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AND WE DID IT WITHOUT USING ANY PHISH/FISH PUNS IN THE HEADLINES



MY FIRST MEMORIES of Phish?

Aw, it's nice of you to ask! Let's see...

College, early Nineties: A bartender pointed to the speakers above the bar and said, "That's Phish, a cool new jam band from Vermont." I couldn't really make out what I was hearing, but I logged it in anyway.

My first newspaper job, 1995: Even though I was a copy editor (and not a reviewer), they threw me a bone and let me review CDs. One of the first ones I claimed was *A Live One*, a double live album by that jam band — you know, from when I was in college in the early Nineties



and the bartender pointed to the speakers, etc. Anyway, I liked it. I appreciated the art direction, the excitement of the first track (it's still the best-ever version of "Bouncing Around the Room") and, most importantly, Trey Anastasio's wonderfully mind-boggling guitar playing, much of which was hidden under rocks and behind doorways amid half-hour-long tracks like "Tweezer" or the 20-minute-long "You Enjoy Myself."

Frankly — back then and right now — I tend to check out after four or five minutes, which is why I've always preferred Phish's studio albums, especially *Billy Breathes*, *Farmhouse* and *Undermind*. On records like these (and others), the emphasis is on composition, melody, instrumentation and the creation of 12 to 14 brief, individual standalone works of sonic art. Which is why I was excited to have Alan Paul investigate the band's new album, *Evolve*, which came out last month. Interestingly, however, Alan's interview (and the resulting feature) evolved into something else; instead of a standard "new album" feature, we got a one-of-a-kind guide to Anastasio's creative process and inspiring practice regimen. It's the sort of story that — with its first- and second-hand advice, courtesy of Quincy Jones — should appeal to any songwriter and/or guitarist, even those who haven't yet marveled to tracks like "Walls of the Cave," "Free," "The Inlaw Josie Wales," "Crowd Control" or "Down with Disease."

— **Damian Fanelli**

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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 Jem Roberts

MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONIST AND ENGRAVER Jeff Perrin

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Gregory Adams, Joe Bonamassa, Joe Bosso, Dave Burruck, Andrew Daly, David Grissom, Jeff Jacobson, Adam Kovac, François Leduc, Clay Marshall, Mark McStea, Alan Paul, Jenna Scaramanga, Amit Sharma, Andy Timmons, Jon Wiederhorn and Andy Wood — plus Richard Bienstock and Chris Bird!

ART

SENIOR DESIGN DIRECTOR Mixie von Bormann

CUSTOM PHISH TYPEFACE Steve Mitchell

IMAGE MANIPULATION MANAGER Gary Stuckey

ADDITIONAL PAGE DESIGN Damian Fanelli, Rich Genet

PHOTOGRAPHY

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FEATURES EDITOR Matt Parker

SENIOR STAFF WRITER Matt Owen

STAFF WRITER Janelle Borg

CIRCULATION

HEAD OF NEWSTRADE Tim Mathers

PRODUCTION

HEAD OF PRODUCTION Mark Constance

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DIGITAL EDITIONS CONTROLLER Jason Hudson

PRODUCTION MANAGER Nola Cokely

ADVERTISING

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

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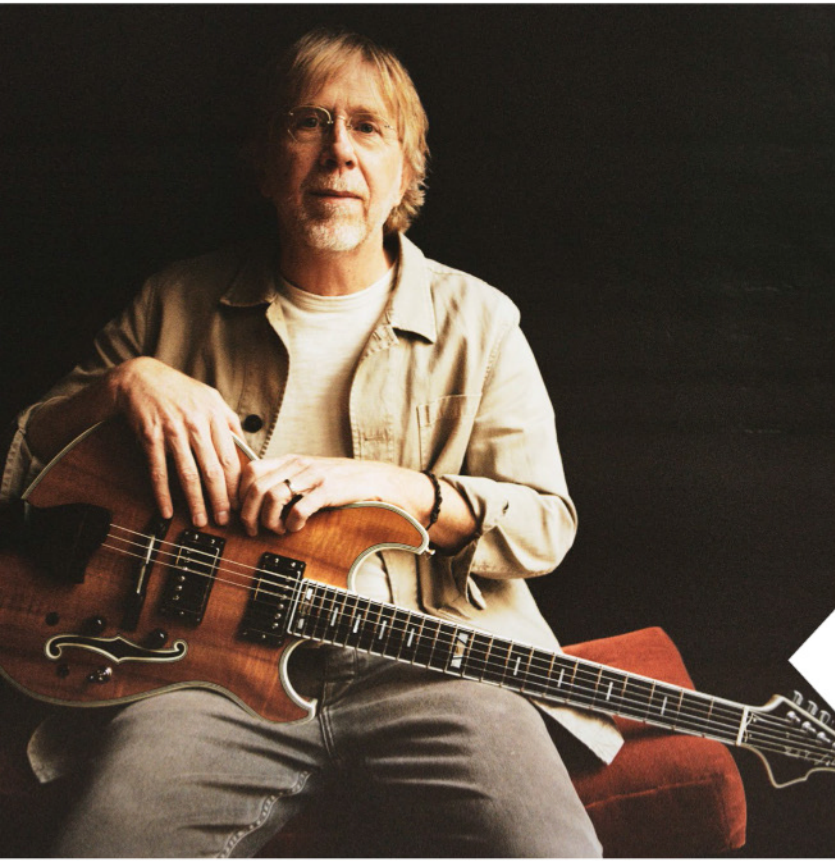


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OF THE MONTH

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 PDF of the image!

And obviously, include your name!



FRANK ZAPPA (1967) BY KARL KEMBERLINGE



CHUCK BERRY BY CAL FYNN

DEFENDERS ⚡ of the Faith



Mark J. Shapiro

AGE: 74 (really!)

HOMETOWN: Fountain Valley, CA

GUITARS: Fender Baja Telecaster, Gretsch Duo-Jet, Fender USA Strat, G&L Legacy

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

Neil Young "Cinnamon Girl," Tommy Castro "You Knew the Job Was Dangerous," Arc Angels "Shape I'm In"

GEAR I WANT MOST: A mic stand that won't fall over!



Roger Feagin

AGE: 56

HOMETOWN: Independence, KY

GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Standard, Fender American Stratocaster, Fender Telecaster, Taylor 210

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

Tommy Emmanuel "Song for a Rainy Morning," Mammoth WVH "Don't Back Down," Led Zeppelin "Bron-Yr-Aur"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Twin Reverb, 1977 Gibson Les Paul Artisan



Alex Salas

AGE: 39

HOMETOWN: Sacramento, CA

GUITARS: PRS Mark Holcomb SE, Fender Stratocaster, ESP-LTD 100, PRS Tremonti SE
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Seal "Kiss from a Rose," Metallica "Enter Sandman," Parallel Fears "Hopeless," Linkin Park "In the End," Creed "On My Sleeve," Alter Bridge "Words Darker Than Their Wings"

GEAR I WANT MOST: PRS MT-100, PRS Mark Tremonti Signature



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

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Simon McBride in action with
Deep Purple in Milan, Italy,
October 17, 2022

Purple Pro

DEEP PURPLE GUITARIST
SIMON McBRIDE ON THE
BAND'S NEW ALBUM, TAKING
THE REINS FROM STEVE
MORSE AND HOW HE PLAYS
"SMOKE ON THE WATER"

By Joe Bosso

IN 1972, DEEP Purple earned the distinction as the "globe's loudest band" by the Guinness Book of World Records when their concert at London's Rainbow Theatre was clocked at 117 decibels.

"They're still loud — very loud," says Simon McBride, who took over guitar duties for the veteran hard rock outfit in 2022 after longtime member Steve Morse left to care for his ailing wife. "I have to wear ear protection, because if I didn't, I'd be deaf. It's old school. It's basically 'turn everything up and let's play.'"

At 45, the Irish guitarist is a generation younger than his Deep Purple bandmates, all of whom are in their mid to late seventies, and fittingly he brings a youthful energy to his first album with the group, the enigmatically titled = 1. Produced by legendary rock specialist Bob Ezrin, the record is one of those rarities in that it captures the band's purity, but it's no nostalgia-fest; everything sounds fresh and vital. ➔



McBride [right] with
Deep Purple's Ian Gillan
in Milan in 2022



want to write a blues song, they'll do it. If you want to write a jazzy blues song, they'll do it. If they want a rocker, they'll do it.

And proggy stuff, too. The song "Bleeding Obvious" is a kitchen sink of prog-rock glory.

Oh yeah, it's crazy stuff. With that song, Bob Ezrin and Ian said, "We need something prog." I was like, "Okay," so Don Airey and I got together one day and wrote something wild. That was the whole idea.

Your playing on the record is spectacular. I wanted to mention the first track, "Show Me," which features a multi-layered solo that's sort of a full menu of your skills. It's a real showboat section.

I had no idea that song would be first on the record. That one came during our first writing session, and the solo was recorded live. We just played in a room and went for it. A lot of our stuff was first takes, including that solo.

What about "Now You're Talkin'"? It feels like a very constructed solo.

That one was. To be honest, the song was two songs, and Bob Ezrin thought we should combine them. The solo is more composed. There's some typical classic rock fast riffing, and there's some Fifties rock 'n' roll, and I also do some arpeggio stuff. I did it at home, but the rest of the song was us winging it live.

Everybody seems to have their own way of playing the intro to "Smoke on the Water." Steve Morse once showed me how he does it, which he said wasn't how Ritchie Blackmore played it. How do you play the part?

I play it like Ritchie — I think. You'd have to ask him, but he probably wouldn't give you a straight answer. [Laughs] Basically, I do it in fifths, and the fifth is your root. So I'm on the fifth fret of the A and D strings, then the third fret of the D and G strings, and I move that to the fifth fret of the same strings. And so on. You can play it different ways, but I like to keep it simple. I've seen players throw in vibrato, and it's like, "Stop. Keep it simple."

"I think sometimes, if a band is getting a little set in their ways, all it takes is one person to come in and shake things up," McBride says. "I wasn't trying to make the band something they aren't — I was just being me. But I could tell right away that everybody was having a great time and they liked what I played. The band still has a lot to say, and I'm thrilled to be part of it."

Prior to joining Deep Purple, you had experience playing with a couple of the guys. Did that enable you to forego the audition process?

Yeah, I played with [keyboardist] Don Airey for eight years, and I did a tour with [singer] Ian Gillan in 2016. I also played with [bassist] Roger Glover. So I played with a bunch of the guys, but never as Purple. For Gil and Don, I was an obvious choice. Initially, I was brought in as a stand-in for Steve Morse when he was dealing with his wife's condition. I just treated it as a session gig. I did some shows and they went great, and that was it.

Eventually, Steve couldn't commit to the band any longer, and they asked me to join. There was no audition. They knew I could play the material, but I think they just liked me as a person. Personality plays a big part in this. Nobody wants somebody who's miserable, and I'm a pretty happy guy, basically.

Now, you had already established a nice solo career. Did you have any concerns about joining a heavy touring band in terms of how it could affect

"The beauty of Deep Purple is they have no restrictions about what they do. If you want to write a blues song, they'll do it"

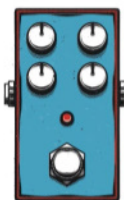
your own thing?

Not really. I think it can help my solo career, which is still there — it's just on hold at the moment. It's not every day you get asked to join one of the most iconic rock bands in history, and I'm grateful for the opportunity. I'm full on with Purple, and I'll do it until it stops. But I think Purple will raise my profile, and my audience will get bigger and bigger. When I go back to do my solo stuff, hopefully I'll have more ears who want to hear what I do.

How involved were you with the writing of the new album?

Very. When we wrote the album, it was just the five of us in our room — all our instruments and amps — and we did some old-school jamming. I came to the writing sessions with reconstructed ideas of riffs, but a lot of it was done there in the room. The beauty of Deep Purple is, they have no restrictions about what they do. If you

Steve Morse on stage in Atlanta on April 20



MY PEDALBOARD STEVE MORSE

WHAT THE DIXIE DREGS, KANSAS AND DEEP PURPLE VETERAN SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

▶ “MY BOARD IS sort of a hybrid now. I used to run basically no effects on the front end between the guitar and the amp and only a little delay into the second wet amp, leaving the dry amp to stay the same. But now I have a little more on the front end in case the balance isn’t right between the wet and dry. I’m getting closer to a single mono sound, so let’s discuss how I do that.

“My guitar goes right into a TC Electronic Polytune [3], which goes into my Keeley Compressor [C2], the silver two-

knob. From there, we go to a small board that I keep on top of my amp, and I do that to filter out noise. So, up there, I’ve got a Voodoo Lab Digital Power Supply, a TC Electronic Hall of Fame Reverb and a TC Electronic Flashback Delay, which leads into my GigRig Wetter Box, which has a variety of tones. I control it with a pedal at my feet.

“So, we go back to my main board and have the dry portion, two more TC Electronic Flashback Delays with different TonePrints. Both Flashback Delays go into



two separate Ernie Ball [6165 500K Stereo] Volume/Pan pedals, one for short delay and one for long. Having both allows me to change the output’s impedance and let the single output circle travel back to the wet amp and into the effects loop, making it a slave.”

Have someone in mind for a My Pedalboard feature? Let us know!

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

“I’d want to use one pedal with a controller – the TC Electronic Flashback Delay going through the effects loop. I’d need that control to go along with my most crucial pedal to get the infinite sounds I’m used to.”



Jimi Hendrix, a Space Odyssey

IN A NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL, THE GUITARIST IS REINVENTED AS A SPACE TRAVELER AND POLITICAL FIGURE WHO HAPPENS TO BE THE BIGGEST ROCK STAR IN THE GALAXY

By Adam Kovac

▶ WHILE THE ENDURING cultural idea of Jimi Hendrix is that of a larger-than-life rock god, complete with burning guitars and legendary sexual and drug-fueled escapades, that perception ignores a key part of the guitarist's identity: he was a massive sci-fi nerd.

It's that semi-forgotten part of Hendrix's soul that is at the heart of a new comic book. In Titan Comics' *Jimi Hendrix: Purple Haze*, the guitarist is reinvented as a space traveler and political figure who is now the biggest rock star in the galaxy, rather than just on Earth. The graphic novel, which was released in July at the San Diego Comic-Con, follows Hendrix as he travels from world to world in a quest to not only further his music, but to free people from a tyrannical government engaging in a forever war.

The comic was created with the full support of Hendrix's sister Janie, who is in control of his brand.

"She really wanted to do something that reflected more about her brother than a lot of the things she sees in the media," says co-author Mellow Brown. "We want to talk about a lot of his identity as inspiration for some of the songs that a lot of people don't know. There is some backstory to him as a person that we wanted to reflect; there are so many layers of Jimi that we didn't see portrayed before."

To truly capture the psychedelic spirit of the music, artist Tom Mandrake looked at samples of Hendrix's own visual art. It also was important that the book reflect an era of Hendrix's career that is often given short shrift, as he moved away from the Experience and into Band of Gypsys — a move that came as Hendrix grappled with accusations that he was a Black man making music for white people.

"There's a lot of imagery that I see associated with rock music, and it's not often associated with Black people in rock

music," said DJ BenHa Meen, the book's other author. "I wanted to take some of that iconic imagery — things you see on the side of vans, stuff like the old-school airbrush painting, something you would have on a blacklight window, things of that nature that we would see in a sci-fi nature. It's another setting [where] you really don't see Black people too [often]."

Ultimately, the book is an effort to re-contextualize Hendrix's life and work for a new era — one where young artists and musicians making a big impact are rarely holding guitars.

"It's a reference we make in the book to the river of Black music, and this river is a continuous theme that has been here throughout the history of America," Meen says. "We've been making the same form of music; we've been making blues and protest music since we started in America. The form of it has changed, but the message has always been the same."

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LOST CLASSICS: Helmet

PAGE HAMILTON REVISITS THE MAKING OF THE NYC ALT-ROCKERS' NOW-BELOVED 1994 CURVEBALL OF AN ALBUM, *BETTY*

By Joe Bosso

▶ IN 1992, PAGE Hamilton appeared to have won the music lottery. The jazz-trained guitarist's alt-metal/post-hardcore band, Helmet, darlings of the New York City downtown music scene, had signed a whopper of a deal with Interscope Records (worth a reported \$1.2 million, staggering numbers at the time) and released their major-label debut, *Meantime*, which went gold in a matter of months. Helmet's music was easy to digest: the guitar riffs and rhythms were brutal and direct, the grooves were pummeling and unrelenting, and Hamilton's vocals were perfect if you were into the "Ozzy Osbourne as drill sergeant" thing.

It all worked like a charm. MTV played the video of the attack-mode single "Unsung" in regular rotation, and the band's touring dance card was checked off for the next year. Any other rocker would have pressed "repeat" for the follow-up record, but Hamilton had other ideas. The band's 1994 album, *Betty*, packed a few sure-fire bangers, most notably "Milquetoast" and "Wilma's Rainbow," but the rampaging pace was dialed down throughout most of the record, and there were even forays into jazz and avant-garde funk. For buzz-cut headbangers lusting for the hard stuff, *Betty* felt soft.

"The funny thing is, everybody who slagged the record now thinks it's great," Hamilton says. "That's happened so many times with me, especially with critics. They write a review and kill an album, and 10 years later they re-review it and say, 'I was wrong.' Here's what I believe: If you're trying to repeat what you did last time because it was successful, that's kind of weak. That's why I'm such a fan of [*the Replacements*] Paul Westerberg and [*the Kinks*] Ray Davies. They made it okay to shoot yourself in the foot, as long as what you're doing excites you. I'm not doing this to please an audience. I only try to please myself."

Even though *Meantime* went gold, Helmet had signed to Interscope for a huge sum at the time. Was the label expecting platinum or double platinum? How much pressure did that put on you?
I never gave it a thought. I didn't give it much thought when we signed, either. I



Helmet's Page Hamilton [left] and Henry Bogdan do their thing in Hasselt, Belgium, August 27, 1994



remember talking to [Interscope co-founder] Jimmy Iovine around the holidays. I said, "We're thinking of putting the album out sometime next year." He said, "Get into the studio as soon as you can and do it now." And I was like, "Oh, shit. I better finish these songs." Which I did. We went into the same studio where we did our first album, *Strap It On*, and worked with the same engineer, Wharton Tiers. The only difference was we had a larger budget, so we got Andy Wallace to mix. I loved him.

People from the label would come around the studio and say things like, "This smells like another 'Teen Spirit,'" which was absurd. But I remember Jimmy saying, "I've worked with Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen and U2. You have your own vocabulary that you came up with. I'm not going to tell you what to do." Nobody was doing what we were doing when we came out, and he got that.

Was the label okay with you deciding to produce yourselves on *Betty*?

They didn't frown on it. After we had just won a fucking Grammy nomination and had a gold record, Jimmy Iovine asked me who was going to produce the new record. I said, "Uh, me." I thought we had done okay. We were on MTV and had sold something like 650,000 records.

Before *Betty*, we did that song "Just Another Victim" with the House of Pain guys for the *Judgment Night* soundtrack. T-Ray remixed it, and the album went platinum, so our manager said, "Maybe we should have a hip-hop guy do the Helmet record. Let's throw people a curve." I was open to it. The problem was, T-Ray worked his own way. He made tracks and would have guys come in and write words over them. Whereas I write the words, I write the tracks, I sing the lead vocal, I play the lead guitar, and I write the arrangements. I do everything myself, and then my band turns it into music.

T-Ray said to me, "Your shit is so together. I don't have anything to do." And I was thinking, "Why are you here then? Why am I paying you money?" He's a sweetheart of a guy, and eventually we did some other stuff, but he comes from a different world. People tell me, "You're a control freak." I'm like, "Yes, I am. So be it." I put in the time because it's my music.

How did you come to work with Butch Vig on "*Milquetoast*"?

We had met when we did the Led Zeppelin tribute album, *Encomium*, with our old pal David Yow from the Jesus Lizard. I was a big fan of Killdozer and other things Butch produced. Of course, after he did *Never-*

mind, everybody wanted him. But we hit it off and talked about working together. He had just finished the album with his own band Garbage, and he said, "It probably won't do anything, so I'll be available." Then the thing went multi-platinum, and he became *unavailable*! [Laughs]

Ultimately, Butch had time to work on that one tune with you.

Right. And it came out on *The Crow* soundtrack, too. I loved working with Butch. I adore the guy. I remember he said, "How about a guitar dropout for the first verse?" I was like, "Whoa, what a great idea!" He said, "Let's do a far-away vocal thing." Every idea he had sounded fantastic. He couldn't do the whole album, which is probably for the best, because it would have been Butch Vig and Andy Wallace — the same people who did Nirvana.

Don't get me wrong: We loved Nirvana, and we were friends with them. We played together with their old drummer, Chad

"That's happened so many times... Critics write a review and kill an album, and 10 years later they re-review it and say, 'I was wrong'"

[Channing], and later with Dave Grohl, but we didn't want to be Nirvana. We were a completely fucking different band.

Before cutting *Betty*, your other guitarist, Pete Mengede, left.

He was let go. Let me clarify a few things. We have some kind of non-disclosure agreement or whatever bullshit is probably passed at this point after he sued us. He was let go for reasons that are absolutely viable and significant, and I care for him as a former member of the band. But I knew at that point that I didn't need him to play on the albums. There were songs that he's not even on because I'm a much better guitar player than he is. I was writing stuff to my ability, not his. Early on it worked, and then it stopped working. We let him go and it turned into a big dramatic thing.

Then Rob Echeverria came in. He was a really good guitarist and a great guy. It just got to the point where I was tired of holding another guitar player's hand. Rob learned all the songs and played on *Betty*,

but after a couple of years I said, "I don't want to do this anymore." I need another guitarist live, but I don't want to deal with anyone in the studio.

So I let Rob go, and it was amicable, and then I read all this shit about how he quit to join Biohazard. I'm like, "Please. Leaving Helmet to join fucking Biohazard?" And then he was like, "I got tired of playing math equations." I'm like, "Math equations? Give me a break. It's not math equations, bro. It's called *groove*."

What was your guitar setup on *Betty*?

My ESP Horizon Custom. It was my first endorsement guitar that I paid \$600 for, and they never charged me again. The amp was my Marshall JCM800 2204S. I believe I used a 1960s greenback Marshall cabinet, which I stupidly sold when the band broke up. I had found it in a pawn shop in Cleveland sometime in 1990.

Did you use a different guitar and amp setup for the jazz number, your cover of "Beautiful Love"?

I did. For that song, I used my 1986 Fender Super Champ, and the guitar was my 1986 Les Paul goldtop that I bought from Sam Ash in Queens. It was always my dream to have a goldtop, and I bought it when I was 19 and went into deep credit card debt.

After *Betty*, the band didn't release another album for three years. Was it a difficult period? Did you need to reassess and regroup?

Yeah. We had gone from playing to 10 kids at CBCG or the Pyramid Club to headlining Roseland. Money changed everything. The other guys were chilling when they were home, but I was writing songs. They were like, "You're getting more money than us," and I was like, "I'm spending months writing these songs for us, and I'm doing all this work that I love and have to do to not go crazy. But at the same time, I get compensated for that." That created tension.

Plus, we were constantly going and going. Everybody was trying to make as much money off of us as they could, and we were oblivious. We were like, "Yeah, great, okay. We're playing, we're touring." I look back on it now, and it's like, "Yeah, milk these guys for all you can."

There were great people that I still respect and am still friends with, but there were a lot of shitheads that didn't give a rat's ass about us and didn't know the first thing about our music. I thought everybody was getting it. I thought everybody understood what we were doing. We weren't trying to be Nirvana. It's never what I set out to do.

The Last Dinner Party's Emily Roberts [left] and Abigail Morris perform in Indio, California, in April



The Last Dinner Party

LEAD GUITARIST EMILY ROBERTS ON THE ETHEREAL TONES SHE CONCOCTED FOR ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING DEBUTS YOU'LL HEAR THIS YEAR

By Amit Sharma

▶ THEY SUPPORTED THE Rolling Stones within their first six months of performing and ended up topping the U.K. album charts with their debut full-length, titled *Prelude to Ecstasy*, released back in February. So it would be fair to say things have gotten off to a remarkably impressive start for British indie rockers the Last Dinner Party, who combine elements of glam, shoegaze and dream pop into their own heady cocktail of noise. If you're a fan of avant-garde visionaries such as David Bowie and Kate Bush, this quintet could very well end up being your favorite new band.

"As well as the more obvious influences you can hear, our singer listens to a lot of stuff like Marina and the Diamonds and Siouxsie and the Banshees," says guitarist Emily Roberts, who cut her teeth covering Brian May's role in an all-female Queen tribute band and undertook a four year jazz course in order to closely examine the

brilliance of players like Pat Martino and John Scofield. "I guess we come from different musical backgrounds, but we all love Queen and Abba."

There were two guitars she relied on heavily for album number one — the first being her Ernie Ball Music Man St. Vincent signature Goldie and the other being a 1963 Gibson ES-330, a vintage workhorse she describes as "probably the most beautiful guitar I've ever played." The guitars were fed into a Fender Deluxe Reverb with pedals like her Fulltone OCD and a Klon Centaur belonging to producer James Ford providing more sonic weight where necessary. By the guitarist's own admission, there weren't a ton of effects in her signal chain, but tremolo ended up being a very useful tool in the arsenal, creating extra movement in all the right places on tracks like "The Feminine Urge" and "Caesar on a TV Screen."

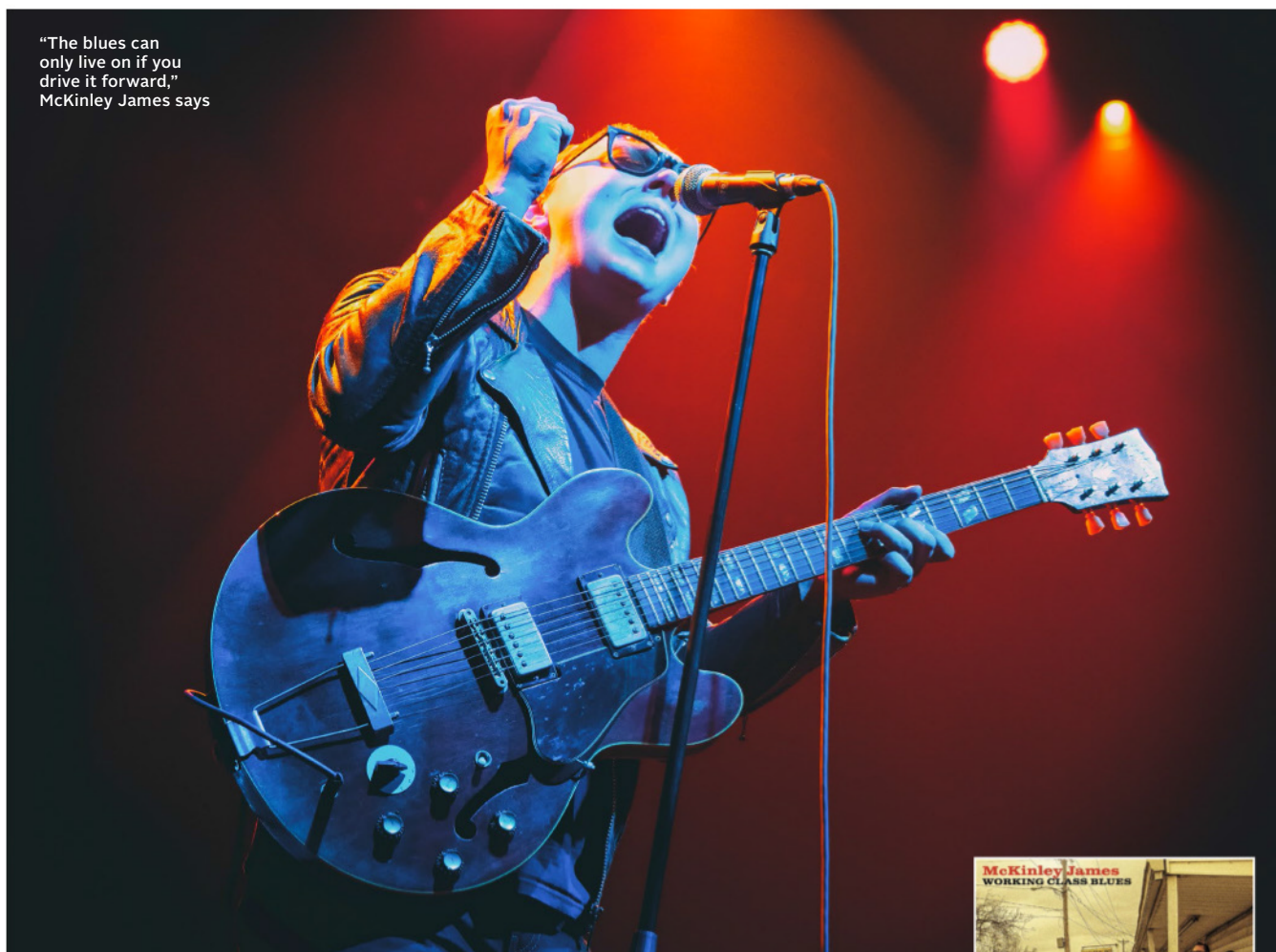
"I like using tremolo because it creates

"The fact that my main guitar was designed by St. Vincent makes it very appealing to me"

an interesting texture, rather than just having a straightforward clean guitar," she says. "The fact that my main guitar was designed by St. Vincent makes it very appealing to me. I love how it sounds and how it looks, though I suppose it doesn't have a huge amount of weight behind it. It's quite a bright-sounding guitar."

A quick visit to South London luthiers Providence Guitars resulted in finding the right solution to add more power and increase the instrument's overall versatility. "I had a Firebird pickup fitted into the bridge position, which made it even more punchy and harsh — in a good way!" Roberts says. "I find it really cuts through the mix, especially as there's another guitarist [Lizzie Mayland] in the band. The tremolo helps round everything off nicely, providing more character whenever I need that extra color."

"The blues can only live on if you drive it forward," McKinley James says



McKinley James

WHY ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS A GUITAR, A DRUMMER AND SOME SERIOUS LOW-END SIX-STRING SKILLS

By Joe Bosso

NASHVILLE-BASED BLUES rocker McKinley James came flying out of the gate in 2022 with his Dan Auerbach-produced EP, *Still Standing By*. His momentum screeched to a halt, however, when his keyboardist split, leaving only him and his drummer, Jason Smay (who also happens to be his father). "For a moment, I was like, 'What are we going to do?'" James says. "But then I thought, 'Well, other bands have succeeded as a duo. Maybe we can, too.'"

James says he had to rethink his playing style to compensate for the low end his Hammond player once provided. "I always wanted to play with my fingers, but now I was forced to," he says. "Now I use my thumb on the bass strings and keep that root thing going, and with my fingers I work chords and little melody lines. After a couple months and some tours, I had it

down. Now I really like playing as a two-piece."

There's an added benefit to the two-man approach, he notes: "We save on expenses. One less hotel room, one less everything."

For his first full-length album, *Working Class Blues*, James and Smay holed up for three days in a studio they built in their family barn and recorded 11 tunes as blazing live performances. Whether it's swaggering shuffles ("Movin'"), "Call Me Lonesome"), deep-grooving soul ("Say Goodbye") or high-octane blues ("Get to My Baby"), the two work up a robust, fully fleshed-out sound. James' songwriting has grown considerably since his debut EP (each song features hooks to spare), and with his charismatic vocals and fiery guitar playing — he effortlessly shifts between in-the-pocket rhythm and sparky leads — he emerges as a major talent.



"I come from a traditional blues background," he says. "I grew up on Lightnin' Hopkins, Eddie Taylor and Lightnin' Slim. I like to wave that flag, but I love keeping it fresh, too. I don't want to write about the same old stuff — you know, drinking in a bar and that whole thing. I want to write about real experiences, like I do on 'Get to My Baby,' which I think anyone can relate to. The blues can only live on if you drive it forward."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1954 Fender Stratocaster, 1959 Gibson ES-335 reissue
- **AMPS** Peavey Pacer, Fender Super Reverb, Fender Vibratone
- **EFFECTS** "I don't use 'em. None of my heroes did."

Absolution Blues

JIMMY PAGE'S 10 GREATEST
NON-LED ZEPPELIN GUITAR SOLOS

By Andrew Daly

▶ BACK IN FEBRUARY, Jimmy Page came out of hiding, emerging at the grand opening of London's Gibson Garage alongside Brian May and Tony Iommi. Fanfare ensued, as did news of Gibson's launching of a faithful Collector's Edition recreation of Page's 1969 EDS-1275 double-neck.

