popular."

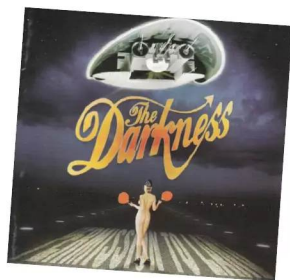
The position of making an old-school glam rock album in the early 2000s no doubt seemed wild to most, as evidenced by the fact that there was no buzz surrounding the band and that "no more than

two labels" showed interest. It seemed the Darkness were seen as decidedly uncool.

It's a good thing the Hawkins brothers were resourceful, as no label would have them, and no big-time budget would be available to record the album that would lead them to infamy. "We were lucky," Hawkins says. "Justin had been making money writing music for adverts, so we could purchase instruments and get some time in a small studio in North London called Chapel. Once we were in there, it [*Permission to Land*] was quick and done in a matter of weeks."

Having no idea what they had in hand, the Darkness took the tracks they'd put together in that little "residential studio" and started releasing EPs and singles to attract some label support. But still, no deal was in sight, so the band took to the stage to get the word out.

"We had these great tracks, like 'I Be-



“Things went horribly pop and rap as far as big music goes, and it’s never really recovered, in my opinion”

lieve in a Thing Called Love,” he says. “But we still couldn’t get a deal. But our agent at the time believed in us and got us on tours with acts like Alice Cooper, the Rolling Stones, Deep Purple and Def Leppard. We became the go-to ‘new classic rock band’ supporting all the oldies!”

Sharing the stage with icons of rock and metal is one thing, but making chart-impacting headway with music that’s not remotely popular beyond boomers is another. But to the surprise of many, “things began to snowball through word of mouth,” and before they knew it, the Darkness were on the precipice of success.

When asked what the dynamic between him and his brother Justin was like then, Dan says, “We’re quite different as people, you know? But it worked, and it still kind of works. [Justin] plays lead, and I play rhythm, which means I’m just a glorified bass player. And Justin is an excellent lead guitarist, and the two shall never meet. We always knew who would do what, so there was never any fighting as far as guitar playing went. We speak the same language and know each other well, so that was to our benefit. Even back then, I would be thinking something on guitar, and Justin would already know what I was going for, and vice versa. It’s telepathic.”

The wave of fanfare associated with the Darkness’ live shows led to Atlantic Records scooping them up. Of course, if you asked Dan Hawkins, he’d remind you that he “knew the record was good but was probably a bit too close to it” to grasp its impending impact fully.

“I remember going to a mastering session and being pretty underwhelmed,” he says. “I was like, ‘Okay, we’ve done it. Fantastic.’ Once we were on the road, it hit me. We were in the back of an old transit van, and we cranked [Permission to Land]; that’s when it became exciting. But did I expect it to become as big as it did? Not at all. But I did find it to be an exciting drunken listen.” [Laughs]

Humble as he is, the reality is *Permission to Land* wasn’t just for drunks and fools — it quickly became a worldwide phenomenon, specifically because of the over-the-top nature of its hit single, “I Believe in a

Thing Called Love.”

“The early campaign worked,” he says. “The early singles were ‘Get Your Hands Off My Woman’ and ‘Growing on Me,’ and then the label released ‘I Believe in a Thing Called Love,’ and things went wild. The video was done properly because this was still when you had \$100,000 budgets. The timing was perfect to put the ball in the net. Looking back, we really did tee it up with that song.”

Retrospect tells us that the Darkness wasn’t long for the world, as they broke up just three years after *Permission to Land*. Why? One could cite drugs, pressure and the age-old dynamic of brothers kicking the ever-living shit out of each other — all of which would be true. But if you ask Hawkins, one thing that didn’t contribute to the demise was success. “We were ready,” he says. “By that point, we were already in our late twenties, quite old for struggling musicians that had been slumming around London for over a decade. When the opportunity to play award shows, headline festivals and tour the world came, we rose to the occasion.”

Despite their resolute nature, according to Hawkins, “We were mentally prepared, but it still surprised us how big it became and how quickly we got there. I remember being on tour and finding out we’d gone from no record deal to things going berserk because we were selling 75,000 records a week in the U.K. I was like, ‘God... what’s going on here?’”

What was going on was that the Darkness had taken over the world. They weren’t just “on the rise” or “hungry and going for it”; they’d become zeitgeist-breakers that fans, press and critics ate up, with most opining down the line that they’d defined the New Wave of Classic Rock.

But Hawkins has a different take. “I don’t know about that. It would have been amazing to have kickstarted a scene where other bands were as successful as we were within that genre. But I don’t think we did.”

Starkly contradicting the common “the Darkness birthed the New Wave of Classic Rock” assertion, Hawkins says, “I feel like a lot of rock bands were already on their way before us, so I’m not sure if we can be

credited for that. In my head, I feel like we were excited about the idea that our coming through could be a turning point for rock, but I don’t think it happened that way. Things went horribly pop and rap as far as big music goes, and it’s never really recovered, in my opinion.”

Regardless of whether Dan and Justin Hawkins’ early work is a precursor for groups like Dirty Honey, Classless Act and Greta Van Fleet, 20 years on, *Permission to Land* remains vital to those who were there to witness its ascent.

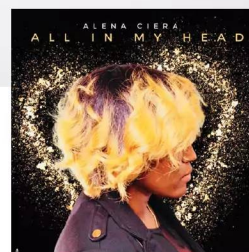
“I do think it’s kind of a classic album,” Hawkins says. “The quality of the songs means it’ll never go out of date. It was so out of step with everything else at the time, and it still is now. Good songs don’t age; sometimes I’ll hear us on the radio, making me smile. If there’s any importance attached to *Permission to Land*, it’s that you don’t have to play the rules. I guess that’s how we’ve inspired other bands most. If you love a certain type of music, don’t hesitate to pursue it just because it’s not popular. For those reasons, I think it would still work if we released it today. If I weren’t a member of the Darkness and heard an album like that, they’d instantly be my new favorite band.”

Though the supporting cast around Justin and Dan Hawkins has changed, they have done what the Gallagher brothers (sorry, Oasis fans) refuse to do — regroup. Since paired back up in 2011, another five records have come and gone, all of which have been well-received. But there’s no denying the magic of *Permission to Land*, aka “the record that started it all,” giving the Darkness its claim to rock ‘n’ roll infamy. As for Dan and Justin, they have “nothing but appreciation” for what the 20-year-old record has afforded them.

“After some time apart, Justin and I were able to put it back together, probably because we realized how much we missed it,” he says. “We now know how precious this thing is, which keeps us focused on having fun. If it weren’t fun, we wouldn’t do it. As for *Permission to Land*, I love the album, and we love playing those songs.

“I saw this thing with Paul McCartney on Instagram,” he says. “Paul was going on about songwriting, and it was so inspirational. He said something like, ‘People ask me why I still write songs even though I’m old, and no one buys them. I do it because I love to do it.’ So even if I was sacked from the Darkness or we were dropped, I’d still be doing this. It’s the same mindset that kept us going before *Permission to Land*, and it keeps us going through today. We love to make music, and it’s still fun. If it stops being fun, we’ll stop.”

"An American Strat can be great, but there's something about the tone versatility with my Japanese Strat that can't be matched," Alena Ciera says



5 FIVE QUESTIONS ALENA CIERA

GW PEERS INTO THE MIND OF THE BUSY DAVID BYRNE AND CEELO GREEN GUITARIST

By Andrew Daly

▶ AFTER PLAYING ALONGSIDE David Byrne [*Talking Heads*] and CeeLo Green [*Gnarls Barkley*], Alena Ciera could've gotten a big head. But no, Ciera took those experiences and weaved them within her guitar-driven tapestry, manifesting as her EP, *All in My Head*. With hopes of success via authenticity, Ciera dialed in with GW for a brief chat on her past, present and future.

Q: How has working with David Byrne and CeeLo Green affected your approach?

Working with different artists makes you realize that they require other things, you know? With David, especially, there were a lot of rhythm and lead-based things specific to his *American Utopia* show; and it was the same with CeeLo. I learned that being a guitarist requires versatility; you can't settle on one thing that might not showcase you.

Q: While writing your music, are you meticulous or more free-form?

I'm somewhere in between. Most of the

stuff on *All in My Head* came from me being home, and an idea would come, and I'd start recording it. I'd draw on experiences, mumble some words, and then nine times outta ten, something that happened in my life would bleed through. My songs are about things I've gone through, moments with friends and random moments of spontaneity.

Q: Every guitarist is trying to convey a message. What's yours?

If you look at a song like "Change Your Mind," that's an example of all I've been through. It's been rough out there as a musician, and that song talks about a lot of the bad stuff. I guess the message is going back, learning how to cope, figuring out how to get through that rough stuff and uplifting my spirit to keep creating.

Q: What gear are you leaning on most to relay that message?

I've got a Boss GT-1000 [*Guitar Effects Processor*], which has some solid effects like delay, reverb and a lot of clean tones. I also leaned on my Kemper, which is nice

"Being a guitarist requires versatility; you can't settle on one thing that might not showcase you"

and easy. As for guitars, I love my Japanese Fender Strat. It pairs so well with my [*Fender Hot Rod*] DeVille. Don't get me wrong — an American Strat can be great, but there's something about the tone versatility with my Japanese Strat that can't be matched.

Q: What's next for you?

I'll be touring in 2024, and I'm focusing on that. I've got more new music I'm working on, but the focus is getting some shows under my belt supporting *All in My Head*. I'll put some live footage out there, get on stage with other guitarists and keep pushing myself to do more and achieve my goals.



Ryoji Shinomoto in action
with his Jackson Kelly

Ryujin

RYOJI SHINOMOTO RECENTLY RENAMED HIS LONGTIME BAND, BUT HE'S STICKING TO THE TENETS OF "SAMURAI METAL" WHILE SHREDDING ON A JACKSON... AND THE OCCASIONAL SHAMISEN

By Gregory Adams

THOUGH RYOJI SHINOMOTO just recently became Ryujin's (usually stylized as RYUJIN) resident shredder, he's paradoxically been the Japanese combo's lead guitarist for more than a decade. That's because the band recently went through a name change, rebranding as Ryujin for their new, now self-titled album, following a series of releases as Gyze.

What remains on pace is how the Hokkaido-based outfit continue to fine-tune their singular brand of "samurai metal," a stylistic flex that melds power metal hooks with brutal melodi-death flair and traditional Japanese tonality. Take how Shinomoto's primarily blitzing through the runs on "Raijin and Fujin" and "Gekokujo" with his custom, mirror-plated Jackson Kelly, but also loves doubling lines while speedily picking at a traditional three-string shamisen, or piping into a bamboo dragon flute. He's also prone to

rip-snorting through solos using Eastern Ryo pentatonic scales. And as Ryujin's vocalist, Shinomoto growls out references to mythology and anime in Japanese and English. Those hyper-localized attributes, he argues, are what sets Ryujin apart from their contemporaries.

"There is a custom that the more Western the style, the better... [but] flowers that bloom with admiration quickly wither," Shinomoto laments of his surrounding metal scene. "Don't get me wrong; this doesn't mean we don't do Western things — I use an electric guitar and sometimes even a harmonic minor scale — but I want to make music that doesn't exist in the West."

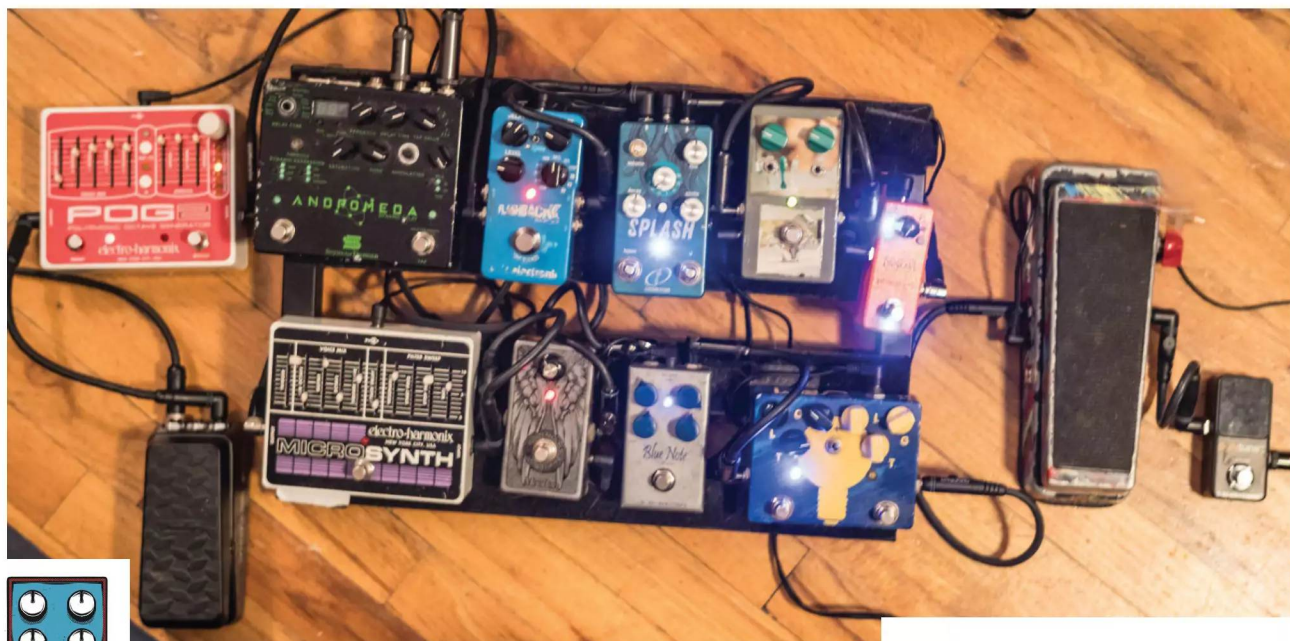
Ryujin is the act's first album for new label home Napalm Records, and likewise their first project since befriending Trivium heavy-hitter Matt Heafy, who produced the album. Shinomoto was curi-

"I want to make music that doesn't exist in the West"

ous whether he'd trade solos with Heafy on *Ryujin* — noting that he'd learned his share of Trivium phrases in his youth — but so far, the latter's been more of a supportive co-writer than a co-riffer.

Shinomoto proudly takes a guitar-first approach on *Ryujin*, but it's still damned impressive to hear him trilling through manic death metal inflections on a high-tension shamisen neck, all while using a bachi — essentially a long-handled, rigid plectrum with less give than your everyday pick. Nevertheless, the musician says he's always seeking ways to level up his three-string style.

"There are things I don't like about the shamisen," he says. "The tuning is not stable; I wish I had a shamisen with modern pegs. [And] if I could make an electric shamisen, I might be able to use it on metal stages. If any instrument company sees this, please make one for me!"



MY PEDALBOARD

ALEX SKOLNICK

WHAT TESTAMENT'S GENRE-HOPPING AX-SLINGER SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

▶ “I PLAY MANY styles, so I need a board that serves many purposes. My current board has plenty of tone options, flexibility and the potential to add on without losing quality. It’s nothing crazy — primarily standard effects — but I have some weird, oddball sounds if needed. This board has come through for me during countless gigs and sessions for hire. It could be tidier, but it’s been through some changes of late, so I guess you could say — as is always the case — it’s a work in progress.

“Starting with my offboard effects at the front, I’ve got my TC Electronic Polytune 3 Noir and my JAM Pedals Wahcko [wah]. Once we get to my onboard stuff, I’ve got a [JAM Pedals] TubeDreamer 88 [overdrive], which goes into my J. Rockett [Audio Designs] Blue Note Overdrive. That leads into this unnamed custom boost pedal by Moollon. From there, I’ve got an MXR Phase 95 Mini, and an EHX [Analog Guitar] MicroSynth.

“The MicroSynth goes into my JAM Pedals Waterfall Chorus, and after that, I’ve got my Crazy Tube Circuits Splash Reverb. The last two onboard pedals are my TC Electronic Flashback Delay and a technically out-of-line Seymour Duncan Andromeda Dynamic Digital Delay. Then

we go offboard again with my EHX Pog [*Octave Generator*] and my Jim Dunlop volume pedal.”

"It's inspiring, and with a decent amp, I could get Seventies-sounding vibes like Tommy Bolin and Eddie Van Halen"



**Testament's
Alex Skolnick in action
in Madrid, Spain,
February 28, 2020**

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

"It would probably be the MXR Phase 95. This is a strange choice since I don't always keep it on, and phaser stuff is far from essential. But it's inspiring, and with a decent amp, I could get Seventies-sounding vibes like Tommy Bolin and Eddie Van Halen."

Sue Foley

THE AUSTIN BLUSER ON HOW HER AUDIENCES PLAY A ROLE IN HER SHOWS, AND HER UPCOMING TRIBUTE TO PIONEERING WOMEN GUITAR PLAYERS

By Jim Beaugez

THE FIRST TIME Sue Foley saw blues music performed live, she was taken fully by the relationship between the performer and the audience.

“The connection between the audience and the band was so key that the audience seemed to be creating the music, too, which is really quite magical,” she says. “I’m not sure audiences realize that they’re making the performance.”

Now, as a veteran blues musician herself, she gets to experience the phenomenon from the other side of the stage. Credit the fans who turned out for Foley’s May 2023 gig at the Continental Club in Austin, then, for the fiery guitar workout she gives on her first live album. Foley stacked the set

list on the recently released *Live in Austin Vol. 1*, with classics from bluesmen Howlin’ Wolf and Willie Dixon, as well as tunes penned by Bob Dylan and Cheap Trick alongside a few of her own.

Foley leaned on her tried-and-true pink paisley Fender Telecasters — the namesake of her 2021 studio set, *Pinky’s Blues* — plugged into her ’59 Bassman reissue with minimal stompboxes to create her tone on the album. “I’m based in Texas, and Texas is about tone,” she says. “You don’t get tone from pedals; you get it from your hands and by using a good, strong solid amp and a good guitar. If you don’t have good tone with just your amp and your guitar, ain’t no pedal gonna help you.”

Next up for Foley is *One Guitar Woman*, a collection of originals and songs by Memphis Minnie, Lydia Mendoza, Maybelle Carter, Elizabeth Cotten and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. She recorded the album,

“I’m based in Texas, and Texas is about tone,” Sue Foley says

“If you don’t have good tone with just your amp and your guitar, ain’t no pedal gonna help you”

which comes out March 29, as a tribute to the pioneering women of guitar, using a flamenco guitar built by Salvador Castillo and employing styles like Piedmont fingerpicking. There’s even a rendition of the classical composition “Romance in A Minor” by Paganini as a nod to French classical guitarist and composer Ida Presti, a child prodigy who played professionally until her death in 1967.

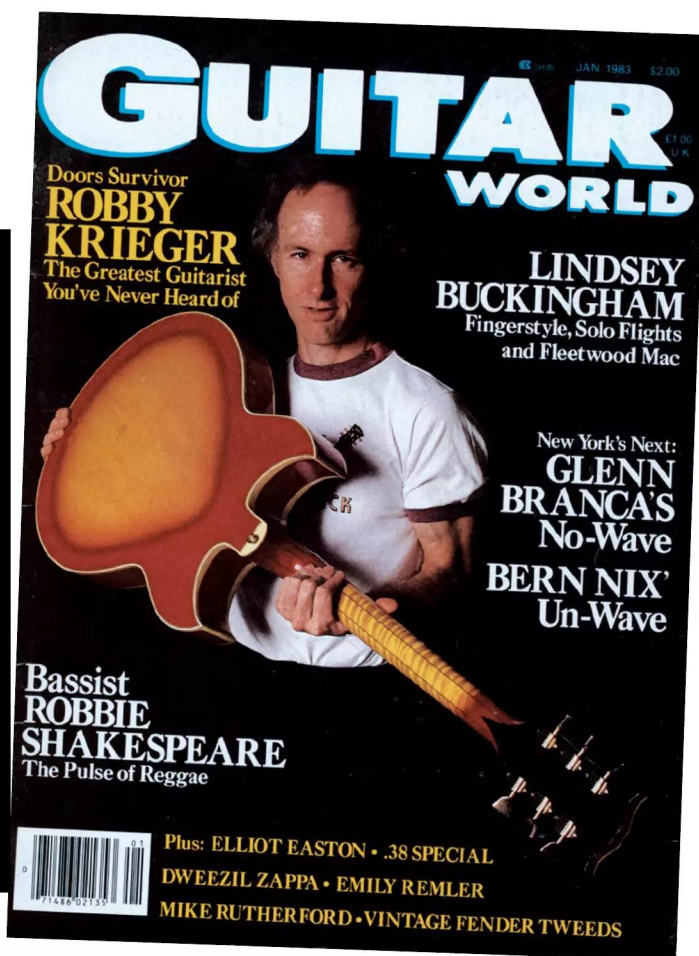
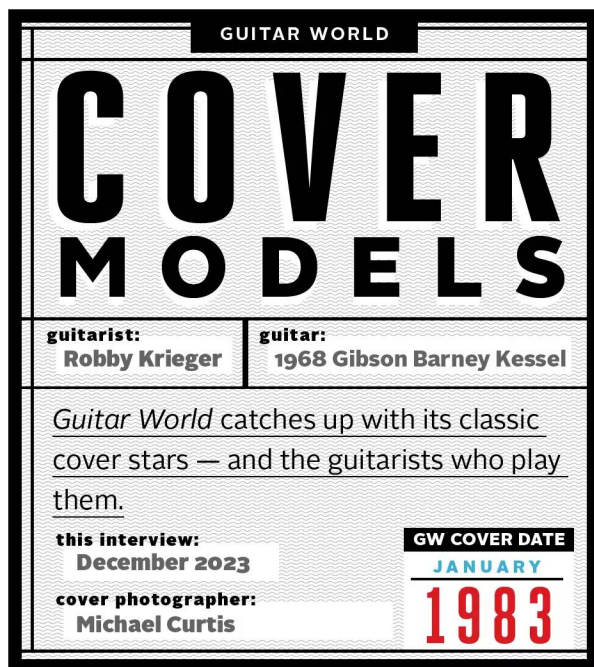
“The [common] thread is me, and it’s sort of a reflective study, because I’m taking myself and my guitar and I’m doing their thing,” she says. “Even playing blues on a nylon-string [guitar] — it is different, but it really works.”



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Telecasters, Castillo nylon-string
- **AMPS** 1959 Fender Bassman 4x10 reissue





Interview by Andrew Daly

Q: Where and when did you buy this guitar?

I got it at Norman's Rare Guitars in Los Angeles in the early Eighties. The guitar would have had to be from the Sixties; as I recall, it was a '68. I'd never buy one from the Seventies because I've always felt that there's no such thing as a good guitar from that decade.

Q: Why did you choose it?

I had been looking for a Gibson L-7 from the Fifties or Sixties, but I didn't find one I liked. Then I came upon the Barney Kessel and was immediately drawn to it because it was a double-cut, which I liked, and it was a good jazz guitar. I always loved Wes Montgomery and felt that Sunburst would be the perfect tool for that style.

Q: Did you use it on any notable recordings?

I might have, but honestly, I didn't buy that guitar to record with. I liked messing

around with it in my free time, and around that time, I was playing a lot of jazz guitar at home, so the [Gibson] SG wasn't what I'd be using for that.

Q: What did the Barney Kessel allow you to do that the SG didn't?

It was easier to get that Wes Montgomery sound. I liked how the octaves sounded, which I guess is one of many differences between a hollow-body guitar and an SG.

Q: Why did you choose this particular guitar for your GW cover shoot?

Because I liked how it looked! That would have been the driving force since it wasn't being used to record. I've always been into jazz, and people always talk about the SG, so I wanted to have a different look.

Q: Do you still own this guitar?

I do. I just saw it the other day, coincidentally. It's been forever since I played it; I should get it out and play it again. I remember it being a great guitar, which is

"I'd never buy one from the Seventies because I've always felt that there's no such thing as a good guitar from that decade"

probably why I bought it!

Some very trivial trivia: Inside the January 1983 issue (pictured above), Robby is misspelled "Robbie," and his guitar is misidentified as a Gibson 355. Come on, vintage GW — get your facts straight!

If you'd like to nominate a particular Guitar World cover for the Cover Models page, let us know. Please be as specific (with the issue date/cover star) as you can.

TRIPTYCH

THE POWER OF THREE

Pushing the boundaries of vintage Strat tones into uncharted territories of super heavy fuzz-drenched riffing



"For me, the perfect Strat tone has been an ongoing journey for the last few years, and I'm happy to say that the journey has ended with the Triptych single coils"

RABEA MASSAAD

BEA



bareknucklepickups.co.uk

Bare Knuckle



↑

HIS FIRST
Plastic Letters (1977)

.....
The Hunter (1982)
HIS LAST

 ↓



Blondie-era Frank Infante
 with an early Sixties
 National Westwood 77

FRANK INFANTE

The former Blondie guitarist revisits his classic riffs and solos on “One Way or Another,” “Heart of Glass,” “Call Me,” “Rapture” and more

By Joe Bosso

EVEN IF YOU didn’t know that Frank Infante is a Jersey boy, it wouldn’t take you long to figure it out. Born and raised in Jersey City, next door to Hoboken and a tunnel or bridge away from Manhattan, the 71-year-old guitarist still has his gritty North Jersey accent intact.

It’s a tone and attitude thing, a certain street flair to the way he occasionally says “dis” for “this” or “dat” for “that.” When he talks about guitar parts, it sometimes comes out as “guitar pahts.” And as for the way he says “forget about it,” well, fuhgeddaboutit.

Back in the 1970s, Infante brought

plenty of tone, attitude and flair to a New York City band that wasn’t lacking in any of those areas: Blondie, the pioneering, shape-shifting outfit, led by guitarist Chris Stein and singer Debbie Harry, who, over a six-year span, deftly — and in many ways, presciently — mixed punk and new wave with the sounds of Sixties girl groups, garage rock, disco, reggae and hip-hop. The band was one of the first success stories out of CBGB’s, and by the time their run ended in 1982, they had dominated the airwaves with a steady succession of smash hits like “Heart of Glass,” “One Way or Another,” “Call Me,” “The Tide Is High,” “Atomic” and “Rapture.”

Infante remembers the downtown New York scene where it all started. “It was a cool time,” he says. “You didn’t have to be a brilliant musician — you just had to play your songs and have fun. Right before Blondie, you had the New York Dolls and other bands doing the androgynous thing. Then CBGBs and Max’s started up, and what we could call punk and new wave came in. CB’s was more of the college kids on a pseudo-intellectual trip, while Max’s was pure street rock ’n’ roll. Blondie played both places.”

During this time, Infante bounced between North Jersey and Manhattan, playing in a number of blues-based hard rock groups, most notably WWIII. “I started using Gibson guitars and Marshall amps in that band,” he says. “It was also the first band I was in that did all-original material. We were a four-piece — guitar, bass, drums and a singer — so I did all the guitar parts and improvised a lot. We were four uncompromising delinquents. We’d show up at places and take over, just playing loud and heavy. I liked that approach.” Soon enough, however, that approach and sound began to fall out of favor, and as Infante recalls, “a lot of the stuff I liked just wasn’t cool anymore. I never stopped liking it, but I could see things were starting to change, and Blondie was a part of that.”

Infante was already friends with Blondie’s drummer, fellow New Jerseyan Clem Burke. “Clem is from Bayonne, so he and I crossed paths in all of our bands,” he says. Eventually, he

CHRIS GABRIN/REDFERNS

“I DIDN’T THINK WE WERE PUNK. THE SEX PISTOLS WERE REALLY GOOD, BUT THERE WASN’T

befriended Harry and Stein, then partners in romance as well as music. “I liked Debbie and Chris as people first — forget about the music. They saw me play, and I’d go to their gigs. Blondie was different from a lot of the other bands. They were having fun and people liked them. There was an almost amateur quality to their thing, but it added to their charm. Gradually, I started sitting in with them. It was very casual.”

Blondie’s self-titled debut album, released in 1976 on Private Stock Records, found supporters in the U.K. and Australia, but it went otherwise unnoticed in the States. Ahead of the recording of their follow-up, 1977’s *Plastic Letters*, this time for Chrysalis Records, group members Stein, Harry, Burke and keyboardist Jimmy Destri were dealt a blow when bassist Gary Valentine tendered his resignation. “Clem called me and told me about it,” Infante says, “and I said, ‘If you want, I’ll come in and play bass.’ They already knew me, so that was it. I wound up playing bass and guitar on the second record. After that, I stayed with the band.”

Infante proved to be a versatile and valuable asset to Blondie, and with the addition of Nigel Harrison on bass, he switched over to guitar just in time for the band’s ascent to the top of the charts. Among his standout contributions are the rip-snorting riffs on “One Way or Another” (from the 1979 album *Parallel Lines*) the seething blasts on “Call Me” (a Number 1 single from the *American Gigolo* soundtrack) and in what is arguably his finest recorded moment, the gargantuan, whacked-out solo that bum-rushes “Rapture” (another Number 1, from 1980’s *Autoamerican*).

