

OUR UNMISSABLE END-OF-YEAR ISSUE!

GUITAR WORLD

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TRANSCRIPTIONS

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MOTÖRHEAD
ACE OF SPADES

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2024

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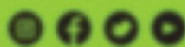
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VOL. 46 | NO. 1 | JANUARY 2025

SET THE CONTROLS FOR THE HEART OF 2025

▶ AND SO ENDS another wild year in guitar land. Well, sort of. We like to get an early start on the whole end-of-year thing, so this issue is actually coming to you in mid to late November. Which reminds me — Happy Thanksgiving! I'm thankful for our faithful, dedicated readers, our Defenders of the Faith, our Sounding Board contributors, our Reader Art gang and everyone who subscribes (or peruses GW in the waiting room while getting their tires rotated or barnacles scraped).

Where was I? Ah, yes — November! This means we shipped this issue in late October, which, in turn, means that just about anything could've happened during the month it took to get this issue into your hands. Did we miss anything? Did



Marty Friedman rejoin Megadeth? Did Oasis break up again? Did Gibson bring back the Marauder? Did Billy Strings, Molly Tuttle and Larkin Poe somehow wind up playing on Ringo Starr's new album? (Oh wait, this actually happened...) Because, as we've seen, pretty much anything is possible in 2024. And not to sound corny or anything, but it's all really got me looking forward to 2025, which also happens to be GW's 45th year on the planet. Hey, this makes GW the same age as Macaulay Culkin, and that's certainly worth celebrating!

CORRECTION: We messed up some of the pagination in our December 2024 issue; pages 48, 49 and 50 are marked as 36, 37 and

38 (although none of the page- or story-flow was affected). We apologize for any inconvenience. — **Damian Fanelli**



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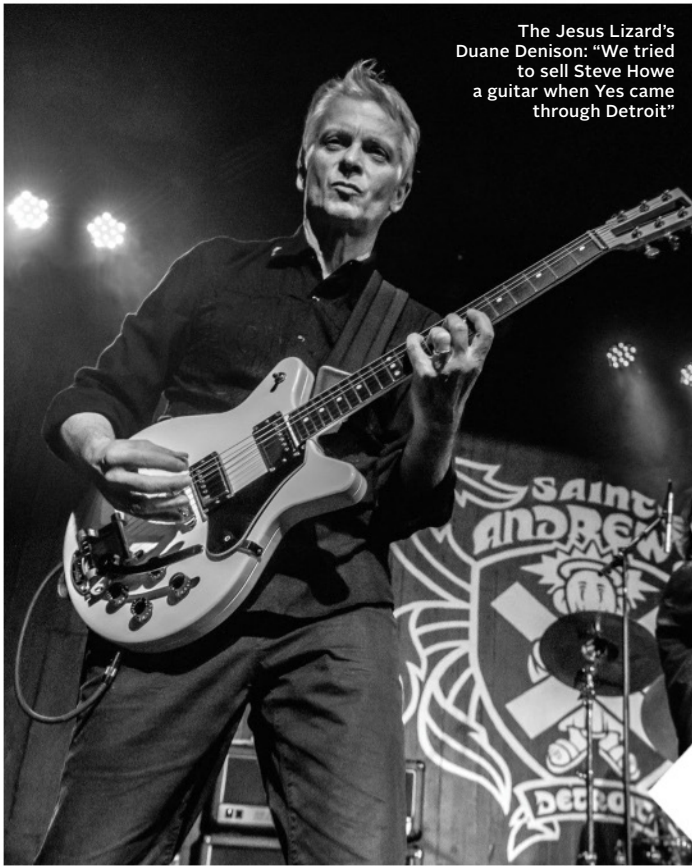


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We check in with blues master Tab Benoit (who's released his new first album in more than a decade), while Richie Kotzen gets the Inquirer treatment. We've also got Philadelphia's the Bad Ups, the Courettes' Flavia Couri, Within the Ruins' Joe Cocchi and the Linda Lindas' Bela Salazar and Lucia de la Garza. Meanwhile, the Pixies' Joey Santiago shows us his pedalboard.

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COVER PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (GARY CLARK JR., KIKI WONG), JEN ROSENSTEIN (SLASH), RAYON RICHARDS (KERRY KING), KEVIN NIXON (DAVE NAVARRO), DAVID McCLISTER (GRACE BOWERS), ANTON CORBIJN (DAVID GILMOUR), JACKSON GUITARS (DIAMOND ROWE), SIMON EMMETT (OASIS), ALISON DYER (BEAT), GIBSON (JIMMY PAGE), RYAN PIORKOWSKI (WOLFGANG VAN HALEN), PAOLO TERLIZZI (MATTEO MANCUSO), FUTURE (STRAT)

DOUG COOMBS

SOUNDING BOARD

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



O Eddie, where art thou?

I understand that Eddie Van Halen is more [associated with] the Eighties, but to leave him off the cover of your Seventies issue [November 2024] is confusing. *Van Halen* and *Van Halen II* came out in 1978 and 1979. Those two records stood the guitar world on its head! Plus, the *GW* poll results on page 42 has Van Halen at the top of the list as the greatest guitar album of the Seventies.

— Michael Ballard,
Mather, California

What? No mention of Paul Kossoff?

In *GW*'s Seventies issue, I didn't see anything about a band called Free! One of the biggest hits in the Seventies was this song called "All Right Now." So I would like to submit my unsung hero, Paul Kossoff! Thank you for your time.

— Alan Harper

A powerful Warning

I'd like to thank you for the article on the Warning [November 2024]. Not since Måneskin made their mark on the U.S. has a foreign-bred hard rock band exhibited as much power and passion as the Warning, one of the most exciting bands to emerge on the rock scene in any genre, and it's an all-female

band, to boot. The band embody the very essence of rock and roll — loud, rebellious music that is as enthralling as it is thrilling, and with a smacking snare drum. It's unfortunate that surprisingly few great bands emerge these days. The Warning are a bold exception to that rule.

— Joe Lalaina

Keep on truckin'!

I owe the *GW* staff a thank you for the [September 2024] transcription of the Dead Kennedys' "Police Truck," which I requested. I appreciate seeing different genres represented in

the magazine (or more of the outer fringe of otherwise-covered genres). How fun. Thank you.

— Matt Gardner

Rare sightings of Justin Hayward...

Thanks so much for the Justin Hayward interview [December 2024]. I've seen him with the Moody Blues and solo. He's always impressive. Also, the David Gilmour interview! His musical output speaks for itself. I find myself gravitating toward guitarists who sing. It just makes melodic sense!

— Nightbreed

...and Les Dudek!

I really enjoy the Personalities features because we get to read about guitarists who are otherwise forgotten (no offense to them, of course). Case in point? The fascinating Les Dudek feature in the December 2024 issue. But, just going from memory, we've also had Frank Infante, Eddie Martinez, Eric Bazilian, Bruce Kulick, Keith Scott, Carlos Cavazo, Earl Slick and the guy from Huey Lewis and the News. Please keep it up! Personalities was/is a great addition to the mag.

— Coda Springs



RANDOM PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Killing Joke's Kevin "Geordie" Walker [left] — with his early Fifties Gibson ES-295 — and Jaz Coleman perform at The Roundhouse in London, November 6, 2015. After Walker's death at age 64 in November 2023, Coleman said Walker's playing was "like a fire from heaven." From the late Seventies, when the guitarist first took the stage as co-founder of the seminal British post-punk band, the results could be pulverising and/or bone shaking — a seismic strain of the heaviest metal.

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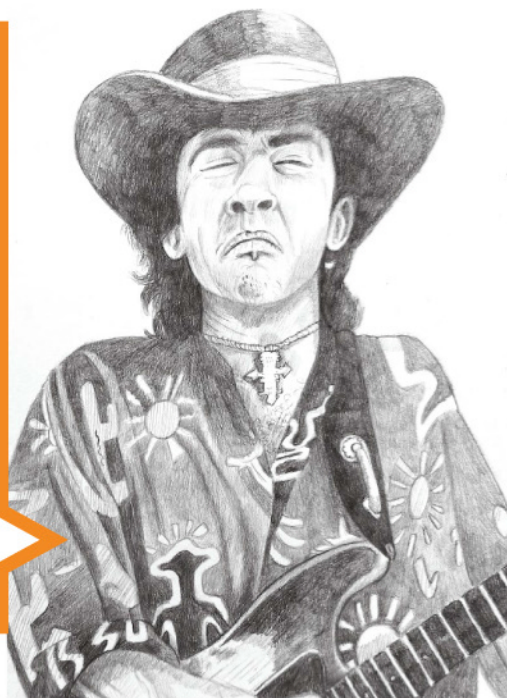


READER ART

OF THE MONTH

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

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



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN BY ERIC MONIZ



TAL WILKENFELD BY JAMIE CUNNINGHAM

DEFENDERS ⚡ of the Faith



Dave McCullough

AGE: 54

HOMETOWN: Pharr, TX

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

"Meditation," "Misty," "Message in a Bottle" and the blues

GEAR I WANT MOST: Taylor GS Mini



Andrew Green

GUITARS: Self-built T-shaped object and mahogany S-shaped object, modded Epiphone SG with P90s, Epiphone Dot, Harley Benton JA-CC60

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

Red Hot Chili Peppers "Suck My Kiss," Incubus "Nice to Know You," Led Zeppelin "Black Dog" and the blues

GEAR I WANT MOST:

Matchless 30/15 2x12 combo



Liam Murphy

AGE: 42

HOMETOWN: Eastchester, NY

GUITARS: Music Man Majesty 7-string, Gibson Les Paul goldtop, Gibson ES-335, Ibanez JPM4, Washburn Dimebolt

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING:

Rush "La Villa Strangiato," Chris Stapleton "I Was Wrong," Pantera "Floods"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Kiesel Custom, Fender Stratocaster American Pro



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RICHIE KOTZEN



PHOTO BY JEAN FRANK

The Return of Tab Benoit

AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE COMMITTED TO THE ROAD, THE LOUISIANA BLUES ARTIST IS BACK WITH A NEW 10-SONG COLLECTION, *I HEAR THUNDER*

By Jim Beaugez

▶ BETWEEN THE TIME bluesman Tab Benoit released his first solo album, *Nice and Warm*, in 1992, until *Medicine* dropped in 2011, he kept his foot on the accelerator, putting out new collections of original music nearly every year.

But after nabbing a trio of Blues Music Awards for *Medicine*, he didn't darken a studio door for years, instead concentrating on creating music live on stage. Now, after 13 years of studio silence, Benoit is revealing →

what happened — and it's a classic tale of a good-natured artist signing a bad business deal.

"I was stuck in a record deal for my entire career that I never could get out of, and when I finally got out of it, I just didn't wanna give away any more music," he says.

Albums, to him, are simply a license to create. "I never looked at it like, 'This is an album that's gonna go out to the world and they're gonna make a bunch of money on it.'" So, instead of hiring a lawyer to read through the contract he signed 30-something years ago, in his naivete, he considered the long-term deal as job security and a way to make music the center of his life.

At the conclusion of the deal, with no more obligations hanging over him, Benoit pushed ahead as a live performer. "I've always considered myself a live artist more than a recording artist, anyway, so I just kept playing shows," he says. "That communication between me and the audience is open and free, so I stuck to that. It's one thing that nobody could mess with."

Now recording for his own label, Whiskey Bayou Records, Benoit is back in business with *I Hear Thunder*, a new 10-song collection inspired by the swamps and written among the cypress trees near his fishing camp south of Houma, Louisiana.

"When I write out there, I'm just playing with the environment, and it plays back and gives me things to play with that I would never come up with in town, or in a hotel room, or in the bus or anything like that," he says.

Benoit surrounded himself with a pair of New Orleans ringers he's known for decades — legendary funk bassist George Porter Jr. of the Meters and journeyman singer/songwriter and guitarist Anders Osborne — and set out for the swamp, where they fished, laughed and observed the natural life teeming around them.

All that bayou magic seeped into the songwriting like a leaky pirogue. "Watching the Gators Roll In" is a literal observation of their time on the water, written to catalog the moment when wildlife appeared to creep from the shadows to find out what was making the ruckus.

"We get out there and start playing," he says, "and sure enough, there's an alligator coming up to the boat, and he's just sitting there in the current with us, like, *I wanna see where this is going*. I'd give him a writer's credit if I knew where to send the royalties," he says with a laugh.

Album opener "I Hear Thunder" explodes, as its title suggests, with a booming Jimmy Page-esque pentatonic riff. On its heels, "The Ghost of Gatemouth Brown" is a strutting blues workout set to a Bo Didd-



dley beat, with lyrics nodding to the legacy of the late Louisiana bluesman. Throughout the set, Benoit's play-for-the-moment philosophy pushes the performances into the red.

"I never put out music that was written to where I had to play it exactly note-for-note every time I play it," he says. "A song is basically like a race track, and I get to drive it differently every night. It's always being created and recreated all the time."

When it came time to capture the performances that became *I Hear Thunder* on tape, Benoit brought the same spontaneity of his bayou jams to his studio return. Despite the availability of the usual digital gadgetry, he recorded without overdubs, punch-ins or gratuitous effects, choosing instead to use his live setup — his road-dog '72 Fender Telecaster Thinline and signature Category Five amp — and let the performances stand on their own.

"Blues are such a perfect fit for me, because the structure of the songs is simple so you can put more emotion into the performance of the song," he says. "Each performance is its own thing, and then once it's played, that performance is done, and it will never be like that again. And I

"Music has to be heartfelt. I mean, Robert Johnson didn't go back and redo anything"

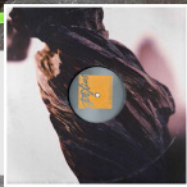
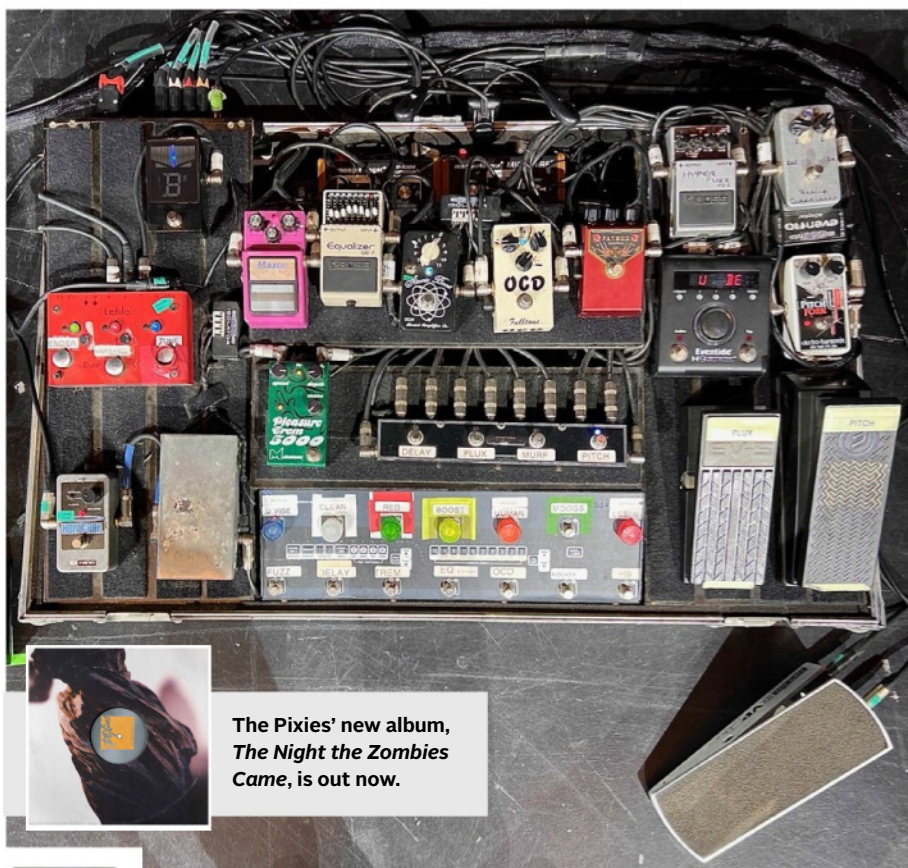
record the same way.

"Music has to be heartfelt," he continues. "I mean, Robert Johnson didn't go back and redo anything. John Lee Hooker, he walked in there and did it once. Everybody that I love just went in there and did it once, you know, and that was it. They captured the moment, and that's what I try to do."

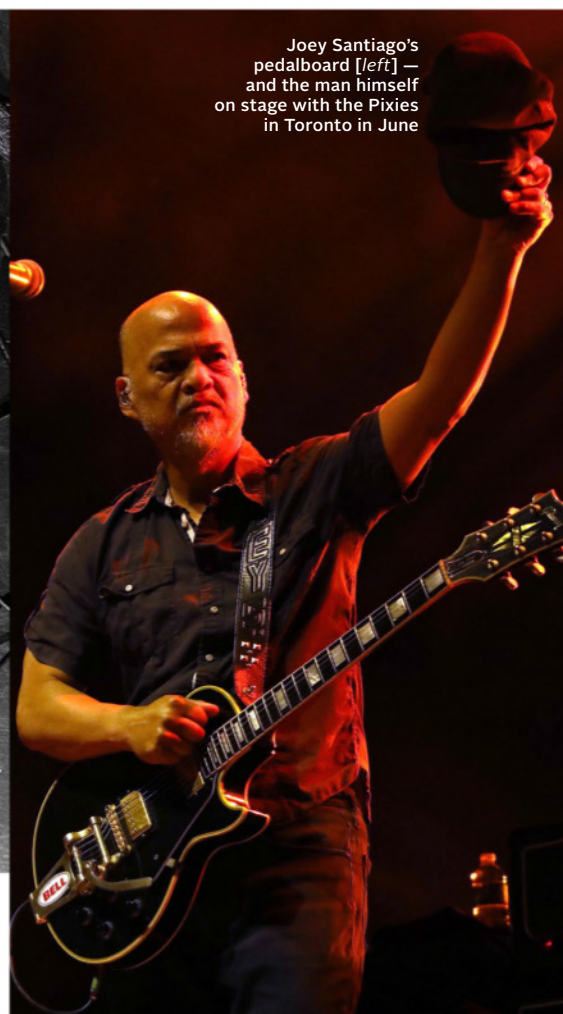
Just the mere occasion of having a "do-over" mindset can disrupt the creative moment, he says. "If we had it in mind that we could go back and fix anything, then everybody half-asses their way through every take, and you never really get one good, powerful [take]. When that red button is on, that is the audience."

And now that *I Hear Thunder* is in the world, Benoit is back on the road.

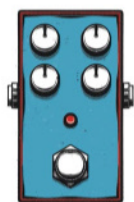
"My music is set up to be open to change and flex and bend with my feelings and the time and everything we're doing — the audience and the venue and the moment," he says. "Every night, I'm creating."



The Pixies' new album, *The Night the Zombies Came*, is out now.



Joey Santiago's pedalboard [left] — and the man himself on stage with the Pixies in Toronto in June



MY PEDALBOARD JOEY SANTIAGO

WHAT THE LONGTIME PIXIES GUITARIST SEES
WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN Interview by Andrew Daly

“BACK IN THE day, I took pride in having no pedals. All I had was a tuner. Now I have a crapload of pedals! I was talking to Charles [Black Francis], and he said, “Look, we’re playing different venues all the time...” and for me, the easiest way to carve out a sound for each venue was the pedals. But I do like the tones and the variety, and now I just enjoy collecting and using pedals.

“I have a crapload of distortion and boost pedals. I’m still looking for that sound, and I’ll have slots on my pedalboard that change maybe one or two times per tour. I’ll want another sonic thing to entertain myself on stage. Sometimes I’ll use a boost into an overdrive and maybe into another overdrive. I’ll have three things overdriving that thing; some might think that’s weird, but I have no qualms about it.

“The thing I don’t use is chorus. I just don’t like it. [Laughs] It reminds me of when I go into a coffee shop and someone is performing, and they put the chorus pedal on. It’s just not good in my ears; it sounds compromised. I like overdrive and gain because of the whole character of the sound... I find it interesting that none of them sound exactly alike. But if my pedalboard gets any bigger, I’d have to seek help!

“After my tuner, I’ve got a Lehle [SGoS Amp Switcher with Tuner Out], a pink Maxon AD999 Delay, a Boss GE-7 Equalizer, an Atomic Boost OC 44 by Stewart Amplifier Company, which goes into my Fulltone OCD [overdrive]. After that, I’ve got my Fatbee [overdrive] by Beetronics FX. I’ve got an old [two-knob] Keeley Compressor in the top corner of the pedalboard, along with an EHX Pitch Fork [pitch shifter] and

“An OCD through a Marshall is the Pixies sound”

an Eventide H9 [harmonizer, *Dark Edition*].

“At the lower area of the pedalboard, I have pedals for wah, which is my DOD and a Roland EV-5 Expression pedal. I love my wah. I can’t use other ones. I can’t do it. It sounds old-fashioned, and they don’t make them anymore.

“Aside from that, I’ve got a multi-effects station that’s color-coded, where I can activate the pedals on my board without having to find them. At the bottom of the pedalboard, I’ve got an EHX Holy Grail [reverb]; off-board, I’ve got pedals that I rotate in, like the Crowther Hot Cake [overdrive], the Boss FZ-2 Hyper Fuzz and Aclam’s The Mocker fuzz.”

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

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

“Can I pick two? [Laughs] I like the Atomic Boost. It’s a good thing to put in front of my OCD pedal. I’d go with one of those two. But an OCD through a Marshall is the Pixies sound.”

The Bad Ups

PHILADELPHIA PUNKS
LOAD UP WITH PAINT-PEELING
POWER CHORDS ON
THEIR DEBUT ALBUM

By Jim Beaugez

▶ THE JOYOUS BLASTS of distorted power chords propelling *Life of Sin*, the debut album by Philly punks the Bad Ups, are enough of an adrenaline boost that it's easy to overlook the level of songcraft guitarists Travis McKayle and Mike Dougherty have up their tattooed sleeves.

Raised on the country-and-western tunes his grandfather played at backyard parties and the reggae his Jamaican father played around the house, frontman McKayle's musical inspirations run as deep as his interest in non-trad instruments — for punk, at least. "It's like, 'three chords and the truth,' or whatever they say," McKayle says. "I always liked bluegrass a lot because the tempo is a lot closer to a NOFX beat."

But for now, he's keeping his interest in banjo and melodica to himself in favor of the caffeinated punk rock he fell in love with by listening to records released by tastemaking labels Epitaph and Fat Wreck Chords. Hell, even reggae and ska, which along with punk formed the three pillars of the band's sound on the EPs *Life Is Swell* (2019) and *91* (2023), are in short supply on their first long player.

"We were like, let's hit 'em with the punk, and then we'll expand from there as we keep going," McKayle says. "We've got more of that in the back pocket right now."

Since forming in 2018, the Bad Ups — a



[from left] Mike Dougherty, Chris Slaughter, Travis McKayle (foreground) and Sean Smith

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Reverend Double Agent W (Travis), Reverend Double Agent OG (Mike)
- **AMPS** Orange Crush Pro (Travis), Orange Dark Terror (Mike)

variation on the Caribbean patois term "baddup," meaning to treat someone poorly or violently — have played gigs with punk standard bearers Face to Face and the Bouncing Souls, among others, building a following with energetic shows that lean into their roots.

"I think a strong suit that we have is that we're not quite confined to the four walls of punk rock"

A lasting key benefit of having an eclectic musical upbringing, which included guitar lessons in the style of Chet Atkins, is an open-minded approach to songcraft. To wit, McKayle and Dougherty filled *Life of Sin* with guitar-nerd Easter eggs like the chorusy, new-wave guitar textures on songs like "Sweet and Low," and employed rabble-rousing acoustic guitar strumming on closing song "NTB."

"I think a strong suit that we have is that we're not quite confined to the four walls of punk rock," Dougherty says. "We have multiple genres we can kind of slide into and out of and do relatively well."

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[from left] Lucía de la Garza,
Mila de la Garza, Eloise Wong,
and Bela Salazar



The Linda Lindas

"MUSIC IS ALWAYS THE PRIORITY — SO I JUST DROP IN TO SCHOOL WHEN I CAN." NOW THAT'S WHAT WE LIKE TO HEAR!

By Mark McStea

L.A. ROCKERS THE Linda Lindas grabbed everybody's attention when their debut single, "Racist, Sexist Boy," became a viral sensation in 2021. On the back of that success, Epitaph signed the band, releasing their debut album, *Growing Up*, in 2022. They're just about to drop their sophomore album, *No Obligation*, having spent the summer on tour with Green Day and Rancid. Not bad for a band with three of their four members still in high school and the fourth just starting college. Guitarists Bela Salazar and Lucia de la Garza were excited to grab some downtime to discuss all things guitar.

What were you listening to that inspired you to start playing?

SALAZAR: My grandpa would play a lot of mariachi music for me when I was growing up. He bought me my first guitar, a classical guitar, and it's the one I've written all my Linda Lindas songs on.

DE LA GARZA: I think I tended to be in awe of the guitar players when we went to shows. My family took me to a lot of all-ages punk

shows, day-time matinees, that kind of stuff. When I first started playing, that was pretty much the music I was learning.

Did you immediately know the kind of music you wanted to play when you first got together?

DE LA GARZA: We were doing covers of old punk and rock music at first. It was just songs we liked. Then, as we kinda started growing as musicians, we started writing songs that more broadly reflected our own individual musical tastes. We were definitely having fun, and we really liked playing and performing together. We weren't writing songs before we started the band.

What guitars and amps did you start out with — and what are you using now?

SALAZAR: My first electric guitar was a Fender Tele that I got for free. I'd go into this one antique store every day to play it. One day the owner just gave it to me! Now I play Gibson Les Pauls, the Modern Lite ones. For amps we both use a Bad Cat Lynx

with 4x12 cabinets.

DE LA GARZA: My first guitar was a Fender Duo-Sonic, and I kept it in my room during the pandemic, so a lot of the first songs I ever wrote were on that guitar as well. I think my first amp was a Supro. Right now I play a Gibson SG and a Fender Strat.

How do you work out guitar parts and decide who does what?

DE LA GARZA: Most of the time, we play the same thing. But every now and then we want to switch it up a little, and then when we're practicing, one of us will come up with an idea for more of a lead part that likely makes it onto the record. We also tend to change the parts for live performances, just to keep it fresh.

It must be hard to schedule live shows when you're all still in school.

DE LA GARZA: We try to schedule shows around it most of the time, and if we can't, we'll end up skipping and making up work on the road and when we get back. The band is our first priority, but it's hard to know where we'll be in the future, so college is always a possibility later on.

SALAZAR: I'm in college studying fashion design. Music is always the priority — so I just drop in to school when I can.

Within the Ruins

JOE COCCHI REVISITS HIS CLASSIC *PHENOMENA* TONE (AND A COUPLE OF COMIC BOOKS) TO CRUSH THROUGH A SUPERHEROIC SEQUEL

By Gregory Adams

▶ FOR *WITHIN THE Ruins*' new comic book-themed *Phenomena II* album, vocalist Steve Tinnon obsessively thumbed through back issues of *Blade* and *Superman* to craft his lyrical character studies. As for founding guitarist Joe Cocchi, he ended up analyzing a different kind of superhero: himself. Ten years on from the metal bruisers' initial aural ComiCon, Cocchi wanted the sequel to both honor and expand upon his virtuosic canon.

"It was fun to be like, 'Let's look back to where we were and where we were coming from,'" the guitarist says of revisiting the tone palette and techniques of their first *Phenomena*. "It was almost like ghostwriting, in a way. You listen to a band, and then you go, 'Yeah, that's up my alley... maybe I can pick some highlights and try to nod to the old albums.'"

Most specifically, that meant dialing back into the hyper-glitchy tremolo harmony sections Cocchi had developed through the making of 2014's *Phenomena*, a busy texturing that come across like a symphony of Morse code messages, or a metalcore interpretation of house musician Darude's frantically syncopated "Sandstorm." *II* conjures that hard-gated, square wave choppi-ness across its venomous "Demon Killer" and the ruthlessly chugged, yet dementedly dancy "Level 12" instrumental.

And yet, there are key ways in which the sequel stands apart from the first edition. Cocchi once used an old Boss tremolo pedal to yield his tremorous harmonies, but now works in-the-box via ProTools. While a personnel snafu led *Within the Ruins* to program the low-end on the first *Phenomena*, current bassist Paolo Galang is delivering IRL heaviness. Cocchi also notes that



Within the Ruins'
Joe Cocchi
(and the back of
his pedalboard)

"There's a ton of delay on these solos; it makes them more metal and spacey"

he was chunking out rhythms on a new Sub-C-tuned Caparison Dellinger II seven-string, and got wetter than ever before with his delay-drenched soloing.

"I never bothered with using delay pedals because it was another pain in the ass to use live... but there's a ton of delay on these solos; it makes them more metal and spacey."

While Cocchi admits he's not as well-versed in comic lore as Tinnon, he did his best to emulate Marvel vigilante the Punisher on "Castle in the Sky," a melodeath mash-out of armor-piercing precision

trilling, wham-wonky guitar dynamics and hand-on-the-pump shotgun effects. He more specifically alludes to composer Ron Wasserman's Nineties-era *X-Men* cartoon theme for *Phenomena II*'s closer, "Enigma II."

"Hopefully he's cool with that," Cocchi says of paying homage to the super-shreddy soundtrack, which also reentered the zeitgeist this year through another sequel: Disney's *X-Men '97* series.

"I always try to sneak in little things. There was some *Super Mario* and *Inspector Gadget* in the original 'Enigma,' and kids picked up on that," Cocchi says of slipping sonic Easter eggs into his music. "I think when people find those little things, it's fun for them, too."

INQUIRER RICHIE KOTZEN

FIRST GUITARS, FIRST GIGS AND THAT TIME HE GOT REALLY, REALLY, REALLY SICK ON STAGE

Q: What was your first guitar?
Something from a yard sale when I was seven. I took it to my guitar teacher on the first day of my lessons, but he said, "I can't teach you on this. You need to get a proper instrument." So I went out and got a Gibson Marauder and learned on that — so that was my first real guitar.

Q: What was the first song you learned to play?
"Purple Haze." I learned it in the open position, though, and it didn't sound like "Purple Haze." I remember getting into an argument with my mother when I told her, "This is 'Purple Haze,'" and she said, "No, it's not. I saw Jimi Hendrix live, and 'Purple Haze' didn't sound anything like that!" So I got very upset by what she said, as technically I was playing "Purple Haze," but because it was in the open position, it didn't sound like it to someone who wasn't a musician.

Q: What was your first gig like?
The first time I got in front of people was at a school assembly, and I played "Jingle Bell Rock." It was within that first year of learning guitar. I was very nervous as I still didn't know how to tune my guitar, so I was in a panic. Luckily, there was an older kid there that played in the jazz ensemble, and who was very good, so he tuned it for me so that I could go out and play the song.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?
I was playing in a full-time bar band when I was a teenager, and we were doing this circuit of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. And as the guys in the group were older, they were making a living from it — we played four nights a week. One night in Delaware, I remember being very sick from some kind of food poisoning. I needed to have a bucket on the side of the stage because I was that sick. It was my worst time ever on stage, and I can still remember it.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?
My signature Fender Telecaster, the initial version of which came into production in 1996. It is my main guitar, and one I've been playing for a good 14 years. It came off the rack, but I sanded the finish off and added this little tuning device, an electronic LED disc-tuner — made by a



Winery Dogs
Billy Sheehan [left]
and Richie Kotzen
perform in London,
January 31, 2016

company called N-Tune — that's built into the guitar. It plays and feels great, too, and because it is so played-in — and I'm the only person that has ever played it — it feels like it's part of me.

Q: The building is burning down; what one guitar from your collection would you save?
I've experienced this first-hand. We lived through the largest natural disaster fire in Southern California history back in 2018. The Woolsey Fire came through my canyon, and we had to evacuate. I didn't take any guitars! My wife was luckily out of town, so I evacuated and took my dog, who's now passed away, plus a bunch of hard drives that had all my music ideas, a copy of my insurance policy and my wife's five-string Music Man bass.

Q: When was the last time you practiced and what did you play?
I don't practice like I used to when I was a teenager. These days, the guitar is just a tool for writing music and performing it. But what I will do is, when I write something, I'll record it. This way, months later when I have to go back and figure out what I did, I'll learn to sing it and play it at the same time. So that becomes my practice.