Mind you, this was *after* Page had popped up with a Les Paul the previous November to perform a rendition of "Rumble" for Link Wray's long-overdue Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction. So he's been busy of late — at least by 21st-century Page standards — and his re-emergence has got us thinking about some of his most soaring solos *outside* of Led Zeppelin, aka the stuff that gets overlooked because radio stations and Apple Music playlists are too busy obsessing over "Stairway to Heaven" and "The Ocean." But don't get it twisted; those songs are terrific, as is a ton of Page's output post- (and pre-) Led Zeppelin, including Page & Plant, Coverdale/Page and the Firm.

And so, *Guitar World* is taking a journey back through Page's days with the likes of the Yardbirds, Roy Harper and more to pick out 10 of his greatest non-Led Zep-elin guitar solos. Are any of these your favorites, too?



10. "Elizabeth," Roy Harper & Jimmy Page (*Whatever Happened to Jugula?*, 1985)

Like much of *Whatever Happened to Jugula?*, "Elizabeth" is filled with Eighties-tinged electro-acoustic folk goodness by way of Jimmy Page. Also present are the sweet-meets-quirky vocals that long defined Roy Harper before his teaming up with Page. Overall, there are not a lot of what you'd call "typical" Page solos to be found on this record, except, perhaps, for "Elizabeth," which finds the guitarist breaking free of the album's mellow mood and delivering a slightly off-kilter solo that sounds a bit like modern art — or at least mid-Eighties modern art. It's slow burning, a bit twangy and carries just the

right amount of rough-and-tumble, bluesy backbone.



9. "Liquid Mercury," Jimmy Page (*Outrider*, 1988)

Page seemed to lean heavily on his well-worn B-bender-equipped Tele in the Eighties, and his only true solo record, 1988's *Outrider* — which happens to feature a Gibson Les Paul on the cover — is no exception. The vaguely slapdash riffs, a Page staple, are present throughout this intricate instrumental track. (Speaking of its intricacies, we happen to know Page & Co. used a click track when recording this tune; he told us so in 1988.) But what truly stands out is the tangy Tele ecstasy that Page drops on the listener about halfway

through; after soloing to his heart's content, Page enhances the riff with additional bits of snappiness until this nearly forgotten gem fades out.



8. "Tear Down the Walls," The Firm (*Mean Business*, 1986)

If you're into Page, you've probably dug on the Firm by now. But suppose you dropped off after Zeppelin or aren't into Eighties supergroups? In that case, Page's outstanding two-year experiment with Paul Rodgers (vocals), Chris Slade (drums) and Tony Franklin (bass) is probably more of a case of "If you know, you know." And so, if you don't know, a good starting point would be "Tear Down the Walls," which finds Page, Tele in hand, delivering a sing-





Jimmy Page in Italy in 1984 with a Les Paul and his ubiquitous-in-the-Eighties B-bender-equipped Telecaster

onion-like “Scarlet” from *Goats Head Soup* 2020.



6. “Take Me for a Little While,” Coverdale/Page (Coverdale/Page, 1993)

Most Page historians would say Page’s work on 1993’s *Zeppelin/Whitesnake*-sounding record, *Coverdale/Page*, was his most inspired since *Zeppelin*. And yeah, there’s merit to that, especially when you look at a track like “Take Me for a Little While.” Not surprisingly, David Coverdale’s vocals set the tone, with Page mellowing out and underscoring things. At the same time, the listener is lulled into a false sense of security. It’s a trick Page did well alongside Robert Plant throughout the Seventies, and it works here, too. It works so well that when Page arrives in the frame, with what’s undoubtedly a Les Paul plugged into a Marshall, the solo hits you like a splash of molten lava to the face, burning in the best possible way.

And if you can’t get enough of Rolling Zeppelin (Stones + Page), check out “Scarlet” from *Goats Head Soup* 2020



5. “Prison Blues,” Jimmy Page (Outrider, 1988)

If you’ve been along for Page’s wild ride dating back to the late Sixties, then “Prison Blues,” the penultimate track from 1988’s *Outrider*, will have you feeling right at home. To that end, coupled with Chris Farlowe on vocals, Page treads no new ground here, nor does he have his Tele in hand, as he did for most of the Eighties. Instead, Page grabs his Les Paul, delivers tried-and-true blues riffs and lets loose for an extended solo that would easily fit on any early to mid-Seventies *Zeppelin* album.



4. “Blue Train,” Page & Plant (Walking into Clarksdale, 1998)

After spending years watching Plant run as fast as he could from *Zeppelin*’s legacy, the duo regrouped in the mid-Nineties for *Unledded* and a subsequent tour. It went so well that Page and Plant moved to make a full-length record, 1998’s *Walking into Clarksdale*. With mostly his Les Paul in hand, Page syncs up with Plant for one of the album’s best offerings, “Blue Train,” a shadowy cut with brooding chords, subtle

riffs and what is perhaps Page’s last great guitar solo — mostly because he’s done so little since. And if you happen to be revisiting *Walking into Clarksdale*, be sure to check out “Please Read the Letter” — not so much for Page’s guitar heroics, but simply to compare it to the better-known 2007 version by Plant and Alison Krauss. Let us know if you have a preference!



3. “Live in Peace,” The Firm (Mean Business, 1986)

As previously established, the Firm is underrated. And even if some of the production is kinda dated, the Firm’s underrated nature is through no fault of the musicianship or songsmithery. Want proof? Check out “Live in Peace,” an at-times synth but mostly quasi-power-ballad-sounding track where Page once again grabs his Tele and unleashes one of his more clear-headed solos of the Eighties. There aren’t too many post-*Zeppelin* solos where Page truly made his guitar cry out, but during “Live in Peace,” he did exactly that.



2. “Don’t Leave Me This Way,” Coverdale/Page (Coverdale/Page, 1993)

If *Zeppelin*’s “Since I’ve Been Loving You” is among your favorites, we’re willing to bet that “Don’t Leave Me This Way,” another monster cut from *Coverdale/Page*, will be too. It kicks off with some devilishly subtle foreplay before the power chords and quintessential Page riffs kick in, all while Page inserts flourishes of tone-perfect leads before breaking into a solo that might just be his best of the Nineties. It’s a perfect example of why, despite his forays into other genres, Page was — and is — at his best when playing beefy and slightly off-the-hook blues rock.



1. “Smile on Me,” The Yardbirds (Little Games, 1967)

For what amounted to Page’s fiercest solo outside of *Led Zeppelin*, we’ve come down to the guitar-forward yet insanelly catchy “Smile on Me.” For the uninitiated, “Smile on Me” is track two off 1967’s *Little Games*, Page’s first *Yardbirds* recording without Jeff Beck in the lineup, his only full album with the band and his last studio album (as an artist), period, before the dawn of *Led Zeppelin*. As for the solo, it’s a speaker-tearing tour-de-force by way of the trusty Tele that Jeff Beck had gifted Page. Moreover, it’s a perfect example of where Page’s head was before *Zeppelin* — and extremely informative in understanding where he was headed. If you’re looking for one Page solo to dig on outside of *Zeppelin*, “Smile on Me” is it.

songy solo that harkens back to his Sixties attack instead of his much heavier Seventies exploits.



7. “One Hit (to the Body),” The Rolling Stones (Dirty Work, 1986)

Interestingly, “One Hit (to the Body)” was the first Rolling Stones single featuring a Ronnie Wood co-writing credit with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards — not that it mattered, as Page was called in to provide some oomph. And provide some oomph he did, as he delivered choice Tele licks throughout, before breaking into a quick mid-song (and very off-the-cuff-sounding) B-bender solo. And if you just can’t get enough of “Rolling *Zeppelin*” (Stones + Page), be sure to check out the

Creatures of the Night

A BRIEF HISTORY OF KISS'S
SESSION GUITARISTS

By Andrew Daly

▶ AFTER MORE THAN 50 years of rocking and rolling all night, Kiss have done their damndest to deliver the smashes, thrashes and hits that the Kiss Army craves. Of course, it hasn't been all smooth sailing — especially from a lead guitar perspective. After Ace Frehley's initial mad dash to glory, Kiss, at least for a minute there, had trouble securing the services of a reliable six-stringer.

That's not to say that Vinnie Vincent and Mark St. John weren't talented. And, of course, Bruce Kulick was nothing short of a champion during his 13-year tenure, while Tommy Thayer is the epitome of reliability. But there's no denying that turbulence has long been a part of Kiss's guitar-related process, as evidenced by the need for several session players to save the day throughout the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties.

Ergo (yeah, we said "ergo"), *GW* is looking back on the long history of the session guitarists who helped make up the fabric of Kiss's recording history.

Bob Kulick

KULICK AUDITIONED FOR Kiss in late 1972 but was passed on in favor of the more flamboyant Ace Frehley, who — coincidentally — auditioned immediately after. While Kulick wasn't a fit for the Kiss aesthetic, his chops impressed Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley enough that they came calling numerous times over the years.

The first occurrence of Kulick subbing for Frehley came in 1977 when Frehley was too busy playing poker to record most of *Alive II*'s side-four studio tracks. Kulick was asked to cover for Frehley on "All American Man," "Rockin' in the U.S.A.," "Larger Than Life" and "Anyway You Want It." Reportedly, Kulick was supposedly tasked with trying to imitate Frehley, but it was all too obvious that Frehley was MIA.

Stanley again summoned Kulick for his 1978 solo album, *Paul Stanley*, but he didn't come calling again until 1980, while Kiss were recording *Unmasked*. It's unclear

Bruce [left]
and Bob Kulick
in New York City,
May 7, 1985



Bob Kulick auditioned for Kiss in late 1972 but was passed on in favor of the more flamboyant Ace Frehley

which tracks Kulick provided “additional guitars” for, but we know he had a heavy hand in writing “Naked City.”

Two years later, Kiss solicited the services of Kulick once again for *Killers* and *Creatures of the Night*. By this point, Frehley was all but out of Kiss, so Kulick was allowed to cut loose, resulting in some of Kiss’s best cuts in “I’m a Legend Tonight,” “Down on Your Knees,” “Nowhere to Run” and “Partners in Crime.” As for *Creatures of the Night*, Kulick is said to have played on early versions of “Keep Me Comin’” and “Danger,” but in a 2011 interview, Kulick said none of his licks made the final cut.

Dick Wagner

KNOWN FOR HIS work with Alice Cooper throughout the Seventies and early Eighties, after several successful albums under the tutelage of super-producer Bob Ezrin, by 1976, Dick Wagner found himself at the top of Ezrin’s speed dial. And it’s a good thing, as, during the recording of 1976’s *Destroyer*, Ezrin had grown frustrated with Frehley’s frequent tardiness. And so, Ezrin summoned Wagner to his chambers, asking him to stand in for Kiss’s guitarist.

Of course, Frehley wasn’t happy, but no matter; Wagner’s electric work, as heard on “Sweet Pain” and “Flaming Youth,” and his acoustic licks from “Beth” and “Great Expectations” helped make *Destroyer* an album to remember. If you believe Frehley, he was ready, willing and able to record, but Ezrin didn’t care for his playing. Moreover, this is supported by the fact that 2012’s *Destroyer Resurrected* features solos and acoustic work recorded by Frehley on all four tracks.

Perhaps we’ll never know what really happened. But then again, given *Destroyer*’s greatness, does it even matter? Oh, and if it helps the proverbial sting, Wagner was called in once more by Ezrin to aid in a Kiss-related effort in 1991 while the sessions for *Revenge* were under way. This time, Wagner laid down a righteous solo for one of the album’s softer moments, “Every Time I Look at You,” in place of Bruce Kulick.

Mikel Japp

THOUGH RELIABLE AND undoubtedly the backbone of Kiss, even Paul Stanley wasn’t safe from studio subbing. To that end, during the recording of “Down on Your Knees” from 1982’s *Killers*, for reasons unknown, Stanley’s licks are missing in action. Instead, it’s Welsh session man Mikel Japp handling rhythm duties. Stanley and Frehley’s absence was a sad harbinger, as this sort of thing would become familiar as Kiss moved ahead.

Robben Ford

THERE’S NO DENYING that the thought of Robben Ford playing on a Kiss album is weird, if not entirely awkward. Moreover, the fact that Ford features on what’s often referred to as “Kiss’s heaviest record,” *Creatures of the Night*, makes it all the weirder. Nevertheless, in the wake of Frehley’s departure, Ford, along with a few others, was involved, and to be fair, his playing on “Rock and Roll Hell” and “I Still Love You” was bang-on. In fact, these two tracks — and solos — may well be the finest on the entire record.

Steve Farris

GENE SIMMONS AND Paul Stanley were in a tough spot without Frehley as they attempted to record their “comeback record.” But thankfully, Robben Ford and Vinnie Vincent came around to save the day. But Kiss was into diversification back then, leading to Steve Farris getting the call for *Creatures of the Night*’s title track. Farris is far from a heavy metal guitarist, but his seething solo is debatably the most metal thing Kiss ever did. Go figure.

Vinnie Vincent

BEFORE BEING ANOINTED Kiss’s lead guitarist, Vinnie Vincent was but a humble session musician banging around Connecticut. As the story goes, Vincent was recommended to Simmons and Stanley by songwriter Adam Mitchell, and indeed, *Creatures of the Night* cuts such as “Danger,” “Keep Me Comin’,” “War Machine,” “Saint and Sinner,” “Killer” and “I Love it Loud” all benefited from his services. The rest of the story, as they say, is history. But before the toxicity became all too real, Vincent and Kiss were a match made in heaven.

Rick Derringer

FUNNY HOW THINGS come full circle, huh? Just one album prior, Vinnie Vincent was Kiss’s session savior during *Creatures of the Night*. Then, during the recording of 1983’s *Lick It Up*, Vincent’s overplaying became such an issue that Kiss drafted Rick

Derringer, of all people, to come on down and mop up. And while Vincent wasn’t happy that Derringer was getting in on his action, there’s no denying that Derringer laid down an explosive solo on *Lick It Up*’s opening track, “Exciter.”

Bruce Kulick

MARK ST. JOHN never was right for Kiss. It’s bizarre that they even hired him. Is that mean? No. It’s just that, given how absurdly things went down with Vinnie Vincent, one would think Kiss would have swung the pendulum in the other direction. But as history shows, one would be wrong. Anyway, while recording 1984’s *Animalize*, it didn’t take long for Paul Stanley to realize that St. John was nearly incapable of playing the same solo twice, leading to Bob Kulick’s younger brother, Bruce, being called in on “Lonely Is the Hunter” and “Murder in High-Heels.” And once St. John succumbed to reactive arthritis, Kulick was in Kiss for good. For more about Kulick the Younger, check out the September 2024 issue of *GW*.

Mitch Weissman

BRUCE KULICK WASN’T the only guy Kiss called in as things went south with Mark St. John. In fact, given that Kulick plays on two of *Animalize*’s nine songs, and Weissman plays on “Get All You Can Take” and “While the City Sleeps,” one can’t help but question just how much St. John participated. Anyway, Weissman (of *Beatlemania* fame) was far from a virtuoso, but that’s the point; Kiss realized that while they might have been in the heart of the shred era, toning it down — to a degree, at least — was in their best interest.

Tommy Thayer

AS OF 2024, at 22 years served, Thayer is Kiss’s longest-tenured lead guitarist. But before he was a full member of Kiss, he participated in two of the group’s records, 1989’s *Hot in the Shade* and 1998’s *Psycho Circus*, in a session-man capacity. Regarding *Hot in the Shade*, Thayer’s contributions were minimal, having only contributed electro-acoustic guitar on “Betrayed” and “The Street Giveth and the Street Taketh Away.” But *Psycho Circus*, aka Kiss’s “reunion album,” is a different ball of wax. Sure, it would’ve been nice to have Frehley’s fingerprints all over *Psycho Circus*, but no; Thayer plays all the lead guitar except the Frehley-penned “Into the Void” and the kumbaya classic “You Wanted the Best.” Not much of a reunion, but who cares? *Psycho Circus* is an excellent record, and Thayer earned his stripes during its recording.

Kittie's Tara McLeod
[left] and Morgan Lander



Kittie

GUITARISTS MORGAN LANDER AND TARA McLEOD DISCUSS THE CANADIAN METAL POWERHOUSE'S UNEXPECTED REBIRTH — BY FIRE!

By Gregory Adams

▶ AS YOU'D HOPE from something called *Fire*, Kittie's first album in 13 years is incendiary. The Canadian metal quartet's unflinchingly heavy return, however, wasn't an inevitability.

Guitarists Morgan Lander and Tara McLeod explain that making new music was “not on their bingo card” when the band regrouped in 2022 for a few festival appearances, preferring to think of the sets as more of a “final lap” than a new beginning. But drilling into old favorites — whether the nu-flavored teenage slams of 1999's *Spit* or the more venomously groove-thrashed tunes of their late-'00s period — revealed that despite not having raged together in years, there was something undeniably special about Kittie's musical connection. “Playing with these girls is like putting on an old pair of pants,” Lander says. “It's very comfortable — and it looks good too.”

Though McLeod had recently been running country licks with Calgary's Nice

Horse, she tapped back into a fiercely feral feel by the time Kittie hit Nashville's Sienna Studios with producer Nick Raskulinecz (Foo Fighters, Code Orange). Straight out of the gate, *Fire*'s opening title track is ablaze in Lander's percussively nasty riffage, while McLeod's big, flame-broiled bends triumphantly rise from the ashes ahead of the rest of a note-scorched solo.

“I know it is *cliché* to say, but it does very much feel like a ‘phoenix rising’ type of situation,” Lander says of the allusion. “Fire can destroy. It can create. It's cleansing. It allows for a clean slate, or to be reborn again. All of those things are parallel with the things we're experiencing right now.”

That clean slate likewise led Lander to eschew her '00s-era Hamers for a Solar V that gave Kittie the ultra-modern bite of Fishman active pickups, though McLeod kept her kit traditional with a passively chunky Les Paul. “We've always had that

blend,” McLeod says of their tandem aesthetic. “Morgan has the [actives], and then I use grandpa's guitar. That defines Kittie's tone.”

Fire ultimately finds Kittie refreshed, and in fighting shape. The anthemically slammed-down “I Still Wear the Crown” becomes a mission statement for a group that's faced many challenges — from the lengthy hiatus, to the death of longtime bassist Trish Doan in 2017 — but perseveres on its own proudly defiant terms. As Lander howls it: “Face down, hands pressed to the ground, yet I'm unbroken.”

“It's a reminder to yourself that no matter what bullshit you go through — no matter the trials — you still have power,” Lander says of remaining the “master of your domain.”

“We like to joke that we've really been sent through the meat grinder,” McLeod adds. “[*Adversity*] didn't take us down for good... but we definitely had our faces in the mud for a while.”

“I know it is *cliché* to say, but it does very much feel like a ‘phoenix rising’ type of situation”

Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse

HOW A CORNISH AXMAN AND A NEW ORLEANS CHANTEUSE ARE FORGING A FRESH BLEND OF BLUES

By Amit Sharma

▶ **FORMED BY GUITARIST** Robin Davey, formerly of British blues revivalists the Hoax, and singer Greta Valenti, Beaux Gris Gris & the Apocalypse are one of those bands who know how to put their own spin on things. Based in California, it's the combined experiences of the founding members growing up on each side of the Atlantic that led to an eclectic take on rootsy rock. Their latest album, *Hot Nostalgia Radio*, is a tantalizing blend of classic soul and vintage blues, with some truly mesmerizing tones from Davey.

"Greta grew up in New Orleans and was brought up around a very different kind of blues to what I had in England," the guitarist says. "Though I was across the pond, I strangely felt more connected to the Austin scene — artists like Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, that kind of thing — whereas Greta was listening to Fats Domino and Dr. John. We wondered what would happen if we combined our influences and what we ended up with was something that wasn't like either."

There's a similar sense of exploration when it comes to Davey's rig, running his St. Vincent signature or D'Angelico semi-hollow into a trio of amps that cover different ends of the sonic spectrum. There's a Mesa Boogie Express 5:50, a Fender '65 Princeton reissue and a Marshall combo that he bought from a local shop despite being told it wasn't actually made by the

British amp pioneers. "I was trying out a bunch of amps that sounded okay and then plugged into this red Marshall 2x12 that sounded creamy, almost more like a Dumble," he says. "I asked the manager and he explained how nobody wanted that one because it wasn't actually real — someone had built it and put the Marshall badge on the front. I use it for my edge-of-breakup tone, like a Rolling Stones rhythm kinda sound, with the Mesa on its 'Burn' mode and the Princeton running clean."

Certain pedals are run ahead of the split while others are specific to each amp, allowing the guitarist to introduce varying degrees of color to breathe life into his tones. One favorite is his 1968 Vibe made by Kingtone, the brand run by his brother Jesse who also played in the Hoax. Another is the cheap and cheerful MXR Classic Distortion, which he owns three of.

"I was in Guitar Center looking for a new drive," Davey says. "I tried all the

"I was in Guitar Center looking for a new drive. I tried all the boutique ones — and my favorite was something that was only \$27"

boutique ones and my favorite was something that was only \$27 on a Black Friday exclusive. Apparently it's the same circuit as the Distortion III. I use it in front of the Princeton with the gain turned to zero, which makes it sound much fatter. Then I will switch through pedals to create different gain stages. Interestingly, this album was recorded live in one room. Even the solos were cut that way. I love listening to records where you can tell there's no overdub. You can hear the pedals kick in and out. There's a real magic to that kind of stuff."



AXOLOGY

GUITARS Ernie Ball Music Man St. Vincent, D'Angelico Premier Bedford

AMPS Marshall clone, Mesa Boogie Express 5:50, Fender '65 Princeton reissue

EFFECTS MXR M86 Classic Distortion, Ibanez Tube Screamer Mini, J. Rockett Flex Drive, TC Electronic Spark, Kingtone 1968 Vibe, MXR Phase 95

GUITAR WORLD

COVER MODELS

guitarist: Samantha Fish	guitar: Fender Classic Player Jaguar Special HH
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Guitar World catches up with its classic cover stars — and the guitarists who play them.

this interview:
April 2024

cover photographer:
Alysse Gafkjen

GW COVER DATE
NOVEMBER
2019

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GUITAR WORLD

4x4 COLLECTOR'S COVERS

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STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
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"I Feel So Good (I Wanna Boogie)"
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ERIC CLAPTON
13 overlooked gems!

BUDDY GUY
Stone-crazy lesson!

SPECIAL ISSUE!

BLUES Blowout!

SAMANTHA FISH
Slide guitar savagery!

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
The birth of a guitar hero!

JOE BONAMASSA
King of the blues!

BLACK KEYS • KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD • DANNY JOHNSON
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Q: When and where did you buy this guitar?

Probably around 2018 or 2019. It's one of those newer models, a Mexican Jaguar. I got it from Reverb; I've gotten a lot of stuff off Reverb and Sweetwater. I walk into guitar stores now, and there's not always a massive selection to choose from. I can't remember the last time I was able to successfully buy one from a store that felt good.

Q: You're known for your Gibson SG, so why did you choose a Jaguar?

I had never played a Jaguar before and wanted something that wasn't overly expensive but that I could try out to see how it felt. I thought it was going to be an aggressive guitar — I was thinking of Kurt Cobain, who played a Jaguar — but when I got it, I felt it lent itself better to more of the R&B material I was playing. So I shopped around for a while, and this was the one that kept calling to me. It complimented old-school, Sixties R&B and had this nice bell tone. But if we're going to be superficial about it, I think they look great. I'm still finding new sounds on the Jaguar

because it has a ton of options.

Q: Have you used this guitar on any notable recordings?

I definitely used it on *Kill or Be Kind* [2019]. I didn't use it on *Death Wish Blues* [2023] or *Faster* [2021]; I had a limited arsenal for both albums. So it's on *Kill or Be Kind*, but I can't remember which songs. I don't want to lie and rewrite history, but if I could take myself back in time, I probably would have used the Jaguar on the title track.

Q: What does the Jaguar bring to the party creatively that your SG doesn't?

Offset guitars can be really clumsy, but that clumsiness makes me approach them differently. I had to refine my rhythms and kept hitting the kill switch mid solo, thinking, "Why is this here?!" [Laughs]. Anytime you switch up guitars, it's going to help you maybe rein in a bad habit or approach it in a way that unlocks a lot of stuff.

Q: It seems you have a special bond with this guitar. Is that why you chose it

for your GW cover shoot?

The photo used for the GW cover was one of the photos we didn't use for [Kill or Be Kind]. We probably took 300 pictures in that set, and I had a bunch of my guitars with me, and I was trying different outfits and guitars to go along with them. I have a bond with all my instruments, but everyone sees me with the SG. It's all about the song and the application. I beat the hell out of them, so it's nice to have some variation.

Q: We know you still own this guitar; do you have plans to record with it in the future?

Fender gifted me one when we were doing the *Kill or Be Kind* album cycle, so I got an updated Jaguar, and that's the one I've been bringing on the road. It's Sea Foam Green, so I've been leaving the Olympic White one, the original one, at home. I play around with it when I'm off, and I could possibly record with it again. It's still sitting here for a reason; if I had a house fire, it would be one of the top 10 I'd grab.

— Andrew Daly

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VICTORY AMPS

With notable users including Guthrie Govan, Richie Kotzen, Chris Buck and Bill and Brent from Mastodon, **VICTORY** has gone from strength to strength since launching just over a decade ago

By Amit Sharma

their needs are met at every stage. By his own admission, the brand's inaugural releases — hand-wired V100, V50 and V10 heads — didn't make a big splash on the market, but by the time they started working with Guthrie Govan on designing the V30, interest began to soar.

Below, he explains how the company went from relative newcomers to one of today's most popular amp brands, producing equipment to suit music of just about every kind.

When did you get serious about amp building?

I mainly taught myself. There was a local repairman who talked to me [*as though*] I could understand when I really didn't, but the few things I *did* understand from school physics inspired me greatly. Another friend experimented with the post-phase splitter master volume mod from *The Tube Amp Book* [by Aspen Pittman]. I decided to try that on my 1969 Marshall. They weren't worth a lot of money in those days. It worked; I didn't burn anything down... I'm still here.

How did Victory start to take off?

The initial launch was toward the end of 2012, though we chose not to come in making lots of noise. We started off with boutique stuff, and no one took much notice until we spoke to Guthrie about working

together. The first part of the brief was the size; it had to fit into an overhead compartment on a budget airline. Then we started talking about the tones. After the V30 launch, Victory started to get taken seriously. Lunchbox heads weren't entirely new; there was the Linear Conchord back in the Sixties and more recent stuff like the Orange Tiny Terror. But ours was more full-on, with around 40 watts to cover most gigs while being easy to cart around.

You'd worked with Guthrie and Richie Kotzen during your time at Cornford. What do players like that look for?

Guthrie just wants a good clean and overdrive sound. He can do an enormous amount from the guitar's volume. I went to see him play using an early V30 prototype. He ended up doing everything from the guitar using just the overdrive channel, which impressed me. He wants a peculiar balance of headroom, compression, clarity and sustain. Basically, he wants to have his cake and eat it! He doesn't necessarily need an extra pedal to get his lead tone, even if he chooses to use one. Whether it's fast legato stuff or heavy palm mutes, the amp shouldn't be fighting what you're trying to do. Its job is to make you sound as good as possible. Richie didn't want a clean channel; he prefers doing everything from his guitar, so he sets his single-channel

WHETHER YOU PREFER the sound of vintage blues, indie crunch, harder rock or progressive metal, you'll probably have seen a Victory amp on stage at one point or another. Given the bar of quality that stretches across their impressively wide range of products — from stacks and combos to pedal

amps and solid-state stomp boxes — it's no surprise their designs have been popular with all kinds of players, as demonstrated by their growing list of high-profile endorsees.

For Chief Designer Martin Kidd, who had already built a solid reputation as one of the finest amp builders in England through his work at Cornford, it's been a case of listening to what artists want and ensuring that



amp to crunch and uses the boost for extra power.

While their signature amps are more British-voiced, you also have American cleans and American high gain covered via the Duchess and Kraken, respectively.

After the V30, it was suggested we try making a Dumble-style clean. They're so mystical — I'd never played one. You can look at the circuit and still be none the wiser, so I decided to make a clean amp that wasn't sterile. When people want a good clean, they don't want something that sounds like you've plugged into a hi-fi. They still want harmonic content and compression. I probably focus more on overdrive, but if you have a nice drive, you get a nice clean by turning down. All the chime and harmonics stay. When Chris Buck started playing bigger venues, he wanted higher-powered amps to hear himself and fill the venue. Clean headroom became an important consideration with the V40 Duchess. Then we did the opposite with our metal amp, the Kraken. What today's players like isn't that different to the gear from the Sixties and Seventies. Obviously metal amps didn't exist back then, so I took the overdrive and refined it with all the nasty bits taken out. But the core of those sounds were gotten right the first time, much like the Telecaster,

Les Paul or Strat.

Your latest designs are the MK Clean and MK Overdrive. Where do these fit into the roster?

The main difference is they are hand-wired. The MK Clean is a high-headroom amp that's loud but won't fight you. You can play softly and still be heard. It has all the ingredients you want but don't always get. These amps are a nod back to what I made at Cornford and early on with Victory. Some people prefer this kind of gear, but I don't have a problem with printed circuit designs. Even with the latest new circuits, some elements are PCB-mounted, like switching relays or mute circuits, because relays can cause pops and bangs. Everything else in terms of the signal path is gold turrets and hand-wired. It's a hybrid construction method that's more mechanically stable. It's the same with the MK Overdrive, which was born of all the requests for a reissue of the Cornford MK50 mk2. We refined it with more scope for sounds and gain levels. I tried to remember the quirks of the original and produce something a little more intuitive.

What's next for Victory? We imagine a Chris Buck signature model would sell rather well.

All I can say is, watch this space! I don't know if anything's been finalized. Chris just launched his first

pedal through Thorpy Effects — which is the same company we collaborated with for our solid-state pedals.

Bill Kelliher and Brent Hinds from Mastodon have been using Victory lately, which is interesting given that they've had Friedman and Orange signature amps in the past.

Brent has been using the 100-watt Sheriff, and we've been chatting to Bill about tweaking the VX100 he currently has. You develop products by listening to what people have to say. I think he would like the clean channel of a V140 with the same gain options. It's something I'm considering for a mk2 version!

Have there been any other welcome surprises in terms of artists using your gear?

