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LOTS OF DIME TO SPARE

▶ **UNBELIEVABLY, 20 YEARS** have come and gone since we lost Dimebag Darrell, who — besides being a bona fide guitar hero — was a great friend of this magazine and its readers. Over the span of 29 pages, Nick Bowcott does a fantastic job of illustrating that friendship — especially via the reappearance of Dime's classic *GW* column, Riffer Madness (and its "Dear Dime" variants). Bowcott worked with Dimebag to make Riffer Madness (as well as several Pantera features) a reality all those years ago, so he adds a bit of "I was there" street cred to the proceedings. Check out his tale of the day *The Great Southern Trendkill* was mastered and the "Floods" outro had to be re-recorded on the fly.



GUITARS ON TV: Keep an out for a new guitar-packed Spectrum commercial where about 101 musicians are jamming to Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child O' Mine." Even better, point your eyeballs to *Hysteria!*, a new show on Peacock. The comedy-horror-thriller — which is set in 1989 — is about a high school metal band that pretends to be satanists in order to attract attention. You can feast your eyes on a black Rickenbacker bass and plenty of Gibsons.

CORRECTIONS:

>>> In our Holiday 2024 issue, we asked Ernie Isley about the moment his family watched the Beatles perform on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964. In his reply, we wrote, "There was a thunderclap in our house. We saw that performance. A few days went by, and there was a band meeting... and my eldest brother O'Kelly took the floor and said, 'Everything's changed. This English group, the Beatles, isn't all hype. In terms of rock 'n' roll music, I don't think we'll be alright.'" Isley actually said the opposite, namely, "There was no thunderclap" and "I think we'll be alright."

>>> In our May 2024 issue, the same tabs appear on pages 100 and 101 of our transcription of Pearl Jam's "Even Flow." We've included the correct page 100 content on page 143 of this issue. — **Damian Fanelli**

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in the U.K.,
June 9, 2004



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GW catches up with the guitarist from Zebra, the band whose self-titled 1983 album went gold and became the fastest-selling debut album in Atlantic Records history.

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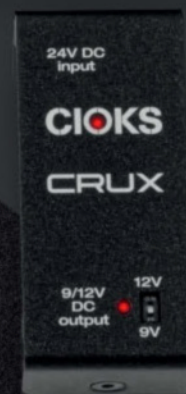
Blackface and silverface Fender Champs and Vibro-Champs have been used on way too many recordings to list in this issue. Perhaps the most famous example is James Gang's "Funk #49," where Joe Walsh used only a Tele plugged into a blackface Vibro-Champ.

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OF THE MONTH

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with a .jpg or screenshot of the image.

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



STEVE VAI BY HENRY JORDAN



JIMMY PAGE BY BRIAR KEEL

DEFENDERS of the Faith



Pete Vadelnieks

AGE: 39

GUITARS: Gibson Explorer, Supro Silverwood, Black Bobbin Jazzmaster, Gibson ES-335, Fender Jaguar

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Quia Bimö "Post/Wall," Velvet Revolver "Slither," Dinosaur Jr. "Start Choppin'," Sonic Youth "What We Know," Quia Bimö "Bad Jacket"

GEAR I WANT MOST: '70s Fender Starcaster, Gibson Les Paul Custom



Chris Belena

AGE: 54

Guitars: Fender 50th Anniversary Eric Clapton Strat, Les Paul Smartwood, Fender Sonic Telecaster, Epiphone 1961 SG Maestro Vibrola

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Little Willie John "Need Your Love So Bad," Chase the Sun "You Gotta Go," Treasa Levasseur "The Good Ones Never Share" and my blues band's originals

GEAR I WANT MOST: Matchless 30/15 2x12 combo



Butch Maloney

AGE: 54

HOMETOWN: Phoenix, AZ

GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul "Slash" Novemburst, EVH Bumblebee, EVH Wolfgang Standard, Epiphone Tommy Thayer Explorer

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Thin Lizzy "Cold Sweat," AC/DC "Have a Drink on Me," Van Halen "Feel Your Love Tonight," The Cult "Love Removal Machine"

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



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The Heavy Heavy's
Georgie Fuller [left]
and William Turner

Heavy-Duty Nostalgia

TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM WITH THEIR REFRESHING TAKE ON SOUNDS OF THE PAST, THE HEAVY HEAVY ARE HERE TO MAKE NOSTALGIA ACCESSIBLE AGAIN

By Amit Sharma

▶ WITH THEIR DEBUT album *One of a Kind*, U.K. rockers the Heavy Heavy are dialing up the nostalgia for sun-kissed songs that recall the glory years of rock 'n' roll. Led by singer/guitarist William Turner and vocalist Georgie Fuller, their music can be compared to Sixties greats like Fleetwood Mac, the Rolling Stones and Jefferson Airplane, bringing feel-good tunes into the modern age without feeling too engineered or contrived. It's a creative

regimen that seems to be working well for them, with plenty of international touring early on in their career, as well as an invite to join Joe Bonamassa's next Keeping the Blues Alive at Sea cruise. As the pair explain to *GW*, it all comes down to making sure they keep their ideas as accessible as possible.

"It seems like it all happened overnight," Fuller says. "And in a way it did, but the hard work planting and sowing seeds has

been happening for years. When we released our first EP, it wasn't just an experiment, it was a fully-formed thing."

"It all felt ready to go and we just rolled with it," Turner adds. "We deliberately tried to make our sound accessible. We don't like people having to work hard to enjoy our music. They don't need to figure it all out because of the nostalgic nature — it should be instantly familiar whether you're old or young."

Which artists have inspired you most over the years?

WILLIAM TURNER: A lot of the harmony bands, stuff like Crosby, Stills & Nash and the Mamas & the Papas. I would say those are the two brightest shining lights in that vocal harmony world. The Rolling Stones →

NICK LANGLOIS, GONZALES PHOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

are a big part of what we are trying to do. I love the ragged edge and groovier side of things. Delaney & Bonnie are another influence.

GEORGIE FULLER: Then there's the more modern stuff like Fleet Foxes, Father John Misty and the Black Keys. We soak up all of our influences quite willingly and let them boil together in a stew.

There are some really charming vintage sounds on this record. What are we hearing, and what's your general approach to tone?

WILLIAM TURNER: Rather than relying on the amps for overdrive and saturation, we use clean amps to hit the tape hard. That will produce a very slight breakup. I use a Fender Princeton, which is amazing to crank. I also have a really nice early Seventies Marshall, which sounds just like Eric Clapton on the Bluesbreakers album. That's the only sound it makes. All of the guitar solos were done through that using a 1981 Les Paul Standard. It's very heavy and came in this ridiculous chainsaw case, but sounds great. My general approach is Fender guitars and amps for rhythm and the Les Paul into a Marshall for leads.

So there was nothing in between the guitars and amps?