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

I think with the guitar, or any instrument, you're always growing. If you ever feel like you've gotten as good as you're ever going to get, that's not a good thing. My attitude is that it's a constantly evolving thing. What I love about the guitar is the ability to be expressive on it. I'm one of those guitar players that doesn't work out solos. I don't know what I'm going to play when I get on stage. So there's a bit of excitement in that for me as I love reacting as a musician.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self if you could?

Keep at it, follow my instincts, believe in myself and be open-minded. I always made sure I played with guys who knew a little bit more than me in other styles. My guitar playing is kind of what it is. I'm not a guy who sits around and thinks about guitar playing or practicing and technique. I think about the stuff that's in my head; the melodies and lyrics and song ideas, and getting it out of the speakers. I function in that way. I don't function like a guitar player. I have to rid myself of this noise in my head, which is the creativity. So the guitar is just a vehicle for me to use. — **Joe Matera**

The Courettes

A PAIR OF FUZZ-TINGED GARAGE ROCK MANIACS EXPAND THEIR SOUND — AND THE RESULTS ARE EXQUISITE

By Mark McStea

▶ EXPLOSIVE GARAGE ROCKERS the Courettes released their debut album, *Here Are the Courettes*, way back in 2015. Brazilian singer/guitarist Flavia Couri's playing sounds like a crazy mix of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Johnny Ramone. Meanwhile, her husband, Denmark's Martin Couri, attacks the poor drum kit with a ferocity that makes *The Muppet Show's* Animal look immobile. Their new album, *The Soul of... the Fabulous Courettes* (Damaged Goods Records), channels Motown, Phil Spector and Sixties pop. Sonically, it's a long way from their debut record, but for Flavia, it's all coming from the same place. Below, Couri gives us the low-down.

The new album has some pretty lavish production values, including lots of extra instrumentation. Is this how your first album would've sounded if you'd had the budget?

All the influences you hear on the new album were always there for us. We used to live by this dogma that we can't put overdubs on the records because we wouldn't be able to play the songs live. But for our second album, *We Are the Courettes*, we decided to add a few things, and we've continued to add more instrumentation to each subsequent album. We made the decision to treat the live shows and the studio as two separate things.

Would you like to take a bigger band out on the road?

It's hard to find the right people. It's not just the musicianship — it's about personal energies and how everyone gets on with each other. We've been using a bass player for some shows recently, which is a pleasure for me, as it takes some of the responsibilities off my shoulders. We've been playing as a duo for 10 years, and I think that's our identity as a band.

What got you into playing?

I started on bass in Brazil, when I was 11,



The Courettes' Flavia Couri does her thing

probably because of my mom's Beatles records. I started on acoustic but then saved up for a bass. I was a big fan of John Paul Jones and James Jamerson. I saw so much great music on MTV growing up: punk, indie, shoegaze and Riot Grrrl. I played bass in bands then switched to guitar. The Courettes is the second band I've played guitar in.

You use some unusual gear.

I had been playing a red Billy Childish Cadillac guitar made by Belgian company, Fab, that was inspired by the Duchess [Norma-Jean Wofford], who played with Bo Diddley. However, Fab's Fabian Schweiger has now built me my own signature Fab guitar, a Flavia Cadillac, in black and white, which I'm really excited to have. I use an old Selmer Zodiac Twin 50-watt combo from the mid Sixties. For effects, on record I use a 1962 Gibson Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone, but live I use a Danelectro Eisenhower fuzz. I also

use a Maestro Mariner tremolo, a Danelectro DE-1 Dan-Echo and a Danelectro The Breakdown gain pedal. I have a signature fuzz pedal — the Fuzz-ette — coming out in 2025, made by Reuss Musical Instruments.

How'd you hook up with Martin?

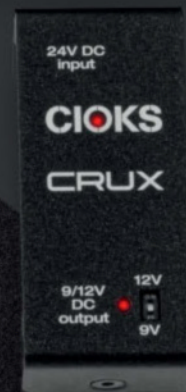
We met when his former band was supporting my former band on tour in Brazil. We had no plans to get together musically — it was about two years into our relationship before we ever started to try out some songs. From the first chord, we both thought wow, and I quit my band and moved to Denmark. We have so much in common in terms of our work outlook and philosophy. I guess it's funny; one day he sat next to me on that tour bus, and he's been by my side ever since. [Laughs]

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WELL THAT WAS an interesting 12 months, wasn't it? 2024 proved to be quite the rollercoaster, with its fair share of ups, downs and in-betweens. Some might say, if you'll pardon the pun, the biggest news of the year was the return of Britrock superheroes **Oasis**, with the Gallagher brothers finally managing to put their differences aside and reunite one of the most beloved guitar bands of all time. Their Live '25 Tour will include stadium dates in the U.S., U.K. and elsewhere next summer, and singer Liam has even hinted at the possibility of new music arriving in the near future.

But that wasn't the only comeback. Another pair of brothers — Rich and Chris Robinson of the **the Black Crowes** — released new music in the form of *Happiness Bastards* following their reunion just before the pandemic. Then there's the rebirth of nu-metal heavyweights **Linkin Park** with new singer Emily Armstrong, the debut album from **Kerry King** and his new band, **Steve Vai** and **Adrian Belew** joining forces on the Beat tour, plus **David Gilmour's** first album in nearly a decade.

Beyond the welcome-backs, there were a few somber farewells — from the deaths of **John Mayall** and **Dickey Betts** to **Wayne Kramer** and **Steve Albini**, plus the official retirements of influential greats such as **Aerosmith**, **Sepultura** and **KISS**. In terms of more curious headlines, *Gremlins* actor **Corey Feldman** went viral in August for, shall we say, his rather interesting take on shredding while on tour with **Limp Bizkit**, resulting in an open debate as to whether he was playing at all. Fred Durst even brought a chair on stage at a later show just to see what the fuss was about, cementing Feldman's role in one of the most outlandishly bizarre events of the year.

As for industry news, Sam Ash announced it would be closing all of its retail stores back in May; a few months later, Fernandes Guitars — founded in 1969 and renowned for their Sustainer pickup and Burny range — also filed for bankruptcy.

So, here we go. Strap yourself in for *GW's* rundown of the last 12 months, from the good and the bad to the plain unexpected...

NEWS

OF

THE

(GUITAR)

WORLD

SIT BACK AND GET READY
TO RELIVE THE BIGGEST, BADDEST
AND DOWNRIGHT CRAZIEST GUITAR-
CENTRIC HEADLINES OF 2024

JANUARY 2025
PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT



“ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT BLUES IS THE STORIES THAT IT TELLS, ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING”

— Slash



[from left] Samantha Fish, Slash and Christone “Kingfish” Ingram in Los Angeles on May 7

THE NEWS OF 2024

SLASH GETS THE BLUES

SURE, HE’S BEEN keeping busy enough with Guns N’ Roses and his solo band (fronted by Myles Kennedy), but when he’s in creative mode, Slash has proven himself to be an unstoppable force. This year’s blues album, announced back in March and titled *Orgy of the Damned*, ended up being one of the most talked-about releases of 2024, with the Les Paul devotee roping in star guests like AC/DC frontman Brian Johnson, Gary Clark Jr. and Demi Lovato for modern takes on old-school classics by Robert Johnson, Peter Green and Howlin’ Wolf. “One of the great things about blues is the stories that it tells, especially for people who are struggling,” Slash observed in his September *GW* cover story. The guitarist also put together the S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival tour, enlisting modern luminaries such as Eric Gales, Samantha Fish and Christone “Kingfish” Ingram for a joyous celebration of all things flat five. The top-hatted gunslinger also joined forces with Ryan Gosling and Wolfgang Van Halen for a show-stealing performance of *Barbie* tune “I’m Just Ken” at this year’s Oscars ceremony.

JIMMY PAGE UNVEILS HIS DOUBLENECK

WHEN WE THINK of the Gibson EDS-1275 doubleneck, several players come to mind — from Slash and Don Felder to John McLaughlin and Alex Lifeson. But for most people, it’s Jimmy Page they picture holding the iconic guitar first introduced in 1963, strumming those immortal chords to “Stairway to Heaven” on its upper-half 12-string. The launch of his Gibson Custom/Murphy Lab replica coincided with the opening of the Gibson Garage in London, where Page was joined by fellow guitar greats Tony Iommi and Brian May. But that’s not the only big news from Gibson; Michael

JEN ROSENSTEIN/GUITAR WORLD

Words by **AMIT SHARMA**



Jimmy Page with his namesake Gibson 1969 EDS-1275 Double-neck Collector's Edition

Schenker revealed in August that he's working with the company on a signature Flying V — and a signature model for Lamb of God's Mark Morton has been teased. Watch this space!

PUMPKINS PICK KIKI WONG

AFTER 16 YEARS with the band, Jeff Schroeder announced his departure from the Smashing Pumpkins late last year, and the iconic alt-rockers soon announced they'd be holding a worldwide open-call audition for a live replacement. More than 10,000 applicants later, it was decided that Kiki Wong was the right person for the job. "I never thought little ol' 15-year-old me playing metal guitar in the bedroom would amount to this moment," she said not long after the announcement, adding "it goes to show that hard work and perseverance truly pays off if you're

Kiki Wong [left] in action with Billy Corgan in Boston on August 7



"I NEVER THOUGHT 15-YEAR-OLD ME PLAYING METAL GUITAR IN THE BEDROOM WOULD AMOUNT TO THIS MOMENT"

— Kiki Wong

willing to push through the tough stuff." The guitarist played her first show alongside co-guitarists Billy Corgan and James Iha in Birmingham, England, in June, with many praising how naturally she fit into the legendary Chicago group's dreamy wall of fuzz.

JOE DUPLANTIER HAS ESP

AS IF WITNESSING Gojira's extreme-metal take on French revolution anthem "Mea Culpa (Ah! Ça Ira)" at the Olympics with opera singer Marina Viotti wasn't extraordinary enough, eagle-eyed fans were quick to spot something peculiar in singer/guitarist Joe Duplantier's hands. Instead of his signature T-style San Dimas Charvel, it was a custom chrome-bodied, reverse-headstock ESP XJ-1 fitted with a single bridge pickup, presumably his DiMarzio Fortitude humbucker, as well as an Evertune bridge. The official announcement of his endorsement came a few weeks later, with ESP Artist Relations Director Tony Rauser hailing the performance as "a historic for Gojira and metal," noting how the inclusion of an ESP guitar at the world's foremost sports competition, an event watched by billions,

was something that felt "truly wild." Other Olympics news included a cloaked figure shredding on a vintage Veleno aluminum electric, later revealed to be Noé Efrira, an associate of the French band Phoenix, and H.E.R. performing the national anthem on a white Strat custom-built by Fender luthier Brian Thrasher, who had previously overseen one-off Starcasters for Blink-182's Tom DeLonge.

FAREWELL TO GUITAR PLAYER

LATE IN THE year, there came the sad news of the closures of three key publications in our industry. Along with *GW* (we're still here!), magazines like *Guitar Player*, *Total Guitar* and *Guitar Techniques* have shaped how we play, use gear and emulate our favorite players — and our world is poorer in their absence.

VAI & BELEW GET THE BEAT

THOUGH KING CRIMSON, the highly influential English progressive rock band, are spoken of in the past tense these days, founder Robert Fripp ended up giving his blessing to latter member Adrian Belew for a semi-official celebration of his time

Dave Navarro [left]
and Perry Farrell,
pre-fisticuffs

in the band. Exploring the music heard on the group's Eighties albums — namely *Discipline*, *Beat* and *Three of a Perfect Pair* — the Beat tour consists of Belew on vocals and guitar, joined by bassist Tony Levin (who played on those albums), Steve Vai and Tool drummer Danny Carey. “The first show of a tour can be like a gauntlet,” Vai reflected on social media after the opening night. “You can rehearse until you’re blue in the face, but once you hit the stage the lights go out and there’s a live audience eager to be entertained, all bets are off. But the band delivered well and we were all relieved to get through a good first show.” Stay tuned; we might want to revisit this in a future issue.

NAVARRO RETURNS, GETS ASSAULTED

JANE'S ADDICTION GUITARIST Dave Navarro ended up missing their reunion tour co-headlining arenas with the Smashing Pumpkins in 2022 as a result of his battle with Long Covid. He was replaced by

Queens of the Stone Age and A Perfect Circle multi-instrumentalist Troy Van Leeuwen, eventually making his return to the stage after some well-needed rest in May of this year. But it proved to be short-lived. Singer Perry Farrell attacked the guitarist on stage in September during a performance at Boston's Leader Bank Pavilion. A few days later, it was confirmed the rest of the tour had been canceled, with the group identifying the singer's “continuing pattern of behavior and mental health difficulties” as the cause, leaving them with no alternative while also hoping “he finds the help he needs.”

DIAMOND ROWE SCORES A SIGNATURE JACKSON

IN OCTOBER, JACKSON revealed that they'd partnered with Tetrarch guitarist Diamond Rowe for a history-making signature guitar. With the release of what has been badged the Pro Series Signature

Tetrarch's
Diamond Rowe
with her signature
Jackson DR12MG
EVTN6

Diamond Rowe DR12MG EVTN6, Rowe became the first female in the history of Jackson with a signature guitar — and Jackson's first African-American female signature artist. She also became only the second Black female guitar hero to be honored with her own signature model — and the very first in heavy music — following H.E.R.'s history-making Fender Strat. “I’m so excited about this new venture with the Jackson family,” Rowe said in a press release. “This is a historic collaboration.” It's been a quick turnaround for Rowe, who has only been a Jackson endorsee since March.

LINKIN PARK ARE BACK, BUT...

SEVEN YEARS ON from the tragic death of frontman Chester Benington, nu-metal titans Linkin Park made their long-awaited return in September with new singer Emily Armstrong. Livestreaming their very first performance for the world to experience from Warner Studios in Burbank, the group then announced a small handful of dates across the world and the arrival of new album *From Zero*, supported by lead single “The Emptiness Machine.” A few days later, lead guitarist Brad Delson announced that he'd be absent for the group's upcoming tour, with Alex Feder filling in for him, but he assured fans he'd remain creatively involved behind the scenes. “Alex is a world-class musician, a kind and thoughtful friend, and we are truly fortunate he'll be contributing his unique talent to our LP universe,” said Delson, noting that “fresh eyes, honest appreciation and devoted teamwork have brought us to this special moment.”

[from left]
Tony Levin,
Steve Vai,
Adrian
Belew and
Danny
Carey

JACKSON (ROWE) GIBSON (PAGE) ALISON DYER (BEAT) MATTHEW J. LEE/BOSTON GLOBE VIA GETTY IMAGES (WONG) KIERAN FROST/REDFERNS (JANE'S) →



DAVID GILMOUR SURPRISES US

ALMOST A DECADE on from his last studio album, the Pink Floyd veteran released his fifth solo full-length, *Luck and Strange*, in September, reminding us of his abilities as a master storyteller, melting minds one bluesy bend at a time. The singer and guitarist went as far as saying it was his finest work since *The Dark Side of the Moon*. As well as the Strats we've known him to play throughout his career, he also revealed he'd used a Gibson ES-335 for the solo on "Dark and Velvet Nights," admitting he didn't have "a huge history with Gibson guitars" and the recent acquisition was "a very, very different sort of guitar to what I'm used to." Elsewhere, in quite possibly the most surprising crossover of 2024, the guitarist guested on Body Count's cover of "Comfortably Numb," noodling the whole way through almost like a backing track. Gilmour revealed he was originally approached by frontman Ice-T for permission to use the song and ended up offering to play on it. "I like the new lyrics; they're talking about the world we're living in now, which is quite scary," he later reflected.

THE BROS ARE BACK IN TOWN

GIVEN THEIR EXTENSIVE warring and all-too-public exchanges, it'd be fair to say the Gallagher brothers are in a class of their own when it comes to sibling rivalry. Which is why news of their long-awaited return dominated headlines around the world. It's the reunion many of us were hoping for but few ever

expected to materialize, and ultimately a big moment for guitar music in general. Those overdriven cowboy chords and stadium-conquering chorus hooks will be omnipresent throughout 2025, and who knows, they might even result in more guitars being picked up. Though no official confirmation of the resurrected lineup has been made at the time of writing, it looks as if Noel Gallagher will be joined by latter Oasis member and High Flying



[left] The notorious Gallagher brothers have put aside their differences to finally give fans what they want — a huge world tour in 2025; [above] A rare Dan Armstrong Ampeg Plexi owned by Mark Knopfler, displayed ahead of the guitarist's 120-item auction at Christie's; [below] A familiar sight: David Gilmour with a black Strat (just not the Black Strat)

Bird Gem Archer on guitar, and original member Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs will also be likely to make an appearance. In other Gallagher-related news, the Cherry Sunburst Epiphone Les Paul Standard used on *Definitely Maybe* (and in the "Supersonic" music video) sold at auction for just over \$175,000, which works out as roughly 250 times more than what a new model would retail for today.

STRAIT TO THE AUCTION BLOCK

A COLLECTION BELONGING to Dire Straits legend Mark Knopfler went under the hammer in February, fetching over \$11 million. 120 items were offloaded through Christie's in London, including his 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard, which sold for \$884,000, setting a new auction record. Then there was his 1988 Pensa-Suhr MK-1, which he played at Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday tribute concert at Wembley Stadium, and the red Schecter Tele-type used on "Walk of Life." At least a quarter of the proceeds were shared across three charities close to Knopfler's heart, and Teenage Cancer Trust collected the total \$535,000 raised from a 2021 Gibson Les Paul goldtop signed by Jeff Beck, David Gilmour, Slash and more. "I hope they all get played," Knopfler told BBC News, adding, "I don't think they do too well living in a case all their lives."

RETURN OF THE (KERRY) KING

KERRY KING HAS certainly been forthcoming about his dissatisfaction with Slayer calling it a day since the group played their "final" show in November 2019. The deci-



"THE SLAYER REUNION IS JUST A REASON TO PLAY A FEW SHOWS WITH THE GUYS AND THEN JUMP BACK IN THE COFFIN"

— Kerry King

sion led to him writing and recording for his new solo band — launching in February this year, with Phil Demmel [ex-*Machine Head*] joining him on guitar for the May debut release. But just a matter of days following the news, Slayer announced their "unretirement" with a handful of select festival dates scheduled for September. When quizzed by this writer about the timing of it all, he revealed it came as a surprise for him, too. "Everyone thinks Slayer is getting back together, but that couldn't be further from the truth," he reasoned. "We're not going to record anymore; that final tour was definitely our final tour" and describing the festival dates as "just a reason to have some fun with the guys, play a few shows and then jump back in the coffin."

THE RISE OF GRACE BOWERS

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE of young guitar talents making their mark on the world, but it feels like Grace Bowers sits at the forefront of the revolution. The 18-year-old Nashville prodigy released her debut album, *Wine on Venus* (recorded with her band, the Hodge Podge), in August and established herself as a force to be reckoned with, building a dedicated following, thanks to her well-rounded skill set and sense of musical maturity. She landed her Gibson endorsement at the tender age of 14, though her main weapon of choice is, in fact, 45 years older than she is. "I have a 1961 Gibson SG that was

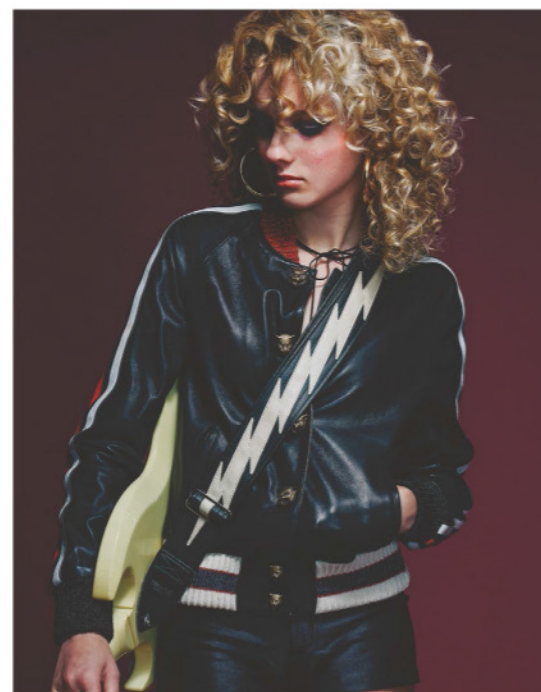
gifted to me," she told us at the beginning of the year. "It's my absolute favorite — all original with P90 pickups. I play it on almost everything and I'm very connected to it. I've been pairing it with a Fender Reverb and a sparse pedalboard including a Grindstone Audio Solutions Nightshade overdrive, an Echoplex tape delay and a wah. That's it!"

GUITAR CENTER SAVES THE DAY

WHAT DO YOU do when you get to the venue but your gear has been delayed in transit? Unless you're able to borrow what you need from another band, you'll probably have to visit the nearest guitar shop. Which is precisely what Primus did when they arrived to play Sick New World Festival in April, with their equipment running late due to extreme weather. Maybe some bands would've struggled without their tried-and-tested tools, but not Primus, with fans commenting how the California trio sounded as good as ever come stage time. "Just further proof that the gear doesn't matter when you have the skills to pay the bills," one person noted, with another fan agreeing how "Les sounds like Les on any bass" and declaring their love for how "he kept the tags on."

TOWNSHEND GETS HIS FIRST JACKSON

IT'S NO SECRET that the Who guitarist Pete Townshend tends to stick with the more old-school guitar designs — from



[left] After releasing his debut solo album in May, Kerry King had his sights set firmly on the hotly anticipated Slayer reunion shows; [above] SG-loving Grace Bowers, whose prized 1961 model is 45 years older than she is

Strats to Les Pauls and SGs, not to mention Rickenbackers. What he's not known for is playing heavy metal speed machines made by companies like Jackson. But that all changed at the beginning of the year. In an interview with *Guitarist*, he explained how he'd been impressed by the light-gauge strings, double-locking tremolo system and whammy bar on his latest acquisition. "I was playing faster, no question," he said. "I was playing at three times the speed I normally play at... because these guitars are built for a particular kind of thing. So I'm still learning and I'm still having fun with guitars."

COREY FELDMAN SHREDS

YOU PROBABLY KNOW of Corey Feldman from Eighties movies like *The Goonies*, *Gremlins* and *The Lost Boys*. So the last thing you'd expect from him is frenetic soloing, whammy bar theatrics and Tom Morello-style killswitch abuse on an Eighties-style guitar, while opening up for nu-metal originals Limp Bizkit. Footage went viral in August, with commenters debating as to whether the actor/musician was in fact executing the notes himself or simply faking it and pretending to — you know, as actors often do. Feldman



later confirmed he was in fact playing every note; one YouTuber said, “I can say 100 percent he’s not faking,” while adding, “he’s playing pretty badly, but he is playing.” Does this mean a Corey Feldman shred album will be landing in 2025? Probably not, but never say never.

MANCUSO JAMS WITH BONAMASSA

SICILIAN VIRTUOSO MATTEO Mancuso made an appearance with Joe Bonamassa and his band in April, guesting on “Breaking Up Somebody’s Home” to a delighted crowd in Berlin. Joe Bo laughingly shrugged at the notion of trying to keep up with the whizz kid on stage with him and had been kind enough to give him a pep talk before the performance. “Joe was great at making me comfortable — he’s such a nice guy,” Mancuso told us a few months after, while also giving us the background on his latest track, “Paul Position.” The new song had originally been composed as a demo for the Bacci baritone Mancuso had been using and ended up loosely serving as a tribute to Mr. Big/Racer X shred master Paul Gilbert, hence the name. The guitarist was also quick to point out his endorsement deal with Yamaha remains very much intact, the Bacci partnership is exclusively for baritone models — which Yamaha no longer make.

70 YEARS OF THE STRAT

MARCH SAW FENDER celebrating seven decades of their best-selling model by roping a whole host of guitar talents for a rousing cover of Jimi Hendrix

classic “Voodoo Child (Slight Return).” Tom Morello and Nile Rodgers were joined by Ari O’Neal, Rebecca Lovell, Tash Sultana, Jimmie Vaughan, Mateus Asato, Tyler Bryant, Rei and Biffy Clyro frontman Simon Neil. A month later the company announced that they would be returning to NAMM for 2025, having been absent since their last attendance in 2020. “When NAMM closed during Covid and we were compelled to come up with a plan B, we developed this online dealer event and reallocated the money we would have spent going to the show into increased marketing,” revealed CEO Andy Mooney, while admitting he’d been waiting for the right time for the company to make their return. “We’re thrilled to be back, we missed being there, and I’m excited to see everyone again back in Anaheim.”

SAM ASH CLOSURE

IN MARCH, RETAIL giant Sam Ash Music announced it was preparing to close 18 of its 44 locations across the U.S., including its Manhattan flagship store. Two months later, the company revealed it’d be going out of business and liquidating the remaining 27 stores, bringing an end to 100 years of service to the music community. The revenue losses were blamed on rising rental costs as well as other challenges faced by business in the aftermath of the pandemic. Not long after, Mexican-based retailer Gonher ended up purchasing the remaining assets at bankruptcy auction for \$15.2 million, and the Sam Ash online store was reopened for sales.

IN OTHER NEWS...

OTHER MAJOR HEADLINES from the year include the Rory Gallagher auction at Bonhams in London, led by the guitarist’s 1961 Strat. The instrument had originally been bought for £100 on credit from the owner of Crowley’s Music Store in the Irish city of Cork in 1963. Meanwhile, George Harrison’s circa-1958 Resonet Futurama — his main Beatles guitar in the band’s very early days (before he bought a used Gretsch Duo Jet) — hit the auction block in November. Frank Marino, who announced his retirement from touring in 2021, launched his own pedal company, Frank Marino Audio — starting with the Dragonfly overdrive, Juggernaut fuzz and Maxoom clean boost — all hand-assembled by Marino and Ryan Szawlowski, the son of his studio engineer Billy Szawlowski. And

that’s not the only musician who decided to get stuck into the gear trade; singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran also unveiled his own looper pedal line. Then there was the debut of the first production rubber-bridge guitar from Orangewood, giving musicians access to the muted sounds of the past, and Wes Borland’s Tonality plug-in by STL Tones. As for new music, Gary Clark Jr. released his fourth studio album, *JPEG Raw*, roping in Stevie Wonder and George Clinton for monumental results. The year also saw key releases from Judas Priest, the Jesus Lizard, Opeth, Jerry Cantrell, Marcus King, the Pixies, Black Country Communion, Phish, Myles Kennedy, Jack White, Marty Friedman, DragonForce, Bon Jovi, Richie Kotzen, Sue Foley, Devin Townsend, Warren Haynes, Michael Schenker and Mr. Big. And let’s not forget about the return of Creed! **GW**



IN MEMORIAM

Many a guitar great left us in 2024; there was the passing of **John Mayall** in July, a man who was often referred to as “the godfather of British blues” and famously championed guitar heroes like Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Mick Taylor over the course of his distinguished career. Then there was Allman Brothers Band founder **Dickey Betts** (pictured above), MC5 leader **Wayne Kramer** and **Bobby Tench**, who famously worked alongside Freddie King, Jeff Beck and Van Morrison. In May, it was announced that **Steve Albini** had died from a heart attack at age 61, with fans around the world paying their respects to the critically acclaimed producer who also fronted noise rock bands like Big Black and Shellac. This year we also bid farewell to Magnum guitarist **Tony Clarkin**, rock ‘n’ roll original **Duane Eddy**, Cockney Rebel frontman **Steve Harley**, jazz master **Russell Malone** and blues veteran **Carl Weathersby**.

HISTORIC BRITISH TONE

30
WATTS



The **NEW** Celestion 100

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



Les Ward

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

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



CELESTION

Wolfgang
Van Halen
with the new
EVH SA-126

JANUARY 2025
PAGE THIRTY-SIX

OUR FAVORITE GEAR OF THE YEAR

THERE WAS AN ONSLAUGHT OF NEW GUITAR PRODUCTS RELEASED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS. HERE ARE THE ONES THAT HAD US ALL TALKING

Words by **AMIT SHARMA**

THE BEST OF 2024

EVH

SA-126 SPECIAL

\$1,799, evhgear.com

GOOD THINGS, AS the old adage goes, come to those who wait. Having been teased by Wolfgang Van Halen two years ago, following an intensive period of testing on the road and in the studio, the SA-126 Special semi-hollow was finally made available to the public in May. Given that it was the first instrument designed without any input from Eddie, it marked a new chapter for EVH Gear, while still referencing the guitar hero's January 26 birthday. It comes with a chambered mahogany body, a basswood center block and a pair of hot humbuckers designed by Fender pickup guru Tim Shaw for more aggression and punch than typical guitars of this ilk. Despite this, it can handle high-gain situations without feeding back and also deliver more chimey tones on cleaner settings. "The SA-126 is way beyond a typical semi-hollow," Wolfgang told us. "It's like a hot rod, but with a souped-up modern engine. Nothing like this existed until we made it."

WARM AUDIO

WARM BENDER FUZZ

\$199, warmaudio.com

STUDIO SPECIALISTS WARM

Audio have certainly come a long way since launching their first pedals back in 2020, recreating the mythical tones of the Klon, ZenDrive and OCD for a fraction of the price — and with great success. This year's Warm Bender Fuzz could very well be their finest offering to date, housing two legendary British fuzz circuits, the MKI Tone Bender and Professional MKII, in one box — as well as a modern silicon voicing. All in all, it packs five NOS germanium transistors, three silicon transistors and a sag switch to



THE
BEST OF
2024



Strandberg's Boden Essential is a winner at just under a grand

starve the voltage by a third to create that infamous “dying battery” tone for extra spit and crackle. Whether you’re trying to sound like vintage masters like Keith Richards and Jimmy Page or going for a more modern take in the vein of Jack White and St. Vincent, the Warm Bender Fuzz will get you there without any fuss.

STRANDBERG BODEN ESSENTIAL

\$999, strandbergguitars.com

WHEN YOU HEAR the words “ergonomic guitar,” Strandberg will usually be one of the first brands that come to mind. Favored by artists such as Plini, Sarah Longfield and Charlie Griffiths, their incredibly lightweight and user-friendly designs are built to bring out the best in every player, making the physicality of performance as seamless as can be. The only problem thus far is that their instruments haven’t exactly been accessible to those working to lower budgets — until this year, that is, with the introduction of the Boden Essential. It features a meranti body, a roasted one-piece maple neck with their trademarked EndurNeck profile and two pickups controlled via the five-way selector with options for full humbuckers, inner coils, outer coils and even a parallel mode. The three finishes (Elemental Blue, Astro Dust, Black Granite) might not be exactly the most enticing from the company’s catalog, but to get a highly conceptual machine like this for under a grand makes it a winner in our eyes.

BOSS DUAL DIGITAL DELAY SDE-3

\$219, boss.info

IT’S VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE to find another pedal brand that can rival

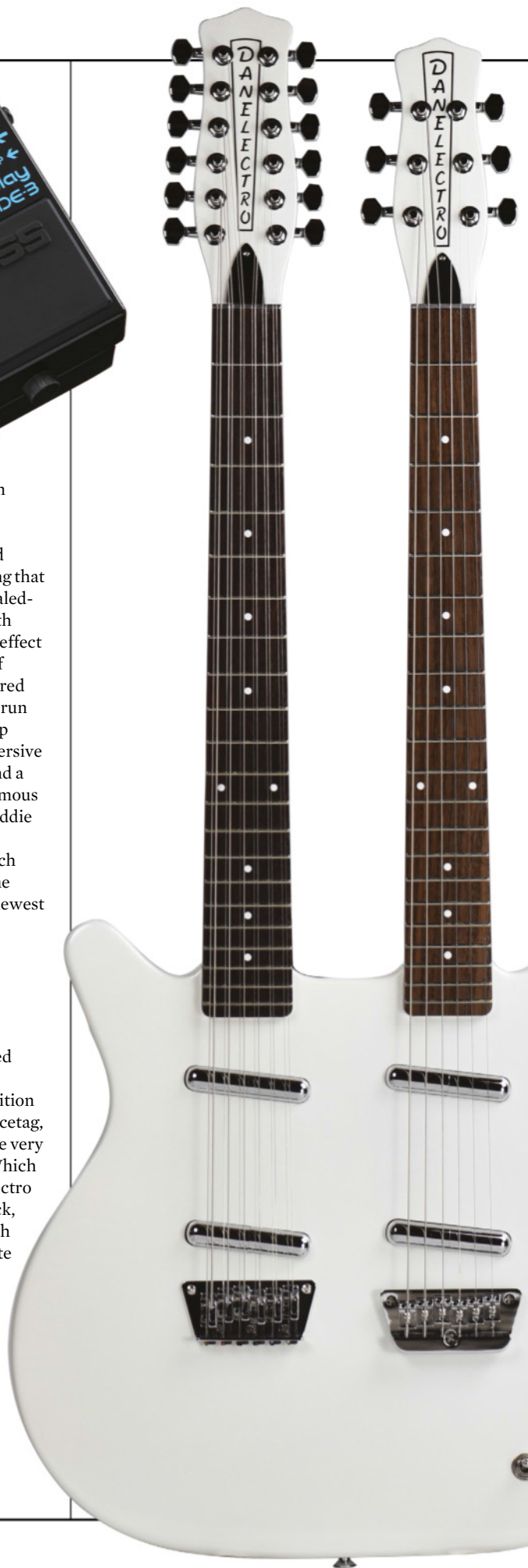


the level of consistency we’ve grown to expect from Boss — the Japanese innovators have long-nailed the holy trinity of quality, durability and affordability. So it’s hardly surprising that the announcement of the SD-3, a scaled-down version of last year’s mammoth SDE-3000D — which recreated the effect of the Eighties Roland rackmount of the same name — was met with fevered anticipation. As you’d expect, it can run two delays simultaneously with a tap tempo function, advanced and immersive stereo modes, MIDI connectivity and a maximum delay time of 1600ms. Famous users of the original unit included Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, Eric Clapton, the Edge and Steve Lukather — which should be enough to demonstrate the sheer versatility to expect from its newest incarnation.