Lots! I have to say Graham Coxon from Blur was a nice surprise. I thought somebody like him would have had a traditional kind of deal with Fender or Marshall. He was such a humble and unassuming bloke. We met at the 2020 NAMM Show when he came over and introduced himself. My original heroes and tonal references are people like Gary Moore, Eddie Van Halen and Michael Schenker, so to have someone like Graham become interested in my designs made me happy. **GW**

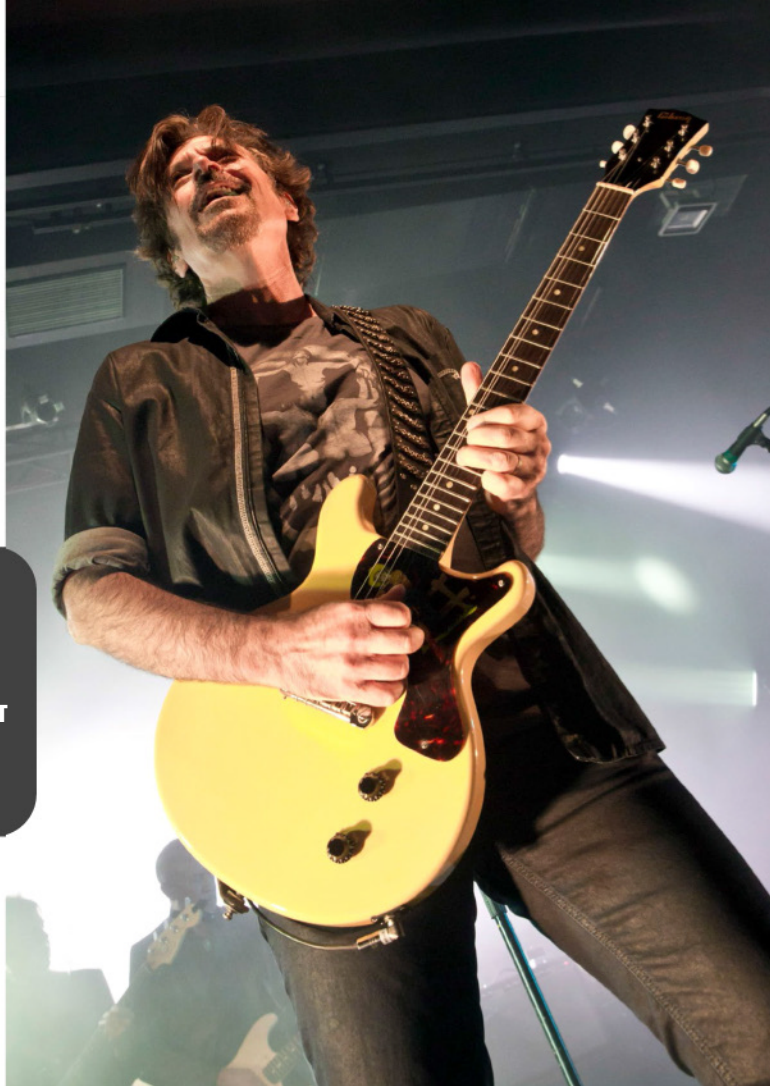
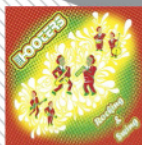
[from left] Detail from the back panel of a Victory Sheriff head; Victory Kraken MKII head; Victory V30 head; The Jack MKII compact head

**“YOU
DEVELOP
PRODUCTS
BY
LISTENING
TO WHAT
PEOPLE
HAVE
TO SAY”**



HOOTERS' FIRST
Amore (1983)

HOOTERS' LATEST
Rocking & Swing (2023)



ERIC BAZILIAN

The Hooters frontman/guitarist talks gear, massive Eighties success, his one-take “All You Zombies” guitar solo and forging hits with Cyndi Lauper, Joan Osborne and Mick Jagger

By Joe Bosso

ERIC BAZILIAN IS nothing if not patient. The Hooters singer-songwriter and guitarist has waited a long while to be featured in *Guitar World* — 40 years, to be exact — so he was understandably elated to sit down for an interview. “I don’t think I’ve ever been mentioned in any guitar

magazine before,” he says. “Finally — here we go!”

While it’s certainly true that the guitar cognoscenti (we include ourselves in that group) has traditionally focused on the tried-and-true legends, there’s still dozens of gifted and notable players — even those who have sold

millions of albums — who, for one reason or another, get overlooked. And make no mistake, Bazilian deserves recognition; the man can play. As he points out, “I’ve written and played guitar riffs that people sing.”

He’s quick to mention some examples: “‘Girls Just Want to Have Fun’ — I saw the *Barbie* movie, and all they used was my guitar riff. People hear those first three notes, and they know what the song is. I played that, but I didn’t get credit for myself because I was paid as a session musician. And there’s ‘One of Us’ [*Bazilian* wrote *Joan Osborne’s* 1995 smash]; people hear that riff and they know the song. I’ve heard from bands that want to cover Hooters songs, and they’ve asked me for help. ‘And We Danced’ is a bitch. I mean, for me it comes naturally, but it’s not your father’s rhythm guitar part.”

Success didn’t come quickly for Bazilian. In the mid Seventies, the Philadelphia native teamed with singer and keyboardist Rob Hyman and drummer Rick Chertoff to form a progressive rock group called Baby Grand. When Chertoff split to become an A&R executive for Arista Records, he signed the band and produced two albums that failed to sell. Undaunted, Bazilian and Hyman put together the Hooters, and within a couple of years the hard-driving pop rock outfit ruled the Philly club scene. Local radio stations loved the band, and bookings got bigger and better — the Hooters even opened for the Who at Philadelphia’s JFK Stadium in 1982.

Securing a record deal, however, proved elusive. Then Chertoff, now with Columbia Records, recruited Bazilian and Hyman as core writers and players on Cyndi Lauper’s 1983 debut, *She’s So Unusual*, and the resulting cavalcade of hits (one of which, “Time After Time,” was co-written by Hyman) gave the producer enough pull to sign the Hooters.

The band’s 1985 Columbia debut, *Nervous Night*, broke fast with radio and MTV gems like “And We Danced,” “All You Zombies” and “Day by Day” — each one brimming with unbridled energy, hooks a-plenty and Bazilian’s sparky guitar playing. After years of waiting in the wings for their

“THE ‘ALL YOU ZOMBIES’ SOLO WAS COMPLETELY SPONTANEOUS. I JUST PLUGGED IN

moment, the Hooters were now double-platinum stars: *Rolling Stone* named them Best New Band of the Year, and the group was chosen to open the Philadelphia segment of the Live Aid benefit concerts.

"We had screaming girls in Philadelphia in '83 and '84, but now it was national," Bazilian says. "What was really exciting was getting to play the music we made and hearing it on the radio. The rock-star thing was funny because we were already in our late twenties and early thirties. I was 31 when *Nervous Night* came out."

The Hooters' Stateside chart run waned in the late Eighties, but the band saw their stock rise internationally with hits like "Satellite" and "Boys Will Be Boys." When the group announced a hiatus in 1995, Bazilian was already back in the limelight as the main writer and arranger on Joan Osborne's album *Relish*, which resulted in multiple Grammy nominations, including Song of the Year for "One of Us." The band's break only lasted six years; in 2001 they reunited and have remained a steady touring operation ever since.

"If I've learned anything about the music business, it's that there are no made men," Bazilian says. "Even with success, it never gets easier. For me, I try not to repeat myself creatively, but I also try to stay in my lane, which can make it easy to repeat myself. I mean, there are only so many notes."

As a guitarist, which players had the most impact on you?

First it was George and John. I loved John Lennon's rhythm playing. He'd take short solos sometimes, like on "You Can't Do That" — that was like punk. George Harrison's playing was impeccable. One of my first great accomplishments was learning his solo from "Till There Was You."

Then I got into Keith Richards, but my next true hero was Roger McGuinn. I was 12 years old and I got bar mitzvahed so I could buy a Rick-enbacker 12-string. Next came the Holy Trinity — Clapton, Hendrix and Beck. I loved Alvin Lee, too. I saw Ten Years After open for the Jeff Beck Group, and honestly, [*Ten Years After*] blew them away.

When did you start gravitating toward Les Pauls?

I saw a band called Woody's Truck Stop in Philadelphia, and the guitar player was a guy named Todd Rundgren. He played a goldtop Les Paul through a Twin, and he was doing blues like Mike Bloomfield. A few days later, I went to see a kid who had just moved nearby, and he had a goldtop Les Paul. I knew I had to get one. The next day I was walking to school, and I saw an old man carrying a goldtop Les Paul without a case. Crazy, right? He sold it to me for \$150, which is the best \$150 I ever spent. I had that guitar for a while, but it was stolen some years later.

With the Hooters, you played Les Paul Juniors quite a bit.

It was almost the only guitar on *Nervous Night*. By that time, I was bouncing between guitars — my '57 Strat was the Cyndi Lauper guitar, and I had a '66 Tele that I bought from a friend. But another friend of mine had a Junior. He said, "Go to the studio and try it out." The second I plugged it in, it was like, "Whoa." It was a game changer — the thing sounded great for everything. I could work with the volume and tone controls to make it crunchy enough for rock, but it had enough dynamics to bring out my crazy little voicings.

What kind of amps did you pair it with?

It was either a 1965 Vox AC30 Top Boost or a Marshall 2203 — not the JCM800, but one of the first master volume amps. I think all the rhythm guitars on *Nervous Night* were played through a stereo pair of Marshalls, a 50-watt and a 100-watt. The solos were through the AC30, except for "All You Zombies"; on that I played through a Marshall. One take and it sounded right.

Before the Hooters got signed, you guys were huge in Philly. Was it a pretty competitive scene?

Eric Bazilian on stage with the Hooters in Berlin, July 26, 2016. "[The Les Paul Junior] was a game changer," he says. "The thing sounded great for everything"

It was a friendly competition among a lot of bands, but I didn't feel competitive. Robert Hazard was playing at the same time as us. Our bands were kind of the Beatles and Stones of that scene. They'd open shows for us, and we'd open for them.

And, of course, Robert Hazard wrote "Girls Just Want to Have Fun."

That's right. Rick Chertoff was assigned to produce Cyndi Lauper. Rather than do the record with session guys, he wanted a band feel, so he got Rob and me involved. He had a bunch of songs that he thought would be great for Cyndi to cover. She was on board with everything except "Girls." She hated it — [*imitates Lauper*] "I will never sing that song!"

We tried it every which way — rocking it out, doing it ska — but she still hated it. One day, I heard "Come On Eileen" by Dexy's Midnight Runners, so I started playing the opening lick of "Girls" with that feel. Cyndi started singing to it, Rob played a keyboard pad on top, and Rick Chertoff's eyes opened wide. It was like magic. By the end of the day, Cyndi was saying, "I've always wanted to sing that song!" She thought it would be very empowering to women.

Goodness knows you've heard that opening riff thousands of times. Do you ever get sick of it?

It just gets tiring because I'm not getting paid. [*Laughs*] I've come to terms with it for the most part. It's like I'm taking one to the team. But when I saw *Barbie* and I heard that riff, it's like I know what a sync like that is worth. Anyway, what are you gonna do?

You cut the solo to "All You Zombies" in one take, but had you worked it out live beforehand?

I worked out a lot of solos live, but the "Zombies" solo was completely spontaneous. I just plugged in and started messing around. I turned the Marshall to two, and that was it. Same thing with "Day by Day." That one was just boom!

"Day by Day" is such a beautifully composed solo; one would think you'd spent a month figuring it out.

And you'd think that the guy who played it would be able to come up with another solo as cool as it the next day. But no, "Zombies" and "Day by Day" were like I gave birth to them fully formed one day. They came out, they were great, and they remain.

AND STARTED MESSING AROUND. I TURNED THE MARSHALL TO TWO, AND THAT WAS IT"



RANDY BACHMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Around this time, you played a brilliant solo on the single version of Mick Jagger's "Hard Woman."

That's right. He thought of us as the team that had done Cyndi's album. Before he came to the studio, we did a reggae-type demo of the song. Mick came to the Record Plant and listened to what we'd done. He thought it sounded good, but he thought the bass wasn't right. We changed it around after he left, and the next day he came back and said, "The keyboard isn't quite right." We finally got it to what he wanted, and when he started to sing it, that's when it occurred to me, "This is Mick Jagger singing." I was like, "Damn, we're working with Mick Jagger!"

Did Mick have any ideas for what he wanted you to play?

We sort of directed each other. At first, I was going to play an arpeggiated thing, but as I stood there with my Les Paul Junior I thought I should play a blues solo. He was moving around like a marionette responding to every squeak coming out of my guitar. I guess he liked it because in the video he was this computer image playing the solo.

Tell me about coming up with that riff to Joan Osborne's "One of Us."

It was sort of the situation as when we did Cyndi's record. Rick Chertoff was producing and he needed material. The idea was for us to write all the songs together. One day I was working

in this crawl space above Rob Hyman's garage. I picked up his ES-330, and my fingers just went there — I kept playing the riff over and over. Rob came in and said, "That's a good riff. Let me record that on my Walkman."

The next day he couldn't find the tape he'd recorded it on because he labeled it wrong. It took a while to find it, and by then I'd started playing it in a Chet Atkins finger-picky kind of way. Joan started riffing around with it, but there was no movement toward making a song out of it.

What happened next was, my girlfriend Sarah — who's now my wife — she was fascinated by four-track recording, so I decided to show her what my TASCAM could do. I recorded the intro, then a verse and a chorus, then a B section. I laid down all these parts and started to sing lyrics. I kind of sang them like Brad Roberts from Crash Test Dummies. Sarah had fallen asleep, but by the end of all this, I had a song.

By demonstrating what your four-track could do, you wound up writing one of your biggest hits.

I had no idea. I totally freestyled the lyrics, but I knew I'd stumbled upon a basic truth and sort of encapsulated my entire worldview. Of course, that doesn't mean you're going to have a hit song. I was shocked when, the next day, Rick said to Joan, "Can you sing this?" If he

The Hooters in San Francisco, September 30, 1985 [from left]: Andy King, Rob Hyman, Eric Bazilian, David Uosikkinen and John Lilley

had asked her, "Would you like to sing this?" she might have said no. We did a demo with her singing it, and then we went off to this hunting lodge to cut the album.

Your guitar solo on the song is pretty raw and crazy.

It's pretty shreddy. It's like me doing a nervous Neil Young. Up till then, I'd played chords through the solo section — I figured I'd overdub something. I clicked on the Rat distortion and let it rip. I tried changing it a few times, but that first solo tells a story.

What kinds of guitars are you playing nowadays?

My '56 goldtop is the Holy Grail. I found another one in L.A. that's a darkback, and it plays itself. I don't have a collection — I have a selection — though I do have three 1966 12-string Rickenbackers. I discovered a Finnish luthier — the brand is Vuorensaku — and I saw one of his guitars in a music store in Stockholm. I plugged it in, and it was just right. It's one of the first iconic shapes I've seen in decades. It's not a Strat or a Tele, not a PRS or a Ric; it's kind of Jaguar-like and Tele-like, with a single P90. He aged it so it looked like a white tabletop from the 1950s. I said, "That's coming home with me."

Later on, I had him build me a red one with two humbuckers. That's my alpha guitar for touring. I do bring out the Les Paul Junior, which I'll pull out for "Zombies" or "Day by Day," but the main live guitar is the Vuorensaku.

How about your amps?

In 2013, I moved over to the dark side. I'm all Kemper, all the time. I got tired of renting Vox amps that sounded like shit. When the Kemper thing came on, I got them to send me a prototype, and the first thing I did was profile my AC30 and Marshall. Once I did that, I never looked back. I can play a clean solo loud or a dirty solo loud. I can play crunchy chords without being too loud. I've got my time-based effects on it. The front-of-house guy doesn't even have to touch my channel. I just mix myself. I'm a big fan. **GW**

"IT'S PRETTY SHREDDY — IT'S LIKE ME DOING A NERVOUS NEIL YOUNG"

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"My main guitar was the red Sixties Fender Mustang with the short scale that I've been playing for a while," says Fontaines D.C. guitarist Carlos O'Connell

GUITAR WORLD OCTOBER 2024



UNIVERSE

CARLOS O'CONNELL — half of the rapidly rising Irish rockers' twin-guitar attack — discusses the importance of space in a mix, the finer points of his Fender Rory Gallagher Strat and why the band's singer played what just might be the best guitar solo on their new album, *Romance*

words by **Mark McStea**

photo by **Jesse Barnett**

FONTAINES D.C. HAVE come a long way since meeting at college in Ireland in 2014. A few short years after breaking out of the rehearsal room and into clubs around Ireland and the U.K., rapidly building on the huge buzz around the band, they managed to release three singles in 2018, kicking off with “Liberty Belle.” A deal with Partisan Records soon followed, and *Dogrel*, their debut album, was released in 2019, peaking at Number 9 in the U.K. That same year they set their sights on America, which involved playing nine sets at SXSW over five days and appearing on *The*

Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

Their efforts Stateside saw them rewarded in 2021, when their second album, 2020's *A Hero's Death*, was nominated for a Grammy for Best Rock Album. That was followed by 2022's *Skinty Fia*, home of the brooding but catchy “Jackie Down the Line,” with its pulsing, “Watching the Detectives”-like riffs aplenty.

The band have just released *Romance*, which sees them take their sound a long way from the spiky, angular post-punk vibe of their debut record. Guitarists Carlos O'Connell

and Conor Curley weave atmospheric textures that underpin singer Grian Chatten's emotive vocals to create a sound that is simultaneously familiar, yet distinctive enough to set them apart from the typical guitar-driven indie band sound.

O'Connell, a self-confessed guitar geek, is constantly hunting down elusive, obscure gear to unlock the tones he hears in his head. He's also understandably excited about the new record.

There's a clear evolution in the band's sound from the first album through today. Is that a conscious progression?

It's totally natural. I think it's having access to more music, having a broader knowledge and wider experiences. I think you can draw a clear-cut line from the first album to this one, where ideas and approaches we've taken have become more developed with each record.

Does the increasing familiarity with the studio and the recording process factor into that?

It definitely does — that's a really big thing. When we recorded the first album, I only had one overdrive pedal and a reverb pedal. And one guitar, a Danelectro, which had a very thin sound. I just made it work, but we didn't really have the experience, knowledge or confidence to try different ideas and equipment in the studio. By the stage we're at now, the studio has really become another instrument.

Do you already know what you're going to record when you go into the studio?

We try to be as prepared as possible. For this album we had four weeks of writing and pre-production at a studio that a friend of mine owns in London. We tried to get the songs, and even the sounds, as close as possible to how we wanted the finished album to sound to give us a lot more control. We all come up with ideas that we usually just record on our phones, then we put them into a folder that everyone can access and come up with ideas. We'd name the ones we liked and put those songs up on a board and plot out what we're going to do. We always have about 30 ideas for each album, then we play around with them and know quite quickly which ones aren't working. Some go on hold for future records even if we don't think they're quite right for the album we're working on.

There is a great sense of space on the album, even where there are quite a few layers of guitars.

I feel that the longer I spend in the studio, the more my ears get attuned to where the

lines will go and what to leave out. The producer, James Ford, has the ability to leave a lot of space in all of the ranges, particularly at the top and bottom ends. He's so tidy in the way he organizes things, that there always seem to be some spare frequencies where you could maybe put down a high guitar part that would normally be in conflict with cymbals or something. The more space you have, the more powerful the mix sounds.

Do you have some songs earmarked as potential singles when you're recording?

No, that never really happens — we give every song the same focus and attention. Every song has the same value to us; we never know what the singles are going to be until after we've finished.

How do you and Conor divide the guitar parts?

It's usually very organic. We just play ideas to each other and try to work out something that leaves a space for each part. It usually comes out great because it's all about listening to what each other is doing, rather than what we're doing. Sometimes it's just down to finding different chord inversions. "Death Kink" has a great part that Conor played, where I wasn't really thinking of adding much to it, when we were preparing the song. When we were in the studio, I was listening to him playing those chords over and over, and I tried to find some extensions above the chords he was playing, and making some noises as well on the guitar. It opened the song up into another world, yet originally I wasn't even planning on playing anything much. I think you can shape the sound of what the other person is playing with just a handful of notes.

"Death Kink" has one of the few out-and-out guitar solos. Was that you or Conor?

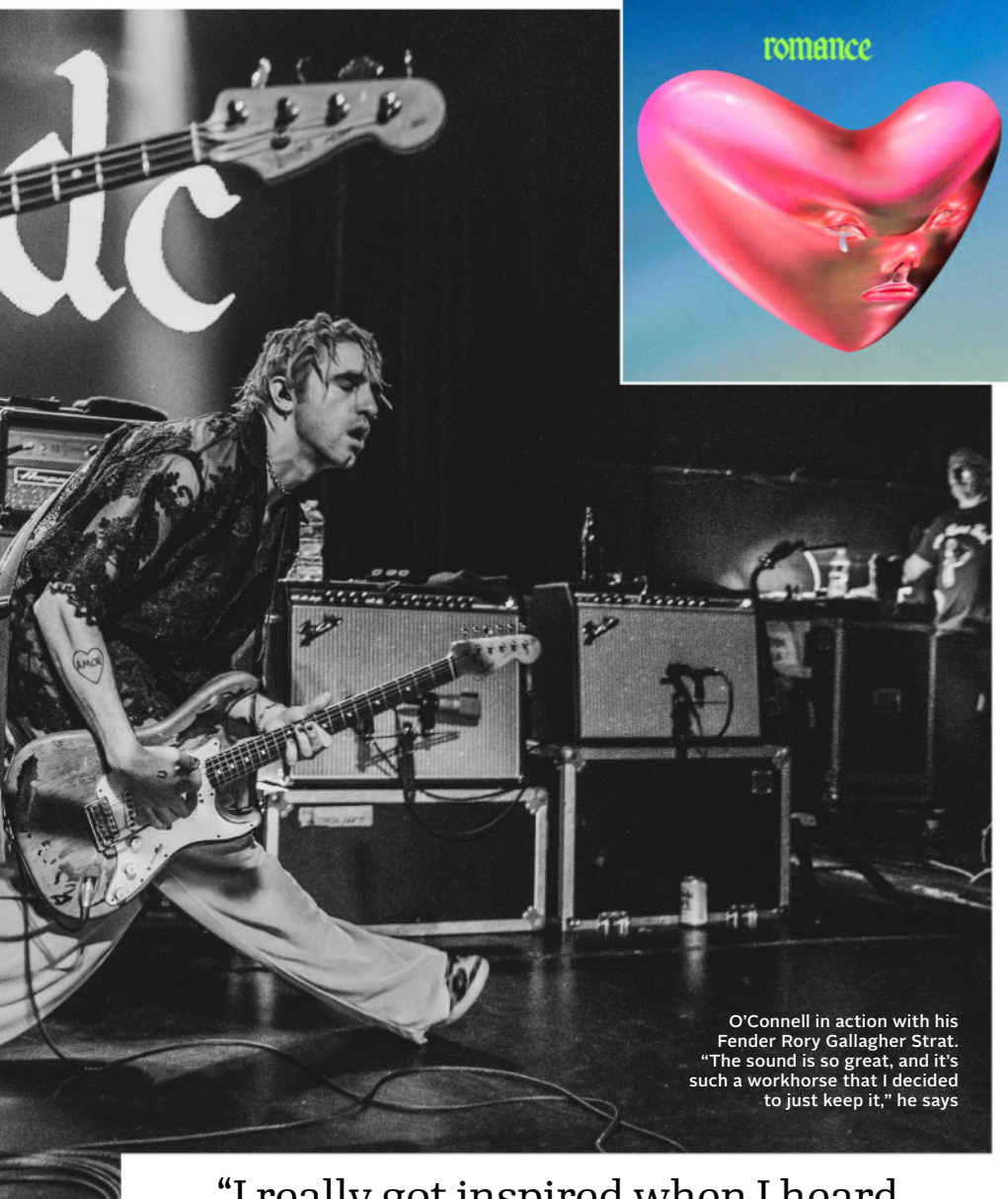
Actually, Grian [*Chatten, the band's singer*] played the solo on that song. [*Laughs*] He was listening back to the track, and he was really excited about it and kept asking if he could give it a go as he had some ideas. He's a really good guitarist, actually. Conor and I had been passing a guitar back and forwards in the control room, looking for ideas — and Grian just fucking nailed it. I guess it's quite ironic that one of the few solo opportunities was taken by the singer. [*Laughs*] To be fair to him, though, he's a brilliant guitarist in his own right and he played a lot of the acoustic parts on the album. We'll spend a lot of time in the rehearsal room with all three of us playing guitar.

What were the main guitars you and Conor used for the album?



My main guitar was the red Sixties Fender Mustang with the short scale that I've been playing for a while. I've also got a blue one now, which is the same age but is the normal-scale length. My sound was a mix of those two and a Rory Gallagher Strat, which records brilliantly. I was thinking of selling it for a while to get another Strat that I could make more "my own," but the sound is so great, and it's such a workhorse that I decided to just keep it. I also used a vintage Epiphone Coronet that Alex Turner [*Arctic Monkeys*] lent me. It had one P90 on it and sounded fantastic. Conor played his Jazzmaster a lot, which is a newer American vintage-spec model.

Were you a fan of Rory Gallagher when you got the Strat?



O'Connell in action with his Fender Rory Gallagher Strat. "The sound is so great, and it's such a workhorse that I decided to just keep it," he says

"I really got inspired when I heard **NIRVANA'S LIVE AT READING.** That release of pent-up aggression resonated with me"

Not really, but only because that's a genre of music I don't really listen to. He was a fantastic guitarist, though. I saw it on the wall in a store in Chicago and thought it looked interesting, as it was so distressed to look like his old guitar. I tried it and thought it was just a brilliant instrument.

Go-to amps?

Conor's main amp was a Fender Princeton, and he also used a Fender Vibrolux. My favorite studio amp is a Fender Deluxe

Reverb. James Ford just puts a Shure SM57 on the center of one of the cones, and that picks up all the bite of the sound. I've used that since the first album. We had some Fender Twin Reverbs in the big room upstairs at the studio, which were mic'd up and mixed into the sound of our primary amps. I watched Aaron Rash, who has a YouTube channel that explores the tone secrets of Kurt Cobain's sound, and I saw him demoing early Nineties G12M-70 Celestion speakers. It just clicked for me

that this was the sound I was trying to find. I've put them into my Fender Twin, which is my live amp, and now it's going to be the only amp I use for anything — studio or live. They are a speaker that people generally hate — I think they used to use them in Marshalls at one time.

You're going to have to hunt down a bunch of spares for the Celestions now, aren't you?

That's right. [Laughs] I've already got requests on various websites and I'm constantly watching for them coming up for sale on the internet.

What music inspired you to play, and what was your first guitar?

It was all the classic rock like AC/DC, Guns N' Roses and Led Zep. I'd learn some of the solos and that, but when I really got inspired was when I heard Nirvana's *Live at Reading* [2009]. I was at summer camp, and one of the older guys there introduced me to it. It was just incredible, even from that opening feedback. That release of pent-up aggression resonated with me, as I was quite angry as a kid, and that record changed everything. It became less about learning solos than putting the guitar in front of an amp and making it scream. My first guitar was a cheap Encore Strat copy. After that I got an Epiphone Les Paul copy that I had for ages, then I progressed to a better Epi Les Paul, which I sold when I was about 20. Then I got a Danelectro, which was a totally different sound altogether. [Laughs] It was because of the Danelectro that I moved onto the Mustang, which I thought did everything the Danelectro did, but better. I suppose that brought everything all the way back to Nirvana in a way, which makes sense, given how much I loved Kurt's playing.

You have quite a packed pedalboard. If you could only pick a couple of pedals for your core sound, what would they be?

Firstly it would be a spring reverb that I've had since day one. It's the first pedal I ever got, and I build my whole sound around that. The other main pedal would be a Soundgas Type 636P, which was ridiculously expensive. It's based on the pre-amp channel on a Grampian spring reverb unit that Pete Townshend used to use as his overdrive. Soundgas realized that the pre-amp was so specific that they decided to reproduce it. I think it's genuinely the best overdrive pedal in the world. It's a pedal with one knob and a button — you just turn it up or down. If I could get one of those actual spring tanks, I'd be happy and not need anything else. [Laughs] **GW**

FIRE STORM

MATT PIKE and JEFF MATZ discuss the lead-up to – and aftermath of – HIGH ON FIRE’s latest release, *Cometh the Storm*, an album that couldn’t have come at a better time for the Oakland metal masters.

STORY BY JON WIEDERHORN PHOTO BY JASON ZUCCO

HORNETS’ NEST GUITAR buzz, dark, doomy riffs and rhythms as foreboding as torrential thunderstorms are what make High on Fire *heavy*. What makes them stand out from their stoner-metal peers, however, is the way they imbue Sabbathian sludge with Eighties metal hooks, thrash attitude, psychedelic swirls and authentic Turkish folk melodies.

“I never wanted to be just a doom band,” says frontman Matt Pike, who cut his metal teeth in the Nineties with

drone legends Sleep. “When we formed High on Fire, I was thinking we’d be more like Celtic Frost with maybe a little black metal in there. But that was just a starting point.”

Since they surfaced from their Lovecraftian netherworld in 1998, Pike and his bandmates have explored multiple styles and subgenres. Their version of metallic doom gradually evolved into a faster animal heavily influenced by Motörhead and snarling biker metal. Then the band pumped the brakes a bit and upped their songwriting game, shifting up the rhythms and switching between various landscapes of fist-tight, mid-paced metal.



High on Fire's
Jeff Matz [left] and
Matt Pike (with his
custom nine-string
First Act)



“Growing with this band has been like learning a language,” Pike says. “At first, you’re figuring out how to pronounce things, and then you’re expanding your vocabulary. By the time you step into the world and start to travel, you get exposed to all these accents and different languages, and you include some of that in what you do as well. You’re no longer just talking in your native language, so you’re always developing.”

Nearly 25 years and eight albums since High on Fire released their 2000 debut, *The Art of Self Defense*, the trio has reignited the metal scene with *Cometh the Storm*, a twisting, entrancing contrast of scorched-earth riffs, searing hooks and subtle, spacey interludes. It’s plodding, plundering and progressive — more of a musical journey than an aural assault.

“I’ve discovered that people’s ears react well to a melody that’s voiced on guitar,” says bassist Jeff Matz, who writes on guitar and has played a major role in High on Fire’s songwriting since he joined for 2007’s *Death Is This Communion*. “It’s helpful for us to start off by going one-on-one with a guitar and drums just to get some good ideas going. When we have something we like, we take it from there and start filling in the other music colors and making some noise.”

High on Fire’s ability to combine heaviness with tunefulness has earned them tours with a wide range of death metal, thrash, metalcore, stoner and experimental bands, including high-profile gigs with Metallica, Megadeth, Mastodon and Melvins. More than six years in the making, *Cometh the Storm* is rife with the spirit of invention. In some ways, it’s a natural evolution from 2018’s chugging, churning *Electric Messiah*, the title track of which won a Grammy for Best Metal Performance. And the album has triggered a new level of excitement following Pike’s descent into depression, insecurity and illness, much of which was caused by an abrupt halt of momentum during the pandemic shutdown and the financial sinkhole that threatened to swallow the industry veteran. Critics, fans and other musicians have consistently praised High on Fire, yet the band has never enjoyed huge album sales and had only just graduated to marquee-level success in 2020 when the pandemic lockdown began, leaving Pike and his bandmates in a difficult financial position.

“I’ve had a pretty rough time with coming out of being wildly successful to Covid shutting everything down — and having to pay the interest rates on the bills from when I was wildly successful,” Pike says. “So



[north to south]
Jeff Matz,
Coady Willis and
Matt Pike on stage
in Helsinki, Finland,
July 3, 2022





that's been a rough run, and it has taken up a lot of my time trying to be creative again and develop my career. It sucks because we got a Grammy for *Electric Messiah*, and then we couldn't play the tour for it. Our pay for those shows went through the roof; we just never made it to the shows to get paid."

During the downtime, Pike released the side project *Pike vs. the Automaton*, remastered and reissued *The Art of Self Defense* (with their 1999 demo as a bonus) and released the book *Head on a Pike: The Illustrated Lyrics of Matt Pike*. "I had a lot of things on the stove, but I couldn't make any income from them until they were done," Pike says. "And, with the current interest rates in the United States, I was trying to keep my head above water and I had to learn to get creative about the way I made money. I can't dig ditches anymore because I have peripheral neuropathy [a degenerative nerve cell condition that causes numbness, tingling and pain in the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands and arms]. I could probably be a bouncer, but I really don't want to work in a bar. Given my history with alcohol, it's not a good place for me. So I had a lot of things to work out."

The Matt Pike that surfaced on the other side of existential crisis might surprise longtime High on Fire fans. Though he shows up for our interview slightly late and a bit frazzled, he looks pretty sharp, dressed not in metal garb, but in a collared cream-colored shirt patterned with circular red designs. The top few buttons are undone, and the left and right edges of the shirt frame two brown rope necklaces and a silver horseshoe pendant. A thick Seventies porn mustache sits prominently above Pike's beard scruff, and, at first glance, it looks like his hair is tied back in a ponytail. But nope, he's actually sporting short hair for the first time since he started growing his locks as a kid in the early Seventies. It's not an intentional part of an image overhaul, but Pike liked the way it looked and has kept it short for the last year — even though it was originally meant to be a make-shift disguise.

"I was in the Czech Republic on my 50th birthday, and I cut it myself when I was shrooming," he says. "My mother was a hairdresser, so maybe it runs in the family. I hadn't planned to cut it. I wasn't drinking, so I did a bunch of mushrooms and went to the Czech casino. But I started winning a lot of money once the shrooms kicked in. Then I started freaking out because there were some very large gentlemen that were not happy about me winning and being kind of psychic about their weird roulette game. So I chopped my hair off to keep them

away. And it's been that way ever since. It's kind of nice. There are benefits to having cropped hair. I'm sure any Spartan gladiator will tell you that."

Pike's eccentric personality and off-beat perspectives (regarding everything from drugs to aliens) have driven his creative songwriting, and his hunger to prove himself as an arena-worthy rocker has kept him motivated through challenging times. Now, having received strong accolades for *Cometh the Storm*, and having successfully finished the first tour for the album with new drummer Coady Willis (ex-Melvins, Big Business), Pike is enjoying the kind of praise he hasn't experienced in years and feeling relief that he made the right career decision by keeping High on Fire on the top of his priority list.