WILLIAM TURNER: I didn't use any pedals in the studio. I did have some nice reverbs, though. There's a Sixties Danelectro spring reverb unit that is similar to the ones Fender used to make, like what Dick Dale would have used. It sounds amazing, with this swirl effect where you can overdrive the reverb.

Your acoustics play a big part on some of these tracks. What kind of models do you like to record with?

WILLIAM TURNER: It's hilarious; the 12-string I use is probably the worst guitar in the world. It's a roundback Ovation copy, which I bought for £40 at university because somebody had kicked a hole in it. Subsequently, there's no bass, but it's great for that shimmery percussive sound. All you get is the strum, which makes it really easy to mix into songs. I actually write all the music on that thing, despite it being an absolute terror of a thing. I've just been given a really nice Martin 12-string, so I'm looking forward to recording with that. There are a few dreadnoughts on the album, plus a resonator. I try to keep it simple and avoid overcomplicating things.

Which of the tracks are you most proud of, then?

WILLIAM TURNER: "Feel" has that big slide



"We could turn people off by having too much guitar"

riff that I double tracked and ended up sounding cool. My journey on slide was quite a funny one. I love the sound of an open-tuned resonator and that kind of rootsy blues. I used to do television music, and there was always a need for things with that country flavor. Then I got into using slide with standard tuning, which presents its own set of challenges. The album closer, "Salina," also has some of my favorite tones. "Dirt" was fun because I based it around Led Zeppelin's "Ramble On," doing the hot and cold thing. It can be a challenge making overdriven guitars sound big without

getting too heavy. We use layering in our music to provide depth instead of drive. There's definitely room for more beautiful guitar work in this band but we want to earn the right to get there.

Well, rhythm guitar can be just as beautiful as lead playing, right?

WILLIAM TURNER: I think rhythm guitar is the apex of guitar playing. The best guitar players are the rhythm players. Just look at Keith Richards and the way he works against Ronnie Wood, or the kind of stuff Steve Cropper plays. I find that stuff very fascinating. It's not the solos; it's the character in the chords and the way they are played. Most people can solo quite easily. We could turn people off by having too much guitar. It's more about the personality. We want to attract people to the songs first. Rhythm is king!



MY PEDALBOARD DUANE BETTS

WHAT THE ALLMAN BETTS BAND
GUITARIST SEES WHEN
HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

► “THE GENERAL METHODOLOGY behind my board is that my sound is more about a natural, pure tone coming from the amp. So my approach to pedals is very minimal at the moment. I do think having a tuner is very important, and everyone can use a boost in the heat of battle.

“Over the years, as far as how my board has shifted, I would say my board has gotten more minimal. I’ve used delay pedals in the past and, sometimes, different fuzz pedals. But at the moment, my sound is basically the guitar into the amp.

“That said, pedals are a great way to help a guitar player develop their own style and their own unique sound. However, people get too dependent on the sound they’re getting from the pedals. Having said that, my board starts with my tuner, a TC Electronic Polytune 3. After that, I’ve got an Analogman King of Tone [overdrive], and I’m rounding out my minimalist board with the Solar Flare [distortion] by Sarno Music Solutions.”

“At the moment,
my sound is
basically the guitar
into the amp”

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

“Definitely my TC Electronic tuner. But aside from that, when I’m playing through reissue amps for fly-in shows, it is great to have my King of Tone.”



Betts on stage
at the New Orleans
Jazz & Heritage
Festival in April 2024



JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC

Frozen Crown

THE ITALIAN POWER METAL SHREDDERS RETURN WITH A NEW, THIRD GUITARIST ON THEIR IMPRESSIVE LATEST ALBUM

By Gregory Adams

▶ **THOUGH FROZEN CROWN'S** new album *War Hearts* keeps pace with the jubilantly shredded power metal the Italian combo has been honing since 2017, it's likewise an energized sprint forward for the act. You can credit that to the Milanese outfit having supersized their lineup in 2023 through the addition of third guitar player and rising prodigy Alessia Lanzone. The 18-year-old's arrival is apparent from the record's BPM-pushing opening title track, where Lanzone leads off a back-to-back-to-back solo section with feverishly fluid legato runs.

"We wanted the album to sound explosive and scorching, so it was paramount to have a faster song at the beginning," founder and chief songwriter Federico Mondelli says. "Also, because this album was introducing Alessia, the first song had to be 'War Hearts,' because she plays the first solo there."

The track likewise showcases the stylistic differences between Mondelli, Lanzone and the act's resident tap contortionist, guitarist Fabiola "Sheena" Bellomo. Mondelli says he's quite calculated when crafting alternately-picked neo-classical textures, while Bellomo can sometimes take months to sculpt out her devilishly melodic and mercurial two-handed moments. Lanzone had initially come into the recording sessions with leads based on simple melody guides Mondelli had sent her in advance, but ended up scrapping most of those sections to lean into limber legato improvisation informed by her love of John Petrucci and Mark Tremonti.

The young guitarist grew up a fan of Frozen Crown, too — she reached out to compliment them a few years back after seeing them in concert. When the group noticed Lanzone had been posting a series



[from left]
Alessia Lanzone,
Federico Mondelli
and Fabiola Bellomo

MONDELLI SAYS HE'S BIG ON THE "HUMAN FACTOR" OF BRINGING A THIRD GUITARIST INTO THE FROZEN CROWN FAMILY

of feisty and flavorful guitar videos on social media, they kept in touch; they formally brought her into the fold to thicken up their sound while touring 2023's *Call of the North*. While Mondelli has long multi-part harmonies into Frozen Crown recordings — sometimes in excess of 16 guitar layers — he concedes there was only so much he and Bellomo could feasibly recreate in concert.

"Because we were just playing a lot of these harmonizations and leads, there was no rhythm back-up at all. It was very thin," he says. "All these sound engineers and friends were advising us to use a backing track, but of course we didn't want that — we really despise that! We wanted a real person."

Mondelli says he's big on the "human factor" of bringing a third guitarist into the Frozen Crown family. Lanzone, meanwhile, is ecstatic to be starting her recording and touring career with the veteran power metal force.

"My previous band was a local band, so I played covers. I didn't tour; I wasn't writing songs," she says. "This is the first time for everything!"



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Jackson Soloist Chris Broderick (Bellomo); Suhr Modern Satin Black (Lanzone); Jackson King V Corey Beaulieu, Charvel DK24 Pro-Mod (Mondelli)
- **AMPS AND EFFECTS** Live, Alessia and Federico use Line 6 Helix, while Fabiola uses a Mooer GE200. In the studio, Federico uses a pretty classic setup: Tube Screamer and Peavey 5150 + Marshall 1960 (mic'd with an SM57 and a Neumann TLM 103).