DANELECTRO 6/12 DOUBLENECK

\$899, danelectro.com

JIMMY PAGE MIGHT have dominated headlines earlier this year with the release of his Gibson Collector’s Edition 1969 EDS-1275, but with a \$50K pricetag, it’s the kind of extravagant purchase very few would even dare to consider. Which partly explains why news of Danelectro releasing their own 6/12 Doubleneck, coming in at under a grand, was such a cause for celebration. With a White Pearl finish, rosewood fretboard, a quartet of lipstick pickups and the bonus of being surprising light thanks to its semi-hollow construction, there’s no reason you wouldn’t be able to write your own “Stairway to Heaven” on an instrument like this. And let’s not forget, it was typically a Danelectro six-string in the Led Zeppelin





**NUNO BETTENCOURT
SAYS THE SPARK 2 IS
“LIKE TAKING MADISON
SQUARE GARDEN WITH
YOU WHEREVER YOU GO”**

guitarist's hands for DADGAD tracks like “Kashmir,” so there's that, too.

POSITIVE GRID SPARK 2

\$299, positivegrid.com

THOUGH THEY STARTED out as specialists in amp-modeling software, in recent years Positive Grid have taken the practice amp world by storm with the Spark line. This year saw the launch of its second iteration, with *Guitar World's* Paul Riario teaming up with Nuno Bettencourt, Paul Gilbert and Periphery guitarist Jake Bowen for the live premiere on YouTube. In terms of updates, the new model boasts twice the processing power, 25 percent more volume, a brand-new looper mode with drums, AI technology for more HD amp models and the option to use a Spark Battery, offering 12 hours of play time on a full charge. The speakers have also been tweaked for a wider stereo imaging and broader frequency response, resulting in a practice amp that's loud, versatile, intuitive and affordable. Bettencourt went as far as saying the “Spark 2 is like taking Madison Square Garden wherever you go — epic and versatile.”

ESP LTD KIRK HAMMETT KH-V

\$1,799, espguitars.com

THERE'S BEEN a lot of noise about the Gibson and Epiphone Greeny models over the last few years — and rightly so — though for metal purists in search of Kirk Hammett's stadium-conquering distorted tones, it might not have been the first ax they'd associate with him. Which is precisely where ESP come in, with the new korina-bodied 24-fret KH-V signature boasting active EMG humbuckers and pointy ends to really emphasize the aggression and attack pioneered by the thrash metal masters. Other notable appointments include the TonePros Locking Tune-O-Matic bridge with strings coming through the body, increasing both stability and sustain, with more reassurance provided by the locking tuners, and extra tonal reinforcement from the neck-through design. Available in Black Sparkle, Red Sparkle and Metallic Gold, Hammett described the line as “a perfect hybrid of reality and my vision” that gave him goosebumps on first inspection. →

[clockwise from top left] The Boss Dual Digital Delay SDE-3; Danelectro 6/12 Doubleneck; Positive Grid Spark 2; ESP's LTD Kirk Hammett KH-V in Red Sparkle and Metallic Gold

THE
BEST OF
2024



DONNER JACK WHITE TRIPLE THREAT

\$99, donnermusic.com

JACK WHITE HAS shown us many things over the years — one of which being how musicians don't necessarily need to rely on expensive equipment in their search for world-conquering tones. Partnering with budget brand Donner at the beginning of the year, the signature Triple Threat is a three-in-one analog effect unit combining a high gain distortion they describe as a "threatening rock sound," a phaser based on their Pearl Tremor stompbox and an analog voiced echo harking back to Donner's debut pedal, the Yellow Fall delay. It also scores very high in the aesthetics department, with a yellow on black finish, lightning bolts, stripes and Jack White's very own Third Man Hardware graphics. And that's not the only release from the "Seven Nation Army" writer — he also teamed up with Fender for the signature TripleCaster Tele, featuring custom Tim Shaw pickups, a Bigsby B5 vibrato and custom controls.

MXR M309 JOSHUA AMBIENT ECHO

\$239, jimdunlop.com

DESCRIBED BY SOME as "U2 in a pedal", the Joshua Ambient Echo can easily handle basic delays, but really excels at all things ethereal. There are buttons for secondary repeats and toggling the Trails mode, plus dials for Delay, Modulation, Voice, Regen, Division and Mix, as well as a tap tempo mode. It's no secret the Edge has mainly been known for using Electro-Harmonix Memory Man Deluxes, Korg SDD-3000s and TC Electronic 2290s to handle his trademark repeats in the past, and despite coming in a small Phase 90-sized box, the Joshua Ambient Echo can keep up with any of them. If you're into heavily processed, dreamlike soundscapes where your gui-



tar sounds like its being beamed from a long-distant planet, or like having enough controls to fine-tune everything from fast slapbacks to cathedral-like atmospheres, this will certainly be of interest.

EPIPHONE INSPIRED BY GIBSON CUSTOM 1957 SJ-200

\$1,499, epiphone.com

ONE OF OUR FAVORITE acoustics of the year arrived in the form of Epiphone's 1957 SJ-200. This latest addition to the (awesome) Inspired By Gibson line pays tribute to the historic super jumbo seen in the hands of George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Elvis Presley and many more. Its reputation as the "King of the Flat Tops" made it the go-to weapon of choice for folk and country artists halfway into the 20th century. Features include a thermally-aged sitka spruce top and figured maple back and sides,

EPIPHONE'S
SJ-200 IS ONE OF OUR
FAVORITE ACOUSTICS
OF THE YEAR —
AN ALL-ROUNDER
IN EVERY SENSE



[counterclockwise from top left] Donner's Jack White Triple Threat; MXR M309 Joshua Ambient Echo; Epiphone Inspired By Gibson Custom 1957 SJ-200; Fender Player II Strat; Gretsch Electromatic Pristine Jet

scalloped X-bracing, an Indian laurel fingerboard and LR Baggs Element Bronze VTC electronics. And it certainly looks the part, too, thanks to the Gibson "open book" headstock, graduated crown mother of pearl inlays, engraved pickguard and open moustache bridge. An all-rounder in every sense.

FENDER

PLAYER II STRATOCASTER

\$799, [fender.com](https://www.fender.com)

LAUNCHED IN 2018, the Player series replaced the Standards and ended up becoming Fender's best-selling line thanks to the juxtaposition of classic features and modern ingenuity, all delivered at their affordable "Made in Mexico" price point. This year saw the introduction of the Player II — which, while incorporating some of the improvements with the Player Plus models of 2021, sticks with the vintage concept over anything too contemporary. Key differences between first and second editions include a rosewood fingerboard in place of pau ferro — arguably its most significant upgrade — this time with rolled edges (a feature more associated with midrange and premium guitars) and ClassicGear tuners. But there's so much they got right the first time round, it's perhaps unsurprising that the new models share much in common with the highly successful originals.

GRETSCH

LIMITED EDITION ELECTROMATIC PRISTINE JET

\$749, [gretschguitars.com](https://www.gretschguitars.com)

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for the most visually striking guitar of 2024, the Gretsch Electromatic Pristine Jet should be somewhere on the list, and that goes for any of its three finishes (Mako, Petrol or White Gold). The combination of two-tone colors with metallic tops and rich stained bodies and necks, exquisitely complimented by the gold hardware, makes for an eye-popping elegance that will hold attention in just about any setting. As you might expect, it boasts a chambered mahogany body with a maple top, FT-5E Filter'Tron pickups with cream inserts and a Bigsby B50 vibrato tailpiece. Other key appointments include a master volume with treble bleed circuit, 22 medium jumbo frets and pearloid Neo-Classic thumbnail inlays. Users of the Jet series include Malcolm →



The PRS S2 Custom 24-08 might be the most enticing release in the range to date



scale length, mahogany body and maple top, a mahogany neck and rosewood fingerboard — rounded off nicely by the PRS patented tremolo.

YAMAHA

PACIFICA PROFESSIONAL

\$2,199, [yamaha.com](https://www.yamaha.com)

ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED IN 1989 as a custom shop model for session players, the Yamaha Pacifica ended up serving proudly as one of the finest entry-level guitars money can buy, guaranteeing beginners an instrument of high enough quality to encourage them to carry on playing. Which is exactly why the new Professional models became a big talking point at NAMM — reimagining the model as a high-spec workhorse meticulously crafted in Japan, nodding back to the late-Eighties originals. With options for either a rosewood or maple fingerboard, the new flagship features newly designed Reflectone pickups made in collaboration with studio wizard Rupert Neve, a carved neck joint heel and premium Gotoh hardware, plus increased body resonance, thanks to the 3D modeling and intensive science behind Yamaha's Acoustic Design technology. A legend gets reborn.

THORPYFX

ELECTRIC LIGHTNING VALVE OVERDRIVE

\$499, [thorpyfx.com](https://www.thorpyfx.com)

LET'S FACE IT, most of us have looked at footage of British guitarist Chris Buck at some point or another and felt like we needed to up our tone game. Given that he's often sworn by pedals made by Major Adrian Thorpe MBE — who started the company after 16 years working as a bomb-disposal expert in the British army — an official partnership for his first signature stompbox made perfect sense. As well as the impressively dynamic 12AX7-powered overdrive, the Electric

YAMAHA HAS REIMAGINED THE PACIFICA AS A HIGH-SPEC WORKHORSE METICULOUSLY CRAFTED IN JAPAN



Young, Danielle Haim and George Harrison — and higher-gain players like Kirk Hammett and Chris Cornell.

PRS

S2 CUSTOM 24-08

\$2,349, [prsguitars.com](https://www.prguitars.com)

BRIDGING THE GAP between the budget SE line and high-end Core models, the PRS S2 series can sometimes be a bit of a hard sell — perhaps partly because once over the \$2k mark, some may wish to carry on saving for something well and truly top of the line. That said, this year's Custom 24-08 could be the most enticing release in the range to date, especially when you factor in the new addition of USA-made pickups and electronics, which replaces the import sets found on models thus far. This is of even greater importance with the advanced switching of their 24-08 design, allowing users to coax eight different pickup voicings, thanks to the two mini-toggle coil tap switches found in between the volume and tone controls. Apart from that, it's business as usual, with a 25"

[clockwise from top left] ThorpyFX Electric Lightning Valve Overdrive; Yamaha Pacifica Professional; Vox VRM-1 Real McCoy Wah; Klös Guitars Carbon Timber Grand Cutaway Mini; UAFX Enigmatic '82 Overdrive Special Amp Pedal



Lightning offers a high-headroom boost to fatten up cleans or provide an extra push where needed, with its own dedicated pre-gain Lows control. There's a three-band EQ to help shape your tone, a dedicated 12v power supply and a housing that looks bomb-proof — which, given Mr. Thorpe's previous field of expertise, can probably handle anything you throw at it.

UAFX

ENIGMATIC '82 OVERDRIVE SPECIAL AMP PEDAL

\$399, uaudio.com

WITH A *CRÈME de la crème* list of famous users ranging from Eric Clapton, SRV and Carlos Santana to Robben Ford, Larry Carlton and Joe Bonamassa, Alexander Dumble's mythical creations have long sat at the ultra-expensive end of the gear wishlist. After the boutique amp veteran passed away in January 2023, however, his heads and combos became even more collectible, which could explain why Universal Audio chose to unveil their own pedal version of the Overdrive Special back in September. Powered by UAFX dual-engine processing and UAD modeling, the pedal offers pristine cleans and rich overdrives through its Jazz, Rock and Custom modes, as well as nine classic mic/speaker combinations and more customizations and mods through the UAFX Control app. UAFX have certainly put in the hours to “give you the sound of the most wildly expensive and coveted guitar amps in history.”

KLÖS GUITARS

CARBON TIMBER GRAND CUTAWAY MINI

\$1,959, klosguitars.com

BASED IN UTAH and founded almost a decade ago, Klös Guitars have become one of the most exciting new names in the carbon fiber world, using their extensive research to create highly durable and resonant electrics, acoustics, basses, mandolins and ukuleles. Of course, there will always be some players who prefer the traditional look of acoustic tonewoods, but there are many advantages to be found with carbon fiber — particularly when it comes to smaller travel guitars, which may be subjected to extreme environmental changes. The Grand Cutaway Mini comes with a 24.75" scale length, 20 frets and Graph Tech

THE
BEST OF
2024



Neural DSP Nano Cortex; [right] Origin Effects Cali76 FET Compressor; [below] Taylor's Circa 74 acoustic amp



Ratio tuners, and there are upgrades available for electronics. There's also an option to use carbon timber as the material for more of a classic wood-like appearance.

VOX

VRM-1 REAL MCCOY & V846 VINTAGE WAHS

\$279, voxamps.com

"1967 IS BACK!" Vox boldly declared at NAMM, where they launched reissues of the world's first production wahs — the Clyde McCoy original, which was accidentally created while redesigning the Vox Super Beatle amp in 1966 and initially targeted to trumpet players, and then the V846, which came soon after. The pedals found their way into the hands of Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix and the rest, as they say, is history. SRV was also a big fan of these wahs and



even acquired one of Jimi's V846 units after his brother Jimmie opened for the "Purple Haze" superstar in Fort Worth. The reissues are said to be "perfect recreations" of the early units, thanks to the 3D scanning technology used to analyze the early designs. In terms of differences, the VRM-1 carries more of a midrange warmth while the V846 boasts an extended sweep range for a sharper and more biting effect.

NEURAL DSP NANO CORTEX

\$549, neuraldsp.com

IT WAS A fairly quiet year for Neural DSP — until September, that is, when they unveiled the smaller sibling to their revolutionary Quad Cortex floor processor, which originally stole headlines for carrying arguably the most advanced technology of its kind. Small enough to fit in the palm of your hand and weighing just over one pound, the Nano Cortex still manages to pack in Neural's Capture technology for digital copies of physical gear, with the same resolution and quality as before. Shipping with 25 captures of famous releases by Mesa/Boogie, Fender and Diezel, an additional 256 amps can be stored, with thousands more available through the Cortex Cloud. On top of that, you also get 300 studio-quality IRs, each with five different mic options and six positions for what the company describes as "endless tone shaping possibilities." Few would argue.

TAYLOR CIRCA 74 ACOUSTIC AMP

\$1,199, taylorguitars.com

THEY'VE BEEN ONE of the biggest names

in the acoustic trade for decades, but Taylor had never launched their own amplifier until now, with the arrival of the Circa 74. For owner/founder Bob Taylor, the project reminded him so much of his freewheeling startup days, he decided to name it after the year it all began. With two independent channels for guitar and vocals, plus a master volume to mix an aux in, the 150W amp features a 10-inch speaker, a three-band EQ, room reverb and Bluetooth connectivity. Much like the instruments the company are renowned for, it's an amp that sounds warm, dynamic and incredibly hi-fi. And it certainly looks the part, too — thanks to the vintage-style logo and mahogany cabinet and stand. We won't be surprised if there's more to come from Taylor on this front.

ORIGIN EFFECTS CALI76 FET COMPRESSOR

\$369, originaffects.com

THE 1176 PEAK Limiter, designed by Bill Putman and introduced by UREI in 1967, is one of the most fabled compressors of all time, immortalized on classic albums by the Stones, Led Zeppelin and Aretha Franklin. Which is why the Cali76 pedal, launched by U.K. builders Origin Effects just over a decade ago, quickly became one of the most lauded dynamic tools on the market, ending up on the boards of tone connoisseurs like David Gilmour, Noel Gallagher, John Mayer and Steven Wilson. This year's new FET version comes in a smaller enclosure and features a 10-LED gain reduction meter, as well as an improved sidechain and more headroom from the internally increased voltage. Though it can happily provide the extreme squish heard on many a country guitar album from the Eighties, where it truly excels is in providing a fullness that makes your tone come to life in more subtle ways. **GW**

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THE YEAR'S BEST GUITAR STUFF

PRO PLAYERS WEIGH IN ON
2024'S BEST SONGS, SOLOS, RIFFS,
GUITAR MOMENTS, GUITARISTS
OF THE YEAR, GEAR AND MORE

JANUARY 2025
PAGE FORTY-SIX



Grace Bowers [left]
and Hodge Podge vocalist
Esther Okai-Tetteh perform in
Wichita, Kansas, on September 10

THE BEST OF 2024

GRACE BOWERS

Song: Anything from Marcus King's *Mood Swings*

Riff: "What About the Children," Gary Clark Jr. feat. Stevie Wonder

Solo: Post Malone, "Finer Things." I believe Derek Wells played the ripping solo.

Guitar moment: Slash popping up at the Oscars with Ryan Gosling and Mark Ronson!

New band/artist: I've enjoyed watching Chappell Roan's rise this year.

New guitarist: Daniel Donato

New gear: Forever and always, the wah pedal

Album you listened to most:

Cory Henry's *Something to Say* and Funkadelic's *Maggot Brain*

Guitarist of the year: Too many to name!

AARON MARSHALL (INTERVALS)

Songs: "The Saboteur," Stephen Taranto. It has it all, and Stephen is a beast.

Riff: The main chorus riff in "STFIL" by Four Year Strong. This is one of those, "Oh, of course it goes like that" riffs. Too sick.

Solo: 1:55 to 2:38 in "Spin" by Spiro Dussias. I don't have to tell you why.

Album: *Analysis Paralysis* by Four Year Strong

Guitar moment: Dave Grohl pretending to play "Eruption" while Wolfgang Van Halen actually played it side stage at Welcome to Rockville (while wearing an Intervals shirt).

New band/artist: House of Protection

New guitarist: Spiro Dussias

New gear: Revv Generator G50 and continued updates for the Fractal Audio Axe-FX III

Album you listened to most:

Post Human: Nex Gen by Bring Me the Horizon

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

Compiled by **ANDREW DALY,
JOE BOSSO & DAMIAN FANELLI**

GARY MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

COREY FELDMAN

Song: Mark Knopfler, “Going Home: Theme of the Local Hero”

Riff: Billy Joel, “Turn the Lights Back On”

Solo: Corey Feldman, “The Joke” (Gregg Sartiano and me)

Guitar moment: Me, on my end-of-song (live) solo on “The Joke”

New band/artist: Jelly Roll

New guitarist: Corey Feldman

New gear: Fender 70th Anniversary Strat

Album you listened to most:

David Gilmour, *Luck and Strange*

Guitarist of the year: David Gilmour

ERIC GALES

Song: Judith Hill, “My Whole Life Is in the Wrong Key”

Riff: Kenny Wayne Shepherd, “Sweet & Low”

Solo: Samantha Fish, “Black Wind Howlin’” (2024 performance)

Guitar moment: Slash with Eric Gales at Koka Booth Amphitheatre in Cary, North Carolina

New band/artist: Ron Artis II

New guitarist: Reece Malone

New gear: Gibson SG

Album you listened to most: Eric

Johnson, *Ah Via Musicom*

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

BRIAN MAY

New gear: I haven’t got much new gear. I always use the same old stuff! You can put that if you like: “Brian does not use new gear. He’s very old-school and immovable.” It’s just the old [Vox] AC30, which is rather souped-up by Nigel Knight, made to be much more robust. And our version of the treble booster, à la [Dallas] Rangemaster, à la Rory Gallagher. And that old Red Special, which is no different from what it was 50 years ago. You can put that in as sort of a counterpoint to all these people with new gear!

JEFF SCHROEDER (EX-SMASHING PUMPKINS)

Song: Medicine, “Some Bodies”

Riff: Thurston Moore, “The Diver”

Solo: Medicine, “Some Bodies”

Guitar moment: Steve Vai and Adrian Belew playing the 1980s King Crimson catalog

New band/artist: Quannnic

New guitarist: Quannnic

New gear: EarthQuaker Devices Silos

Guitarist of the year: Joe Satriani.

He did an amazing job on the Best of All Worlds Tour.

CHRIS HOLT (MIKE CAMPBELL & THE DIRTY KNOBS)

Song: Razor Braids, “Big Wave”

Riff: Jonny Greenwood’s intro to “Read the Room” by the Smile

Solo: David Gilmour, “A Single Spark.” He takes a long, stunning melodic solo at the end, and it seriously brought a tear to my eye to hear how much he’s still got it.

New band/artist: Razor Braids from Brooklyn

New guitarist: Julian “Paint” Smith from Closeby

New gear: Matt Iddings in Portland builds custom amps called Voltmaster that look cool and sound amazing

Album you listened to most: Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, *Woodland*; Razor Braids, *Big Wave*; the Smile, *Wall of Eyes*

Guitarist of the year: Jonny Greenwood keeps raising the bar.

NUNO BETTENCOURT

New gear: My favorite new piece of gear for 2024 is the Positive Grid Spark 2. It’s the biggest-sounding little amp I’ve ever played. It’s so diverse and really responsive to my hands, which makes it a great creative tool as well.

DOUG ALDRICH (THE DEAD DAISIES)

Song: Plush, “Barracuda”

Riff: Joe Bonamassa, “Heartache Follows Me Wherever I Go”

Solo: Judas Priest, “Devil in Disguise”

Guitar moment: Finally new music from Black Country Communion

New band/artist: The Band Feel

New guitarist: Jared James Nichols

New gear: None!

Album you listened to most:

Gary Moore, *Run for Cover*

Guitarist of the year: Joe Satriani

NITA STRAUSS

Song: “Classical Dragon,” Marcin feat. Tim Henson

Riff: “Don’t Kill Me,” Chaosbay, played by Alexander Langner

Solo: “No Tomorrow,” All That Remains, played by Jason Richardson



[from left] Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood keeps raising the bar with the Smile; Code Orange guitarist Reba Meyers, aka Nita Strauss’s choice for guitarist of the year; David Gilmour’s 2024 album, *Luck and Strange*, didn’t hurt his legendary status one bit

Album: *Evil World Machine*, Crossbone Skully

Guitar moment: H.E.R. at the Super Bowl halftime show

New band/artist: Crossbone Skully

New guitarist: Diamond Rowe of Tetrarch. Not new but definitely starting to get the recognition she deserves!

New gear: While my touring rig has stayed the same for years, I recently picked up a Positive Grid Spark Go at a Guitar Center. That thing rips! It has a permanent home in my backpack — and I love that I can even fit it in a purse if I need to.

Album you listened to most:

Colony, In Flames

Guitarist of the year: Reba Meyers of Code Orange

MIKE DAWES

Song: Linkin Park, “The Emptiness Machine.” You can’t deny how much of an impact it had!

Riff: “Better Hell (Thicc Boi),” Bilmuri

Solo: Spiro Dussias, “Negative”

Album: Mike Dawes, *Galactic Acid*

Guitar moment: Guitar Summit 2024

New band/artist: Bilmuri

New guitarist: Joshua De La Victoria

New gear: ToneX One



Album you listened to most: Bilmuri, *American Motor Sports*
Guitarist of the year: Tommy Emmanuel

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

New gear: My new Yngwie Malmsteen overdrive by MXR is the most amazing piece gear you'll ever have. It sold out in 24 hours from Sweetwater and Guitar Center. Say no more.

SCOTT HOLIDAY (RIVAL SONS)

Song: Anything new from Julian Lage, Marcus King, the Smile, David Gilmour, Ty Segall, King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, Jack White, Mei Simones, Wilco and/or Rival Sons

Riff: The Smile, "Read the Room"

Solo: Julian Lage, "Tiburon"

Guitar moment: The return of David Gilmour

New band: Forever Pavot

Guitarist: Mei Semones

New gear: SoloDallas Orbiter Fuzz, JHS Notaklön, Kauer Gripen, Way Huge Smalls Stone Burner and Attack Vector, Source Audio Artifacts

Album you listened to most: Grant Green, *Nigeria*

Guitarist of the year: Billy Strings

VERNON REID

Song: St. Vincent, "Flea"

Riff: Jack White, "Archbishop Harold Holmes." Prosperity and primitivism at its



ZACH MYERS (SHINEDOWN)

Song: "Another Way," Sleep Theory

Riff: "Best of Times," Kenny Wayne Shepherd

Solo: "I Got a Woman," Kenny Wayne Shepherd

Guitar moment: Oasis! Oasis! Oasis!

New band/artist: Sleep Theory

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

New gear: Supernova Effects Klonlike

Album you listened to most: Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit, *Weathervanes*

Guitarist of the year: Kenny Wayne Shepherd

JOE BONAMASSA

New gear: My favorite discovery of 2024 is the Crazy Circuits White Whale reverb pedal. It does a great job in front of any amp and adds a killer authentic spring (there's spring inside it) and a believable brown amp circa '62 Fender-style vibrato. I've used it on many sessions, and it has become a quiet MVP in the studio.

ZAKK WYLDE

New gear: The new Goreghen Wylde Audio guitar. And we've got a new one coming out that we're just getting ready to do a prototype for — the Wrathmaker. I'm looking forward to checking that out. I'll be working with Jimmy again [Jim Dunlop] and firing up the old pedals and everything like that. It's all awesome; I'm truly blessed.

finest. He has a nearly supernatural gift for the basic, propulsive, elemental riff that frames compelling tunes.

Solo: Greg Howe, "Inside This Zoo." Holy smokes! Greg is a master of tone, time and radical melodicism. His playing is outlandishly good on this album.

Guitar moment: The release of MC5's *Heavy Lifting*, which is the final recording by the proto-punk legend Wayne Kramer. His relentless commitment to rock 'n' roll integrity is something I'm proud to have contributed to, along with Tom Morello, Slash and a host of other luminaries.

New band/artist: Nir Felder

New guitarist: Nir Felder. His record *III* is a fabulous tour into the mind of a fabulous player who's not afraid to apply his prodigious skills to a vast array of tonal expressions, from subtle to raging.

New gear: Chroma Console by Hologram Electronics. They've reinvented the concept of multi-effects and looping as a textural wonderland yet again.

Album you listened to most: Chris Whitley, *Rocket House*

Guitarist of the year: David Gilmour

SCOTT HENDERSON

New gear: Empress Zoia! It works on the modular system and has hundreds of effects you can string together in any order to make amazing sounds. It's got a learning curve, but there's a huge group of great programmers on the internet who give away their patches for free, which you can download into their librarian app and download onto the Zoia.

BRENT PURGASON (EX-GWAR)

Riff: You could close your eyes and throw a dart at all the riffs on the new Deicide record; anything you hit is gonna be heavy and sick.

Solo: Anything Richie Faulkner touches is gold. The whole new Judas Priest record is great.

New band/artist: Plush

Album you listened to most: I've been spinning a lot of Rose Tattoo.

Guitarist of the year: Anyone who's not recycling the same tired ideas from genres that ended before they were born is an ace in my book.

JESSE DAYTON

Song: "Bedside Manners," the Black Crowes

Riff: "Old Scratch Blues," Jack White

Solo: Tab Benoit, "Gold on the Ceiling"

Guitar moment: Jimmy Page and Ronnie Wood joining the Black Crowes onstage during their *Happiness Bastards* tour

New band/artist: An unsigned band out of St. Louis called Feel

New guitarist: A young blues guitarist out of Tennessee called McKinley James

New gear: Origin Deluxe '61 Tremolo and a drive pedal that Origin Effects gave me

Album you listened to most: My new record, *The Hard Way Blues*, because we were in the studio pounding it into our heads!

Guitarist of the year: A guy I met on Instagram named Trey Hensley. He's a country/bluegrass guitarist but has been sitting in with huge rock bands like Stone Temple Pilots and Ritchie Blackmore.

RICHIE KOTZEN

New gear: Marshall made me a few new hand-wired 1959 HW heads; somehow, they sound even better than my older 1959 HWs. I'm not sure how they do it, but the quality control and consistency over there are of the highest level. I'm super pleased with my new touring amps; they are most definitely my favorite new gear additions of 2024!

JOHNNY HAWTHORN

Song: Steve Hackett, "The Circus and the Nightwhale"

Riff: "Wanting and Waiting," the Black Crowes

Solo: Slash feat. Demi Lovato, "Papa was a Rolling Stone"

Guitar moment: Slash with Wolfgang at the Grammys

New band/artist: Militarie Gun

New guitarist: Marcus King

New gear: Xotic Effects XW-2 wah pedal

Album you listened to most:

Joni Mitchell, *Hejira*

Guitarist of the year: David Gilmour

ANGEL VIVALDI

Song: Marcin's "Classical Dragon."

Tim Hensen's guest solo is astounding.

Riff: Andy Timmons, "The Boy from Beckenham." Tone, feel, pacing — Andy's got it all!

Solo: Steve Morse's guest solo on my song "New Country."

Guitar moment: Kiki Wong landing a spot in the Smashing Pumpkins!

New band/artist: Jamie Leeming's work on Alfa Mist's "Cycles" is spellbinding and truly sublime.

New guitarist: Spiro — an unbelievable metal shredder!

New gear: The new Steve Morse ENGL mini amp

Album you listened to most: Alfa Mist, *Variables*

Guitarist of the year: Josh Meader. If you're into Pat Metheny's *Orchestration*, you'll love Meader's "Ultraviolet."

CHARLIE STARR (BLACKBERRY SMOKE)

New gear: I picked up a new Gibson Murphy Lab Southern Jumbo. I don't know what kind of voodoo Tom and the good folks in Bozeman are performing on these guitars, but whatever it is works for damn sure! It sounds dry and warm with the perfect low-end thud that you want from a slope-shoulder Gibson acoustic — and just the right amount of sparkle without being too bright, which is so rare for a new acoustic guitar. Bravo, Gibson and Murphy Lab!

ELI WULFMEIER (EX-DOROTHY)

Song: "Wanting and Waiting," the Black Crowes

Riff: "White Horse," Chris Stapleton

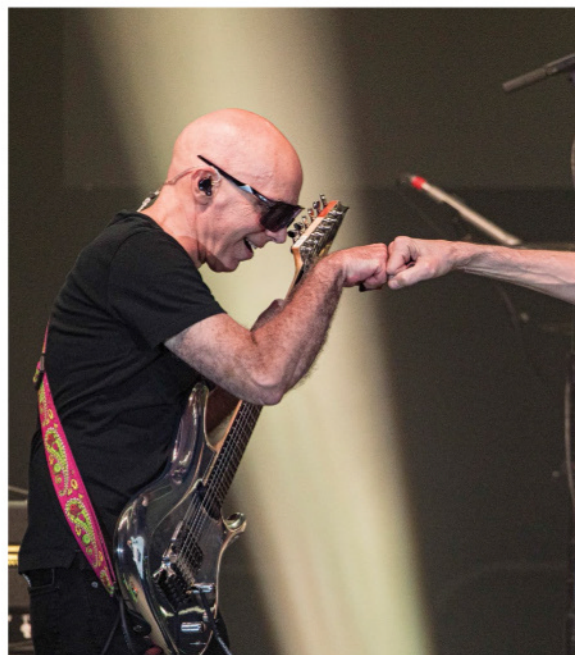
Solo: "Killing Floor," Slash

Guitar moment: Seeing Sturgill Simpson and Laur Joamets at the Santa Barbara Bowl

New band/artist: Robert Jon & the Wreck

New guitarist: Trevor Menear from Dawes

New gear: Gibson Les Paul and Benson Vincent amps



[above] Legendary shredders Joe Satriani and Steve Vai perform together at Harrah's Resort in Valley Center, California, on May 1;
[right] the Black Crowes' Chris and Rich Robinson onstage at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago on April 19

Album you listened to most: Junip, *Fields*
Guitarist of the year: Mike Eli LoPinto (Chris Stapleton)

MICHELLE MALONE

Song: "Hammer and the Nail," Blackberry Smoke

Solo: Doug Kees' solo on "Wine and Regret" by Michelle Malone

Guitar moment: The rise of Grace Bowers. What an amazing journey she's on!