Egos, drugs and personal resentments loomed large within the Blondie camp, and despite his solid and inventive performances, Infante’s relationships with Stein and Harry grew contentious. It all came to a head leading up to the recording of *The Hunter* in 1982, when he was pushed out of the group. Although he won a lawsuit to remain a member, he was sidelined for the tour in support of the album (Eddie Martinez took his place). By now, Blondie’s drawing power had waned (they played to half-empty halls), and soon after they called it quits. When the band eventually reformed in 1997, they again excluded Infante — and

Harrison as well. The two attempted to sue the band’s founding members from touring with the name Blondie, but their case was rejected. And when the group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006, Infante, Harrison and bassist Gary Valentine were blocked from performing, despite Infante’s onstage plea for unity.

Yet for all the acrimony, the guitarist harbors no ill will toward his one-time bandmates. “Sometimes, when a Blondie song comes on the radio, I’ll turn it up,” he says. “It depends on mood, though. There’s other times when hearing it makes me feel a little stressed-out. It goes both ways. But hey, the music is great — I’ll say that.”

Do you feel as though your contributions to Blondie aren’t always recognized?

There’s a lot of misinformation out there. If you look on Wikipedia, it says that the band did *Plastic Letters* as a four-piece and that Chris Stein played guitar and bass. No — I played guitar and bass. I did all the bass. My involvement with the band is always called into question. I saw this video of somebody breaking down “Heart of Glass.” The guy said, “And here’s Chris Stein’s guitar part.” I was like, “No, that’s my guitar part.” That kind of thing’s been happening for years.

Going into the studio to record *Parallel Lines*, was there a feeling that it was a make-or-break album?

With *Plastic Letters*, we were an underground group. We were considered new wave or punk, but we weren’t a big band. Chrysalis Records certainly hoped we’d become something other than an underground thing. When we got to *Parallel Lines*, we worked with Mike Chapman as our producer. He was a hitmaker. Forget about it — he’s the best guy I ever worked with. Mike knew what had to be done.

What was it like working with Mike?

He was very different from Richard Gottehrer, who did *Plastic Letters*. Richard would have us do three or four takes, and then he’d pick the best one. With Chapman, you’d never find any bad takes. He’d erase the tape and then start over. So there was only one take — the good take.

Did you and Chris Stein discuss how

you two would divvy up the guitar duties?

When I switched to full-on guitar, that changed the sound of the band dramatically. Chris and I had very different guitar styles. It wasn’t like we said, “You do this, I’ll do that.” There were things Chris couldn’t play, and there were things I couldn’t play. Two-guitar bands are kind of tricky, but Mike Chapman sorted that out for us; without him, it would have been chaos. Usually, I’d go into a room with Nigel, Clem and Mike to work out a song. We’d figure out the arrangement, and after that I knew my parts.

Speaking about the making of *Parallel Lines*, Mike Chapman called Blondie “musically, the worst band” he’d ever worked with, but he singled you out as being “an amazing guitarist.”

Yeah, Mike and I got along really well. That might have contributed to some of the problems I had in the band. I was getting attention from him, and the others sort of resented it ‘cause I was the new guy. All I know is we were doing what was happening, and it was all moving forward. Like I said, when I got involved with the band, it was sort of amateur, but good amateur — like Vaudeville.

Your riff on “One Way or Another” — what a dynamite sound!

That’s probably my ‘68 Les Paul goldtop through a Marshall. I had a Les Paul Deluxe and a Custom. I used all of them, but I think on that song it’s the goldtop. That was my guitar — put it through a Marshall, and that’s the sound. I never went in for too many effects. Occasionally, I used a bit of chorus or echo, but I usually plugged right into the amp.

How did you feel about the band starting to embrace disco on “Heart of Glass”?

I was fine with it. I mean, I didn’t think we were punk. The Sex Pistols were really good, but there wasn’t any variety. We had a lot of stuff going on. We were a pop group. I don’t even consider “Heart of Glass” a disco song; it was very experimental. Somehow, that beat appealed to people in discos, but it wasn’t the plan.

Were you in the studio when Robert Fripp came in to play on “Fade Away and Radiate”?

ANY VARIETY. WE HAD A LOT OF STUFF GOING ON. WE WERE A POP GROUP”

Oh, yeah. It was cool. We just knew him, so it was like, "Come down and play!" Everything then was very positive. Fripp even played live with us a few times. He fit in with us because we weren't doing the straight-ahead thing like the Ramones.

The twangy, spaghetti Western guitar lines on "Atomic" — was that you?

That's me and Chris. What happened there was, Bruce Springsteen was in the next studio, so we'd see each other — "Hey, how you doin'?" He had a Gretsch Country Gentleman, and I asked him if I could borrow it. That's what I used on "Atomic." Chris and I play the main riff, but I do the whammy bar part at the end of it. Then when you hear Debbie singing, "Take me tonight," that's me doing all the other stuff.

You played that brilliant solo on "Rapture." Chris Stein said to me once that it's one of his favorite solos you ever played. Was it really done in only two takes?

It was. What happened was, I wasn't involved with the track. Chapman and Nigel were in the studio, and I came down to hear what they were doing. Mike played me the track and went, "There! Come in there." I didn't have a guitar on me, but Mike had these two Warlock guitars — a 10-string and a six-string. I plugged the six-string into a Marshall and ran it down to get an idea of what he wanted. Then I did it again and that was it. It just came out of me. There was no rethinking it. Sometimes you can refine a solo too much and it sounds stale. The "Atomic" solo had to be spontaneous. I probably would have lost it if we kept going.

Your rugged rhythm playing on "Call Me" made that song come alive.

I think Clem and I were the only two people who played on it. It was a different song before I came in; they just had the drum machine beating. I played the guitar part on my goldtop, and Giorgio Moroder said, "Oh, wow, it's totally different now." Again, I didn't go home and work it out; it was totally spontaneous.

The overall feeling I get from you about your time in Blondie is, it was fun... till it wasn't.



Blondie in the process of shooting the "Picture This" promo video in London, August 21, 1978. [from left] Frank Infante, Nigel Harrison, Clem Burke, Debbie Harry and Chris Stein

Yeah, sure. See, in the beginning, we didn't know what we were doing. We didn't know where this thing was headed and that we'd have these huge hit records. We were just going along. The more popular we got, things got weirder and weirder. There seemed to be some sort of problem going on, but I didn't know what it was. There might have been some personality crap — egos or whatever. Mike Chapman was essential to the band. You needed him and the band to make it what it was. It was like a chemical formula.

These days, do you have any kind of relationship with your ex-Blondie mates?

[Laughs] You mean non-relationship. Actually, Clem I'm friends with. Nigel I'm friends with. Jimmy I'm sort of friends with. Debbie and Chris, whatever their thing is, I don't talk to them. It's not like I hate them; they're just not around. I do feel disappointed, though, the way everything went down. I never even got to play the solo to "Rapture" live. All this stuff I'm supposedly known for, I never got to enjoy it. With *The Hunter*, they went out and hired some other guy to be me. They went on tour, but that didn't work out and they had to stop right in the middle. That was the end of it, I guess. Debbie wanted

to be solo or whatever. That went on until the reunion.

Which you weren't part of. And you weren't allowed to play with the band during the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction.

Yeah. The plan was for the four of them to go up and accept their awards, and then Nigel and I would go up. But what happened was, when they went up, I went up with them. I wasn't supposed to, but I did. I said to Debbie, "Can we play?" You know — me and Nigel. We were the ones who came up with the parts. We were going into the Hall of Fame, not these hired hands. I wasn't trying to be a smart ass. Before then, I was trying to contact them, because every time I talked to the Hall of Fame, they said, "You've got to talk to Debbie." But she wasn't communicating. I thought it would have been a good thing if she said we could play. Everybody would have been happy.

The sad part is, all the members who did those records are still alive. But we never got it together to play again. I'd be interested to see what would happen if we got the whole band and Mike Chapman back together to do an album. It would be nice to do it while we're all still around. **GW**

BRIAN CROOKE/REDFERNS

"THE MORE POPULAR WE GOT, THINGS GOT WEIRDER AND WEIRDER"

**Technology.
Empowerment.
Performance.**



**David Gilmour
DG20**

Made in California
Since 1976



DREAM JOB

HOW GUITARIST **SAM SHIPSTONE**'S SIDEWINDING RIFFS (AND G&L ASAT) KEEP **YARD ACT**'S DARK, DANCEY POST-PUNK-FUNK DELICIOUSLY OFF-KILTER

STORY BY ANDREW DALY PHOTO BY DAN SULLIVAN

FORMED DURING THE Covid lockdown in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England, Yard Act's initial 2019 lineup featured Sammy Robinson on guitar. But that didn't last long, and by 2020, Sam Shipstone solidified the recording lineup for Yard Act's 2022 EP, *100% Endurance* (Elton John Version), and their first album, 2022's *The Overload*.

Both were well-received but hard to pin down, with Yard Act being labeled everything from post-punk to indie rock to Italo disco-infused randomness. Throw in Shipstone's textural licks, which err toward subtle minimalism as opposed to overt showboating, and you have a recipe for alt-darling success.

And the twists and turns didn't end there, with Yard Act's brand-new full-length, *Where's My Utopia?* skewing toward sounds akin to Oingo Boingo and the Talking Heads. But interestingly, Shipstone's early influences were decidedly dad-rock-leaning. "The big ones early on were Led Zeppelin and Radiohead," Shipstone says. "Those shaped me early on

while I was in Leeds. But once I started playing music properly, in Leeds, there was a great DIY noise rock scene. I played in some space rock bands with blown-out effects and some backend bluesy vibes."

It's a good thing Shipstone's musical background is diverse, as Yard Act is the sort of band that alternates between the need to step back and play subtle rhythms and demanding that Shipstone shove himself to the forefront to reel off some utterly gob-smacking leads.

But it wasn't easy to get to that point, as Yard Act was initially a mere side effect of idle hands. "Yard Act came about as a lockdown thing," Shipstone says. "We didn't play a single live show, so the way we did the early stuff was sending over vocals and robotic drums, and I'd add some guitars. The sounds were quite pokey, but I found it all to be very attractive."

Given the uncertain nature of those lockdown days, who knows if Shipstone intended for Yard Act to get this far; regardless, he's staring down *Where's My Utopia?*, which is primed to better *The Over-*



Yard Act guitarist
Sam Shipstone in action

**“A LOT IS GOING ON
WITH MY GUITAR, BUT
IT’S A RHYTHM THING
FOR THE MOST PART”**

load. And thankfully, once on stage, Yard Act not only gelled, but their juices flowed faster. Still, the band’s place in the world remains unknown, so it’s a good thing they’re sitting on a handful of gorgeously off-kilter cuts.

As for what’s next, Shipstone confides: “Fuck knows; I guess we’ll write more music. I think we’ve all benefited from this collaboration. I expect more of that will happen. So I’d guess it’ll be more writing, a fuck load of shows — and we’ll see where that takes us.”

The guitars within Yard Act’s music are underscored and textural. What’s your process?

Yard Act, the recording project, is quite different from Yard Act, the live band. As a live band, we’re a rock three-piece with a vocalist. So when we play live, the guitars are a bit more performative, louder, gnarlier and flamboyant. But as a recording project, the main thing with this band is the vocals; once we have those, it’s about trying to add something that might be odd. We’re doing a lot of dancey pop music now, so I try to give the music something that is not so smooth and not overly obvious.

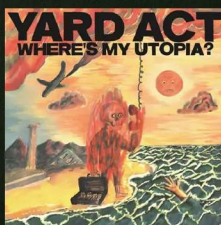
Did finally getting on stage together alter your approach overall?

I think so. That’s precisely the case. All the amplification and distortion affected things and made certain aspects more prominent. And the fact that our songs have quite a bit of layering led to certain sounds becoming much more to the forefront when we play them live — especially considering we’re only a three-piece band.

And how did the culmination of all that shape *Where’s My Utopia?*

We released *The Overload* during lockdown and never played it live as a band, not even in a room. Because we couldn’t play live, as soon as *The Overload* was released, the writing for *Where’s My Utopia?* kicked off. Any time we weren’t doing press, we were writing, and then, once we did play live, that altered our process because we felt more locked in. But we still did the recording using a lot of computers because we thought it was a very creative way of doing things, so the process didn’t entirely change.

Many artists reference certain songs as ‘eureka moments’, where their record began



[from left]
Ryan Needham,
Sam Shipstone,
James Smith
and Jay Russell
(the soggy skeleton remains
unidentified)



to make sense. Did that happen to you?

Interestingly, songs on *Where's My Utopia*? are written two years apart. But the first song I remember where it started to feel good was "Fizzy Fish." There's something about the groove of that song that I loved. What I like about this record is that there are many songs with a clear lyrical narrative, which led to me adding some guitar parts that I feel are, at times, stronger than the first record. Overall, there are more dance tunes but a darker and slightly more aggressive atmosphere.

How did the guitars come together on the first two singles, "Dream Job" and "Petroleum"?

Pretty much every Yard Act song starts with a very repetitive drum and bass loop. And then, once [vocalist] James [Smith] adds lyrical context to things, it begins to solidify, and I can add guitars. The only song that wasn't like that was "Blackpool Illuminations," which started with a guitar part.

But overall, the songs come from a rhythmic place, and I think you can hear that in "Dream Job" and "Petroleum." The approach was kind of boring, but it's like when you play on the B string and leave the E droning, you know? So many riffs do that, and I've got a Spotify playlist with 100 songs just like that. So I started doing riffs like that, took one of them, and that's how those songs — especially "Petroleum" — started.

Does your mindset change much between rhythms and leads?

My logic when it comes to writing for this band is whenever there's a vocal idea that is not a hook, meaning when James delivers lyrics, I need to step back. And when he's not doing that, my guitar can come forward. When we started doing demos, I was doing too much noodling, which became quite distracting, so I had to change. My big lesson was that I needed to step back and be rhythmic. It's a dream job because a lot is going on with my guitar, but it's a rhythm thing for the most part. But there are these moments where I get to step forward and do some fantastic lead guitar parts. That's the basic give and take between the two for me.

Do you layer with different guitars in the studio to create textural sounds?

No, I don't. But I might have used more guitars on *Where's My Utopia*? than I did on *The Overload*. But when it comes down to it, my main guitar in the studio and when we play live is my G&L ASAT, which has those interesting pickups. They're not overly clear, and quite nasty, and sound so good when hot. But I borrowed someone's [Fender] Telecaster for "Fizzy Fish." Something about the Tele had me absolutely slamming that day, and I came upon that riff through that, which was just so satisfying. But for the most part, it was all the G&L, with a bit of that Tele and a random baritone guitar on "An Illusion."

My main guitar is an ASAT Classic made of solid swamp ash. The MFD pickups are brilliant, but many people don't understand them. Did you find them hard to get used to?

Ah, yes! Mine is solid swamp ash, too. They are brilliant guitars. And with the MFDs, yeah, I had seen videos with loads of different types of Tele pickups, but they really did stand out. When I got the G&L, I had seen videos of people trying to play them quite cleanly, but there wasn't that traditional single-coil clarity. If I had gone by those videos alone, I'd have passed over the MFDs. But I learned that if you make them hot with a pickup booster and then add a little EQ and distortion, these pick-

ups cut through nicely when you make them hot. Once I got them dialed in, I felt so present, and when I was really going hard and loud, it was great. But they handle lows and quiet stuff, too. They really are lovely pickups. Is that your experience, too?

Definitely a similar experience. They're single coils but have a Pgo vibe, only with more dynamic mid-range. Rather than dimming them and rolling off, I essentially started at zero and rolled on.

Right. That's exactly it, isn't it? I also love the amount of feedback you get, which is quite strange. It took me a while to realize how to control it. With most guitars, if you lay the headstock over the amp, you'll get continuous tone and feedback, but with these pickups, they just cut through that for some reason. But after that, there's a whole new type of feedback, which I've only ever heard with the G&L and these pickups.

The MFDs also interact with effects differently than traditional single-coil pickups. What pedals have you settled on?

For live and while recording, it became essential to get loud and hot sounds. I got a Union Tube & Transistor [C-Verb] system, and that's been the core of it. I had started using a pickup booster on the first record, but there's a limit to the benefits without using true distortion. Most of the grittiness in this band comes from the amp gain, but I had seen people like Jack White use the Union Tube, and I felt it was lovely because it gives a good base for distortion. I also use a Fulltone [Mosfet] Full Drive. I love that pedal because it's also got some distortion and a bit of compression, and when you really slap it, it immediately hits back in a very satisfying way.

Is there a track from *Where's My Utopia*? that best represents the player you are right now?

From a studio perspective, it's hard to pick one that's totally at the heart of who we are. I think they will come out a bit stronger when we play them live. But I suppose a song like "Grifter's Grief" is a good example because it's got this wonky solo and some quite loud and stupid guitar playing at the end. [Laughs] **GW**

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE UP TO 80%

PLUS GET 2 FREE GIFTS



ORDER FORM

COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW & RETURN WITH PAYMENT TO: GUITAR WORLD PO BOX 2029 LANGHORNE, PA 19047-9957

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

- ☐ **FOR FASTEST SERVICE**
CALL 1-800-456-6441
AND MENTION CODE B4DMAG
- ☐ **PAYMENT ENCLOSED**
(CHECK PAYABLE TO GUITAR WORLD)
- ☐ **24 PRINT ISSUES**
FOR \$43.99
- ☐ **12 PRINT ISSUES**
FOR \$23.95

T-SHIRT SIZE

☐ M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ XXL

BILL TO ADDRESS

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

E-MAIL

☐ Check here for news and offers from other Future brands.

SHIP TO ADDRESS

☐ **YES! THIS IS A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

*Offer is valid on US orders only, visit us at magazinesdirect.com or call 1-800-289-9839 for international pricing and other subscription options. Free gifts are fulfilled once payment is processed. T-shirt design may vary. Digital book will be emailed 7-10 days after payment is processed, device is not included. Your first issue and t-shirt will arrive 4-6 weeks after your payment is processed, please allow additional time for overseas deliveries. Newsstand cover price is \$9.99, 12 issues annually.

The beauty — and irony
— of Adrian Belew is
that his sound is in
constant flux, but few
guitarists are so easily
identifiable

Adrian Belew at
home in Wisconsin,
December 15, 1986



Omar Rodríguez-
López (and his
pedalboard) in
action in Seattle,
June 8, 2016



LOTS OF GUITAR nerds would consider Adrian Belew a virtuoso, and it's hard to argue against them. But he's really a virtuoso of sound and form more than show-off technique: As a one-time member of prog rock institution King Crimson, a solo artist balancing Beatles-like ear worms and outré studio craft, and an A-list hired gun for legends like Talking Heads, Frank Zappa and David Bowie, he's created his own *language* on the guitar. Literally no one else could sound like him if they wanted to — partly because his skill set is so distinctive, partly because he approaches effects pedals like a painter would colors.

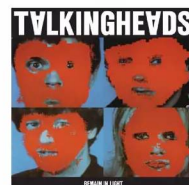
For Belew, head-turning gigs begat head-turning gigs in the late Seventies and early Eighties: In a legendary three-year studio streak (not even mentioning his stage work), he appeared on Zappa's *Sheik Yerbouti*, David Bowie's *Stage and Lodger* and Talking Heads' *Remain in Light* — solidifying his joyously wacky approach to sound design and an aggressive rhythmic energy that drew on his background as a drummer. In the reformed Crimson, he teamed with bandmate Robert Fripp to create a startling guitar style drawing, at various

points, from the glow of New Wave, the bombastic snarl of metal, and the interlocking principles of gamelan. And he's continued to innovate with each band, album, and one-off collaboration.

The beauty — and irony — of Belew is that his sound is in constant flux, but few guitarists are so easily identifiable. No list could even scratch the surface, but below we round up 10 of his definitive guitar moments.

10. "YOUNG LIONS" (ADRIAN BELEW, FROM 1990'S *YOUNG LIONS*)

Belew's fifth solo album is a bit of a grab-bag, source-wise — compiling covers of The Traveling Wilburys ("Not Alone Anymore") and, technically, himself (King Crimson's "Heart-beat"); two link-ups with Bowie ("Pretty Pink Rose" and "Gunman"); and a track that samples radio evangelist Prophet Omega ("I Am What I Am"). You'd think the vibe would be chaotic, but *Young Lions* could be his most consistently melodic work, kicking off with the sharpest pop song in his catalog, the chugging title track. The primary guitar part is more subtle and funky than Crimson fans may have expected, showcasing his knack for Beatles-y chord changes. But there's also some good old-fashioned Belew animal noises (elephants and lions, at the very



ALL HAIL THE TZWANG BAR KING!

ADRIAN BELEW'S 10
definitive guitar moments

BY RYAN REED

least), matching the mood of this “hot tribal night.”

9. “THIS IS WHAT I BELIEVE IN” (ADRIAN BELEW, FROM 1992’S *INNER REVOLUTION*)

Belew opens this introspective rocker, a sort of bluesier cousin of King Crimson’s “Neal and Jack and Me,” with several sweetly sung sentiments: “*Hold tight to your faith / Don’t let nobody make you jaded / Your love is precious / Give it to somebody who deserves it / This is what I believe in / Hold tight to yourself / Don’t let nobody give you hell.*” But the song grows darker as it grinds on, with Belew warning of a “dangerous,” cannibalistic world “full of homicidals and terrorists.” Still, by the song’s conclusion, you’re left with a warm sense of optimism — urged on by some of his most colorful guitar work, including an instrumental bridge full of violin-like churning and a solo that recalls the soulfulness of Stevie Wonder’s harmonica.

8. “THE MOMUR” (ADRIAN BELEW, FROM 1982’S *LONE RHINO*)

Falling somewhere between palm-muted power-pop and ragged New Wave punk, “The Momur” is Belew at peak silliness. Between swarming feedback, atonal fills, and an impressively sustained solo, the guitarist channels the absurdity of Zappa, sharing a B-movie-type tale his old pal and musical mentor might have appreciated. Here’s the plot: The previous night, the protagonist’s wife turned into a monster, backed him into a corner, tried to kill him with a broom (seems difficult, doesn’t it?), smashed his favorite guitar, and even danced on the wreckage. (The seemingly random title was a family joke: Belew’s daughter Audie, then only three, used to babble the word “momur” instead of “monster” when she got scared by something.) “It’s from back in the day when I was still trying to be funny in my songs, which came from my work with Frank Zappa,” Belew explained to *Innerviews* in 2022. But that tip of the cap seems to extend even beyond the words — musically, it’s easy to picture “The Momur” as part of a late-Seventies Zappa album like *Sheik Yerbouti*.

7. “TANGO ZEBRA” (ADRIAN BELEW, FROM 1986’S *DESIRE CAUGHT BY THE TAIL*)

On a purely tonal level, Belew is probably best known for being animalistic. Literally — he once displayed his gift for beastly mimicry during a Japanese TV



Adrian Belew on stage with Julie Slick in Barcelona, Spain, March 2, 2016

commercial, accurately channeling chickens, cats and elephants. But his guitars, when prompted, can also speak the language of other instruments, as showcased through the experimental folk orchestrations of “Tango Zebra.” It’s a journey song of the highest magnitude, opening with the twang of resonators and gradually growing more synthetic — the result lands somewhere between jazz, bluegrass and avant-rock. It’s unlike anything else in his catalog, not least because of the unique arrangement, inspired partly by George Gershwin. “[T]hat’s how I approached it,” Belew told *Music Technology* in 1987, “as though there really were members in this orchestra and I had to produce for their instruments.” The most blatantly orchestral touch: a section of electric guitars that sound uncannily like woodwinds. Except that they don’t quite — like basically every other Belew tone, it sounds uniquely his.

6. “E2” (ADRIAN BELEW, FROM 2009’S *E*)

By the late 2000s, Belew had collaborated with the elite of prog and art-rock — he could pretty much record with anyone, forming whatever outlandish supergroup he pleased. Most people in this exalted position wouldn’t start a brand new band from scratch — in this case, the Adrian Belew Power Trio — with a pair of relatively unknown young adults. But brother-sister rhythm section Julie Slick (bass) and Eric Slick (drums) brought a renewed vitality and edge to Belew’s music, best displayed on a knotty five-part suite dubbed *e*. It would be cheating to pick the full, 42-minute piece (the swaggering live favorite “b” deserves an honorable mention), so let’s turn to the eight-minute finale, “e2,” in which Belew unfurls chromatic runs and unnerving harmonies over Julie’s staccato bass riffs. As with many of his tunes, this



one takes on a new intensity in concert, as Belew builds mountains of overdubs with a loop pedal.

5. "BORN UNDER PUNCHES (THE HEAT GOES ON)" (TALKING HEADS, FROM 1980'S *REMAIN IN LIGHT*)

Talking Heads didn't exactly need any guest players on their fourth LP — and they *certainly* didn't need a gravity-bending show-stopper like Belew on the densely arranged funk-rock opener, "Born Under Punches (The Heat Goes On)." The song is stuffed to the gills with overdubs, as electronic bleeps, bass riffs, and backing vocals pile into a polyrhythmic groove that borrows its all-hands-on-deck heft from African music. And that's before even mentioning Heads frontman David Byrne, whose raving lands somewhere between cryptic paranoia and plain gibberish ("Take a look at these hands / The hand speaks, the hand of a government man / Well, I'm a tumbler / Born under punches / I'm so thin"). In summary, there's already a lot to unpack. But then Belew, who'd later join the band on the *Remain in Light* tour, added a magic dash of secret sauce: a long stretch of guitar

has caused at least as much confusion for the group as it has the public and the industry," Fripp wrote in the album's press release. "The left side is accessible, the right side excessive." Kicking off the former half is the classic title track, which is — let's be honest — still pretty damn unorthodox for any band not named King Crimson. Belew and Fripp revive their now-standard interlocking guitars for the verses, grounded by the polyrhythmic force of bassist Tony Levin's jumpy low-end and Bill Bruford's restrained acoustic drumming. It's already a highlight of their entire Eighties run, but that's before you dig into Belew's sputtering guitar-synth solo, assembled, like "Born Under Punches," through studio doctoring with the Lexicon Prime Time.

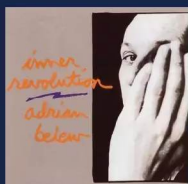
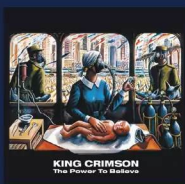
3. "LEVEL FIVE" (KING CRIMSON, FROM 2003'S *THE POWER TO BELIEVE*)

During a run of dates with heavy prog masters (and King Crimson disciplines) Tool way back in 2001, the prog legends road-tested fresh material that wound up on their 13th and final studio album, *The Power to Believe*. Tool's influence seemingly rubbed off: The music is darker and

moment — the yin to that song's yang. (Ironically, the lyrics originated from a sort of joke between Belew and Levin, the band's other American member, about the analytical side of their studious British bandmates.) The track is quintessential Eighties Crim, built around a complex twin-guitar pattern in $\frac{7}{8}$ that drifts apart before locking back into place. But even if Fripp and Belew could meld into each other's styles, they never tried to hide their differences: "Frame by Frame" opens with a disorienting instrumental section with the two playing off each other brilliantly — Fripp overcome in a flurry of rapid-fire picking, Belew strangling his strings into chunky rhythms and whammy bar wildness. (To fully appreciate the latter's work on this behemoth, check out the live version from the *Neal and Jack and Me* concert DVD.)

1. "ELEPHANT TALK" (KING CRIMSON, FROM 1981'S *DISCIPLINE*)

It may be the obvious choice, of course, but... come on! "Elephant Talk" has everything you could possibly want from Belew: the elite musicianship, the raw creativity, the sense of child-like wonder, the boatload of



Belew's MVP moment arrives after the five-minute mark, when he breaks into a torrent of high-octave squeals and dazzling dives

playing that sounds like an ancient, defective modem booting up on an alien planet. "I recorded a guitar solo and then ran it through an expensive piece of studio gear called a Lexicon Prime Time," Belew wrote on Facebook, "which allowed me to alter the [bandwidth] of the sound while capturing quick little loops I could fool with."

4. "THREE OF A PERFECT PAIR" (KING CRIMSON, FROM 1984'S *THREE OF A PERFECT PAIR*)

Throughout the Eighties, King Crimson invented their own language within progressive rock — their best songs were both snappy and strange. By the time the classic quartet lineup reached *Three of a Perfect Pair*, their last of an early-decade trilogy, those extreme sensibilities seemed to be diverging: "The album presents two distinct sides of the band's personality, which

more metallic than anything Crimson had released since 1974's *Red*. (The album's working title was, fittingly, *Nuovo Metal*.) There's no better example than opener "Level Five," a piece almost frightening in its attack. The track, originally described as the fifth installment of their "Larks Tongues in Aspic" series, offers plenty of fireworks from both Belew and Fripp, as both players react to the sputtering, glitchy electro-acoustic drumming of Pat Mastelotto. But Belew's MVP moment arrives after the five-minute mark, when he breaks into a torrent of high-octave squeals and dazzling dives.