HISTORIC BRITISH TONE

30
WATTS



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CELESTION

Speed metal masters
Marty Friedman [left]
and Jason Becker



LOST CLASSICS

Cacophony

IN A TRULY ONE-OF-A-KIND INTERVIEW, CACOPHONY'S JASON BECKER AND MARTY FRIEDMAN LOOK BACK ON THE MAKING OF 1988'S *GO OFF!* — ONE OF THE EIGHTIES' MOST IN-YOUR-FACE GUITAR EXTRAVAGANZAS

By Andrew Daly

▶ LOOKING BACK ON recording the scintillating *Go Off!* with Marty Friedman, Jason Becker, who was 18 when the album was released, says, “It was all special to us, especially now that we both know how precious and fleeting those times were.”

Given Becker's ALS, one can understand the sentiment. But still, “precious” is an interesting way to define one of the more in-your-face guitar extravaganzas of the Eighties. “That album resulted from me being so inspired by working with Marty,”

Becker says. “For *Go Off!*, I had gotten better at writing and playing, and I was a lot more confident. We just were comfortable with each other. We were getting good at mixing our different flavors. I was able to give more to *Go Off!*”

By the time *Go Off!* dropped on Shrapnel Records in '88, it was the heart of the so-called “shred era,” and Friedman and Becker had already recorded their first record as Cacophony, *Speed Metal Symphony* (1987), and two frenzied solo records in Friedman's *Dragon's Kiss* (1988)

and Becker's *Perpetual Burn* (1988).

They'd learned a lot, and it showed on *Go Off!*, a record bred through dedication and sheer talent. “When we did shows or toured, it was definitely wilder,” Becker says. “We never trashed hotel rooms or anything, though. It was weird for me; I never did drugs or drank. There was something in me that thought I didn't want to hurt my body. Like my lungs and brain couldn't take it. I always wanted to be in control of myself. Ironical, as now I have no control.”

Regardless of its over-the-top nature, what *Go Off!* really represents is the supernatural bond between Becker and Friedman, leading to moments no one saw coming but definitely heard.

“At the end of ‘Black Cat,’ there is this pretty acoustic fingerpicking chord sequence by Jason,” Friedman says. “The song was just supposed to fade out with



him playing that by himself. The song was complete, and we were listening before mixing and I was holding a guitar randomly plugged into a DI; I didn't know that guitar was live or recording. When Jason's ending part came up, I started playing a melody on top, not expecting to hear what I was playing through the monitors, but there it was."

The "it" in question was something Becker and Friedman will never forget. "I kept playing, and it was just a moment," Friedman said. "I never played over his part before, but here I was. It was the wee hours, way after midnight after one of many long sessions, and Jason's piece was like the tender arpeggios of a music box lullaby. The soft melody I was playing over it seemed so cozy and poignant, although neither of us planned for any melody there."

Becker adds: "When I recorded the outro for 'Black Cat' on an acoustic guitar, I got it in one take. Then, without any preparation, just to test the tone, Marty recorded a solo over it. [Producer] Steve Fontano and I said it was perfect. Marty wanted a little more time, but we talked him into his first take. It was just a beautiful, off-the-cuff moment."

"We looked at each other in disbelief and high-fived each other," Friedman says. "Not because 'This sounds like a hit!' or 'What an insane lick!' or 'People are gonna dig this!' but because we just experienced one of those rare magical moments while making music. I could have learned what I did and played it better. I could have tweaked the melody here and there, used a nicer-sounding guitar and amp setup — but documenting the actual magic that happened was more important to us than polishing it."

You recorded *Speed Metal Symphony* before *Go Off!* What did you learn about working together?

MARTY FRIEDMAN: *Speed Metal Symphony* was my baby, but I saw potential in Jason, so I had him play a lot of the harmonies and shoehorned him into a few places where he could shine. That album was Jason's first professional recording experience. After doing *Speed Metal Symphony*, I improved quite a bit, but it must be noted that Jason grew by leaps and bounds, literally at a savant level. Right after *Speed Metal Symphony*, he wrote and recorded *Perpetual Burn* at 18. In that short year and a half, he had evolved into an altogether different person/player. He was demonic.

JASON BECKER: I had gotten a lot better. *Speed Metal Symphony* was like school for me. I learned so much from Marty. That album was Marty's baby, but he was so kind as to include some of my ideas and make it

a team effort. I didn't quite have my own distinct style. I was only 17, but I was very positive and probably pushed Marty to improve. We were best friends.

What were Shrapnel Records' expectations for *Go Off!*?

FRIEDMAN: The only pressure was that the label wanted good vocal songs. We did, too, but Jason and I were definitely not Elton John and Bernie Taupin. My lyrics were vomit-inducing, and Jason's lyrics... ahem... were why "Images" became an instrumental song. Peter Marrino did a really good job with what we provided him. I don't envy a singer trying to do his job between 64-measure guitar solos. I don't remember the budget, but we did move up to Fantasy Studios in Berkeley for *Go Off!*, which was a more prestigious facility than we had used before.

BECKER: I don't think Mike Varney pressured us to do anything specific. Marty could correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't

"Is it really a cult classic? Cool. I didn't know that. It was just so much fun being able to make music with my best friend"
JASON BECKER

remember any budget increase or pressure. My recollection is that Mike Varney thought we were like the new innovative players, and he gave us control. Mike always had suggestions, but I remember feeling free to do what we wanted.

You recorded with Steve Fontano. How much freedom did you have?

FRIEDMAN: Jason and I were in complete control of the guitar work, and Steve took care of the overall sound, vocal arrangements and loads of embellishment ideas. I loved Steve. He is uber-talented, and I still use many of his catchphrases. We did provide some sick guitar work, but Steve reigned us in like a band so that "even girls could listen to us..." kind of. If anything on *Go Off!* resonates as being a good song and not just a guitar extravaganza, Steve is highly responsible.

BECKER: Steve was Mike Varney's main guy, and we loved working with him. He is very talented, musical, funny and fun. He got all the nice sounds, helped a little with

arranging, mixed it, and we cracked each other up. Marty and I brought in our songs, and he made them sound good. With Shrapnel, we were free to do any crazy guitar stuff we wanted to do.

Did you intend to make *Go Off!* more accessible than *Speed Metal Symphony*?

BECKER: Marty and I wanted to be as well known as Whitesnake or Poison. We wanted it to be more accessible to normal people and guitar players. We wanted to be rock stars with pretty girls and rock fans coming to our shows.

FRIEDMAN: I got the intense and often dissonant *Speed Metal Symphony* off my chest, so with that piece of music firmly documented, I wanted to feature Jason and myself more equally and take on more of a band dynamic that wasn't there before.

Since you're both virtuoso guitarists and songwriters, was it challenging to find space?

FRIEDMAN: You are far too kind. Songwriting was our Achilles' heel. Our problem was we were shining *too* much almost all the time. There is only so much shining a listener can take. Any one song on *Go Off!* might have about one full album's worth of guitar work on it. It was like a "money shot compilation" of guitar solos.