New band/artist: The Band Feel

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

New gear: The new Michelle Malone Signature Bullet Nose Slide by Rocky Mountain Slides!

Album you listened to most: *Led Zeppelin III* remastered, which is great for driving through the redwoods.

Guitarist of the year: Doug Kees from Michelle Malone Band!

DRIVER WILLIAMS (ERIC CHURCH)

Song: "Ronald" by Falling In Reverse

Riff: "Savior of None/Ashes of All" by Fit for An Autopsy

Solo: "Area Code" by Alluvial

Guitar moment: Gojira at the opening ceremony at the Paris Olympics



New band/artist: Stephen Wilson Jr.
New guitarist: Grace Bowers
New gear: My Myles Kennedy signature PRS
Album you listened to most: *Son of Dad*, Stephen Wilson Jr.
Guitarist of the year: Joe Duplantier of Gojira

NOÉ EFIRA (HOODED GUITARIST FROM PARIS OLYMPICS)

Song: “The Sea of Emotion, Pt. 1,” Joe Satriani and Steve Vai
Riff: Black Country Communion’s “You’re Not Alone”
Solo: Vai’s solo on “The Sea of Emotion”
Guitar moment: I really thought the Paris Olympics closing ceremony solo was a great spot in time for the electric guitar, further celebrating how alive and beloved the instrument remains in 2024. I was so fortunate to have been selected to [take part in] such an iconic moment.
New band/artist: Noé Efira! My debut EP, *War Paint*, can be found on Spotify.
New guitarist: Matteo Mancuso
New gear: Boss IR-2 Amp & Cabinet pedal
Album you listened to most: *Boss Guitar*, Wes Montgomery
Guitarist of the year: Steve Vai

JOSH PARTINGTON (SOMETHING CORPORATE)

Song: Post Malone, “Chemical”
Riff: Pearl Jam, “Wreckage”



Solo: “Stan Qualen,” the Southern River Band
Guitar moment: Finding out the Edge stopped using amps at the Sphere and was using UAFX pedals. The beginning of the end! Sell your amps now!
New band/artist: The Southern River Band!
New guitarist: Tim Henson probably doesn’t count as new, but whatever.
New gear: Hologram Chroma Console
Album you listened to most: Polyphia, *Remember That You Will Die*
Guitarist of the year: Mike Campbell

JASON NARDUCY (BOB MOULD)

Song: Mannequin Pussy, “I Got Heaven”
Riff: Hotline TNT, “Son in Law”
Solo: Mdou Moctar, “Imouhar”
Guitar moment: Comedian Dave Hill toured with Tenacious D as their opening act. He invited me to join him as part of his backup band (Dave’s standup performances often involve music) for his first show on the tour in Charlotte, North Carolina. I stood on the side of the stage for the first 10 minutes next to Jack Black while Dave told jokes. Then he picked up an electric guitar and started shredding. The crowd of 10,000 was already on board with his jokes, but they roared when he started ripping guitar solos. I’ll never forget it.
New band/artist: Sharp Pins and Militarie Gun
New guitarist: Yasmin Williams and Macie Stewart
New gear: American Ultra Telecasters

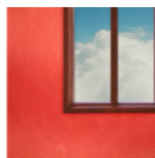
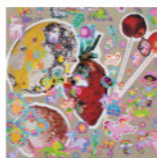
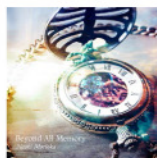
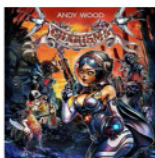
Guitarist of the year: Robbie Fulks

LAURA JANE GRACE (AGAINST ME!, SOLO)

Song: “You’ve Got the Nerve” by Bad Nerves. Blazing guitars!
Riff: “Punk’s Dead” by Soft Play
Solo: “Archbishop Harold Holmes” by Jack White
Guitar moment: Soft Play live at Glastonbury. Such a massive, intimidating presence by only a duo up there on stage and an absolute wall of sound. So rad. Everything I wished my band could be when I was starting out.
New band/artist: Team Nonexistent (not new-new, but probably new to you)
New guitarist: My kid
New gear: Line 6 HX One
Album you listened to most: *Gossip*, *Real Power*
Guitarist of the year: Laurie Vincent of Soft Play

JOE PERRY

New gear: Silktone amps. They’re great amps to use with pedals, meaning you can get them relatively clean to get the most out of your pedals. You can get it to crunch just by putting it to 10; I run mine at 2 o’clock. I also have a compressor pedal, and a boost from Fulltone that I use with it. If you can get your hands on a Silktone, it’s a great piece for your arsenal. I did some recording with mine, and for what I was going for, it worked great.



ERIC JOHANSON

Song: Jack White, "That's How I'm Feeling" from *No Name*

Riff: Satch/Vai, "The Sea of Emotion, Pt. 1"

Solo: Anders Osborne, "Real Good Dirt" from *Picasso's Villa*

Guitar moment: It was cool to see Slash release a blues album and then lead a tour featuring blues and rock artists. It's always great to have those crowds mixing, as there is no firm line between the genres.

New band/artist: Emily Wolfe

New guitarist: John Hart

New gear: I finally got a Gibson Explorer. It's the guitar I dreamed about most as a kid, and I feel that excitement when I play it.

Guitarist of the year: Warren Haynes

DAMON JOHNSON (LYNYRD SKYNYRD, BROTHER CANE)

Song: "Sinner," the Last Dinner Party

Riff: "Old Scratch Blues" Jack White

Solo: Jason Isbell/Sadler Vaden, "This Ain't It" from *Live from the Ryman, Vol. 2*

Guitar moment: Billy Strings sits in with Tool

New band/artist: The Last Dinner Party

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

New gear: Gibson Charlie Starr Signature Les Paul Junior

Album you listened to most: *Blast Tyrant*, Clutch

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

ANGELA PETRILLI

Song: "I'm Ready" from *Live at the Memo* by Cardinal Black

Riff: "Ballad of a Broken Hearted Man" by Robert Jon & the Wreck

Solo: "Shark" by Daniele Gottardo

Guitar moment: David Gilmour's return to the Hollywood Bowl

New guitarist: Henry James (Robert Jon & the Wreck and King Tree & the Earthmothers)

New gear: UA Lion 68 Super Lead Amp

Album you listened to most: *Let It Lie* by the Bros. Landreth

Guitarist of the year: Gretchen Menn

TREV LUKATHER (THE EFFECT)

Song: "Sighommi," the Smashing

Pumpkins

Riff: The Effect, "World Between Us"

Solo: David Gilmour, "Between Two Points." A haunting solo and song with his daughter; I think it's really beautiful to see them working together.

Guitar moment: Tom Morello and his son doing a tune together, "Soldier in the Army of Love."

New band/artist: Return to Dust

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

Album you listened to most: Peter Gabriel, *So*

Guitarist of the year: Grace Bowers

STEVE LUKATHER

New gear: Two gadgets from my old pal, Andy Timmons. He gave me the Keeley MK3 Driver Lead and the Keeley Halo Andy Timmons Dual Delay. These are my favorite pedals this year by far!

ANDY TIMMONS

New gear: I gotta go with my peeps at Keeley. Their new OCTA PSI pedal is so killer. It's kinda like an [Electro-Harmonix] Big Muff and harmonizer combined. I'm using it kinda like a fuzz and low octave, but it does every harmonization in between, and you can do all kinds of crazy pitch-shifting effects and what not. It's on my board because I didn't have a Big Muff — but I do now with the OCTA PSI.

MATEUS CANTERI

Song: "Free Range Chicken," Andy Wood with Brent Mason

Riff: Matteo Mancuso, "Paul Position"

Solo: Greg Koch, "Since I've Been Loving You"

Guitar moment: Don Kelley Band Reunion in Nashville featuring Brent Mason, Johnny Hiland, JD Simo, Redd Volkaert, Daniel Donato and Luke McQueary

New band/artist: Matteo Mancuso

New guitarist: Matteo Mancuso

New gear: Line 6 Pod Express

Album you listened to most: Allen Hinds, *Fly South*

Guitarist of the year: Greg Koch

MARTY FRIEDMAN (EX-MEGADETH)

Song: Naoki Morioka, "Crash and Chaos."

Deeply dark riffs give way to a sweet melody.

Riff: Hot Crazy, "Elizabeth Taylor" — Jordan Ziff's breakdown riff!

Solo: Something by Ichika Nito, Mateus Asato, Marcin or Matteo Mancuso. What an inspiring time for guitar!

Guitar moment: Gojira at the Olympics. So incredibly cool!

New band/artist: CrossFaith, Official Hige Dandism, PassCode or Mrs. Green Apple

New gear: Frank Marino Dragonfly pedal

Album you listened to most: Maneki

Kecak, *Kimi Wazurai*

Guitarist of the year: You!

KIKO LOUREIRO (EX-MEGADETH)

Song: Judas Priest, "Panic Attack"

Riff: "Oh! That Bitches Brew," Philip Sayce

Solo: Any live version of "Banshee" by Extreme

Guitar moment: Gojira at the Olympics

New band/artist: Leprous

New guitarist: Antoine Boyer

New gear: Neural DSP Nano Cortex

Album you listened to most: Steve Morse Band, *The Introduction*, and, of course, my new album.

Guitarist of the year: Pedro Martins

KEITH URBAN

New gear: I have a Bolin Telecaster that I got this year that I love. And I'm working with Paul Reed Smith on a bespoke guitar. I've played a couple of prototypes that they've made (for feedback data primarily). That's super exciting. And I bought a recording studio in downtown Nashville in June that is absolutely phenomenal.

AARON DUGAN (MATISYAHU)

Song: "Livid," Wilco

Riff: "Under Our Pillows," the Smile, played by Jonny Greenwood

Solo: "Desiderata," Mary Halvorson

New band/artist: Brian Marsella's Imaginarium

New guitarist: Anthony Pirog

New gear: Blammo Electronics

Space Madness

Album you listened to most: *Uprising*, Bob Marley

Guitarist of the year: Nels Cline

TONY BRUNO (JOAN JETT, ENRIQUE INGLESIAS, RIHANNA)

Song/riff: “Crack Cocaine” by Billy Morrison, Steve Stevens and Ozzy Osbourne

Album: Cage the Elephant, *Neon Pill*

Guitar moment: Dave Navarro keeping his cool after Perry Farrell tried to deck him

New band/artist: Bar Italia

New guitarist: Taj Farrant

New gear: J.Tal Guitars Super Saturday Strat

Album you listened to most:

Rage Against the Machine

Guitarist of the year: Taj Farrant

STEVE STEVENS

Song: “The Longest Kiss,” the Darkness

Riff: Jack White, “Tonight (Was a Long Time Ago)”

Solo: Guthrie Govan live with Hans Zimmer on “Man of Steel”

Album: Yamandu Costa and Francesco Buzzurro, *Uno a Uno*

Guitar moment: Slash’s S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival

New band/artist: The Effect

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

New gear: Knaggs Severn XF-SS Rebel Yell

Album you listened to most: Band of Gypsies, *Songs for Groovy Children: The Fillmore East Concerts*

Guitarist of the year: Samantha Fish

PAUL GILBERT

New gear: My Ibanez FRM350 is wonderfully satisfying in several ways. It’s the first production guitar (from any company) to include a slide magnet. I’ve been working with prototypes that have a magnet under the pickguard for several years, and Ibanez came up with some new improvements that I really like! The slide magnet allows me to easily jump into slide fills and quickly get back out, and it also makes it convenient to practice so I can get my slide playing to sound fluent and natural. The guitar features my favorite DiMarzio Air Classic humbuckers. The neck shape and size are a nice balance between chunky (more wood for more tone!) and fast (still small and flat enough to make the burning licks work with ease and clarity). And black and gold looks killer.

GEORGE VJESTICA (NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS)

Song: “Caja de la Sala,” Khruangbin

Riff: “My Brother Is an Only Child,” His Lordship

Solo: “That’s How I’m Feeling,” Jack White

Guitar moment: Marc Ribot’s Ceramic Dog at the Jazz Cafe in London. He’s one of my favorite guitar players, and the band are just cool as fuck.

New band/artist: The Deadlians

New guitarist: Ian Carter from Stick in the Wheel

New gear: A reverb/tremolo pedal by Crazy Tube Circuits called White Whale V2. Nasty low-fi surf Sixties-style reverb at its best.

Guitarist of the year: Angus Young

BLUES SARACENO (EX-POISON, EX-JACK BRUCE)

Song: Idles, “Gift Horse”

Solo: Probably somewhere on Instagram is a six-year-old prodigy who is slaying it. I will be in awe for about 60 seconds and then completely forget about it.

Guitar moment: When Alex Van Halen sold all his drums. That’s how you close a chapter.

New band/artist: Sierra Ferrell

New guitarist: Billy Strings

New gear: Neural DSP Quad Cortex, Seymour Duncan PowerStage 100 Stereo

Guitarist of the year: Josh Smith and Dweezil Zappa

NED EVETT

Riff: Molly Miller’s “Shifting Sands”

Solo: Yvette Young’s solo in Covey’s “Falkor” has it all

Guitar Moment: Joe Satriani taking on the legacy of Eddie Van Halen

New band/artist: Luna Shadows

New guitarist: Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

New gear: Fender Tone Master Super Reverb

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

HANNAH HUGHES (JULEZ AND THE ROLLERZ)

Song: “Pink Pony Club” by Chappell Roan

Solo: “Old Scratch Blues” by Jack White

Guitar moment: I got the privilege of seeing Orianthi shred on her cherry red signature Gibson SJ-200 at a showcase. I also got to meet her! It was an amazing experience.

New guitarist: Hannah Hughes

New band/artist: I love Laufey!

New gear: I’ve been loving my Dandelion

fuzz by Messiah Guitar Pedals.

Album you listened to most:

Jack White’s *No Name*

FRANK MARINO (MAHOGANY RUSH)

New gear: My line of pedals, which I custom build myself. They consist of a clean sustain called SUS-IV, an auto-wah envelope filter called CryingMoon and a classic analog chorus called Universe. Together, they’re called the FX-Bundle, and they can be seen and heard alongside my first three pedals of 2023: Dragonfly [overdrive], Juggernaut [fuzz] and Maxoom [clean boost] on my website.

REGGIE WU (HEAVENS EDGE)

Song: Andy Wood, “Free Range Chicken”

Riff: “Better Days,” Paralandra

Solo: Andy Wood, “Master Gracey’s Manor”

Guitar moment: Slash’s blues project.

I love Slash even more now than his early days with Guns N’ Roses. He’s prolific and playing better than ever!

New band/artist: Paralandra. Stellar from top to bottom.

New guitarist: Matteo Mancuso. I know he’s not “new,” but he’s finally getting recognized. Amazing!

New gear: Neural DSP Quad Cortex.

Maybe not a new piece of gear, but with the latest update I can now have my Neural Plug-ins on there. Sounds incredible!

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

ROB MCNELLEY

New gear: The Hologram Chroma Console. There are so many great and unique sounds you can get so easily with this pedal. It’s easy to figure out how to use, and it’s great for putting a lot of personality into a guitar part if you want to add some interesting texture.

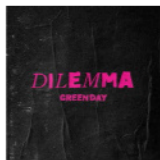
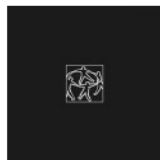
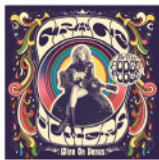
TED NUGENT

Song: Slash and the boys on his version of “Crossroads”

Riff: Doubt if anyone has heard it outside of my hunting camp, but my new instrumental, “Butterfingers,” is the cat’s ass. It inspired my dogs to go into premature heat.

Solo: The one Jared James Nichols unleashed at our jam session at Two Frogs in Ardmore, Oklahoma, this summer was phenomenal.

Guitar moment: Certainly the firestorm →



jam session with me, Jared James Nichols and Wes Jeans in Ardmore at Two Frogs was out-of-body dangerous.

New gear: Jared James Nichols' Blackstar amp

Album you listened to most:

James Brown, *Live at the Apollo*

Guitarist of the year: Jim McCarty

NILI BROSH

New gear: The new Strymon BigSky MX. I think so many of us fell in love with the original BigSky, and this new edition only improves on it. It has a much more detailed screen, a stronger DSP engine and better MIDI connectivity, all while keeping the original BigSky reverb parameters the way we all know and love. There are seven new modes (such as impulse, swell, etc.), and even cooler — the new dual modes are also of note: allowing for combining two types of reverb in parallel, series or as separate effects.

GRAYSON STEWART (NORMAN JEAN)

Song: "Living is Easy," Agriculture

Riff: "Joyless Grails," Generation of Vipers

Solo: "Area Code," Alluvial

Guitar moment: Gojira performing at the Olympics opening ceremony. One of the greatest metal bands of all time was given a spot on the world stage and brought more attention to our community. It also was the launch of Joe Duplantier and ESP working together.

New band/artist: House of Protection. Two of the highest-energy and chaotic performers mixed with smart production and catchy songwriting.

New guitarist: Mk.gee

New gear: ESP Royal Shiva

Album you listened to most: *You Won't Go Before You're Supposed To* by Knocked Loose

Guitarist of the year: Wes Hauch

YVETTE YOUNG (COVET, SOLO)

New gear: "I'm really into the Hologram Electronics Chroma Console. It's just such a fun color palette to draw from when writing/producing, and it's super intuitive to use! I've been doing a lot of recording with it.

SETH ROSENBLUM

Song: "Free Range Chicken" by Andy Wood. Terrifyingly awesome.

Riff: I love Myles Kennedy's new single, "Say What You Will."

Solo: "Prisoner" from Joe Bonamassa's new live album is stunningly good.

Guitar moment: The return of NAMM to its normal January time.

Best new band/artist: Eddie 9V

New guitarist: Dave Scher out of Austin

New gear: Keeley MK3 Driver

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

SIERRA LEVESQUE

Song: "Dilemma," Green Day

Riff: "Edin," the Smashing Pumpkins

Solo: "Echo Your Madness," Art of Anarchy

Guitar moment: Kiki Wong joining the Smashing Pumpkins was huge!

New band/artist: Grace Bowers & the Hodge Podge

New guitarist: Teemu Mäntysaari. He's gaining more recognition after joining Megadeth this year.

New gear: I'm loving the new Fender Player II Series guitars!

Guitarist of the year: Kiki Wong

BRUCE KULICK (EX-KISS, EX-GRAND FUNK RAILROAD)

New gear: I record guitars at home when possible, and every engineer who hears



Polyphia's Tim Henson continued to blow minds this year

my work is more than pleased. I mic a small 12-inch Celestion cab, and I love my Egnater Rebel 20 head — so my neighbors aren't wondering, "What the heck is that going over there?" My secret weapon is my Friedman Golden Pearl Overdrive. It helps me shape and slightly tweak my tone with its "voice" and "hi cut" toggle options, as well as volume, drive and tone controls. This pedal packs a punch in versatility.

DAVE KUSHNER (EX-VELVET REVOLVER)

Song: "Nightingale," Afrodisiac

Riff: "Enemy," Velvet Chains

Solo: "Voodoo Chile" by Eric Gales opening for Slash

New band/artist: Afrodisiac

New: Afrodisiac

New gear: Fender Tone Master Pro

Album you listened to most:

Sepultura, *Roots*

Guitarist of the year: Me!

EMANUEL CASABLANCA

Song: Anything by Matteo Mancuso

Riff: Emanuel Casablanca's "Strung Out on Thrills"

Solo: Kerry King, "Idle Hands"

New band/artist: Toby Lee

New guitarist: Emanuel Casablanca

New gear: Fender Tone Master Pro

Album you listened to most: *Crown* by

Eric Gales

Guitarist of the year:

Emanuel Casablanca

SAM 'BAM' KOLTUN (FASTER PUSSYCAT, DOROTHY, BUDDERSIDE)

Song: "Say What You Will" by Myles Kennedy

Riff: "Shake" by Sunflower Bean

Solo: "Invincible Shield" by Judas Priest

Guitar moment: The reunion of Oasis!

New band/artist: Return to Dust

New guitarist: Nate Rogers of Motherwind

New Gear: The Friedman Plex 50-watt amplifier

Guitarist of the year: Mark Tremonti

ROCKY ATHAS

Song: Joe Bonamassa, "Twenty-Four Hour Blues"

Riff: Philip Sayce, "Babylon Is Burning"

Solo: Philip Sayce, "Oh, That Bitches Brew"

Guitar moment: Slash releasing a new blues rock album and bringing this format to the forefront.

New guitarist: Igor Paspalj

New gear: Vox AC10C1 in red; a very cool studio amp

Guitarist of the year: Andy Timmons

COLIN CLIVE (MUSTARD PLUG)

Song: Fontaines D.C., “Favourite”

Riff: Ministry, “Just Stop Oil”

Solo: Judas Priest, “Invincible Shield”

Guitar moment: The return of Oasis

New guitarist: Lily Hopkins

New band/artist: Lambini Girls

New gear: Shure guitar wireless GLXD16+

Album you listened to most: Redd Kross

Guitarist of the year: Kiki Wong

BLACKBYRD MCKNIGHT (P-FUNK, EX-RHCP)

Song: Marcin, “Classical Dragon” featuring Tim Henson

Riff: Anything by Guthrie Govan; dude is out of this world!

Solo: Guthrie Govan on C3 Stage, Guadalajara

Guitar moment: Joe Bonamassa and Matteo Mancuso, “Breaking Up Somebody’s Home” in Berlin

New band/artist: Mateus Asato

New guitarist: Gretchen Menn

New gear: Positive Grid Spark Go

Guitarist of the year: Plini, Matteo Mancuso, Tim Henson and Marcin

CODY NEIRSTEDT (WU-TANG CLAN)

Song: Widow, “Masquerade”

Riff: 1:06 to 1:10 in “Slaughterhouse 2” by Knocked Loose

Solo: “Banana Split” by Berried Alive

Guitar moment: Does me playing with Wu-Tang for the first hip-hop residency in Las Vegas history count?

New band/artist: drewBOOGIE

New guitarist: Dominic Petrocelli of Disembodied Tyrant

New gear: Okay, this is a bit of a technicality here because it isn’t quite gear, but I’m going to have to say Neural DSP’s CorOS 3.0.0 update. I can’t stress enough how much I love the Quad Cortex; it’s literally the iPhone of amp modelers and now having the ability to run plugins made it even better.

Guitarist of the year: Johnuel Hasney (touring guitarist for Poppy), Dylan Reavey and, of course, Tim Henson.

In 2024, Matteo Mancuso received the praise and attention he deserves



QUINN SULLIVAN

Song: My song, “Once Upon a Lie”

Riff: “Maktub,” Gary Clark Jr.

Solo: “Hero,” Marcus King

Guitar moment: It seems like guitar-based music is making a resurgence. People say rock is dead, but I think it’s as alive as ever and just waiting to be brought back into the mainstream.

New band/artist: Marcus King

New gear: Vemuram Jan Ray overdrive

Album you listened to most: The new Clairo album, *Charm*

Guitarist of the year: Marcus King

CORY WONG

New gear: Archetype Corey Wong X plugin. It’s a plugin I developed with Neural DSP. We spent so many hours, weeks and months developing it to get just this crispy, warm, bubbly, bright, dynamic clean tone — and we’ve just nailed it. I’ve been using a beta version on my Quad Cortex because I use a Quad Cortex live. I was using the Quad Cortex a little bit but there was something that still felt a little bit missing from just playing direct through a modeling rig until I started using the plug-in on the Quad Cortex. It opened up everything and had the feel that I was looking for. The sound is a great, and so is the feel of how it responds and is dynamic with my playing.

RYAN GULDEMOND (MOTHER MOTHER)

Song: “Are You Looking Up,” Mk.gee

Riff: “Fool,” Adrienne Lenker

Solo: “Floods of Triton,” Lamb of God and Mastodon

Guitar moment: The rise of Grace Bowers

New band/artist: PISS

New guitarist: Matteo Mancuso

New gear: Mike Young’s [Mother Mother bassist] custom six-string Maurizio Uber Bass Miezio

Album you listened to most: *In Utero*, Nirvana

Guitarist of the year: Grace Bowers

TRAVIS STEVER (COHEED AND CAMBRIA)

New gear: Bowman Audio Endeavors Odious Octave/Fuzz. James Bowman, who you also would know as Against Me!’s guitar player, has been working with me and Coheed for the past year. He creates all these incredible pedals, so I would say anything by Bowman Endeavors — but this one is the pedal I loved the most from this year.

PAUL JACKSON JR. (SOLO, SESSION)

New gear: I just got the Simplifier X from DSM & Humboldt [Zero-Watt Stereo Amplifier]. It’s a pretty cool idea. There are a lot of great modeling devices. I’ve also been using the Fender Tone Master Pro [amp modeler]. It sounds great, is easy to set up and is very intuitive for me to get around.

HENRI CASH (STARCRAWLER)

Song: “Old Scratch Blues,” Jack White

Riff: Too many to name for the life of me!
Solo: Corey Feldman's "The Joke." Also, I saw Beck earlier this year finger tapping on his Silvertone with the L.A. Philharmonic backing him, which was probably one of my favorite solos I've witnessed in person.

Guitar moment: What Grace Bowers is doing is amazing; I'm excited to see what she comes out with next!

New band/artist: Small Wigs

New guitarist: This one Instagram dude (@chrissparker246) that does the pedal steel licks on guitar with a slide — and he doesn't even have a B-bender.

New gear: I've been enjoying the new R2R Electric MKI Fuzz.

Album you listened to most: I've been playing *Tonight's the Night* on loop after seeing Neil Young and Crazy Horse earlier this year.

Guitarist of the year: Nick Bockrath, who's been killing it with Cage the Elephant.

JIMMY BROWN (GUITAR WORLD)

Song: "Killing Floor," Slash featuring Brian Johnson

Riff: "I Should Have Known It," Chris Stapleton

Solo: "Killing Floor"

Album: 2023 A.D., Jeff Kollman

Guitar moment: "Grace Bowers Band Destroys Eastside Bowl" (YouTube video)

New band: Grace Bowers & the Hodge Podge

New guitarist: Grace Bowers

Album you listened to most: *Dark Side of the Mule* (Deluxe Edition) by Gov't Mule

Guitarist of the year: Grace Bowers

MICHAEL ASTLEY-BROWN (GUITARWORLD.COM)

Song: "Gary Clark Jr., 'This Is Who We Are.'" A masterclass in how to update the blues for 2024. Though GCJ's epic leads are indebted to the Eighties, their back-story — of his personal crossroads between shred and blues — lends them real emotional weight.

Riff: The Smashing Pumpkins' "Edin"

Solo: Alien Ant Farm, "So Cold." Terry Corso is one of the most underrated guitarists in one of the most underrated bands of the nu-metal era, so it was gratifying to hear him have his EVH moment on their comeback record.

Guitar moment: Dave Navarro's return to Jane's Addiction after years spent battling Long Covid and associated demons.

New band/artist: Asymmetric



Gary Clark Jr. impressively updated the blues for 2024

Universe broke through with a fresh take on jazz-fusion djent that really works. Think Polyphia meets Al Di Meola meets Meshuggah.

New guitarist: Emily Roberts has had a storming year with the Last Dinner Party and solidified herself as part of a new generation of guitar heroes.

New gear: The Yamaha Pacifica Professional is a flawless HSS electric guitar, with a genuine first in its remarkably balanced Neve-designed pickups.

Guitarist of the year: Grace Bowers established herself as one of the modern greats — at the grand old age of 18. An other-worldly talent.

PAUL RIARIO (GUITAR WORLD)

Song: "Dream Stealer," Arch Enemy

Riff: "10,000 Volts," Ace Frehley

Solo: "The Serpent and the King," Judas Priest

Album: *Liam Gallagher John Squire*

Guitar moment: "What Dweezil Zappa Learned From Eddie Van Halen," demonstrating the proper way to do a pick slide (YouTube video)

New band/artist: Seth Lee Jones

New guitarist: Marcin

New gear: Positive Grid Spark 2, Jackson Guitars American Series Virtuoso, Lava Me Air, Danelectro Doubleneck, MXR Joshua Ambient Echo

Album you listened to most: Not an album, but "The Professor" Nick Harrison's

AI Yacht Rock cover of Pantera's "Walk" gets me every time.

Guitarist of the year: Matteo Mancuso

DAMIAN FANELLI (GUITAR WORLD)

Song: "Free Range Chicken" by Andy Wood and Brent Mason

Riff: "Alright (Believe in What You Say)" by Billy King & the Bad Bad Bad and/or "Good Enough Alone" by Funkwrench Blues feat. Jack De Keyzer

Solo: "Bird of Paradise," Seth Lee Jones

Album: *Rack* by the Jesus Lizard; honorable mention goes to *Nite Owls* by JD McPherson.

Guitar moments: 1. Guitar taking center stage at the Paris Olympics; 2. The whole Vai/Belew/King Crimson scenario is like a crazy dream — but then you wake up and realize it's actually happening (sorta like when the *Brady Bunch* cast got together in 2019 to recreate the original Brady house). 3. Shooting *Guitar World* videos with Eric Gales, Vernon Reid, Marcus King, Sue Foley, Marcin, Doug Aldrich, John 5 and more. 4. I don't play too many sessions these days, but in 2024, I played B-bender Tele, resonator and Martin acoustic on "Billy the Kid" by a fella named Scott DeVito. Check it out on Spotify!

New band/artist: Office Dog, Parlor Greens, Cosmic Guilt, Wunderhorse, Softcult

New guitarist: Yasmin Williams

New gear: In January I bought a \$449 Squier J Mascis Jazzmaster and customized it with a Descendant Adapt-O-Matic bridge, a Mastery Bridge OMV vibrato and a 920D Custom JM Vintage Loaded Pickguard. Think of all the fun you can have with Squiers!

Album you listened to most: I put on Hermanos Gutiérrez when I work, so it's gotta be their new album, *Sonido Cósmico*. But I also can't stop listening to *Unknown Pleasures* by Joy Division, so who knows?

Guitarist of the year: Sorry for the flip-flopping, but it really is a three-way tie — Slash, Grace Bowers and Matteo Mancuso. **GW**



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THE GUITARISTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY 2025
PAGE FIFTY-EIGHT

GUITAR WORLD'S EDITORS
AND WRITERS SELECT
2024'S GAME-CHANGERS
AND TASTEMAKERS

Slash
Joe Satriani
Steve Vai
Adrian Belew
Dave Navarro
Gary Clark Jr.
Joe Perry
Brad Whitford
Kerry King
Grace Bowers
David Gilmour
Mdou Moctar
Emily Roberts
Matteo Mancuso
Marcin
Talyor Swift
John 5
Nancy Wilson
Susan Tedeschi
Kiki Wong
St. Vincent



Words by **JONATHAN HORSLEY**

Slash, Guns N' Roses' resident guitar hero, showcased another dimension of his playing on *Orgy of the Damned*



SLASH

THIS YEAR, SLASH'S Rolodex was every bit as important to him as a Gibson Les Paul or Magnatone amp, with the Guns N' Roses guitarist leveraging all his convening powers for the all-star blues album *Orgy of the Damned* — before repeating the trick and launching the touring S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival to make money for good causes and take the art form nationwide. *Orgy* was an opportunity to show the world a side to his playing that we hadn't seen since the Nineties (via his Blues Ball live project), and yet you don't need to dig that deep into Slash's back catalog to find examples of blues phraseology — the influence has always been there.

He had been wanting to do some of the *Orgy* tracks since forever — “Killing Floor” (transcribed on page 86) being one of them. “It's always been one of my favorite guitar riffs of all time,” he told *GW*. His high-energy shakedown of the Howlin' Wolf standard — with AC/DC's Brian Johnson barking lava into the mic — showcased an ease with this material.

The GN'R guitarist freshened up the rotation for *Orgy*, predominantly playing through a Magnatone M-80 combo and breaking out his 1963 ES-355. The Gibson brand ambassador even switched codes to use a Fender Telecaster on a bravura take on Stevie Wonder's “Living for the City” and a Strat on Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac standard “Oh Well.”

Green and fellow Bluesbreaker alumni Eric Clapton are primary inspirations, but as Slash argues, the O.G. trailblazers remain unsurpassed.