2. "FRAME BY FRAME" (KING CRIMSON, FROM 1981'S *DISCIPLINE*)

If "Elephant Talk" is the playful centerpiece of *Discipline*, "Frame by Frame" is the album's serious, beard-stroking prog

guitar effects. (The one thing it doesn't feature is the man's underrated singing — this one's basically spoken.) The song bloomed from a funky guitar riff that Belew eventually suggested that Levin refine on his Chapman Stick — and from there, the former was free to go nuts with the pedals. It's a *tour de force*: woozy dives, static-wrapped rhythms, harmonic pings and, most crucially, a flange-and-fuzz combo that sounds unmistakably like the roar of a freaking elephant. Belew's lyrics add another layer of gleeful mania, moving alphabetically to list the various kinds of human speech. (Best part: "These are words with a 'd' this time!") Since the words didn't rhyme, he felt no need to sing in the traditional sense, instead leaning into a bizarre holler. Luckily he made it up to the letter "E," allowing him to connect the dots between elephant sounds and, well, whatever it was "Elephant Talk" actually meant. **GW**

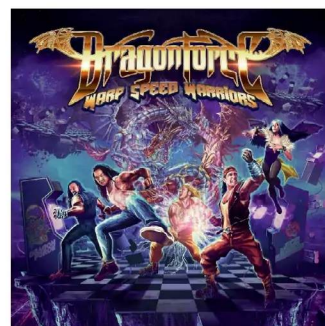
THE



WAY

THESE DAYS, SOMEWHERE AMID THE FIRE AND THE FLAMES OF DRAGONFORCE'S EXTREME POWER METAL, YOU'LL DETECT A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA IN **HERMAN LI'S** PLAYING: AN EMPHASIS ON MELODY AND DYNAMICS

STORY BY ANDREW DALY
PHOTOS BY TRAVIS SHINN



Musical extremes have always been part of the DragonForce experience. And while de facto leader and guitarist Herman Li is working to expand his horizons musically and via social media, the band's five-years-in-the-making studio record, *Warp Speed Warriors*, is brimming with guitar heroics.

Still, Li is the tinkering sort who loves gear and — despite his monster chops and ability to outright shred — refuses to fully adhere to DragonForce's extreme-meets-Nintendo metal past.

"At the beginning of our career, I was just trying to show my unique style," he says. "But now I've grown that same style into something beyond only playing fast."

But not to worry, DragonForce aren't about to unleash a new wave record, nor does *Warp Speed Warriors* represent an unexpected journey akin to Metallica's *St. Anger*. Songs like "Burning Heart" and "The Killer Queen" are

not-so-gentle reminders to those who grew up with fake guitars in hand while pretending to shred "Through the Fire and Flames" that, as Li puts it, "DragonForce will continue to do whatever the fuck it wants. The shredding is still there, but with guitar solos, I've got to mix it up. I don't want to have just one style over another because you lose originality. But I'm not trying to be someone else. And so, when I do a solo, the mindset is never, 'I've got no new ideas,' or 'This solo belongs here because it sounds like me.' I'm always trying to be original and find new things."

Still, with its endlessly over-the-top, in-your-face and hyper tongue-in-cheek vibe, it's obvious where Li had his mind's eye trained when coming up with material for *Warp Speed Warriors*. Not that high-speed ballistics are bad — especially when you've based your entire career on them.

For the most part, Li agrees, saying, "We've always played fast, and that hasn't changed. But the big thing is finding new notes that instantly fit within that zone. I play fast, but I'm not only trying to shred, so I had to put a bit of a different hat on."

"I'M BETTER NOW BECAUSE I RECOGNIZED THAT I NEEDED TO GET BETTER"

But that's how you learn new things, he says. "Sometimes you have to take back what you know and add more style. I've recently played over jazz stuff on live streams; it was good to sit down and become part of a new train of thought rather than always playing fast."

And so, perhaps the most refreshing part of *Warp Speed Warriors* is the fact that heaping doses of humility permeate the thing. "I'm better now because I recognized that I needed to get better," Li says. "But even if I could go back and redo our old music, I absolutely wouldn't do it. No way. Those imperfections, or whatever you want to call it, made those songs what they are. And my lack of ability back then gave me the insight I needed to grow and strengthen my playing. No one wants to hear classic stuff recreated. I don't. I leave whatever it is back in its era and always look toward the future. I can't speak for anyone else, but that's how I do it."

Warp Speed Warriors is DragonForce's first record in five years. Where have you been in that time?

Good question. When you make music, you do it at the right time to make it as good as possible. If you try just to pump music out, you become like a fast-food chain, right? So, we only release music when we want to and feel it's good enough. We spent a lot of time on this record, and even though we haven't made an album, there's so much more we're doing online these days, too, so there's at least been a lot for the fans.

There are a couple of things to unpack there, starting with only making music when it's good enough. What was it about these songs that told you they met the DragonForce standard?

The standard of what we do with our music has moved in different directions as we've gotten older. We're doing other things that led to a more diverse, dynamic album. In the early days, it was about playing fast, going to extremes and shredding until we dropped. Now we can combine styles; I wouldn't say experiment, but maybe add more simply because we're better players now.

But the music still ultimately needs to sound like DragonForce, right? Your sound is so unique; you wouldn't want to lose that.

That's a good point. When we made our first few albums, we could slow down the music, but we decided to make what we call "extreme power metal," which was faster, longer and had more and more guitar solos. As Yngwie Malmsteen once said, "More is more," and that was the motto. These days, we're more about melodies and dynamics; but don't get me wrong — there's still more. [Laughs] It's just that we're showing different sides of

us. I guess what's come out of a lot of the YouTube and Twitch stuff is that we in DragonForce do whatever the fuck we wanna do.

It sounds like DragonForce is as much about a mindset as it is about making music.

Yeah, I guess it is. We spent a lot of time on this album because we didn't want to be in golden handcuffs where our success enslaves us. We're a self-managed band and do what we want to do in the studio and on stage. All the elements you see come from the time we spend and how we design it. We're not hiring people to do things for us; our image is on us. Sure, we want people to like what we do, but it has to be authentic. Knowing that this is created by us, designed by us and executed by us makes it so that, even if we

wanted to, we couldn't pump things out like fast food.

You haven't entirely moved away from the "more is better" mentality, though, as *Warp Speed Warriors* is loaded with dueling guitar solos. Is it hard to find space to shine sometimes?

Everything we do is to make the song better, you know? [Guitarist] Sam [Totman] and I each contribute our skills based on what we do best. Whoever plays a specific part, it's done that way because we decided it was best for the band. If I have a weakness, maybe Sam will fill that void, and when it comes to guitar playing, we're not trying to outdo each other, even if we joke around on stage about that. We complement each other and find space to do our own thing. We've always been con-



DragonForce's
Herman Li [left]
and Sam Totman
do their thing in
Berkeley, California,
November 18, 2023



scious about not doing something that could hurt the other player.

Regarding your style, how do you approach leads and rhythms?

My style has grown a lot since starting to do live streams on Twitch. I've played a lot in the last few years, like the [2021] Jason Becker campaign [*a two-month-long fund-raising marathon that raised cash for the former Cacophony and David Lee Roth guitarist, who has been living with ALS for more than 30 years*], where I got to jam with Marty Friedman, George Lynch, Tim Henson and others; that changed me. When we play in one band, you don't get to jam with other players, but during the Jason Becker thing, I did, and my improvisational skills improved.

How does that differ from Sam?

With Sam, I think his playing is still — and this is not a bad thing — closer to what you've heard with DragonForce. So I'm now bringing a different tone, maybe not as fast — and other note choices. I'm trying to grow and increase the amount of note choices I have.

“SOMETIMES
YOU CAN
FORGET
ABOUT THE
**FINE ART
OF STRING-
BENDING,**
AND WHAT
HAPPENS
IS YOU
OVERPLAY”

After making so many albums, you play the same way, and it sounds the same. I'm always trying not to sound the same by doing new things with dynamics and speeds.

Which songs from *Warp Speed Warriors* best represent that new approach?

Maybe “Doomsday Party,” which is slightly different. It's got a more mid-tempo, weird, dance-type of production, along with the typical metal vibe. And with the solo, I didn't want to approach it the old DragonForce way; I think you'll hear it. But it's not all new, meaning there's stuff here that fans will identify with, like “Astro Warrior Anthem,” which has about seven guitar solos. We definitely want to mix it up, but we're not trying to be someone else.

Were there any solos or songs that gave you fits while recording them?

One of the first songs we did was “Kingdom of Steel,” which is a ballad, and that was difficult. All the slow, ballad-type stuff is always tricky. It's harder to get the right vibrato, and it's not easier to find the sweeter sort of dynamics that I look for. The band's feeling changes there, but it's always different when there's no shredding.

Some would say there needs to be less shredding and more feeling, in general.

Like all the great young shredders, many new players have a certain mindset because shredding is so much fun. But sometimes you can forget about the fine art of string-bending, and what happens is you overplay. Finding a balance between shredding and keeping the subtle nuances apparent is always a challenge.

To your point, one of the more overlooked nuances within your playing is your vibrato. What's your secret to keeping them apparent in the madness of DragonForce?

Vibrato is so important. If you can finish something with some nice vibrato and a good string bend and make the notes sing, those are the notes you want to sit on. Those sing-

ing notes mean more than however many arpeggios, and I've been working to develop that even more. I did that on the live streams when I'd play slower music and do more jams, where I'd put on random backing tracks and play over them.

What's the secret to your tone these days?

I'm not using my old signature Ibanez [EGEN18]. For this album, I used a custom guitar I've been developing with PRS, a significant departure from the Ibanez as it has Fishman custom pickups, giving me a new voice. And the timing is perfect, as I've been jamming and trying new things. I needed a new guitar that was not designed in 2007. [Laughs] If you compare the Ibanez to the PRS, it reacts so differently with the Fishman pickups, and the voicing is more antsy, mature and perfect for me as I'm more knowledgeable than [I was] in 2007.

While you've heavily embraced social media through Twitch and YouTube, there's growing concern about AI and how we consume music.

I think you've just gotta keep moving forward and be flexible. I know no one likes change — especially guitar players — but technology and social media have been great for finding new things. No musician wants to be told what to do, and as creative people, it's important to find new ways to be flexible. You've got to find ways to take advantage of these platforms and see what works for you rather than ignore it. If you do that, you're throwing away all the tools at your disposal.

Do you see yourself expanding further through social media and streaming?

I'm not sure I can. [Laughs] I've used TikTok, YouTube and Twitch, and we have a million subscribers. But I'm always open to new things that help reach a different audience. It depends on what you're looking for and what type of music you play. But there's a business side to it where you need to understand each platform individually, regardless of what you play. It's like learning an instrument; you've got to learn the platform. Just posting isn't enough; you need to learn how to do it right. But having said that, I'm pretty much maxed out.

Unless DragonForce goes the way of Kiss and become digital avatars.

That's not really such a bad idea, to be honest. There are so many crazy ideas on successful digital platforms, so why not try them? Many musicians think these things are cringeworthy and don't want to accept



"I used a custom guitar I've been developing with PRS," Li says

"FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN SHREDDING AND KEEPING THE SUBTLE NUANCES APPARENT IS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE"

different and new things, but we need to be open. A guitar player on these platforms might not need to be a master, but you can fully control your music if you have good knowledge of the platform and the music business. And that business part, as musicians, might be boring, but it's important. If you can't control that and have no understanding of it, sooner or later, if success finds you, you'll have problems and lose control of what you create.

Social media and new approaches aside, how will you continue to expand what you do in the future?

I'll always try to improve. I want to get better, make our stage show bigger and ensure that when you see DragonForce, it's an experience to remember. It's not just about guitar solos. It's the whole thing, you know? I look at the entire thing from a third-person point-of-view, to where what they see, hear and feel is something to remember. I had no knowledge of that when we started, but now I look at all aspects of things and the guitar beyond just my fingers touching the strings. What I'm saying is that there is more to this than just guitars and songs. I want to keep growing all of that. But a lot is happening, so we'll see how we do that. **GW**

SONGS WANTED NOW

**HURRY!
DEADLINE:
MAY 31st**

"OMG, this is totally unreal!!! Thank you so much for this incredible honor, we're speechless and so very grateful!"

*...Ships Have Sailed (Will Carpenter, see pictured)
ft. Abby Posner, Overall Grand Prize Winner of the
28th Annual USA Songwriting Competition*



**BECOME OUR NEXT
SUCCESS STORY...**

"This is a great place for talent to be found."

...Monte Lipman, President & CEO of Universal Republic Records

**It's time for you to take that all-important step
to enter the 29th Annual USA Songwriting Competition!**

- ✓ Win \$50,000 Grand Prize!
- ✓ Radio Airplay
- ✓ 15 Categories You Can Enter
- ✓ 53 songs have already hit the Billboard Charts by our past entrants
- ✓ Take your Songwriting to the next level



PLATINUM SPONSORS



SPONSORS



Enter your songs **NOW** at: www.songwriting.net/gp

DROPPOL



Drop Nineteens circa 2023:
[from left] Pete Koeplin,
Motohiro "Moto" Yasue,
Greg Ackell, Paula Kelley
and Steve Zimmerman



IN 1992, BOSTON'S **DROP NINETEENS** BECAME UNLIKELY STARS OF THE OVERWHELMINGLY BRITISH SHOEGAZE ROCK SCENE. A YEAR LATER, THEY FELL OFF THE MAP — BUT THEIR LEGEND ONLY GREW. NOW, AFTER NEARLY THREE DECADES IN THE DARK, THE BAND HAS RETURNED WITH *HARD LIGHT*

WORDS BY JON WIEDERHORN

PHOTO BY PAT PIASECKI

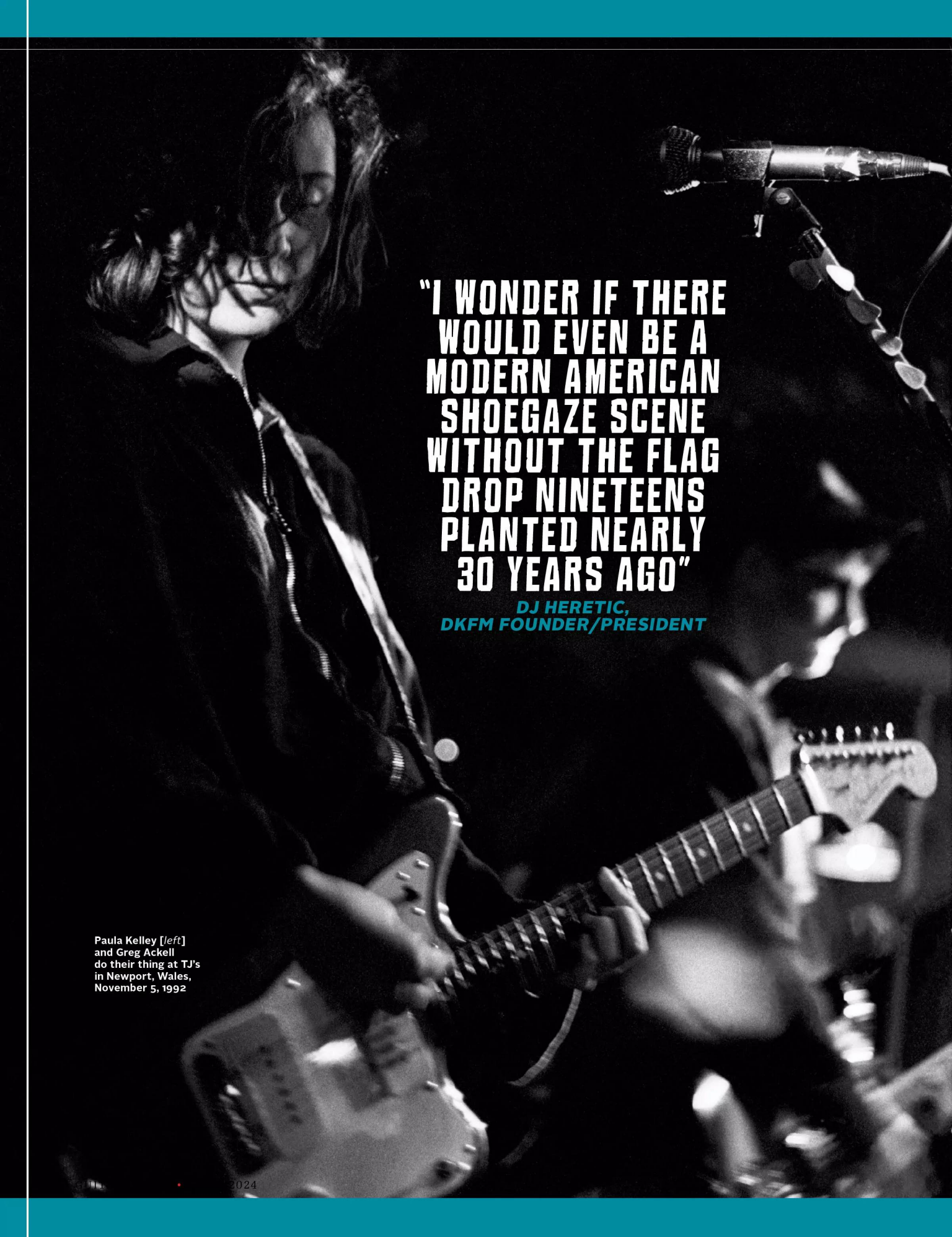


Almost every successful band has a similar story. They form, play some covers, write some originals and play loads and loads of shows, gradually climbing their way up the fickle rock 'n' roll totem pole until they get noticed and signed. Then, there are the rare exceptions — like Boston shoegaze quintet Drop Nineteens.

When they formed in 1990, the home-recording band had no industry connections, prior recording credits or experience playing live. Yet almost before they could fumble their way through a full set, Drop Nineteens were shuttled to England, embraced by the British media, put on tour with U.K. groups and signed to a subsidiary of Virgin.

"We went straight from being these totally unknown college students to being considered this big thing," says frontman/guitarist Greg Ackell. "It was insane. We didn't have a record deal or anything one minute, and before we know it, the Cranberries and Radiohead are opening for us."

The origins of Drop Nineteens are almost as remarkable as their highly unexpected comeback after more than 30 years. They formed in 1990 in a dorm room at Boston University, which most of the members attended. Soon after they met, Ackell, co-vocalist Paula Kelley, lead guitarist Motohiro "Moto" Yasue, bassist Steve Zimmerman and drummer Chris Roof recorded a demo heavily inspired by the gauzy, ethereal soundwashes of U.K. shoegazers My Bloody Valentine and Slowdive. While the shoegaze scene was thriving in the U.K. at the time, it was under-



**"I WONDER IF THERE
WOULD EVEN BE A
MODERN AMERICAN
SHOEGAZE SCENE
WITHOUT THE FLAG
DROP NINETEENS
PLANTED NEARLY
30 YEARS AGO"**

**DJ HERETIC,
DKFM FOUNDER/PRESIDENT**

Paula Kelley [left]
and Greg Ackell
do their thing at TJ's
in Newport, Wales,
November 5, 1992

appreciated in the U.S., where aggressive alt-rock and grunge were moving the masses. So, Drop Nineteens — who couldn't get a gig in their home town — sent their demo to English magazine *Melody Maker* and were rewarded with "Single of the Week" accolades before ever stepping onstage.

Word spread and demand for the demo was strong. Soon, the showers of praise turned into a waterfall, and U.K. labels looking for the next wunderkinder of shoegazing, came calling. Drop Nineteens were invited to play shows in England opening for Chapterhouse, and before they could learn the difference between an escalator and a lift, the band was signed to Virgin-owned Hut Records (home of the Verve and Moose) in the U.K., and Caroline (Smashing Pumpkins, Monster Magnet) in the U.S.

As thrilled as they were with the record deal, Drop Nineteens didn't want to be lost in an ocean of pedal pushers, so they downplayed the heavy effects that swarmed through their demo, and wrote an entirely new set of songs for their debut album, *Delaware*, which they tracked at Downtown Recorders Studios in the Cyclorama Building in Boston, where Pixies recorded *Doolittle*. While *Delaware* was hazy and multi-hued, it was also visceral, containing an externalized angst that hung heavy in the songs and hinted at an underlying tension within the melancholy.

"I liked a lot of the bands that were influenced by My Bloody Valentine, but I think we equated ourselves with the Pixies and Sonic Youth slightly more than we did with My Bloody Valentine and Cocteau Twins," Ackell says. "So, even though it's a similar genre, Drop Nineteens were one of the few American outliers in that scene, and that's maybe why we stood out from a lot of those other bands."

"I wonder if there would even be a modern American shoegaze scene without the flag Drop Nineteens planted nearly 30 years ago," says Internet radio station DKFM founder and president, DJ Heretic. "They brought a sense of menace and an immediacy that made an impact. [Without them, that kind of music] just wouldn't have been as relatable to a younger generation of American music fans."

When the shoegazer scene was at its peak in the U.K. — just prior to



[from left] Greg Ackell, Paula Kelley, Steve Zimmerman at CBGB's in New York City, 1992

the arrival of Drop Nineteens — only a handful of U.S. bands, including Bethany Curve, Lilys, Velocity Girl, Swirlies and Medicine, rooted their indie rock sounds in the technicolor pool of shoegaze. These groups all enjoyed multi-album careers and loyal fanbases, but it was arguably Drop Nineteens that had the most lasting impact on future generations of artists and fans weary of the macho posturing of grunge, the attitude-laden irony of U.S. indie rock, and the pretense and affectations of some English shoegazer music.

From the start, Drop Nineteens were driven to be authentic and credible. The demo songs that got Drop Nineteens signed swam through rivers of reverb, delay and chorus and bore comparison to their favorite U.K. bands. With *Delaware*, however, they discarded much of the ethereal window dressing, while retaining the tones and aesthetics of their demo. The album was praised for its diversity, strong songs and the band's frequent shifts between volatility and vulnerability.

"From the swirling guitars to the fey vocals, and songs about longing for lost love, the British scene had all the expected trademarks and signposts of a rich U.K. musical tradition," DJ Heretic says. "With Drop Nineteens, there was no climbing through textures and colors to get to the sonic sparkle at the center of a song. Drop Nineteens sounded like disaffected college-town youth cutting to the heart of the matter. And that's not something you can fake to an audience that demands authenticity above all else."

Drop Nineteens kick-started their U.S. success with the simultaneously dissonant and gorgeous guitar tangles of "Winona," which earned airplay on MTV. They followed with the instrumental fan favorite "Kick the Tragedy," and then dropped a blinding cover of Madonna's "Angel." For their efforts, the band earned an opening slot on the U.S. Chapterhouse tour and returned to England where they opened for My Bloody Valentine and recorded a radio session with legendary BBC DJ John Peel. But the avid praise was accompanied by overwhelming pressure. Ackell and his bandmates were ambivalent about being viewed as part of a vibrant English scene and they were uncomfortable touring Europe before they felt road ready. The internal friction that resulted from the turmoil caused the already volatile band to slowly self-destruct.

Drop Nineteens' second album, *National Coma* — which followed the departure of vocalist and co-guitarist Paula Kelley and drummer Chris Roof — was an intentional brush off to the entire shoegaze scene, and shortly after it came out in 1993 Ackell broke up the band. Too thin-skinned to skillfully navigate the prickly, turbulent record business, he stopped listening to music, largely avoided his bandmates, and for decades remained oblivious to the cult-like status Drop Nineteens achieved among generations of American shoegazers and their fans.

"I was turned off to the whole thing and I decided to see what else I could do with my life," Ackell says. "I mean, when I started out, I loved music and being in a band, and I made the dream happen. But then I discovered that pursuing a career in music didn't appeal to me because once that dream came true, the actual life didn't make me happy. I'm pretty insecure, and I couldn't handle it, so I stopped and didn't look back for a long time."

Ironically, while Ackell had his back firmly turned on music, *Delaware* became a cult favorite in the emerging U.S. shoegaze scene, a scene that long outlasted the British movement, which was treated with derision after the arrival of Britpop. For more than two decades now, Drop Nineteens have been cited as a major influence on a new breed of shoegazers, including members of Wishy, Horse Jumper of Love, Computerwife, Cryogeyser, Deerhunter, Warpaint and a host of other bands.

In late 2021, almost on a whim, Ackell decided to start

writing songs again, all of which led to the reunion of Drop Nineteens and the release of their breathtaking new album, *Hard Light*. More mature than *Delaware*, the album substitutes reflection for rage and is rife with evocative, ruminative songs that echo and chime, but remain grounded. Sonically, it's a record that could have followed *Delaware*, matching buzzing, layered guitars with clean, iridescent strumming, and including warbly mid-sections and soaring reverb-laden passages.

"We never followed up *Delaware* with something that was written with that same mindframe," Ackell says. "In that respect, the new album is very much a follow-up to *Delaware*. It is not *Delaware 2*, but in a way it's like a long-missing album that we never made."

Comeback albums rarely live up to their long-ago predecessors, largely because the musicians involved have moved on. That's not the case with *Hard Light*. Having been absent from music for so long, Ackell imbues his new songs with youthful wonder and joy, and his reunion with his old bandmates is a time warp to a more innocent time, yet one somehow burdened by the pains of age and experience. Drop Nineteens flared like a shooting star for a brief time and disappeared. Now, against all odds, they've returned with an album that can be cherished by old-school fans of Slowdive and Ride, as well as younger listeners, who prefer Hotline TNT, Nothing and Feeble Little Horse — bands about which Ackell remains blissfully oblivious.

"I'm getting asked about every fucking shoegaze band on earth right now, and I just don't know any of them," Ackell says. "I'm learning about them and I'm open to hearing everything. I'm proud that something I did inspired other people in bands, but I feel like I need to do more homework and more studying before I can really talk about any of them."

In one of his first in-depth interviews since the release of *Hard Light*, Ackell offers his take on the English shoegaze scene and sound, discusses how and why Drop Nineteens recorded *Delaware* without reverbs or delays, and provides insight on why the band's second album, *National Coma*, was so different than its predecessor. He also addresses why he abandoned music for 30 years, what he did during his time away, what brought him back to the band he founded, the recording process

for *Hard Light*, and how his life has changed between the time he was an arrogant, unstable rock star rubbing elbows with Kevin Shields and his reunion with bandmates he hadn't seen in three decades.

How did you discover shoegaze music?

I always liked atmospheric bands, dating all the way back to the Velvet Underground. But then you fast forward to the Eighties in that same space, and there was something about the psychedelic sounds and repetitive phrasing of Spacemen 3, and the guitar noise of the Jesus & Mary Chain that really appealed to me. But it was Sonic Youth's *Daydream Nation* and My Bloody Valentine's *Isn't Anything* that really got me into guitars.

"BEFORE WE KNOW IT, THE CRANBERRIES AND RADIOHEAD ARE OPENING FOR US"

GREG ACKELL

My Bloody Valentine frontman Kevin Shields is widely credited as the most significant pioneer of shoegaze. The way he blended distorted guitar with backwards digital delay and heavy reverb created mesmerizing tones. And the way he held the tremolo bar and wobbled it as he played became a trademark technique of the genre.

There's something very disconcerting about that sound. Kevin once told me that what happens is that the chords are always detuning and the listener is always trying to hear the chord in the correct register, which is being alluded to, but by using the tremolo, it's never really delivered. There's something about the promise of a chord that's coming but doesn't quite come that creates tension and, in a way, it's romantic in a literal sense — something promised but not delivered.

Sonic Youth were influential to alternative and indie rock, and the way they used alternate tunings and dissonance was groundbreaking. How did they factor into what you did with Drop Nineteens?

Their album *Daydream Nation* came out in 1988 at around the same time as *Isn't Anything* and it was so jarring and interesting. It didn't sound like anything else out there. They were an incredible band that made their own rules, which I really admire.

The demo that earned you accolades in the U.K. was loaded with reverb and delay and seemed influenced by Slowdive.

We were making it up as we went along. We weren't a band that played in clubs. We just recorded songs in our dorm room influenced by stuff we liked. We made a demo, and

we didn't know what to do with it, so we sent it to *Melody Maker* without a record deal or anything. We had no real goals, and we didn't expect anything. We were 18- and 19-year-old kids and we were all in school and trying to do well there and make this music at the same time, and suddenly everything blows up. It was crazy and totally unplanned. At the time, my thinking was, "Oh my God. If I could only get a record deal, make just one record, and play on a stage, that would be incredible!"

You used some effects on *Delaware*, but you didn't pile on the guitar pedals, which is something that differentiated you from some of your British influences. It was shoegaze and featured many of the elements of bands like My Bloody Valentine and Slowdive, but there was a distinct focus on songs, not just sounds.