We knew listeners usually wanted a memorable song rather than an insane guitar solo or riff, but we wanted to be extreme, whether people liked it or not. At the time, that extremeness was a big minus, but that may be why the album is more appreciated now than it was then.

BECKER: That album was pretty satisfying, but I admit that after the tours of Japan and the U.S., I wanted to do more of my own music with more of my own guitar. After our tour, I remember Cacophony talking about doing another album, and it seemed less guitar-focused. I could be remembering wrong, but that is when I left Cacophony. We did another show after that at some Bay Area music magazine awards show. It was fun, and I questioned my decision to leave, but as life turned out, it was a good thing that I did.

During that tour, I was having the first symptoms of ALS. I went to Japan on my own and then joined David Lee Roth, all with a limp and weakness in my body. I remember calling Marty from the hotel in L.A. after getting the gig with Roth. Marty called me after joining Megadeth. It was quite cool. We were so happy for each other.

What songs presented the most significant challenges?

BECKER: My two songs, "Stranger" and →

"Images," took the most work because I hadn't written lyrics before. In the studio, Steve helped me polish my lyrics for "Stranger." I had lyrics for "Images," but when we were rehearsing the songs with our drummer, Deen Castronovo, and our singer, Peter Marrino, I got teased so badly! It was funny hearing Peter singing my silly words. Deen defended me and made me feel a lot better.

FRIEDMAN: The title track was tricky. Jason and I played the weird intro together live, but in the studio, the high and low harmonies had to be "tight as a gnat's ass in a power dive," to use Steve Fontano's words. So Jason played them both. He nailed them, but it was a bitch to keep the tiny spaces clean between the phrases.

It would've been nice if Pro Tools existed back then. Edits were done with a razorblade and tape; you had to punch out of the record and in, and there was no quantizing, copy-and-pasting or auto-tuning. After recording in Pro Tools for so long after this, it blows me away how we did this ambitious stuff without it.

BECKER: I remember recording the intro to "Go Off!" I laid down my drum machine part to play over it in time. We couldn't get a guitar tone I was happy with because if I had any distortion on it, it would feedback in all the little spaces. I had to use an almost clean tone, which wasn't cool, especially to Marty. He didn't want anything sounding like jazz. We worked it to sound okay. In that intro, I played both harmonies, but he came up with the harmony part on the spot and told me what to play. He is quite a musical genius.

You both were very young. Did either of you have red-light fever?

BECKER: That is funny. No — we didn't have any of that. We didn't think about what others would think; we just wanted to please ourselves. Marty had total confidence in his whole unique musical vision, and that rubbed off on me. I started thinking I was the man, too. When we first started,



"We wanted to be rock stars with pretty girls and fans coming to our shows," Becker says

I wondered if it was as good as our previous albums. He said, "Don't worry, it's great." I relaxed and enjoyed it.

FRIEDMAN: There was no time for nerves or crises, as we were on a tight budget with lots to get done. If you have a great engineer like Fontano on board, it allows you to have intense focus on the music. He was a godsend.

When not working to record the record, how did you two blow off steam?

FRIEDMAN: We would argue about football, Jason would cream me at chess, and we'd spend lots of time listening to, analyzing, and marveling at music we liked. Philip Glass comes to mind. Nightlife and wild antics didn't come until we went on tour in Japan and North America.

BECKER: We were pretty chill. Getting to play our own music was the greatest release. We watched football sometimes. We had fun going to Telegraph Avenue. in Berkeley with Marty's girlfriend Laurie and my brother Ehren. We would find new music

at Rasputin, Leopold's, and Tower Records, like Philip Glass, Kitaro and all kinds of weird classical composers.

I remember one time we all went into some kind of rock clothing store. A guy who worked there started telling us about a great band called Cacophony. He saw a show, and the two guitar players were great. We were trying not to crack up. I asked which guitar player was his favorite of the two; he said he couldn't pick. We never did tell him who we were.

While recording, did you share gear?

FRIEDMAN: We shared gear and borrowed gear from our guitar students, who usually had better gear than we did. We started to have a few endorsements, so there was a lot of new gear coming into the studio, too. I used my first Jackson Kelly and a few Carvin guitars. Few, if any pedals. No idea about amps.

BECKER: If I remember right, we used the same kind of Carvin amps. Marty could correct me if I'm wrong. Maybe we used Marty's student's Marshall amp like

we had on our solo albums. I think we used the Carvin guitars from the cover of the album. We didn't have to consciously work on sounding different. We could use the same gear and sound like ourselves.

Go Off! was kind of over the top, even for the time, but it's also a snapshot of the era. It didn't get its due then, but it's a cult classic now.

FRIEDMAN: Kind of? It was beyond over the top! I do agree that it's a snapshot of the era, though. We looked like every other hair band at the time and thank God we did. Girls expecting glam rock came to our shows. We fooled everyone when we toured the U.S. and Japan. We looked like Poison, but we shook our asses in 5/4 time.

BECKER: Is it really a cult classic? Cool. I didn't know that. It was just so much fun being able to make music with my best friend. I'm so grateful for those times. I was healthy, happy, young, and full of creative energy. Thank you to Mike Varney for that opportunity.



"I especially love Robert Fripp and King Crimson," Mathieu Ricou says

Lizzard

FIVE ALBUMS IN, THE EUROPEAN ART-ROCK TRIO ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR NEW WAYS TO EXPAND THEIR SOUND

By Amit Sharma

▶ THE FIRST THING you'll notice when you hear Lizzard's new album, *Mesh*, is that they're a power trio with an emphasis on the word "power." There's nothing one-dimensional or minimalist about this latest collection of songs — which, at times, sounds like nearly twice as many musicians locked in a room together and going for sonic gold. Welcoming new shades of prog and shoegaze into their kaleidoscopic wall of noise, the beguiling layers of ambiences will appeal to just about any kind of listener.

"We're really into bands like Radiohead, Gojira and Tool," says singer/guitarist Mathieu Ricou, who is based in France and works with a British rhythm section. "I especially love Robert Fripp and King Crimson. We toured with Adrian Belew once, which was a huge deal for me. Seeing him do all that crazy shit was incredible."

"We already know how most typical guitars sound. Why stick to someone else's palette?"

So how exactly does a band with only one guitarist manage to sound as rich, deep and complex as other groups with twice as many? There are a few tricks, says Ricou, who uses his Boss DD-3 Hold function to create live loops, and pitch shifters like the Electro-Harmonix POG to add textural weight, while also encouraging his bass player to dial in extra distortion where necessary. "The short loop time on the DD-3 is actually why I love it," Ricou adds.

"I embrace the limitation. It forces you to find something that works, you can't just go crazy or it will fall apart."