“My favorite British guitar players are amazing, but they all pale in comparison to the original guys, because that was their own personal technique, from its origin, and everybody after that was just picking up on it and taking it somewhere else,” he said. “Those early blues guitar players from the Fifties and Sixties — and, of course, it goes further back than that — there was a thing there that was just raw and amazing and unique.”



JOE SATRIANI

JOE SATRIANI DID more in one year than most players do in a lifetime, starting out with the G3 Reunion Tour alongside the original 1996 lineup of Eric Johnson and Steve Vai, playing shows that would've been the highlight of any other year.

But not when Satch also announced that he and Vai were touring and making music together, releasing their first single, "The Sea of Emotion, Pt. 1," in March, sharing a *GW* cover and having big fun onstage. And definitely not when it was confirmed that Satch was going to be performing a de facto tribute to Eddie Van Halen on Sammy Hagar's Best of All Worlds Tour.

After all the hoo-ha about the EVH tributes, this was a chance for one great to pay homage to the G.O.A.T., and Satriani approached it with his trademark humility. He got serious. First, fretting about the tone, he developed an all-new tube amp with 3rd Power to replicate Eddie's *Live Without a Net*-era sound. Then he sweated the playing. Performing "Mean Streets" on *The Howard Stern Show* without a rehearsal was a baptism of fire. Everyone had an opinion. But he did what the greats do; they get in the room and practice, and when the shows came around, no one was mistaking Satch for Eddie Van Halen — but they

sure could've been mistaken in thinking this was easy, because he made it look like a fun jam with friends, which is kind of what 2024 was for Satriani. Which brings us to Mr. Vai...

STEVE VAI

AS IT GOES with Joe, so it does with Steve, and although Vai didn't need a custom-built amp to play Van Halen night after night he did have his own musical Everest to scale. Once he had fulfilled his post-G3, post-Satch/Vai commitments, it was time to tour with Beat, reimagining King Crimson classic albums in the company of Crimson alumni Adrian Belew and Tony Levin, with Tool's Danny Carey on drums.

The Beat tour is a big deal — 65 dates across the States — and a heavy lift, with a set culled from King Crimson's *Discipline*, *Beat* and *Three of a Perfect Pair*, all performed for a fanbase who expects perfection. Vai wouldn't have it any other way.

"When the opportunity to do this gig was presented to me, I saw myself on the stage in my mind's-eye and I knew it would be good," he wrote on Instagram. "But the way it is turning out for me has surpassed my expectations... I feel so comfortable being on this stage playing

this absolutely superb music and being a part of something that offers the fans of this music an opportunity to hear it live after over 40 years of its release."

ADRIAN BELEW

ON THE MOMENTOUS occasion of the Stratocaster's 70th birthday (another big 2024 event), Adrian Belew had a revelation for *Guitar World*. He was the owner of the world's first relic'd guitar, and Seymour Duncan did the relic'ing.

It goes back to a "brown sunburst" Strat Belew bought in Nashville for \$285, a bargain. But it had an "ugly-ass" finish. Duncan knew just what to do.

"He got in the trunk of his car and took out all these things — files and a screwdriver and spray paint and lighter fluid," Belew said. "He laid it on the lawn, and before I could say anything, he took the lighter fluid out and squirted it on the face of the guitar and set it on fire... It looked just like the beginning of *Bonanza*." That was only the beginning. Screwdrivers came out. It got dragged around. Belew applied spray paint, and guitar history was made.

As for Belew the player? We'll leave that to Vai, who has witnessed it up close on the Beat tour: "I have never heard anyone even in his neighborhood



when it comes to his creative mastery of guitartronics. I watch and listen to him take solos and find myself giggling in disbelief." And, as we see it — no Belew? No Beat tour!

DAVE NAVARRO

THERE'S NO NEED to go all Judge Judy here on what went down on that fateful Friday, September 13, in Boston, as the Jane's Addiction reunion imploded. We've all seen the fan-shot footage, the alt-rock Zapruder film duly uploaded to YouTube. Perry Farrell took a pop at Dave Navarro. Everyone has had their two cents. He says. She says. Jane says.

Well, it's done now. That Navarro managed to take part at all in the reunion is testament to his character, having contested with the grief of losing his friend in Foo Fighters drummer Taylor

Hawkins, and still to fully recover from the effects of Long Covid. The tour began with Troy Van Leeuwen, then Josh Klinghoffer in his place.

Navarro said it was tough sitting out the opening months. "I love both of those guys, and I was fine with that, but it was hard not to be with my original band," he said. After Hawkins' death, he didn't pick up a guitar for a year. He soon made up for lost time.

"I spent most of my days during my illness just kind of woodshedding guitar and relearning things," he said. "I played Jane's Addiction records front to back and tried to relearn things I'd played in the Eighties and Nineties that I'd forgotten. That was a challenge, and that was fun."

Who knows what's next, but Navarro has emerged a better player, "a little bit more confident" of his abilities. He's available for hire.

[from left] Some 50 years into their friendship, shred icons Joe Satriani and Steve Vai finally co-wrote a track in 2024, "The Sea of Emotion, Pt. 1"; Dave Navarro once again graced the stage this year with his former Jane's Addiction bandmates after a battle with Long Covid had temporarily kept him sidelined; Gary Clark Jr. in a Gibson mood



GARY CLARK JR.

THERE IS MUCH to be said for personal development and the wisdom that comes with life experience; but this shouldn't come at the expense of the inner-child — not if you want to retain that sense of play that animates the creative impulse. That's the lesson we took from Gary Clark Jr. and his radical reinterpretation of blues guitar on his 2024 album, *JPEG Raw*.

"What felt different about this record is that I kinda went back to my 12-year-old self," he said. "There was a fork in the road where I could have headed toward blues or shred. I chose blues and ended up being the kid at those jam nights with that same Ibanez Blazer and a 60-watt solid-state Crate."

Clark's last four years have seen a reunion with Ibanez guitars and the Floyd Rose vibrato. "I went crazy on distortion, chorus and delay, going nuts in my studio for hours and hours every day. That was the approach for this album. I was being a full-on musician and not sticking to one style."

As such, you won't find him solely administering I-IV-V shuffles in 12/8, but the blues is still coming from the same place — the gut. →

"It wasn't cool to know music theory when I was growing up; it was about the feeling," Clark said. "I'd ask all the other players and they'd say, 'All you need is three chords and the truth!' So that's just what I lived by — the pentatonic scale with a little bit of soul."

JOE PERRY/BRAD WHITFORD

HAD THINGS GONE according to plan, we'd be basking in the afterglow from one of the valedictory shows on Aerosmith's *Peace Out: The Farewell Tour* or draining some cold beers in anticipation of one. But frontman Steve Tyler's voice has finally given out, and the band have retired from touring. Bassist Tom Hamilton sounded a note of hope about an album, but it's the hope that kills you.

What we *do* have is 50-plus years of louche, libidinous, often epic, always inventive rock 'n' roll. The reflections of the band's guitarists Joe Perry and Brad Whitford in *Guitar World* last year offer a compelling commentary on the Boston institution's story — the guitars, the fall-outs, the secrets behind its success.

Part of the secret is how the book-smart Whitford dovetails with the instinctive Perry.

"Joe has such an elite sense of timing, rhythm and note choices," Whitford said. "I don't do that. I'm more Berklee-inspired. I'm always thinking about intervals, scales, chords and how they're supposed to fit together."

Perry's approach is not without risks. Instinct can get you lost on the fingerboard, but Whitford says Perry always lands on his feet.

"I doubt Robert Johnson knew what fucking intervals he was working within a musical sense or what that looked like on paper," Whitford continued. "But who gives a shit? It's the same with Joe."

Perry returned the compliment, expressing his wish that, maybe, after all this time people would stop calling him the "lead" guitarist.

"It's always rubbed me the wrong way when people put Brad down and only refer to me as the lead guitarist," he said. "We're both guitar players in the band, you know? Brad is a wicked soloist. In my book, some of the best solos in our catalog are ones that Brad did."

KERRY KING

KERRY KING'S DEBUT solo album, *From Hell I Rise*, is the best Slayer record since 2001's *God Hates Us All*, and the fact that it doesn't have the legendary Huntington Beach thrash quartet's name on it really seems to piss him off. As King says, Slayer split too soon and it "sucks" not being in the band.

"I want Slayer to exist, so this is the only way I know how to do that," he said. "To me, it would be weird to do anything else. Everybody knows how I write. This is my comfort zone. I'm a big metal guy. I don't want to make rock 'n' roll. I don't want to make anything else. If people say this album sounds like Slayer, I take that as a huge compliment."

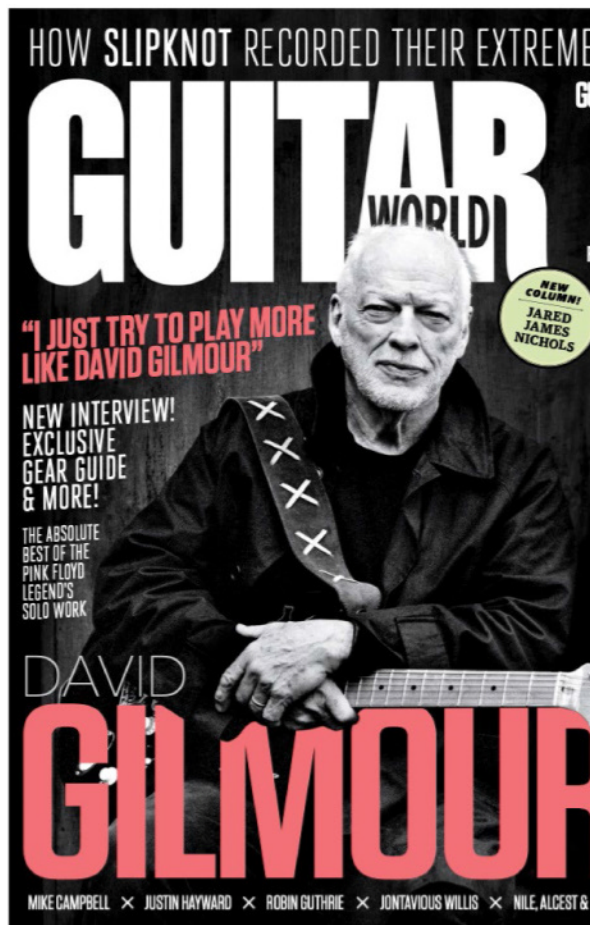
With Paul Bostaph on drums and rippers like "Crucifixation" and "Idle Hands" to destroy venues, it's business as usual.

GRACE BOWERS

IF TEENAGE BLUES phenom Grace Bowers rises any faster, she's going to need some time out in a hyperbaric chamber to realign her chakras. This year alone she has debuted on *Jimmy Kimmel*, released a very well-received album and covered SRV's "Lenny" and "Scuttle Buttin'" (exceptionally) — and her ascent shows no signs of slowing anytime soon.

Her latest single, a rootsy, mesmeric cover of Led Zeppelin's "Going to California," gave props to her home state (California) and hero (Jimmy Page), demonstrating that nothing was off limits; only Heart have covered Led Zep with this kind of three-dimensional authority. "We stayed pretty truthful to the original, while giving it a deeper sound, I would say," she said.

Speaking of Heart, Nancy Wilson is a big fan, identifying Bowers as a player with the precious gift of knowing how not to overplay. "There's a whole difference in my mind between just shredding, like wanking off, as opposed to melodically conversational-type shredding," Wilson told *Total Guitar*. "That's what the great players do, like I think Grace Bowers is already at 17. 'She has a significant voice. I would pick her out in a crowd of shredders, like, 'Oh, I know who that is,' like David Gilmour."



DAVID GILMOUR

ONCE UPON A time he was playing the ancient Roman amphitheater of Pompeii. In 2024, it was open mic night at a pub in England playing "Wish You Were Here" with his daughter. But if David Gilmour's impromptu first live show in four years was low-key, new studio album *Luck and Strange* was more in keeping with the prog icon's career among the gods.

Gilmour reckons it is his best since Pink Floyd's 1973 magnum opus, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, crediting producer Charlie Andrew for challenging him to push harder.

History will ultimately judge *Luck and Strange's* standing, but in the here and now it is a considerable work of reflective grandeur. Written by Gilmour's wife, the novelist Polly Sampson, the lyrics are a meditation on mortality. The guitars, meanwhile, betray all the characteristics of immortality, arranged according to Gilmour's golden ratio.

Who needs Pompeii, anyway? You can't even get a decent pint of beer there.

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WHO BUILT
PRINCE'S AXES
THE OTHER
"RAMBLIN' MAN"
GUITARIST



[from left]
"I just try to play more like David Gilmour," said David Gilmour, *Guitar World's* December 2024 cover star. He also said that his 2024 album, *Luck and Strange*, is his best work since Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon*; Tuareg guitar genius Mdou Moctar performing live in Milan on August 22

MDOU MOCTAR

HAVING CONSTRUCTED HIS first guitar from scrap wood, using bicycle cables for strings and sardine can keys for tuners, this MacGyver of the Sahel was never going to play it safe once he performed the miracle of going pro and taking his psychedelic Tuareg sound global. And so Mdou Moctar's *Funeral for Justice* takes his AmPro Stratocaster

deeper into uncharted territory, its Sustainiac at the neck expanding the Nigerien virtuoso's reach.

But the key to all this isn't gear; it's a state of mind. Moctar's advice to guitar players is to forget about the tools of the trade (he himself can't remember which amps he used on the record) and concentrate on developing the ability to express yourself on the instrument. That's all *Funeral for Justice* is — the sound of Moctar processing anti-colonialist anguish, hope, joy and the search for connection, all through his guitar. That's what makes a guitar hero.

EMILY ROBERTS

LIKE ALL THE best players, Emily Roberts is full of surprises. The Last Dinner

Party lead guitarist holds a degree in jazz guitar — and yet it's not Charlie Christian but Queen's Brian May who is her creative lodestar. She even played a gig with a Queen tribute band.

I really got inside Brian May's playing, and I would say he's my main influence for writing guitar parts and coming up with ideas," she said. "I really like how melodic and catchy his playing can be. It's not necessarily trying to show off; it's more what can be good in a moment of the song and what can lift it."

That's not to say that her studies were in vain. You can hear it on her lead work on "Sinner." Many of her note choices and phrasing — played on an Ernie Ball Music Man St. Vincent Goldie — betray her education and session work on the resumé.

Roberts says her theoretical vocabulary places all kinds of musical ideas within easy reach, which is one of the reasons why the Last Dinner Party's debut, *Prelude to Ecstasy*, is such an enchanting ride, with tracks such as "Caesar on a TV Screen" and "Beautiful Boy" modulating between the theatrical and the dreamy.

"Having all of the jazz theory knowledge gives me a lot of ideas when it comes to writing a rock or pop song," she said. "It's definitely helped having that theory behind it when it comes to improvising ideas and understanding harmony

MATTEO MANCUSO

THIS SICILIAN WUNDERKIND sure was given the big build up with Joe Bonamassa and Steve Vai — and anybody who had watched him play on YouTube — all saying the same thing, that he's the future of guitar... You've never heard anything like it, yadda yadda yadda.

They had a point. When Matteo Mancuso dropped his full-length debut, *The Journey*, last year, it felt like a hinge moment in the history of fusion-rock guitar. Rumor has it there was an EGM held at Dunlop for fear the bottom would fall out of the market for Tortex guitar picks as players googled "tocco appoggiato" and tried to get a handle on Mancuso's sui-generis fingerstyle approach. For this year's trick, he wrote a breathtaking instrumental tribute to Paul Gilbert. Titled "Paul Position," it found Mancuso transposing his virtuosity to a lower register as he swapped his underrated Yamaha Revstar for a beefy Baccì baritone.

MARCIN

CLASSICAL GUITAR HAS an image problem and a structural problem, and the two are related. Just how do you teach the next generation to take the art form forward when mastering it requires such deep study of the past? Marcin Patrzalek [pictured at right] might just have the answer. The Polish guitarist's technique owes as much to mixed martial arts as it does to Andrés Segovia — a full-court press of nuevo flamenco, contemporary shred and percussive acoustic. Bludgeoning the soundboard, it's like his guitar's possessed by the spirit of Buddy Rich.

"Classical guitar is often about emulating other people, especially older generations of classical musicians," he said. "So I just wanted to do the wildest thing possible, and that culminated in this style, which just happened to be very visually stimulating."

His debut album, *Dragon in Harmony*, features collaborations with Polyphia's Tim Henson and Ichika Nito, and will do for nylon-string what *Perpetual Burn* did for electric.

TAYLOR SWIFT

ONE OF THESE days, Taylor Swift is going to take us up on the offer of a monthly column teaching pop songwriting. Until then, we'll just have to admire her craft from afar and learn what we can. For a generation of pop fans, this is the year of the Eras Tour, football stadiums sold out night after night to witness and participate in Swift's marathon sets.

From a guitar POV, Swift is using Gibson acoustics, with the brand building her a pair of custom pink and lavender acoustics. Gibson brand's VP of product, Mat Koehler, says Swift is exacting about what she wants.

"Taylor favors a fairly unique Gibson model — a J-180 with a long-scale length," he said. "The long-scale length of the J-180 adds power and presence to be able to cut through a mix, which is especially useful when playing live on stage.

JOHN 5

THIS MAKES TWO years running where we've got Mötley Crüe guitarist John 5 up here on the "guitarist of the year" podium,



and there's no great mystery as to why. As box-office guitar players go, he is the *Mission: Impossible* franchise with a hot-rodded Telecaster, defying physical laws on a nightly basis on tour with the Crüe. And he's having a similarly transformative effect in the studio with "Dogs of War," the first new material recorded since the departure of Mick Mars, and there's the promise of more to follow.

That cover of the Beastie Boys' "Fight for Your Right" they've been playing live has been tracked, and there's a single coming that John 5 describes as having an Aerosmith flavor. Confirmation of a full-length album is most surely be on the horizon. What is definitely coming via Fender is The Phantom, an all-black sequel to his 5's switch-equipped (and now sold-out) Ghost Telecaster.

NANCY WILSON

HEART MIGHT HAVE had to take a medical time out from their Royal Flush Tour,

as lead vocalist Ann Wilson underwent treatment for cancer, but they'll be back at it in 2025, when it will be one of the most anticipated shows of the calendar. The tour is their first in five years. Those dates in April and May testified to them losing none of their magic in that time, with Nancy Wilson's tone sometimes sweet as honey, often super-heavy, and when she hits those opening chords to closer "Barracuda," it takes the wind out of your chest.

Here's hoping they keep "The Ocean" in the set. Only Led Zeppelin do Zeppelin better, and they're not doing it anymore. While we wait for February to come around, check out their performance on *The Tonight Show*. Even in a three-guitar lineup, Nancy's SG steamrollers through the mix. Vegas had better be ready!

SUSAN TEDESCHI

BESIDES TAKING REGULAR exercise, a solid eight hours a night and enjoying a balanced diet, there are few better things for mind

and body than attending a Tedeschi Trucks Band show. There you will find an abundance of humanity, talent and music onstage — a transformative experience, at the center of which is Susan Tedeschi.

Her peerless voice, allied to the fact that she's a consummate team player among a team of them, is perhaps one of the only good reasons why people don't talk about Tedeschi enough as a G.O.A.T. guitarist. They should. If her husband, Derek Trucks, provides TTB's ancillary vocal glissando guitar, it's often left to the Berklee grad, blues-room trained Tedeschi to pin the audience to their chairs — especially when she has her Les Paul and the wah pedal engaged. She is hard on her instrument, preferring .11s, showing no mercy. This year, Fender honored her with a signature model based on her '93 Tele. On the back of the headstock you'll find her signature. On the original, you'll find Buddy Guy's, with B.B. King, John Lee Hooker, Herbie Hancock, Kris Kristofferson signing the front — testimony to the company she has kept, to the player she is.

NICK FANCHER

KIKI WONG

MORE THAN 10,000 people applied to fill the vacancy left by Jeff Schroeder exiting

the Smashing Pumpkins, and after a herculean effort from Billy Corgan and his HR team, Kiki Wong got the gig. She told *Guitar World* that only giving birth had brought her more joy — and that in Corgan she had found a fellow Pantera obsessive. “It's super-rad that Billy has a heavy metal side to him,” she said. “It inspired him to fuse the lines between alt-rock and metal.”

But what does Wong bring to the Pumpkins? Well, no shortage of chops. Those following her on social media pre-Pumpkins will know exactly what she can do. Wong admits says this is a chance to broaden her skill set on a set containing multitudes.

“It's definitely been a challenge learning the Pumpkins style of rock,” she said. “There's so much feel and rhythmic eloquence that goes into their style of playing.”

ST. VINCENT

HOW ST. VINCENT, aka Annie Clark, dispenses guitar in her world-building alternative indie rock/pop sound is worthy of its own credit-bearing module at Berklee, but should be required study for any player of any genre. Sometimes it's as an acoustic, dry as a graham cracker, that she will pan left and right, other times it is a “paint-

the-fence guitar” or a tone dissolved in the solvent of guitar effects.

“I certainly have a guitar player ego, but what I play and when I play has to be correct for the song,” she said. “I look at guitar more as a songwriter, an arranger and a producer. Guitar is part of that whole world and that lexicon, but I'm not always going, ‘Hey, I'm a guitar player, so I have to put guitar on this.’ It's more like, ‘What does this song need? Is it aching for guitar?’ If the answer is yes, then absolutely, guitar shall be there.”

No one does it quite like her, and when it's done, don't expect her to repeat a trick, because reinvention is just around the corner. This creative sensibility is what makes *All Born Screaming* such a supernova of invention — accessible yet unorthodox, urgent yet haunting, weird yet human.

Such is her appetite for finding new sounds to play with, Clark has hitherto avoided the Stratocaster like the plague — they “come with a lot of [cultural] baggage, so they're tricky,” she said. But a gift from Mike McCready gives her an occasion to use one this time around, its “slappiness” offering an alternative voice to her Ernie Ball Music Man Goldie, which is all over the album, assuming new forms, shedding its skin from track to track. **GW**

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THE
BEST OF
2024



HER LATEST
Wine on Venus (2024)



GRACE BOWERS

After a “whirlwind” year, the 18-year-old sensation discusses her love of SGs, inspiring a new generation of female guitarists, and how she’s more than just a blues player **By Andrew Daly**

AT THE BEGINNING of 2024, a then-17-year-old Grace Bowers couldn’t have imagined she’d drop her uber-vintage, totally bodacious guitar smorgasbord, *Wine on Venus*. And she definitely didn’t think she’d be one of *Guitar World*’s guitarists of the year.

But here she is, now 18, and having accomplished all that (and more). “Oh, man,” Bowers says. “I don’t even want to know who else is on that list because I’m probably not worthy to be listed next to them.”

Bowers has earned it. There’s been buzz about her before she broke out, but *Wine on Venus* confirms that she’s here to stay. She’s made no bones about her love for classic rock and blues, and despite her vintage-inspired cover of Led Zeppelin’s “Going to California,” she’s got other places to go. “I feel like I’ve broken out of that,” she says. “It’s easy to get trapped because it’s comfortable and familiar. But that’s not all I want to do for the rest of my life.”

So where will Grace Bowers go next? “The album we recorded has a

throwback sound,” she says. “I love that, but I want to do something new now and again. But I’m just taking it all as it comes. I’ll always be learning. I’ll still be practicing every day. But I want to eventually make another record and get more music out there. I want to keep touring and doing all this stuff. I’m just gonna see where it all takes me.”

You’ve had a hell of a year. Have you had a chance to reflect on it?

A whirlwind is a great way to describe it. Looking back on a year ago from today, I was in such a different place. What I’m doing now is what I wanted to do then — and it’s all happened so perfectly. I’m very grateful for being thrown amazing opportunities. This is my first year, and I put a record out with my band; I’ve been very lucky.

Now that you’re in the thick of it, has your perception of the music industry changed?

I’ve seen and experienced a lot of the ugly side. I’ve had to deal with a lot of horrible people, but at the same time, I’ve gotten amazing experiences. I’m just more aware of what’s happening than last year when I was still playing out in Nashville clubs every night, and that was my life. I’m glad to have broken out of that and to have a broader outlook.

Not many people have done what you’ve done by their 18th birthday; I’m sure you’ve had people cast you aside because of your age.

Absolutely. I get disrespected before I even play. People take one look at me, [see] a young female and immediately get a thought in their head of what I am, and they don’t take me as seriously as they should.

There should be mutual respect, regardless of age.

For the most part, I feel that way. I feel equal. But there’s been a lot of times when I feel disrespected or lesser, which is not cool. At the same time, being young and a girl is an advantage. There’s a lot of other people who are in that position, so I view it as an advantage — and a disadvantage.

DAVID MCCLISTER

“I GET GIRLS COMING TO MY SHOWS ALL THE TIME, AND THEY’RE LIKE, ‘I PICKED UP

You're empowering women to pick up the guitar, which is happening more than ever.

Yeah, that's become less of a stigma. I get girls coming to my shows all the time, and they're like, "I picked up guitar because of you," or "My dad bought me my first guitar after I came to see you." That's my favorite thing. I love that there's more female players — but not just guitar players — in music now.

Who are some of the contemporary players who inspire you?

Daniel Donato is cracked. We've played a few shows together, and he's just on another level. Marcus King is a monster guitar player, singer and songwriter. He's all of the above. He's awesome. Kirk Fletcher is cool, and right now, I think Cory Wong is great, too.

You've become synonymous with a Gibson SG, but if that guitar were taken away, or if you were "banned from the SG," what would you turn to?

It can't be an SG at all? Man, I don't even know! I genuinely cannot answer that. I don't know what I would do.

The SG is quirky. It's surprising that a young player like yourself would be so committed to it.

When I'm touring, I play a Murphy Lab SG that Gibson gave me, and the [Maestro Vibrola] tremolo is just perfect. I've never experienced neck dive, and it's never gone out of tune even once. I think it gets a bad rap for that. It looks cool, which is a plus, and I have full access to the neck and can get to those last few frets. And there's so many tonal differences you can get out of it. But I've been playing a Strat now and again, which I've come to love because it's totally different.

Have you had any gear discoveries while on the road this year?

I've been playing Silktone amps recently. The guy that makes them [Charles Henry] is going to make me a new one, which is like the size of, or a little taller than, a half-stack. I told him I needed something with lots of headroom that wouldn't break up. I've also been using an Analog Man King of Tone [overdrive].

"I'm kind of backing away from being a 'blues guitarist,'" Grace Bowers says. "I've been trying to get out of that realm and playing a bit out of that box"

Are you a tube amp purist?

I don't know... I've never really messed around with stuff like modelers, to be honest. It would probably make life a lot easier not to lug around tube amps. [Laughs] I'd be open to it if it can sound good, but it's tube amps for now. You can feel tube amps like they're real. That sounds kind of cheesy, but there's something about tube amps that digital can't really capture.

As far as technique, how has your playing evolved over the past year?

I'm learning every day. My playing has changed a lot — especially my rhythm playing. That was never something I focused on, but now I'm playing my own songs, and there's lots of funk and soul, so the most important part is good rhythm playing. And then I'm kind of backing away from being a "blues guitarist." I've been trying to get out of that realm and playing a bit out of that box.

Is it challenging to keep yourself from leaning into those things since they've given you success?

I love the blues. It's what got me into guitar. But if I'm in my car listening to music, I'm not listening to blues. I'm still very blues-influenced, and as you can hear in my playing, it's an inspiration to me. But it's not what I wanted to be boxed into because there's other things to be done.

Do you see yourself leaning more toward R&B, funk and hip-hop?

Absolutely. I've been really into Cory Henry. I love Anderson .Paak, and Bruno Mars is great. I already want to make another record; I just don't have the money right now. But if I did, it would have a more modern sound.

Lack of financial backing is a good point, since you're an independent artist. Has that held you back?

Literally, everything is a challenge when you don't have a label behind you, which is essentially a bank. It's so hard. I'm still paying off the record we made. People online are like, "Her parents paid for it," "She comes from a rich background" or "Her family was in the music business." None of that's true.

Here and now, what would you say to those people?

This record was self-funded. I have a distribution company that has helped me, but people don't see how hard it is to do this by yourself without a whole lot of guidance. With every single show I play, I'm not seeing any of that money because it's going toward the record. That's how much I believed in it. I was willing to make that kind of sacrifice because it was something I really wanted to do.

Odds are that a major label will come knocking. When they do, does getting deeper into the machine — and potentially losing control — scare you?

The decision to do it without a label was intentional because I wanted complete control over it and for it to be my vision. After going through this cycle and seeing how hard it is financially, I'm definitely talking to some labels. It's about finding the right person to work with; if you're butting heads creatively, that's not the best place to be. If I ever do sign anywhere, I'd make sure we're on the same page.

What are your thoughts on the modern guitar scene, which is increasingly geared toward social media and less about what's "traditional"?

As someone who got their start from social media, it's an entirely different realm from 10 or 20 years ago. There's so many ways you can break through and be noticed. That's cool, but at the same time, you see "Instagram guitarists" who do nothing but that. That takes away from the spirit of playing guitar. It should be about more than showing off. At the same time, it's a blessing because some people wouldn't have heard you otherwise.

How do you differentiate between somebody who's the real deal and somebody who's just farming views and clicks?

Everyone has different intentions. I started on social media, but ultimately I knew I wanted to be playing shows and make my own songs. That was my goal from the get-go. But other people are fine just playing in the bedroom on YouTube; that's all they want to do. It depends on what you want and are motivated to do. **GW**

GUITAR BECAUSE OF YOU.' I LOVE THAT THERE'S MORE FEMALE PLAYERS IN MUSIC NOW"

THE
BEST OF
2024



HIS LATEST
The Journey (2023)



MATTEO MANCUSO

The Italian jazz-shredder on social media, his love of the Yamaha Revstar and the advice given to him by Steve Vai

By Andrew Daly

TO SAY THAT Matteo Mancuso has had a big 2024 would be an understatement. His debut record, 2023's *The Journey*, has continued to wow just about anyone who hears it, but now he's being namechecked by the likes of Steve Vai, Joe Bonamassa and Al Di Meola.

Yes, the things Mancuso does are utterly incomprehensible, but he isn't worried about competing with the

greats he's wowing. "The guitar is such a personal instrument," Mancuso tells *GW*. "You can't compare yourself to other people. I know Steve [Vai] said something like, 'You can't duplicate what Matteo does,' but it's the same for me — I can't duplicate what he does. I can't replicate what Al Di Meola does. I don't compare myself to these kinds of players because they are giants."

But Mancuso, who is just 28, is a

giant. Few possess his style-meets-skill vibe, and even fewer have been classified as halcyon so quickly. "It adds pressure, that's for sure," Mancuso says. "If these kinds of players are talking about you, you feel happy. Steve gave me some good advice: 'Concentrate on music and not too much on guitar.' You can open up a lot of new ideas with that mindset."

You've had an incredible year, and you've done it without being hyper-present on social media — at least compared to other players.

Social media impacts the community a lot. The information you can find sometimes influences us in a good way and sometimes in a bad way. If you gain a lot of followers on Instagram or grab somebody's attention and make people say, "Wow," that sometimes means shredding it, but it's probably the best choice. That's why people on Instagram tend to focus on that. They tend to focus more on Instagram reels rather than actual music. I always say, "Never judge a guitar player by a short reel." But to make it work, you have to do really short videos with a lot of "Wow." People tend to concentrate too much on the "Wow."

Is social media a good or bad thing for the guitar community?

It's not, "Okay, this is my music. Check it out." It's just a video on Instagram. It's not my music. If you want to check out my music, check out Spotify or YouTube. I sometimes do videos and just upload them on Instagram, but they're not to be associated with my musical offerings. They're separate things. But we have an advantage as a generation because everything is available on the Internet. We're probably better off than the previous generation — not because we're better, but because it's easier for us to reach a certain level faster.

Does being a guitar player in the internet era come with stressors people might not realize?

Now that everybody is doing live videos, if you have a bad gig, it will end up on YouTube or Instagram. People will see it if you're drunk at a gig, for

PAOLO TERLIZZI

"SOME PEOPLE, WHEN THEY MAKE A MISTAKE, THEY'RE SMILING, BUT I CAN'T DO

example. We need to pay attention. I don't like to be recorded — not because I don't want to see people doing it, but because I think you need to enjoy the moment.

Being present these days is extremely important — and very difficult.

In the old days, maybe in the Eighties, if you had a bad gig, or were drunk and puked on the stage, maybe somebody would tell the story, but there was no video proof. Now it's more dangerous. That's why I keep myself in very good shape. All the people from my generation need to be very consistent online; everything is recorded.