When you listen to Spacemen 3, there are trippy sounds there, but they're very natural. You can't hear choruses, flangers, and distorted wah-wah all over the place. So many bands loaded up their pedal boards and went crazy with stacked effects and overly produced records. Cocteau Twins were a big influence on a lot of those bands, and [frontman] Robin Guthrie co-produced the first Chapterhouse album. It became all about these sounds. It was a bit too much for my ears. So, when we went in to do *Delaware*, we completely abandoned pedals. You can do amazing things with pedals, but in my 19-year-old mind, I went, "Hey, pedals aren't cool anymore. They're lame." There was a wah-wah on our cover of Madonna's "Angel," but all the other sounds were achieved by setting up amps in different ways.

How did you achieve ethereal guitar textures and echoes without reverbs and delays?

We experimented. We put two Vox AC30s facing one another in a room with high tremolo on. So, that's an effect, but the effect is in the amp, not a pedal, which to us seemed more authentic. And we had a Marshall stack in the main room blasting to the high heavens. Then, in the isolation booths, we had the shittiest little Peavey amp set at a tone that cut through. And me and Moto played all these Fender Jaguars and Jazzmasters in the control

room, then stacked them. We mixed everything to taste, depending on what song we were doing. I don't think any song has just one guitar amp sound. Everything was a blend, and that's how we made all the different guitar sounds. We created the delay sounds naturally by having amps in one room and mics further back and in different places. It was the same thing David Bowie did when he sang "Heroes," and when you do that you get that cool plating effect.

How did you replicate your tones when Drop Nineteens toured for *Delaware*?

We knew we had to reinvent what we did in the studio, but we didn't even try to approximate the sounds on the album. We just wanted to be loud when we played. So we turned everything up. I really wonder if we were trying to make up for a lack of musicianship by creating this assault on everyone's ears.

Was it frustrating to be lumped into a the U.K. scene when you weren't British and strived for a different sound?

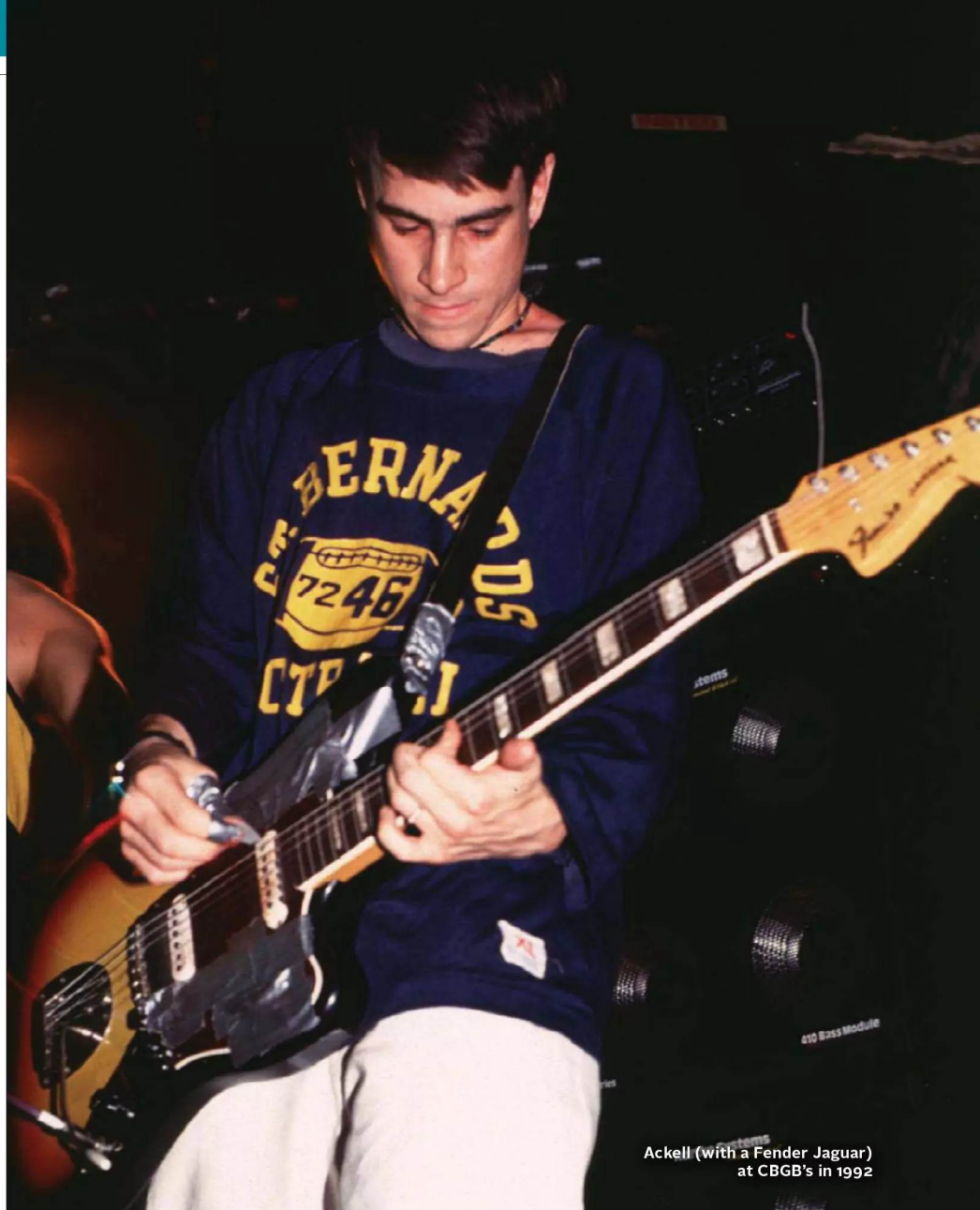
It's true that I was annoyed by that, so I rebelled. I was young and arrogant, and I came away from that whole touring experience saying, "Yeah, well they like us, but for all the wrong reasons. So, I'll show them." It was pretty silly, and not very gracious. But that's one of the reasons our second album, *National Coma*, was such a sharp left turn. That record is the sound of me searching for something and screaming most of the time. It's a weird record and I don't like it that much.

***National Coma* was more American sounding, but there was a lack of the strong hooks and choruses that made *Delaware* so enjoyable.**

I just think that if you're honest with yourself, you can decide you want to sound like something, but invariably you're going to sound like yourself. On that record I didn't want to sound like anything and that's what it sounds like. In a way, it was me trying to do something that no one would expect from us. I wanted to surprise people. And I don't think too many people were happily surprised.

Was it the reaction to *National Coma* that caused you to quit the music business?

It wasn't the death knell. I knew I



Ackell (with a Fender Jaguar) at CBGB's in 1992

wanted to leave the band and stop doing music before that, but I didn't want *National Coma* to be the last thing I did. I recorded one more album under the name Fidel. I funded it myself and was offered a deal, but I decided not to release it because I couldn't stand the idea of being back under the microscope.

Why did you leave the music business for so long?

I was very unhappy, and it was music that was making me unhappy. I hated music and stopped listening to it. I was no longer a fan. And that was crazy because it had been so important to me before then. Growing up, I didn't think I'd ever be able to do music for a living or be successful at it. I wanted to. I dreamed of doing it, but I didn't plan on it and those are two very different things. So when my dream came true, the bubble burst. Music was no longer my dream, it was my job, and it didn't make me happy. I was very controlling, and I was not kind. And I think some of that intensity I directed towards people came from my unhappiness. So I

decided to go be with my girlfriend and discover what I was going to do next in my life. I had no idea that there were all these bands that were starting to love *Delaware* or that bands would form over the years and be influenced by what I did. I'm flattered now, but that was totally off my radar.

After a 30-year absence from even listening to music, what inspired you to write and play again?

In the very early aughts, I heard this band the Clientele [whose song "Police-man Getting Lost" we covered on *Hard Light*]. And listening to them really brought me back and made me want to hear other new music. I discovered Spoon, who brought me back in a much

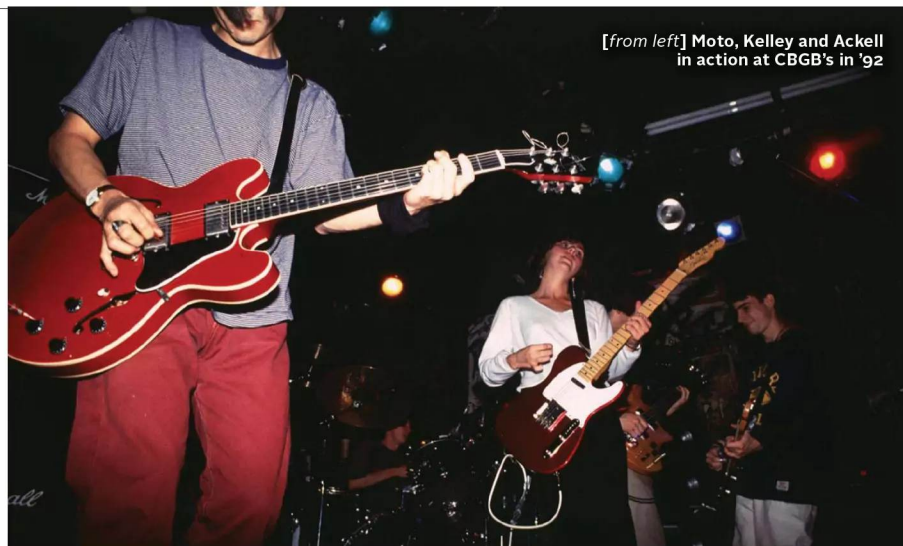
more serious way and I became a serious fan of music again. It was exciting to be back in a place I thought I'd never get to, and I started listening to LCD Soundsystem and this band I love called Car Seat Headrest. Those are the kind of bands that move me now.

How did you go from rediscovering indie rock to reforming the band?

[Bassist] Steve [Zimmerman] was the only one I had stayed in touch with over the years. One day I started wondering what a new Drop Nineteens song would sound like. But I didn't have a guitar around. I told Steve what I was thinking and he went on Reverb.com and overnighted me a [Squier] J Mascis Jazzmaster. I was so pleased because I come from an era where we played Jazzmasters and Jaguars. And it wasn't because these other shoegaze bands played them, it was because we couldn't afford Telecasters and Stratocasters. Whereas you could get vintage Jaguars and Jazzmasters for five or six hundred bucks back then. They're worth so much now. Our guitarist Moto has a '64 blue Jaguar and it's worth about \$20,000. But back then, we had lots of those things. I actually had a vintage Jazzmaster that I played in the "Winona" video, but I didn't like it that much. I'd usually reach for another guitar on tour. I don't know why, but I gave it to a girl after a show in Liverpool when we were on tour. Of course, she had no idea where I had been for 30 years. Then, I was on social media — which I never used to use — and she sees me on there and reaches out to us and says, "Hey Greg, I'm glad you're alive. I've got your guitar." And she sent me back the guitar from Liverpool. It's like it died and went to heaven and came back to me. And now I love it. It's the only guitar I have left from the original Drop Nineteens.

What happened after Steve sent you the guitar? Did you start playing and writing right away?

Your readers are going to throw up when they read this. I hadn't played a guitar for 20-odd years. I didn't even pick one up — not once. I remembered how to play, but I didn't have a tuner here or anything. So, I took the guitar out of the box and tuned it to itself. I didn't bother tuning it to the low E. I tuned it to 440, but I was in the key of C minor when I started writing the new songs. And I never tuned it back.



[from left] Moto, Kelley and Ackell in action at CBGB's in '92

Wouldn't the songs have sounded brighter and more ethereal if you used standard tuning?

Here's the thing — I didn't write everything in C minor because I'm an idiot. I mean, I *am* an idiot, but what happened was I started to like the sound of my voice when I played the chords tuned down. The songs sounded a little weary, and the music seemed like I was searching. So that became part of the sound of *Hard Light*. It's funny. Life affects your sound more than anything, and sometimes it's just happenstance. It's not so much a matter of what you are doing to the sound so much as what life is doing to you and how the sound is affecting you.

Did the new songs come easily?

When I picked up the guitar, I didn't know if I could still play or could sing or write or had anything to say. And I didn't know if I'd be able to put lyrics on anything I came up with. The crazy thing was that I had so much to express, so none of it was a struggle and none of it was hard to find. I wrote over half the songs over the course of the first weekend when I got the guitar. It took us 30 years to come back and, ostensibly, it took me just a few days to write most of the record.

Once you realized you had the material, you called Steve and the two of you put Drop Nineteens back together. Then on January 18, 2022, you posted on Twitter that the band was back.

I didn't even know how to create a Twitter account. Steve created it and I posted this letter announcing our plans. And it got picked up by some of

these different music news websites that morning. I don't even know how they found it. But without that, I might not have seen this through. If people didn't know I was doing it then I wouldn't have to finish it. For a while, I was thinking it was a little premature for us to have said anything. But, in retrospect, I realize it was a smart move.

Did you record *Hard Light* the same way you recorded *Delaware*?

Working on it reminded me a little bit of how we did *Delaware*. Except this time, instead of being in a space with all these amps in all these different rooms and mixing the sounds together, we were on laptops, or an interface, switching through all the sounds, which is kind of the same thing we did back then but with modern technology. In a very practical way, we flipped through sounds and blended them. And I think the sounds we came up with are as good as anything we did on *Delaware*. We mic'd a Vox amp and some of the little crappy speakers we used. We bought the cheapest modeling amps you can buy on Amazon and I had those things behind me while we recorded. And I swear to God, some of the coolest, most powerful sounds came from those little things.

Was Logic hard to learn?

Well, yeah, and I still am not really that good at using it. Steve got pretty good with it, which is good. I'm in New York, Steve's in Boston, our drummer Pete Koeplin is in Boston, Paula's in L.A. and Moto is in San Francisco, so we knew that sharing files was going to be intrinsic to this project. Everyone has lives. There was no way we could all fuck off to Barbados like rock stars, do a bunch of drugs, and do the whole album there. So, Steve and I worked together and used everything under the sun that we had at our disposal.

In the early Nineties, there was a lot of friction and conflict in the band, which added to the excitement of the music. Does that still exist?

No, we're all getting along spectacularly well. We've all grown up and are happy to be making new music together. That we're back is a miracle unto itself, especially to me. I'm the last one anyone ever expected would come back and play in the group. But one of the greatest things in my life isn't just making this record, it's having these people back in my life again. **GW**

USE WHAT THE PROS USE!

FU-Tone Guitars Come Loaded With The Upgrades That You Expect!



- FU2 Tremolo with 42L Brass Big Block
- EVH D-Tuna for Drop D On The Fly
- P.M.S. Pickup Mounting System
- Heavy Duty Noiseless Springs
- FU-Tone Humbucker Pickups
- Titanium Saddle Inserts
- Brass Claw and Screws
- Brass Tremolo Stopper
- Coil Tap Switches
- Strap Locks
- Kill Switch

BIG BLOCK

PERFORMANCE



New FU-Tone Guitars From The Original Tremolo Upgrade Company!

www.fu-tone.com





MOVE OVER, ROVER, AND LET EDDIE TAKE OVER!



VETERAN ENGINEER/PRODUCER **EDDIE KRAMER**
— THE CLOSEST THING JIMI HENDRIX HAD TO A SONIC WINGMAN
— LOOKS BACK ON HIS SESSIONS WITH THE KINKS, LED ZEPPELIN,
KISS AND (OF COURSE) MR. HENDRIX

BY ANDREW DALY

THERE HAVE BEEN more than a few notable producers and engineers who have impacted rock music over the years, including George Martin, Bob Ezrin, Tom Werman and Butch Vig. But few have specifically influenced rock music pertaining to the electric guitar in the way that South African-born knob-twirler extraordinaire Eddie Kramer has.

Even if you don't know his name, you've undoubtedly heard Kramer's work if you're into the guitar-driven heroics of the late Sixties, Seventies and beyond. His resume boasts massive production and engineering credits on records like Jimi Hendrix's *Are You Experienced* (1967), Led Zeppelin's *Led Zeppelin II* (1969) and Kiss's *Alive!* (1975).

Beyond those massive titles, Kramer's discography features dozens of records created at the family New York City institution, Electric Lady Studios, which was commissioned by Hendrix and designed by Kramer and architect John Storyk.

So it goes without saying that Kramer has been as essential to guitar music as the players

themselves. And to be sure, that association has left him with many favorites, but still, his iconic work with Jimi Hendrix stands out most.

"The backwards guitar on 'Are You Experienced' was memorable," Kramer tells *Guitar World*. "Jimi would take home tapes of the session, reverse it, practice to that and come back saying, 'I know exactly where I want to play from here.'" Elaborating on Hendrix's process, Kramer says, "And then, bam, it was done. He knew what he had to do when I flipped the tape because he'd practiced it, which was an example of Jimi's genius. And along with that, I will never forget the sheer beauty of 'Little Wing.' It's still one of the most emotional things I have ever heard. I could go on and on; all his stuff is bloody marvelous. But I guess some are more marvelous than others."

These days, despite being nearly 82, Kramer remains busy and tuned into what's happening. But while he understands that advancement and digitization are inevitable, for Kramer, analog remains king. "Nothing can substitute for ana-

Eddie Kramer [seated, center] at Electric Lady Studio with Jimi Hendrix [left] and studio manager Jim Marron [standing], June 17, 1970

log,” he says. “It just sounds more pleasing to the ear. I know many things are done digitally, but it lacks warmth and soul. I think guitar players should think more analog; there’s just something about digital that rubs me the wrong way.”

Soul-sucking digitization aside, Kramer still beams when talking about getting behind the glass and settling behind the boards. No matter where technology takes us, for as long as Kramer is around, the spirit of what made guitar music great will linger. “I still get excited about this stuff,” he says. “Music has been such a big part of my life and still stimulates me. When I walk into a studio, I still get chills. There’s something about a bunch of musicians — or even one musician — getting in a room and striking that first chord. And when that happens, it all comes back, and I say, ‘Ah, yes, I know what to do with that.’”

Did you know from a young age that you wanted to be a producer and engineer?

Growing up in South Africa, I was fascinated with the idea of, “What the hell is coming out of that speaker?” I wanted to know how it got its power and volume and how it worked. I was just so curious, and I remember being young and sticking a screwdriver in a spot it shouldn’t go back in

the days when the loudspeakers were powered by voltage. [Laughs]

Once that fascination crept in, how did you view guitars within that space?

It’s important to have perspective here because where I grew up, I studied music, but classical music was a massive part of my life. Understanding that allowed me to think outside the box and not be prejudiced by sound or a piece of music which was deemed offensive.

My ears and mind were open when the Sixties came around, and I was recording a guy like the Kinks’ Dave Davies. But even then, this was before stereo recording, and the skill of working with mono was how we were taught, so by the time I got to Olympic Studios in ’66, and I was working with Jimi [Hendrix], my brain was on fire. I heard his guitar, and it completely changed my life.

Nothing could have prepared you for witnessing Hendrix first-hand. Aside from having your mind blown, what went through your mind?

To set the scene, it was January 1967, and [Hendrix manager and former Animals bassist] Chas Chandler had called me to book studio time as he and Jimi were unhappy with “Hey Joe,” “The Wind Cries Mary” and a few other tracks that were to be on *Are You Experienced*. The record was not finished, but they had heard that Olympic was a top studio, and they wanted to come down.

So Jimi walks in, and I see these big amps coming in behind him. As that’s all sorted out, Jimi is sitting quietly in the corner, wrapped in a raincoat. He wasn’t saying a bloody word, but once the amp was set up, he wandered over, switched it on, plugged in his guitar, and just as I was setting the mic up, he started playing, and man, my brain froze. In that second, my life changed. I heard that sound, and I don’t know how to describe it other than God himself being in the room.

Was it difficult to capture the enormity of that on tape?

It was so remarkable and overwhelming. I had to think rather quickly about how I would record him, and I picked microphones that gave us the best shot of capturing the enormity of that sound. And then I said to Jimi, “I’m going to go to the control room and have a listen,” and he looked at me, grinned, and said, “Okay...”

And then, Jimi began tweaking his pedals, guitar and amp; all the while I’m frantically twiddling knobs, trying to keep up

THE MASTER’S TOUCH

10 ESSENTIAL GUITAR ALBUMS THAT WERE ENGINEERED OR PRODUCED BY EDDIE KRAMER



Are You Experienced, The Jimi Hendrix Experience (1967)

Kramer was behind the boards for all of Hendrix’s God-like records — and the architect of Electric Lady Studios on Jimi’s behalf — but *Are You Experienced* started it all. Filled with mind-blowing solos pulled from the depths and off-the-cuff licks, the key to the whole was reported to “never have a moment where the tape wasn’t rolling.”



Mr. Fantasy, Traffic (1967)

Jimmy Miller might have produced *Mr. Fantasy*, but Kramer engineered the whole shebang, dialing in the tone-soaked licks of Dave Mason. To this day, Mason remains an underrated six-stringer, and this album is a prime example of Kramer’s magic to that end.



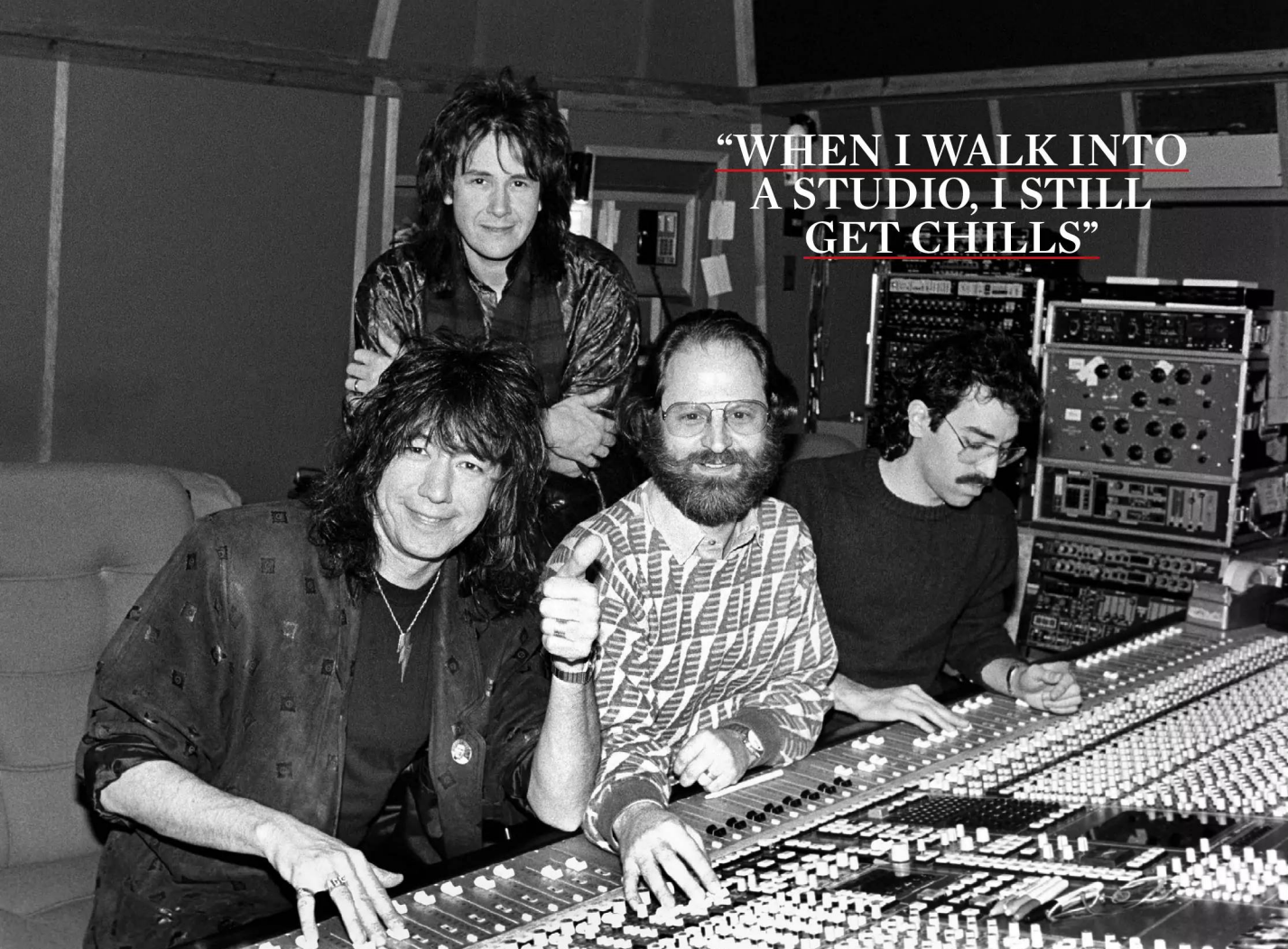
Outsideinside, Blue Cheer (1968)

Kramer is on the record stating that Blue Cheer, in all their pro-metal, pre-sludge metal majesty, was “one of the loudest bands [he’d] ever encountered.” By this point, though still early in his career, Kramer was a master at making guitars sound huge, and Leigh Stephens’ riffs sound straight-up massive.



Kramer plays air guitar next to a Steve Hass photo of Jimmy Page, May 21, 2003

“WHEN I WALK INTO A STUDIO, I STILL GET CHILLS”



EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS (ABOVE) MATTHEW PEYTON/GETTY IMAGES (FACING PAGE)

with him. In the end, we worked our asses off together, but we had so many laughs. Jimi knew I was trying to give him what he wanted and that I could give him a huge palette to work from.

Did Jimi's off-the-cuff nature as a soloist present much of a challenge for you?

The trick was never to have a moment where the tape wasn't running. I had total control over that, and the directive was, "Keep that damn thing rolling from the moment Jimi walks into the studio." You had to be ready whenever he plugged in because sometimes his first takes were so good that they'd smack you in the face.

In hindsight, what was the most significant difference between working with Jimi and other guitarists?

There was no separation between what he physically played and what his brain and soul were telling him to play. Those things were deeply interconnected as one piece, meaning the brain, heart, hands and fingers, so it was

complete and utter expression. And then his sound had this unique technical quality that defied imagination. I often wondered, "How the hell did he do that? How did he make it sound so gorgeous yet aggressive?" I heard so many magnificent things from him while sitting in the control room, but I'd still be amazed by what he could pull off.

Is there one song or solo that stands out?

All of them were brilliant in their own ways. But my favorite is "Little Wing," which goes from beautiful tones created with the volume knob, getting this lovely, sweet sound before roaring into the solo. That dynamic shift is something to behold. It's magnificent to the point that it's overwhelming and incredibly emotional. But all of Jimi's songs feature different levels of brilliance.

And there's Jimmy Page; how did you first meet him?

That's a very interesting question. I met Jimmy while he was working with the Kinks in the early Sixties when they were

doing "You Really Got Me." I know the Davies brothers will say otherwise, but I recall seeing Jimmy coming in and doing an overdub on that song. There's some contention about that, but that's how I remember it.

Anyway, Jimmy was one of that era's young, amazing guitarists. He was very young when he was doing session work, but damn, was he good. And then, the next time I saw Mr. Page, I would have been at Olympic Studio in '67 while doing a Donovan record. And if my memory serves correctly, John Paul Jones was on bass and Jimmy was there to do an overdub for the solo.

You ended up in the studio with Jimmy for Led Zeppelin II, but were you a fan of their first album?

It's funny because, by 1968, I had gone to America and was working at the Record Plant. But I called John Paul Jones to catch up during a visit back in England, and he said, "Come over. I want to play you something." So I went to his house, and he played me the acetates of the first album, saying, "This is the band I've been working with." I

Kramer [seated, center] at work with Ace Frehley [left] and friends (including John Regan, standing) at Right Track Studio, NYC, March 14, 1987

couldn't believe my ears and said, "What is this? It's amazing."

So John said, "We're called Led Zeppelin." I thought that was the worst name I'd ever heard. I thought, "Man, how could you be so stupid and wrong?" But they got it right, and that first record was amazing. And later, in '69, while I was getting going at Electric Lady Studios, I got a phone call from Jimmy Page, saying, "Do you want to work on an album with us?" I said, "Absolutely." They brought in the tapes from England, and off we went.

Jimmy is something of a studio wizard himself. What was it like matching wits with him?

The cool thing was that I'd set up the mics how I did it, and Jimmy would listen and say, "Yeah, great." There was never a point of contention. It was an exchange of ideas and a lot of give and take. I appreciated that Jimmy knew what he was looking for, and he knew I could get the take and make it sound good. While we were mixing *Led Zeppelin II*, like with Jimi Hendrix, we laughed a lot and created a lot of great sounds. We had a very compatible relationship.

Seeing how diverse Zeppelin's Seventies records are, it seems the atmosphere didn't change after they became kings of the world.

The magic word there is "diverse." I loved the fact that Page was able to play acoustically so beautifully. And here's the thing: dynamics is a huge part of what Zeppelin did, you know? All the greats, like [Frank] Zappa, Hendrix or whoever, understand that dynamics within music are important. They would bring the music down low and then come back slamming. I love that, and Page was an expert at that. So was John Paul Jones. It wouldn't have been the same experience in the studio without both of those guys.