"We did such a good record that I feel like a big weight has been lifted off of me," he says. "And now I know I can go and work and tour like I always intended to do, and not have to sell everything I own to pay rent. While I worked on the record, I felt like a chef with all these things on the stove, and I was cooking, but there was no place to sell the food, which was strange. Now the kitchen is open again, and the lines are out the door."

You've been headbanging your mighty mane for decades. Do you ever feel naked onstage with short hair?

MATT PIKE: It's strange, because right after I cut it, I immediately thought, "Oh, man, I don't have anything to headbang." And then I was like, "Well, after a certain point, I never used to headbang anyway just because I have peripheral neuropathy. So I can't balance anymore. And then I got used to it and I thought, 'Okay, this is alright, man. I'm not choking on my own hair onstage.'"

How does peripheral neuropathy affect you, and does it influence the way you write songs?

PIKE: I guess for me it's part of the horror and beauty of being an artist. You never know what's going to happen, and it's just the way I am, and it affects the way I think and act. I've learned to become resourceful, trying to keep my head above water. But at the same time, when you don't have any money and you're used to being thrifty, if you suddenly come into some money you're like, "Holy shit. Maybe I should go to the casino with my 10 grand and be an idiot." I tend to go with whatever happens in my head, and I become self-destructive the minute I have success. That's a pattern I have to be aware of, I guess. It's like tak-

ing baby steps for a long time and eventually slipping and then starting up again. I don't know if that affected my creativity. With this album, it didn't at all, but it definitely affects my mood and my relationships with other people.

You were a heavy drinker for years. Has staying clean been a major hurdle?

PIKE: No, picking up the mess that I made out of my life was the hardest thing. It's not easy to do. I have ADHD. I have problems with my brain chemicals. I have a genetic disorder that makes me prone to being hyper-intelligent, weird and drug induced. I don't make dopamine and I don't make serotonin on my own. People who have this ailment tend to be alcoholics or drug addicts. And I basically drank my liver into submission and snorted a fuckin' mountain full of cocaine. I snorted it off of strippers' tits and all that shit, and I didn't die. So now I'm trying to keep myself a little more healthy and keep my wits about me and stay away from that stuff so I can still be around. And I keep myself really busy with work and music.

To use an analogy, you seem like a shark that needs to move and swim to breathe. Being stagnant and still must be your worst nightmare.

PIKE: I was going crazy not doing anything with Jeff during the pandemic because his wife's mother is elderly and we wanted to be super-safe. So I called one of my best friends, Jon [Reid] (ex-Lord Dying, ex-Megaton Leviathan), and said, "Come over, dude. Let's get your drums set up." He was doing some other stuff, and I was like, "C'mon man!" So he came over and we did *Pike vs. the Automaton*, which I tried to make very different from High on Fire by using down-tunings and different styles of drumming. Any time you add a different rhythm section, you end up changing your sound anyway. We did some of it with my ex-wife Alyssa, and I wrote a little with friends including [guitarist and vocalist] Todd [Burdette] from Tragedy. So that was cool. And I worked on my old [Chevrolet] El Camino, and a lot of friends — too many friends. It's hard to keep up with them all.

Cometh the Storm feels like a continuation of the barreling mid-tempo vibe of Electric Messiah, but with more Middle Eastern flourishes than you've previously explored.

PIKE: Stylistically, it's progressive and creative. It's pretty mid-tempo, but there's some fast shit on it. There are a lot of diminished, Phrygian and harmonic minor parts,

but at the same time, there's a lot of Matt Pike weirdness in there. Jeff brings in a lot of the Middle Eastern feel to the music, and I elaborate on what he does to give it a slightly different feel that's really exciting. Maybe it's something in my DNA, or maybe it's a thing that Jeff has in his. Maybe we were both from Istanbul or Constantinople in a past life. Who knows? We definitely have that Middle Eastern thing in common. And to be honest, Jeff wrote more than half the stuff on this record. He had a burst of creativity. I didn't take a back seat, I just let him play as much of a role in the creative process as me. So I focused on the stuff he wrote and concentrated on making it better and making my playing better.

Jeff, you just returned from a trip to Turkey. Did that put you in the Middle Eastern music headspace for this record?

JEFF MATZ: I've studied Middle Eastern music since 2006, and then I got serious with it and have taken lessons online with Turkish folk masters for three years. This was the second time I've been over there to study with these masters. I play a Turkish folk lute called a baglama or saz. I was over there to do a one-off show with a side band called Mutoid Man, and I popped over to Istanbul afterwards for a couple weeks, just studying folk tunes and techniques and tripping out. It's a total mindfuck over there. Istanbul is a crazy melting pot of different cultures and music, and there's so much going on at once, but there's a flow to it. It's one of the most densely packed cities I've ever been to, but everybody just does their thing and co-exists.

How did you discover Middle Eastern music?

MATZ: I was first exposed to it when I was playing in the band Zeke. Our guitar player, Chris Johnsen, took me to see a Turkish percussionist perform with an ensemble at the University of Washington. I knew nothing about Turkish folk music at the time and I was completely baffled by it. I did not understand what was going on at any level, but I knew it was amazing. I didn't think much about it though, and soon after that I joined High on Fire and moved to Oakland. I lived next door to Matt, and one of my roommates was this guy, Rich Doucette, who was playing in a band called Secret Chiefs 3 with Trey Spruance from Mr. Bungle. One of the main pillars of their sound is Middle Eastern folk music, and Rich was always listening to this crazy stuff, so I always heard wild sounds coming from his room. One day, I knocked on his door and said, "Dude, you've gotta show me what



Pike in action
in Barcelona,
June 9, 2022

you're listening to because it's just too cool." From there, we started hanging out and tripping on various types of Middle Eastern folk music and Kurdish music. Everything about it rocked my world — the bizarre time signatures, the doubled strings, the microtonality, the wild scales — and after I heard it that's all I could think about, from very early on in my tenure and in High on Fire.

Did you introduce the Middle Eastern elements to High on Fire?

MATZ: They were doing some of that before I joined. The note choices and scales on "Baghdad" [from 2000's *The Art of Self Defense*], for instance, is totally Middle Eastern sounding, and that's all Matt. For *Death Is This Communion*, I started writing a little bit in that vein, and Matt was totally open to it. We've just developed it more from there.

Are there similarities between Turkish music and doom metal?

MATZ: There definitely *can* be. It's all about how you dress it up. It's very easy to take elements of Turkish music, add a heavy drumbeat and metalize the guitars. We play parts in the Phrygian mode, and we love minor seconds. Also, diminished and augmented, angular-sounding parts have always been a huge part of the High on Fire sound. At the same time, it all comes naturally, and we try to keep it as organic as possible.

It sounds like you're both schooled in music composition and theory.

PIKE: Jeff is much more educated than me, but I *did* go to school for jazz improv. So I had a good grasp on music theory. It's not like I think about music theory when I'm

writing a song, though. It feels like we've gotten a lot more of an education in music from all the touring we've done. From the moment we started playing together, me and Jeff have vibed on a level where I totally understand him, and he totally understands me. And since we can both count, and we both understand how scales, tones and frequencies work, we can put our souls into all these different ideas.

MATZ: I was self-taught at first. I learned to play from books and publications, and then about 10 years ago, I started taking private lessons from Zoot Horn Rollo (aka Bill Harkleroad), who used to play with Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band. He's a crazy-god guitar player and he turned me on to some really wild ideas and different ways of looking at music. I'm still taking lessons from him.

Did you both record guitar tracks for *Cometh the Storm*?

MATZ: Matt and I doubled the rhythms, and usually the parts were pretty close. There's some stuff where we'll diverge, and he'll play a melodic lead while I hold down the chords. And sometimes I do single-note stuff while he's either playing the rhythm or playing a harmony to accompany what I'm doing — usually thirds or fifths.

How do your tones differ?

MATZ: It depends on the song, but I tend to have a more articulate, crunchy sound. Matt's tone is thicker and syrupier, and mine is a little bit more incisive. That works well for us, especially on the faster stuff, like "Freebooter" and "Electric Messiah."

Matt, you formed High on Fire out of the

"I used an SG in SLEEP for some live shows, but it wasn't really my thing until later when I had so many Les Pauls that I just decided I needed something different"

ashes of Sleep, so you already had established yourself to some extent. What were the first High on Fire shows like?

PIKE: I used as many amp stacks as I had for Sleep, and stuffed them into The Covered Wagon, which was a very small bar. The guitars were so loud you couldn't hear the vocals at all unless you were standing right in front of the PA speaker. We got some reviews that were good and humorous at the same time. Then we did a three-song demo and word circulated pretty fast. So we booked our own tour and got \$50 guarantees, which was basically gas money 'cause back then gas was cheap. Once we started touring, we literally didn't come off the tour for years. We just did albums and toured, and the guarantees started going up and we kept writing.

What was the outfit's most memorable early tour, or the one that earned you the most recognition?

PIKE: We went on the road with Mastodon, which was ridiculous and so great. We did two years with those guys, and we had to go on after them! I'm like, "Can't you switch it around? No? Okay, then I guess I'll just practice all day." I did, and I got better and better. It wasn't so much my playing that improved — though there was that, too — it was my writing techniques and songwriting, and that gave me more of a vision for the band. I think creativity is more important than technicality, anyway.

Jeff, When did you first hear High on Fire?

MATZ: In 2000, I was touring with Zeke and heard about this band that had one of the guys from Sleep, and I said, "Man, we should definitely check this out." I found *The Art of Self Defense* at a record store in Baltimore, and it quickly became stuck in the band's CD player. That's all we listened to the entire tour. Then, when Zeke signed with Relapse Records, High on Fire were doing their second album *Surrounded by Thieves*, and we became label-mates and toured together in 2004. I hit it off with those guys right away. Aside from really being into them musically, I was in full party mode at the time. We got along famously, and I think I ended up riding in the High on Fire van more than I rode in the Zeke van. We kept in touch after, and when their bassist [Joe Preston] left a couple years

later, I joined the band.

High on Fire are a brutal-sounding three-piece live. The intensity doesn't even let up during the guitar solos.

Do you run any samples onstage?

PIKE: No, no, no. It's all me. Of course, you've gotta have a good sound man. And Jeff helps out a lot because he plays bass and rhythm guitar at the same time, basically. I just fill everything in. I'm multitasking. I guess that makes me schizo.

Matt, there are many images of you playing a Gibson SG bare-chested. Was the SG a part of your early arsenal, and how does your gear differ today from back then?

PIKE: When we started out, I worked at a vintage amp shop in San Francisco called Black Market Music. My friend Chris owned it, and I could take whatever I wanted from there and use it in the band. If I didn't want to buy it, I could return it. So I did a lot of experimenting. At first, I got a bunch of Orange amps, and I messed around with Hiwatts and Laney's. I tried different models of amps from different decades. The vintage Orange stuff was really good for a fuzzy tone that sounded a little sloppy. When I got into more metal stuff, I had to make it tighter, but I also wanted a very gnarly chainsaw tone. With every album, the tones got better and the recordings got better. Now I play Soldanos, and I re-amp everything because that way, every time you're recording, you can use whatever kind of amp you want to play the recording through. But it's really weird when you re-amp because you can hear yourself playing in the other room, but you're not *really* playing. And these days with all the technology they've got, you can do almost anything.

When did you start playing SGs?

PIKE: I used an SG in Sleep for some live shows, but it wasn't really my thing until later when I had so many Les Pauls that I just decided I needed something different. I went back to the SG, and I was like, "Wow, this is much lighter and saves my neck from carrying 30 extra pounds of wood onstage." I'm a strong dude, but it's a little smaller scale and the neck's a little thinner.

Last November, Woodrite Guitars

released your signature Warlord, a triple humbucker beast that has a similar design to an SG.

PIKE: Yeah, it's such a great guitar for what I'm doing. My roommate Jordan and I came up with the inlay design. We're doing another model this year, and they're putting my pickups from Lace in the latest version. They're so strong you gotta put 500k to 1M (ohm) pots in there. And they're going to be available for a pretty reasonable price. I just gotta get the prototype and do any tweaks to it and send it back. If they get it right the first time, we should be able to start selling the new Matt Pike Warlord by the end of the year.

Jeff, What gear did you use to write and record *Cometh the Storm*?

MATZ: Mainly my 1989 silver Les Paul Custom. For tracking, I used a Soldano Hot Rod 100, which has got a really awesome dirty channel. Sometimes I hit the front end of it with a booster, usually an EarthQuaker Devices Plumes Overdrive. And I played around with Gorilla Glasses, which is a pre-amp pedal from [God City Instruments], which [producer] Kurt Ballou had.

Your original drummer, Des Kensel, left the band in 2019 and you replaced him with Coady Willis. How has that affected your sound?

MATZ: We had a couple of friends filling in after Des left, but when Coady joined in 2021 we hit a new stride. The drums are such an integral part of the band's sound and Coady was at the top of our list. He really does justice to these songs and does his own thing to them. The shoes that Des left are big ones to fill, but Coady understands the band and our vibe. And he's so creative and easy to work with.

How has your methodology changed during the 25-plus years of High on Fire?

PIKE: When you're young, it's hard to work together with other people. I usually didn't get along well with other guitar players back then. I do now. When you get older, you get wiser. It's all about knowledge versus wisdom. Knowledge is like things you can read, and you can forget knowledge. Wisdom is when you read stuff and you take that knowledge and apply it to make changes in your life. If anything, I've gotten wiser — not smarter — but I've gotten more reasonable. I used to be more controlling. I always knew I was good at what I did, but now I realize that other people are good, too, and working with them and combining ideas to get better music is more important than trying to dictate everything myself. **GW**

SAVING

Savatage

In 1994, following the death of Criss Oliva, their brilliant young guitarist, reeling Tampa metallers Savatage enlisted then-ex-Testament man **ALEX SKOLNICK** for an album and tour.

Although his time with the band was brief, it would have a lasting impact...

STORY BY CLAY MARSHALL PHOTO BY STEPHANIE CABRAL

INTHE SPRING of 1990, Bay Area thrashers Testament — considered by many metal fans to be the leading contender if the “Big 4” were to ever expand by one — spent seven weeks touring across America in support of their recently released third studio album, *Practice What You Preach*. The trek also featured another band who were on the rise at the time — the Tampa, Florida-based Savatage, whose lead guitarist, Criss Oliva, turned 27 on the tour’s 12th stop.

Oliva’s counterpart in Testament was former Joe Satriani student Alex Skolnick, who joined the group — then

called Legacy — in 1984 at the tender age of 16. Despite his youth, Skolnick had achieved international recognition in the metal guitar community for his blistering solos on his band’s first three albums, records for which he co-wrote the majority of the music and even a handful of lyrics.

In 1992, however, Skolnick decided to leave Testament. “I felt like I wanted new experiences, musically and personally, and I just felt limited at the time,” he says, noting that he was only 23 when he gave notice. (He would rejoin in 2005.) “I wasn’t able to be in the band without feeling those limitations.”

Savatage in Modesto,
California, October 1994
[clockwise from left]:
Zachary Stevens, Jeff Plate,
Johnny Lee Middleton
and Alex Skolnick



Approximately one year later, Skolnick — who remained active in the Bay Area music scene after separating from Testament — was in the crowd at a local concert, where he struck up a conversation with an industry acquaintance. Oliva, he was told, had been killed by a drunk driver. “It was much like when I heard about the passing of [*Metallica* bassist] Cliff Burton — just word-of-mouth, and musicians were talking about it,” Skolnick says. “I was kind of in shock — like, ‘Wow, oh my God.’ It was just unthinkable.”

Prior to touring together, Skolnick had admired Savatage from afar, even trading tapes of the band’s early recordings as a high schooler before joining Testament. He cites the title track of the group’s 1983 debut, *Sirens*, as particularly notable in his development as a player.

“I had started getting into the jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery, who used octaves,” he says. “I’d heard about him from Joe Satriani, and I realized, ‘This is somebody you should listen to.’ Then I heard a few examples of octaves in metal, and I think the first one was ‘Breaking the Chains’ by Dokken. It was very well-played but very commercial. Then when I heard Savatage, I realized, ‘Oh, you can actually do that and make it dark and heavy.’ It was definitely ‘Sirens’ that led to that inspiration.”

As he watched Savatage perform in 1990, Skolnick learned that Oliva had even more to offer. “The playing on ‘Sirens’ was great,” he says, “but when I saw them live when we were touring together, Criss was just burning all over the fretboard and had broken through any barriers that might have been there on ‘Sirens.’ He’d grown by leaps and bounds as a player, as touring and dedication will do.”

Skolnick says that Testament and Savatage got along famously during the Practice What You Preach tour, and the band’s two lead guitarists were no exception (“I remember us tossing the guitar around one time,” Skolnick says). In a time before email, cell phones and social media, though, it was much easier to lose touch, and Skolnick doesn’t recall crossing paths with Oliva again after the tour concluded.

He was therefore surprised to receive a phone call in early 1994 from Oliva’s brother Jon, Savatage’s original vocalist. (While he’d officially left the band two years prior, Jon remained a key figure in the Savatage ecosystem.) Soon after Criss’s passing, Jon and his primary songwriting partner, Paul O’Neill, composed a tribute song for the late guitarist, which they initially planned to release as Savatage’s final recording. O’Neill subsequently encour-

“I had started getting into the jazz guitarist **WES MONTGOMERY**, who used octaves. I’d heard about him from Joe Satriani, and I realized, ‘This is somebody you should listen to’”



aged Jon to continue writing as a means of navigating the grieving process, and soon enough, the pair had a full album’s worth of material on their hands. What they didn’t have, however, was a guitarist.

Skolnick initially said he was flattered to be asked to contribute, but that he was not ready to commit to another band after what he described as a “brutal separation” from Testament. “We had an explosion like you see on all those *Behind the Music* documentaries,” he says. “It’s almost like your marriage splits up, and suddenly the girl from high school that you’ve always liked and probably would have connected with instantly under other circumstances comes around, but you’re just not ready for another relationship. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to jump into that band; it’s that I didn’t want to jump into *any* band. If Dave Mustaine called me the same week, it would have been the same thing.”

Jon proceeded to say that his brother admired Skolnick’s playing and that no long-term commitment was required, as Savatage’s future was anything but cer-

tain. “If they were just asking around, ‘Hey, we need a fill-in player’ or ‘We need a guy fast,’ then my thought was, ‘I’m terribly, terribly sorry for what happened, but there’s plenty of guitar players around,’” Skolnick says. “But when Jon reached out, I realized it really did mean something to them and to him.”

Skolnick subsequently agreed to play lead guitar on the Savatage record that would ultimately be released in late 1994 under the title *Handful of Rain*. It was tracked at the legendary Morrisound Recording studio in Tampa, where many of death metal’s landmark albums were put to tape.

“I didn’t even realize until years later that, ‘Oh, yeah — this is the studio where all that is happening,’” Skolnick says. “I did meet a bunch of key players at that time, though. I remember the band Cynic came in just to pick up a rough mix or something. The current bassist of Testament, Steve Di Giorgio, was commuting to Florida at the time, and he was a big part of the Florida death metal scene; essential albums by Death, for example.”

Surprisingly, Skolnick says the vibe at Morrisound wasn’t at all morose as *Handful of Rain* was being recorded. And while many would likely wilt under the pressure of stepping into someone else’s shoes as his surviving brother watched on, Skolnick performed his role admirably, even though he was just 25 at the time. “I felt mostly good about it, just because Jon and Paul made me feel good about it,” he says. “If you know Jon and Paul, it’s impossible not to have moments of levity and jest. That’s just their nature — a lot of funny stories and jokes, even when talking about Criss.”

Musically, *Handful of Rain*, which saw Savatage continue to explore theatrical, symphonic hard rock, marked a departure from the blazing thrash on which Skolnick had built his reputation. “It felt like a wide-open road,” he says. “There were a lot of the types of parts that I’d been lobbying for with some of my Testament solos — I guess what we’d call modal chord progressions, and not just riffs that sounded great and heavy for vocals, but harmonically were really tough for guitar, unless you just kind of wail over it. I’m a big fan of melody, and I heard a lot of opportunities to do melody with these modal chord progressions and chords that were held instead of chugging the whole time. It was refreshing, because I was used to playing songs that were so fast in tempo, and it was a nice change to work with tempos that I associated more with rock ‘n’ roll like Deep Purple and Ozzy and Dio. It really gave me a chance to play some



[from left] Steve "Doc" Wacholz (original Savatage drummer who left the band in 1994 but who was credited/pictured on *Handful of Rain* nonetheless), Johnny Lee Middleton, Zachary Stevens and Alex Skolnick

more expressive stuff."

Many songs on *Handful of Rain* also prominently featured keyboards, which was "exciting" to Skolnick. "Keep in mind, all I had done professionally at that point was the two-guitar/bass/drums/vocal format. I hadn't played with keyboards at all," he says. "With Savatage, there was very cool keyboard and piano stuff. A lot of us [*in metal*], we're sort of trained not to like keyboards. I totally appreciate [*Van Halen's*] 'Jump' as a song now, but when it came out, I was ready to riot. But a few years later, I'd grown so much as a musician, and I was listening to a lot of fusion and jazz pianists and keyboardists. Hearing the stuff that those guys were working on, with piano, I was really digging it."

At the time *Handful of Rain* was recorded, Skolnick was endorsed by Ibanez, and he recalls using a Ghost rider during the album's sessions. "It was a really cool guitar," he says. "The shape was a little closer to a Telecaster, and it sounded good. There was also a purple Ibanez, but I don't

remember if it was a Satriani model or if it was just similar, sort of a stock model that the Satriani one was based on."

Another guitar would feature prominently on the album as well — Oliva's "Gargoyle," an ESP Mirage that featured a custom paint job by Gary Smith, a Tampa artist who was responsible for Savatage's best-known album covers. (See sidebar.) "That guitar just had the magic," Skolnick says. "It had a presence that was just so identified with Savatage, and it was hard not to feel Criss's presence and the weight of the whole thing once that guitar was taken out of the case and set on a stand."

In 1994, hard rock and heavy metal were in something of an existential crisis. Virtuosity was out; grunge was in. Skolnick remembers the time well. "The biggest thing in radio at that point is still Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, Jane's Addiction," he says. "I liked a lot of that music, but the industry was very strange; suddenly, it became much more difficult if you weren't [*playing*] that type of music. There was just

a sense that groups like Savatage, and even Testament to a certain extent, all got kind of lumped in with what was being rebelled against, which really had nothing to do with what any of our bands were doing."

Much like *Handful of Rain* made little effort to mimic the popular guitar rock of the era, Skolnick opted for originality when composing his solos for the album, especially on songs like the progressive rock-influenced "Chance" and the bluesy "Stare into the Sun." He says he wasn't concerned about alienating Testament fans who came along for the ride. "I learned this lesson more and more later, but the less I cared about getting anyone's approval, the better it was," he says. "I knew some people weren't going to get it, but it was not my responsibility for them to like it; it was my responsibility to do my best, to do a good job and to make it as good as possible for Savatage."

That same mentality prevailed when Skolnick agreed to embark on a short tour in support of *Handful of Rain* in late 1994,



Criss Oliva with his ESP Mirage, aka the Gargoyle

CONVERSATION PIECE

ALEX SKOLNICK remembers the late Criss Oliva's favorite guitar, a custom ESP MIRAGE known as "the Gargoyle"

By Clay Marshall

THE TITLE TRACK of Savatage's 1993 album, *Edge of Thorns*, is a tale of deception. Its lyrics — written by the band's late producer, Paul O'Neill — see the protagonist reflecting on a past flame and trying to convince himself that he's moved on ("But I don't think about you anymore," the chorus' final line states in faux defiance), while the truth is anything but.

Fittingly, the song's music video — filmed in the swamps of Florida — is similarly deceptive, at least regarding the instrument used by the band's late guitarist, Criss Oliva. On the surface, it appears to be a Jackson, the brand that endorsed Savatage for many years; in reality, it's a custom ESP Mirage featuring an airbrushed headstock that helped keep Oliva in good graces with his primary guitar supplier.

The body of the guitar — which featured a bolt-on maple neck and Bartolini pickups at the neck (single-coil) and

which saw Savatage traverse America for four weeks before performing four shows in Japan. (The final show of the tour was recorded for a live album, *Japan Live '94*, which was recently released on vinyl for the first time in conjunction with its pearl anniversary.)

The tour saw Skolnick perform material from not only *Handful of Rain*, but also Savatage classics such as "Hall of the Mountain King," "Edge of Thorns" and "Sirens." "I definitely heard some criticism that I didn't play the parts enough like Criss, but I didn't want to just go in there and try to be a clone of him," he says. "I understand that's what some fans expect, and I totally understand that with the riffs and the melodies — the main parts of the songs — but part of who I am is that I'm an improviser. Even with Testament, I sneak in improvisations. It's not always obvious because I play the landmark parts of the solos, but I like to sneak things in. Obviously, I meant no disrespect by changing anything around, but I did have my own identity as a player."

Skolnick also drew inspiration from his experience touring alongside Oliva four years prior. "I saw the band a bunch of times, and I knew some of the early Savatage work, and Criss didn't play it exactly like it was [*on the record*]," he says. "He was stretching out quite a bit. I remember 'Sirens' having all these fills that weren't there before, and the solo was different than he had done originally. Maybe it had some of the [*same*] hooks, but I just thought I was approaching it like he would approach it."

On the U.S. dates of the tour, Skolnick performed double-duty, as he also played with openers Exhibit-A, a band he launched soon after leaving Testament. Thirty years later, Skolnick describes the group — which might be best described as alternative metal — as "directionless."

"I was really in a period of experimentation," he says. "I was so young, and I had no experience leading a band. I wanted to do my own thing, but I didn't feel quite ready to do my thing. I learned not to plan too much, but to go with something when there's momentum and when a project or a circumstance just happens naturally. You can nurture that and go with it, but you can't try to force things to happen."

By the time the tour reached Japan, Skolnick says he'd developed a strong bond with Jon, who toured with Savatage as a rhythm guitarist and keyboardist, and who introduced Skolnick to several Deep Purple records with which he was unfamiliar. While it seemed unlikely a few months prior that Savatage would be able to continue after Criss's passing, the positive over-

Zachary Stevens [left] and Alex Skolnick in action with Savatage in Modesto, California, October 1994



"I definitely heard some criticism that I didn't play the parts enough like **CRISS OLIVA**, but I didn't want to just go in there and try to be a clone of him"

seas reception to *Handful of Rain* led to talk about the future, and Skolnick found himself reconsidering his "no commitments" mindset.

"I felt like we were planting seeds to work on the next record together, and I was definitely open to see where things went," he says. "I knew whatever I was involved with next, I wanted more creative input than I had with Testament. Even though it was great to play the solos with Savatage, and the band was terrific, I still felt like I wanted to at least contribute to the



NIGHT CASTLE MANAGEMENT/EARMUSIC (LEFT) STEPHANIE CABRAL (ABOVE)

songwriting. I contributed to some of the best-known Testament songs, and I was a major writer on many of them. Obviously, I wouldn't try to do the same type of parts [with Savatage] — I recognized it was different — but I could imagine being part of the writing team and writing a new Savatage record, giving it more edge, making it work for the Nineties [with] some of that Seventies Deep Purple influence.”

A few weeks after returning from Japan, though, Skolnick received a call from O'Neill, Savatage's longtime producer and primary lyricist. “Paul told me that he and Jon got inspired and wrote the whole [next] record,” Skolnick says. “There was poetry involved, and Paul's reading it to me over the phone, and I can't get a word in edgewise. [Laughs] I just knew right then, 'OK, this isn't what I'm going to do right now.' I thought I made it clear that I needed to at least have the creative voice I had in Testament, and hopefully a little more — but as Paul was reading me the poetry, I knew, 'If I do this, it's not going to be the creative situation I want.'”

The album O'Neill described to Skolnick, the 1995 rock opera *Dead Winter Dead*, would prove to be the most important release of Savatage's career. It included a holiday-themed instrumental, “Christmas Eve (Sarajevo 12/24),” that would ultimately become a gigantic hit the following year when it was re-released by a sis-

ter group founded by O'Neill and Jon Oliva called Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Still, *Dead Winter Dead*, which featured the guitar team of Al Pitrelli and Chris Caffery, who would both go on to play key roles with TSO, might never have gotten off the ground without the foundation laid by Skolnick, whose contributions to Savatage in the studio and on tour helped to stabilize a band that was reeling.

Ironically, even though he passed up the opportunity to play on the studio recording of “Christmas Eve (Sarajevo 12/24),” Skolnick would end up performing the song several hundred times between 2000 and 2009, when he served as lead guitarist for TSO's “east” troupe during their annual winter tour. “It ended up becoming a major part of my life,” Skolnick says. “I'd been defined by Testament, and if I'd stayed with Savatage, I would have been defined by Savatage; but with TSO, it was something I could step into and step out of, and I did for a long time.”

In a way, TSO even aided Skolnick's eventual return to Testament. “Playing for TSO, you become an arena musician, and you learn how to play for the back rafters,” he says. “Paul was really a motivational coach when it comes to performing, and I'd never had that before. I might have had a little bit of resistance to it at first — ‘What do I need to do this crazy performance stuff for?’ — but then I did it, and I think it helped the music be heard. My guitar parts seemed to be noticed more, because I was performing better. When you're doing TSO, you're sharing the stage with video screens, attractive female singers that are doing this dance, fire that's coming out of nowhere. So much stuff is happening, you can't phone it in; you have to give it your all. After a number of years of that, when I came back to Testament, I think they were shocked because my performance skills and confidence were so much higher.”

While Savatage remains on indefinite hiatus today, some of the songs Skolnick recorded with the band live on with TSO, which continues to incorporate Savatage material into its repertoire. The title track from *Handful of Rain* was performed during the group's tours in 2012, 2014 and 2019, and “Chance” has been played live dozens of times as well.

Although Skolnick never had the opportunity to perform either song with TSO, he says he was “psyched” when the group started playing them. “It was great to see those songs done live, and they did them really well,” he says. “Al's a fantastic player, and I liked how he approached them. I got to hear somebody approach my stuff!” **GW**

bridge (humbucker) positions — was also airbrushed. On it, Gary Smith — who contributed the cover artwork for four Savatage albums between 1987 and 1994, as well as the back cover for a fifth — painted several elements from the cover of 1989's *Gutter Ballet*. A sea of ghostly *Haunted Mansion*-like faces surround the strings and hardware, while at left is a large marble column, atop which sits the instrument's namesake — a gargoyle.

Oliva used the Gargoyles extensively in the studio and on tour until his 1993 death at the hands of a drunk driver. After his passing, the guitar continued to be featured on albums by Savatage (and later, Trans-Siberian Orchestra) as a means of not only honoring Oliva's memory, but also his sound.

“That's one of those guitars that just had the right sound. It had this extra quality that's hard to describe technically”

When Alex Skolnick joined Savatage at Tampa's famed Morrisound Recording to contribute solos to 1994's *Handful of Rain* (the band's first release following Oliva's death), he was given the opportunity to play the Gargoyles. “That's one of those guitars that just had the right sound,” he says. “It had this extra quality that's hard to describe technically — it'd be hard to describe the frequencies — but it sounded very warm and very thick, even though it's not a Les Paul or a ‘classic’ guitar. It's a super-Strat — one of those two-cutaway, post-Van Halen guitars — but it really had this tone that was unmistakable, much like other iconic guitars.”

Skolnick compares the Gargoyles to Billy Gibbons' famed 1959 Les Paul, Pearly Gates. “I've had the pleasure of playing it; I happened to be visiting the Gibson showroom when [Gibbons] was there, and even with the really thin strings he uses, not even plugged in, it's like, ‘OK, there it is — there's that sound.’ The Gargoyles just has its own specific sound that was unmatched by any other instrument.”

Skolnick would like to see the Gargoyles — which was played by Oliva's brother, Jon, when the band toured in support of *Handful of Rain* (the last show of which was recorded for a live album, *Japan Live '94*, that was recently released on vinyl for the first time), and more recently by Chris Caffery when Savatage reunited in 2015 to perform at Germany's Wacken Open Air metal festival — officially cloned to capture its unique sound. “They really should replicate that, because it just has some magic,” Skolnick says.