Have there been any moments this year where you felt like you tripped yourself up?

Sometimes I feel stuck. For example, if I play too much of the same thing, I'll feel musically stuck. To be passionate about music, you need to have a varied listening diet — not just one thing or the other. To keep the passion up, it's important to listen to new music and play the guitar through the records.

Is that mainly how you keep your inspiration fueled?

That is something I like to do — and I don't study too much. It's useful to study the guitar alone so you can explore ideas, but you need to take inspiration from external stuff. Playing through records is something I do all the time to keep my interest in the guitar up.

Your main guitar is the Yamaha Revstar, but do any other guitars inspire you?

I haven't found a guitar that is... I don't want to say better, because that's subjective. I see myself playing it, and that didn't happen with most guitars. That really happened with the Revstar. When I started working with Yamaha, I was searching for a guitar similar to the [Gibson] SG because I'm a big SG fan. But I was searching for a guitar that was a little more versatile because I was already doing jazz-oriented tunes, and I wanted to keep using a solid body guitar.

The Revstar is a cool-looking guitar.
Aesthetically speaking, I really like it.

It's something I pick for myself, and I like playing. But there are many other brands to check out sometimes, like Gibson and Fender. I'm lucky because my father is a guitar player, and he has many guitars at home. I was able to check out a lot of guitars before trying the Revstar.

What's your best piece of gear advice?

Buy a small pedalboard that does everything. I'm an incredibly lazy guy; I don't want to bring anything with me but the Helix; otherwise, it's too big for when I'm traveling. You need to have a travel rig, and it's important to have a small pedalboard that does pretty much everything and is reliable. And if we're talking about guitars, it's all a matter of preference.

How have you progressed as a player over the past year?

One or two years ago, when I played live, I was putting too much pressure on myself. I didn't want to make mistakes and always wanted to be as flawless as the recording. I was able to do that sometimes, but there were nights where maybe you don't feel comfortable, or not at your best. It can happen to anyone. I've learned not to put too much weight on mistakes. This helped me be more in the moment live and enjoy the music rather than concentrating too much on my performance. This especially changed this year because I played a lot. I wanted people to hear the energy.

Most people don't expect perfection at shows anyway.

They don't want to hear a flawless performance. The first ingredients need to be energy and emotion while playing. I don't worry about mistakes like I did before, and that comes with experience. I didn't work on it; it came from the gigs. I still have work to do there, because when I do make a mistake, you can see it on my face that I'm disappointed. Some people, when they make a big mistake, they're always smiling, but I can't really do that. If I make a mistake, you might not hear it, but you will notice it on my face, but not as much as before.

What else would you like to improve

Matteo Mancuso with his Yamaha Revstar. "I haven't found a guitar that is... I don't want to say better, because that's subjective"

upon for 2025?

A lot of things. [Laughs] The key element I'd like to improve is composition. I never studied it in a real, clear way, so most of the compositions from the first album are just, "Okay, let's try to do something with the guitar and see what happens." I didn't have a routine for compositional stuff, so I'd like to be more structured about that — and learn more about composition, in general.

How will you do that?

There are more guitaristic ways, like working on my timing. I'm starting to use a metronome more. Not just with every beat; I'm searching for unusual time signatures. Instead of using a metronome on the strong beat, I'll use it on the last eight or 16 bars before the downbeat. Timing is one of the most important aspects of a musician. How you're able to interact with time and visualize the thing you're working on is important.

Why do you feel you're playing has resonated with so many people?

I think the things that I do are... I don't want to say impossible, but most things I do are hard to play. People might like that because it's something fresh. But the technical point of view is just one thing; whenever I solo, I always search for balance between melody and shred, which people seem to like.

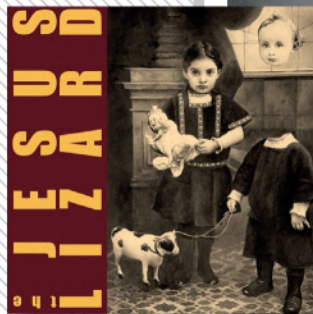
How do you find the perfect balance?

Music is like everything in life, where there's tension and release. A lot of notes is the release, and fewer notes is the tension — but you need that balance. I like to play a lot of notes because, for me, it's a release of energy. It's not something I do to show you I can do it.

So the search for that balance is never-ending.

I think that's something people like about it; I'm always trying to find that balance. I don't consider myself one of the best technical players; there are so many good players who can play twice as fast as me, or they know more leads and have more vocabulary. But people don't care about your technical stuff; people care about the emotion of it. I'm always trying to search for that. 

THAT. IF I MAKE A MISTAKE, YOU MIGHT NOT HEAR IT, BUT YOU WILL NOTICE IT ON MY FACE"



THEIR LATEST
Rack (2024)



THE JESUS LIZARD

Duane Denison tells you everything you need to know about his gear, trying to sell Steve Howe a guitar in the Seventies and — oh, yeah! — 2024's *Rack*, the Jesus Lizard's first new studio album in 26 years **By Gregory Adams**

EACH TIME THE Jesus Lizard make their way back to the stage, it's cause for celebration. Even so, when the hard-buising rock quartet dropped into Nashville's Blue Room venue within the Third Man Records building this past June, the excitement was markedly different. Just the day before, the group — who've been maintaining an off-and-on reunion phase since 2008 — officially announced *Rack*, their first full-length release since the late Nineties. The show likewise featured the live debut of "Hide

& Seek," the record's manically concussive lead-off track, which easily proves that the Jesus Lizard's confrontational spirit remains intact nearly 40 years after the project first got off the ground.

And sure enough, guitarist Duane Denison confirms that sweat-slicked vocalist David Yow was once again surfing his way above their fans, his steel-toe-pointed cowboy boots kicking dangerously against the wind. Something has changed since that first era, though: Yow's mostly fully clothed now.

"I think he starts off with a shirt these days — he's not full Iggy — but the boots are still there. He still goes out in the crowd, maybe not quite as much; we worry about that," Denison says from his Nashville home, alluding to the fact that all four members have now crossed well into their 60s. "But David Sims is playing his bass; to my left I've got Mac [McNeilly] playing drums. Everything's dialed in, and away we go! The Jesus Lizard takes on a life of its own; I'm a cog in the machine here, but it's good."

To be sure, Denison has been keeping himself well-oiled this whole time. Since Jesus Lizard's initial dissolution, he's made five albums of fractiously experimental alt-metal as part of Tomahawk, alongside Mr. Bungle's Mike Patton; he's also backed country outlaw Hank Williams III and cut a loose-cannon solo on "Morning, Noon and Night" from Jack White's *Fear of the Dawn* album in 2022. Denison nevertheless admits there was something extra special about getting the Jesus Lizard back in the studio.

Formed in Austin in 1988 by Denison, Sims and Yow, the Jesus Lizard initially delivered art-damaged post-punk subversion

DOUG COOMES

"WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, IT WAS THE SEVENTIES, AND SO PROG ROCK WAS KING."

with the help of a drum machine. By the time they moved to Chicago just ahead of the Nineties, they picked up jackhammer percussionist in McNeilly, and together they produced a mean-streaked, unbeatable four-album run with producer Steve Albini, from 1990's *Head* through to 1994's *Down*. While heroes within the noise-driven American underground, they also put out a split 7-inch with Nirvana when the latter were at peak-grunge popularity; toured on the mainstage of Lollapalooza in 1995; and by 1996, they'd signed to Capitol Records to deliver *Shot*. But then McNeilly left the band before they made 1998's *Blue* — which featured drummer Jim Kimball — and while the record teeters toward the bone-grinding intensity of their early work, outliers like the electronica-touched “Needles for Teeth” seem a little weird to the band, in retrospect.

Conceptualized around 2019 and tracked in late 2023, *Rack* isn't exactly a back-to-basics affair for the Jesus Lizard, but Denison's playing does hold common ground with the decadently slurred jazz licking of *Goat*'s iconic opening “Then Comes Dudley” or blues-staggered punch-ups like “Puss” off of 1992's *Liar*. He's a jazz-trained player who grew up loving prog but was drawn in by the stately post-punk inkiness of Siouxsie and the Banshees and Killing Joke. *Rack* reflects all of that and more, whether Denison's riding a coal-black phosphorescent surf (“Dunning Kruger”); expressing wide-interval wonkiness (“Hide & Seek”); or plinking through a newly semi-acoustic kind of creepiness (“Swan the Dog”).

The album finds the rest of the group in fine, brute form, too. Sims aggressively leans into a series of mid-twonked walking bass freakouts, while his low-end solo on the roadhouse-leveling “Lord Godiva” is fit with just enough teeth-baring fuzz to show you he means business. Frontman Yow retains his recognizably drawled-and-scratchy, melody-damaged menace. McNeilly's max-punishment beating is straight but savage.

Indeed, the latest return of the Jesus Lizard — this time in album form — is welcome news to many. To put it as Yow does above the slow-lurching doom-

blues of *Rack*'s “Armistice Day,” “now the pain is returning.” And damn... does it ever feel good.

There are naturally some similarities between your playing in Tomahawk and the Jesus Lizard. Is there a different kind of consideration you put into the riffs when you're writing for a vocalist like David Yow, versus someone like Mike Patton?

A little bit. Tomahawk, to me, is a bit more technical and metal, maybe. And Mike, you know, his vocal range and ability to hit intervals is astounding. With the Jesus Lizard, we still do things with odd time signatures, but it's a bit more stripped down and aggressive. I'm not necessarily looking for melody with the vocals, though sometimes they hint at it.

Was it all daunting to think about adding to the canon? It has been more than 25 years since the Jesus Lizard released *Blue*.

Definitely, especially since that stuff has been kept alive over the years through the internet and through people talking about it. Back in the day, there weren't chat groups devoted to the band. So, yeah, we're somewhat aware of not spoiling the legacy. But frankly, we felt pretty confident in the material from the start. I don't think any of us were worried about how it stood up against the other stuff. If anything, there's a couple of things that actually almost refer to the Nineties-period Jesus Lizard. That's the point of departure, but we push it into a more modern era from there.

Are there explicit musical references to your older songs on *Rack*, or was it more that you were matching the vibe?

Both. For instance, we've been working on different versions of “Lord Godiva” since the Nineties. We'd actually played that live before, though maybe not in this exact version. But it's always been a fairly unhinged kind of song.

David Yow doesn't remember it, but we also did a rough demo of “Falling Down” back then that we've since revised; it came alive again [during the *Rack* sessions]. And “Alexis Feels Sick” references some of the things we've done in the past: the

drums; the bass line; the way the guitar surfs along on top of it with these single-note, but spread positions. It hints at the past, but in an updated package — I don't mean using all the latest bells and whistles, I just mean representing where we are now.

That perverted bossa nova in the front end of “Alexis Feels Sick” has the same feel as something like “Low Rider,” an instrumental track in the middle of *Down*.

I know what you're talking about. We've used that rimshot beat before; there's a song called “Glamorous” [off 1993's *Lash EP*] that had that kind of feel, too. It's just a great way to set up tension — that simple, stripped down, sparse feel gives you a lot of room to build dynamics.

How do you remember the Jesus Lizard drawing down at the end of the Nineties?

There were basically two periods in the Nineties — there was the early period on Touch and Go Records, and then the period when we signed to Capitol and put out two albums. The second half started off well, but we didn't end on a high note. By that time, the music scene had changed, especially in Chicago. Big, loud, abrasive bands were not necessarily what people were hearing. It was instrumental bands like Tortoise; avant garde things like Jim O'Rourke and Ken Vandermark.

In the bigger scene, Britpop was in; techno was in; hip-hop was in. Everything except guitar-driven hard rock bands. That last album, *Blue*, was produced by [Gang of Four guitarist] Andy Gill; we were encouraged by the label to “modernize,” so there are samples on that record and touches of drum machines here and there. And... no one cared! Even diehard fans have never heard that record. It's probably out of print, and Capitol are not going to do anything with it, because it didn't sell that much. I was glad to see that chapter close. We all went about our business and dispersed from Chicago. One guy went to New York; I went to Nashville; another guy went to L.A.; one guy stayed in Chicago.

But when we started playing the reunion shows in 2009, it was liberating. It was gratifying that people wanted to

Duane Denison and his Electrical Guitar Company Chessie. “We're super psyched [to be back], and we want people to come and see us”

I'M NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT THAT I LOVED ROBERT FRIPP, JAN AKKERMAN AND STEVE HOWE”



hear those old songs, and wanted to see us play — and that we could still deliver! It took a while to get us all on the same page to do this album, but I'm hoping that the reaction will be like when we came back and started playing shows, where people go, "Wow, I'd figured you'd be good, but not that good."

"Hide & Seek" tees off this phase as the first single and opening track on *Rack*. The sound of those two dissonant-run lead breaks feels different within your repertoire.

When those instrumental passages come in, I'm playing off an interval. It's a major 7th, but it's the 5 and the $\flat 5$ of the key we're in. Then I throw in some other sevenths in there as well. I wanted to have wider intervals in there, spread them out and then throw in a couple little linear things. It had a nice, jarring quality, and the guys all seemed to like it.

But I've actually been doing that kind of thing all along. I took the solo on one song from Jack White's *Fear of the Dawn* album, and I'm kind of doing a similar thing there. And if you listen to "Grind," the third song on *Rack*, I'm also referencing that sevenths-kind of wider interval placement. It's something that's worked its way [into my technique] over the years and stayed there.

It's not that effects haven't been used on Jesus Lizard records, but there's an octaver-sounding effect on "Hide & Seek" that seems a bit more prominent.

I like to think it's fairly subtle, but throughout this album I used the Line 6 Helix for a lot of sounds that I put in there. And on "What If?" I used the Third Man version of the Mantic Flex to get a great crazy, modulated, overdriven sound.

Since you mentioned the idea of sounding "jarring" — the Jesus Lizard have accumulated this reputation as being progenitors of "noise rock," but that doesn't necessarily hit the whole of your sound. The groove of a song like *Rack*'s "Lady Godiva" — which is explored on those earlier records, too — almost makes you sound more like a really fucked-up roadhouse blues band.

Oh, that's funny. But I never liked the noise rock tag. Obviously it's kind of noisy, and it's rock, but those arrangements are fairly involved, as far as the way we [set up] the dynamics. To me, a lot of the noise rock thing seemed fairly haphazard, relentlessly shrill and chaotic; there are almost no elements of traditional music. But in our music, there's verses; there's the occasional

chorus; intros, outros, and breaks. But roadhouse blues? I don't know... if you say so. [Laughs]

What kind of music influenced your playing growing up?

When I was a teenager, it was the Seventies, and so prog rock was king. I'm not ashamed to admit that I loved it. Punk rock hadn't come along yet. The shredders of my day were Robert Fripp, Jan Akkerman and Steve Howe, who I met when I was 17. We tried to sell him a guitar when Yes came through Detroit.

What did you try to sell him?

A friend of mine worked at a guitar shop that carried rare archtop jazz guitars, and there was a Guild George Barnes acoustic-electric. This friend was really pushy and talked to a roadie, and they said to come back the next day to meet at Steve Howe's hotel room in downtown Detroit. He tried it out and played some stuff on it, but he didn't buy it.

You've maintained this unique, signature balance with David Sims over the years. What was it like working with him in the beginning?

I knew him and David Yow from when they were in Scratch Acid, which was a great band. Very influential. Yow was the extroverted guy, and I used to see him around. Super talkative. I had some leftover studio time from a previous band that I wanted to use up, so I approached Yow and said, "Hey, would you be willing to work on a project with me?" Then he said, "Why don't we get David Sims, also?" I thought I struck gold, man. I got two of the guys from Scratch Acid!

I loved working with David Sims. He was on the same wavelength. Organized. A "plan-your-work-and-work-your-plan" kind of guy. We seemed to hit it off right from the start. Our first rehearsals were in an abandoned house [in Austin] where the electricity hadn't been shut off yet. A friend of mine lived down the street and said, "These people moved out, and I think the juice is still on. You guys can probably go in there." And we did! It was a couple of amps, a drum machine, and us. We actually recorded there, too, and it sounded pretty good. [Those songs ultimately] became the first EP [1989's *Pure*].

"THERE'S BEEN SOME PUSHING AND SHOVING OVER THE YEARS; MAYBE THE ODD PUNCH.

Most Jesus Lizard records were made in Chicago. What was it like recording out of Nashville this time around?

We had Paul Allen producing, a very experienced Nashville session guitarist. He was a fan. I've known him for years, and he knew how we had recorded in the past. Even though we were doing digital, we recorded as if it was analog. In other words, we were all set up in the room and playing at the same time. Sure, you do overdubs, but you get those basic takes and you decide right then and there, "that's the take; we're going to keep that."

We did this whole album in about two weeks, start-to-finish. This was at Patrick Carney from the Black Keys' home studio [Audio Eagle]. He had some top-notch gear.

What were you running?

I brought some of my own stuff. There was a Hi-Watt Little J and a 2x12 cab; two Fender Supersonics; I like Blackstar, too. But then we go to Patrick's, and he's got a beautiful early Sixties Fender Bassman, and old Marshall Super Leads — like classic plexis; not reissues. I might've thrown a Vox in there somewhere. Just beautiful-sounding stuff. It turned out to almost always be either the Marshalls or the Fender Bassman, with the Helix in front of it. I also have some outboard pedals that I like for drive: the good old Menatone Red Snapper; the Chandler Tube Driver; the OCD is one of the best.

Patrick had a bunch of guitars, but I didn't use any of them. I just used my own.

You're an aluminum-neck player, mostly?

I go back and forth between aluminum and wood, and always have. Even before I was even in the Jesus Lizard, I had heavy, clunky Kramers. Then I went to wood. When we started the Jesus Lizard, I was playing a Yamaha SG-type, like my English hero John McGeoch from Siouxsie and the Banshees. Somewhere along the way I discovered Travis Bean aluminum necks, but once again, heavy and clunky. Serious neck and shoulder problems. On this album I used an all-aluminum Electrical Guitar Company

Chessie, my model. I used a Fender Uptown Strat on a few things, too.

For the live shows, though, I've been playing a Powers Electric A-Type, and they're catching on, man. It's wood, and it's got some structural things going on that are amazing. It's got trestle bracing. These are single coils; they're virtually silent [yet] really high-output and nasty. You've got a compound radius fretboard. And it's very light. Mine's in London Grey.

We'd be remiss to not point out in a *Guitar World* interview that this a record called *Rack*. You used to run mounted effects in the Nineties, right?

For a long time, I was all-in on TC Electronic. Like a lot of guys, I started off with their very basic chorus/flanger/pitchmod pedal; then I went to the next level of TC: their 2290, a classic delay-and-modulator kind of thing. Then I went to the TC G-Force rackmount, which I still have. It's got some sounds in it that I can't get anywhere else.

But then Bill Kelliher from Mastodon said, "Have you tried the new Line 6 Helix?" I mean, it does a lot of stuff that I'll never even use, but it's got so much to it, and I really like that. And then for a backup I just bought the new POD Go, which has the same sounds in it, but it's smaller. Those are floor things, though; I'm not into the rackmount stuff anymore.

Since you mentioned *Rack*'s "Grind" earlier, that song has got the record's most cookin', extended solo runs in it...

That solo comes right out of my rhythm playing. That was all live, straight up in the studio in a continuous pass. It's funny, Mac's hitting so hard that at the end of the solo — when I hit the open E string and it's kind of hovering and starting to fade — you can hear the air pressure of his kick drum making my notes go, "boomp, boomp, boomp."

[from left]
Duane Denison,
David Wm. Sims,
Mac McNeilly
and David Yow.
"When we
started playing
the reunion
shows in 2009, it
was liberating,"
Denison says

Like, I couldn't make that happen any other way. It was a weird acoustical phenomenon. Neat little things like that happen throughout the album.

While there are moments on *Rack* that hit that classic Jesus Lizard aesthetic, you said

that was just a starting point. What are some of the weirder pivots of the record, to you?

The weirdest is "What If?" It's slower, very atmospheric song. It's got a triple meter; it's got clean guitars almost all the way through; the vocals are spoken word! It was a left turn, but it came together quickly, which to me is a good sign. And then there's the last song, "Swan the Dog," where I used a Taylor T5z, an acoustic-electric. I wouldn't necessarily call that acoustic, but that's the first acoustic-ish guitar on a Jesus Lizard record. So yeah, we took some twists and turns.

It took 15 years of the reunion phase to get a new album out of the band. How does it feel to have actualized new Jesus Lizard material?

Oh, it's the best feeling in the world. You know, I've done a lot of stuff since we last did a record — I've done five albums with Tomahawk; I did some one-offs with other projects; I've played on sessions for other people. But to have the Jesus Lizard back? It seems like there's a level of excitement I didn't quite see with the other projects. People are so happy to hear that we're back. We're all super psyched about this album. We want people to hear it, and we want people to come and see us.

Yow's still getting out in the crowd, but how much action are you seeing onstage? Any accidents or mishaps?

There's been some altercations over the years that we've all been involved in — pushing and shoving; maybe the odd punch. I try to avoid that these days, for a lot of reasons, but there was a time when that was part of the job. People want to get onstage and stagedive, but if you run into me, you're not coming back. Like, don't run into us; don't trip over the pedals. That's half the reason I didn't use pedals for years — it was just chaotic mayhem. I feel like, "You know what, if you want to get on stage, go out and get your own band together."

Is there a head-shaped dent in one of your old Travis Beans?

There's a Travis Bean-shaped dent in someone's head, more like it. Those things don't dent easily. **GW**

I AVOID THAT THESE DAYS, BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THAT WAS PART OF THE JOB"

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SOUND CHECK

Peavey Invective .112

By Chris Gill

▶ AMP-MODELING APPS, pedals and processors may offer guitarists compelling alternatives to a traditional tube guitar amp, but as long as products like the Peavey Invector .112 that offer distinctive tonal character and versatile features continue to be developed, traditional guitar amps will never be obsolete. This latest addition to the Peavey Invector line sits nicely in between the full-size Invector .120 and mini Invector .MH guitar amp heads, adding a 1x12 combo to the lineup.

Like the Invector .MH, the Invector .112 is a 20-watt amp driven by a pair of EL84 power tubes and three 12AX7 preamp tubes. However, it is much more than a combo version of the MH thanks to the clean channel's expanded EQ control section that includes a separate midrange knob in addition to low and high, the front panel's Gate threshold control and a built-in reverb effect, plus a Celestion Vintage 30 12-inch speaker housed in a ported open-back premium birch and poplar cabinet. These additional features are well worth the additional \$400 investment above the MH head's price.

The Invector .112 features two fully independent channels (Clean and Lead) each with their own separate Low, Mid and High EQ controls. The Clean channel also has a Gain



(volume) knob, while the Lead channel provides Pre Gain, Post Gain and Gate Threshold knobs and push-switches for engaging Boost, Tight and Gate functions. A Master section offers Presence, Resonance and Reverb controls for both channels. A pair of output Tube Status Indication (TSI) LEDs located below the standby switch allow players to monitor power tube faults.

Rear panel features consist of a 20-/5-/1-watt power output selector switch, 16-/8-ohm

This is full-on modern metal distortion with super deep bass that is enhanced by the Resonance control



speaker impedance toggle, speaker enable/defeat switch (with built-in dummy load to prevent damage when the speaker is bypassed), 1/8-inch headphone jack, Mic Simulated Direct Interface (MSDI) via the XLR or USB jacks, a Ground Lift switch, mono 1/4-inch effect send and return jacks, individual 1/4-inch footswitch jacks for channel select/Tight and reverb/Boost + Gate functions. A single Peavey multi-purpose two-button footswitch controller is included, but you'll need to buy a second footswitch controller if you want to control all of the footswitch functions at once.

Perhaps the most appealing feature of the Invective .112 is how well it delivers big amp tones and performance in a compact all-in-one package that weighs less than 40 pounds. The Clean channel remains crystal clear up until just below 5 on the Gain when using PAF-style humbuckers, and above that it transitions to subtle, chunky overdrive with just a hint of grit. This channel's attack is instantaneous and may sound a little stiff to players used to tube rectifier sag, but it's perfect for modern guitarists who prefer more precise dynamics that pair well with pedal effects. This channel also provides attractive ambient textures with the built-in reverb effect dialed in.

The Lead channel summons similar super-saturated high-gain tones as the full-size Invective .120 head developed with help from

the discriminating ears of Misha Mansoor. This is full-on modern metal distortion with super deep bass that is enhanced by the awesome Resonance control, which can be employed in conjunction with the Tight function to dial absolutely huge-sounding yet articulately defined bottom end. The Presence control similarly provides versatile shaping of treble frequencies for added sizzle or sparkle. The Boost function provides a slight amount of extra midrange emphasis in addition to increasing the output by a few decibels. Being able to dial in the threshold for the Gate function is worth the price of the upgrade from the MH head alone.

The amp's MSDI feature is highly useful for live performance applications, providing natural-sounding tones directly to a mixing console. It also works well for direct recording applications, particularly when paired with good IR cabinet/room emulation.

Like the MH head, the Invective .112 combo goes above and beyond in providing a well thought-out and comprehensive configuration of gig-worthy, pro features like independent EQ for each channel, numerous footswitchable functions and excellent DI capabilities. It does have its own distinct sonic personality that you'll want to try before you buy, but that's a major bonus in a world where so many amp models are designed to provide the "same old" classic sounds.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE:

\$1,199.99

MANUFACTURER:

Peavey, peavey.com

● **PROS:** Individual independent low, mid and high EQ controls for each channel; Presence and Resonance controls provide impressive "big amp" sounds; lead channel's tone textures can be precisely shaped with Tight, Boost and Gate functions.

● **CONS:** Extra footswitch controller needs to be purchased separately to access all footswitchable functions; Clean tones have stiff, instantaneous attack.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The Peavey Invective .112 combo delivers true big amp sounds with luscious high-gain distortion and tight-but-mammoth bottom end as well as precise modern clean tones that pair well with pedals.

Gibson ES Supreme

By Chris Gill

▶ EDDIE VAN HALEN'S favorite guitar during the mid-Seventies was a Gibson ES-335, but he stopped playing it on stage because his bandmates said that it made him look like Roy Orbison. While good old Roy revived his cool status in the late Eighties about the same time that vintage guitars entered a new era of hip, the original ES-335 in sunburst, cherry red or blonde has sometimes had a bit of an admittedly stodgy, traditionalist image over the years.

Gibson's new ES Supreme semi-hollow electric models give the timeless ES design a flashy makeover thanks to their AAA figured maple tops, brighter, bolder finish options, gold-plated hardware, Super Split Block mother-of-pearl fingerboard inlays and new six-segment modified "diamond" headstock inlay. The beauty of the ES Supreme is more than skin deep however, thanks to its pair of Burstbucker Pro humbucking pickups with coil tapping, Grover locking Keystone tuners, thinly applied gloss nitrocellulose lacquer finish, 22 medium jumbo frets and aluminum Tuneomatic bridge and stop bar tailpiece. Compared to the original ES-335, the ES Supreme is like a super-modified high-performance street rod compared to a stock factory car.

The ES Supreme is available with three standard finish options: Bourbon Burst, Seafoam Green and Blueberry Burst. The body's top, back and sides are made from a three-ply laminate with AAA figured maple on the outer layer, poplar in the center and maple for the inner layer, and the transparent stained colors complement and show off the tiger-stripe/flame grain patterns of the figured maple nicely. Other tonewood components include a maple center block, mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard. Five-ply binding surrounds the body and headstock, while single-ply binding surrounds the fretboard.

Gibson sent us three examples in each of the finish options to examine. While the specs note a rounded "C" shape profile, we noticed a bit of variation in the

thickness and "chunkiness" of each neck from relatively flat and slim to noticeably round and beefy, a sign that the necks are handcrafted and not shaped solely by CNC machines, if at all. Because of the variation, we recommend buying an ES Supreme from a dealer where you can try out the guitar you want to take home with you instead of blindly rolling the dice with a mail-order purchase.

The Burstbucker Lead and Rhythm Pro pickups deliver classic Gibson PAF-style dynamics and articulation with well-defined midrange and chunky bite. The coil tapping function for each pickup is engaged by pulling up its corresponding volume knob. The coil-tapped tones have a funky, hollow midrange quack similar to a Strat's "in between" (i.e. bridge/middle, neck/middle) settings and are slightly fatter than typical straight-up single coil tones. This provides a greater expanded range of textures and tones than the typical ES bridge/middle/neck settings. The bridge and neck humbucker each sound bold and powerful from clean to overdrive up through high-gain distortion and never get murky or muddy.

The hardware choices enhance the ES Supreme's performance and dynamics. The Grover Keystone locking tuners ensure accurate, solid tuning, and the aluminum bridge and stop tailpiece maximize the transference of string vibration to the top and tone block to provide touch-sensitive response and full-bodied sustain.

Construction details from the high-gloss finish to the fine feel of the fretwork is immaculate, as one would expect for a Gibson in the ES Supreme's price range. These models may be on the more expensive side of the spectrum, but they're worth it if you are discriminating about refined tone, expressive dynamics, luxurious craftsmanship and eye-catching looks. This is not your grandad's ES guitar, but it's still a semi-hollow electric for the ages that will provide decades of playing and performance enjoyment.



For Paul Riario's demo of this guitar, visit guitarworld.com/january2025

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$4,299

MANUFACTURER:

Gibson, Gibson.com

● **PROS:** Dazzling, eye-catching figured maple top, back and sides with brilliant finishes; Dynamic, articulate Burstbucker Pro humbucking pickups with coil-tap function; Immaculate construction with handcrafted details.

● **CONS:** The neck profiles on our examples had noticeable variation, so you'll want to try before you buy to choose the match that's best for you.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

The ES Supreme is indeed a supreme upgrade of the classic ES-335 design, with exceptionally more versatile tonal options and striking upscale appearance.

**CHEAT
SHEET**



STREET PRICE:

\$219.99

MANUFACTURER:

Boss, www.boss.info

● **PROS:** Captures the vintage digital delay character of the Roland SDE-3000 rackmount in a compact pedal; parallel and dual digital delay paths; onboard modulation; Hi-Cut control for shaping the high-frequency; Variable Offset knob for creating unique sounds with a secondary delay line; two stereo delay options (panning and discrete stereo); versatile output modes (stereo, wet/dry and dry mute (mono or stereo); tap tempo, expression or footswitch control jack and carryover functions; TRS MIDI input for syncing to external MIDI clock signals.

● **CONS:** Using the output modes requires a learning curve.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The Boss SDE-3 Dual Delay is a comprehensive compact pedal with parallel, multi-hued echoes and lush modulation that captures the essence of the vintage Roland SDE-3000 rackmount.



Boss SDE-3 Dual Digital Delay

By Paul Riario

▶ **I'M NO FORTUNE** teller, but I'd bet that hundreds of years from now when archeologists unearth an effect pedal, it will be made by Boss. Without a doubt, Boss's compact pedals are the most recognized and enduring effects ever produced. Their timelessness isn't only due to the wealth of original sounds Boss has introduced, but also their ability to have complex effects operate intuitively into their familiar compact-pedal format. The unveiling of the SDE-3 Dual Digital Delay — a streamlined pedal version inspired by the legendary Roland SDE-3000 rackmount delay — proves that Boss is indeed in red-hot form.

Boss already reinterpreted that Eighties outboard classic last year as wide-format pedals with the SDE-3000D and SDE-3000EVH (with onboard presets used by Eddie Van Halen), offering unparalleled and advanced features, stereo sound and expanded connectivity. Now, with the SDE-3 Dual Digital Delay, Boss has managed to boil down many of those pedals' key features while still delivering

that revered rackmount's pristine modulation and warm digital echoes in a compact delay pedal.

Considering the Roland SDE-3000 was a permanent fixture in many ax-slingers' stage racks, including Steve Lukather, Steve Vai and — most notably — Eddie Van Halen, it's wild to fathom that the tiny SDE-3 is now configured with dual parallel delay paths, essentially doing the work of two vintage SDE-3000s. Its simplified control set is concentrically stacked, with top knobs for Level, Feedback and Time to handle the delay; bottom knobs for Depth and Rate to introduce modulation; and Hi-Cut knob to adjust the high-frequency content of the feedback sound.