Can you pick out a solo or moment from Jimmy Page as a favorite?

Led Zeppelin II stands out for me because of the guitar work. Every album they did was magnificent, but I have a special place in my heart for *Zeppelin II*. The dynamics and the fact that we created some things through panning and using frequencies to create a vibe make it special. But I also must call out the live record; *The Songs Remains the Same*, which was done under some challenging circumstances but did a great job of reflecting their energy and interaction on stage.

Regarding live records, your work on Kiss's *Alive!* changed the band's trajectory. Working with a young band like Kiss must have been very different from working with Zeppelin.

The thing with Kiss was we knew we had to get everything down on tape no matter what it took. It was hard because they were always jumping around, and we had to do a bunch of work on the album after the fact, but that's how it was. The band may deny it, but the fact remains that on *Alive!*, we had to fix a bunch of stuff.

Did anyone in the band have a say in those fixes?

They did. And the album came out bloody great because the guys in Kiss were very particular about how it should sound and be mixed. We worked tirelessly for weeks to make *Alive!* sound amazing. So, while it's not totally "live," it's a great creation of the live sound of Kiss from that time. There were just bits we had to fix for obvious reasons, like the guys being on stage in six-inch boots, bombs going off and rockets and flames shooting to God knows where. [Laughs] It takes a lot of work to keep in time and tune while jumping up and down. They can do it now, but in those days, not so much.

It goes without saying that Paul Stanley and Ace Frehley were rough around the edges then, but could you tell they were stars in the making?

Right from the beginning, I knew that Ace Frehley would be a star — that's for sure. Ace had intuitive talents; he could play blues and rock, and I loved that he could play all these cool blues licks but make them his own. Ace wasn't scared of anything. As for Paul, I thought he was good. He was an okay guitar player then but became very good later. Paul got sharper and steadier as a rhythm player. But Ace had this huge sound from the start, and his talent was instantly recognizable.



Led Zeppelin II, Led Zeppelin (1969)

Kramer might have been a studio wizard, but he met his match in Jimmy Page. Together, through clever placement of mics, innovative use of dynamics and general guitar badassery, Page and Kramer crafted one of the greatest — and most riff-tastic — rock records of all time.



Woodstock, Various Artists (1969)

It couldn't have been easy recording a concert event of this magnitude — especially given the sonic expanse of the roster, general conditions and tech limitations at the time. Regardless, Kramer — one of the greatest at capturing live rock music, ever — got the job done. We can thank him for this stunning document featuring Hendrix, CCNY, Canned Heat, Ten Years After and more.



Empty Rooms, John Mayall (1969)

As the only set of studio recordings featuring the *Turning Point* (Mayall's previous live record) lineup of John Almond (flute, saxophone), Jon Mark (acoustic guitar), Steve Thompson (bass) and Mayall (guitar, tambourine, harmonica), *Empty Rooms* is significant.

This lineup gets little attention, but thankfully, Kramer captured them while in quite a groove.

**“JUST AS I WAS SETTING UP
THE MIC, JIMI STARTED
PLAYING, AND MAN, MY BRAIN
FROZE. IN THAT SECOND,
MY LIFE CHANGED”**



Performance Rockin' the Fillmore, Humble Pie (1971)

Before he became a pop-meets-rock star on the heels of *Frampton Comes Alive!*, Peter Frampton was a hard-charging blues rocker alongside Steve Marriott in Humble Pie. Few duos did it better than Frampton and Marriott, and thankfully, before Frampton left, Kramer was on hand to work his magic in laying it all to tape.



Alive! Kiss (1975)

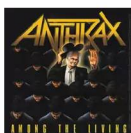
Considering it's one of the greatest live rock albums of all time, it's funny that, save for Peter Criss' drums, *Alive!* isn't so live. Kramer has said recording Kiss was "difficult" due to them "jumping around."

And Kiss's rough-around-the-edges nature made several, okay a ton, of overdubs necessary, "despite what the band may say."



Ace Frehley, Ace Frehley (1978)

Though technically a Kiss album, Ace Frehley came forth via Ace's mind alone — and features no other members of Kiss. Kramer knew "Ace was talented from the start, but it took finesse to get his ideas out." It's good that Kramer was on hand, as the resulting album remains Frehley's defining non-Kiss moment.



Among the Living, Anthrax (1987)

Kramer admits that working with a young and rowdy bunch like Anthrax "was a period of adjustment," as was "wrapping his head around thrash." But once he did, it was business as usual, with Kramer making Dan Spitz's and Scott Ian's guitars sound gargantuan, cutting and fresh. — *Andrew Daly*



Kramer behind the mixing desk at Manhattan Center Studio, NYC, March 29, 1994

You had the Midas touch with Ace, as you also got great results from him during his solo career. What was your secret?

Ace is interesting because many interesting things go on in his brain, but you must get him in the right mood to get that cool stuff out. I remember working with him on his '78 solo record, and I had to have him lie on the floor with a pillow behind his head and a bottle of Heineken because he was too nervous to stand up. So I'd have him on the floor with a bottle of whatever to calm him, and the more takes we did, the more confident he got. By the second or third take, he was up on his feet, and I said, "Alright, Ace, keep going. It's cool."

What's your tried-and-true technique for getting a good guitar sound, regardless of who you're working with?

You know, it's different each time. But at the same time, there's a principle involved in terms of where I put the microphones, what sound the guitarist is looking for, the tone of the guitar; I always want to make sure the sounds aren't foreign, you know? I don't want to be 180 degrees away from what the player is doing. If it's an established player who has their specific tone, I'm not going to alter that with a bunch of crap. It's important to have pure tone from

the room that's resonating and sounds like it's alive instead of being shut down by excessive limiting. I give them whatever they need to make them happy. If the sound in the room isn't great, I make it great.

Looking back, you've immeasurably impacted the way listeners perceive rock guitar in recorded music. Could you have imagined as much when you first stepped into Electric Lady Studios?

Thank you, I appreciate that. With Electric Lady, for me, when I first saw the space in '69, I had heard they wanted to make it a nightclub, and I was like, "You're out of your fucking minds. Let's make this the best recording studio in the world for Jimi Hendrix." It became that and has repeatedly proved its point and is still living famously and beautifully. The sound of that room is special, and Jimi has blessed it with his spirit.

I am so proud of Electric Lady; it's a wonderful place to create music. It's magical. It really is, man. I genuinely believe Jimi's spirit is there because some of the stuff that comes together there... It's been hard for me to find the same thing in other studios. I'm very proud of all I've done — especially the Electric Lady stuff. A few studios have a similar vibe, but nothing compares to the charm and mystery of Electric Lady. **GW**

DAVID CORIO/REDFERNS

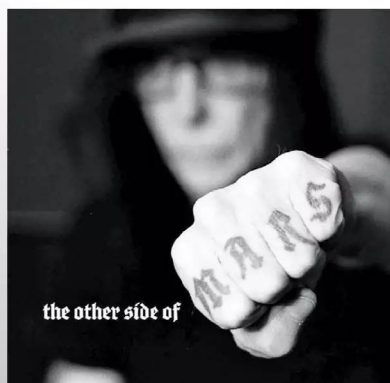
MARS ATTACKS!

FORMER MÖTLEY CRÜE AX-SLINGER

MICK MARS

COMES OUT GUNS A-BLAZING ON HIS DEBUT SOLO ALBUM, *THE OTHER SIDE OF MARS*. BELOW, MARS TAKES US BEHIND THE MAKING OF THE LONG-AWAITED RECORD AND RIFLES THROUGH SOME TURBULENT CRÜE HISTORY — GOOD, BAD AND UGLY

WORDS BY
JOE BOSSO



PHOTOS BY
JEFF FASANO



"I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for Mötley Crüe. I don't regret anything we've ever done — good, bad or ugly"



YOU DON'T START A

conversation with Mick Mars by asking, "How are you?" It comes out more like, "How *are* you?" He's used to it. Ever since the guitarist went public in 2001 with his decades-long battle with ankylosing spondylitis — a pernicious, inflammatory form of arthritis in which the vertebrae grow together and fuse the spine — he's become accustomed to discussing the state of his health.

"I actually feel pretty good," he says. Speaking via Zoom from his home in Nashville, Mars sits in a chair and his body is rigid; he's lost most of the mobility in his spine and has a pronounced head-forward posture. His arms and hands, however, are completely unaffected; he waves them around freely and frequently. He looks frail and almost ghost white, but the truth is, he's never been the robust sort. "The condition has progressed," he says matter-of-factly. "Most of the pain nowadays is in my neck, my head and my hips. When I walk, it feels like I've got a cinder block on my head." He smiles a tight-lipped smile. "I deal with it. I have to."

Mars wasn't exactly a spring chicken when he hit it big with Mötley Crüe. By the time the band released their breakthrough album, *Shout at the Devil*, in 1983, he was 32, making him the elder statesman among his young-buck bandmates. He's 72 now and has finally gotten around to recording the debut solo album he's talked about for the past 20 years. I mention to him a chat we had in a Portland, Maine, dressing room in 2005 during the Crüe's Carnival of Sins reunion tour. Sunk into a black leather couch, he laid out his plans to mix the blues with African rhythms while using multiple drummers on the same song. There would be horn sections, too, he said; the music would be as far-and-away different from Mötley Crüe as could be.

"I remember that conversa-

tion," he says, "talking about flying to Africa just to hear somebody beatin' on logs. I think that's still a possibility. Musicians are always talking about how they want to do something different, blah, blah, blah. I'm just trying to create what I hear in my noggin, and I'm open to a lot of things. I haven't really flown around and searched for things, but I intend to. There's some stuff I'm writing now that would sound good with saxophones — not like the band Chicago, although I love them. Always have."

Much of the music that Mars did eventually record for the album that would become *The Other Side of Mars* is pummeling metal and anthemic hard rock that he co-wrote with fellow Nashville resident Paul Taylor, a former member of Winger and Alice Cooper's touring band. The guitarist surrounded himself with a new core of players — bassist Chris Collier and Korn drummer Ray Luzier, along with two vocalists, Jacob Bunton and Brion Gamboa — but in choosing a co-producer and engineer, he reached out to a key figure from his past: Michael Wgener, the German metal specialist who engineered and mixed the Crüe's 1981 debut, *Too Fast for Love*.

"It was funny how I wound up working with Michael," Mars says. "I wrote to him and asked if he knew anybody to help me engineer, and he wrote back, 'Will I do?' I said, 'Of course!' He introduced me to Paul Taylor, and everything started falling into place. We did everything at my house. I've got Pro Tools and a ton of stuff." He chuckles. "I call my studio the Dungeon because I've got this big dungeon door on it."

The music sounds like it came from inside a dungeon. Mars' guitar tone is rude and sinister throughout the album, which includes thrashy rockers ("Ain't Goin' Back Again"), heavy riff bangers ("Broken on the Inside"), doomsday grinders ("Ready to Roll") and ominous power ballads ("Alone"). As one might expect, there are boatloads of teeth-gnashing solos. The angst-ridden mood changes dramatically on two cuts: the piano-driven ballad "Memories" is laced with violins and violas, and the lone instrumental, "LA

Mick Mars, photographed in Nashville (with one of at least five different Strats(!) he brought to the shoot), November 13, 2023

Noir," evokes the steamy, sin-soaked aura of the 1980s Sunset Strip scene from Mars' past life.

One could make the case that the guitarist responsible for good-time anthems like "Girls, Girls, Girls" and "Don't Go Away Mad (Just Go Away)" was in a foul state while recording his new tunes — an assessment Mars doesn't entirely dispute. "I was thinking about a lot of things that bothered me," he says. He points to the stinging single "Loyal to the Lie" and says, "Look at Charles Manson, Jim Jones and David Koresh — how can people fall for this stuff? You wind up either dead or mentally fucked up. It's frustrating that people believe this crap, and it's all lies."

To the best of his recollection, he never played any of these song ideas for the guys in Mötley Crüe. "Without trying to be the butt man of anything, I was kind of left out of a lot of the band's writing right after [1989's] *Dr. Feelgood*," he says. "When *Generation Swine* came out [1997], I was pretty much omitted — and *New Tattoo*" [2000]. Understandably, the subject of the Crüe hangs around like an elephant in the room. Mars announced his retirement from touring with the band in October 2022, and John 5 was recruited to step in. Months later, the situation turned ugly. Mars sued the band, alleging that they had attempted to divest him as a major stakeholder in the group's corporation and business holdings. Directly afterward, an attorney for the Crüe maintained that Mars' decision to cease touring amounted to quitting the band outright, a contention that Mars disputed.

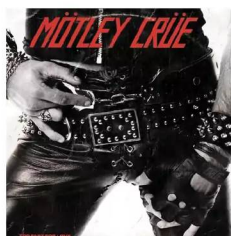
Since then, accusations have flown back and forth in the press between both sides about miming to tapes in concert — an issue that Mars is now reluctant to take up. "I can't do that because of a gag order,"

Lost on MARS!

TEN STELLAR (AND LESSER-KNOWN) MICK MARS RIFFS YOU MIGHT VERY WELL BE MISSING OUT ON

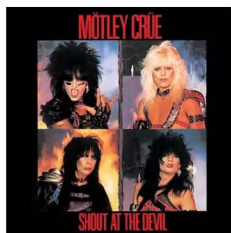
By Andrew Daly

AS THE LONGTIME lead guitarist of Mötley Crüe (and the best musician in the band), Mick Mars did a hell of a lot of heavy lifting over the years. And considering that Mötley Crüe came of age in the hair metal/shred era, the uninitiated would assume Mars' playing would be pyrotechnic, right? Not so much, as Mars was from another, much bluesier, era. But Mars' memorable solos weren't the most impressive part of his style; instead, his rhythms and riffs defined the sound of Mötley Crüe and carried them to sleaze infamy. Ten of said riffs follow, some of which you might've overlooked — or just don't know yet.



10. "Come on and Dance" from *Too Fast for Love* (1981)

Simple yet grungy, the "Come on and Dance" riff slithers across the second track from Mötley Crüe's debut like a venomous snake on the hunt. Sure, any kid with a cheap guitar could learn this one, but it's a prime example of Mars' unique feel.



9. "Red Hot" from *Shout at the Devil* (1983)

Mars enters the picture via a signature pick scrape before underscor-

"I wrote these songs when I had the blues, so I guess they're blues songs — the dark side of the blues"

he says, then clarifies: "I don't have a gag order, but it's like anything you say can and will be used against you. I have to be pretty cautious about what I say because it could be relevant to what's going on." Similarly, when asked if he stands by his lawsuit assertion that Nikki Sixx "gaslit" him about his guitar playing abilities, Mars tenses up and says, "I can't comment on that. Sorry, you know how it is."

On most other Crüe-related matters, he's surprisingly candid and chatty — to a point. He'll start to let

it fly, but then a look comes over him and he becomes self-aware; it's as if he's asking himself, "Am I saying too much?" He's not the first musician to take his bandmates to court, but clearly the lawsuit is weighing on him. At one point, I ask him if he ever considered simply sitting down with the rest of the group to hash things out. "I would say it's past... impossible," he says with a slight, regretful smile.

He brightens when talking about the new music he's making. "It's like when you find a new love in your life — the thrill isn't gone," he says. "When I do stuff with Mötley, I know what Nikki wants. I know what Tommy's hearing. We sort of mash it together. Working with new guys, it's new blood, new energy, and we're trying to figure it out. It's a refreshing vibe."



"It gets a little bit strenuous for me to travel around the world and keep doing that for months at a time," Mars says

You've often been lauded for your rich, powerful guitar tone. Is that something you can just dial up? I'm glad you asked about that because a lot of people think tone comes from your amps. Mostly, it's in your hands. How can I describe it? I don't know the way it works. I could play through a different amp, but the tone you hear is from my hands. If you had put Eddie Van Halen through different amps, you'll still hear his tone; it came from him.

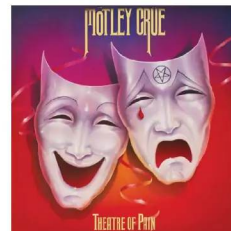
The album is very aggressive and

dark. You've talked about your influences quite a bit — people like Hendrix, Beck, Clapton and Michael Bloomfield. Did you ever record that kind of stuff? Not more blues-oriented songs. I wrote these songs when I had the blues, so I guess they're blues songs — the dark side of the blues. [Laughs] I was thinking about that because I get texts from people like, "Hey, I wanted to hear some blues." You never know — maybe I'll add a Paul Butterfield-type song, like when they did *The Resurrection of Pigboy Crabshaw* [1967], some really cool stuff and tight horns. I can go any way I want.

Did you think that would be too much of a left curve for your old Crüe fans?

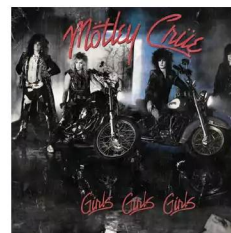
I think Mick Mars fans understand that I love the blues,

ing the festivities with a ballsy yet melodic riff. Once again, it's not about technical prowess here as much as it is about playing for the song, a nuance too many Eighties shredders ignored.



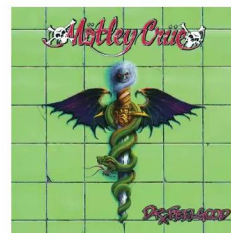
8. "Use It or Lose It" from *Theatre of Pain* (1985)

Mars' signature tone, which is metal-laden yet blues-based, didn't become apparent until *Theatre of Pain*. "Use It or Lose It" is a prime example of Mars' tendency to define trends and tones before they become a parody of themselves later.



7. "Bad Boy Boogie" from *Girls, Girls, Girls* (1987)

The entire *Girls, Girls, Girls* album is defined by its sleazy vibe. As for Mars, his licks, as heard on the likes of "Bad Boy Boogie," ooze with so much sweaty sex appeal that you'll probably want to shower after hearing them.

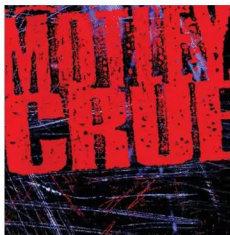


6. "Rattlesnake Shake" from *Dr. Feelgood* (1989)

Released at the height of Mötley Crüe's fame, Mars had his riffage on lock by the time he recorded "Rattlesnake Shake." In short, if you're looking for an example of the sound of Mötley Crüe at their prime best, this cut is it.

5. "Sticky Sweet" from *Dr. Feelgood*

Another example of Mars' ability to use his guitar as a weapon for sex and sleaze, "Sticky Sweet" is the sort of swaggering, sauntering six-stringery that only he could carry out. Back in '89, it took a special riffer to overshadow Vince Neil, but Mars did so handily.

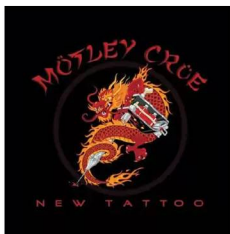


4. "Hammered" from *Mötley Crüe* (1994)

Mötley Crüe's John Corabi-era album is filled with Mars' heaviest riffs. Moreover, based on the vibe of his new album, *The Other Side of Mars*, the heavier-than-heavy sounds heard on a song like "Hammered" are an example of the real Mars.

3. "Smoke the Sky" from *Mötley Crüe*

Why not include another gargantuan riff fest from, gasp, Mötley Crüe's best and most integrity-filled record? Indeed, "Smoke the Sky" is sludgy, chuggy and the most "metal up your ass" Mars had ever been... until now.



2. "Treat Me Like the Dog I Am" from *New Tattoo* (2000)

Mars has alluded to the idea that his bandmates didn't want his guitars on *New Tattoo* to sound like, well, guitars. But this riff, which pairs nicely with the self-deprecating lyrics and odd panting noises, sounds like Mars was up to his old tricks.

1. "Loyal to the Lie" from *The Other Side of Mars* (2024)

Mars might be embroiled in drama — and his body might be failing him — but one listen to this tune tells us the riff-master is anything but creatively dry. This sounds far fresher than anything Crüe have done since the mid Nineties.

and I think a lot of them were expecting a blues record. I don't know; I had to do something a little more than that.

On "Killing Breed," your use of the whammy bar is quite melodic. You've been known to go all sorts of ways with a whammy — sometimes heavy gonzo, other times very light.

Well, I love Jeff Beck, and boy, he knew how to use his whammy. He used it like a speaking voice or singing voice. Ritchie Blackmore uses a whammy and it sounds like it's supposed to, but Beck, like I said, he made more like a voice. That's how I hear it.

Are we hearing a little bit of a Jeff Beck vibe in "LA Noir"? Those distorted jazz chords are reminiscent of his style.

Yeah, maybe. I wrote that initial riff — the really sleazy, sleuth-y thing — maybe 20, 25 years ago. I've had it for the longest time. My album needed one more song, and I said, "Okay, just put that together," and that's what came out.

Do you think you might ever do an album of instrumentals?

Not really. I mean, I like "LA Noir," but I don't think I do instrumental things that well. That song took a while.

"Ain't Going Back Again" has a distinct Alice in Chains vibe — the sound and feel.

Yeah, well, that was like, "I don't want to go back to that bullshit again." I think you're reading me pretty well on that.

I didn't expect a song like "Memories," a languid piano ballad with strings. Did you actually sing on the demo?

[Laughs] Oh, no, no. Jacob sang on that. I wrote the song long ago, right about during the final tour. I wrote it on guitar, added some drums and a little of this, that and the other. I asked Paul Taylor to put piano on it, and he did it exactly right. I went, "That's all I want to hear." I was hearing something like Freddie Mercury walking out, and he just started playing piano and singing. Paul captured that.

Did you have a dedicated guitar-and-amp setup for the record?

I used the white Strat that I used on tours, the one I call Isabella. It was a lot of that guitar, and I also used a Melody Maker. They were plugged in, miked up and that's it. On "The Right Side of Wrong," I went through an old



Magnatone to get a lo-fi kind of thing. I used my Marshalls, of course; [noted amp builder] Jose Arrendondo modded them out. I used Soldano amps, too. I think that's about it.

I imagine some pedals come into the picture.

Yeah, but not many. I used that MXR Cry Baby thing [Dunlop Cry Baby Q Zone Fixed-Wah]. You can set it and get a Leslie West tone. There also were some octave dividers and the [DigiTech] Whammy.

Your playing overall is tip-top. Do you ever feel your condition affecting your fingers or hands at all?

Ankylosing spondylitis rarely goes into your hands or feet or anything. I have some in my shoulders, but does it affect my playing? No. Does it affect my mind? No, it doesn't take your memory away. It doesn't take the dexterity away from the fingers or anything. It's mostly spinal arthritis, actually; it seizes your whole back up your spinal cord, up in your brain. A solid bone. If I was to break my back, I'd die.

All right, let's shift gears. The lawsuit — any second thoughts about filing it?

I couldn't do it anymore — the traveling part. I mean, I'm 72 and I have this crap. It gets a little bit strenuous for me to travel around the world and keep doing that for months at a time with a two-week break. It's just gotten to be too much for me. So yeah, that's about it.

In 2022, you announced that you were retiring from touring with Mötley Crüe. Were you surprised when "retired" was interpreted as "resigned"?

Two different words, two different meanings. It was just retiring from the touring part. I'd actively be involved in every entity of Mötley Crüe. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them. I don't regret anything we've ever done — good, bad or ugly, whatever. My body just couldn't do it anymore.

In your view, what was the peak period for Mötley Crüe? When did the band sound the way you wanted?

I mean, Mötley Crüe was a whole different animal from what I'm doing. Writing the anthems and "Girls, Girls, Girls" was what the band was all about. I like some of the early stuff, like "Too Fast for Love." Then it got a little sideways and then it got back on track. It's ups and downs. Mötley Crüe is what it is — and still is.

Every band has drama, but I get a real sense that at one point it all started to be too much for you and things weren't so fun anymore. When was that?

Well, there were a lot of times, but when I look back on it now, it's almost comical — the atypical thing of what all the up-and-coming rock star people think rock 'n' roll is about. It isn't about heroin, it isn't about drinking, and it isn't about all that stuff that, granted, they did anyway. That isn't part of it. The up-and-coming rock star should really concentrate on music.

You've said that at a certain point the band didn't really include you in the songwriting.

I was kind of left out of the loop right around *Generation Swine*. I mean, I'd play solos on the songs, but as far as writing and playing a lot of the songs, it was different things, different people.

You've stated that you didn't play a note on that album and that the band didn't want your guitar to sound like a guitar. You'd play a part, only to see it erased and then played by somebody else.

Yeah, unfortunately, they had a lot of my guitar parts... That was [co-producer] Scott Humphrey going, "It sounds like a guitar." I'm going, "Because it *is*." Erasing and taking stuff... I don't know. That was the toughest time I had.

Do you know who was playing guitar over your parts?

John.

John...

[One-time Crüe vocalist] Corabi. I don't know who else could have. And I'm not accusing John; he just told me that he replaced my parts, and he felt like a dog. I was just completely devastated that it could happen. I think at the time they were trying to go in a different direction, but it's not acceptable to me. *Generation Swine* was a removal of what Mötley Crüe was about.

Did the band discuss any of this with you, like, "What sound are we going for, and how can we all get it together?"

I would sit in a room with the tape for hours trying to get something that would never work, if you know what I mean. It's like, the producer at the time would be like, "No, that's not right. That's not right." I didn't know what else to do. I'm a guitar player. That's what I do.

You told *Rolling Stone* that you played "one lick" on 2000's *New Tattoo* but

"My
body just
couldn't
do it
anymore"

you didn't write any songs because you weren't invited. Nikki maintains that you played all the guitars on the album.

Well, I was invited and I played all the guitars. But I don't remember writing any of them, even though I was told I wrote one of the songs.

You're credited as a writer on three songs.

Right. I did play on that album. Was that after... I must've said it was after *Generation Swine*. Was *New Tattoo* before that or after?

***New Tattoo* was afterward.**

You're right. Not trying to be a liar. I did play the guitars on that particular album — all the guitars, rhythm and solos. But there was a different producer than on *Generation Swine*. I can't remember his name [Editor's note: It was Mike Clink]. After that was *Saints of Los Angeles* [2008], am I correct?

Yes. What was the story on that album? Nikki said you were struggling to play your parts, and that the album is a mix of you and DJ Ashba, who was uncredited.

DJ Ashba played all the guitar parts except for the solos.

You were battling opiate addiction at that time. Is that right?

At that time I was recovering, but it was more... Let me think about what year that album was. I mean, in 2004 and 2005 is when I got pretty addicted to opiates, and I wasn't very... I was alone. This was during the last of *New Tattoo*. I had to have my guitar tech start driving me to the studio. I couldn't move anymore.

Was playing pretty tough at that point?

Not really. The pain was... but I was filled with opiates. I didn't have a problem playing. I had more of a problem not being addicted. [Laughs] It's hard to explain, but let's say I could tolerate it better by taking the crap I was taking. I wouldn't have been able to do it without that crap. I was already addicted.

You were taking opiates to deal with your medical condition?

Yes, for the AS. There were times when I would get up or try to stand up off the couch or get out of bed where my whole back would go into this big... You know when you get those charley horses in your calf? My whole back.

We've talked about three albums that don't sound like they were very much fun for you. Did you ever talk to the guys about ways to improve the situation?

No, I never complained. Mötley Crüe was my life. It's what I did. Whining is about... I tried to show a lot of strength, that I was determined to do this no matter what. Except for *Generation Swine* — I couldn't get that one. [Laughs]

In your view, should the band have stuck to their guns and quit touring after the "farewell" tour?

Do you know what I was really thinking at that point when we signed that big huge contract thing and made a big deal of it and stuff? That Mötley actually were over touring. There was no mention about putting out a record again or anything else. I was into that.

You were hoping the farewell tour really was the farewell tour?

Yes. Yes. I actually thought it was like the farewell tour, because... bands are bands. They get into arguments, they get into this, they do this. Even the Stones, the Beatles, all of those people, man, it's like eat, sleep and drink with the same people every day for 40 years. There can't not be disagreements or seeing things differently.

There's been stories and specula-

tion about the band potentially firing you back in the day. When did you hear any of that?

1981.

What was the circumstance?

I don't want to give a source for it because it would be a little bit too messed up for me to do that. He was a very famous singer in a band right around the same time we were.

That was right around when the band formed. Did you hear those stories after that, through the years?

I just heard about it maybe a year or so ago. Less than that...

But while you were in the band?

There were some... that happened... If you read Bob Daisley's book [For Facts Sake, 2013], it was in 1984, and they were talking about replacing me. There's a few other times that I heard of or read in a book or something.

Did you just let that blow off your shoulders, or did you go to the band members, like, "What the fuck?"

At that point, I was just going, "That won't happen." I was determined — "No, no, I'm not going anywhere." It's like, "You guys can hallucinate all you want, but I stand."

What was the last record you remember on which the band, including you, was happy and unified?