RENAISSANCE MAN

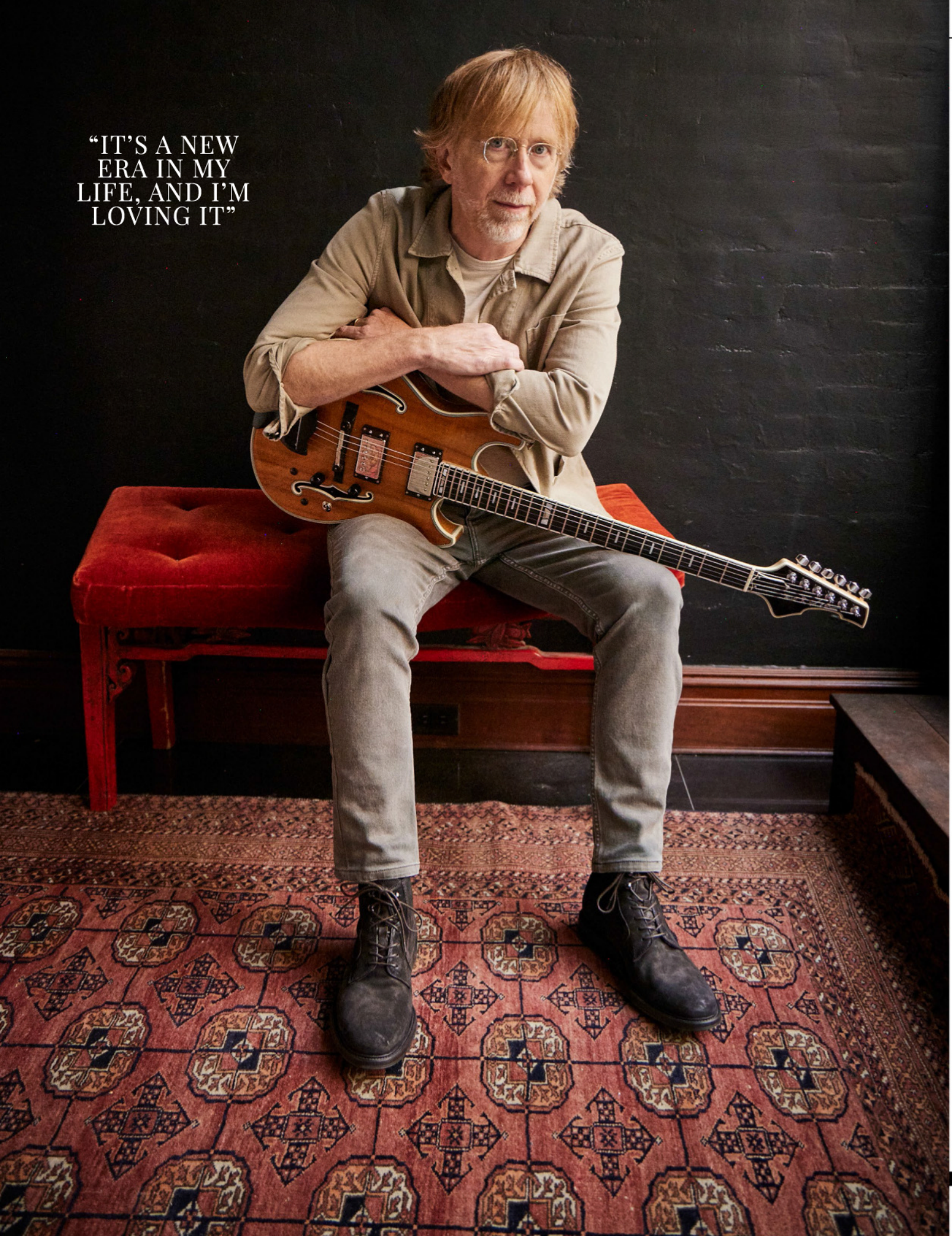
AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 41st YEAR TOGETHER,
PHISH ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAJOR RENAISSANCE
— AND THE BAND IS JUST ONE OF FRONTMAN/GUITARIST
TREY ANASTASIO'S MANY PROJECTS.
IN THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND INTERVIEW, TREY DISCUSSES HIS
MUSICAL REBIRTH, CREATIVE PROCESS, INTENSE PRACTICE
REGIMEN AND SO MUCH MORE

WORDS BY
ALAN PAUL

PHOTOS BY
DANNY CLINCH



"IT'S A NEW
ERA IN MY
LIFE, AND I'M
LOVING IT"



MOST BANDS THAT SURVIVE FOR FOUR

decades enter into a nostalgic phase of their career. But Phish is on fire in year 41. The quartet, which formed in 1983 in Burlington, Vermont, released *Evolve*, their 16th studio album, in July. Their 26-date summer tour includes Mondegreen, a four-day gathering in Dover, Delaware, that is their 11th festival and first since 2015. And they launched the year with a New Year's Eve performance of Gamehenge, a song suite they hadn't played since 1994, and which had taken on almost mythical status amongst fans. The two-hour performance included a cast and a production team that rivaled a Broadway show.

Other highlights of Phish's year include a run at the Sphere in Las Vegas that featured 68 different songs across four nights with each song having original visuals — and their annual Mexican retreat.

"This feels like a renaissance period for Phish," says guitarist/singer/chief songwriter Trey Anastasio. "We don't feel stagnant at all. This is a very vibrant period in our band's life."

As vibrant as Phish is right now, it is hardly Anastasio's sole creative project. He is a man in constant motion, displaying boundless creative enthusiasm and energy. In addition to Phish, he tours regularly with the Trey Anastasio Band (TAB), a hard-charging outfit that includes a horn section. Additionally, New Yorkers have gotten used to Anastasio popping up on stages around the city, sitting in with the likes of Billy Strings, Goose, Tedeschi Trucks Band and even Billy Joel.

At 59, Anastasio says, he "feels like a kid again," secure in his relationship with the three other members of Phish — drummer Jon

Fishman, bassist Mike Gordon and keyboardist Page McConnell — and his 30-year marriage to his wife, Sue, and he's happy that his daughters have launched into adulthood.

"It's a new era in my life, and I'm loving it," Anastasio says over a Zoom call from his New York City apartment, cradling one of his trusty Languedoc guitars.

Anastasio, one of the greatest and most influential guitarists of his generation, was particularly fruitful during the pandemic, when so much of the music world shut down. He recorded and released four very different studio albums: *December* (2020), featuring duet versions of Phish songs recorded with McConnell; *Lonely Trip* (2020), which he calls a "demo album" on which he played all the instruments except some drums laid down by Fishman; the solo acoustic *Mercy* (2022); and *January* (2023), featuring new originals performed with McConnell. Additionally, he put out the live TAB albums *Burn It Down* and *The Beacon Jams*, which was garnered from eight consecutive weekly shows played in an empty Beacon Theatre and broadcast on Twitch.

Phish's Trey Anastasio with one of several custom guitars built by Paul Languedoc. "Paul looks at [Koa 1] and sees mistakes, but I see perfection," Anastasio says

Those free shows raised more than \$1 million in donations to launch the Divided Sky Foundation, a Vermont facility dedicated to helping people recover from addictions, which is now open.

Anastasio's own life was turned around in 2007 after he pled guilty to a reduced felony drug charge after failing a field sobriety test following a traffic

stop in upstate New York. He spent 14 months performing community service and participating in daily meetings in a drug court program, which he has credited with saving his life. Divided Sky, he says, is his way of giving back.

"I've never been part of anything that was so heart-filling, because let's be real — I'm lucky to still be here," he says. "Everything started again at that moment. I got so much help and want to help provide that for others."

You came out of the pandemic like a fireball of creativity. How did that happen?

When I started my sobriety journey in 2007, there was this feeling of reconnecting with everything joyous that you loved as a child. The pandemic was the next chapter in a weird way. Sue and I stayed in New York, and as soon as we were locked down, there was this feeling of joy that's going to be hard for people to understand. I started my music career with a four-track machine in my bedroom. There was this magical moment that happened in the late Seventies, when I was in 10th grade, where the battery-powered four-track machine appeared and you could do a multitrack recording without having to go to a studio. It was the beginning of this new world and I jumped in. That's still the way I like to write. I love songwriting and the simplicity of recording myself. I'm such a dork, but I want you to see my little area. [He gets up and carries his computer into the corner of a room.] Every morning, I have my coffee and sit down here and write and it's like going to heaven. I have a little keyboard, a little headphone, an acoustic guitar and something on my phone that's the equivalent of a four-track machine.



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GUITAR WORLD

COVER MODELS

guitarist: **Trey Anastasio**

KOA-DEPENDENT

TREY ANASTASIO —
while revisiting his two
prior *GW* covers — details his
relationship with his custom
PAUL LANGUEDOC GUITARS

1. OCTOBER 2004
Guitar World (page 58)
Guitar:
Koa 2, a custom Languedoc guitar
Cover photographer:
Nicholas Burnham

2. JANUARY 2016
Guitar World (page 59)
Guitar:
Once again, Koa 2, a custom Languedoc guitar
Cover photographer:
Jimmy Hubbard

WELCOME TO A special Trey Anastasio edition of Cover Models. For those who don't know, Cover Models is a recurring feature in the Tune-Ups section (see page 30) where we ask *Guitar World* cover stars to tell us about the guitars they're holding in their classic cover photos. (Continued on page 59...)

So why did I write so many songs during Covid? Because the road shut down, and suddenly I was home with the cat and Sue. My kids are grown up now, so I'm at a different stage and it felt like being given permission to do what I truly love, which is being creative. I started taping the camera to the wall and making all those videos; everything was with these great limitations. If I needed something, I got it. Like, I bought a bass on Amazon because I wanted it on those Covid albums, *Lonely Trip* and *Mercy*.

So the isolation allowed you to re-set?

Yeah. I know in different places in the country the lockdown wasn't so big, but here in Manhattan, we never left. I just dug in and wrote so many songs, and a bunch of them are on this album. Three songs from *Lonely Trip*, which I call the demo album, are on *Evolve* — "A Wave of

Hope," "Evolve" and "Lonely Trip" — along with two from the acoustic album, *Mercy*. They've all developed so much. It's not that different from how I've always done things, except I released the demos in real time because of the pandemic, because you couldn't do anything else. The album *Trampled by Lambs and Pecked by the Dove* is a collection of four-track demos that Tom [Marshall, songwriting partner] and I made, which ended up being the first big round of Phish songs, like "Twist," "Limb by Limb" and "Water in the Sky," but people heard those demos after they knew the fully formed songs. This was the equivalent of releasing that in real time.

The path that some of these songs took to be on a Phish album is a little different from the past, right? For instance, "Hey Stranger" started on *Mercy*, then you started playing it with TAB, and then it was a Phish song.

It's not that different, but people didn't hear the demos like they heard these, and there's nothing that unusual about songs crossing bands. "Bug," "Sand," "First Tube" and "Everything's Right" were all TAB songs. A good song can move around. Quincy Jones really hits the nail on the head in this documentary where they ask him what he learned being the greatest arranger and producer in music for 50 years, and he says the main

“YOU’RE REALLY ONTO AN INTERESTING SUBJECT — AT LEAST TO MY GEEK BRAIN!”



thing is that you can’t polish a turd. It’s either a good song or it isn’t. And the way for me to find that out is to play it in a lot of different contexts. I’ve now done six or seven acoustic tours and have found out that a good song will work solo; if you can’t play it on a stool with an acoustic guitar, it’s probably not good. Like Quincy said, the greatest arranger in the world can’t make a bad song good, and the worst arranger can’t mess up “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” For me, it has to pass the alone-on-a-stool test.

But some of your most beloved songs are the product of collaboration. I’m thinking of “Reba,” which is based around parts you and Page play together.

Except that it started 100 percent on the guitar! I have a demo of it. The entire form of “Reba” was demoed on the guitar. Same with “Harry Hood,” which was an acoustic song I



played on the beach start to finish, including all the time changes. Online, you can find the acoustic demo of “Time Turns Elastic,” which is a 28-minute orchestral piece. It didn’t become that until I sketched the whole thing out. When I was 18, my composition teacher taught me that all the composers started off by writing piano pieces, then orchestrated out. That’s where I got that concept — studying greats like [Maurice] Ravel. Here’s a good example: Before “It’s Ice” ever existed as a Phish song, it was a solo acoustic song. I walked around my hotel room every morning for two years writing the song until I could play it from start to finish. Then I taught it to everyone at band practice. You’re really onto an interesting subject — at least to my geek brain! But this is *Guitar World*, and I think it might be of interest to other guitar players. Do you agree?

Yes — it’s something we all struggle with. Keep going.

I write a song on acoustic, then I do four-track demos playing everything and figuring out the form. Then I write the lyrics down in my notes and go over them again and again. I edit freely until I have it exactly where I want it. Then I teach people the songs. For these new ones, I booked a round of shows at the Mission Ballroom in Denver with one person from TAB [bassist Dezron Douglas] and one person from Phish [Fishman], and we played all these potential songs as a trio. We did 25 songs, which was my attempt to put them through the birth canal and see what they sounded like in front of people. Playing with one member of TAB and one member of Phish was a conscious choice. There wasn’t a band attached to this. Then I asked our manager to look online and see what fans liked and what they said about the songs that resonated. I then played them on both a TAB tour and on the summer Phish tour. Then we played them in Mexico in 2023. When I got home, I did the most important part of all; I tossed all the band versions in the garbage and recorded solo acoustic versions of every single song that’s on *Evolve*.

Did you have a vision of this entire process right from the start?

Yes! Because I’ve been developing a system for 40 years, and before the *Evolve* album, I said, “This time I’m not skipping any steps.” So step number one is home record-



Although you’re holding your main Paul Languedoc guitar (Koa 1) during this interview, you’re actually holding Koa 2 on your two previous GW covers. How did the whole Languedoc connection come about?

I met my friend Paul Languedoc in about 1983. He was a Burlington [Vermont] luthier who worked at Time Guitars and became my roommate and our first crew member — and for a long time, the only crew member. He was our sound man, but so much more. He had already made me a couple of guitars at Time — a solidbody and a miniature guitar that I traveled with. It was a six-string guitar that was so small I could put it in my backpack. I wrote a lot of early songs on that, including “You Enjoy Myself.”

Paul, who is a genius, said, “I’m gonna build you a guitar. What do you want?” At the time I was listening to a lot of jazz. I was really into Django Reinhardt, Pat Metheny and Wes Montgomery, which you can hear in the writing. I was trying to access the harmonic language of jazz, but I also loved Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin. So I asked him if I could have a guitar that does it all — which everybody always wants! His suggestion was a hollowbody with a Strat-scale length, long enough to twang. He came up with this shape and made me the first one. That prototype was the blonde “Mar Mar” guitar, so named because I put [an image of] our dog — who used to travel with us — on [the headstock]. We have to give Paul credit where credit is due; he designed this unique-sounding guitar, and I started writing music that fit to the sound.

What's an example of that?

The best example I can think of is "The Squirming Coil." The music in the middle section is some of my favorite composed music I've ever done. That guitar really had a midrange-y quality, because as a young guitar player two of my favorite guitarists were Robert Fripp in his Bowie era and the killer Queen, Brian May, who is still the greatest midrange guitarist ever. This guitar allowed me to access that "wooooo" tone, because it was a hollow body with long scaling. I started using it and writing a lot, so Paul said he wanted to make me one out of koa, and he gave me [Koa 1] in 1996.

It's basically the same guitar, but with...

...Koa, more or less. But while Paul was developing it, he was making changes. We'd practice in his garage while he built guitars next to us, and he started building his own tools and normalizing the guitar. This prototype is not normalized yet, so it has a few weird qualities — like, the neck is really thin, almost like a Strat. He chose to start making the necks more like Les Pauls, and he also moved the rear pickup forward so it would be a little bit kinder to that central position. This one is a lot farther back, next to the bridge. But this is the guitar I carried around with me everywhere and wrote so much central music on. The years 1996–99 were a really crazy time for Phish, with the festivals and everything, and this was glued to my body through that whole period. It was backstage at Big Cypress [a three-day New Year's event at the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation in Florida, 1999 into 2000] in the midst of all these big parties, and I basically slept with it — wake up and start practicing. I played it so much that I wore out the neck. So in 2002 he built me another one, a guitar we call Koa 2. I would play it a while and then go back to Koa 1 because [Koa 1] is like a phantom limb. Paul was frustrated, saying, "The new one is better. I made a lot of mistakes on 1 that I fixed."

The craftsmanship on the newer ones is insane. He started using hardwood binding, for instance. They're amazing guitars — works of art. Then he built me the "Ocelot" guitar [Koa 3], which is astounding. I love it, but I'd play it for a while then pick up the '96 guitar again. [Laughs] We had a little head-butt about it, because Paul would say, "It's not as good!" And I'm like, "Yeah, I know what you mean, but..."

**"I HAVE A
PRETTY GOOD
PRACTICE
ROUTINE NOW,
AND I'VE JUST
FOUND THE JOY
IN IT ALL"**



ing. [Holds up his phone and shows a series of recordings.] Then I go to a space with a bunch of instruments with Ben Collette, our engineer, and re-record all the songs with me playing everything in rudimentary form — Rhodes, bass, whatever. I call those four-track versions. My phone has tons of these.

Then I teach the band and play a run, and the ones that rise to the top get played with both TAB and Phish. Now you're at the Quincy Jones point. Then I strip it back down to acoustic; I did the whole *Evolve* as a fully realized acoustic album. This is the step that most people skip, but when you play it solo acoustic, the warts reveal themselves. Like, it's not really in the right key; I need to slide that capo up so I can sing it better and then it can all change!

Now this gets exciting... Hold on. Just give me two seconds.

[Anastasio walks away, then returns with his Languedoc "Koa 1" guitar.]

Alright, check this out. There can be magic to the key you write in, but when I go to solo acoustic, I often find it's not the perfect place for my voice. I wrote "Oblivion" in C $\sharp$, but that key wasn't in the meat part of my voice, and it also doesn't have any open strings or lend itself to sounding great. On the acoustic, I realized it sings better in B, and with a guitar in my hand, I realized B minor has open strings, and this riff got so much more rockin' with them ringing out. [Plays riff] You hear that?

I sure do. In my notes on "Oblivion," I wrote "very riff driven." I was going to ask you if it started with the riff.

You're on it now! If you want to help young songwriters, this is it. I didn't go to the key because of the riff. I went there because I sat on the acoustic guitar and worked on my vocal, which led me to the riff, which changed the arrangement and made the whole song so much better. None of that happens if I don't go down to solo acoustic.

Several great producers tried to tell me this. The first day I worked with Brendan O'Brien [on 2005's *Shine*], he said, "Here's a stool and an acoustic guitar. You're not allowed into the studio until you can play me 12 songs fully formed in the

right key. I'm not going to dork around until you have songs to work on." Steve Lillywhite told me something similar — and then it's back to Quincy Jones: "It's either a good song or it isn't."

After you've gone through that whole process and you feel great about a song, does the band ever say it isn't working?

No, not really. [Laughs]

Is there ever a disconnect — something you felt really strongly about but the audience didn't seem to connect to?

No. I'm now so enmeshed in the magic that our community has a lot more impact on where this band goes than they think. I find so much joy in writing that I've gotten comfortable accepting that if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. I can't push an agenda. "Let Me Lie" is the big example. I really thought it was gonna be the best Phish song, but it wasn't. I think it's on three different albums, but it didn't get legs, and when one does, you have a visceral, tangible feeling of communication when you play it live. Sometimes I get overruled, which happened on this album with "Valdese," which I kept trying to cut because I don't like long albums, and people kept saying it was their favorite song on the record, so I gave in to that.

Since you're so focused on composition, how do you look back at your Nineties self, guitar-playing wise? Was your approach similar? Because the general impression is that you were more focused on intricate guitar playing back then — and some of that stuff is awfully complex. Do you ever look at some of your old songs and say, "I can't play this!"?

I hope I don't say I can't play it, but there are definitely times where I wonder what the hell I was thinking. But my big secret is that the other thing that happened in this rebirth period is that I started practicing the guitar a lot more again. I have a pretty good practice routine now, and I've just found the joy in it all.

In all playing?

In all music, including practice. I never used to practice singing, but anything you want to be good at requires practice and discipline, including singing. I've been inspired by Jon, who does nothing but practice drums all day long on the road. A couple of tours ago, he reminded me of something I had shown him years ago, where Segovia said, "I practice two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, no more, no less." It's not an insane amount of practice, and I have a real system now, which Jon helped me with because he always knows what to do when he sits down, which is important.

On a good day, I have my technical hand practice, then my music practice. I do my finger exercises to music, usually dub reggae, Fela [Kuti] or King Sunny Adé, because there's space and I try to always be playing music in lieu of a click. I'll do them at the top of the neck and then the bottom. Then I play chords up and down, trying to connect the neck. Even though I'm not in the key that the song is playing, I still do it to music so that I'm jamming with somebody all the time. You've got to let go of the fact that the keys don't always match or

Is it the feel or the sound that makes you feel that way?

Both! If I remember this correctly, I asked him to put a piece of lead in here. We were living together, and I'd just get an idea and say, "Hey man, can you do this?" It had a bone nut and he put a brass one on to make it a little more twangy, less wooden sounding. Then we were doing coil taps, all that. Just trying things. During Covid, he made me Koa 4 [aka "the 4.0 Guitar"] and, my God, it's gorgeous. But while I love them all, my love affair with this guitar has gotten out of hand, and it overwhelms the others. I've never loved an inanimate object the way I love this guitar. I didn't even know it was possible.

I saw a picture of you holding a Strat at Billy Strings' wedding last year, and it looks so strange.

Yes! Billy was playing my guitar and he loved it. Vance Powell, the great engineer and producer we've worked with, told me that recording engineers talk and say that there's only one person who makes this guitar sound right, though people buy them. It's a very unique tone. I'm almost getting scared about my love affair with this guitar, because I'm worried what I would do if something happened to it. This thing is fucking magic. It has all the things I wanted when I talked to Paul back in the day about my dream guitar. He looks at this guitar and sees mistakes, but I see perfection.

That's why it's sitting in your apartment and the other ones are in a studio, rehearsal space or equipment truck.

And it's not the easiest one to play! The newer ones play better. I don't even know what he did, but the new ones are perfect. You can bend strings more easily, they're lighter and don't hurt my neck as much. But I've played so many hours and written so many songs on it that I feel like...

Like it's part of you!

Yes. It's starting to scare me how attached I am to this guitar. If there were a fire and I was running out of the house, it's the only object I would try to save. It would be [his wife] Sue, the cats, the dog and the guitar. Everything else can be replaced.

even embrace the question of how does this key relate to the wrong key I'm playing in? Then I go through the circle of fifths. Then I deal with ninth chords, or a circle of fifths where I walk up basslines in any position. Then I do another 1234. Then I do minor chords, like C minor up and down the neck. And I'm doing Hanon for guitar now, adapted from piano exercises.

This whole thing takes about an hour; I do it before every show now, and it's just liberating. Then, most importantly, I do bends — all kinds, up and down the neck, always with the message that I learned from B.B. King. He said the worst thing that ever happened to guitar players is the electronic tuner because they don't have to bend to pitch anymore. You have to practice bending to pitch, like a singer. I practice bending with my fourth finger, then my third. Then I practice vibrato. If you do all this to music, it's not that disconnected from just having fun. I also do right-hand 1234s and then sometimes a little bit of chicken picking. If I had my way, I would do all this every day 'til I die.

If life intervenes and you don't do that for a day, what happens?

It goes away really fast. After two days I feel terrible. Two days and it's gone. Then you gotta get it back.

Is it really gone, or is it psychological?

I think it's actually physical. Tension emerges. When I'm doing it every day on tour, everything feels so loose, and then you get in one of these jams and it just flows. I need to add the second part of practice I've had longer, it's so simple: just listen to a song and play the melody. Any song. You think that's easy? Try it.

A reader told me that they had spent so much time trying to get "Fly Famous Mockingbird" perfect, only to realize that there were compromises in any position he played it in. He wanted to ask you if it just can't be played at that original BPM.

It can be played at that BPM, though I don't know if I can play it the way I did when I was 25. [Laughs] That was before I had kids and I practiced guitar 10 hours a day. All I ever did was play the guitar. Then you have

kids and it's the greatest thing ever; you're making breakfast, drying tears, walking to school and going to PTA meetings, and suddenly your 11 hours to practice are gone. And when the band starts taking off, you're traveling so much... and all of that is why this is such an exciting period. I can pick up my guitar and play it all day, and it's the best thing ever.

But back to "Fly Famous Mockingbird" and your reader. If you're not in the right position, you're never gonna play it. It starts in second position, and then it slides up. Someday I should really do books about "You Enjoy Myself," "Fluffhead" and "Fly Famous Mockingbird" and show the fingerings. I get asked to do it all the time but I've just been lazy.

But I've really always tried to find the easiest fingering. Joe Pass [see page 100] is the greatest jazz accompanist who ever lived. If you're a guitarist who hasn't listened to his work with Ella Fitzgerald, put this down and put that on right now, because that's it! And his rule was "never play anything hard," that something hard to finger leads to showing off, not playing music. His thing was figuring out what notes of this chord he can drop out so it can be easy and he can just react to something Ella sings.

It's the best advice. He didn't mean, "don't play a complex jazz song"; he meant "play it the easy way" — and there are many ways to play a C9 chord; some of them a child could play. When I was writing all that complex stuff, I was obsessed with Joe Pass and asking if there is an easier way to finger this. But to get back to your actual question: no, I can't play it anymore. [Laughs]

As consistent as you've been with your guitar, you've messed with your amp setup recently. Let's discuss.

I did a deep-dive amp study and I'm very happy with where I am. I played a Mesa Boogie Mark III for many years. This is gonna sound like an oversimplification, and I don't want to start arguments in *Guitar World*, but the original Boogie was a souped-up Fender with an extra channel. It was basically a Fender Princeton custom-built for Carlos Santana, and a lot of people think the Princeton and Deluxes from 1965-67 were the high-water mark of Fender

tone — and then the early Marshalls up to 1972 are the British tone. The Boogie I played was a slight variation away from a Fender, so in the Nineties, I went over to a Fender Deluxe. Starting on this last TAB tour, I'm playing through a Komet [60], which is like a hand-wired 6L6 Fender-y tone, and it sounds gorgeous. And then I'm very blessed to have a Ken Fischer Trainwreck for my lead tone.

Is that the heart of your sound?

Half my tone — the lead tone. I went on a crazy tone journey starting in about 2015. We were going to do this Bowie thing. I love Jimi Hendrix and I love the solo at the end of Kate Bush's "Wuthering Heights," which is the greatest tone. I wanted to try the soaring EL-34, British, Jimi Hendrix tone, which opened up this whole journey that I went on through about 2019. I started using these Komets, made by great guys who learned their craft from Ken Fischer, who built the Trainwrecks. And I got amps from Ken for my band in high school in New Jersey! Around 2019, I got this purple Komet, the same amp Mark Knopfler uses now. It's essentially a really nice Fender.

[Engineer] Vance Powell carries a vintage Princeton to every session, and he did Chris Stapleton, who also uses Princetons. Vance thinks it's the only amp worth owning. Anyone who likes *Layla* knows the power of small amps, because that's what they used. As did Jimmy Page in Led Zeppelin. On stage, he used all that shit, but in the studio he used a Telecaster and Princetons and other small amps. They sound the best.

How did you go about playing without amps on stage at the Sphere?

No one will ever have an amp on stage at the Sphere. They might have dummies, but they're not on. The 52,000-speaker sound system comes down right behind your back. So there's a slap back. That's why anyone who will ever play there will have to have the drums wrapped in plexiglass.

When you played the Sphere, you made the decision to do something different and special and take full advantage of the room. I understand you asked your tech people how many shows you could do where each one will be different. Is that accurate?

One hundred percent accurate.

You didn't think that if you're making all this effort, you should play 10 instead of four?

We could have played 20 if we wanted to keep repeating. We had a lot more content than either of the other two bands that have played there. I think Dead & Co. mixed it up a little, but they were repeating by the second night. They probably have two and a half nights of content and they'll just run it over and over again. U2 had a great one night. It's just the Phish mentality that we didn't want to repeat or have any cut-and-paste content. We wanted to use the thing, not just play another show in a new venue. We wanted it to be an art installation, and the best way to do that was to do the four.

You have an amazing relationship with your fans. Often, when any artist has such a dedicated base, part



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of the tradeoff is that you have to give them what they want. But what your audience wants is for you to keep trying new things.

It’s a give and take, which goes back to how, when and where we started, what Burlington was like in 1983. The drinking age was still 18, which was important not because of drinking, but because there were more bars per capita than anywhere else in the United States, and they all wanted bands. There wasn’t an emphasis on nostalgia and covers as much as on creating interesting and unique original music, which is what drew people through the door. So by 1984, we were playing songs like “You Enjoy Myself” and “Maze.” We were trying to find our place, and the crowd was smart and paying attention. We knew the original OG fans and what their favorite songs were, and it still feels like that. I just played eight brand-new songs over the course of 10 TAB shows, and there was this one dude standing in front of me the whole tour. I talked to him outside one night and thanked him, and when I got on stage I was thinking that I gotta honor this guy. He gave me the confidence to try a couple of new songs, which can still be scary.

It’s always been like that, which leads to the Sphere, where I wrote all this music for the atrium, so there was original music when you walked in the door and different walk-on music every night, Easter eggs that led you to the opening song. And we had special between-set music every night, and every single song had a visual that alludes to the narrative but was never literal. We had conversations about every one of these things, which I believe is honoring your fans’ commitment. Everybody wins, and hopefully it never feels like we’re just here making money, playing our hits repeatedly. Like, the Gamehendge thing was so much work for a solid year, so everybody goes, “Why don’t you just keep doing it after all that?” Because we did it! [Laughs]

I watched the video you put together of the rehearsals and realized that you worked up a Broadway show to do a single performance.

Yes, and a lot of people thought this was insane, certainly those whose

job is watching the books! I'm sure an outside person would wonder why anyone likes this. Well, I looked over and Page was crying because we did that at Nectar's [*the Burlington club that was their early home base*], then a couple more times. It's like, we're still here, we're alive, we love each other and we know who's out there. We know what it means to them, too. Ninety-eight percent of humanity would see this craziness and ask, "What the hell is this shit?" [Laughs] That's what's so great about it! It's a strange band.

And that long game is part of what keeps you so engaged. Are you excited about going back to having a festival this year?

Oh, beyond excited. It's bookends. The last three New Year's things at the Garden were really fun — and building up to Gamehendge and the Sphere. The Mondegreen Festival is the bookend to this time period.

We love doing festivals, and we've been working for months with a really cool team. Our history with festivals is pretty deep, and it draws a straight line back to Bread and Puppets, a group of politically-minded hippies who had moved up to Vermont from New York in the Sixties and Seventies, some of whom have come on to work for us as art directors and other things. They made these giant puppets and they did these gorgeous fests, which inspired our first festivals, where we built in quiet time so that people could meet with their friends and experience the art. Modern festivals have a "more is more" philosophy, with 110 bands and three playing at once, hitting you over the head. We're going to try to bring back a little bit more pacing, and also the Phish weirdness.

Let's talk about Divided Sky, your residential drug treatment facility in Ludlow, Vermont, and what it means to you.

It means so much. I had the idea for a while and the funding organically happened during the Beacon jams. I love those shows for so many reasons, mostly because it was free for people during that whole Covid craziness and it ended up being for a purpose. All these people in the community came forward and talked about their brother or sister or their



"A lot of times, people will keep grinding it out for money, but it'll kill you in the end," Anastasio says

best friend who struggled with addiction, and donated money, and we bought the place. It's a 46-bed facility and we're now open. On my last tour I met with John Curtiss, who started a program in Minnesota called The Retreat and has helped 30,000-plus people get sober. Our clinical director Melanie was my case manager in drug court when I got sober, and everybody who works there is sober.

It's this beautiful spot amidst the leaves, but the final part was the reality check: if you want to do this nice thing and offer it to people, you must raise money. It's a nonprofit, but you have staff, and we've been trying to figure out how to make this work. And John has taken a mentorship position, and he is such a help. I'm going to cry talking about this, but we've assembled an amazing board, and we have a viable program that's working. It's been a joyous experience. It's a lot of work, but the clouds are parting and there's a light shining through. I think it's going to work.

This explosion of creativity you've had all grew out of your sobriety, right?