For the latest recordings, the frontman used a Fryette SIG:X head going into an Engl cabinet via his POG, Morley wah and ZVEX Fuzz Factory, as well as an Eventide H9 in the loop handling reverbs and a DD7 for his regular delays. The choice of amp was inspired by Page Hamilton of Helmet, who has used a Fryette Pitbull Ultra-Lead extensively over the years. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the rig is the guitar in Ricou's hands, built by a local luthier by the name of Christophe Dufour, owner of Custom Design Guitars.

"He does everything exactly the way I ask," Ricou says. "I don't use pickup selectors, so I asked him to fit a blend knob like a bass. It gives me more tonal options, with a Van Zandt single-coil in the neck and a DiMarzio Tone Zone in the bridge. I hope I don't sound too French when I say this, but we already know how most typical guitars sound. Why stick to someone else's palette? Ultimately, my tone is pure. All I want to hear is the hands, the strings and the valves."



Billy Bremner
in action in
London, 1977

Repeat When Necessary

WHEN HE WASN'T BUSY RECORDING THAT ONE CLASSIC ALBUM WITH ROCKPILE, SESSION GREAT BILLY BREMNER WAS GUESTING ON COUNTLESS RECORDINGS, INCLUDING THE PRETENDERS' *LEARNING TO CRAWL* AND NICK LOWE'S "CRUEL TO BE KIND"

By Andrew Daly

▶ BE IT BACKING up Dave Edmunds, Nick Lowe or Chrissy Hynde as a member of the gone-way-too-soon Rockpile (which featured Edmunds and Lowe) or peeling off nifty solo records, Scottish guitarist Billy Bremner has merged the worlds of good-time rock 'n' roll and rockabilly for more than 50 years.

One look at his discography, which includes records like Lowe's *Jesus of Cool* (1978) and *Labour of Lust* (1979), Edmunds' *Repeat When Necessary* (1979) and the Pretenders' *Learning to Crawl* (1984), shows his versatility. And that's probably one reason he detests being boxed into the rockabilly category.

"I've said it before, but I don't classify myself as a rock 'n' roll or rockabilly player," Bremner says. "I would listen to Joe Pass, Hank Garland, Chet Atkins... I was trying to be as all-around as I could be."

Bremner was able to be "all-around," not just stylistically but literally, as he spent the Eighties palling around with everyone from Lowe and Edmunds to Elvis Costello and Pat McLaughlin. Along the way, he's managed to drop five solo records, with the first being *Bash!* (1984), which Bremner didn't care for at first, and the latest, 2018's *Singled Out*.

But as great as those records — and his dizzying array of sessions — have been,

what Bremner is probably best known for is his membership in Rockpile alongside old pals Lowe, Edmunds and newcomer (at the time) drummer Terry Williams, which manifested as their only studio record, *Seconds of Pleasure* (1980).

Bremner admits he wishes Rockpile had lasted longer, but songs like "Teacher Teacher," "If Sugar Was as Sweet as You" and "A Knife and a Fork" have stood the test of time. Thankfully, in 2011, we were given *Live at Montreux*, which was recorded in 1980 and showcased Rockpile's pop-meets-rockabilly majesty.

In the years since his heyday alongside Edmunds and Lowe, Bremner lent his licks to iconic tracks while standing in for the fallen James Honeyman-Scott, though he insists he was never a full-fledged member. Still, his presence led to classics like "Back on the Chain Gang" and "My City Was Gone." Not too shabby for a stand-in.

Hundreds of sessions and dozens upon dozens of records later, at 78 years old, and six years removed from his last studio record, Bremner is taking it slow and easing into quasi-retirement. But if you ask him, he'd tell you he's not done yet. "I can't do anything else but write songs and play live! I wouldn't change a thing. I regard myself as being lucky to be doing what I do."

What inspired you to pick up the guitar, and who were your earliest influences?

I always loved the sound of the guitar — all the styles and techniques. I loved things like the acoustics on the Everly Brothers records, such as the intros to "Bye Bye Love" and "Wake Up Little Susie." But I also loved the electric guitars on those Everly Brothers records, like the intro to "Don't Blame Me."

Can you remember your first guitar?

I was so jealous of my cousin! He was given a guitar for his birthday, but he was not interested in playing, so I kind of "borrowed" it and taught myself, all while not knowing how to tune it. [Laughs]

Growing up, what sort of scene was around you, and were there any local musicians who inspired you?

No local musicians were inspiring; we were literally all listening to great guitar players on records in the late Fifties and early Sixties.

Tell me about joining the Luvvers in the Sixties. It didn't last long, right?

No, it didn't. Lulu [Kennedy-Cairns] left the band before I joined. Honestly, they were all great guys, but not the best band in the world.

From there, how did you end up recording under the name Bill Murray in the early Seventies?

That happened because there was a famous Scottish footballer with the same name as me. So, on some of my early songs, I'd use my middle name, Murray.

How did you first meet Dave Edmunds and Nick Lowe, and how did you end up recording with him?

Dave and Nick used to come and see me play. I was with a band called Neil Innes & Fatso. And then, one day, we all had a chat about forming a band with [drummer] Terry [Williams], who I had never heard of before.

Tell me about your guitar and amp setup when you recorded albums like *Repeat When Necessary* — especially on “Sweet Little Lisa.”

I've used so many guitars over the years, but I think at the time, I was mainly playing a Gibson L6-S. As for “Sweet Little Lisa,” all I can remember is just being so knocked out by Albert Lee's guitar playing!

How about Nick Lowe's “Cruel to Be Kind”?

The main thing I really remember was that I was still using my Gibson L6-S. Also, I played the solo on “Cruel to Be Kind,” and I more or less arranged [it], too.

What led to the merging of those worlds and the formation of the Rockpile?

As I sort of said earlier, when Dave and Nick would come and listen to me play at the same time, we all got together, had a long chat and ended up deciding to form a band. And we chose Terry as the drummer.

What gear did you bring to the studio to record *Seconds of Pleasure*?

I can't remember the acoustic guitar I brought in, but as I do remember, I think it was that same Gibson L6-S. As for my amps — no idea! I had a lot of them at the time. [Laughs]

Why did Rockpile make only one record? Do you regret not making more?

We had some good songs, like “Teacher Teacher,” which I actually don't think Dave was involved in. It was so long ago and I don't remember. But we did make a few records together; the last one was as Rockpile, which was used as a band name. Of course, I would have liked to have made many more together.

You've got a credit on *Trust*, one of Elvis Costello's 1981 albums, but not much info exists. What's the story there?



Rockpile circa 1980.
[from left] Nick Lowe, Billy Bremner, Terry Williams and Dave Edmunds

“As for ‘My City Was Gone,’ I totally made it up as the song went on!”

I would have to know the song titles [Bremner played on Costello's “Love for Sale,” which was recorded in 1980 or 1981 but didn't appear until the 1994 Rykodisc reissue]. All I know is that Nick Lowe used to produce all of Elvis' records, and that's why we got involved.