It would be kind of a toss-up between... *Dr. Feelgood* felt pretty good. The Corabi album [1994's Mötley Crüe] felt really comfortable to me, because everybody was... I guess that thing you feel when you first fall in love. And then when the thrill is gone, it's like... you know.

The thrill was definitely gone on *Generation Swine*, right?



[from left] Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil, Nikki Sixx and Mick Mars get crazy in Detroit, July 20, 1987

“Generation Swine... I can't say that I remotely enjoyed any minute of that”



[Laughs] *Generation Swine* is like... I can't say that I remotely enjoyed any minute of that. I was so distraught — you know, *lost*. No, I didn't have fun.

When we spoke during the 2005 tour, you seemed to be in decent spirits.

Yeah, that's when I started to go more, if I remember correctly, off opiates. That was better. I didn't feel like I was the walking dead. You know how that stuff works. It's like, “Oh, my God...”

Do you miss being friends with those guys? Were you ever friends?

Yeah, at one point. It's like, I don't hate anybody. In the band there's a lot of stuff that I wasn't particularly fond of that would happen through the years. Wiping your ass on my doorknob wasn't exactly fun. That kind of stuff — lighting my doors on fire. And like I said, when I look back at it now, it's kind of comical. But this happened, and it wasn't funny at the time.

Let's circle back to your record. Do you plan to tour at all? You've said you probably wouldn't do a real tour.

It's about the same as I said with Mötley. I'm not quitting, I'm just retiring from this amount. Touring is too much — I'm retiring from that. I'll do a one-off if people really want to see me, or a residency three days out of five, wherever. As far as the extensive stuff you do with world touring and the major touring in the United States, buses and planes and trains and all that other stuff is a beating. It's a beating.

You could do a residency thing at that new Sphere in Las Vegas.

That would be cool because it could make the whole sphere Mars.

There you go. And your head could be as big as the sphere.

Heck, no! My head will never get that big. [Laughs]

You do live in Nashville. What about holding some sort of blues jam? I imagine a bunch of players in town would show up.

We're thinking along the same lines. I'd love to find some sort of speak-easy — a damp, dark cellar that we turn into a café. Players could show up, but they would need a password to get in. I'd love to do something like that. **GW**

Martian TRAITS

A LOOK AT THE EX-MÖTLEY CRÜE GUITARIST'S FLASHY, BLUES-ROCK-BASED PLAYING STYLE AND TECHNIQUES

By Jenna Scaramanga

ACCORDING TO THE valuable historical document that is Mötley Crüe's "Home Sweet Home" music video, Mick Mars lives in a large Transylvanian mansion. When not joining his bandmates in turning over tables on Japanese gangsters, he is a devotee of blues and foundational rock music and guitar playing. His first inspiration was surf legend Dick Dale, from whom he gets his crunching pick attack. Mick later moved on to worshipping the playing of Jeff Beck and Duane Allman, and he even played some slide with the Crüe (check out "Primal Scream"), one of the few giveaways of his blues roots.

In this mini lesson, we present a short but rocking Mötley Crüe-style instrumental ditty with a swinging 16th-note groove that's inspired by Mars' rhythm and lead work in the title track to the band's 1989 album, *Dr. Feelgood*. As you read the tabs and play along to the audio track, aim to lay back on the beat slightly to give the riffs and licks that signature Mötley Crüe swagger.

GET THE TONE

You will need: A Strat-style guitar with a bridge humbucker (or a Les Paul, as used by Mars until 1985-ish), an overdrive pedal and a Marshall JCM800. Mars always tunes his guitar down a whole step, to "D standard" (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D) for a heavy sound. Keep plenty of mids in the EQ; "scooped mids" is for a different kind of metal. Now is probably also a good time to remind you that there's less gain in Mick's tone than you might think.

Tune down one whole step (low to high, D G C F A D).

All music sounds one whole step lower than written.

Moderately ♩ = 135, w/swing-16ths feel (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

FIG. 1 D5 A/C# B5 N.C.(G) (E5) D5/E A/E D5/E (E5) D5/E A/E E5

1 Gtr. 1 (w/dist.) 1/4 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

4 D5/E A/E D5/E D5 A/C# B5 N.C.(G) (E5) G5/E D/E G5/E (E5)

7 G5/E D/E A5/E G5/E D/E G5/E D5 A/C# B5 N.C.(G) 1/4

10 A5 pre-dive w/bar -7 D5 A5 (E5) D5/E A/E D5

13 A5 B5 (E5) D5/E A/E D5/E (E5)

16 D5/E A/E E5 D5/E A/E D5/E D5 A/C# B5 N.C.(G) (E5)

FIGURE 1: Rhythm Part (Gtr. 1)

This riff is played as if it were in the key of E, with everything sounding a whole step lower, in the key of D, due to the tuning. The figure features lots of recurring punchy-sounding 16th-note anticipations, or "pushes," on the open 6th string. That means the note is attacked a 16th note ahead of the beat, or "early," then held over into the following downbeat. Listen to the track to cop the

desired feel, and be sure to dutifully palm mute (P.M.) those open low E notes to keep things tidy and tight sounding as you alternate between them and the fretted notes. Allowing the open notes to ring would only serve to muddy things up.

In bars 2 and 3, be sure to apply

some shimmering finger vibrato to the last dyad on the D and G strings for added sex appeal, but be careful not to wiggle the notes too sharp to the point where they sound out of tune.

In our featured Mars-style solo, which begins at 0:32 into the track, some of the licks may look and sound intimidating at first, but you'll find they're actually easier to play than what one might initially assume. There are some flashy moves here, but you'll find that they're mostly based on stock legato patterns and finger-friendly shapes, with the incorporation of open strings further aiding the fret hand.

The “palm harmonics” in bars 15 and 16 are sounded by repeating a fast double pull-off triplet motif on the open G string — with a hammer-on to every 4th-fret B note after the initial pick attack to keep the pattern going in a loop— while gently resting the heel of your picking hand on the strings near the bridge and proceeding to slide the hand toward the nut, sounding random harmonics along the way. This is followed in bar 17 by a series of quick whammy bar dips applied to a walk up the B string through the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) with a C $\sharp$ (the 6th) added at the 14th fret before bending the D note at the 15th fret up to the E root.

The final fast run in bar 22 is, thanks to the recurring use of the open B string and an unchanging octave B note tapped at the 12th fret, fairly easy to finger for both hands, with all the notes falling on the same string and only the pairs of fretted notes, performed with double hammer-ons, changing between the taps. Notice that the pattern is based on the B Mixolydian mode (B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A) and is not unlike what AC/DC's Angus Young did in his descending pedal-point lick in the intro and verses to "Thunderstruck." Proceed slowly at first then gradually work the lick up to tempo. Strive for clean taps, pull-offs and hammer-ons with good projection and even volume, then crank up the speed and go for it! As Vince Neil would say, "Make some friggin' noise!" **GW**

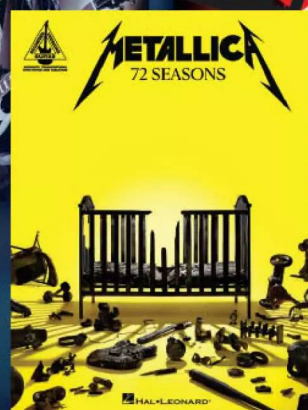
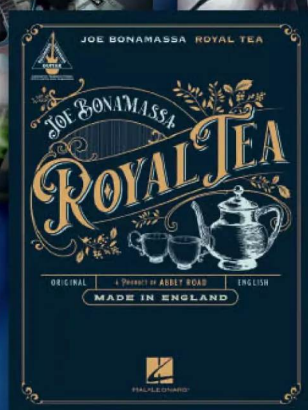
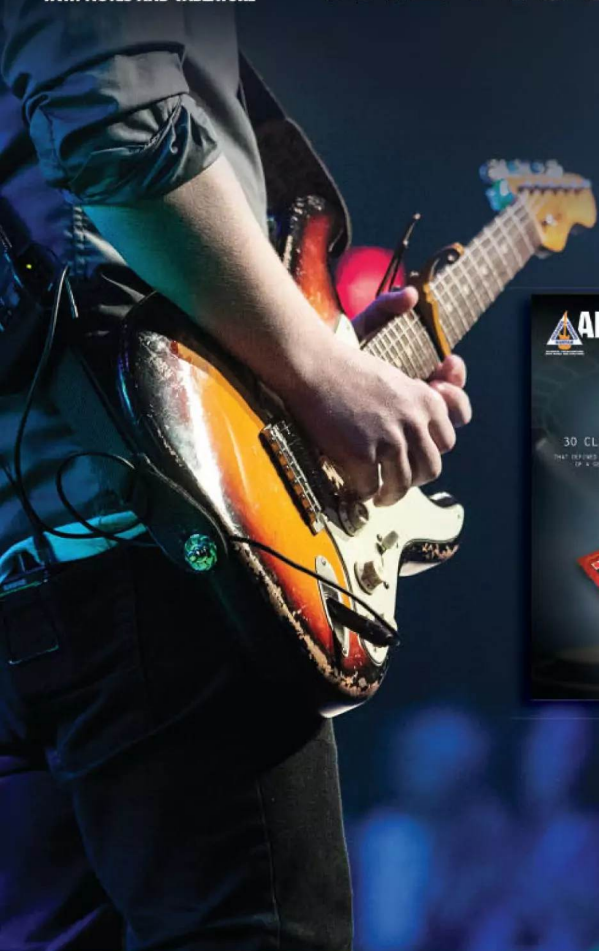
[illegible]



AUTHENTIC TRANSCRIPTIONS
WITH NOTES AND TABLATURE

HAL•LEONARD®

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN TAB



ALICE IN CHAINS – ACOUSTIC
00690178 • \$22.99

**ALTERNATIVE ROCK –
GUITAR TAB ANTHOLOGY**
00465601 • \$29.99

JOE BONAMASSA – ROYAL TEA
00358863 • \$24.99

**ERIC CLAPTON –
COMPLETE CLAPTON**
00690936 • \$34.99

**GARY CLARK JR. –
GUITAR TAB ANTHOLOGY**
00389392 • \$29.99

**BEST OF CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER REVIVAL**
00690819 • \$27.99

BEST OF DEF LEPPARD
00690784 • \$29.99

**THE VERY BEST OF EAGLES –
UPDATED EDITION**
00278632 • \$49.99

FOO FIGHTERS – GREATEST HITS
00691024 • \$26.99

**GRETA VAN FLEET –
THE BATTLE AT GARDEN'S GATE**
00369065 • \$24.99

IRON MAIDEN – GUITAR TAB
00200446 • \$34.99

**ROBERT JOHNSON –
THE NEW TRANSCRIPTIONS**
00690271 • \$27.99

THE VERY BEST OF KISS
00291163 • \$29.99

**MEGADETH – GREATEST HITS:
BACK TO THE START**
00276065 • \$27.99

METALLICA – 72 SEASONS
01213122 • \$29.99

NIRVANA – UNPLUGGED IN NEW YORK
00690026 • \$22.99

**TOM PETTY – THE DEFINITIVE
GUITAR COLLECTION**
00690499 • \$25.99

PINK FLOYD – GUITAR ANTHOLOGY
00244637 • \$24.99

QUEEN – GREATEST HITS
00694975 • \$27.99

**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS –
GREATEST HITS**
00690673 • \$24.99

**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS –
RETURN OF THE DREAM CANTEEN**
01120374 • \$29.99

**THE ROLLING STONES –
GUITAR ANTHOLOGY**
00690631 • \$34.99

**RUSH – THE SPIRIT OF RADIO:
GREATEST HITS 1974-1987**
00323854 • \$26.99

**STONE TEMPLE PILOTS –
THANK YOU**
00322564 • \$26.99

**STRANGER THINGS – MUSIC FROM
THE NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES**
01112208 • \$22.99

STYX – GUITAR COLLECTION
00690520 • \$24.99

STEVE VAI – GUITAR ANTHOLOGY
00156024 • \$39.99

VAN HALEN – 30 CLASSICS
00295076 • \$34.99

**STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN –
LIGHTNIN' BLUES 1983-1987**
00660058 • \$29.99

WHITE STRIPES – GREATEST HITS
00237811 • \$24.99

ZZ TOP – GUITAR ANTHOLOGY
00690589 • \$27.99

VIEW ALL OUR GREAT GUITAR TITLES AT HALLEONARD.COM/GUITAR

SOUND CHECK

PRS SE Series SE Custom 24 Quilt and SE Swamp Ash Special

PRS SE Custom 24 Quilt in Turquoise

*the gear
in review*



77

XOTIC

XW-2 Wah - Red Limited

78

SOMA

Cosmos Drifting Memory Station

80

SHED PICKUPS

HA-59 PAF Set

81

GIBSON

Falcon 20



By Chris Gill

IT'S NOT A secret that the PRS SE Series offers guitarists some of the best value available on today's market. At any given time, an examination of the leading retailers' lists of their top 10 to 20 best-selling solidbodies under \$1,000 will inevitably include a large percentage of PRS SE models. Although a few SE models crossed the \$1,000 threshold a while back, the bulk of the lineup still sells for street prices from \$699 to \$999 — inflation be damned — making the PRS SE series even more enticing, as many musicians' purse-strings have tightened.

The SE Custom 24 Quilt and SE Swamp Ash Special are two of the three latest new additions to the PRS SE Series (the other being an SE CE 24 model) for 2024. The SE Custom 24 Quilt is the SE Series' most luxurious version of the timeless PRS Custom 24 offered to date, while the SE Swamp Ash Special is an affordable SE Series resurrection of the cult classic PRS Swamp Ash Special that originally was a beloved Core model from 1996-2009 and 2011-2012.

Every detail of the SE Custom 24 Quilt—particularly the tonewood materials—are so upscale that I had to take a second closer look at the headstock to make sure that I wasn't mistaking the "SE" logo for some other set of initials added to a Core model. The figuring of the book-matched quilted maple top is beguiling, and the deep black shade of the maple 24-fret neck's ebony fingerboard provides an ideal contrasting background for the pearl





PRS SE Swamp
Ash Special
in Iri Blue

“birds” inlays to enhance their dazzling sparkle. The quilted maple may be just a veneer on top of a thicker slab of maple that caps the mahogany body, but its looks still kill.

The SE Swamp Ash Special offers a more understated and rugged approach to the PRS aesthetic, like a Jeep Wrangler compared to the more upscale “Range Rover” vibe of the SE Custom 24 Quilt. Its main features include a bolt-on maple neck with 22 frets, colorful abalone Birds inlays and a versatile humbucker/single-coil/humbucker pickup configuration.

Both models share several common features that include a shallow violin top carve, 25-inch scale length, Wide Thin neck profile, 10-inch radius, master tone with push/pull coil split and master volume controls and nickel-plated hardware consisting of a molded PRS patented tremolo and PRS-designed tuners. While both models have PRS 85/15 “S” Treble (bridge) and Bass (neck) humbuckers, the pickups provide different tones thanks to the obvious inclusion of the SE Swamp

Ash Special’s PRS-designed AS-01 single-coil “S” alnico/steel pickup in the middle position.

The SE Custom 24 Quilt’s three-way blade pickup selector accesses standard bridge, both and neck humbucker settings or inner single-coil bridge, both and neck settings with the tone knob pulled up. The SE Swamp Ash Special has a three-position toggle instead. Pickup settings include the standard bridge/both/neck humbuckers with the tone knob down, while pulling up on the tone knob engages the middle single-coil pickup in all settings to provide a selection of bridge humbucker/middle, bridge humbucker/middle/neck inner coil and middle/neck inner coil settings.

Despite sharing quite a few common features, each of these models has its own distinct tonal personality thanks to the differences between the Custom’s set neck construction, ebony fingerboard, maple top over mahogany body and pickup wiring on one hand, and the Special’s bolt-on neck, maple fingerboard, Swamp Ash body and pickup wiring with additional

middle single-coil pickup on the other. Both instruments offer a versatile host of full humbucking and single-coil tones that cover the gamut of classic “F” and “G” brand guitar tones. If you tend to lean more towards brighter percussive twang over darker tones with singing compression, the SE Swamp Ash Special is recommended, or vice versa. The non-locking PRS-patented tremolo bridge provides a supreme balance between full-bodied tone and rock-solid performance that keeps the strings in tune.

Many assume that swamp ash is a lightweight wood, but actually the weight of swamp ash can vary considerably. Our SE Swamp Ash Special test example actually weighed about a pound more than the SE Custom 24 Quilt. Regardless, the Swamp Ash Special still delivered the percussive attack, lively dynamics and distinctive resonance that swamp ash is known for.

These new PRS SE models offer guitarists a bit of a dilemma when it comes to choosing one over the other, but thanks to their affordable prices most guitarists can solve this conundrum by buying both.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE
\$999 (SE Custom 24 Quilt); \$849
MANUFACTURER
PRS Guitars,
prsguitars.com

● **PROS:** Incredible value for instruments in the below \$1,000 range; meticulous craftsmanship and comfortable playability; versatile variety of humbucker and single-coil tones.

● **CONS:** Popularity of these models often results in long back-order waiting times; the toggle seems more suited to the Custom and the blade selector would be a better match for the Special.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether you prefer the luxurious appeal of the SE Custom 24 Quilt’s tone woods or the rough and ready working class vibe of the SE Swamp Ash Special, both models are best buys for players seeking versatile guitars with refined playability.

Xotic XW-2 Wah - Red Limited

By Paul Riario

▶ IN A RECENT interview, Metallica's Kirk Hammett openly addressed the flak he's often received for his blatant overuse of a wah pedal by softly capitulating, "I can't get away from it. I love the wah..." And instead of throwing more shade toward his lead-footed wah tendencies, I'm just gonna flat out agree with him. With that, there are many wah pedals I've unabashedly swept through with impunity like Mr. Hammett, and as a bit of a wah connoisseur (I own well over 30 wahs), I can unequivocally say that all wahs are not the same. For instance, Xotic hasn't exactly flown under the radar as far as wah brands go. Still, if you dig deep enough, you'll find their Xotic XW-1 has made its home on many popular artists' pedalboards — mostly because the XW-1 allows for a plethora of tone-shaping versatility with its side-panel controls for Bias, Hi and Low EQs and Wah-Q (width/range of sweepable frequencies). This time around, Xotic has proven "Less is more" with a new finely tuned wah that's similar to the XW-1 and based on the Italian-made '67-'68 Clyde McCoy Wahs, but now arrives without any fiddly control knobs. For many wah enthusiasts, Clyde McCoy wahs are considered the "Holy Grail" and Xotic has seemingly replicated its tonal recipe for their XW-2 Wah that not only says "wah" with a sweetened sweep but arrives in a bold red metallic finish that's limited to 1,000 pieces.

The first thing you'll notice about the XW-2 is its shrunken footprint (it's about 20 percent smaller than a typical wah pedal), but I can tell you it makes little to no difference in feel; if anything, your toe-box ends up blocking the LED indicator at the top. Speaking of which, that LED will flash if the battery power falls below 50 percent, which makes it a useful indicator. What I dig is that the new XW-2 is a case study in simple refinement combined with premium components and a superb build. Features include a proprietary wah potentiometer and custom-wound inductor, gold contact relay true bypassing (for transparent true bypass tone) and ultra-reliable switching that'll last for over a million stomps. For its quietly smooth operation, Xotic installs a self-lubricating nylon bushing pivot under the hood, so



there's no goopy internal grease to be found. You can also fully adjust the rocker pedal tension, and the rubber stopper on the treadle's backside can be shimmed for more travel range on the pedal.

Even without the control set found on the XW-1, Xotic cleverly simplifies the XW-2 to achieve the same Clyde McCoy-inspired wah tones by optimizing the EQ and moving the Wah-Q control inside the chassis. Regardless, it's a wonderfully vintage-voiced wah — much like the famed Clyde McCoy — that exists primarily in the very vocal-like range, with a pronounced quack and brassy honk that sounds like a horn section when you need to poke out. It can also get more dramatic or aggressive in its sweep, but for that, I would adjust the width of the filter peak from the internal Wah-Q knob and remove the rubber stopper. However, to my ears, the Wah-Q factory setup is dialed in perfectly — with a sweetened intensity à la Cream's "White Room," and combined with its smooth throw on the foot treadle, the XW-2 allows for total wah expressiveness without a fight.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$220

MANUFACTURER:

Xotic California,
<https://xotic.us>

● **PROS:** Articulate and expressive wah tones; Easy plug-in and play with no external knobs; Compact wah housing that's 20 percent smaller; Quality audio-grade components and bright LED power indicator; eye-catching red metallic finish.

● **CONS:** Expensive for a wah. Some players may prefer a normal-size foot treadle.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

The XW-2 is Xotic's no-nonsense wah with a throaty and articulate vocal-like sweep, and a must-have for wah connoisseurs that love McCoy-voiced wahs with a smaller footprint and bright metallic finish.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$649.99

MANUFACTURER:

SOMA Laboratory,
somasynths.com

● **PROS:** Generates incredibly complex, hypnotic ambient effects that evolve and mutate in unpredictable ways; streamlined design that facilitates use in live performance; dazzling sound quality.

● **CONS:** Not initially intuitive to use — studying the manual is essential; the inherent random nature of the algorithms means most effects/performances cannot be duplicated.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The SOMA Cosmos is more of an instrument than an effects processor, that creates strange and beautiful sonic textures and helps musicians generate unique improvised performances of hypnotic ambient music.

SOMA Cosmos Drifting Memory Station

By Chris Gill

▶ **IN RECENT YEARS**, a new variant of digital delay-based effects has emerged that is not delay as we know or understand it, yet it exists. These effects scoff at usual dotted-eighth, ping pong and multi-tap delays and boldly bluster, “hold my absinthe,” before taking musicians into a wild and wonderful world filled with strange but beautiful atmospheres. The SOMA Cosmos is the latest entry into this category that defies previous delay descriptions. SOMA calls it a “Drifting Memory Station,” although it could just as easily be named a “Sound Alchemist’s Discovery Kit” or “Ambient Texture Mill” or such.

So what is a Drifting Memory Station, exactly? It would require a review five times the size of this entire issue to barely scratch the surface, but in essence it’s a powerful processor that employs algorithms that are exponentially more sophisticated than the norm. These algorithms can manipulate audio signals into random patterns and truncated loops or granu-

lar segments of varying lengths, smear sounds into reverb-like textures with long, sustaining tails, crossfade effects seamlessly and much more. It’s really something you need to hear and experience yourself, as mere words don’t do it justice.

The SOMA Cosmos is about the size of an early Nineties floor multi-effects unit, so I hesitate to call it a pedal even though it has five footswitches (High Pass Filter, Low Pass Filter, Erase, Reverse and Record) lined up along its top panel. Users can control it hands-free with their feet, but it’s also very expressively satisfying to control the unit with one’s hands on a desktop or mounted on a stand above the floor.

Cosmos is sort of an advanced looper, but instead of merely playing back phrases recorded into the unit, it mangles them in delightful ways. The 12-position rotary algorithm selector knob at top center is the key to how Cosmos processes audio. Algorithms consist of three “two delay” algorithms where two delay lines shift in place with



total repetition times of about 2.5, 9.5 or 22 seconds, three “four delay” algorithms that are similar to the previous but with double the amount of delay lines, three “giant reverb” algorithms with “huge hall,” “super-huge hall” and “insanely super-huge hall” settings and three “granular delay” algorithms with small, medium and large delay and grain sizes that chop audio signals into random, asynchronous segments.

Blur and Drift knobs provide cross-feed-back or modulation (except on the reverb algorithms where they are disengaged) to further mangle the sonic textures, while Drive adds smooth distorted grind. The Sup/Com control either suppresses previous sounds as new sounds are layered when the knob is turned left of 12 o’clock, or compresses the sound when turned right of 12 o’clock. Other controls consist of feedback, mix and input and output level knobs.

The rear panel is surprisingly streamlined for a processor this sophisticated, providing pairs of stereo 1/4-inch input and output

jacks, a headphone output jack and a USB port for downloading firmware updates via a flash drive only (not for connecting to a computer). An included 12-volt DC adapter delivers power to the unit.

The SOMA Cosmos is unlike any other effects processor on the market. It is truly an instrument unto itself that works its magic with any electronic audio source, including electric guitar or bass, keyboards, drum machines or mic’d vocals. Musicians who are into creating ambient soundscapes can build long careers using this device to generate anything from John Cage-style soundtracks and Brian Eno-inspired exhibitions to live performances for a chill-out room at a rave. Some potential users may bemoan the lack of MIDI for syncing to drum machines, loopers or synths, but that’s kind of the point. The SOMA Cosmos is more likely to deliver off-kilter 9/8 “dance kryptonite” rhythms and such without ever coming close to 4/4 monotony. If that sounds like your cup of mushroom tea, get ready to take a deep, hearty gulp.

THE SPECS



- **CONTROLS:** Input level, Output level, Blur, Drift, Drive, Suppressor/Compressor, Feedback, Mix
- **SWITCHES:** 12-position rotary algorithm selector, power on/off
- **FOOTSWITCHES:** High Pass Filter, Low Pass Filter, Erase, Reverse, Record
- **JACKS:** 1/4-inch L and R input, 1/4-inch L and R output, 1/4-inch headphone output, USB (flash drive only), 12VDC power

Buzz Bin Shed Pickups HA-59 PAF Set

By Paul Riario

▶ **ASK ANY GUITARIST** and they'll tell you that installing new pickups with the hopes of invigorating your prized guitar can be a roll of the dice. Sometimes, the result doesn't always meet your expectations. To illustrate, I own a 2002 Gibson '59 Historic Les Paul that's been one of my main stage guitars for well over two decades. It's been a "love/like" relationship; I love the guitar, but I only *like* the way it sounds. I attribute that to the numerous humbuckers I've installed in the guitar — from boutique to name-brand — all of which have been lukewarm to adequate in tone. It could simply be that the guitar is unremarkable, but I haven't given up on it yet. Recently, I received the opportunity to try out Shed Pickups' much-lauded HA-59 PAF Set, and since I had heard some praiseworthy buzz from close friends, I jumped at the chance to find out whether these new humbuckers could be the saving grace for my favored Les Paul.

Shed Pickups — namely, Spencer Mumford, a pickup designer from South Wales, U.K., made quite a splash in online gear forums and user reviews more than a decade ago for the historically accurate tones of his hand-wound boutique pickups, but due to the growing pains of running a one-man operation like his, he had to shutter it for some time. The good news is the company is back with a couple of adept partners who have shouldered the responsibility to run the business smoothly and allow Spencer to do what he does best — wind and design some of the best-sounding repro pickups in the boutique biz.

Having the HA-59 PAF Set in your hands feels much like holding an authentic PAF yanked from a vintage Gibson. Shed has taken a meticulous approach to constructing and handwinding these PAFs to look and sound like the real thing. To get there, Shed's checklist confirms the HA-59s come with period-correct 42 AWG plain enamel wire on butyrate bobbins, employing roughcast Alnico IV magnets and ensuring the pickups are calibrated for an even response between the bridge and neck positions. Like original PAFs, these HA-59s are not wax potted. For its aged appearance, you'll find OEM hookup wire is used along with accurate baseplates with tapped screw holes, brass Phillips bobbin screws, double black bobbins, slothead mounting screws and springs, silk-screened PAF decals and nickel plating over its German silver covers that all come as standard — which I'm sure will appease many vintage diehards for the HA-59s spec. Shed points out that the pickups' DC resistance should read around 7.9k ohms for the bridge and roughly 7.6k ohms for the neck, how-



ever, these are approximations. What I can tell you? The HA-59s I received read at 8.07k ohms for the bridge and 7.53k ohms for the neck (these are a colleague's readings because I don't own a meter). And finally, while I've dedicated much of this space to the HA-59s, I should note that Shed also offers a specialized variety of repro Stratocaster and Telecaster single coil pickups, a "Greenie" PAF set and overwound "SO-Hot Bastardos" humbuckers.

After outfitting my '59 Les Paul with the HA-59s, I feel compelled to name this guitar "Lazarus," because what I thought was dead has been brought back to life in an undeniable manner. This pair of HA-59s turned my '59 from dull to dynamic, and it's staggering how these pickups combine all the broken-in "honk" of a vintage PAF along with the biting clarity of a Fifties Telecaster with teeth. Between all three positions, the response is smoothly balanced, but the cherry on top is how each pickup shines with noteworthy character. Sandwiched between its clear highs, quacky mids and warm lows, the bridge humbucker chimes with detailed depth and a heightened output that slices through. In other words, the HA-59s don't sizzle, but rather *sing* with fervent sweetness. The neck humbucker is one of the most expressive pickups I've ever played — with a drippy, bell-like tone, and if you drive either PAF loudly, notes gloriously blossom into sustained feedback that reaches those magical upper overtones. Even with both humbuckers engaged, the HA-59s pretty much encompass the whole sound of classic rock in a pair of pickups. It's all there for lovers of that Gibson sound that players like Joe Bonamassa have come to adopt as their own. I ran these pickups through my amp collection of a Marshall Jubilee, Fender Deluxe Reverb, Matchless DC-30 and EVH 5150 III, among a few others, and if anything, the HA-59s just ended up making these amps sound better. I know there are plenty of other worthy PAFs to be judged here, but at the very least, Shed's HA-59s arrive as a stand-out contender for any PAF pickup party. But at this moment, I'm putting on some electrified wear-and-tear miles on these HA-59s, because I know they're only going to sound better with age.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:
£319/set (approx.
\$403.25 w/free
worldwide shipping)
MANUFACTURER:
Shed Pickups,
shedpickups.co.uk

● **PROS:** Near
period-correct
PAF sound and look.