No question. I've been sober since January 5, 2007, and I'm very lucky in that I haven't had to pick up a drink or drug in that time, and I'm grateful for that. It was the beginning of a long, slow journey. You have to find a different mojo than "I'm going to do a shot of tequila and be the funniest guy at the party." And then realizing that you weren't really the funniest guy at the party except in your own mind. [Laughs] It's also reconnecting with your real self, which got me into all this in the first place.

I'm 59 years old, and I've been with Sue for 35 years. My kids are grown up. I drive a 2010 Volvo. I have the same guitar. So, what's the point of all this? The sheer joy of writing and the birth of a song and then seeing people dancing in the audience and being with my friends on stage. In a weird way that answers all the questions you asked me. Like, why wouldn't you stay in the Sphere and make a whole lot of money? Because it's not as much fun and what's the fucking point? Look at how many musicians we love who are passing away. It doesn't last forever, so what are you going to do with what you have?

Why work for a year on Gamehendge? Because of the moment when Annie Golden [*actress and performer known for the band the Shirts, the Broadway musical Hair and TV shows like Orange Is the New Black*] dropped the

needle on that record. Annie Golden and Tina Weymouth were my high school crushes, the two hottest girls in the game, and on New Year's Eve, there's Annie Golden up there with me. Gamehendge! Then the place goes wild and it's a magical moment. Everybody's laughing and crying and their non-Phish friends are scratching their heads and going "Why would you care about this?" I can't explain why it's magical, but it is.

Just having an unchanged band lineup for 40 years is magical, and the relationships that develop and grow and how well you can know each other. Like you, Trey, I've been married for more than 30 years and I know that when you get to a certain point in that relationship, it provides a terrific sense of security and a freedom to be yourself. I feel like that's what has happened with Phish.

Yes! It's so similar. At a certain point in a marriage, you don't fight anymore, because it's like... we had that fight 10 years ago, so what's the point? It's like that with the band right now. We're really also conscious of what a blessing it is for the four of us to all still be in good health and to like each other after 41 years.

And you had the good sense to realize at what point you needed to take a break in 2004, rather than ride it until it fractured.

That goes back to driving the old car and having the same guitar. Because a lot of times people will keep grinding it out for money, but it'll kill you in the end. And, like, what's the game here? **GW**

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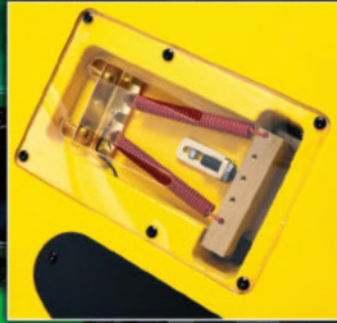
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A LIVE ONE

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO TREY ANASTASIO'S LIVE RIG, COURTESY OF HIS TECH, JUSTIN STABLER BY ALAN PAUL

GUITARS: Custom-made Languedoc Guitars. Anastasio recently replaced the pickups on all his guitars with pickups by ReWind Electric. “These are a custom design, which James Finnerty and I worked on together,” says Justin Stabler, Anastasio’s guitar tech. “It includes Fifties wiring with higher-tolerance pots (550k ohms). [They’re] based around ReWind’s 1958 P.A.F. model coils but with different magnets and further underwinding in the neck position.”

“Trey’s guitars are fully hollow, and acoustically they sound very different from something like a semi-hollow ES-335 or a PRS hollowbody,” Stabler says. “The midrange is more similar to a violin or a cello. It would probably be easier for guitar players to imagine something like the old Airline or Danelectro guitars, in terms of its unplugged sound. It has a beautiful top- and low-end that you’d find in a well-crafted instrument.”

AUDIO CABLES: Evidence Audio. The main instrument cable is the Lyric HG, which is a solid-core wire.

EFFECTS: Pedalboard designed and built by Bob Bradshaw of Custom Audio Electronics. “It includes Trey’s ‘greatest hits,’ with an original Ross Compressor and Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamers with Analog Man mods, Boomerang Phrase Sampler and DigiTech Whammy II,” Stabler says. “The Line 6 M5 Stompbox Modelers carry a lot of weight, covering the crazy synthy sounds, delays, womp-womps or whatever crazy noise Trey can conjure up. There are ‘pre’ and ‘post’ M5 units, which refer to where they sit in the pedalboard signal chain before or after the preamp.” Other pedals include an original Klon Centaur bronze “horsie” overdrive, Custom Audio Electronics/Dunlop MC404 wah, NuX Voodoo Vibe and Way Huge Supa-Puss analog delay. Power supplies are by Mono, with a Cioks AC10 for his sideboard.

AMPS: The pedalboard has three outputs: Amp 1, Amp 2 and Leslie. Amp 1, for lead tones, is an original

Trainwreck Express named “Shinobu” built by Ken Fischer. Amp 2 is a purple Komet 60. NOS tubes are installed in both amps. The Leslie is a G37 rotary guitar combo 100-watt model.

“Since the Sphere [the new Las Vegas venue where Phish played four shows April 18-21, 2024], we have begun using iso cabinets for the speaker cabinets and the Leslie, leading to all the amps and speakers being off-stage,” Stabler says. “To drive the lines from the pedalboard to my world, we use the Undertone Audio GB Tracker to the satellite. These things are absolutely transparent, allowing us to run balanced lines over a long distance to retain tone as well as reduce any outside noise that a long, unbalanced cable would pick up.

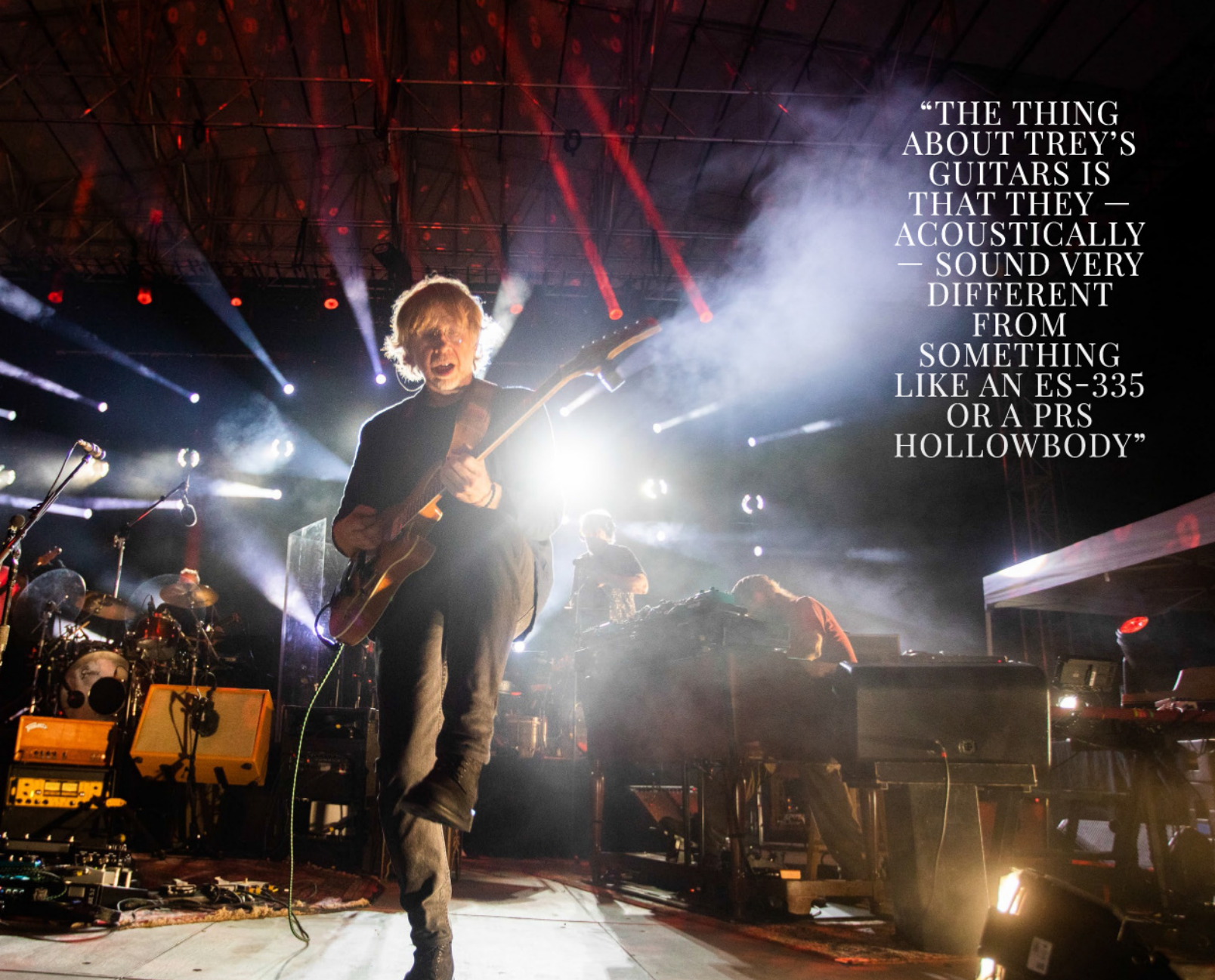
“The speaker cabinets, each a 1x12 open-back with a Celestion G12H-65, straight-grain sitka spruce construction and basket-weave grill cloth, are made by Tony Bruno. After the cabinets we take a split at our microphones (Royer 122 ribbon and Shure Beta 57A dynamic). One side is the direct microphone; the other hits an API preamp that feeds two different reverbs respectively. On the Komet side we go to a Surf Industries Surf Bear Studio spring reverb; the Trainwreck hits a Bricasti Design M7 Stereo Reverb Processor with a plate setting. In the past, both amps hit the Bricasti.”



[main photo] Anastasio — and his live rig — in action at a recent TAB show

[and below that...] Three exclusive views of Anastasio’s rig, courtesy of his tech, Justin Stabler. “Here’s a nice one of the amps; it has our ‘sit-in rack,’ which features most of our big rack stuff — just scaled down,” says Stabler of the middle photo

“THE THING ABOUT TREY’S GUITARS IS THAT THEY — ACOUSTICALLY — SOUND VERY DIFFERENT FROM SOMETHING LIKE AN ES-335 OR A PRS HOLLOWBODY”



PROVIDED/PR (TREY) JUSTIN STABLER (GEAR)

MAN OF ADVENTURE

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE CREATIVE WAYS IN WHICH **TREY ANASTASIO** DRAWS UPON HIS DIVERSE RANGE OF STYLISTIC INFLUENCES TO TAKE AUDIENCES ON A THRILLING MUSICAL RIDE

BY JEFF JACOBSON

IT'S THE EVENING of July 21, 1993, and Phish is navigating an especially energetic version of "Runaway Jim" at the HORDE Festival in Middletown, New York. Guitarist/vocalist Trey Anastasio's masterful, extended solo runs the gamut from quiet meditation to blistering groups of cascading notes, delivered in ways both clever and compelling. But what happens next is perhaps an even greater metaphor for the guitarist's overall approach to music.

The band segues into "Big Ball Jam," an occasional addition to the set where large, colored beach balls are simultaneously batted about by the audience, each color assigned to a different band member. Every time a ball is touched, the corresponding player sounds his instrument. (Luckily, video of this fun spectacle is available on YouTube.) What results is a spontaneous and beautiful musical cacophony that also serves to create a visceral connection between audience and band. In short, it captures a fleeting moment — something at which Anastasio consistently succeeds in his songwriting and improvising.

The guitarist keeps himself quite busy, splitting his time between his Trey Anastasio Band (commonly known as TAB), solo acoustic tours, performing with orchestras and other interesting side projects. But Phish continues to be at the heart of his musical life, as it has been since its inception in 1983, and so, it will be our main focus here.

One lesson couldn't possibly cover the totality of Anastasio's playing, as he draws inspiration from such a wide array of musical styles, from progressive rock and reggae to funk, bluegrass and beyond. In *Between Me and My Mind*, the 2019 documentary focusing on a year of his musical life, the guitarist jokingly admits, in regard to Phish, "I don't know what kind of music this is!" So let's home in on some of Trey's most dynamic approaches to soloing and songwriting, along with some music examples. Here, however, the examples also seek to inspire you to emulate Anastasio in a less literal way by encouraging you to create and develop your own improvised ideas. That might sound a bit scary. But in music, as in life, that usually means we're onto something worthwhile.

Let's begin by staying with the very same 1993 live version of "Runaway Jim," as Anastasio employs a slew



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"FLUFFHEAD,"
FROM PHISH'S
DEBUT, *JUNTA*,
BRINGS
TO MIND
SOME OF
STEVE HOWE'S
STELLAR
ACOUSTIC
WRITING AND
PLAYING

the guitarist's biggest influences, Jerry Garcia and Frank Zappa, would often go on long solo excursions over this type of limited progression, and at times even just over a one-chord vamp or droning bass note. The challenge here is to find unique and interesting ideas to keep both you and your audience interested. As in the previous example, using accents is key, and they're used here to create an unexpected grouping of notes. Instead of playing eighth-note triplets "normally," as groups of three notes, here they're divided into two-note groupings by adding accents and a down-up-down-up melodic contour. The reiterated high D note on the 1st string functions as a melodic *drone*. This creates a new tension over the same ol' chords, giving Anastasio's solo new life, while also inspiring his bandmates. (More drones to come.)

Anastasio also uses rhythm-based ideas to create drama in his songwriting. **FIGURE 5** brings to mind the chorus of "Free" from Phish's 1996 album *Billy Breathes*. (Note that the instruments are tuned down a half step on the record, but our example is in standard tuning.) Notice how, in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, an unexpected three-bar phrase is created, where ones spanning two or four bars are more common and expected. To practice what we preached, we've added our own element here by shortening the third bar by one beat, creating a bar of $\frac{3}{4}$, which helps to keep the phrase's momentum rolling into the repeat. The main takeaway here is that the prog rock-inspired elements in Anastasio's songwriting aren't forced; in "Free," the music just feels light and fun, which is part of the guitarist's musical charm.

At its core, Phish is essentially a live band. They have released a plethora of live albums, replete with hours of Anastasio's soaring lead work; you can almost literally drop the needle anywhere and find a gem. One such solo can be found in "Divided Sky" from *Phish: 1/2/2016 Madison Square Garden, New York, NY*. The guitarist digs into his deep stylistic bag and pulls out some fantastic country and jazz-tinged lines. **FIGURE 6** is a longer solo chunk reminiscent of his playing in the closing four minutes of this 16-minute epic. Trey's phrasing often has shades of Garcia, with extended eighth-note major pentatonic-based lines incorporat-

FIG. 6

FIG. 7

ing few bends (you won't find any here). As the guitarist's songs often do, the example navigates chord changes that require moving between keys. The first four bars are in D Mixolydian, followed by D natural minor (D, E, F, G, A, B $\flat$, C) for the B $\flat$ chord, and, finally, D major (D, E, F $\sharp$, G, A, B, C $\sharp$) for the phrase over the A chord, the V ("five") chord of D major.

Anastasio's aforementioned side project, TAB, has had numerous lineups since its inception in 1998; the current version, known as Classic TAB, was formed in 2007. TAB's November 9, 2022, version of "Everything's Right" (video on YouTube) features another element of the guitarist's soloing style, with roots in jazz. **FIGURE 7** is reminiscent of Trey's playing at around 9:00, and this time, there's a healthy dose of bending involved. Over a funky Bm7 vamp, he targets the notes of a minor 7 chord a 5th (two and one half steps) above, which here is F $\sharp$ m7 (F $\sharp$, A, C $\sharp$, E). This provides access to some *extensions* (chord tones above the 7th), relative to the foundational B minor tonal center, namely the 9th (C $\sharp$) and 11th (E). To perform the gradual, almost moaning, bend releases, think of the notated rhythm as just an approximation; allow the bends to release freely, reaching their destination just slightly before the subsequent note is sounded. A chromatic element (playing notes that are out of key) is

introduced in bar 3, as an F $\sharp$ m triad (F $\sharp$, A, C $\sharp$) is approached from a half step and one fret above, with a Gm triad (G, B $\flat$, D), which provides a moment of heightened tension. (Note the suggested fret-hand fingerings beneath the tab.)

"First Tube," from 2019's *TAB at the Fox Theater*, has Anastasio providing another kind of rhythmic tension over a static background. The instrumental's theme (0:45), played over a groove based on the A natural minor scale (A, B, C, D, E, F, G), is pretty straightforward, except for the fact that the guitarist plays it *behind the beat*, meaning just a tad "late," or "lazy." **FIGURE 8** is inspired by this melody; as you play it, imagine you're having a rhythmic tug-of-war with the band, dragging just a hair behind them. Keep in mind, this takes some practice to feel natural.

While you'll most often see Anastasio holding one of his hollow-

body electrics made by former Phish soundman Paul Languedoc, the guitarist is equally adept on acoustic guitar. (His collection contains a few vintage Martins, including an 000-28 model from 1933.) So, let's finish up by taking a look at some of the creative axman's acoustic work, like the main guitar figure in "Fluffhead," from Phish's 1989 debut *Junta*, which brings to mind some of Yes guitarist Steve Howe's stellar acoustic writing and playing. **FIGURE 9** is along the same lines, and here again, simple wins the day, as the same basic open-C chord shape is moved around the neck, allowing for the open G string, nested between the fretted notes, to serve as a drone, creating various tensions in the new chords. Bar 1 begins with this chord form in the 8th position, creating a jangly G chord, which is then moved down two frets in bar 2 to form an Fadd2 (F, G, A, C), with the open G note acting as the added 2nd. The same note lends a similar tension in the last bar, functioning as the added 4th in the Dadd4 chord (D, F#, G, A).

Another example of Anastasio employing a drone, this time with some clever chordal movement, can be found in "Sample in a Jar," from Phish's 1994 release *Hoist*.

FIGURE 10 brings the intro to mind and involves an open A-string drone below a sea of shifting chord forms. Anastasio is clearly aware of triads and their *inversions* (chords where the root is not the bottom note) up the neck, the shapes of which are shown for an A major triad on two sets of strings in **FIGURE 11**. There are just three shapes to learn on each string set (strings 2-4 and 1-3), with the last shape in each bar being identical to the first, only 12 frets and one octave higher. Notice how **FIGURE 10** shifts between the parallel keys of A major and A minor, with a nifty b2 chord (Bb/A) borrowed from the A Phrygian mode (A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G) at the end of bar 2. The overall sound is reminiscent of something Jimmy Page would write, the Led Zeppelin guitarist being another one of Trey's big influences. These shapes are not only helpful in rhythm playing; they can give your soloing new life as well. Take another look at **FIGURE 1** to revisit how Trey constructs the opening pick-up motif around a C triad shape, then try using the shapes in your own solos.

FIG. 8

(Am)

P.M. —

3

P.M. —

FIG. 9

G

let ring

C

Dadd4

C

Dadd4

FIG. 10

A

E/A

C/A

G/A

D/A

Bb/A

let open A string ring

3

F/A

C/A

G/A

A

FIG. 11

A

Anastasio stands on the shoulders of the great guitarists who influenced and inspired him, employing some similar approaches while following his own creative vision and ultimately arriving at his own signature style. We can take inspiration not only from his playing, but from his spirit of adventure, as he takes his long solo flights, not always sure of just where he'll land. **GW**

Jeff Jacobson is a guitarist, songwriter and veteran guitar transcriber. For information on virtual guitar lessons and custom transcriptions, feel free to reach out to Jeff on Instagram (@jeffjacobsonmusic) or visit jeffjacobson.net.

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**DEATH BY AUDIO/
EARTHQUAKER
DEVICES**
Time Shadows II



Blackstar HT Series MK III amps

By Chris Gill

THERE WILL ALWAYS be a time and a place for big, powerful 100-watt amps, but for a vast majority of guitarists today a smaller amp is much more practical for everyday recording, practice and performance applications (in other words pretty much always unless you're playing at the Megadome Super Stadium, and even then most can do just fine by miking a smaller amp through the PA).

For many years now the Blackstar HT Series has offered guitarists a compelling variety of small amps of various sizes that are packed with cool features and a plethora of useful tones. Blackstar's new HT Series MK III amps bring IR-based CabRig speaker simulation to the party to further expand the usefulness of these amps in the recording studio or when running an output to a venue's mixing console.

As before with the MK II versions, the MK

III HT Series consists of a 1-watt head (HT-1RH) and combo (HT-1R), a 5-watt head (HT-5RH) and combo (HT-5R) and a 20-watt head (HT-20RH) and combo (HT-20R). Each combo has a single speaker — an 8-inch speaker for the HT-1R or a 12-inch speaker for the HT-5RH and HT-20H. Blackstar also offers matching 1x12 and 2x12 extension cabinets.

For this review, we looked at the HT-1RH MK III head, HT-5R MK III combo and HT-20RH MK III head.

The 1-watt, 5-watt and 20-watt models each have different tube complements, which gives each version its own distinctive tonal range and character, although there is an overlapping "Blackstar" personality throughout. The HT-1 amps have single ECC83 (12AX7) preamp and ECC82 (12AU7) power amp tubes; the HT-5 amps feature an ECC83 preamp and 12BH7 power amp tube; and the HT-20 amps provide



STREET PRICES:

HT-1RH MK III head, \$429.99;
HT-1R MK III combo \$449.99;
HT-5RH MK III head, \$599.99;
HT-5R MK III combo \$679.00;
HT-20RH MK III head, \$749.99;
HT-20R MK III combo \$799.99

MANUFACTURER:

Blackstar Amplification,
blackstaramps.com

● **PROS:** Great variety of clean and overdrive tones thanks to standard EQ and ISF voice options; two-channel operation; CabRig speaker simulation provides realistic, organic tones when recording direct; channel/voice footswitch is included.

● **CONS:** The back panel jacks on the HT-5 and HT-20 combos face downwards making cable insertion somewhat of a hassle; the LEDs are outrageously bright, which can blind users from seeing controls or settings on a dark stage.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

When you want the sound and versatility of a big amp but don't want to deal with more volume than you need or the hassles of hauling a heavy boat anchor around, Blackstar's new HT Series MK III amps provide a range of useful options for recording, practice and performance applications of musical styles.

a pair of ECC82 preamp and dual EL84 power amp tubes. The lower gain of the ECC82 preamp tubes in the HT-20 may seem unusual considering that the 12AX7 has become almost ubiquitous for this application, but they actually provide more than ample grit and grind that will keep hard rockers more than satisfied.

The tiny HT-1RH head is best suited for recording applications, but it's actually quite impressively loud when paired with a 1x12 or 4x12 cabinet. This micro-size amp is packed with features, including individual clean and overdrive channels, each with two selectable voices that change the tonal character, position of the tone stack, gain and power amp damping characteristics at the flick of a switch. There's also built-in reverb with adjustable level, a three-position CabRig preset select switch, 1/8-inch line in and line out/headphone jacks, USB-C audio out and a footswitch jack for the included controller, for switching channels and voices.

The HT-5R and HT-20RH share virtually identical controls and jacks, with the exception of a master volume control included on the HT-20RH. Front panel controls consist of reverb level, EQ for the overdrive channel (ISF, treble, middle, bass), overdrive volume, overdrive voice switch, overdrive gain, OD select switch, clean tone, clean voice switch

and clean volume, plus a low/high power switch that selects 0.5- or 5-watt output power on the HT-5R or 2- or 20-watt output on the HT-20R. Rear panel jacks include USB-C audio out, 1/4-inch footswitch (channel and voice switching), 1/4-inch effects loop send and return, +4/-10dBv effects loop level switch, 1/8-inch line in, CabRig 1-3 toggle switch, 1/4-inch line out/headphones, XLR balanced CabRig out and two 2x16-/1x8-ohm and one 1x16-ohm speaker outputs.

All three models provide an excellent range of tones from sparkling clean to raunchy hard rock overdrive. The HT-1R's cleans aren't quite as refined as those of its bigger brothers, partially because it delivers surprisingly beefy bass, which players who love more punky and aggressive tones may actually prefer. The HT-1R's distortion is also more over-the-top, but the EQ section is more limited. The HT-5R provides textures from jazzy clean to bluesy crunch on its clean channel, while the overdrive channel provides a wide range of classic rock wallop. Its volume output is somewhat "polite," but that's perfectly fine for players who want to rock out without having the cops show up. The HT-20R is loud enough for small gigs (or bigger gigs with the CabRig connected to a mixer) and it provides a wider range in overall bass and treble, clean headroom and saturation.

[top to bottom]
UE150, UE 350 (with
accessories) and UE250

Ultimate Ears Pro UE 150, UE 250 and UE 350 In-Ear Monitors

By Paul Riario

IT USED TO be that in-ear monitors (IEMs) were something reserved only for superstars. But — in case you haven't caught much live music lately — a rising tide of musicians don't go onstage without them. The only drawbacks have been their astronomical prices and getting custom ear molds to ensure a proper fit.

Ultimate Ears Pro has long established itself for making an impressively wide range of custom IEMs so sophisticated that many pro musicians and weekend warriors have made them their go-to brand. And in case you're wondering, they're fully aware of the obstacles that prevent musicians from taking the plunge toward IEMs, which is why their new affordable line of premium in-ear monitors — the UE 150, UE 250 and UE 350 — feature a universal fit that offers an exceptional trinity of sealed-in comfort, high fidelity and durability.

Tackling a universal fit for all three of these IEM models is no small feat, which is why UE Pro employs their proprietary PerForm Fit (a unique, universal-fit design developed from their experience of gathering well over 175K ear scans) that, according to the company, “minimize ear fatigue and irritation while maximizing sound quality and sound isolation” and ensure a secure, comfortable fit that won't fall out of your ears. All three IEMs come with an assortment of foam and silicone tips in every size (XS, S, M and L). I'd suggest trying on each size to find the appropriate fit for your ear canal and testing the foam and silicone tips. In my experience, foam does a better job of noise isolation and a snugger fit; silicone feels smoother and gives the impression of a better fit.

As you might have guessed, these IEMs feature more drivers as you go up a model, with the UE 150 having a single driver,



the UE 250 with two and the UE 350 with three, and with both the UE 250 and UE 350 including a two-way crossover that further enhances musical detail. All three models look slick; UE Pro's signature triangular ear mold sits flush in your ear and sports cool faceplates in Solid Black (150), Black Galaxy (250) or Black Carbon (350). Finally, these IEMs come in a metal carry case and a 50-inch IPX T2 cable.

Testing out all three in several environments — monitoring music and backing tracks, as a guitar IEM for my amp modeler and blending a separate monitor mix of instruments and vocals at rehearsal — I got a good read of the strengths of each model. Most importantly, these IEMs fit snugly in my ear and never fell out, which is surprisingly great for a universal fit. The UE 150 purportedly boasts an “even and natural sound,” and I agree; it's a serviceable IEM at the most basic level. It's great for musicians who use an IEM in one ear and leave the other out in order to hear natural stage sound. You get exactly the monitor level

you need in a no-frills, flat response. Pop-ping in the UE 250 IEMs significantly ups the sound game with tuned-in detail. The UE 250s have a more enhanced low-end and brighter frequency response, and for a guitar mix and instrument/vocal separation, they were my favorite. I expected the UE 350s to be the best with its trifecta of drivers, and while I won't discount that they're impressive, I honestly didn't hear much difference between them and the 250s. They sound very similar, albeit the 350s do have a sharper clarity and are dynamically refined. I find the UE 350s are better suited for cleaner instruments such as keyboards — or vocalists who need the utmost fidelity in musical separation between the rest of the band. I'll be the first to tell you that using IEMs is an acquired taste, but in the long run, when you're trying to save your hearing and are looking for a better monitoring alternative than stage wedges, IEMs are the future. That said, UE Pro's 150, 250 and 350 IEMs are solid performers to start with here.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICES:

UE 150: \$199;
UE 250: \$299;
UE 350: \$399

MANUFACTURER:

Ultimate Ears Pro,
pro.ultimateears.com

● **PROS:** Universal fit IEMs with affordable pricing; UE Pro's PerForm Fit design provides a comfortable secure fit and great seal; Sound quality and performance move up per model with more drivers and two-way crossover.

● **CONS:** Fit may not be as perfect as getting a custom ear mold.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** For off-the-shelf IEMs with a secure universal fit, the UE Pro 150, 250, and 350 are some of the finest sounding in-ear monitors for those new to IEMs



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$1,499.99

MANUFACTURER:

Fender, [fender.com](https://www.fender.com)

● **PROS:** The combination of '70s pickups, rosewood neck, alder body and hardtail design delivers bold, singing tones; one of only a handful of hardtail models Fender currently offers; very attractive Antigua finish; reasonable price.

● **CONS:** No alternative finish option for players who don't love Antigua finishes.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:**

The Fender 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster offers guitarists everything they love about Seventies Strats with none of the issues they hate and is a great choice for players who prefer hardtail Strats.

Fender 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster

By Chris Gill

▶ **MOST OF THE** nine new Stratocaster models that Fender introduced in commemoration of the Strat's 70th anniversary provide a familiar "tried and true" experience — two-color sunburst, maple neck, synchronized tremolo, etc. However, the 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster stands out for something rather unexpected. It's the only Vintera II model in the lineup; it's the only hardtail; and it's the only model that's unapologetically based on Fender's Seventies designs — oversized headstock, three-bolt Micro-Tilt neck plate, bullet truss rod nut and all.

Of course, the reason why you're probably reading this review is because you can't take your eyes off of this guitar's Antigua finish. The Antigua finish was a bit polarizing when Fender first introduced it in the late Sixties on the semi-hollow Coronado II model, but eventually it won over enough supporters to become an option for all Fender electrics and even a few acoustics during the Seventies.

Original Antigua Strats from the Seventies now fetch premium prices with average starting prices around \$4,000. The new 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster is priced well below that at \$1,499, which is also about in the middle of the price range for Fender's 70th anniversary Strat models.

Typical of the Vintera II series, the Antigua Strat is mostly faithful to the era upon which the model is based. The most notable improvement is the finish itself, which is basically a very tasteful sunburst in shades of gray whereas many of the original Seventies examples have a sort of mustard yellow hue towards the center. That dark-to-light gray motif is echoed in the pickguard, and the pickups, knobs and switch tip are a boldly contrasting black.

The neck is period correct, thanks to its '70s "U" shape profile, 7.25-inch fingerboard radius, 21 Vintage Tall frets and oversize headstock. Original Antigua Strats were available with either a maple or rosewood fretboard, but Fender's decision to go with only rosewood on this version was a wise choice for both visual



The reason you're probably reading this review is because you can't take your eyes off of this guitar's Antigua finish...

and sonic appeal that is also in keeping with its "something different" aesthetic.

The alder body on our example was a comfortable mid-range weight, unlike the heavy "boat anchor" weight of most Seventies examples. The six-saddle vintage-Strat string-through-body hardtail is also made of better, more durable material than the cheap pot metal Fender used during the late Seventies. Pickups are a trio of 70th Anniversary Vintage-Style '70s Single-Coils, and controls consist of master volume, neck/middle tone, bridge tone and a five-position blade pickup selector switch.

This new Antigua model positively oozes

a Seventies vibe in every way other than the overall upgrades in construction, attention to detail and quality. Does the hardtail design's extra mass of wood beneath the bridge and pickups make a difference? It certainly seems that way, although the '70s pickups could also be responsible for the bolder mids and more percussive twang of the bass and treble. The tone is all a true Strat aficionado could ask for, from the instantly recognizable "quack" of the second and fourth dual-pickup settings to the Beck-like throatiness of the bridge pickup with its tone knob backed down. To me, rosewood neck Strats sing a little sweeter and sustain a little longer — that's certainly the case here.

At the end of the day, this is a classic Seventies hardtail Strat, and your decision will probably be based primarily on that and whether you like the Antigua finish or not. If you do, this current version is the most attractive iteration that Fender has offered to date. If you don't, Fender offers another eight 70th anniversary Strats, not to mention a BAJILLION other models, that will certainly satisfy your taste.