The key to the SDE-3's expanded functionality is configured to the pedal's multiple outputs and output modes. Unlike the original mono processor, you can route the pedal for true stereo with separate left and right delays via the outputs or set up panning mode for alternating sweeps across the stereo spectrum. Other output-option modes allow for wet/dry setup or direct mute, which only



The SDE-3 gets very close to that ultra-wide delay spread mastered by Eddie Van Halen — and at a reasonable price

outputs the effected signal. The pedal's delay time caps at 800ms whether you run it in mono or stereo; however, you can double it in mono (1,600ms) if you connect to its Output B jack only. The SDE-3's ace in the hole is the Offset knob, which varies or "offsets" the secondary delay from the primary one to generate spatial textures, doubled sounds or nonlinear syncopation between the delays. In addition, the pedal features Tap tempo functionality, a Carryover switch to maintain delay trails when disengaged, a TRS MIDI input to receive clock sync signals from outboard gear and a CTL/EXP jack for external footswitches or an expression pedal.

The SDE-3 gets very close to that warmly processed, ultra-wide delay spread mastered by Eddie Van Halen using a pair of original SDE-3000s — and at a reasonable price. But it's not only for disciples of EVH; the SDE-3 is quite capable of doing so much more, such as conjuring panoramic stereo delays, animating regenerative self-oscillation, modulating echoes that swarm from left to right and even propelling ambient soundscapes that sound purely hypnotizing — especially when running it in true stereo or conversely in wet/dry mode with the Offset knob set around 9 o'clock. That same knob is musically rewarding for filling a room with back-and-forth repeats by syncopating the secondary echo rhythmically with the primary or merging both in atmospheric harmony. The modulation gets warbly quick, so a healthy dose of moderation goes a long way for a layered chorus spread.

While the SDE-3 doesn't have the digital firepower of its wider-format siblings, its ability to mimic the sweeping delays of a pro-level guitar rig in a compact pedal makes its "wow" factor undeniable for simplified setups.

THE SPECS



- **ORIGIN:** Malaysia
- **TYPE:** Dual digital delay with modulation
- **FEATURES:** Buffered bypass; Check indicator (Used for indication of Tempo and check battery); 48 kHz Sample Rate; Carryover switch (for delay trails)
- **CONTROLS (DUAL CONCENTRIC):** Level & Depth; Feedback & Rate; Time & Hi Cut; Offset knob
- **CONNECTIONS:** Side-mounted 1/4-inch; INPUT A (MONO) jack, INPUT B jack, OUTPUT A (MONO) jack, OUTPUT B jack; CTL/EXP jack; DC IN jack; MIDI IN jack
- **POWER:** 9V battery or AC adaptor (PSA series: sold separately)
- **CURRENT DRAW:** 75 mA
- **DIMENSIONS:** 73 (W) x 129 (D) x 59 (H) mm; 2-7/8 (W) x 5-1/8 (D) x 2-3/8 (H) inches



The Donner
DST-600 [above]
and DST-700

Buzz Bin

Donner DST-600 and DST-700 electric guitars

By Paul Riario

▶ DONNER MUSIC MAY not have been on your radar since it surfaced in 2012, but if you've been online-gear surfing, you'd know that the global brand has launched some seriously neat guitar products lately. Take, for example, their co-branded collaboration with Jack White's Third Man Hardware for the excellent-sounding Triple Threat multi-effects pedal, which offers three essential guitar effects in a stylishly packaged compact floorboard for less than a hundred dollars. You also can add their Hush Series travel guitars, Circle Looper (which I use religiously) and fantastic mini-pedals to that list. Sure, you wouldn't be wrong pointing out that Donner's targeted consumers are usually entry-level and budget-conscious players, but for what it's worth, the overall quality of their products

can't, and shouldn't, be overlooked. The recent introduction of Donner's DST-600 and DST-700 electric guitars — two solid new guitar models in their Seeker Series of electrics intended for discriminating players — have all the potential to make Donner a firm competitor with other major guitar brands in the sub-\$500 category.

The DST-600's traditional aesthetics and features are convincingly executed on an alder body with a 3-color sunburst gloss finish that looks fairly authentic combined with the aged pickguard. The very slim C-shaped maple neck has a shallow carve with rolled edges, making playability comfortable across the neck for players with smaller hands. The fretwork on its rosewood fingerboard with 22 medium jumbo frets (maple fingerboard models have only 21) is spot-on without any sharp or protruding edges, adding to its smooth

feel. Plugged in, the ToneDesign alnico V pickups — a humbucker bridge and two vintage staggered single coils — sound firm, with medium output throughout the range of the 5-way selector switch. The humbucker brings on the warmth with honky mids and a sharp bite (when you access the coil split); the single coils have a softer and glassy texture if you're playing clean lines but cut with brightness when overdriven. The guitar's six-point tremolo bridge with steel saddles worked fluidly for slight vibrato wavers; however, the vintage-style tuners had some slippage. Then again, tuners are one of the first things I'd swap out on a budget guitar.

Donner ups the ante with the DST-700 model, which sports a satin-finished mahogany body and neck with a rosewood fingerboard that appears primed for high-octane shredding. Out from its included gig bag, upgrades abound with 22 medium jumbo steel frets, 12-inch compound radius fingerboard, Donner Lab humbuckers with coil switching at the tone control (HSS configuration available), heavy-duty knurled volume and tone knobs, Donner 18:1 locking tuners and a floating 2-point synchronized tremolo with block saddles and a steel plate. Playability across its modern C-profile neck is as speedy as expected, and the softly carved neck heel offers unimpeded access to the higher frets. The DST-700 feels more substantial with a bit more weight than the DST-600 and more ergonomic contours that make it drive faster than high-performance guitars twice its price. The Donner Lab high-output humbuckers sound clear and full, although many discerning speed merchants will install pickups with more complexity.

For many beginners, the DST-600 or DST-700 will be appealing choices for their upgraded features and inviting playability; still, many savvy guitarists will want to spend time with these affordable axes to add their own modifications or employ them as solidly built backup guitars for gigging.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICES:
DST-600 in Sunburst,
\$439.99; DST-700
in Natural, \$499.99
MANUFACTURER:
Donner Music,
us.donnermusic.com

● **PROS:** Affordable traditional and contemporary-style guitars with modern upgrades; Donner Lab pickups cover vintage and harder-edged tones with coil splitting; multiple finishes and pickup

configurations available; solidly built.

● **CONS:** Discriminating players may want to upgrade some of the hardware or pickups at some point.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE:**
The Donner DST-600 and DST-700 models are affordable, high-performance guitars with attractive vintage and modern styling and loaded with proper player upgrades.



For Paul Riario's
demo of this guitar,
visit guitarworld.com/
january2025

Reverend Billy Corgan Signature Drop Z

By Chris Gill

▶ WHEN I FIRST received the new Reverend Billy Corgan Signature Drop Z, I thought Reverend sent a Corgan Z-One like the one I reviewed two years ago. The Drop Z looked and felt similar, but immediately my ears noticed that its voice is much deeper, more throaty and more resonant. To my surprise when I checked the specs I discovered that it has a longer scale length (26.25 inches compared to the Z-One's 25.5 inch scale) and a 24-fret neck instead of 22 frets.

The reason why my eyes deceived me is because the Drop Z measures about the same overall length as a Les Paul from the tip of the headstock to the lower strap pin. The bridge is moved down lower on the body so you don't end up with a neck that extends out further like you do with most longer-scale/extended range instruments. As a result, the Drop Z feels and plays almost exactly the same as its regular 25.5-inch scale Z-One counterpart.

Most of the Drop Z's specs are identical to the Z-One. It's equipped with Railhammer Billy Corgan Z-One Bridge and Z-One Neck humbucking pickups, with the hotter bridge pickup measuring 14k ohms resistance while the neck measures about 8.3k ohms. The chambered body is alder while the bolt-on neck and its fretboard are roasted maple. Other neck specs include .110 (w) x .050 (h) frets that are slightly wider than typical medium jumbo frets, a medium oval profile and 12-inch radius. Controls consist of a three-way blade pickup switch and master volume, master tone and bass contour knobs, and hardware includes a Strat-style six-saddle hardtail string-thru-body bridge, Reverend pin-lock tuners, low-profile aluminum knobs and six-bolt neck plate.

Reverend's specs says that the Drop Z ships with 11-49 strings but to me they felt more like 9s thanks to how well the tension matches with the 26.25-inch scale length. I tuned it down 1-1/2 steps to C#, but the strings still felt slinky and comfortable even with the guitar tuned up to standard pitch. The tone is honking and resonant with a wonderfully expressive midrange that reminded me of playing a semi-hollow in open G tuning. Although the bridge pickup is about twice as hot as the neck pickup, the volume output is balanced. The wah-like master tone and beef-boosting bass contour controls allow users to dial in a wide range of tones with minimal effort.



CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$1,499

MANUFACTURER:

Reverend Guitars,
reverendguitars.com

● **PROS:** Longer scale length accommodates drop tuning while maintaining standard body size; chambered body provides expressive, resonant tone; numerous deluxe upgrades like treble bleed circuit, bass contour, six-bolt neck and +/-10% pots and caps.

● **CONS:** None.

● THE BOTTOM LINE:

The Reverend Billy Corgan Signature Drop Z's longer scale length combined with standard body dimensions and measurements allows guitarists to use drop tuning while maintaining the same exact feel and comfort of a standard scale guitar.



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2025

MELODIC INVENTION

How to create memorable single-note themes

AS A COMPOSER of instrumental guitar-based music, I'm continually challenged with trying to write single-note melodic themes that tell a musical story and develop it in a conversational way while carrying the song forward. An effective way to accomplish this goal is to utilize and combine various elements and techniques, such as chordal arpeggios, scales and legato articulations. As an example of how I do this, I'd like to cite the title track from my latest album, *Charisma*.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the first 10 bars of the tune, which begins in bar 1 with a fat-sounding B $\flat$ sus2 (B $\flat$, C, D) chord, voiced on the A, D and G strings. On beat 4, I hammer-on from C to D on the G string, switching to a B $\flat$ major triad (B $\flat$, D, F). In bar 2, I go back to B $\flat$ sus2 then follow it with G5 (G, D) and C5 (C, G) power chords.

The tune's initial melodic theme begins in bar 3, where A and B $\flat$ notes are allowed to ring into each other, referencing the sound of B $\flat$ maj7 (B $\flat$, D, F, A). I then slide down to F, the 5th. After playing this fairly simple phrase twice, I move in bar 7 to the tune's more complex primary theme, which is built from arpeggiated chord shapes.

Across the first half of bar 7, the theme is devised from an open-voiced arpeggiation of Dm (D, F, A) with the 9th (E) added as a color tone. I then take a similar approach to a B $\flat$ major chord shape on beats 3 and 4, again adding the 9th (C) as a color tone. In bar 8, I then arpeggiate Gm (G, B $\flat$, D) in the same manner as I did with Dm, again briefly touching upon the 9th (A). This is followed by an arpeggiation of a C chord (C, E, G) that briefly moves to the sus4 (F), as well as the sus2 (D). Bars 9 and 10 then essentially repeated bars 7 and 8.

I then introduce a new melodic theme over the Dm - B $\flat$ - Gm - C chordal arpeggiations, which now repeat in the background. This new theme is shown in **FIGURE 2**.

In bars 1-4, I chose to rely on relatively sparse lines based primarily on the D minor pentatonic scale (D, F, G, A, C). Bar 4 includes the 2nd/9th, E, which expands the scale to D minor hexatonic (D, E, F, G, A, C). Playing some long, sustained notes

FIG. 1 B $\flat$ sus2 B $\flat$ B $\flat$ sus2 G5 C5

(B $\flat$ maj7) Dm B $\flat$

Gm C Dm B $\flat$ Gm C

FIG. 2 (Dm) (B $\flat$) (Gm) (C) (Dm) (B $\flat$)

(Gm) (C) (B $\flat$) (C) (F)

(B $\flat$) (C) (F)

here serves to leave "space" for the intricate arpeggiated figures in the accompaniment, which I think creates a nice balance.

Bars 5-8 are played with a double-time feel over a B $\flat$ - C - F chord progression, which repeats. These chords represent a shift from the tonal center of Dm to its relative major key of F major.

FIGURE 1 and **FIGURE 2** comprise what I think of as the two-part verse section of

the tune. On the recording, I used drop D tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G, B, E) and voiced the initial B $\flat$ sus2 chord on the bottom three strings. Live, I perform the song in standard tuning, as shown here.

When playing through these lines, try to focus on the articulation of the slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs and vibratos, as these techniques are essential in telling the musical story in the right way.

Andy Wood is an extraordinary virtuoso and master of everything from bluegrass to metal. His latest release, 2024's *Charisma*, is available from andywoodmusic.com

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2025

WRAP IT UP

How to end a slow blues solo

LAST MONTH, I discussed a few ways to begin a slow blues solo. I'd now like to talk about approaches to wrapping it up, which is an entirely different matter.

The most important part of a slow blues solo is how to get out of it! At that tempo, I typically like to take two or three choruses, tops. If I take two, I might play the first in a lower register and work my way up into a higher register. It depends on my mood, though. I might just keep all of it really quiet and end the solo with a low, held root note. As shown in the key of C in **FIGURE 1**, a sustained high C is followed by a classic B.B. King-style “stab” on a C13 chord voicing, and then boom — back to the verse.

One of the greatest live blues albums of all time is B.B. King's *Live at the Regal*, which includes the slow blues medley, “Sweet Little Angel/It's My Own Fault/How Blue Can You Get?” The way B.B. builds the power and emotion through this medley is a lesson in slow blues perfection.

Most often, the intensity of a solo escalates as it progresses, as the phrases build in length, complexity and speed and culminate with something that's hopefully impactful and memorable. **FIGURE 2** offers an eight-bar soloing example in the key of C that begins with a classic B.B.-style lick, starting with a slide up to the G string's 12th fret, followed by two heavily vibrato-ed high C root notes and then the 4th, F, which I then bend up a whole step up to G, followed by a quick minor 3rd, E $\flat$, then another heavily vibrato-ed C.

On beat 3 of bar 1, I shift up to 13th position and remain anchored here for a long stream of fast, intense licks that I perform with lots of hammer/pulls on the top two strings. Through beats 1 and 2 of bar 2, these hammer/pulls on the 1st string move between F and G, and for beats 3 and 4, I shift down to the 2nd string to play similar hammer/pulls between C and E $\flat$ before sliding up to 15th/16th position at the end of bar 2. I remain here through all the fast phrases in bar 3, after which I shift back down to 13th position at the start of bar 4.

Bar 5 begins with a shift back up the fretboard for more “high note activity,” after which I work my way back down to 8th position, wrapping up in bars 7 and 8

FIG. 1 (C7) C13

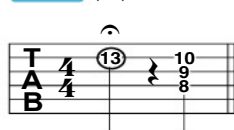


FIG. 2

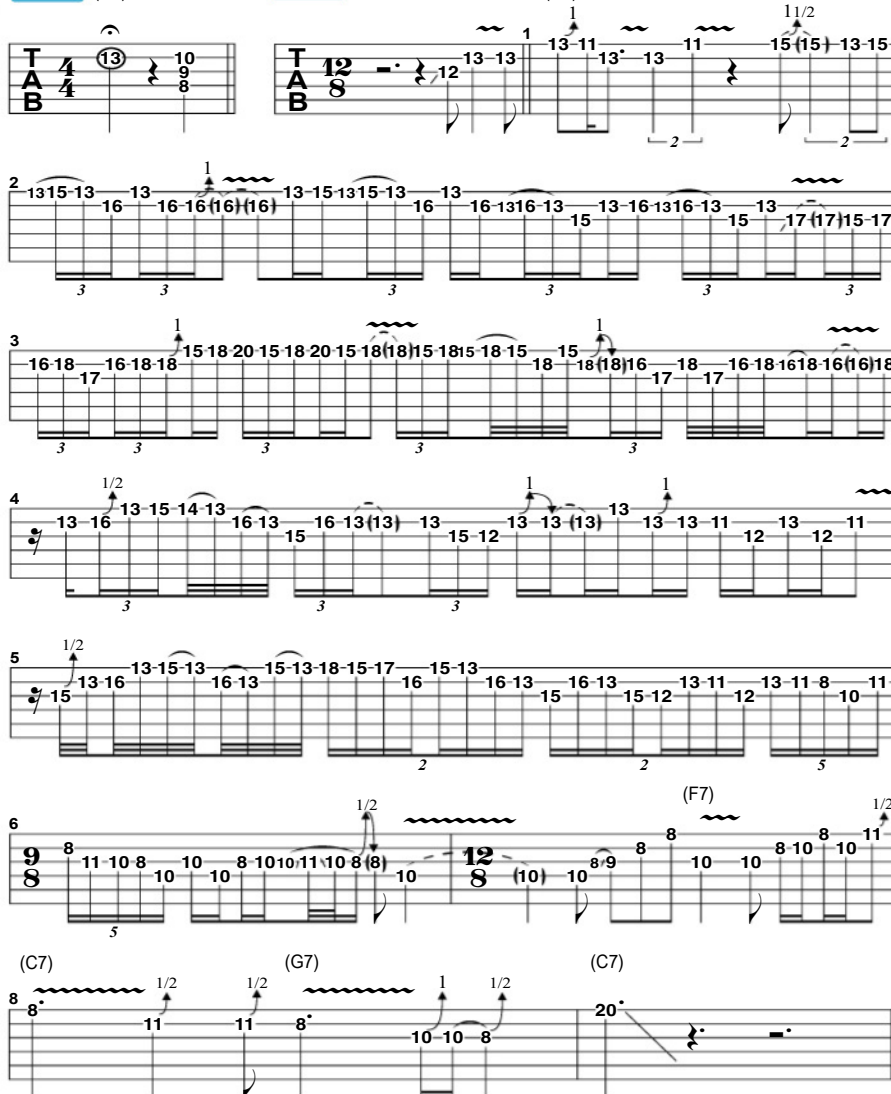
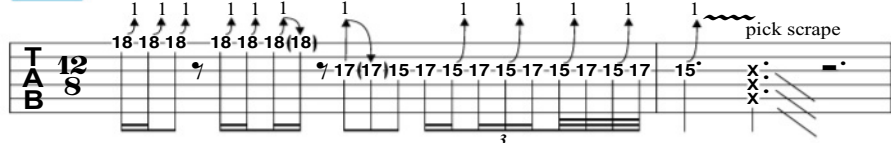


FIG. 3 (C7)



with simple phrases that clearly outline the closing I - IV - I - V turnaround (C7-F7-C7-G7) and ending with a B.B.-style stab and slide down from the highest C note on the instrument.

Sometimes, you use the guitar almost as a weapon to push people back in their seats, but they know it's going to end. It's a con-

versation between you and your audience. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the “Jeff Beck” method of ending a slow blues solo. As shown in **FIGURE 3**, I play a series of aggressive high bends, followed by a pick slide down the wound strings. Works every time, although you'll ruin your pick. But that's a small price to pay!

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.

TELE-PATHY

by Jim Oblon



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/january2025

THE RIGHT APPROACH

Using approach notes to solo over a I - VI - II - V progression

IN THIS LESSON, I'd like to discuss playing over what's known as a I - VI - II - V ("one-six-two-five") chord progression, which is common in a variety of musical styles, from country to rock to folk to jazz and blues. You'll find it in many old blues tunes, such as some by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, through the later recordings of Eric Clapton and many others. The examples I offer here are played in the key of F and with a swing-eighths feel. And all of the chords have a dominant 7 quality or implied tonality. So the basic underlying progression is F7 - D7 - G7 - C7.

FIGURE 1 shows a rhythm part based on this progression: I begin with a boogie pattern on F5 (a low F note with C, the 5th, above it) to F6 (with C moving up to D, the 6th), played through bar 1 and beat 1 of bar 2. This is followed by the chords E♭7/B♭ to D7/A, both with the 5th in the bass, which creates a warm sound. D7/A is the VI (six) chord, and I approached it from a half step, or one fret, above. The bar ends with A♭7 to G7 at the start of bar 3, again utilizing "half step above" approach, which I then also apply to D♭7/A♭ to C7/G. The figure ends with a return to the I, F5 to F6, which can be looked at as implied F7 chord.

Now, one could easily play licks based on the F blues scale (F, A♭, B♭, B, C, E♭) over the entire progression, and it would work well. But in this lesson, I'd like to demonstrate "making the changes," which means acknowledging each chord melodically.

FIGURE 2 presents a solo that does this. I begin over F7 with a simple melody based on F major pentatonic (F, G, A, C, D). In bar 2, I set up the arrival of D7/A by playing E♭, a half step above the D root, which is known as the flatted 9th, or ♭9. This is mirrored in the chord progression via E♭7/A♭ to D7/A.

I take the same approach in bar 3 for the next chord, G7, as I play A♭ to G (♭9 to root), and the subsequent chord, C7/G, by playing D♭ to C (again, ♭9 to root), setting up the return to F7 and a lick based on the F blues scale. Taking this same approach with each of these changes like this sounds pleasing while making things easier to think about.

In terms of setting up the change from F7

Triplet Feel ♩ = ♩³

FIG. 1 (F7) E♭7/B♭ D7/A A♭7 G7 D♭7/A♭ C7/G (F7)
fingerstyle, w/thumbpick

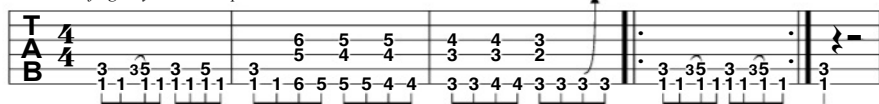


FIG. 2 (F7) (E♭7/B♭) (D7/A) (A♭7) (G7) (D♭7/A♭) (C7/G)

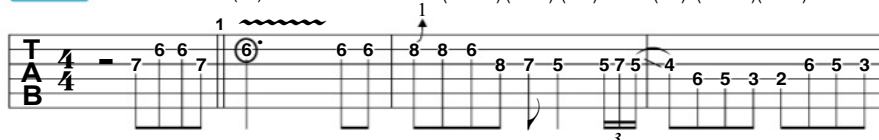


FIG. 3 D7 D7♭9 D7 (G7) (C7)

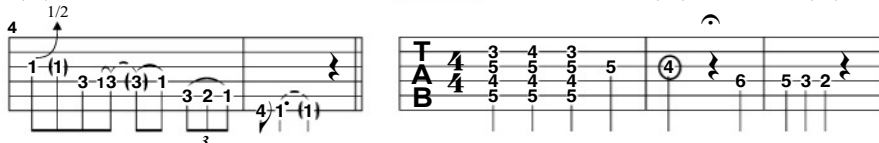
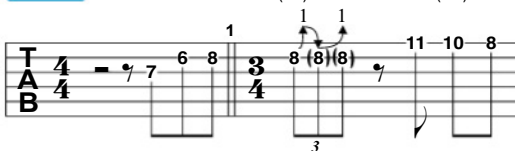


FIG. 4 (C7) (F7)



FIG. 5



(G7) (C7) (F7)

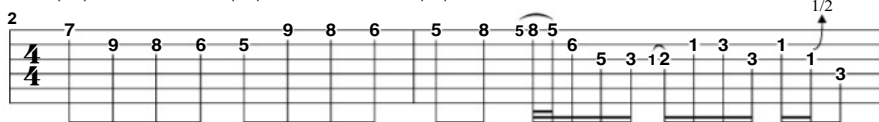
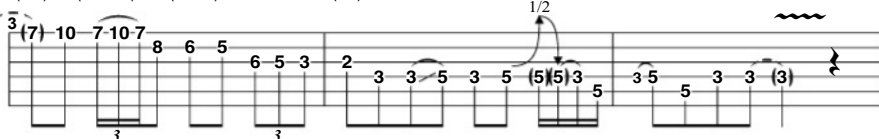


FIG. 6 (F7) (E♭7/B♭) (D7/A) (A♭7)



(G7) (D♭7/A♭) (C7/G) (F7)



to D7, **FIGURE 3** illustrates D7 and D7♭9, which includes the E♭ note. I then play B, the 3rd of G7, then E, the 3rd of C7. **FIGURE 4** shows how the descending line D♭, C, B♭ sets up a nice resolution to A, the 3rd of F7.

FIGURE 5 demonstrates the same concept

applied in a higher register.

Finally, **FIGURE 6** offers another melodic example. After playing F major pentatonic over F7, I play E♭ to D to set up D7. Bar 3 ends with D♭ to C, played over C7, setting up the return to the I chord, F7.

Virtuoso guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Jim Oblon has toured and recorded with Paul Simon, Lucinda Williams and many others. His latest album is 2023's *I Wanna Be Loved*.

HARDWIRED

by Jared James Nichols



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/january2025

FREE RIDER

A look at the iconic playing of Free's Paul Kossoff

ONE OF MY biggest influences is the great Paul Kossoff from the band Free. Paul had a guitar riff that changed rock radio in the early Seventies, "All Right Now." Like Leslie West, Kossoff wrote incredible songs that were larger than life, transcending the world of three-piece guitar rock.

The distinctive ways in which Paul bent notes and voiced chords exemplified the feeling of freedom as a guitarist. For example, when he played an A5 power chord, he wouldn't just play the typical three-note voicing shown in bar 1 of **FIGURE 1**. He would expand it to include notes barred across the top two strings, as shown in bar 2. Broadening power chords in this way gives them a unique, powerful sonic punch.

We can apply the same approach to an E5 power chord, as illustrated in **FIGURE 2**. Here, an E-B-E note stack played on the bottom three strings is topped with a fretted B on the G string's 4th fret, along with the open top two strings. **FIGURE 3** has us moving from A5 to E5 using these octave-doubled voicings.

Another nice twist Paul would do is drop a power chord's high root note down a whole step to the dominant 7th. In bars 1 and 2 of **FIGURE 4**, I substitute D at the 3rd fret on the B string in the E5 power chord, resulting in E7(no3). In bar 3, I substitute G on the high E string's 3rd fret in the A5 chord, resulting in A7(no3).

Kossoff also liked to voice the 3rd of the chord as its lowest note, or "in the bass." For example, in **FIGURE 5** I begin with a B5 chord, voiced B, F#, B, low to high, but then substitute the major 3rd, D#, for the low B root, resulting in B/D#, voiced as D#, F#, B. In **FIGURE 6**, I utilize both B5 and B/D#, as well as F#/A#. Paul would use this approach to craft catchy rhythm parts, not unlike **FIGURE 7**. Notice the use of inversions to create chromatic movement.

Kossoff also had one of the greatest finger vibratos of all time, which he used to convey so much feeling and attitude in his single-note lines. Played in the key of B, **FIGURE 8** presents a simple phrase based on the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F#, A). **FIGURE 9** demonstrates how Paul might have played this riff, with a fast, wide vibrato and more intricate phrasing.

FIG. 1 A5



FIG. 2 E5

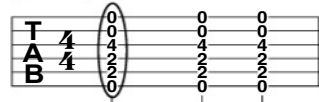


FIG. 3 A5 E5

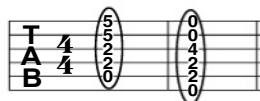


FIG. 4 E7(no3) E5 E7(no3) A5 A7(no3)

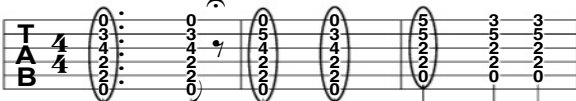


FIG. 5 B5

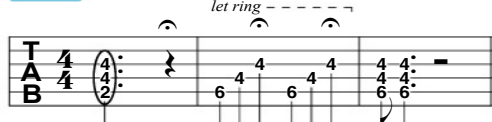


FIG. 6 B5 F#/A#



FIG. 7 B5 F#/A# A5 E5

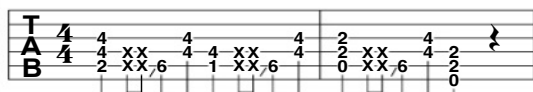


FIG. 8 (B7)



FIG. 9 (B7)

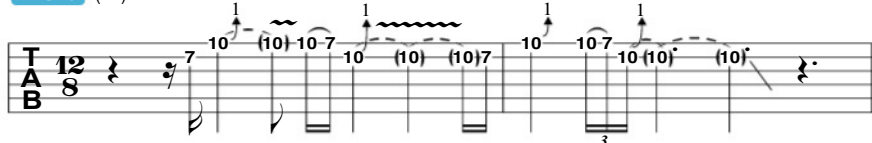


FIG. 10 (B7)

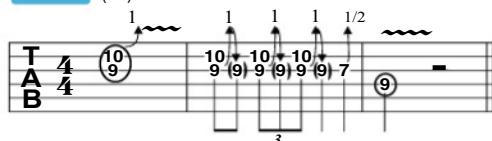


FIG. 11 (B7)

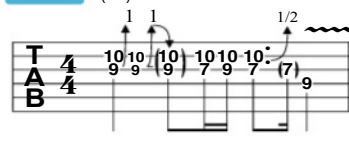


FIG. 12 (B7)

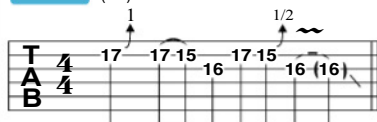
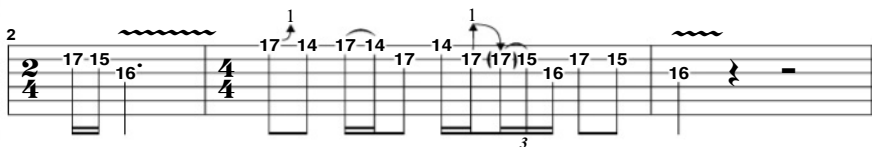


FIG. 13 (B7)



Paul also loved to use oblique bends, where one note rises while another remains stationary. In **FIGURE 10** and **FIGURE 11**, the notes E and A are played together, with a whole-step bend and release on the G string.

FIGURE 12 and **FIGURE 13** illustrate

some high-register B minor pentatonic licks in Kossoff's style. **FIGURE 12** moves between the notes E, D and B, and **FIGURE 13** elaborates on the approach with more complex phrases played on the top three strings, all accentuated with the Kossoff-style fast, wide vibrato.

Jared James Nichols is a true blues-rock titan with two signature Epiphone Les Paul models (and a Blackstar amp) to his name. His latest album is 2023's *Jared James Nichols*. For more info, go to jaredjamesnichols.com

“KILLING FLOOR”

Slash feat. Brian Johnson

As heard on **ORGY OF THE DAMNED**

Words and Music by CHESTER BURNETT (A.K.A. "HOWLIN' WOLF) • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

A Intro (0:00)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 125

[illegible]

B (0:08)

*A7

Gtr. 1

Riff A

99

9 9 (9) 9 9 9 7 5 5 (5) 5 5 5 7 9 9 (9) 9 9 9 7 5 5 (5) 10 10 10 12
9 9 (9) 9 9 9 7 6 6 (6) 6 6 6 7 9 9 (9) 9 9 9 7 6 6 (6) 11 11 11 12

*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

P.M. _ _ _ _ _

(repeat previous bar)

5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	7		%	%	%
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 1a

Figure 10: A musical score for a single melodic line, likely for a guitar or piano. The score is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of 12 measures, grouped into four measures per system. The notes are as follows:

- Measure 1: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter)
- Measure 2: A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter)
- Measure 3: E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter)
- Measure 4: Bb3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter)
- Measure 5: F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter)
- Measure 6: C3 (quarter), Bb2 (quarter), A2 (quarter)
- Measure 7: G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter)
- Measure 8: D2 (quarter), C2 (quarter), Bb1 (quarter)
- Measure 9: A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter), F1 (quarter)
- Measure 10: E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter)
- Measure 11: Bb0 (quarter), A0 (quarter), G0 (quarter)
- Measure 12: F0 (quarter), E0 (quarter), D0 (quarter)

The notes are written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 3/4. The score is a single melodic line, likely for a guitar or piano.

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

(repeat previous bar)

5 5 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7

System 1: Measures 1-12

Chords: D7 (Measures 1-6), A7 (Measures 7-12)

1. I should've

System 2: Measures 13-16

Chords: E7 (Measures 13-14), D7 (Measure 15), A7 (Measure 16), E7 (Measures 17-18)

end Riff A

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 1a

end Bass Fig. 1

Fill 1 (3:12)

 A7

Gr. 4



Musical notation for guitar solo on a single staff. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a wavy line indicating a vibrato or tremolo effect. The notes are: 5 (quarter note), 7 (quarter note), 7 (quarter note), (7) (quarter note), (7) (quarter note), and a final quarter rest. A bracket connects the first two notes (5 and 7). A slur connects the last four notes ((7), (7), (7), and the final quarter rest).