● **CONS:** Pricey; but
price includes free
worldwide shipping.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE**
There is nothing quite like Shed Pickups' HA-59 PAF Set, which over-delivers as an exceptional pair of full-sounding, harmonically rich humbuckers that achieve hallowed vintage PAF tones with remarkable warmth and clarity.

Gibson Falcon 20

By Chris Gill

GIBSON'S TUBE AMPS from the Fifties and Sixties used to be one of the best-kept secrets and bargains on the vintage amp market, although eventually players and collectors caught on and prices and demand went up. One of the more coveted vintage Gibson amp models is the rare GA-19 RVT from 1961 with a top-facing control panel (like a Fifties tweed Fender amp) that was produced only that year before it got a new makeover that included a revised circuit and modernized appearance with front-facing panel as part of the new Crestline series. The '61 GA-19 RVT is the inspiration for Gibson's new Falcon 20 combo, the company's first Gibson-branded amp produced with Randall Smith and the Mesa/Boogie design team.

Prime examples of early Sixties Gibson amps are aggressive little beasts (Ted Nugent often used a similar Gibson-made Bell 15RV that shares similar DNA to the GA-19 RVT in the studio for Cat Scratch Fever and other albums), and new Falcon 20 carries on that tradition. It's a simple, vintage-style amp with a 12-watt Class A circuit that employs a pair of 6V6 power tubes and four 12AX7 tubes for the preamp, reverb, phase inverter, etc. and features a single 12-inch Jensen Jet series speaker in an open-back cabinet. The 6V6 tubes can be swapped to 6L6s without bias readjustment to boost the output to 15 watts and increase the amp's clean headroom.

The new Falcon 20 combines classic simplicity with a handful of modern upgrades that expand its versatility and applications. Like the original GA-19 RVT it offers very sweet-sounding reverb and tremolo effects with a dry/wet blend control for reverb and depth and frequency controls for tremolo. New additions include a power select switch with full, half and low power settings, footswitch control of reverb and tremolo on/off (the footswitch is included), 8/4/4-ohm speaker output jacks and a monitor output jack for sending a line-out signal of the preamp and power amp output to an external power amp or an audio interface for direct recording or re-amping.

With only a single volume and tone control for shaping your guitar's sound, the Falcon 20 is truly vintage-voiced, but that's perfect for players who want big, fat tones that preserve their instruments' natural character and dynamics. Want to switch between clean and overdrive? Use the guitar's volume knob. With humbuckers the amp delivers glorious fuzz-like sag on the bass notes, with the amp's volume cranked up past 3 o'clock. The overdrive at levels just below that delivers crunchy chords and sweet singing sustain, and the clean tones further down ooze tantalizing sparkle and spank.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$1,799

MANUFACTURER:

Gibson,
Gibson.com

● **PROS:** Classic, vintage-style tube clean and overdrive tones; full/half/low power switch maintains consistent tonal color from stage/recording to practice levels; reverb and tremolo effects are very rich, organic and expressive.

● **CONS:** Some players may find it too one-dimensional unless they use it with pedals (which it pairs with very well).

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Gibson Falcon 20 delivers a just-right balance between pure, unadulterated vintage tube tone and modern conveniences, like its full/half/low power switch and footswitchable reverb and tremolo effects, that make it a highly useful combo for small gigs, studio and practice applications.



**For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/april2024**

IN THE GROOVE

Laying solo lines deep in the pocket

AN ESSENTIAL MINDSET when soloing is to strive to make your lines sit as deeply “in the pocket” and as “locked into the groove” as possible. All of our favorite players developed the ability to communicate a deep connection to the groove while soloing, which fortifies their playing with greater expressiveness and musicality.

A great way to start developing this attribute is to devise a vamp that has a nice, deep groove to it. Once you've got a rock-solid riff to play over, you can then experiment with different soloing approaches over it, striving to connect and tie the articulations and rhythmic syncopations of your phrases to the pocket of the vamp.

Let's create a vamp by first selecting a tempo, groove and key. In this first example, I've chosen a mid-tempo groove, around 88 beats per minute, played with a rhythmic syncopation based on "swinging" 16th notes; this means that each pair of 16th notes is felt like a 16th-note triplet (three notes) with the first and second notes tied together, resulting in a lopsided "long-short" feel. This type of groove is the foundation for the Shuggie Otis classic, "Me and My Woman."

FIGURE 1 illustrates this swinging vamp in the key of A: an A root note is sounded on beat 1, followed by a 16th-note theme played in a syncopated rhythm. This four-bar phrase is based on the A Mixolydian mode (A, B, C $\sharp$, D, E, F $\sharp$, G), which is the mode that best conveys a dominant 7th tonality, in this case an implied A7 sound (A, C $\sharp$, E, G). When playing this riff, strive to keep your pick-hand moving in a constant down-up-down-up motion in the rhythm of the 16th notes, even through any rests, held notes or legato articulations.

FIGURE 2 presents the first of two four-bar solos. I begin this first one with an oblique bend on the top two strings, sounded by striking the B and high E strings together then bending the F# note on B string up a half step to G. I then hold the bend while alternating between striking notes on these two strings. I employ hybrid picking here, sounding the B-string notes with the pick while fingerpicking those on the high E string with my ring finger.

On beat 3, the oblique bend shifts down a whole step to the 5th fret, and on beat 4

FIG. 1 (A) Swing 16ths ($\text{♪} = \overline{\text{♪♪}}^3$)

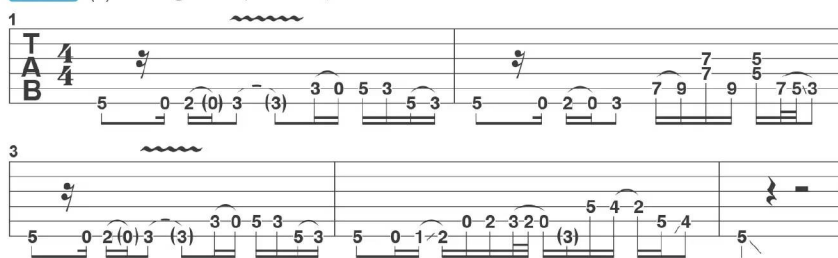


FIG. 2 (A) *w/hybrid picking*

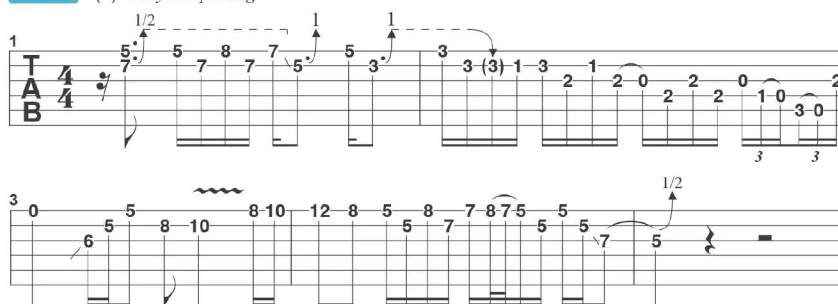
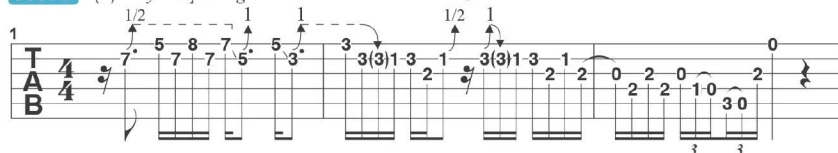
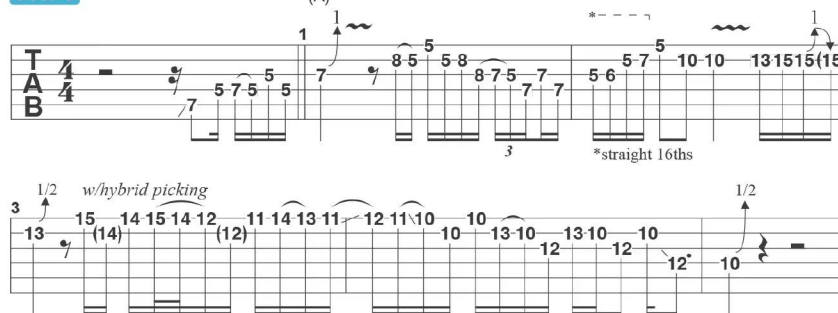


FIG. 3 (A) *w/hybrid picking*

**FIG. 4**

it shifts down another whole step to the 3rd fret, followed by a lick based on the A blues scale (A, C, D, E $\flat$, E, G). **FIGURE 3** breaks down the lick to highlight the position shifts. At the end of bar 2 into bar 3, I use a “rolling” technique with my pick hand, dragging the pick in a downward motion across all the strings and then fingerpicking

the high E string.

FIGURE 4 offers another solo idea, this time starting with a pickup to beat 1 of bar 1, with lines based primarily on the A blues scale. In bar 3 into bar 4, I incorporate chromaticism on the high E string with an emphasis on trying to make the 16th notes swing as much as possible.

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/april2024

ODE TO RONNIE EARL

Part 2 of my tribute to one of the greatest blues guitarists ever

LAST MONTH, I discussed one of the most cherished instruments in my collection, the Howard A. Reed 1955 black Fender Stratocaster that was featured as the “Collector’s Choice” centerfold in *Guitar World* back in 1988. For this 11-year-old, it was love at first sight. Years later, in 2013, the guitar went up for sale at Gruhn’s in Nashville, and I had the opportunity to buy my dream guitar. And it sounds phenomenal, exactly the way anyone would want a Fifties maple-board Strat to sound — bright, clear, and punchy but with lots of body and warmth.

All of these qualities make it the perfect choice for paying tribute to one of my blues guitar heroes, the great Ronnie Earl. As I mentioned last month, Ronnie comes from what I call the “East Coast blues” school, which has a unique vibe and is predominantly built from a Strat sound.

For my latest record, *Blues Deluxe Vol. 2*, we recorded a cover of “I Want to Shout About It,” which Ronnie cut for his 1990 album, *Peace of Mind*. Ronnie plays in the classic blues style of T-Bone Walker and B.B. King, relying on a very clean tone with the Strat toggle switch set in the #4 position, wedged between the neck and middle pickup setting, so that both pickups will sound. The first time I saw Ronnie, back in 1990, he was playing a blonde maple-fingerboard Strat through two Super Reverbs, and the sound was clean and larger than life!

FIGURE 1 presents 10 bars of soloing in Ronnie’s style: the example is in $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, with three eighth notes per beat, resulting in a triplet-oriented phrasing feel. The lines in bars 1 and 2 are based on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G). Notice that on beat 3 of bar 1 and beat 1 of bar 2 I slide up from D to E on the G string instead of bending the string.

Throughout the remainder of this example, I make use of the brighter-sounding A major pentatonic scale (A, B, C#, E, F#). This scale works well for soloing over the A - F#m chord progression, as the notes of A major pentatonic are the same as those of F# minor pentatonic (F#, A, B, C#, E). Notice also that I accentuate the root note of each chord as

FIG. 1 (A)

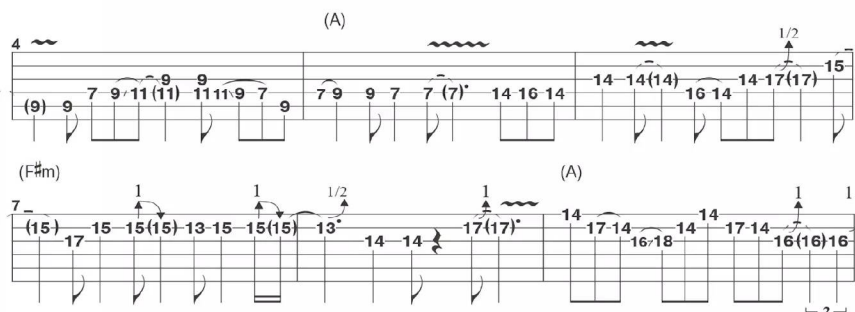
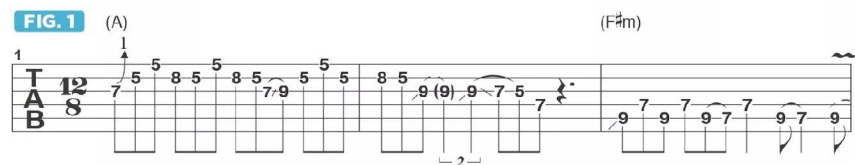


FIG. 2

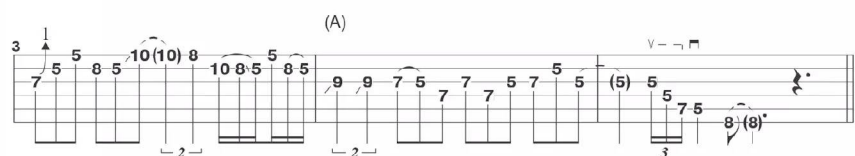
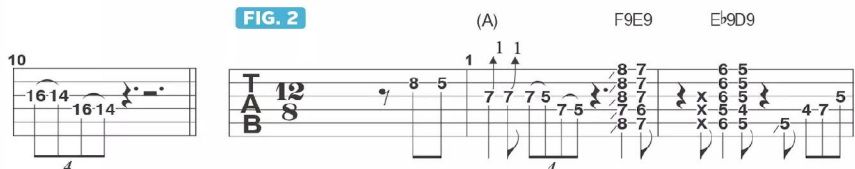
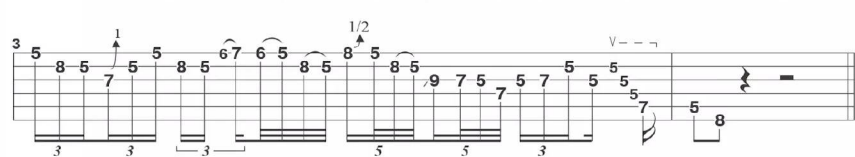
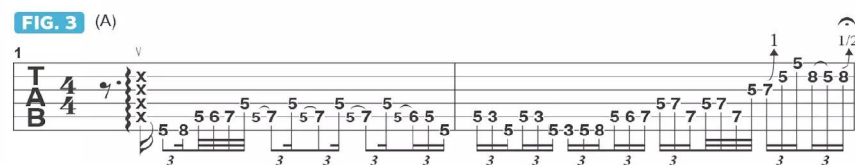


FIG. 3 (A)



it arrives.

A hallmark of Ronnie’s style is his use of pull-offs, as exemplified in **FIGURE 2**, along with slides up and down the strings. Ronnie also likes to incorporate reverse rakes, for which the pick is dragged upward across several strings in a single upstroke motion. In **FIGURE 3**, I begin with a reverse rake in bar 1 and then bring in another reverse rake at the end of bar 3.

When performing a reverse rake, a cool “trick” is to pick behind the bridge pickup, in that little space between the pickup and the bridge saddles. The strings are the most taut in this area, and picking here will create a very bright, “twangy” tone with lots of bite. By comparison, picking the strings between the end of the fretboard and the neck pickup will yield a much mellower, rounder, bassier tone.

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.

JEFF FASANO

MELODIC
MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/april2024

ROLL WITH IT

How to craft interesting rolling licks using open strings with various syncopations and articulation techniques

THIS MONTH, I'D like to use another couple of excerpts from my song "Ghost of You," which I recorded with the Andy Timmons Band for our 2006 album, *Resolution*, to demonstrate some cool, effective ways of employing various pick- and fret-hand techniques to create riff patterns that roll nicely off the fretboard. The first is the finger-picked breakdown section, and the second is a part that follows and is devised of shifting two-note fretboard shapes with recurring open-string pull-offs.

FIGURE 1 shows the fingerpicked breakdown, which is built around a two-note dyad of E (4th string, 2nd fret) and B (3rd string, 4th fret) that is repeated and pitted against changing bass notes played on the bottom two strings. For this section, I tuck my pick into the crux of my index finger and use my thumb and middle and ring fingers to pick the strings.

Through the first three and a half bars, and then again in bars 5-8, I repeatedly pull-off from the B note to A, which I barre at the G string's 2nd fret with my 1st finger, along with the E note. The tricky part of this section is that I also drop in an ascending bass line, starting with the open low E string and followed by F# (2nd fret), which I thumb-fret, then G (3rd fret). I then continue the climb to the open A string followed by C at the 3rd fret. These low notes "fall in the cracks," on 16th-note upbeats, so executing this riff correctly requires mindful attention to the rhythmic syncopations used.

Midway through bar 4, I slide the dyad shape up to 7th position, sounding A and E, and play an F bass note on the 5th string's 8th fret, which yields an Fmaj7 chord voicing. This shift reoccurs in bar 9, following the $\frac{2}{4}$ bar in bar 8.

Here's where the pick-hand part becomes a bit more complex: I rapidly switch between accenting the F note and the A-E dyad above it while additionally incorporating a series of quick 32-note hammer-ons from the open A string to the F note. The hammer-ons subsequently fall on a different part of each beat each time, which lends the phrase its unique, exciting rhythmic quality.

FIG. 1 (Em) (Em/F#) (Em/G) (Em/A) (Cmaj7)

♩ = ca. 88
fingerstyle

FIG. 2 (G) (Bb)

This section is followed by **FIGURE 2**, which is also built from two-note dyads but played with a pick. I begin with D (4th string, 12th fret) and F above it (3rd string, 10th fret). The F note is then pulled off to the open 3rd string, and these three notes are played as a 16th-note triplet. I then shift down to fret C and E and do the same thing, forming a six-note group, notated

here as a sextuplet. Each note on the 4th string is picked with a downstroke, and the notes fretted on the 3rd string are picked with upstrokes. Simple as it may seem, it can be challenging to perform this passage smoothly and evenly, so start slowly and then, once you get the movements flowing smoothly, gradually build up to the tempo of the recording.

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."

LIVE FROM
FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/april2024

ZEROING IN

Focusing on dynamics and playing in a limited register

LET'S CONTINUE OUR exploration of utilizing different tools for strengthening the substance of our improvisation. We began with a look at how to use repetition as an effective soloing tool, and last month we used what I call "handcuffs," which is to restrict oneself to an area of the fretboard or a specific technique. As contrary as it may sound, setting limits on the amount of notes and positions one can use will actually inspire creative choices, both melodically and rhythmically.

Let's begin with a look at restricting oneself to playing low on the fretboard and on the low strings. **FIGURE 1** presents an improvised solo played over a standard 12-bar blues form in the key of A, for which I'm playing on the bottom two strings only and staying between the 3rd and 7th frets the entire time.

I begin with a pickup of a low A, the root note, to C, the minor 3rd, and then on the downbeat of bar 1 I repeatedly bend a D quarter note up a half step to E $\flat$, followed by a sliding lick back down to A and then up to D in bar 2. Bars 3 and 4 revolve around the low A tonic, and then, when the progression moves to the IV (four) chord, D7, in bars 5 and 6, the D note becomes the "target note" of the phrases. Bars 9-11 are played over the V (five) chord, E7, with the low E as the target note, and then the line resolves back to A at the end of bar 11 into bar 12.

If you make the lines melodic, with a sense of direction and resolution, it should sound like you're writing an instrumental song! I'm not thinking of anything pre-planned when I start to play, but rather simply aiming to create a thematic melody. By locking oneself on the low strings and staying in the lower register of the fretboard, you will play things that you would probably not think of otherwise. Your mind will take you to what is logical because you're limited to this small area of the neck.

Another way to apply the handcuffs approach is to limit yourself dynamically. In **FIGURE 2**, I restrict myself to playing softly through an entire 12-bar chorus, with double-stop shapes played on the G and high E strings utilized as a central theme to the solo. The particular dynamic in this

Triplet Feel ♩ = ♩♩♩

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

Softly *fingerstyle*

solo is attained by fingerpicking all of the notes with a soft, even attack. Also, focusing on accentuating specific articulation techniques, using repeated hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides, gives the solo focus and a thematic quality. The limitations applied actually serve to develop a solo that creates

a compelling narrative and tells a story.

Incorporating these concepts into your playing can help you build a "tool box" containing not just notes and melodic choices, but also techniques and phrasing ideas. When you roll all of that together, you're on your way to crafting great solos.

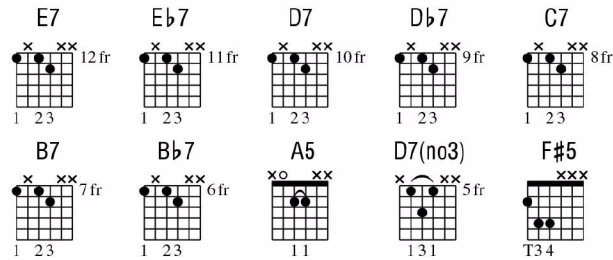
Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-round tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

"SATCH BOOGIE"

Joe Satriani

As heard on **SURFING WITH THE ALIEN**

Written by JOE SATRIANI • Transcribed by ANDY ALEDORT



Fast Shuffle ♩ = 216 (♩♩♩♩♩♩)

A Theme (0:04, 2:37)

Gr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)
1 (drums) 3

N.C.(A5)

Bass 3 w/pick

7 > P.M. > > > > (D7/F#) sim.

11 (E/G#) let ring --- E7 Eb7 D7 Db7 C7 B7 Bb7 w/bar

33

1/2 5 7 8 7 5 7 5 8 5 8 8 1/2 7 (7) 5 8 5 7 5 8 7 5 0 0 5 5 0 5 1/4

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. > > >

end Rhy. Fig. 1 Rhy. Fig. 1a

Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 (see below)

semi-harm. .

37 semi-harm.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 29)

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1 (see below)

**String ② is caught under pinky and picked unintentionally.*

44

Grtr. 1

D7(n03)

1/2

1/2

semi-harm. - - -

P.H.

pitch: E

Grtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 2

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

Bass 1

Bass Fig. 2

Rhy. Fill 1 (0:47, 1:13, 1:36)
Gtr. 2

TAB 4/4 2 2 2 2 3 0 3 0 3

[illegible]

49 full wide vib. P.H. full semi-harm.

pitch: E

cont. P.M. simile

53

w/bar * P.H. +2 1/2 +3 +3 +3

* Pinch harmonic is produced on string (3) between neck and bridge pickups.

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

Th.

57

1/2 full 1/2 1/2

P.H. P.H. P.H.

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

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

Th.

59

1/2 full 1/2 1/2

P.H. P.H. P.H.

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

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

Th.

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 29)

Gtr. 1

w/pick and finger

let ring

61

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 29)

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1

Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1

65

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1a (see meas. 36)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 29)

Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1

69

* Trills are executed by quickly tapping on string at fret indicated in parenthesis w/edge of pick.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 29)

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see meas. 44)

73

pitch: G

* Pull bar up.

** Depress bar so that wound strings stick to pickups and then are sounded as bar is released.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 44)

D7(no3)

77

81

Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 44)

85

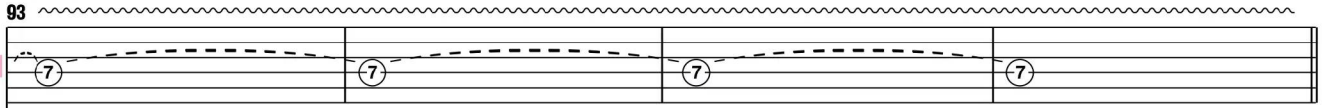
Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 44)

89

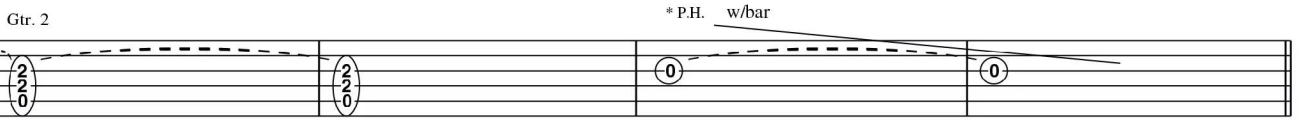
Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 44)

A5

Gtr. 1



Gtr. 2



* P.H. w/bar

pitch: A

*An additional rhythm guitar plays a high A pinch harmonic and dives with the bar at a slower rate.

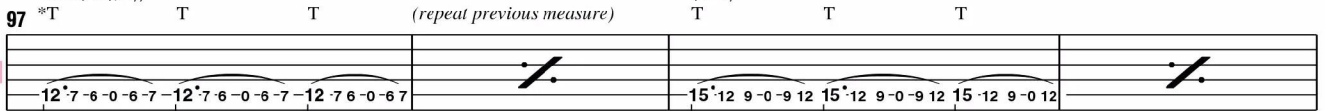
Bass



C Bridge (1:50)

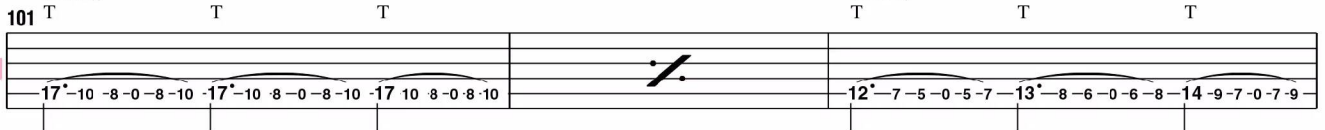
Gtr. 1 (w/flanger)

N.C.(A5(#4))

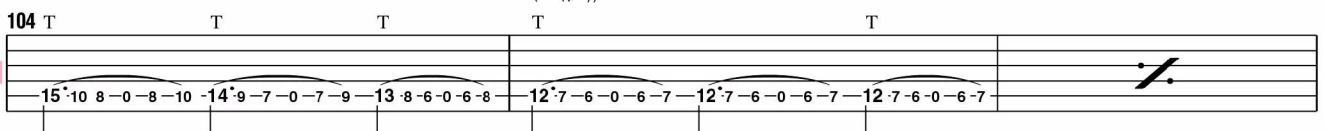


*Tap, pull-off and hammer-on the notes in the sequence indicated.

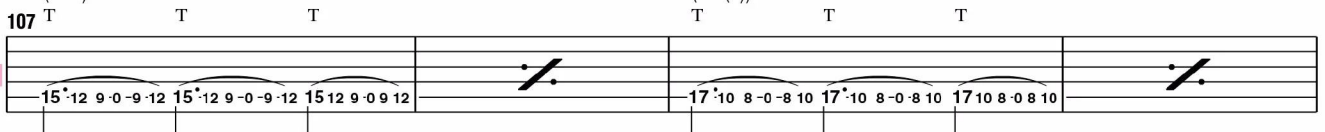
(Dm(4))



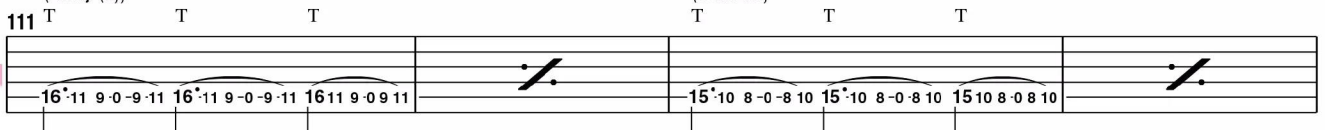
(A5(#4))



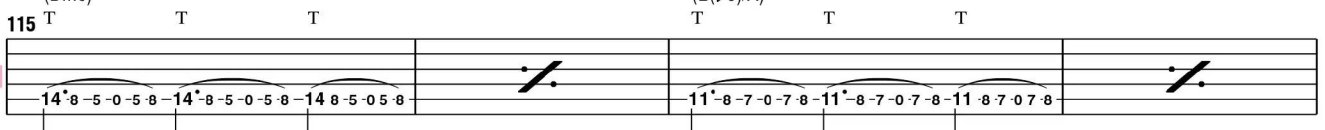
(A^o7)



(Ama7(6))



(Dm6)



(A7sus4) (Amaj7)

119 T T T T T T

17°12 10 0 10 12 17°12 10 0 10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 16°12 11 0 11 12 16°12 11 0 11 12 16 12 11 0 11 12

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 fifteen times (see below)

(A7sus4) (Amaj7)

123 T T T T T T

17 12 10 0 10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 16 12 11 0 11 12 16 12 11 0 11 12 16 12 11 0 11 12

(A7sus4) (AmaJ7)

127 T T T T T

-17°-12 10 -0 10 12 17°-12 10 -0 10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 -19°-12 10 0 10 12 17°-12 10 0 -10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 -16°-12 11 0 11 12 16°-12 11 0 11 12 16 12 11 0 11 12

130 T T T T T T T T T

(A7sus4) (A7)

18 12 11 0 11 12 16 12 11 0 11 12 16 12 10 0 10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 17 12 10 0 10 12 16 12 10 0 10 12 16 12 10 0 10 12 16 12 10 0 10 12

134 Gtr. 1

vibrato and depress bar simultaneously

dive w/bar

go back to **A** Theme (flanger off)

(slack)

Bass

16 12 12 12 12 12 0 0 3 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 0

D **Outro** (3:02)

N.C.(A5)

139

A13

w/bar

* P.H. +1/2 +1

pitch: G

* An additional gr. adds another high pinch harmonic and alters the pitch w/the bar in a similar fashion.