THE SPECS



- **BODY:** Alder
- **NECK:** Maple
- **FRETBOARD:** Rosewood
- **NECK PROFILE:** '70s "U"
- **RADIUS:** 7.25-inch
- **SCALE LENGTH:** 25.5-inch
- **FRETS:** 21 vintage tall
- **NUT WIDTH:** 1.65-inch
- **PICKUPS:** Three 70th Anniversary Vintage-Style '70s Single-Coil Strat
- **CONTROLS:** Master volume, neck/middle tone, bridge tone, five-position blade pickup selector
- **BRIDGE:** 6-Saddle Vintage-Style Strat Strings-Through-Body Hardtail
- **NECK:** Fender Vintage "F" Stamped

Buzz Bin

PJD Guitars St. John Standard

By Dave Burrluck

PJD GUITARS WAS founded in 2010 by Leigh Dovey in the historic North Yorkshire city of York in the U.K. Things began to get serious starting in 2017 — and now PJD has a team of six people building around 30 instruments per month. While those numbers aren't going to bother the big boys, the brand's quality and affordability might. Last year, PJD re-jigged their range to start with the new Standard models, which come in five body shapes and kick off, price-wise, at \$1,689.

While many small guitar-makers concentrate on often exotic custom builds, PJD's Standards are pared back in style — but not in quality. Like an increasing number of U.K.-based makers, PJD uses solid obeche for St. John's body, a slightly downsized offset; it's a light and readily available wood that ensures that weight is kept low, around 6 lbs. Along with some pretty standard front and back contouring, the unfussy style extends to the thin satin nitro "open pore" finish that's perfectly applied.

A very big part of the PJD proposition is the excellent neck work. From the start, PJD has used proper Allen key bolts — not screws — to join neck to body, the small heel well-rounded and unobtrusive. All the Standards use a Fender scale length, too, and in classic style the satin-nitro-finished neck is slab-sawn maple with a 10-inch radius maple fingerboard, lightly rolled edges and impeccably installed and mirror-polished Jescar 55090 frets. As of early 2024, each guitar goes through the Plek process, and — thanks to its perfect setup — our St John's playability rivals much higher ticket builds.

The Standard models are all hard-tail (vibrato models are available at the Plus level), and the St. John uses Gotoh's industry-standard thru-strung GTC102 bridge with steel block saddles and 10.5mm spacing; equally simplistic and fit for pur-

pose are the split-post Gotoh SD91 tuners. With its perfectly cut bone nut and a single string tree, tuning stability is superb.

Another recent change is that PJD now wind their own pickups in-house. The St. John uses a zebra-coiled, four-conductor Wadfather humbucker at the bridge (Alnico V, 43AWG coil wire and a DCR of 13.52k ohms), paired with a Parkin's Cream soapbar in the neck position that uses a pair of Alnico IV magnets, 42AWG coil wire with a measured DCR of 741k. There are no tricks in the copper-foil-lined control cavity, the simple circuit using CTS 500k volume and tone controls, a .022μF Mallory capacitor and a Switchcraft three-way toggle pickup selector switch.

It might have an offset outline, but obviously the St. John doesn't aim to replicate the sound of that original Fender classic. Unplugged, there's a pretty pushy acoustic-like resonance that feels more like lightweight Fifties Fender. Plugged in, the "hot vintage" bridge humbucker has plenty of attitude that sends our clean channel into light break-up, while our usually on-the-edge-of-break-up crunch channel is nodding toward juicy saturation. It's a strong-sounding pickup that pulls down the resonant frequency and rounds the highs with a full-fat midrange thickness. To be honest, there are plenty of gigs to be had on just that bridge pickup alone — but adding in the old-style soapbar single coil creates a timeless bouncy jangle. On its own, there's depth and clarity that covers everything from jazz comping to snaky Santana leads, just as a good P-90 should.

But sounds aside, it's the playing experience that punches way above its price. Due to its light weight, it virtually disappears on a strap; the neck's pretty mainstream shallow "C" neck profile is definitely up there with the bigger names and, as we've said, it's very stable and very in-tune. It's custom shop quality at a production-line price. Definitely one to try!



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:
\$1,689 (includes premium gig bag)
MANUFACTURER:
PJD Guitars,
pjdguitars.com

● **PROS:** Crisp, uncluttered design; downsized offset shape; lightweight; superb Plek'd fretwork; big, rock-ready sounds from the bridge humbucker; well-voiced soapbar single coil at neck.

● **CONS:** Might be too austere and simplistic for some tastes and the light finish relics easily.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:**
A fine example of the high quality craft of one of the UK's leading lights. Nothing gets in the way of the playing experience, which is exceptional with sounds to match.

Death By Audio/ EarthQuaker Devices Time Shadows II

By Chris Gill

COLLABORATIONS OR CROSS-OVERS can be a very difficult thing to pull off successfully, but the recent pairing of Death By Audio and EarthQuaker Devices for the development of the Time Shadows pedal is the music industry equivalent of the kung fu-meets-samurai brilliance of *Zatoichi and the One-Armed Swordsman*. Time Shadows II is described as “Subharmonic Multi-Delay Resonator,” but that just scratches the surface of the incredibly complex effects lurking within this diminutive yet powerful stomp box.

In essence, Time Shadows is an advanced multi-effects unit with three very distinctive algorithms or modes. EQD mode (developed by EarthQuaker Devices) is “an envelope-controlled sub-octave filter delay” or “pitch-morphed fuzz delay filter;” DBA mode (contributed by Death By Audio) is a “multi-delay regenerating filter” or “multi-delay filter remorphinator;” and !; mode, a new addition that wasn’t featured on the initial limited-edition version of the pedal, is a “pitch-warping dual delay” created by EQD’s Jamie Stillman and completed for the new version of Time Shadows. Each mode has its own distinct personality, which gives the box functionality similar to three entirely separate multi-effect and/or synth pedals.

Time Shadows provides only three controls for tweaking sounds — Time (delay time), Filter (filter frequency envelope and gate for EQD mode, filter frequency and phased delay line shift point for DBA mode, mix for !; mode) and Span (intensity) — but this modest-seeming array can summon a multitude of compelling effects and textures.

The new “II” iteration adds several new features, including a fourth knob/rotary switch that accesses six user-programmable presets. The pedal can also switch between preset and live (current knob settings) operating modes. A TRS expression pedal connected to the side-mounted expression pedal jack can control either Time, Filter or Span, with the desired function independently assignable to each preset. Manually sweeping parameters can generate some truly mind-blowing sounds.

So what does Time Shadows sound like? Its effects defy description and are really something you need to hear in person. EQD mode can combine deep, gritty sub-octave boom and bowed string or horn textures with hypnotic cavern reverbs, while DBA provides dreamy lo-fi smears with long, sustaining tails or percolating delays or even dramatic washes of flanging. !; mode reminds me of the simultaneous pitch shift up and down effects that lurk with the old MXR Model 129 Pitch Transposer (like those heard during the “freak out” section of Queen’s “Get Down, Make Love”).

Playing with Time Shadows brought me back to the glorious post-punk era of the early Eighties when bands like Cabaret Voltaire, Wire and Throbbing Gristle challenged the conventions of pop music and generated some truly captivating sounds with a ton of imagination, experimentation and complete disregard for the status quo. For musicians with open minds (it sounds equally great with guitar, bass, synth and drum machines), Time Shadows offers incredible inspiration that will significantly expand your mind and your sonic palette.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE: \$199
MANUFACTURER: EarthQuaker Devices/
 Death By Audio,
earthquakerdevices.com
 or deathbyaudio.com

● **PROS:** Incredibly complex, synth-like tones and “experimental” textures; manual control of Time, Filter or Span controls via an optional expression pedal; six presets; hands-free shifting between preset and live operation modes.

● **CONS:** Not for unadventurous, conservative players who prefer conventional effects.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** Musicians with open minds seeking complex, adventurous new sounds to explore will find plenty of inspiration from the gloriously wild and weird effects lurking with Time Shadows II.



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/october2024

WIDE RANGE

Developing flatpicking technique, and how to play “Free Range Chicken”

LAST MONTH, I kicked off my new column with a brief synopsis of interval recognition, with a distinct goal of laying the groundwork for a topic that is to me an essential element in learning music and progressing on the guitar. We'll now increase the difficulty a bit by digging into “Free Range Chicken” from my new album, *Charisma*.

FIGURE 1 presents the opening 16-bar intro section of “Free Range Chicken.” Bars 1-8 are primarily built from straight 16th notes that are articulated mostly with alternate (down-up-down-up) picking combined with some pull offs and played for the most part on the bottom three strings.

Recalling our discussion of interval recognition, this song is based around an E7, or E dominant 7, tonality, which means the tonic, or “home chord,” is E7. The notes of an E7 chord are E, G#, B, D, and the scale, or mode, associated with E7 is E Mixolydian (E, F#, G#, A, B, C#, D), which includes those notes. To me, this is a classic country-inspired harmony, as this dominant 7 sound is at the root of a great deal of country music.

The intro riff entails the repeated use of an open low E-string pedal tone that's played against a series of pull-offs, and an occasional hammer-on, fretted on the A and D strings. In bar 1 of **FIGURE 1**, after sounding the initial open low E, I pull-off from the b7 (flatted 7th) to the 6 (6th) — D to C# — followed by the open low E note. This three-note *motif* (short musical idea) is then moved up and down the A string to visit other pairs of adjacent notes that live in E Mixolydian. **FIGURE 2** focuses on how to execute this pattern.

At the end of bar 1, I bring in the minor 3rd, G natural, which is hammered up to the major 3rd, G#. This minor-to-major 3rd melodic idea is essential to many classic blues and bluegrass licks and melodies.

Bar 2 makes brief reference to an Esus4 sound, with the inclusion of the A note — the 4th of E, intervallically speaking — which then resolves immediately to G# and the sound of an E major chord. This is zeroed-in on in **FIGURE 3**.

Bar 4 of **FIGURE 1** is a riff that I associate with Steve Morse and the Dixie Dregs, as you'll hear riffs like this in many of Steve's

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 4

FIG. 3 (E7sus4)

FIG. 5 (E7sus4)

compositions. **FIGURE 4** offers a closer look at the pattern, presented more simply as eighth notes instead of 16ths.

In bar 5 of **FIGURE 1**, I play what is basically the same lick as that in bar 2, but I switch the last few notes from A - G# - E - D to B - A - G# - E, as illustrated in **FIGURE 5**.

Notice also that I employ palm muting (P.M.) throughout the eight-bar figure. I do this in order to make each note sound more distinct and percussive while at the same

time eliminating unwanted string ringing.

The intro wraps up with bars 9-16 of **FIGURE 1**, as pairs of notes that reference E major and D major triads are played against an open D-string pedal tone, with all notes allowed to sustain. One can think of this as either E/D to D, sounded across two-bar sections, or an overall tonality of D (#11).

I'll be back next month with the challenging but fun verse melody to “Free Range Chicken.” See you then!

Andy Wood is an extraordinary virtuoso and master of everything from bluegrass to metal. His latest release, *Charisma*, hit shops in July and is available from andywoodmusic.com

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/october2024

PURE GOLD

A tribute to the legendary Dickey Betts

THIS PAST APRIL, we received the sad news of the passing of Dickey Betts, founding member of the Allman Brothers Band and one of the greatest and most lyrical and melodic guitarists of all time. Dickey became a primary inspiration for me from a very early age and has remained one of my biggest influences.

In 1983, my father was able to talk the owner of Coleman's Night Club in Rome NY, into letting his six-year-old son (me) sit in the back and watch Dickey perform with his band BHLT, an acronym for Betts, Jimmy Hall, Chuck Leavell and Butch Trucks. They were sharing the bill with the Gregg Allman Band, which included the great Dan Toler on guitar and his brother Frankie Toler on drums. That experience changed my life! It was the first professional, legendary and mind-blowing live show I ever saw. Dickey came out and killed it; his singing and guitar playing were just phenomenal.

All of the greatest players of all time have a couple of things in common: 1) they all possess a very distinct signature tone, or "voice"; and 2) you can identify who it is from hearing just a couple of notes. This can be said for B.B. King, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Dickey Betts... the list goes on and on.

Dickey had a truly great and unique style and mostly played a Gibson Les Paul; either a goldtop, which he seemed to prefer in the late Sixties, or a sunburst Les Paul, which he is often seen playing throughout the Seventies. Additionally, he used 100-watt Marshall amplifiers equipped with either JBL, Altec or Lansing speakers, all of which yield a very clean and bright tone. He most often played with his guitar set on the front (neck) pickup or with both pickups engaged. Rarely will you hear Dickey on the bridge pickup only, and so he set his tone for the optimal sound with the front pickup.

Dickey had a unique way of phrasing his improvised solos; **FIGURE 1** is played in his style, with lines based on the D major hexatonic scale (D, E, F $\sharp$, G, A, B), which some players refer to as the "country scale."

This example is played in long streams of 16th notes; Dickey would often punctuate his solos by accenting and briefly holding quarter and eighth notes, often with finger

FIG. 1 (D)

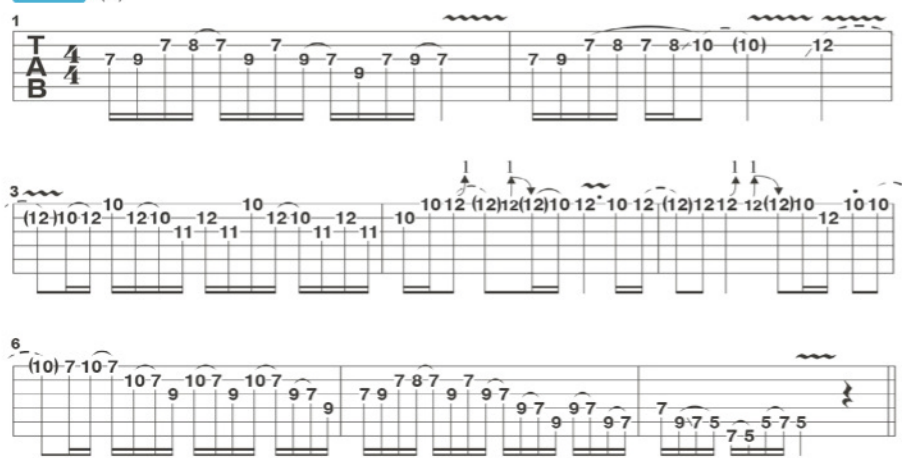
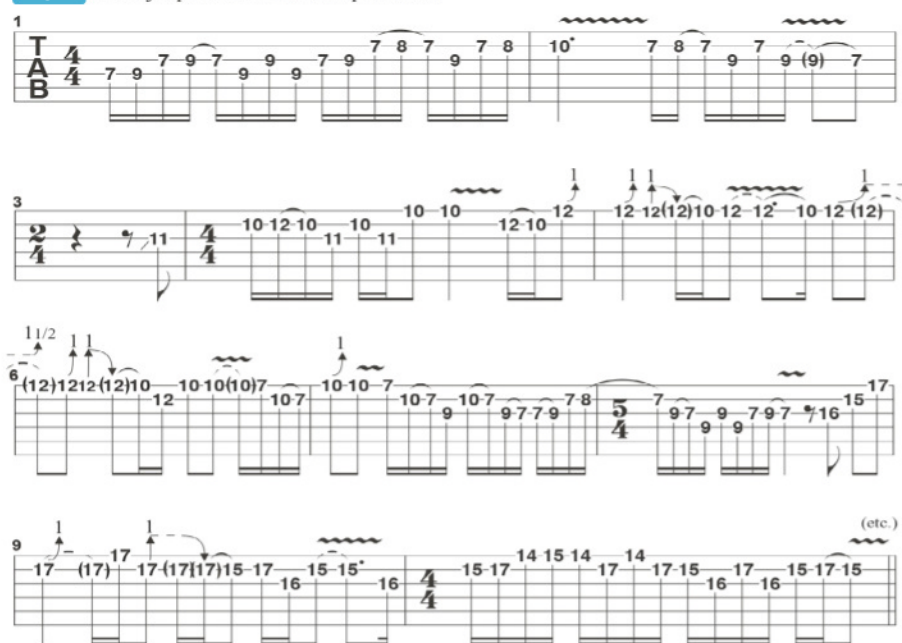


FIG. 2 D major pentatonic/ B minor pentatonic



vibrato, which creates a stinging effect. Notice in particular the "rolling" type of sound that results from using an abundance of hammer-ons and pull-offs and hanging out in a particular position for several beats.

If you think of these lines as being based on D major pentatonic (D, E, F $\sharp$, A, B), that's the very same set of notes that make up B minor pentatonic (B, D, E, F $\sharp$, A), so one can think of them that way too. **FIGURE 2** of-

fers a long 10-bar phrase that can be thought of as being based on B minor pentatonic, but you'll hear Dickey play lines like this over D, resulting in the sound of D major pentatonic and its six-note variant, D major hexatonic.

What is rock 'n' roll without the Allman Brothers Band? "Blue Sky," "Jessica," "Ramblin' Man." Dickey used the guitar as the ultimate tool to service songs that changed the world, and the music will live on forever.

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

MELODIC
MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/october2024

THE SONG WITHIN THE SONG

Approaching a solo as a mini composition

THE MOST MEMORABLE guitar solos serve as compositions unto themselves. When listening to one, it's like you're hearing a song within a song. Examples include George Harrison's solo in the Beatles' "Something" or Eric Clapton's solo in "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." For both of these tracks, you simply can't imagine the song without the solo being an integral part of it.

One of the bands I record with is the Reddcoats, whose second album, *The Reddcoats 2*, includes the track "All for Me," which is constructed of an intricate and highly unusual chord progression that's challenging to solo over.

In recording my solo, I initially felt I needed to compose it. I was thinking, "Man, there are so many chord changes, as well as key modulations; I'm going to need to take this home and work on it." But Mike Medina, the producer, said, "Just take a pass on it and see what happens." Fortunately, my instincts were good, and within an hour we had a solo we both really liked.

My mindset from the start was that the solo needed to serve as a composition unto itself. I thought, "What can I do with this solo that will tie everything together in the best possible way?"

FIGURE 1 presents the 16-bar solo, as I recorded it. The first thing I needed to do was memorize the chord progression so that I knew harmonically where it was headed and would be able to anticipate and navigate what I'd be playing over.

The solo begins over a G major chord, and in bar 1, I play the notes of a G major triad — G, B, D, G — in a syncopated rhythm. While sustaining the G note into bar 2, the chord beneath it switches to E $\flat$ maj7. G is a perfect note to play over E $\flat$ maj7, as it is one of the four chord tones or that chord: E $\flat$, G, B $\flat$, D (see **FIGURES 2** and **3**).

Here's a rundown of the progression: G - E $\flat$ maj7 - F $\sharp$ - C $\sharp$ - Cdim - B $\flat$ m - B $\flat$ m/A $\flat$ - G $\flat$ - F. The song then modulates up a minor 3rd (one and one half steps) to the key of E $\flat$ and follows a similar progression in the new key: E $\flat$ - G $\flat$ maj7 - A - E - D $\sharp$ dim - C $\sharp$ m - C $\sharp$ m/B - A - G $\sharp$ dim, which resolves back to G major. As you can see, this is a lot to keep in mind!

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIGURE 4 highlights the brief melodic line I play over the second chord in the progression, E $\flat$ maj7, with the E $\flat$ included underneath; when G, the major 3rd, is restated, I simply slide down one fret to F $\sharp$, the tonic of the next chord in the progression. As shown in **FIGURE 5**, I approached the F $\sharp$ chord in the same way as I had approached the G chord, by playing the notes of an F $\sharp$ major triad: F $\sharp$, A $\sharp$, C $\sharp$.

As you study the remainder of the solo,

you'll see that each melodic phrase "describes" the chord over which it's played. Take your time with this solo, and pay attention to how each melodic phrase sets up the arrival of the next chord.

This will be the last installment of Melodic Muse for the time being. I'd like to thank everyone who has been following these columns over the last couple of years. I'll be back with more columns soon. In the meantime, hope to see you out on the road!

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."

LONE STAR EVOLUTION

by David Grissom



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/october2024

KEEP IT CLEAR

Applying two-hand muting techniques to make rhythm parts articulate and precise

LAST MONTH, WE began looking at “Way Down Deep,” the title track from my 2011 solo album. You can also check out a live version of the tune that’s included as a bonus track on *How It Feels to Fly* (2014). In breaking down the riffs I play during the intro section, we dissected the pick-hand hybrid picking techniques required to play the riffs, which I find very useful in many situations for which I want precise control of the way I attack the notes.

Hybrid picking is a combination of fingerpicking and flatpicking. For most applications, I’ll clasp the pick between my pick-hand index finger and thumb, as I’d normally hold it, and use the pick to strike the low strings with downstrokes while picking the higher strings with my middle and ring fingers, and sometimes the pinkie too. In many cases, using hybrid picking allows me to selectively include one or more open-string drone notes along with flatpicked fretted notes on lower strings.

Let’s move on to the verse rhythm part. This is a song I often perform live, so the first thing I always do when we come to this part of the tune is to turn my guitar’s volume down a little bit. There are two reasons for this: 1) to allow the vocal to sit nicely above the guitar part, and 2) to clean up the overdriven tone while also affording me the opportunity to dig in harder on the rhythm part for added dynamic contrasts.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the riff as played at the end of the intro, at which point I’ll roll back the volume a little and launch into the verse part, shown in **FIGURE 2**. This is essentially a two-bar pattern that repeats, with a first and second ending: Throughout this part, I use my left thumb to fret the low F note at the 1st fret then hammer-on to the 3rd fret with my ring finger to sound G. And, in a rare occurrence here, there’s no hybrid picking used at all, as I’m instead strumming the strings with my pick.

A benefit of hybrid picking is that it enables clear articulation between lower and higher strings. In lieu of hybrid picking here, I’ll sometimes use pick- and fret-hand muting techniques when strumming, in order to achieve a similar type of clarity. When playing **FIGURE 2**, I’ll palm mute

FIG. 1



FIG. 2

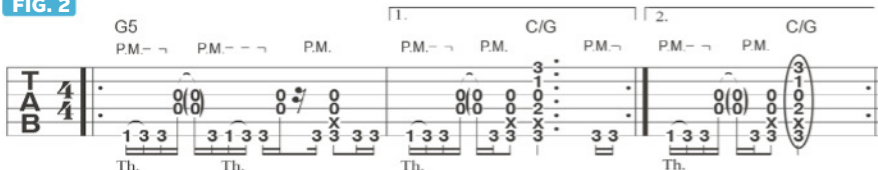


FIG. 3

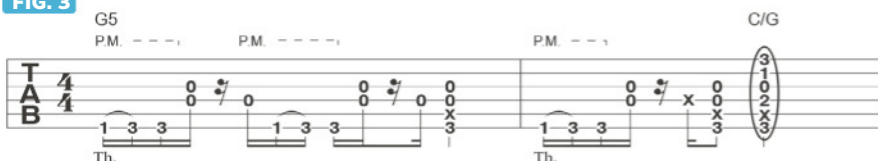


FIG. 4

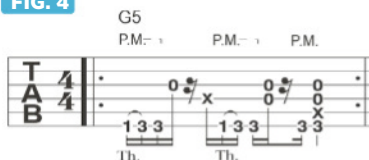
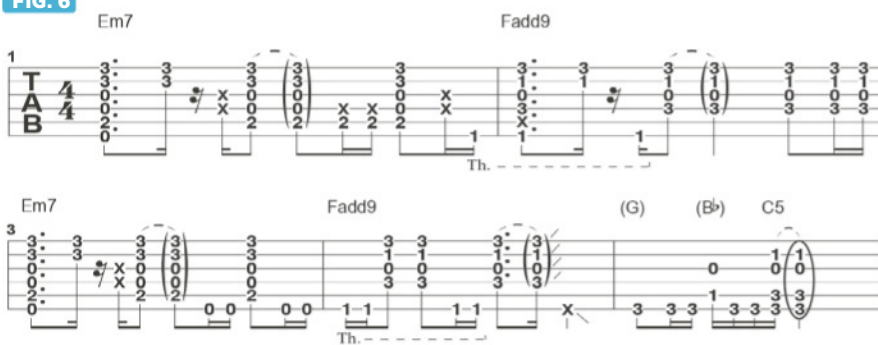


FIG. 5



FIG. 6



(P.M.) the lower strings at the bridge, to mute them and prevent unwanted ringing. Additionally, I’ll use the underside of my fret hand’s 3rd finger to mute the A string, while also intermittently releasing pressure with that fingertip to stop the low G note from ringing continually and get more of a *staccato* sound (short, detached notes).

FIGURES 3 and 4 offer a clearer look at this technique. Notice that the A string remains muted when I strum the C/G chord in bars 2 and 4, as shown in **FIGURE 5**.

FIGURE 6 illustrates the second part of the verse rhythm part, which is built from the progression Em7 - Fadd9 (or Fsus2) - Em7 - Fadd9. This is followed by a restatement of the implied G - B $\flat$ - C changes, akin to the intro.

Fret-hand muting is a technique that’s not often talked about and sometimes impossible to notate, but it’s what serves to create the rhythmic syncopation that’s integral to this particular part, and I find it invaluable while using an overdriven tone.

David Grissom has toured or recorded with Buddy Guy, John Mellencamp, Storyville, the Allman Brothers Band, Robben Ford and John Mayall. In 2022, *Guitar World* named him one of the 30 greatest Texas guitarists of all time.

K.T. YARBROUGH

ROCK THIS WAY!

**Get a grip on the
Aerosmith co-founder's
style — and put some
swagger in your riffs
and swing in your solos**

Joe Perry performs
at RFK Memorial
Stadium in Washington,
DC, in May 1976

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS





WORDS BY
**JENNA SCARAMANGA,
RICHARD BIENSTOCK
and CHRIS BIRD**

GUITARS AND
BACKING TRACKS BY
JENNA SCARAMANGA

“I’M NOT SURE where it comes from, because we come from two different places,” Aerosmith’s Brad Whitford told *Guitar Player* in 2019. “[Joe Perry] isn’t schooled at all, so it’s totally a ‘feel’ thing for him, whereas I did a lot more studying of the guitar. So you’re seeing two different approaches, but they work really well together. Ultimately, you want to have both sides.” What Whitford is explaining is the intangible secret of the Aerosmith groove machine. Even if you can play like Perry or Whitford, a big part of the band’s sound is the sum of these two players’ distinct approaches.

Joe’s take on this? “I listen to what Brad’s playing, and he listens to what I’m playing, and then we just try and mix it up, right down to — especially in the earlier days — saying, ‘Who’s gonna play the Strat? Who’s gonna play the Les Paul?’ That kind of thing. And when we come up with new riffs and songs, we each approach it from different angles, and then we settle into our thing. I’ve always felt like we have two lead players and two different flavors in this band, and that’s really important.”

The division of sonic duties is far from simple, though, and is certainly not just a matter of Strats and Les Pauls. Though Fender and Gibson guitars feature heavily in the duo’s arsenal, both players have

extensive collections. Alongside the big two brands, Perry's recently been spotted playing a Guild Blade Runner, a Nelson Admiralcaster, an Echopark Geisha and a Danelectro 12-string; Whitford's played a Charvel Pro Mod SD1, a Gretsch G6228 and various other S- and T-style guitars. Still, if there's a formula to be had, and if you're playing with another guitarist, you're better off using one humbucker- and one single coil-equipped guitar. A little light fuzz and — if it tickles your fancy — a clean boost are the icing on the cake.

In this lesson, we break down some of Perry's signature techniques and stylistic elements before taking a look at his riffing secrets. Our hand photos show you how he approaches the basics of left- and right-hand techniques, and you can

apply these to our musical examples.

Like his hero, Keith Richards, Perry's guitar approach has been described as "tight yet loose." To get his parts to sound right you'll need to nail both parts of that equation. The tightness comes from Perry's outstanding groove and the way the entire Aerosmith machine locks in together. The looseness is about being relaxed. No one ever accused Perry of seeming uptight, and if you approach the music as though you're too cool to care, you'll

be well on your way to copping his feel and approach. That means keeping your wrists loose, and being sure not to rush. Even when he's playing solos, Perry doesn't sound like he's in a hurry.

Many Aerosmith songs are played with a swing-eighths or -16ths feel — no doubt a reflection of their funk and soul influences — and playing the riffs like this is crucial to making the grooves feel right. Listen carefully to the drummer's kick drum and hi-hat while you play.



1 HOLDING THE PICK

PERRY CLASPS HIS pick between his thumb and the flat pad of his 1st finger, with his thumb straight or bent slightly back, approaching the string almost parallel.



2 PICK-HAND ANCHORING

FOR MORE CONTROL over his picking and strumming, Perry often anchors a couple fingers on the body near the bridge pickup. Picking near the bridge adds bite to his tone.



3 HYBRID PICKING

FROM THIS ANCHORED position, Perry can easily pluck the highest strings with his 2nd and 3rd fingers, like for those open-string snaps in the main riff to "Walk This Way."



4 THUMB OVER THE NECK

PERRY MOSTLY USES the "baseball bat grip" or thumb-over position preferred by many rock and blues players for more controlled bending and vibrato.



5 STRING BENDING

PERRY'S FINGERS DON'T move relative to his hand when he bends. The movement comes from a rotation of the fret hand's wrist and his forearm.



6 WIDE-STRETCH THUMB POSITION

WIDE STRETCHES ON bass strings are impossible with a thumb-over grip, so Perry switches to this more classical position for his funkier riffs round the bottom end.

FIG. 1 Funk-rock riffing

♩ = 88 Swing 16ths (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)
N.C. (E7)

FIG. 2 Blues-rock swing feel

♩ = 123 Swing eighths (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)
A5 P.M. G5 P.M. D5 P.M. D6 P.M. D7 P.M.

FIG. 3 Loose, slippery lead style

♩ = 88 Swing 16ths (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)
N.C. (E7)

FIG. 1 FUNK-ROCK RIFFING

MANY OF PERRY'S riffs pay tribute to funk icons like the Meters and James Brown. This first example is inspired by Perry's signature use of swung 16th notes and offbeat (syncopated) rhythms. Watch out for the timing in bars 1, 3 and 4, and be sure to use fret-hand muting to keep the staccato articulations short and crisp and to silence the strings during the rests. The riff also demonstrates the use of the classic blues trick of playing both the minor and major 3rd — in this case, the G and G# notes at the 3rd and 4th frets on the low E string — giving that dirty feel. Perry also uses plenty of pull-offs, helping the 'tight yet loose' vibe.

FIG. 2 BLUES-ROCK SWING FEEL

FOR SUCH A renowned riff writer, Perry plays surprisingly few chords, but our second example epitomizes many of his favorite moves. Bars 1 and 3 feature classic AC/DC-style open power chords; bar 2 includes an early rock 'n' roll-style boogie riff idea, à la Chuck Berry, and bar 4 features a funk/soul-style dominant-7 chord voicing, hinting at Perry's love of James Brown's catalog. The groove is an eighth-note shuffle feel, reminiscent of such Aerosmith classics as "Same Old Song and Dance" and "Uncle Salty."

FIG. 3 LOOSE, SLIPPERY LEAD STYLE

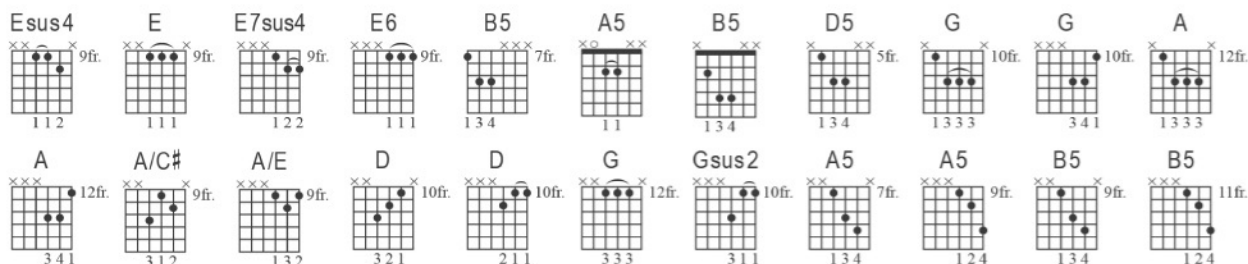
PERRY'S LEAD STYLE has a "slippery" quality to it, due in part to his judicious use of pull-offs, finger slides and string bends. Even his solos are highly rhythmic, so pay attention to the timing of the rhythmic phrasing, especially in bars 3 and 4. A big part of Perry's sound comes from adding the major 6th to the minor pentatonic scale. In this case, we have E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D), with the added 6th being the note C# on the B string's 14th fret. Notice how the note is used alone in bars 1 and 3 and as part of an aggressive double-stop in bar 4. **GW**

"LUNATIC FRINGE"

Red Rider

As heard on **AS FAR AS SIAM**

Written by TOM COCHRANE • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

**A** Intro (0:00)

Freely

N.C.(E/B) Esus4 E

1 Gtr. 1 (synth keyboard arr. for clean elec.) w/slide

19/22 (22) 19 17 17

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/light overdrive)

10 9 9 10 9 9 9 9 9

Synth keyboard arr. for bass gtr. (let ring next eight bars)

2 2 2 2 2

*optionally w/tremolo picking

E7sus4 E6 N.C. (B5) (F5)

6 26/29 (29) 24 24

*Approximate "virtual" fretboard position over pickups.

w/dist. 1/2 (end synth arr.)