From there, how did you end up with the Pretenders? Did you know James Honeyman-Scott?

Yes, I knew James. He was a great friend, and it was an honor to play in his place. But I was never [officially] in the Pretenders;



I played on a few things with the band. Again, it happened because of Nick's involvement. And even with the Pretenders, I always used the same equipment, which was probably that Gibson L6-S or whatever else I was using at the time.

Do you remember recording “Back on the Chain Gang” and “My City Was Gone”?

It was my Gibson L6-S. As I recall, Chris Thomas produced that session, and I know he and Chrissie [Hynde] liked the guitar fills and solo that I did. But I don't remember much else beyond that; it was so long ago. As for “My City Was Gone,” I totally made it up as the song went on!

Do you have a favorite solo record?

I didn't like *Bash!* very much at the time, but I must admit, I got used to it after a while. [Laughs]

Looking back on your career, which album or song you've recorded is the most important to you?

I used to be solely a studio musician and have played on hundreds of records over the years. Having said that, it's my favorite record, but I really enjoyed making [the song] “Shatterproof” a lot.

Is there one guitar that you've hung onto that means the most?

No. A few guitars have been stolen from me over the years, though. I don't have any of my original collection, and now, I have no particular favorite.

INQUIRER

TORSTEN KINSELLA

THE GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT GUITARIST ON THE TIME HE FORGOT HIS IN-EAR MONITOR SYSTEM, THEN HIS AMP DIED, THEN HIS BACKUP AMP DIED, ETC., ETC.

Q: What was your first guitar?

A 1990 Music Man StingRay bass, which I got around age 14. I started out on bass, while my brother Niels was on electric guitar; eventually we ended up switching roles. That StingRay was a beautiful red sunburst with just two EQ bands – bass and treble. When I moved to the guitar, I picked up a Fender Strat with noiseless Lace Sensor pickups.

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

Del Shannon's "Runaway" and Bob Dylan's "Knockin' on Heaven's Door." My dad was the one who taught me. He had this idea that if a music career didn't take off, at least I'd have a few songs up my sleeve for wedding gigs! We started with these basics, but they were perfect for building my foundation and gave me a good mix of rhythm and melody to work with.

Q: What was your first gig?

The Harbour Bar in Bray, Ireland, when I was 14. I was only doing vocals back then, and the nerves were intense; I was so anxious I couldn't eat all day! But once I was on stage, I felt this energy from the crowd. They were really supportive, and the positive response we got helped me shake off some of those nerves. That gig taught me a lot about connecting with an audience; it's something I'll always remember.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?

About a year ago, while playing a festival in the U.K., I realized I'd forgotten my in-ear monitoring system. Since we depend on click tracks for several songs, I was in a panic. I managed to rig a solution using a spare wired pack, but by that point, we had taken so long to get ready that we had to start the show without a line check. Surprisingly, everything began smoothly – but then my Marshall tube amp died halfway through the set. I quickly switched to my backup amp, but it blew out immediately. I couldn't believe it. There I was, facing thousands of fans without amplifiers, unsure how to resolve the situation. I scrambled to replace a fuse in my main Marshall, and thankfully,



Torsten Kinsella in action with God Is an Astronaut at Hotel Cecil, Copenhagen, 2023

it sprang back to life. But we endured six minutes of complete silence.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?

My 1973 Ram's Head Big Muff, which has the 2N5133 transistors. It has this unique, thick, gritty sound that's perfect for the heavier sections of our music. I've collected a lot of different Big Muffs over the years and even have some custom clones from Stomp Under Foot pedals made specifically for me, but none of them fully replicate that exact tone. There's just something about the way it fills up the speakers with that raw, grainy texture – you can really hear the difference when I use it.

Q: The building is burning down; what one guitar would you save?

My father, Thomas Kinsella's bass guitar. It's a 1965 Precision that he played from the mid Sixties onward, with wear marks from his hands that add so much character. It's more than just an instrument – it's a piece of my dad's life. He passed away last year, and it means the world to me.

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

Yesterday, running through our current set. A big part of practice is working without plugging in – just playing through the parts and working on my touch. But there's an extra challenge when every-

thing's plugged in, because I use so many pedals to recreate the tones. I could simplify things with an Axe-FX, but I like to keep it hands-on. So a lot of my practice is about making smooth pedal changes to avoid surprises, like accidentally hitting a rotary effect in the wrong spot.

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

Lead guitar. It's not something I practice often, and I believe that enhancing my skills in this area would elevate my overall playing. I mainly play arpeggios, riffs, chords and at times some experimental sustained notes with effects, often using the tremolo arm to create dissonance. I think developing my lead guitar techniques would nicely complement these styles. Additionally, I'd like to get better at slide, as I find it a beautiful technique that adds depth to our music.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

I'd stress the importance of consistent practice and the value of mastering scales – but not at the expense of spending less time composing music. It's essential to balance technical skills with creative expression. I'd encourage myself to work on all aspects of guitar playing, as this approach would expand my horizons rather than confine me to limitations. Ultimately, the more versatile I become, the more options I'll have for expressing myself through music.

— Joe Matera

Eric Gales unwinds on the *Guitar World* couch!



TO WATCH ERIC GALES PLAY THESE RIFFS AND MORE, HEAD TO GUITARWORLD.COM/FEBRUARY2025

My Favorite Riffs: Eric Gales

THE INNOVATIVE SOUTHPAW CHOOSES THE FIVE RIFFS THAT STOPPED HIM IN HIS TRACKS — PLUS OPENING FOR ROBIN TROWER, MEETING SRV AND THE MAGIC OF BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

By Andrew Daly

WATCHING LEFTY MASTER
Eric Gales play — in all his idiosyncratic glory — is a thing of breathtaking beauty. And we got to see it firsthand when he dropped by *Guitar World* HQ in NYC a few months back. He came here to share, explain and play some of the famous riffs that have truly informed his playing — everything from Jimi Hendrix to Stevie Ray Vaughan to Robin Trower. Not surprisingly, every riff he played had a goodly supply of “total Eric Gales” thrown into the mix.

“Every song I do is left up to interpretation,” he says. “There’s no reason to play something exactly like someone already has — or where you can go to the record store and buy something by someone who did it already. You should put your twist on it. That’s what evolution is all about! I’m a huge aficionado of tossing your own spice and throwing your own little ingredients into the recipe.”

With that, here are the five riffs Gales played for us that day.