Free Time (3:05)

w/bar

* P.H. +1/2

+1

pitch: G

** An additional grtr. adds another high pinch harmonic and alters the pitch w/the bar in a similar fashion.*

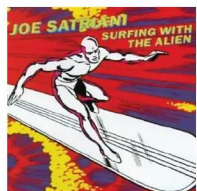
Bass Fig. 3 (2:15)

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

“SATCH BOOGIE”

Joe Satriani



IT'S RARE FOR a guitar-driven instrumental to achieve a level of popularity approaching that of a hit song, and this uptempo, hard-rocking signature

tune by the very musical Joe Satriani did just that, helping to elevate the young Long Islander to international guitar hero status in the late Eighties.

Set to a fast shuffle beat, the track features Satch not only tastefully applying his highly developed and polished lead playing chops in an extended improvisation but also serving up catchy, swinging blues-rock boogie-style riffs that really groove. Throughout the main theme, beginning at section A, the guitarist makes great use of pull-offs to the open A string, which give the melody a bouncy quality and smooth legato feel. Notice how he cleverly uses both the open A note and the A at the 5th fret on the low E string within a single phrase, in order to add soulful finger vibratos to the held notes.

Joe's solo presents a masterclass in how to be melodic and flashy at the same time, using a variety of techniques such as string bends, pinch harmonics (P.H.) and whammy bar pitch manipulations in vocal-like ways. He relies on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G) for most of his phrases and periodically adds notes from A Mixolydian (A, B, C $\sharp$, D, E, F $\sharp$, G) and A Dorian (A, B, C, D, E, F $\sharp$, G), lending his lines a warmer modal color, a great example being the series of shimmering pick-tapping trills in bars 69-71. To perform this technique, rotate the pick downward, parallel to the frets.

For the tune's climactic breakdown/bridge section (see letter C, bar 97), the bass and drums switch to a half-time feel as Satch launches into an extended breath-taking tapping extravaganza, which he performs entirely on the A string, cupping the pick into the crook of his middle finger and tapping with his index finger. Immediately after each tap, he flicks the string downward, pushing it in the same direction as when pulling-off with a fret-hand finger. To make this passage easier to read, we've streamlined the rhythmic notation, showing all the notes sounded with the fret hand as stemless grace notes between the taps.

“BLOOD IN THE WATER”

Ayron Jones



CHANNELING THE SOULFUL, bluesy rhythm guitar style of fellow Seattlan Jimi Hendrix, Ayron Jones crafted a beautifully elegant standalone accom-

paniment to his vocal for this stirring song's opening verse and chorus, for which he used his Fender Stratocaster's neck pickup with a clean tone, treated with some lush reverb and a swirling, almost Uni-Vibe-like phaser effect.

And as Hendrix had famously done in “Little Wing,” “The Wind Cries Mary” and “Castles Made of Sand,” Jones uses his fret-hand thumb to fret the 6th-string root notes on certain chords, as opposed to playing stock barre chord shapes. By doing this, and also fretting the notes on both the 5th and 4th strings in some of these chords with the tip of his ring finger (3), a technique known as “shared fingertip fretting,” Jones frees up his fret-hand pinkie (4) to perform little hammer-on and pull-off embellishments, or “melodic extensions,” to the basic chord grips, such as adding the 9th on the high E string, two frets above the partial 1st-finger barre in the Bm and Gadd9 chords, and, on the A chord, the sus4 (D), located one fret above the middle finger (2), on the G string's 7th fret.

Thumb fretting can be awkward and arduous to do if you don't have long fingers, and/or your guitar has a “fat” neck with “broad shoulders” — what's known as a “U-shaped” neck — and/or wide string spacing at the nut. If this is the case, you could alternatively use standard barre chord fingerings, with your index finger covering the 6th string, and deal with the open B notes in the G6 and F $\sharp$ 7add11 chords by lifting the base of that finger off the top two strings.

The shared-fingertip fretting technique in the Bm and G6 chords can also be problematic for similar reasons — having a fretboard with wide string spacing or not having big hands with “sausage-finger paws.” If you can't manage to cover both the 5th and 4th strings with the tip of your ring finger, you could try angling the finger down to present more surface area. Or just make the finger quickly “hop” from one string to the other, as needed.

“BAD MOON RISING”

Creedence Clearwater Revival



THIS CCR CLASSIC epitomizes the highly effective rhythm section arranging approach of having two guitars playing in different tunings and using

different sets of chord voicings to achieve a full, fat sound. As he had done for “Proud Mary” and “Fortunate Son,” John Fogerty tuned his electric guitar (most likely a Rickenbacker 325) down a whole step and played the song as if it were in the key of E, with the tuning transposing everything to the sounding key of D. Brother Tom Fogerty, meanwhile, played the song in standard tuning on acoustic guitar, using open chords in the key of D (see Gtr. 2). This layering of the two different sets of voicings created an unusually wide pitch range overall, as well as a rich doubling and natural chorusing effect with the two guitar parts, resulting from the sonic interaction of duplicated notes.

No doubt inspired by Elvis Presley's longtime lead guitarist Scotty Moore's playing on “Blue Moon of Kentucky,” John crafted a tastefully understated, chord-based solo for this song (see section E, Gtr. 3 part), playing triad inversions of B (B, D $\sharp$, F $\sharp$) and A (A, C $\sharp$, E) and decorating the open E chord (E, G $\sharp$, B) by hammering-on to the major 3rd, G $\sharp$, from the minor 3rd — the open G note — and adding the 6th, C $\sharp$, on the B string's 2nd fret, as a harmonic-melodic color tone. In bars 38-45, he took the same approach of adding the 6th to both the B and A triad shapes, with the notes G $\sharp$ and F $\sharp$, respectively, creating interesting movement and melodic activity within the chords, an approach jazz guitarists refer to as “chord-melody” playing.

John also added tastefully supportive background fills during the song's second verse and third verse and chorus (see boxed *Fills 1-3*), for which he applied, to the open E chord shape, the technique of *Travis picking*, a hybrid-picking style named after legendary country guitarist Merle Travis. The alternating E octaves on the 6th and 4th strings are picked with lightly palm-muted downstrokes while the middle finger picks single notes on the top three strings, either together with the downpicked bass notes, or between them, creating a syncopated feel.

"BLOOD IN THE WATER"

Ayron Jones

As heard on **CHRONICLES OF THE KID**

Words and Music by ERIC DALY, MARTI FREDRIKSEN, SCOTT STEVENS, ZACHARY MALOY and AYRON JONES

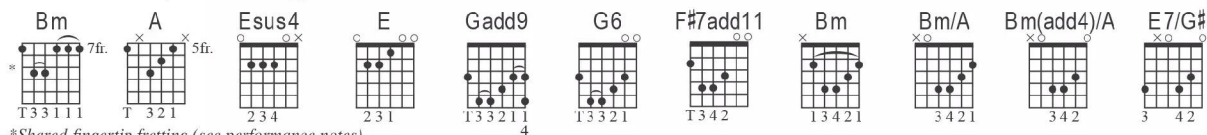
• Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

Guitar 1 is in standard tuning (low to high: E, A, D, G, B, E).

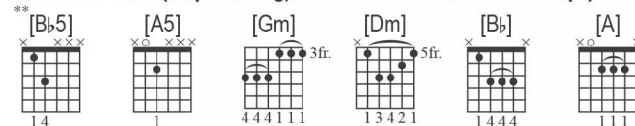
Guitar 2 is in drop-D tuning, tuned down one and one half steps (low to high: B, F#, B, E, G#, C#).

5-string Bass is in standard tuning (low to high: B, E, A, D, G).

chords for Gtr. 1 (standard tuning)



chords for Gtr. 2 (drop-D tuning, tuned down one and one half steps)



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 75

Bm

Gtr. 1 (clean elec. w/phase shifter and reverb effects)

let ring throughout

B 1st Verse (0:13)

Didn't cry on the day she died

She couldn't stand the tears

But I could feel the cold wind blowing like a

ghost inside the mirror

"BLOOD IN THE WATER"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY ERIC DALY, MARTI FREDRIKSEN, SCOTT STEVENS, ZACHARY MALOY AND AYRON JONES.
COPYRIGHT © 2023 ROUND HILL LYRICS, SONGS FROM THE SKULL, ROCK N OUT MUSIC, MYCITYSCREAMSMUSIC WORLDWIDE,
ROUND HILL SONGS III, IRIS SCISSORTAIL PUBLISHING AND BIG MUSIC MACHINE (BMI) / PHOENIX JEAN PUBLISHING (BMI).
ALL RIGHTS FOR SONGS FROM THE SKULL, ROCK N OUT MUSIC AND MYCITYSCREAMSMUSIC WORLDWIDE ADMINISTERED BY
ROUND HILL LYRICS. ALL RIGHTS FOR IRIS SCISSORTAIL PUBLISHING ADMINISTERED BY ROUND HILL SONGS III.
ALL RIGHTS OBO BIG MUSIC MACHINE AND PHOENIX JEAN PUBLISHING ADMINISTERED BY BIG MUSIC MACHINE, LLC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. USED BY PERMISSION. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF HAL LEONARD LLC.

I couldn't pray on the day he died For a man I never knew

Bm

A

C 1st Pre-chorus (0:32)

I'll wash these sins on down the river

Gadd9

G6

F#7add11

For a life I didn't choose

G6

F#7add11

D 1st Chorus (0:45)

I'll say a prayer for my mother

Cry a tear for my father

Bm

Bm/A

Bm(add4)/A

Ain't nothing gonna save me

There's blood in the water

E7/G#

G6

I pray for forgiveness

Let the Lord be my witness

Bm

Bm/A

Bm(add4)/A

Ain't nothing gonna save me

There's blood in the water

E7/G#

G6

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

*Gtr. 2 doubled throughout

E (1:10)

(♩ = 78) (♩♩♩♩ = ♩♩♩♩)

* B5

A5

Gtr. 1 (w/dist. and harmonizer effect**)

23

*Chord symbols implied by bass gtr.

**POG-style harmonizer pedal set to produce an additional note one octave higher than original pitch.

N.C. [(D5)]

[(C5)]

Gtr. 2

E/G#

G5

F#5

25

[(G/B)]

[(B♭5)]

[(A5)]

F 2nd Verse (1:23)

Just a child of a ruthless man

Let the truth be told

Everyone's got their cross to bear

They

B5

D5

A5

B5

27

[(D5)]

[(F5)]

[(C5)]

[(D5)]

So what would you give What would you take on your dying day

The musical score for "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel is presented in three staves. The guitar part (top staff) features a melodic line with various chords and techniques like triplets and bends. The bass part (middle staff) provides a steady rhythm with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The drum part (bottom staff) includes a consistent bass drum pattern and a snare drum that emphasizes the backbeat. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, with some measures containing multiple measures of music indicated by repeat signs.

what shines wil fade away

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written for guitar, bass, and drums. The guitar part is in the key of B major (indicated by two sharps) and features a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a final key signature change to A major. The bass part provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment using a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The drum part is a simple, consistent pattern of eighth notes. The score is divided into two systems, each with a measure number (33 and 34) at the beginning. The guitar part includes a key signature change from B major to A major at the end of the second system.

G 2nd Chorus (1:48)

I cry a tear for my father

[illegible]

There's blood in the water

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is for the right hand, labeled 'end Rhy. Fig. 1'. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the E/G# chord. The second measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The third measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fourth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fifth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The sixth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The seventh measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eighth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The ninth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The tenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eleventh measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The twelfth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The thirteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fourteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fifteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The sixteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The seventeenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eighteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The nineteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The twentieth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The bottom staff is for the left hand, labeled 'end Bass Fig. 1'. It starts with a bass clef. The first measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the E/G# chord. The second measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The third measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fourth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fifth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The sixth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The seventh measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eighth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The ninth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The tenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eleventh measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The twelfth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The thirteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fourteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The fifteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The sixteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The seventeenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The eighteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The nineteenth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The twentieth measure contains a wavy line indicating a tremolo on the G5 chord. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Let the Lord be my witness

B5
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 35)
Gtr. 1

39

(12) (12) X

12' (12) 10

10 (10) X

12' (12) 10

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 35)

There's blood in the water

H Guitar Solo (2:12)

Em
Gtr. 1

Bm

43

10 (10) (10) (10) 7 10 7 10 9 7 9 7 9 9 (9) 9 (9) (9) (9) 7 9 9 7 9 7 9 7 9 9 7 10 7 9 10

[Gm]

Gtr. 2

[Dm]

Bass

100

1000

1000

guitarworld.com **99**

There's blood in the water

(Ow)

There's blood in the water

G5

B5

A5

54

Ain't nothing gonna save me

(Ah)

There's blood

in the water

E/G#

Gtr. 1

G5

57

Bass

Bass Fig. 2

58

I pray for forgiveness

Let the Lord

be

my

witness

B5

A5

Gtr. 1

59

Bass plays first two bars of Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 35)

Ain't nothing gonna save me

There's blood

in the water

E/G#

G5

61

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 57)

K Outro (3:13)

(♩ = 75)

Bm

Bm/A

Bm(add4)/A

Gtr. 1 (w/clean tone and phase shifter effect)

let ring throughout

63

E7/G#

G6

65

**World's most
trusted capo.**

KYSER



HARD ROCK TIME MACHINES...



SBS MS260
Neon Green



SBS VS300
Metallic Purple

Introducing SBS... **Steve Brown Sound**. Million-Selling recording artist Steve Brown who has toured the world with the band he started, Trixter, and appeared onstage with Def Leppard, now brings a radical new level of power, tone and quality to affordable guitars!

Imagine a custom-made guitar from the 80s. Been through hell and back. Seen it's share of Arenas, Stadiums and even Local Bars. HOT Alnico II Pickups, Solid alder Body, Flamed Maple neck, Great pickups, Genuine Floyd Rose locking trem and a cool but battered paint job.

Now imagine that guitar. Introductory-Priced under \$400!



SBS PRODUCTS CAN BE PURCHASED EXCLUSIVELY AT WWW.GUITARFETISH.COM

"BAD MOON RISING"

Creedence Clearwater Revival

As heard on **GREEN RIVER**

Words and Music by JOHN FOGERTY • Transcribed by MATT SCHARFGLOSS

Gtrs. 1 and 3 are tuned down one whole step (low to high): D G C F A D.

All notes and chords played by Gtrs. 1 and 3 sound one whole step lower than written (key of D).

Gtr. 1 chords:

Gtr. 2 (acous.) and Bass are in standard tuning.**Gtr. 2 chords
(standard tuning):**

* Chord names in parentheses reflect actual sounding key.

A Intro (0:00)**Moderately Fast** ♩ = 90

E VII B A V E E6 E E6 E E6

Gtr. 1 (clean elec. w/reverb)
(repeat prev. chord)

Gtr. 2 (acous.)

Bass

(repeat previous measure)

B Verses (0:06, 0:38, 1:31)

1. I see a bad moon risin'
2. I hear hurricanes got your a - blowin'
3. Hope you got your things together

E B7 A E E6 E E6 E E6

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 on 2nd verse (see next page)

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 2 on 3rd verse (see next page)

Rhy. Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 1

5

(D) (A) (G) (D)

Rhy. Fig. 1a end Rhy. Fig. 1a

Bass Fig. 1 end Bass Fig. 1

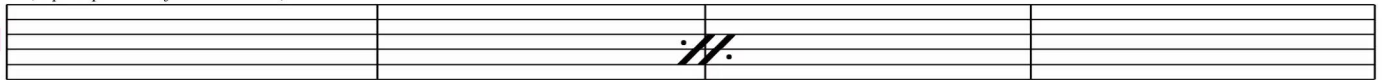
I see trouble on the way
I know you the end quite is comin' soon
Hope are the end quite is prepared to die

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

Gtr. 1

9 (repeat previous four measures)

4

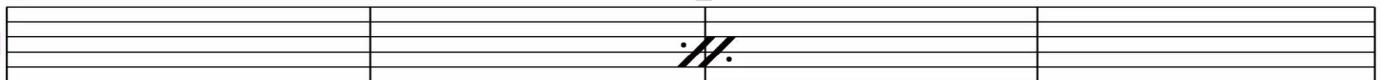


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 5)

I see earthquakes and lightnin'
I fear rivers overflowin'
Looks like we're in for nasty weather

13

4



I see the bad times today
I hear the voice of rage and ruin
One eye is taken for an eye Well

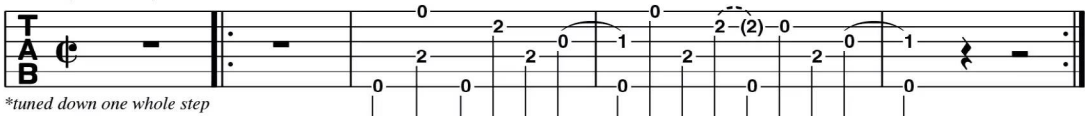
17

4



Fill 1 (0:38)

E B7 A E
(D) (A7) (G) (D)
*Gtr. 3 (clean elec.) *w/pick and fingers (play 3 times)



*tuned down one whole step

* Notes on strings 6 - 4 are played with the pick; strings 3 - 1 are picked with the middle finger.

Fill 2 (1:31)

E B7 A E
(D) (A7) (G) (D)
Gtr. 3 w/pick and fingers (play 4 times)



Fill 3 (1:52)



C Chorus (0:27, 0:59, 1:52)

Don't go around tonight

Well it's

bound to take your life

There's

a bad

A
Gtr. 3 plays Fill 3 third time (see previous page)

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 2

21

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for guitar, labeled 'Gtr. 2' and '(G)'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, including some notes with 'x' marks. The middle staff is for guitar, labeled 'Gtr. 1' and '(D)'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, including some notes with 'x' marks. The bottom staff is for bass, labeled 'Bass'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, including some notes with 'x' marks.

(3rd time) skip ahead to **E**

moon on the rise

E

E6 E

E6

E

E6

All right

Full	Right	
E6	E	E6

Gtr. 3

26

The musical score is arranged in four staves. The top staff is for the drums, featuring a complex pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second staff is for the guitar, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a guitar solo section marked "end Rhy. Fig. 2" and a section marked "end Rhy. Fig. 2a". The third staff is for the bass, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a section marked "end Rhy. Fig. 2a". The bottom staff is for the vocal melody, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a section marked "end Rhy. Fig. 2a".

D Guitar Solo (1:10)

E (D) B7 (A) A (G) E (D) E6 E E6 E E6

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

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

*Gtr. 3 (clean elec.)

30 *let ring* *let ring*

tuned down one whole step

Bass

34 E (D) B7 (A) A (G) E (D) E6 E E6 E E6

let ring

Bass

A (G) E (D) E6 E E6 E E6 E E6

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 21)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a simile (see meas. 21)

38

let ring

Bass

go back to **B** Verse

42 B7 (A) A (G) E (D) E6 E E6 E

let ring

Bass

E (2:01)

Don't come around tonight

Well it's

46

E Gtr. 3 E6 E E6 E E6 A

Gtr. 1

(D) Gtr. 2

Bass

bound to take your life

There's

a bad

50

E E6 E E6 B7

Gtr. 1

(D) Gtr. 2

Bass

moon on the rise

53

A E E6 E E6 E

Gtr. 1

(G) Gtr. 2

Bass

Rocksmith+
A UBISOFT ORIGINAL

Learn Guitar Fast

/// ROCKSMITH+'S PROVEN LEARNING METHOD HAS
HELPED OVER 5 MILLION PEOPLE LEARN HOW TO
PLAY GUITAR.* WITH A POWERFUL SUITE OF TOOLS
TO CONTROL YOUR LEARNING, YOU CAN PICK UP
AND PLAY ANY GUITAR OR BASS FAST.



START YOUR FREE TRIAL AT

GETROCKSMITH.COM 

*Over 5 million copies of Rocksmith+
and Rocksmith 2014 sold.


UBISOFT

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

INTRODUCING THE NEW
NOBLE SCREAMER 4 IN 1
OVERDRIVE / BOOST

CREATE HYBRID SOUNDS
NO ONE HAS EVER
PLAYED THROUGH BEFORE



SCAN HERE
FOR A YOUTUBE
DEMO COLLECTION



AVAILABLE NOW
AT RKFX.COM
AND AT
DEALERS
WORLDWIDE



Get more for your used gear.

Create your first listing today!

ZERO SELLER FEES

when you redeem earnings in the
form of a Sweetwater Gift Card!



Sweetwater.com/used

PRODUCT PROFILE

The First Two Lessons Will Transform Your Playing Forever

Lesson 1

By learning 5 simple patterns and the chords that match up to them, you form the foundation for shattering the barriers that are holding you back. You'll start hearing notes and chords that you recognize from listening to your musical heroes. Your fingers and ears will work together like never before.

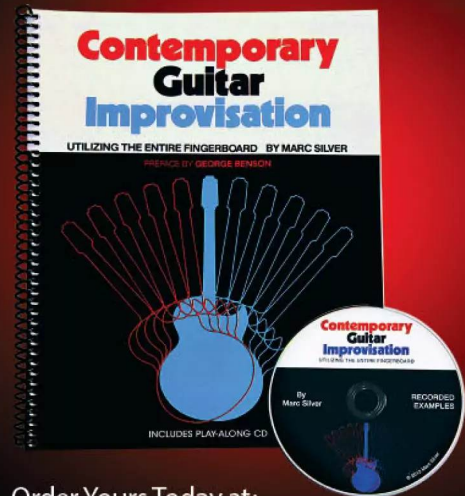
Lesson 2

By connecting the five patterns, the fingerboard suddenly becomes a familiar superhighway that takes you anywhere you want to go. You'll understand how and why these related patterns and chords work together so well across the entire fingerboard. *Lessons 3 through 8 will take you even further.*

Contemporary Guitar Improvisation will teach you:

- How to improvise across the entire fingerboard on any single chord
- How to improvise in one position over multiple chord changes and keys
- Chords with fingerings and voicings that you understand and can modify
- How to accurately (and creatively) interpret chord symbols
- How to substitute chords
- How to use pentatonic and blues scales over ANY types of chords
- How to apply the 5 patterns to sightreading
- How to analyze songs so you play the right patterns
- Chromatic connections
- Much more

You don't need any music-reading ability to get the full benefit of the book, and the included CD has over 50 helpful play-along examples to keep you on track as you progress.



Order Yours Today at:

MarcSilverGuitarImprov.com

\$45.00 USD (includes shipping in the U.S and U.S. territories)

The advertisement for Big Bends features a blue background. At the top, there is a red circular logo with 'Big Bends' in a script font, 'TUNING LUBRICANT' around the top edge, and 'NUT SAUCE' in the center. Below this, a clear plastic package of 'GEM-TONE String Wipes' is shown. The package has a red and black label with the Big Bends logo and text: '50 COUNT GEM-TONE String Wipes', 'EXTENDS STRING LIFE AND TONE', 'Easily Removes Dirt Oil & Oxides!', 'MADE IN THE USA', and 'www.bigbends.com'. To the right of the package, a quote from Joe Satriani is displayed in a white box: '"Big Bends Gem-Tone Wipes should be in everyone's guitar case. They will keep your strings sounding the way they should and help them last longer too."' Below the quote, the name 'Joe Satriani' is written in blue. At the bottom, the website 'bigbends.com' and the phone number '888-788-BEND' are displayed in large, bold, blue letters.

The advertisement for Railhammer features a blue background. At the top, there is a large image of a rocket launching, with bright orange and yellow flames at the bottom. Below the rocket, a black pickup is shown. The text 'MORE LOW-END LIFTOFF.' is written in bold, black, capital letters. At the bottom, the Railhammer logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized 'RH' in a square followed by the word 'RAILHAMMER' in bold, black, capital letters, and 'LOUD & CLEAR' in a smaller font below it. The website 'RAILHAMMER.COM' and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also shown.

Narrow rails under the wound strings, oversize pole pieces under the plain strings. A revolutionary design that tightens lows and fattens highs for exceptional clarity and punch. Railhammer nails the tone you've been searching for.

1974-PRESENT MXR PHASE 90

PHASE SHIFTER PEDAL

THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1973 and 1975 was a significant phase for pedal effects as numerous phase shifters ideal for gigging guitarists emerged on the market. A handful of great-sounding but bulky units were introduced previously, like the Uni-Vibe and Maestro PS-1A, but this era saw the introduction of numerous guitar-friendly devices that included the Electro-Harmonix Small Stone, the Maestro MPS-2 Mini-Phase and its identical counterpart the Oberheim P-100 Phasor, the dazzling, sophisticated Mu-Tron Bi-Phase and scaled-down Mu-Tron Phasor, the Ace Tone LH-100 Stereo Phasor, Roland's terrifying trio of the AP-2 Phase II, AP-5 Phase Five and AP-7 Jet Phaser and possibly a few others.

Most of these effects have come and gone, with the exception of the EHX Small Stone and this article's topic of discussion — the legendary MXR Phase 90. Introduced in 1974, the MXR Phase 90 was certainly the smallest and arguably the simplest phase shifter of its time, which accounted for much of its success and subsequent longevity. Housed in a small diecast Bud box that easily fitted into a guitar case's accessory compartment, the Phase 90 could easily withstand nightly abuse from stacked-heel platform boots without tripping up the guitarist's snazzy dance steps. Getting a good sound was easy: just dial the pedal's solitary control (Speed) to the desired sweep rate



An MXR Phase 90 photographed in 2011

The MXR Phase 90 was certainly the smallest and arguably the simplest phase shifter of its time, which accounted for much of its success and subsequent longevity

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

EVH SOLO

Speed: Between 2 to 3
(or 9 to 10 o'clock)

Tip: Ed's original Phase 90 was a script version from 1974 with a subtler effect than later block logo versions. If you have an EVH Phase 90 pedal, use the script setting.

HENDRIX/TROWER UNI-VIBE

Speed: 7 (or 2 o'clock)

Tip: Use an overdrive or distortion pedal in front of the Phase 90 to thicken the texture; a block logo version is best if you like extra-chewy, vocal-like growl. A Strat's single-coil neck pickup sounds particularly gnarly.

and kick out the jams.

Like the Small Stone, the Phase 90 features four-stage phase shifting, but because they each used different methods and circuits for varying resistance to create the phase-shifting effect they sound quite different, with the Phase 90's effect being subtler. The Small Stone also offered a wider speed range and a Color switch, but many players out there prefer the Phase 90's "less is more" functionality and its highly musical personality.

Most vintage pedal collectors note that there is a difference between the early "script logo" and later "block logo" Phase 90s, which is partially true, although there was a crossover period where some block logo pedals got script logo circuit boards and vice versa, so a later script logo pedal may actually not be what it's hoped to be. The phase effect tends to be thicker, brighter and more pronounced on the block logo versions, but both versions deliver desirable Uni-Vibe/rotary-style effects at faster speeds and highly expressive shifting textures at slower speeds. Placing an over-

drive or distortion box in front of a Phase 90 can also make the phasing effect more pronounced, if desired.

The list of MXR Phase 90 users over the last five decades is long and quite illustrious. It was, of course, a vital element of Eddie Van Halen's sound, particularly on many of his solos including "Eruption" but also as a sound effect on songs like the intro to "Atomic Punk." Steve Hackett was one of the earliest users as heard on mid-Seventies albums by Genesis, and David Gilmour famously plugged into a Phase 90 on Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* album, most notably on "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" (either in tandem with a rotating speaker effect or without, as heard around the 7:30 mark) and "Have a Cigar." Robin Trower used one on stage for a while to replace his aging Uni-Vibe, and Steve Jones recorded tandem rhythm tracks each processed with Phase 90 to provide the snotty, snarling power chords of "Anarchy in the UK." More recent users include Muse's Matt Bellamy, John Frusciante, Dave Grohl, Josh Homme, John Petrucci and dozens of others.



**The
NAMM
Show**

**the
AMPS
crank here**

See You in 2025!

**Join us for a high-energy week of networking,
sessions, concerts, special events and exhibits.**



Events • January 21–25 | Exhibits • January 23–25

Anaheim Convention Center • Southern California

Marshall

STUDIO JTM
20W ALL-VALVE AMP
MADE IN THE UK



ERA-DEFINING SOUND

THE AMP THAT STARTED IT ALL IS BACK.

MARSHALL.COM