2 (4) (4) (4) 2 1 1

Gtr. 2 (w/overdrive) w/slight fdbk.

10 9 9 9 9 2 2

B (0:39)

Moderately ♩ = 98

B5

10 Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1 (w/dist.)
(pick scrape)

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of four measures. The first measure contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure continues with a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The third measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The system ends with a double bar line.

1. Lunatic

A5

B5

14 Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

let ring throughout

end Rhy. Fig. 1

[illegible]

Bass

C 1st and 2nd Verses (0:59, 1:43)

(1.) fringe

(2.) fringe

I know you're out there
in the twilight's last gleaming

**You're in hiding
But this is open season**

D5

B5

48 (Gtr. 1 plays first time only)

--	--	--

Rhy. Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 2

The second system of the musical score for 'The Little Boat' consists of four measures. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes (3-5), followed by a quarter note (5), an eighth note (5), and a quarter note (5). The second measure contains a quarter note (5), an eighth note (5), a quarter note (5), and an eighth note (5). The third measure contains a quarter note (5), an eighth note (5), a quarter note (5), and an eighth note (5). The fourth measure contains a quarter note (5), an eighth note (5), a quarter note (5), and an eighth note (5). The notation includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and note heads.

*Note played first time only.

Bass Fill 1 (2:00)

B5

7 7 x x 7 x 2 4

Rhy. Fill 1 (2:08)

Gtr. 1 B5

w/fdbk.

The first staff of music is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation shows a whole note chord consisting of a B-flat (labeled 'B' with a flat symbol) and a D (labeled 'D'). The chord is enclosed in a circle, and the notes are written as 'B' and 'D' with a flat symbol over the 'B'. The staff is labeled 'TAB' and '4/4'.

and you hold your meetings
but you won't get too far

I can hear you coming
'Cause you got to blame someone

D5
22 Gtr. 2

Bass
Bass Fill 2

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1, second time (see below bar 18)
end Bass Fill 2

I know what you're after
for your own confusion

We're wise to you this
We're on guard

A5
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 one and one half times (see bar 14)
26 Gtr. 1

Bass

B5
Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 second time (see below bar 20)

2nd time, skip ahead to [E] (bar 36)

time
this time

(Wise to you this time)
(On guard this time)

We won't let you kill the laughter
against your final solution

A5
30

[D] (1:33)

Go back to [C] 2nd Verse (bar 18)

Whoa

Oh

Oh

2. Lunatic

B5 N.C. B5 N.C. B5 N.C.

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 3

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

E (2:18)

Oh yeah

B5 G A A/C# B5 D G A/C# B5 A5 B5 G5 B5 A5 A/C#
Gtr. 3 (w/dist.; pedal steel arr. for elec. gtr.)

36

Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 4a

end Rhy. Fig. 4a

Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 4

end Rhy. Fig. 4

Bass
Bass Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

F Guitar Solo (2:29)

A5

B5

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 14)

Gtr. 3 (w/dist.; pedal steel arr. for elec. gtr.)

41

Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 5

Bass
Bass Fig. 3

A5

B5

45

D5

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 18)

B5

49

A5

Gtr. 2 plays first two bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 14)

53

end Rhy. Fig. 5

end Bass Fig. 3

G (3:04)

Oh

Oh

Oh

We can hear you

B5 N.C.

B5 N.C.

B5 N.C.

B5 N.C.

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 twice simile (see bar 32)

Gtr. 2

55

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice simile (see bar 32)

H 3rd Verse (3:14)

coming (We can hear you coming)

No

you're not going to win this time

(Not gonna win)

We can hear the foot-

A5

B5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 5 simile (see bar 41)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 14)

Gtr. 3

59

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 41)

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1
(see below bar 18)

-steps

Hey

out along the walkway

(Out along the walkway)

Lunatic

(We can hear the footsteps)

A5

B5

63

fringe

We all know you're out there

Can you feel the resistance

D5
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 18)

B5

67

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 2 (see bar 22)

A5
Gtr. 2 plays first two bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 14)

Can you feel the

71

I Outro (3:48)

thunder

Oh

B5 G A A/C# B5 D G A/C# B5 A5 B5 G5 B5 A5 A/C#
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 twice, simile (see bar 36)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 4a twice, simile (see bar 36)

73

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice simile (see bar 32)

no

Hey

B5 G A A/C# B5 D G A/C# B5 A5 B5 G5 B5 A5 A/C#

77

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 36)

B5 G A A/C# B5 D G A/C# B5 A5 B5 G5 B5 A5 B5 G5 B5
Gtr. 3

81

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 2

85

Gtr. 1

B5 G A A/E B5 D Gsus2 A/E B5 A5 B5 G5 B5 A5 B5 G5 B5
Gtr. 1

89

Bass

Bass

93

Bass

"KILL THE NOISE"

Papa Roach

As heard on **EGO TRIP**

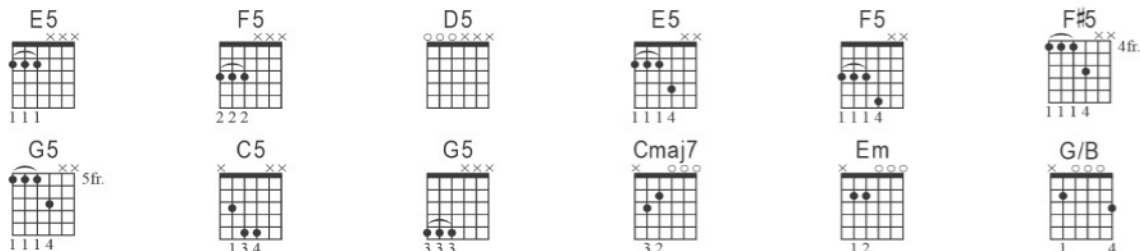
Words and Music by ANTHONY ESPERANCE, TOBIN ESPERANCE, JACOBY SHADDIX, DREW FULK and ANDREW GOLDSTEIN

• Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

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

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

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



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 95

I just feel like I'm
channeling something

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

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

(0:02 sec.)

1

2 2 X X X 2 3 2 2 2 2 2 0 2 X X X 2 3 2 2 2 2 7 5 7

*w/"whammy"-style pitch shift effect - , +15

*Expression pedal set to raise pitch two octaves higher when pressed forward.

(F5) (E5) (D5) (F5) (F#5) (G5)

Kill the noise

w/pitch shift effect +15

3 5 7 2 X 2 3 2 2 2 2 2 0 2* 3 (3) 4 (4) 5*

**w/pitch shift effect - - - , -8

w/pitch shift effect - - - , -8

**Expression pedal set to lower pitch one octave when pressed forward.

(0:12, 1:02)

(on repeat) Kill the noise

E5 F5 E5 D5 E5 F5 E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 w/pitch shift effect - - - , -8

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

*Omit chord second time.

Bass

**

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

**Omit note second time.

F5 E5 D5 E5 F5 F#5 G5

7

B Verses (0:22, 1:12)

1. No love no feelings I choke on the air I'm breathing
2. My scars keep screaming I live through the pain for a reason

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

9 Gtr. 1

Undone my God unhealing my anger Ain't nobody stopping the bleeding
It drags me down like an anchor

(F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (F#5) (G5)

11

*Notes played first time only.

I'm Deaf with demons on both sides Can't think no angel left inside
deaf with demons on both sides Can't think no angel left inside

E5 (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (E5)

13 Gtr. 1

*Omit notes first time.

Bass

*slap string w/thumb

** 'pop' string w/index finger

Chained	to	the	static	in	my	mind	and	I	can't	hide	}	This
Chained	to	the	static	in	my	mind	and	I	can't	hide		
		(F5)	(E5)			(D5)	(E5)	(F5)	(F#5)	(G5)		

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 second time (see below)

w/pitch shift effect

+15

w/pitch shift
effect - - - 7w/pitch shift
effect - γ

C Chorus (0:42, 1:33, 2:23)

rage I just can't escape Screaming at my face so loud I can't

C5 E5 C5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Rhy. Fill. 2 third time (see below)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1 third time (see below)

Bass

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 2 third time (see below)

Rhy. Fill 1 (1:30)

N.C.(E5) (F5) (F#5)

Gtr. 1 w/whammy effect - - -

Gtr. 1

w/whammy
effect - - 1

N.H. - 7

pitch: E

Bass Fill 2 (2:28)

C5

G5

F5

TAB

4
4

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

5 5 5 5 5 5 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

5 7 5 7

Rhy. Fill 2 (2:23)

C5

E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

TAB

4
4

5 5 ~ | -

3 3 3 3 ~ | -

Bass Fill 1 (2:23)

TAB 4
A B 4

3 3 ~ | -

2 2 ~ | -

hear my voice

Breaking

through my mistakes

Free fall into

G5

E5

C5

E5

D5

20

The musical notation for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system contains the first 16 measures, and the second system contains the remaining 16 measures. The notation is written on a treble and bass staff. The notes are as follows:

System 1 (Measures 1-16):

- Measure 1: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 2: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 3: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 4: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 5: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 6: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 7: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 8: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 9: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 10: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 11: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 12: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 13: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 14: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 15: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 16: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)

System 2 (Measures 17-32):

- Measure 17: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 18: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 19: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 20: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 21: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 22: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 23: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 24: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 25: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 26: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 27: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 28: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 29: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 30: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)
- Measure 31: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4)
- Measure 32: C5 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1)

1.	2., 3.	2nd time, skip ahead to F Outro (bar 33)
----	--------	---

grace I'm not insane

It's time to kill the noise

It's time to kill the noise

C5

G5

E5

G5

E5

23

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a series of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). This is followed by a series of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) and a half note. The lower staff begins with a series of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1), followed by a series of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) and a half note. The system concludes with a double bar line.

D Interlude (1:53)

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

Shut

N.C. (E5)

(F5)

(E5)

(F5)

26 Gtr. 1

[illegible]

E Breakdown (2:03)

up
up

E5

F5

D5

E5

D5

E5

F

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2
w/pitch shift
effect — — —

w/pitch shift
effect - - - -

N.H.

29

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

pitches: E
B
G

Bass

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

Shut This

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

“LUNATIC FRINGE”

Red Rider



ONE OF NORTH America's biggest rock radio hits from 1981, this cool and hauntingly intriguing song, written by Canadian singer-songwriter Tom

Cochrane, features a slick arrangement and production that includes layered guitar parts, along with bass, drums, keyboard synthesizers, lead and background vocals and soaring slide licks that were performed by Ken Greer on an overdriven pedal or lap steel.

We've adapted the arrangement's keyboard and steel parts for electric guitars and bass. Ideally, you'd have a keyboard synth player cover the ambient, mysterious intro. Alternatively, to emulate the infinitely sustaining low B synth bass note in bars 1-13 on bass guitar, you could try either gently tremolo picking the note, as indicated, or executing a series of gradual volume swells and use a very wet, long-tail reverb effect to keep the sustain going and smoothen out the volume. The high-pitched synth melodies in bars 3 and 6 may be emulated on a guitar with a wet tone (lots of reverb) and a slide, with the highest notes in bar 6 — F $\sharp$, A and E — extending beyond the range of the fretboard, being tabbed at their virtual positions over the neck pickup. An alternative option here would be to play the notes one octave and 12 frets lower and use a harmonizer or pitch-shifter pedal set one octave up.

The main guitar parts that enter at section B (bar 10) are built around stock root-5th-octave power chords. Note the interesting arpeggiation pattern in the Gtr. 2 part that enters at bar 14, where Cochrane, using his Fender Stratocaster's nasal-sounding #2 pickup combination (bridge and middle, out-of-phase), adds hammer-ons on the D string, from the 4th to the 5th of each power chord shape, implying an suspenseful “sus4” sound. Doing this obviously requires fretting each note with an individual fingertip, as opposed to barring. When playing this part, use an upstroke to pick each of the high notes on the G string.

Speaking of barring, when playing the bluesy double-stop bends during the break riff at sections D and G (Gtr. 2 part), barre the G and B strings with your 3rd finger.

“KILL THE NOISE”

Papa Roach



GUITARIST JERRY HORTON kicks off this hard-hitting song with an aggressive, highly syncopated drop-D-style riff on his bottom two strings,

to which he periodically applies a sweeping pitch-shifting effect, akin to that produced by a DigiTech Whammy pedal, momentarily raising the pitch of the note or chord he's playing two octaves (+15) or lowering it one octave (-8), as indicated in bars 2-4 and elsewhere. The effect enhances the riff in an interesting way, but if you don't have that capability, you can just play the riff without the effect and it will still sound cool.

The fingerings Horton uses to play this intro riff and those that follow are mostly simple one-finger power chord shapes, but there's some additional, subtle technique happening with the fret hand, to mute the strings either during or between the notes. To achieve the pitchless, percussive strums, indicated by X's, strum the strings while momentarily loosening your grip on the previous chord shape, just enough so that the strings break contact with the frets but with the fingers not leaving the strings. Horton employs this same fret-hand muting technique during the rests that fall between the single 16th notes or power chords. The only difference is that he's not strumming the strings when doing this, resulting in silence.

Being that this song has a 16th-note groove, to achieve the desired feel with the pick hand, you'll want to employ *16th-note pendulum strumming*, pretty much the entire time. This involves keeping the pick swinging back and forth over the strings in a continuous, unbroken down-up-down-up oscillation across each beat, even though you're not going to be touching the strings on every stroke. Any note or chord that falls on the first or third 16th note of the beat would be picked or strummed with a downstroke, and anything that falls on the second or fourth 16th note would be caught with an upstroke. During the rests, the pick silently passes over the strings with a “phantom” downstroke or upstroke. The only exception to this would be for the accented “kicks” in bars 4, 12 and 16, which are best picked with all downstrokes for added emphasis.

“AUTUMN LEAVES”

Joe Pass



JOE PASS'S BEAUTIFUL solo chord-melody-style reading of this popular jazz standard showcased the legendary guitarist's rich harmonic

vocabulary, command of the fretboard and inventive, resourceful musicality. Although he was known mostly for playing a Gibson ES-175 archtop hollowbody electric guitar with a pick, or pick and fingers, he chose to perform this rendition of “Autumn Leaves,” which seems to have been at least partly improvised, completely fingerstyle, on a nylon-string acoustic.

This performance was meticulously transcribed by François Leduc, as featured on his YouTube channel. (For more of François' transcriptions, head over to his site at francoisleduc.onlinelibrary.com). Being that it's a jazz tune, we opted to present it as originally transcribed, in the traditional notes-and-tab format, which requires a bit more page space than *GW*'s regular “rhythmic tabs” notation.

It's interesting to note that Joe starts off playing the tune with a medium-tempo swing feel, which he then abandons at bar 17 (section C), changing to a lyrical Romantic classical-style *rubato* (free time) feel, with even eighth notes, as if becoming more serious about his musical intention and artistic expression at that point.

On the first page, we included 50 (!) chord frames to illustrate just about all of the voicings Joe employed in this masterful performance, many of which he arpeggiated. There are a couple of wide-stretch fingerings that span four frets, such as the two-note, implied B7 $\flat$ 5 chord in bar 5 and the Em6 shape in bar 19, both of which require exceptional dexterity and limber fingers to reach. In each case, allow your wrist to rotate as needed to make the spread.

You'll notice that some of the barre chord shapes have an unplayed string within a 1st-finger barre, as indicated by an “x” over the frame. This is due to Pass's selective fingerpicking of the strings, as opposed to strumming them, which you'll see in the music for D9no3 (bar 22), G7 $\sharp$ 5 (bar 28), B9no3 (bar 30), Am7 (bars 33 and 41), F $\sharp$ 7 $\sharp$ 5 (bar 49) and F $\sharp$ 7 $\sharp$ 5#9 (bar 61).

"AUTUMN LEAVES"

Joe Pass

As heard on **UNFORGETTABLE**

Music by JOSEPH KOSMA • Transcribed by FRANÇOIS LEDUC

A 1st Chorus (0:01)

Medium Swing Feel (♩ = ♩³)

N.C. (Em)

(Am)

Am7

D7b9

Gmaj7

Cmaj9

Acous. Gtr. (nylon-string)

fingerstyle

let ring - - - -

F#m7b5 C7 (B7b5) (B) (B/D#) (Em) E7b9

B (0:16)

Am7 (D7) Gmaj7/D (C) F#m7b5

F#7 B7 B7b9 N.C. (Em)

*let open low E note ring

C (0:31)

Freely and slightly slower, with even eighth notes
Let the notes of each arpeggiated chord ring

(B) C7#11 B7sus4 B7 Em7 Em6 C/E Em

21

A13-9 A7b13 D9no3 D7#9/F# Ab G

D (0:48)

25

F#m7b5 B7b9 B7b13#9 Em7 A13-9 Dm13 G7#5

29

F#7#9 (C) B9(no3) B7b9#5 Em

E 2nd Chorus (1:03)

33

Am7 E7b13 Am7 (D) (G) Db7#9 (C)

let ring - - - -

37

F#m7b5 B (Em)

F (1:21)

Am7 (D7) (G) (G7) C

45

F#m7b5 (B7) (B7#5) (Em)

G (1:41)

F#7#5 B7no3 Em (m-maj7) (m7) (m6)

Am (D) D7 $\flat$ 9 (G6) (Cmaj7)

53

let ring -----

H (1:57)

F#m7 $\flat$ 5 C13 B7sus4 B7 (F7) Em7 E $\flat$ m7#5 Dm13 G7

57

I Ending (2:14)

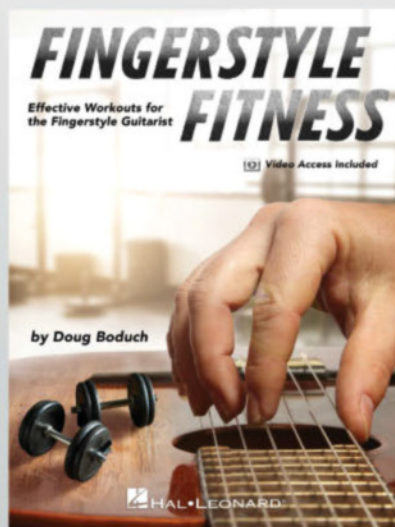
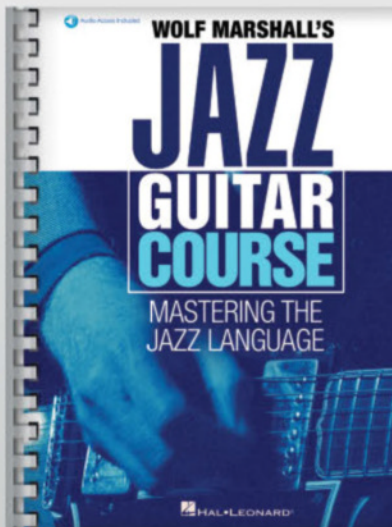
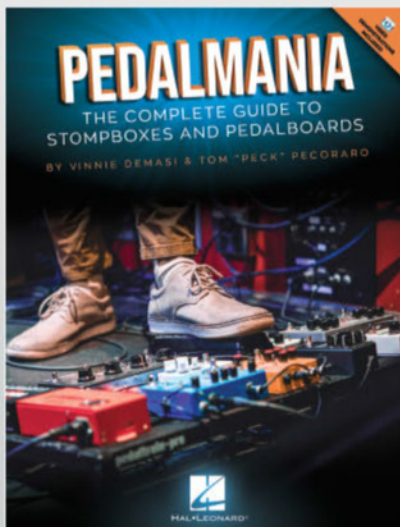
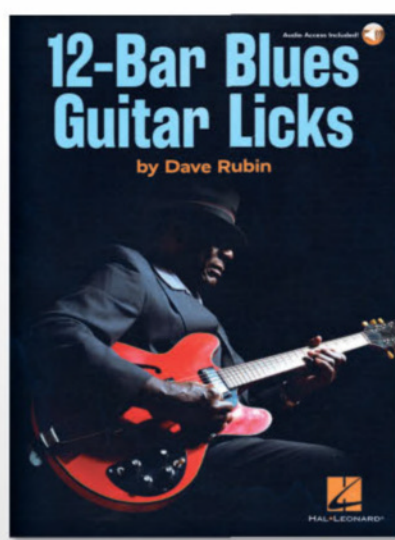
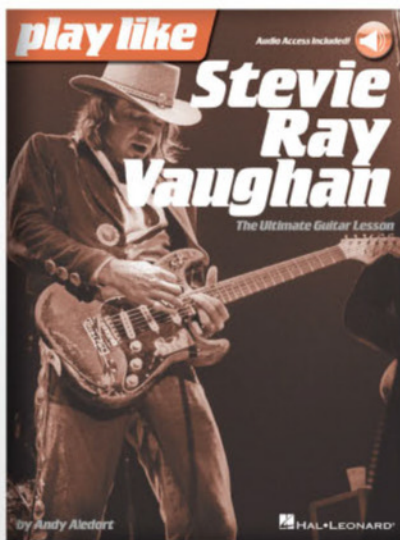
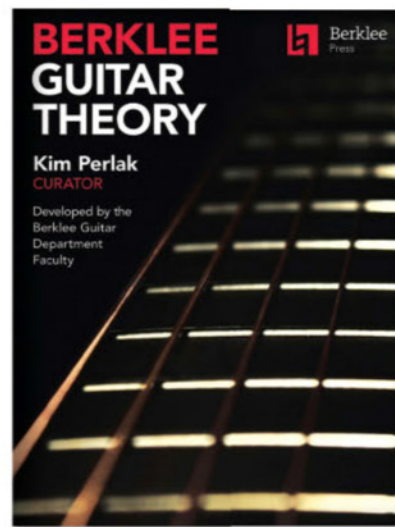
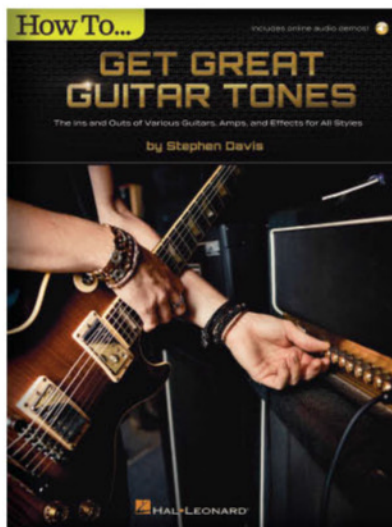
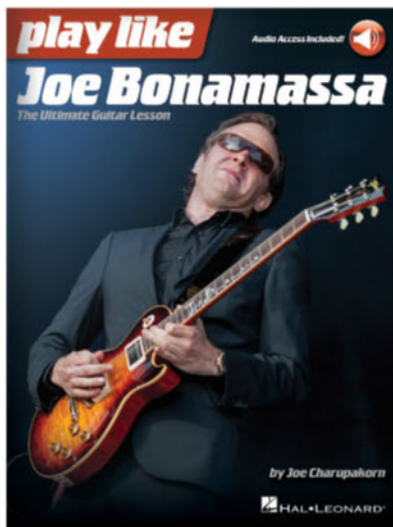
F#7#9#5 (b9) B7 $\flat$ 9(no3) (B7 $\flat$ 13) Em N.C. (Em)

61

(Am) (Am6) (B7sus4) B7#5/D# Em(add9) Em

65

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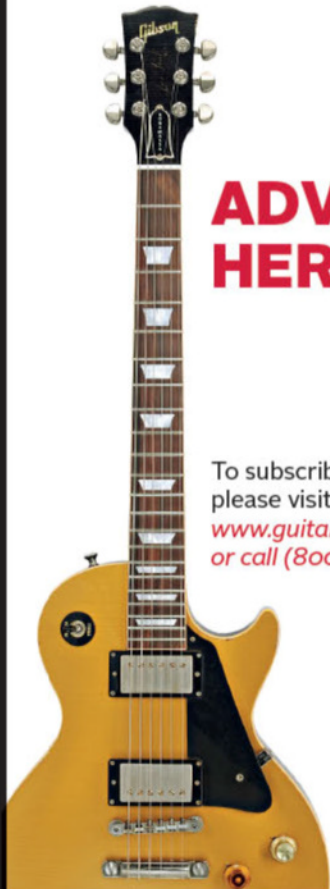
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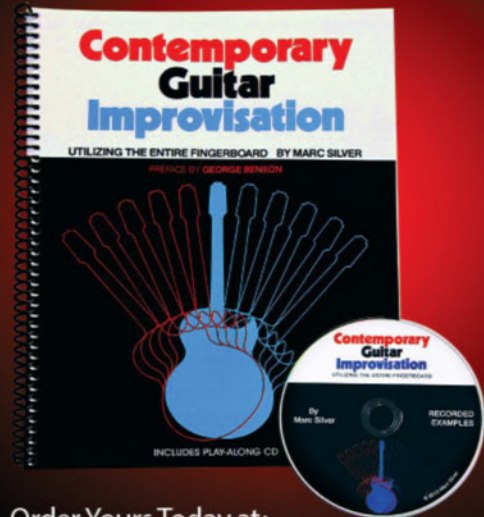
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1987-PRESENT SOLDANO SLO-100

CATEGORY: **AMPLIFIER HEAD**

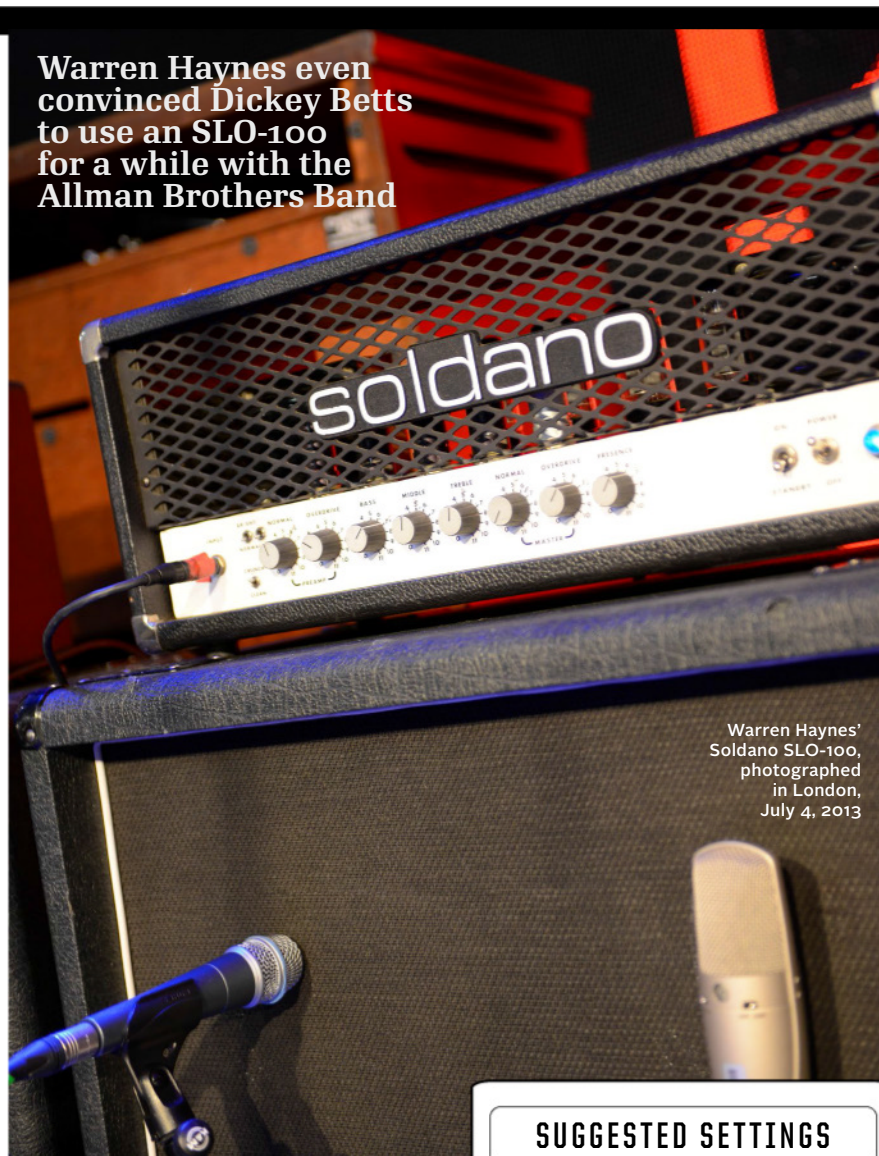
THE BOUTIQUE AMP market thrives and exists as it does today largely thanks to the pioneering efforts and success of Mike Soldano. Before Soldano introduced the legendary SLO-100 Super Lead Overdrive 100-watt head in 1987, the most viable high-gain amp options for hard rock, metal and shred guitarists were mostly limited to either Mesa Boogie models or a Marshall or Fender amp that was hot-rodded by an amp tech. The immediate success of the SLO-100, which was warmly embraced by an impressive variety of pros, gave dozens of amp techs the encouragement they needed to start their own amp companies, particularly those expanding the range of high-gain designs, and a few years later the boutique amp phenomenon was in full swing.

Although Soldano previously had performed numerous amp mods himself, his design for the SLO-100 was not based on a pre-existing model with a few upgrades but rather delivered an entirely new circuit. The power amp section is based on a classic Western Electric circuit using a quartet of 6L6/5881 tubes, but the unique preamp circuit features five cascading gain stages that employ five 12AX7 tubes. While its Normal and Overdrive channels share a single set of bass, middle and treble EQ controls, each channel has its own preamp gain and master volume controls to give users greater textural flexibility. The Normal channel also includes a switch for selecting Clean or Crunch character.

The SLO-100 Overdrive channel's tight, dynamically expressive and harmonically rich high-gain tones and smooth attack instantly earned it a devoted following of hard rock and metal players like Warren DeMartini, George Lynch, Matthias Jabs and Mick Mars. Eddie Van Halen used an SLO-100 during the early Nineties to record *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge*, and the amp later significantly inspired the design of his signature Peavey 5150 model. Joe Satriani relied heavily on an SLO-100 when recording *The Extremist*. Apparently the amp pairs quite well with David Coverdale's vocals, as Vivian Campbell, Adrian Vandenberg and Steve Vai used SLO-100s during their stints with Whitesnake, and Jimmy Page used an SLO-100 to record tracks for the *Coverdale/Page* album.

However, the SLO-100 may be even more famous (and enduring) for its early adoption by blues rockers like Eric Clapton

Warren Haynes even convinced Dickey Betts to use an SLO-100 for a while with the Allman Brothers Band



Warren Haynes' Soldano SLO-100, photographed in London, July 4, 2013

during his *Journeyman* and *24 Nights* era, Gary Moore for his early Nineties tours and Warren Haynes with Gov't Mule and the Allman Brothers Band (he even convinced Dickey Betts to use an SLO-100 for a while with the Allmans). Mark Knopfler and Lou Reed proved that the SLO-100 delivers clean and overdrive tones that are equally as impressive as its more aggressive high-gain distortion textures. The Normal channel's Clean setting provides very distinctive clean tones that are crisp and slinky — similar to the tone of a guitar plugged directly into a mixing console — that is ideal for funk rhythm playing. This, along with its overdrive and distortion tones, made the Soldano one of Prince's preferred amps during the late Eighties and early Nineties.

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

Jimmy Page Crunch and Grind
Bright: On, Crunch: On, Preamp Normal: 4, Preamp Overdrive: 1, Bass: 10, Middle: 6, Treble: 6, Master Normal: 5, Master Overdrive: 5, Presence: 3

Clean and Mean
Bright: On, Clean: On, Preamp Normal: 3, Preamp Overdrive: 6, Bass: 6, Middle: 7, Treble: 6, Master Normal: 5, Master Overdrive: 7, Presence: 7

Soldano still offers the SLO-100 model today, now called the SLO-100 Classic. The Classic features a handful of changes and upgrades, including the addition of a Depth control, front panel channel switching and a Level control for the effects loop.

LEGENDARY HIGH-GAIN PERFORMANCE
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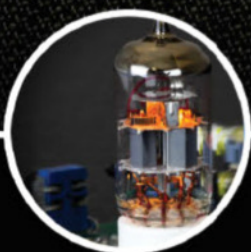
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