“Purple Haze”

Jimi Hendrix

“So, you have the man, Jimi Hendrix. I mean, he’s the man! Nothing else needs to be said. He had so many songs and riffs that are so iconic and influenced so many people, me being one of them. I think you’ll recognize this the moment I start playing it [*Plays opening riff to ‘Purple Haze’*]. That definitely was very impactful for me. It’s kinda hard to get away from Hendrix, man. You know, I’m sorry... but no, I’m not really sorry!” [*Laughs*]

“Little Wing”

Jimi Hendrix

“Here’s one on the more mellow side that kinda leads off into the chordal area, the chordal world that had a huge impact on me [*Plays opening chords to ‘Little Wing’*]. Of course, we all know ‘Little Wing.’ It’s such a beautiful piece of music — and very iconic. The chords and song structure that’s there — I’m sure I’m not by myself when I tell you that it was very influential to me [*in terms of*] my playing, chords and things of that nature.”

“Testify”

Stevie Ray Vaughan (via Jimi Hendrix)

“I was so honored to have met this guy before he passed away — Mr. Stevie Ray Vaughan. I was 15 when we met; I was recording demos for my first record, and he was working on 1990’s *Family Style* with his brother, Jimmie Vaughan. But one SRV song that kind

of hit me — you know, “Man, I’ve got to learn that!” — goes a little like this.” [*Plays ‘Testify’*]

“Bridge of Sighs”

Robin Trower

“‘Bridge of Sighs’ by Robin Trower is just — wow... I don’t know what more to say other than it’s amazing. [*Plays ‘Bridge of Sighs’*]

“I’ll never forget having the opportunity to open for Robin Trower. It was amazing. We created a bond with each other. I’ve been so fortunate to meet all the influences that have been predominant in my life — the ones that hadn’t passed away before I had a chance to meet them — and Robin Trower is definitely one of those. ‘Bridge of Sighs’ is a very powerful song to me, and it’s definitely in the arsenal. Hope y’all dig that.”

“(Don’t Fear) The Reaper”

Blue Öyster Cult

“Here’s one that may be an oddball, but if you look on YouTube, there’s quite a few renditions of me doing this, especially in the last couple of years. ‘Reaper’ is just a beautiful melody. Once I learned the riff, it was off to the races.

“(Don’t Fear) The Reaper” — man. It’s such a morbid title for such a beautiful song! But it’s one of the songs that has stuck with me to this day. I love it. Shout out to Blue Öyster Cult, Buck [*Dharma*] and all the cats over there. They’re good friends of mine. Keep doing what y’all are doing. I’m listening!”



PEDAL PAWN

In what feels like no time at all, **Pedal Pawn** has become one of the hottest new names in the biz, and for all the right reasons. If you're looking to nail the tones of Jimi and SRV, look no further

By Amit Sharma

AROUND FOUR YEARS ago, a video surfaced of Eric Gales demoing the debut fuzz pedal from a new company based in the U.K. It racked up a serious amount of views, thanks to the jaw-dropping licks and tones coming from his hands.

"The thing I like is you don't even need to turn the fuzz off; you just roll the volume down and it's clean," said Gales, showing how the Pedal Pawn

Fuzz could be tamed from something full-bodied and explosive to a hi-fidelity glassy spank using just one control on his Magneto guitar. Since then, the company — launched by guitarist Chris King Robinson — has gone from strength to strength, with limited-run specials of their favorite circuits like the Germanium Fuzz with vintage CV7003 Texas Instruments transistors and the more recent 2N404 Fuzz with transistors housed in ultra-rare Mullard Gold Saucer cans dating back to December 1965. Another addition to the range came in the form of the Octone, voiced after a rare 1970s Octavia that packed the right amount of fatness underneath those instantly recognizable Roger Mayer-designed overtones.

They've also applied the same painstaking level of care into their other pedals, often using Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix as tonal reference points. Of course, every company will probably tell you they've gone to the ends of the earth to perfect "that sound," but in the case of Pedal Pawn, they tracked

down one of SRV's actual TS9 Tube Screamers — most likely the one used for his legendary El Mocambo performance — and cloned it alongside a vintage Bluesbreaker to make the dual overdrive BluesPrint. Then there's the Texan Twang, a recreation of the Texas Ranger boost built by SRV tech César Díaz, or the Chicken Quiff, which reimagines the César Díaz Texas Tremodillo.

Below, Chris King Robinson explains the story behind one of the fastest-growing pedal companies of the past five years.

When did you realize you were going to launch your own company?

It wasn't a calculated move. I was buying and selling stuff, learning more about the gear I liked through that. Eventually I thought, "Why isn't anyone making the stuff that I wanted?" Especially when it came to certain Fuzz Faces from a particular year with the glassy clean up or the old César Díaz circuits.

It feels like few have dug so deep into the goldmine of SRV and Hendrix tones.

I'm biased toward those guys because they are my two favorite guitarists. Some people don't get our brand and think we're just SRV wannabes. The Stevie thing is huge right now. YouTube helped people find out more about those tones so they could recreate them at home. That's where we come in. You can get a close enough sound from any amp, even a 1-Watt Marshall. People think it's all about .13-gauge strings, but I've tested that against .09-gauge strings. There's not that much difference. A lot of people are skeptical at first, but everyone who buys our products comes back saying the same thing — it's the closest they've gotten to that SRV sound.

Tell us more about the BluesPrint. How did you track down SRV's Ibanez TS9?

There's a guy on Instagram called Red Slim. I don't know how long he'd had this Tube Screamer, but it's one of his recurring posts. That pedal is genuinely his pride and joy. Obviously there's been a million copies made over the years. We needed to go to the source and get rid of all the things standing in the way. A lot of Tube Screamers sound the same, but



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I wanted to know we were getting the most legendary sound of all time. Red had acquired one of Stevie's pedals, and he was certain it's the one from El Mocambo from the dates on the parts. It had to be that one, though it's hard to verify completely. I asked if we could get access and look inside.

What did you find when you opened it up?

We have a lot of vintage Tube Screemers lying around, so we knew what to expect. We just wanted to double check the finer details like the chip and take measurements. It's essentially a vintage Eighties unit, but we looked into the tolerances to make our version exactly the same. We noticed SRV's pedal had extra clarity. We're talking such a small difference here, but I made sure to acknowledge that in our design. There's a consistency in what we make. A big challenge for a lot of builders is that they can make units that sound good, but replicating all the tolerances and specs on a bigger scale is hard. Pedals should sound good all the time. We nailed the circuits so we don't have to sit there and tweak each one for 10 hours to feel happy.

Much like the Eric Gales clip, the Philip Sayce demo of the Octone certainly made a big impression.

A lot of Philip's tone comes from the César Díaz Texas Ranger, but most people don't realize that. Not many companies have gone down the Díaz route or focused on the glassy side of tones. I feel like we've pioneered that. We've been hammering it so much that there are 10 or 15 clones of our Texan Twang, so now we're looking at clones of clones of clones, because the Texas Ranger was a clone of the Rangemaster. It's crazy how it's taken on a life of its own. For the Octone, I used the warmth of an original Seventies Tycobrahe Octavia and the



mid-cut of a Roger Mayer rocket ship one, which is what SRV used for his *Austin City Limits* performance. It's a really good blend.