[illegible]

C Verses (0:31, 0:54, 1:40, 3:12)

(1.) quit you a long time ago I should've
 (2.) followed my first mind If I had
 (3.) went on when my friend come from Mexico at me I should've
 (4.) knows (I) should've been gone Ooh God

A7

Gtr. 4 plays Fill 1 fourth time (see below bar 13)

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2 substitutes first four bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 fourth time (see bar 5)

Gtr. 2 (Play repeats simile)

P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

quit you baby a long time ago I should've
 followed my first mind I'd been
 went on when my friend come from Mexico at me But I'm not
 knows I should've been gone And I

D7

A7

P.M.

3rd verse, skip ahead to E (bar 41)

4th verse, skip ahead to I (bar 79)

quit you pretty woman and went on down to Mexico 2. If I had
 gone gone gone yeah since my second time
 foolin' with you baby I let you put me on the killing
 wouldn't have been here down on the killing floor

E7

D7

A7

E7

P.M.

Substitute Bass Fill 1 second time (see below bar 15)

E5

D5

A

E7

Gtr. 4 (elec. w/dist.)

51

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Bass

G 1st Guitar Solo (2:26)

A

G#

A7

G#7

A7

G#7

Gtr. 4

55

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

A7

D7

C#7

D7

A7

G#7

58

A7 G#7 A7 E7

61

D7 A7 E7

64

H (2:49)

A7

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play first 10 bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 5)

Gtr. 4

67

Bass plays first 10 bars of Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

69

D7

71

A7

73 1 5 5 8 (8) 5 8 5 7 8 7 5 7 7 5 7 5 | 7 5 8 7 5 7 (7) 5 7 7 5 7 5 7 14

E7 **D7**

75 14 14 (14) 14 12 13 12 14 12 12 (12) 12 X let ring 14 13 14 13 14 (14) 13 13 14 14 14 X

3

Go back to **C** 4th Verse (bar 17)

4. God

A7 **E7**

77 Gtr. 4 5 5 8 7 5 7 5 6 7 7 5 4 2 4 3 4 5 0 5 7 5 7 5 7

Gtrs. 1 and 2

5 7 7 7

Bass

5 2 12 7 7 7

I (3:31)

And I wouldn't have been here down on the killing floor And I

A7 **E7** **D7** **A7**

79 Gtr. 1 4/6 5 12 10 5 4/6

4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7 9/13 11 11 12 12 12 12 13 14 9/11 9 9 10 10 10 10 11 12 4/6 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7

Gtr. 2 P.M.

5 5 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7 0 0 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7 5 5 2 2 3 3 3 3 4 5 5 5 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 7

Bass

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

would not be here down on the killing floor Hey now

E7 D7 A7 E7

83

J 2nd Guitar Solo (3:47)

A7

Gr. 1 plays Riff A simile (see bar 5)

Gr. 2 plays first 10 bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

Gr. 3 plays first 10 bars of Rhy. Fig. 1a (see bar 5)

Gr. 4

87

Bass plays first 10 bars of Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

D7

Gr. 4

91

A7

Gr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 (see bar 36)

93

E7

D7

95

Freely

97

A7 Gtr. 4

B $\flat$ 5 A5

Gtr. 1

B $\flat$ A (trem. strum)

Gtr. 2

B $\flat$ 5 A5 A let ring

Bass

99

A7

A7 let ring

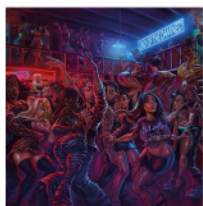
A5

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

"KILLING FLOOR"

Slash feat. Brian Johnson



SLASH'S COVER OF this popular old Howlin' Wolf blues standard features the ageless hard rock guitar god playing as great as ever and sporting a

Gibson ES-335 as he authentically performs the song's signature funky riffs and serves up an inspired and characteristically feisty, well-structured solo.

Backed by an ace rhythm section that includes guitarist Tash Neal providing solidly supportive rhythm accompaniment, Slash and company authoritatively lay down the song's playful, catchy groove behind veteran AC/DC frontman Brian Johnson's throaty, soulful vocals. Both guitarists use their bridge pickups throughout and dial in just the right amount of tube amp distortion to create rich, fat tones with bite, without exceeding a level of gain that would muddy some of their chord voicings, which include not only power chords but major and minor 3rds and dissonant dominant-7 tritones (between the major 3rd and $\flat 7$).

Throughout his first solo (sections G and H), Slash makes extensive use of alternate-picked chromatic walk-ups and walk-downs, which he tastefully uses to approach and build musical bridges between targeted chord tones of A7 (A, C $\sharp$, E, G), D7 (D, F $\sharp$, A, C) and E7 (E, G $\sharp$, B, D) while adding color and interesting contours to his licks. An especially clever example of this is the smoothly rolling lines Slash plays over E7 and D7 in bars 63 and 64.

Notice also the guitarist's deft use of string skipping to perform melodic 6th intervals on the G and high E strings in bars 56, 61, 72 and 76, which tie-in nicely with the signature 6ths featured in the song's intro and verse riffs. When playing these parts, aim for precise fretting and clean, accurate picking. Also noteworthy and instructive is how Slash liberally draws notes from the parallel A major pentatonic (A, B, C $\sharp$, E, F $\sharp$) and A minor pentatonic (A, C, D, E, G) scales throughout the solo, as well as in his second solo at section J. Particularly cool and musical is the way in which he combines notes from the A Mixolydian mode (A, B, C $\sharp$, D, E, F $\sharp$, G) and A blues scale (A, C, D, E $\flat$, E, G) over A7 in bar 57.

"ACE OF SPADES"

Motörhead



THIS LANDMARK 1980 punk-metal classic features frontman Lemmy Kilmister aggressively picking and strumming his growling,

overdriven Rickenbacker bass with a plectrum, as guitarist "Fast" Eddie Clarke provides perfectly complementary power chords and single-note and double-stop riffs above, with drummer Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor laying down a relentless uptempo metal-style train beat.

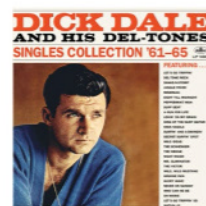
Both axmen downpick all their eighth-note rhythms and anything held longer than that, such as the G5 power chords in bar 12 and Clarke's double-stops in bars 13-16, lending their riffs a pummeling attack and intensity. But due to the song's brisk tempo (141 beats per minute) and frenetic double-time feel, both Lemmy and Eddie alternate pick any consecutive 16th notes that aren't hammered-on or pulled-off, catching any that fall on the second or fourth 16th note of the beat — the "ee" and "uh" counts — with an upstroke. For example, the opening bass riff in bar 1 is picked "down-down-up, up-down-up, down-down, down-down," with a phantom (silent) upstroke on the tied note on beat 2.

Note Lemmy's aggressive use of root-5th power chords throughout the song, as well as guitar-style strummed octaves in bars 17, 18, 21 and 22, which are properly performed by muting the unused D string with the paw side of the fret hand's 1st finger. You can get away with not doing this for the D octaves, as the open D note perfectly agrees with and doubles the fretted notes. But muting the D string is absolutely essential for any other fretted octaves.

Clarke's aforementioned double-stops in bars 13-16 may be fingered a couple of different ways: You can barre the notes at the 14th fret with your 3rd finger and the 12th-fret notes with your 1st finger, or you can fret the 14th-fret notes individually with the tips of your 3rd and 4th fingers. Use whichever fingering feels most comfortable and convenient and enables you to precisely bend both strings up a half step, as indicated. And compare pushing the strings upward versus pulling them downward.

"MISIRLOU"

Dick Dale & His Del-tones



SURF GUITAR KING Dick Dale creatively applied his formidable tremolo picking chops to great effect on his ground-breaking, endur-

ingly popular 1962 rock 'n' roll cover of this old-world, Middle Eastern-flavored folk melody, using the bright, twangy sound of his Fender Stratocaster plugged into a loud, clean Fender Showman tube amp drenched with spring reverb to elevate the tune's exotic melody to an exciting level of intensity. And the guitarist's preference for unusually heavy-gauge strings and thick picks, combined with a ferocious pick attack, contributed to his signature bold sound.

Tremolo picking has long been used by acoustic mandolin, bouzouki, balalaika and oud players to emulate the long, sustaining tones of the human voice or a horn, woodwind or bowed instrument. The technique entails rapidly alternate picking the same note repeatedly while fingering a slower-moving melody with the fret hand. In this case, Dale is picking mostly 16th notes, occasionally "resting" on an eighth note to create galloping rhythms. His fret hand, meanwhile, fingers the changing melody notes up and down a single string, first on the low E, then on the high E, beginning in bar 18. In either case, use whichever fret-hand finger feels most convenient for reaching any given note as you ascend and descend the neck.

Regarding pick-hand technique, try to make your movements small and economical and keep your hand as relaxed as possible, both to conserve energy, so that you can accentuate certain notes without becoming fatigued, and also to avoid creating "turbulence" through excessively large movements, which can disturb the other strings and cause unwanted open notes to ring.

Interestingly, like Albert King and Eric Gales, Dale played his guitar left-handed and "upside down," meaning it was strung for a righty. So his high E string was on the top side of the fretboard and his low E string was on the bottom. This affected his technique, playing style, tone and touch. Imagine, if you're a right-handed player, trying to play a lefty-strung guitar upside down and palm mute its bass strings!

"ACE OF SPADES"

Motörhead

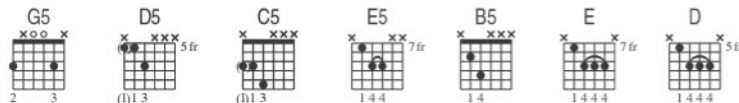
As heard on **ACE OF SPADES**

Words and Music by IAN KILMISTER, EDWARD CLARKE and PHILIP TAYLOR • Transcribed by DAVE WHITEHILL and MATT SCHARFGLASS

Guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high, E_b A_b D_b G_b B_b E_b).

Bass tuning (low to high): E_b A_b D_b G_b .

All notes and chords sound in the key of E_b minor, one half step lower than written.

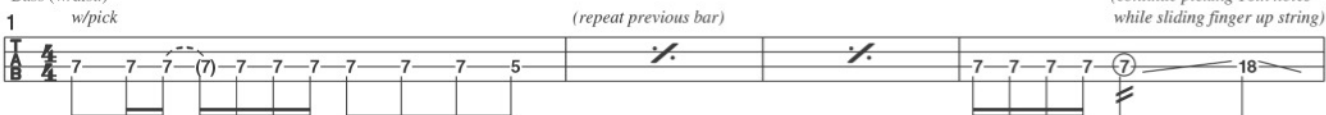


A Intro (0:01)

Fast w/Double-time Feel ♩ = 141

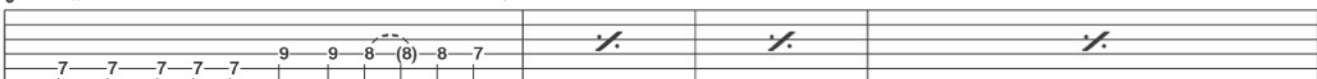
N.C.(E5)

Bass (w/dist.)
w/pick



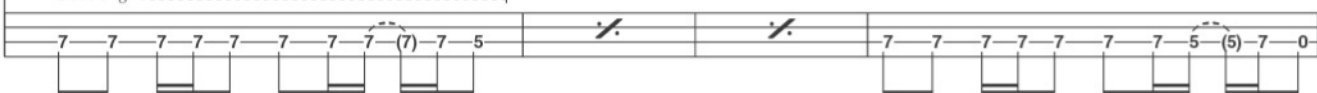
Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

5 Riff A



Bass

Bass Fig. 1



B Verses (0:14, 0:45, 2:00)

1. If you like to gamble I tell you I'm your man You win some lose some it's all the same to me
2. Playing for the high one I dancing with the devil Going with the flow it's all a game to me
3. Pushing up the ante I know you got to see me Read'em and weep the dead man's hand again

9 G5



N.C.(E5)

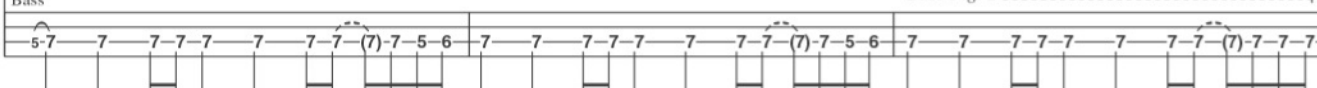
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A four times (see bar 1)

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)



Bass

Bass Fig. 2



The pleasure is to play it makes no difference what you say
 I see it in your eyes snake eyes watching you
 take one look and die

D5

C5

16 Gtr. 1

I don't share your greed the only card I need is the
 Double-up or quit double stake or split The
 The only thing you see you know it's going to be the

D5

C5

19 N.C.(E5)
 Gtr. 2 plays Riff B (see bar 15)

[C] Chorus (0:38, 1:09, 2:24)

3rd time, skip ahead to [F] Outro 1.

go back to [B] 2nd Verse

ace of spades the ace of spades * (nuh)

N.C.(E5)

23 Gtr. 1

*3rd time only

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 15)

2.

27 P.M. P.M. > P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. > P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. > P.M. P.M. > P.M. P.M.

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

[D] Bridge (1:19)

know I'm born to lose and gambling's for fools But that's the way I like it baby I don't wanna live forever

E5

D5

E5

31 Gtr. 1

Bass

And don't forget the joker

35 D5

B5

E Guitar Solo (1:33)

39 A5

Bass Fig. 3

42 B5

end Bass Fig. 3

45 A5 (w/flanger)

Play Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 39)

48 Gtr. 1

51 N.C.(E5)

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

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice simile (see bar 15)

go back to **B** 3rd Verse

F Outro (2:27)

N.C.(E5)

Gtr. 1 P.M.

55

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 four times simile (see bar 15)

(2:34)

D5 C5 E D E D E

Gtr. 2 w/delay

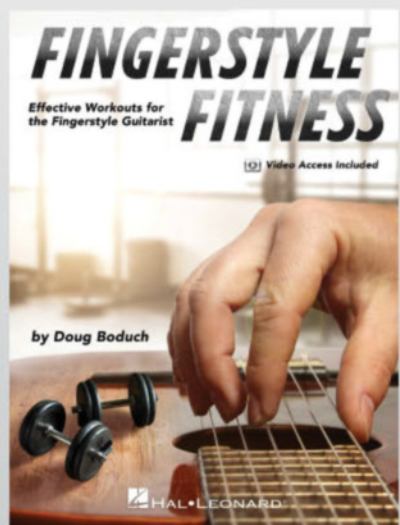
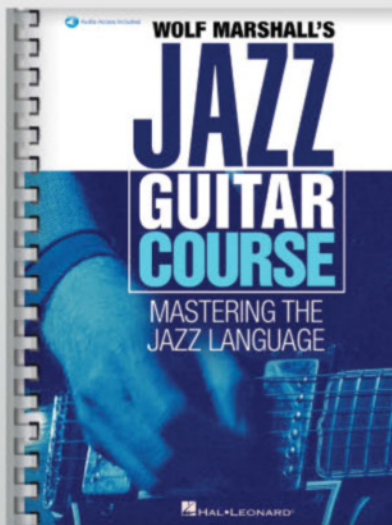
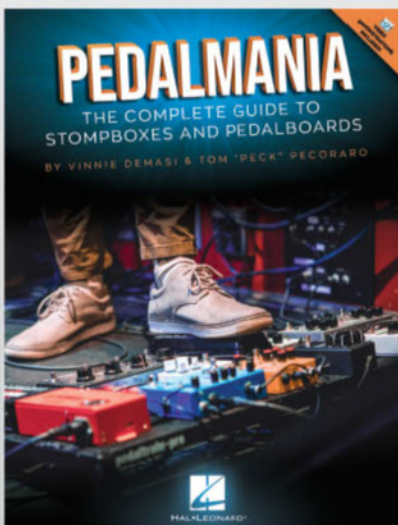
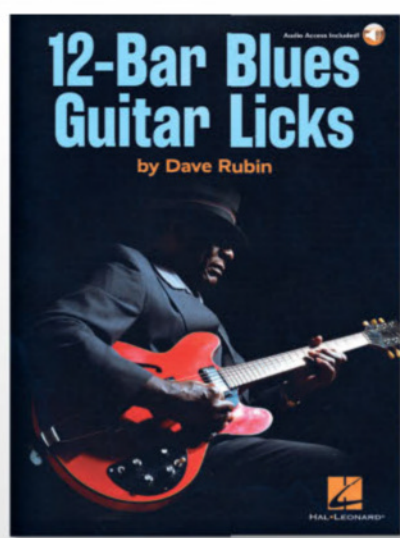
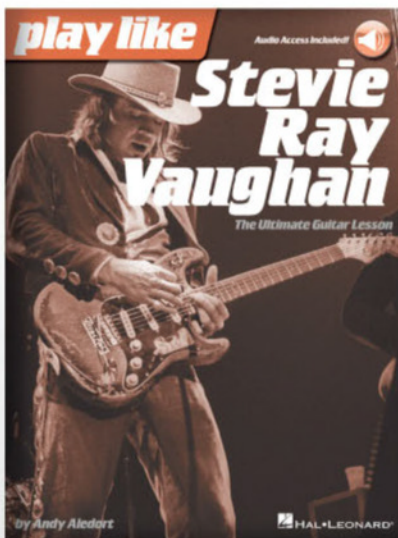
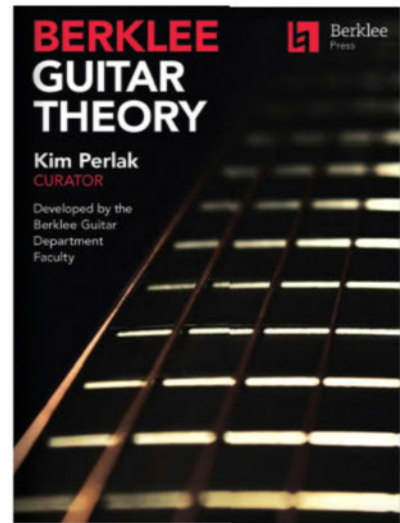
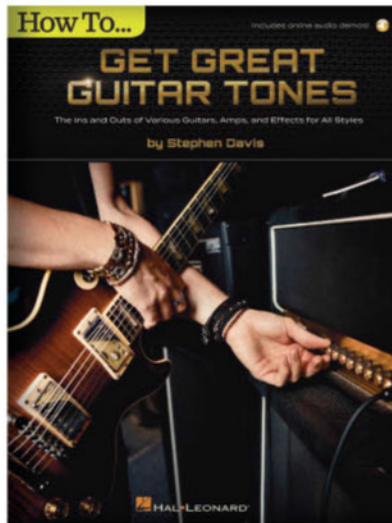
59

Gtr. 1

Bass

*Slide fingers down the strings, then up.

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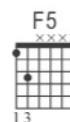
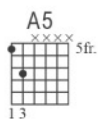
"MISIRLOU"

Dick Dale & His Del-tones

As heard on **SINGLES COLLECTION '61-65**

TRADITIONAL • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

Note: As a result of the tape playback speed being sped up during the mastering process, all pitches on the recording sound slightly sharp (approx. 32 cents). To play along, tune all strings slightly sharp.

**A** Intro (0:00)

Fast Surf Rock ♩ = 173

N.C. (E)

Gtr. 1 (clean elec. w/verb)

> 1



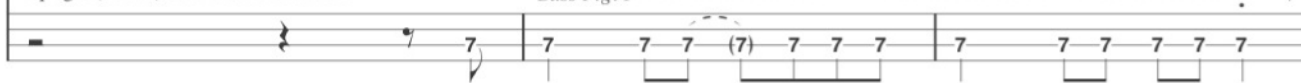
4 Gtr. 1

(trem. pick)



Upright (acous.) bass arr. for elec. bass

Bass Fig. 1



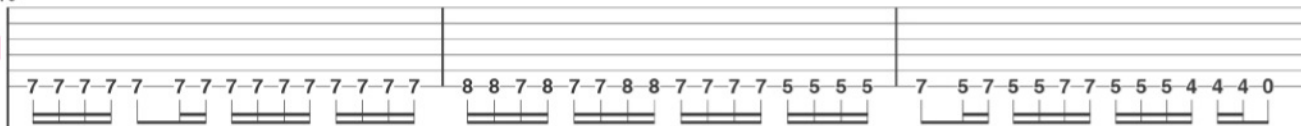
7 Gtr. 1



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 one and one half times (see bar 5)

10 Gtr. 1

(F)



Bass

Bass Fig. 2



(E)

(F)

13 Gtr. 1



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 11)

100

Gtr. 1 substitutes Fill 1 simile second time (see previous bar)

100

100

29

E

moderato

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 3

F
 Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 27)
 Gtr. 1
 31 7-7-7-7-5-5-7 5-7-5 4-4-4-4 5-4-4-5-4 5 4 X-1 4 0: 0 (0) 0 (0) 1 (1) 1
 Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 27)
 E
 2nd time, skip ahead to Outro [E] (bar 67)
 Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill. 1 second time (see bar 45)

C Trumpet Solo (0:48)

A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

35

G5

Bass

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Guitars 1 and 2, featuring two systems of chords: A5 and G5. Each system contains four measures. The first system (A5) has notes 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5 in each measure, with some notes grouped by brackets and slurs. The second system (G5) has notes 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 3 in each measure, also with groupings. The bottom staff is for Bass, showing fret numbers: 12, 12, 12, (12), 12, 12, 12, 12 in the first system, and 10, 10, 10, (10), 10, 10, 10, 9 in the second system. A pink and yellow color-coded box is present on the left side of the page.

39 **F5** Gtrs. 1 and 2 **E**

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 11)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

43 F E

Rhy. Fill 1 - - - - -

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 11)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

D (1:10)

[illegible]

100

Go back to **B** (bar 19)

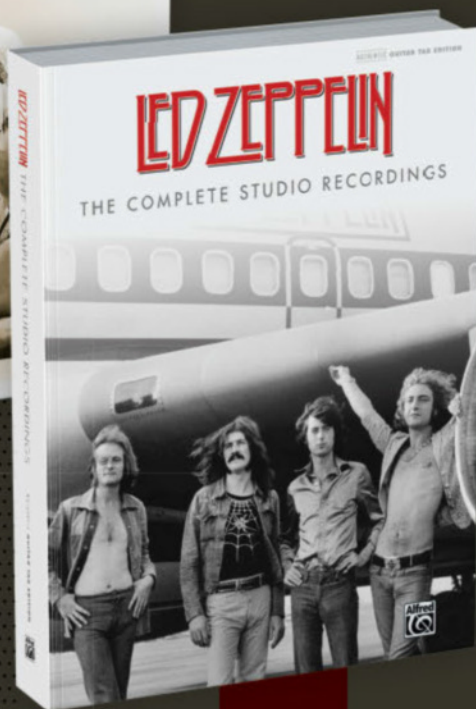
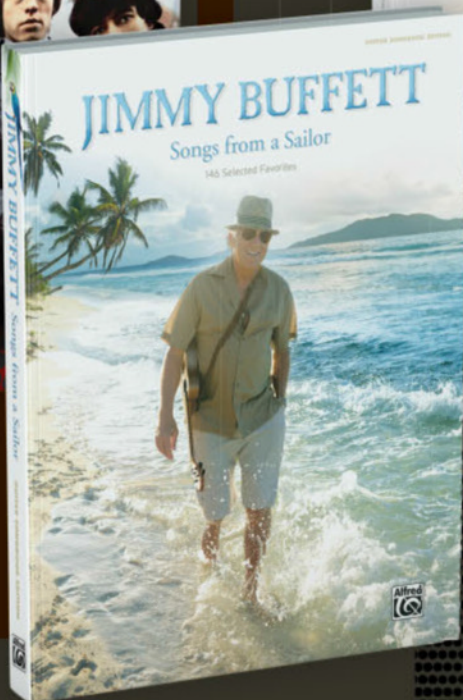
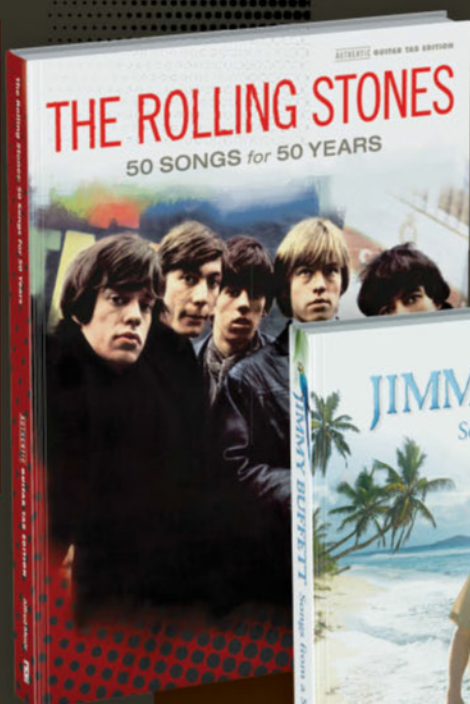
F **Outro** (2:02)

1st time: Begin fade

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1978-PRESENT PROCO RAT

CATEGORY: DISTORTION PEDAL

TODAY'S GUITARISTS ARE blessed with about 26,844 distortion pedals to choose from, give or take two. But back in the late Seventies the selection was much more limited, with stomp boxes like the Electro-Harmonix Big Muff (which some would still call a fuzz unit), MXR Distortion+ and Boss DS-1 leading the way when it came to readily available products from big-name companies.

In 1978, a relatively small sound reinforcement company called ProCo Sound in Kalamazoo, Michigan, quietly introduced their own distinctive take of an op-amp-based distortion circuit combined with diode clipping and called it "The Rat." The Rat's circuit was a happy accident that happened when designer Scott Burnham mistakenly installed a 47 ohm resistor instead of a 470 ohm resistor in his circuit, resulting in a much higher amount of gain with harmonically rich overtones.

One could describe ProCo as being an early "boutique" pedal company at the time, but that's really a precious description, considering that the products were made in a damp, rat-infested basement (hence the inspiration for the "Rat" name). Word quickly got out, and by the Eighties a Rat distortion pedal became a commonly sighted fixture on many hair and thrash metal bands' pedalboards, although a few fusion jazz guitarists also were seen stomping on this furry friend.

Although the Rat pedal went through numerous cosmetic changes over the years, including the original large-format "The Rat" pedal and a smaller (but oddly heavier) Rat pedal that came out in 1984 and became



"By the Eighties, a Rat distortion pedal became a commonly sighted fixture on many hair and thrash metal bands' pedalboards"

[above] A ProCo Rat distortion pedal photographed in 2012. Rat pedals made today don't sound all that much different from ones made in the Eighties and Nineties

known as the "Rat 2" when an LED on/off indicator was added in 1986, the inner circuit has remained essentially the same since day one until today. The internet is rife with old wives' tales and folklore, including arguments about differences between the original LM308 op-amp chips and the OP07 that started appearing around 2005 and myths of the mojo of pedals assembled by a dude nicknamed "Woodcutter." Honestly, Rat pedals made today don't sound all that much different from ones made in the Eighties and Nineties. The biggest tonal differences are usually due to inconsistent component tolerances between one unit and another, so a brand new \$90 Rat could actually sound better than a \$900 LM308/Woodcutter example.

Two common complaints surface about the Rat's sound: It cuts bass frequencies and its treble frequencies can be harsh. The bass cut is actually a bonus, as it generates a

midrange-dominant tone that cuts through a mix with a band. Yes, it doesn't sound as massive for bedroom metal, but tones that sound big in isolation inevitably get lost on stage amongst other instruments. The treble scenario is easily fixed by the pedal itself thanks to its low-pass filter, which is adjusted via the Filter knob. This control works "backwards" with the "zero" setting providing full treble that becomes darker and warmer as you turn the knob up.

The list of Rat pedal fans is pretty long and impressive, including classic rockers like Jeff Beck, who used one live from the mid-Eighties up until 1999 and on the *Guitar Shop* album, Robert Fripp, David Gilmour, Joe Perry, Andy Summers and Joe Walsh, grunge/alternative guitarists like Kurt Cobain (*Nevermind*), Dave Grohl, Buzz Osborne of the Melvins, Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth, Graham Coxon of Blur and Frank Black with the Pixies, metal players James Hetfield (*Kill 'Em All*), Trey Azagthoth and Nuno Bettencourt, jazz guitarists Bill Frisell, Arto Lindsay and John Scofield to assorted users like John Ashton (Psychodelic Furs), Nels Cline, Rivers Cuomo (Weezer) and Mike Stroud (Ratatat, appropriately).

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

Jeff Beck lead:

Distortion: 4.5, Filter: 3, Volume: 6

Tip: Use a Strat with the tone control rolled down and push a Marshall amp dialed to a moderately overdriven tone with the Bass EQ rolled all the way off.

Nineties Seattle grunge:

Distortion: 10, Filter: 1, Volume: 9

Tip: Use a humbucking bridge pickup and an amp pushed well into overdrive/distortion with the Bass EQ control turned up about halfway.

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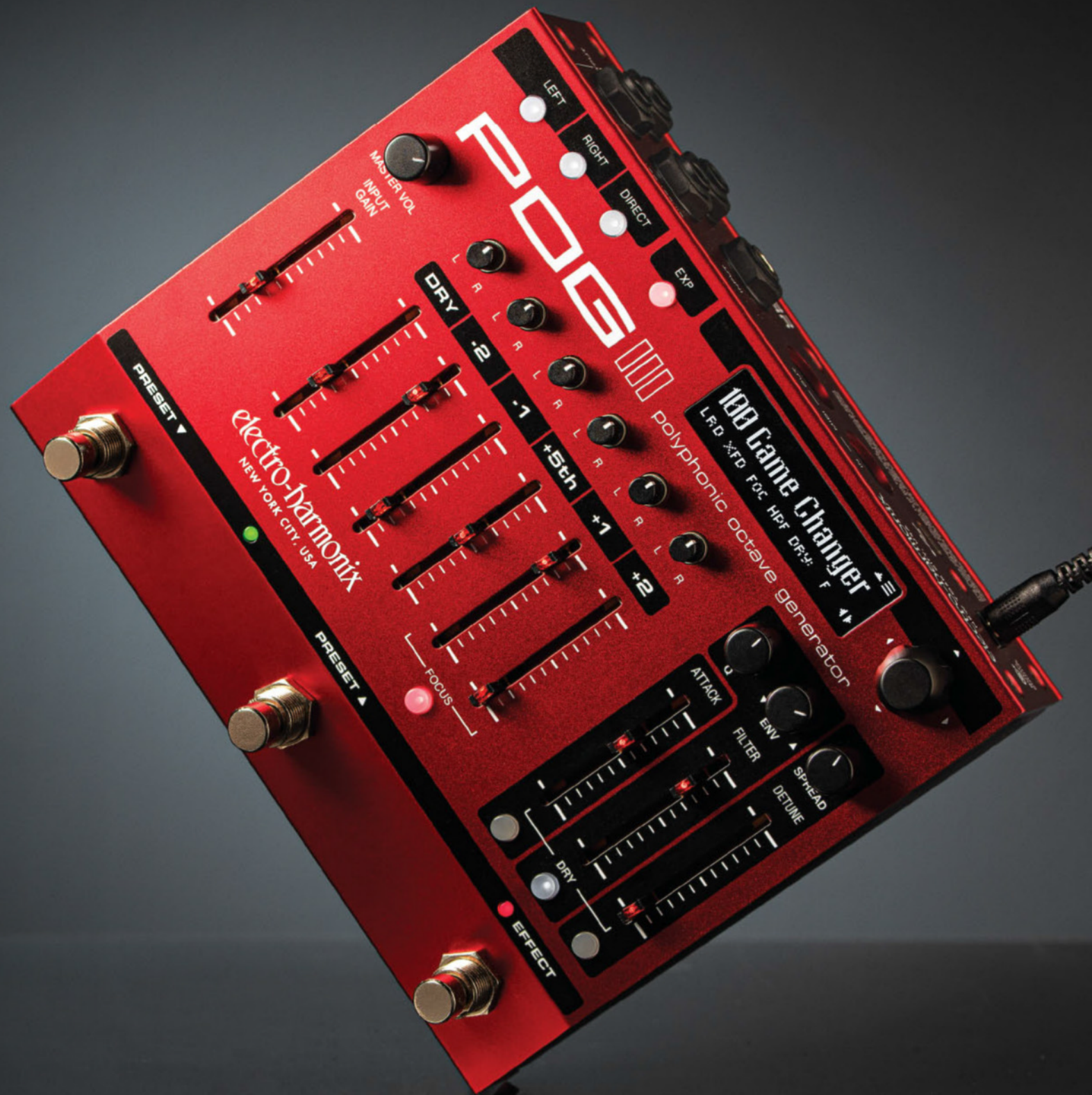
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