Perhaps the most striking pedal in your range is the Gypsy Vibe, now in its second iteration.

The Gypsy Vibe is really time-consuming and expensive to make. I don't think we make much money on those, but we felt it needed to be done, just to get the Hendrix and Trower sound in a box out there. In terms of the design, I bought this old Shin-Ei vibe from eBay as a teenager. I hate to use buzzwords, but it's so thick and syrupy. We decided to recreate that, measuring each part and forgetting about all the other schematics out there. Because I find everyone gets their schematics online and will end up with the same wrong circuit. You have to go to the source and reverse engineer it yourself.

You're a bit of a Gear Hunter yourself. How many pedals do you own and which are the rarest?

We're building a Pedal Prawn studio to showcase everything we have, a bit like the JHS Pedal Show. I want people to see all the pedals we have. I don't have loads for the sake of it, because they're all of a good quality, but there's definitely hundreds. At one point I had 50 vintage Tube Screemers. We even did a video where we connected them all together. I have a couple of Klons. One was owned by Robbie McIntosh from John Mayer's band. I've got Eric Johnson's 1968 Fuzz Face with the BC183 circuit. There's a lot of rare stuff lying around.

Which players are you most proud to be associated with?

There's the obvious big names like Eric Gales, Philip Sayce and Richard Fortus. Then there's the younger players we've been working with like Rhys John Stygal or Mia Smith [*Mimi Sounds*], who did a Texan Twang video for us; I think it ended up being the most-viewed pedal demo in the world. Collectively it has 30 million views or something stupid like that. And that was before we even knew her; she just made it herself and it blew up. It's growing like crazy!



[Clockwise from top] Pedal Prawn's Gypsy Vibe, Octone, Germanium Fuzz, Texan Twang, BluesPrint, Fuzz and Chicken Quiff

"WE
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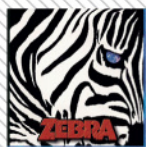


**ZEBRA'S
FIRST**

Zebra (1983)

Zebra IV (2003)

**ZEBRA'S
LATEST**



RANDY JACKSON

Forgotten heroes of 1980s rock, power-trio Zebra — led by singer/guitarist Randy Jackson — kept the spirit of Zeppelin, Hendrix and Cream alive. These days, family man Jackson is busy shaping up the group's first album in two decades

By Joe Bosso

BY THE EARLY Eighties, Zebra had their ground game covered. Since forming in 1975, the hard rock trio comprised of singer-guitarist Randy Jackson, bassist Felix Hanneman and drummer Guy Gelso spent the better part of a decade playing the concert halls of their home base in New Orleans and in their adopted home of Long Island. In the days before the internet could turn artists into overnight online stars, the hard-gigging band had amassed a significant and loyal following the old-fashioned way,

playing shows three, four and sometimes five nights a week. And things were paying off.

"It was all through word of mouth," Jackson says. "We'd play a show for a hundred or so people, and they'd go and tell their friends about this band they'd seen. The next time we'd play, we'd have double the number of folks at the gig. It just got bigger and bigger."

By Jackson's own admission, Zebra weren't doing anything especially cool or revolutionary at the time; in fact,

their setlists — healthy doses of Led Zeppelin, Yes, Jethro Tull and Pink Floyd, along with proggy, metallic-tinged originals sprinkled throughout — stood in stark contrast to the high-fashion synth-pop acts that dominated MTV. Despite their impressive live drawing power, the band couldn't get arrested when it came to label interest. They were seen as Seventies throwbacks, perilously out of step with current trends, and they were turned down by every record company around — multiple times, in some cases. Undeterred, the guys kept gigging away.

"I guess if we weren't going so well locally, we would have gotten discouraged," Jackson says. "We saw lots of other bands that couldn't get signed, and they broke up because they simply didn't have an audience to sustain them. We had our own thing going on. We could support ourselves. We bought houses. Other bands needed a record deal to keep going, but for us, it wasn't a necessity."

The members of Zebra had more or less resigned themselves to the idea of a label-free existence, but then something funny happened: One of their songs, "Who's Behind the Door?" — a hooky, spacey gem that threw signature elements of Zeppelin, Yes and Floyd into a Cuisinart — was included on a Long Island radio station compilation album of local bands. The track garnered big phones, and the buzz reached Atlantic Records, which had already rejected the band. Upon signing with the label, Zebra recorded their self-titled debut album with noted producer Jack Douglas (John Lennon, Aerosmith, Cheap Trick), and the double shot of "Who's Behind the Door?" and the hard-charging "Tell Me What You Want" was catnip to AOR programmers. Within weeks of its release in March 1983, *Zebra* went gold and became the fastest-selling debut album in Atlantic's history.

Unfortunately, the band's descent was just as quick. Zebra's second album, 1984's *No Tellin' Lies* (also produced by Douglas) stalled on the charts at number 84, and following the release of *3.V* in 1986, Atlantic dropped the group.

"It's hard to pinpoint any one reason

"WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON A RECORD FOR 20 YEARS; I'VE GOT SO MUCH MATERIAL.

why things went the way they did,” Jackson says. “The label probably didn’t promote us the way they could have. It would have been nice to have gotten more press, or better press.” He also assigns part of the blame to the band’s wholesome, unprovocative image. “Sometimes you need to attract headlines — I get it. We didn’t have a Dee Snider or a Marilyn Manson in the band. Those are personalities that sell something beyond the music, but that was never us. All we ever had was the music.”

Forty years after their ephemeral brush with fame, and nearly 50 years after their formation, not much has changed. Jackson did a short stint leading a solo band called Randy Jackson’s China Rain in the early Nineties, but by 1994 he regrouped with Hanneman and Gelso. The band issued a solid fourth album, *Zebra IV*, in 2003, and Jackson promises a new record is in the works. They get together for tours, but they don’t beat themselves up on the road like they used to.

“Our situation has always been unique,” Jackson says, “and it’s really because the fans allow us to do what we want. Our fans are our family, and we’ve always gotten along together.” He adds, “The band is family, too. Thankfully, we still get along.”

I understand you saw the Beatles when you were a kid.

I did. My parents took me to see them in New Orleans when I was eight. I hadn’t seen any concerts at that point. I saw the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show* — the girls were screaming. Seeing them live was really strange. You had the girls there, but their parents were there, too. I couldn’t hear the band, but somehow I could tell what songs they were playing. The sound system was pretty much the horns in the stadium. There was no low-end.

I remember there was one girl near me who kept screaming for Paul the entire time. At the end, the crowd climbed over the rails and rushed the field, and that girl tried to make a break for it. Her father held her back and she screamed, “Paul! Paul!” It was crazy. The funny thing is, I looked at all this and thought it was normal. Little

did I know there was nothing normal about it.

Were you a guitar-playing kid at that age, or did the Beatles light the fuse?

I played piano, and I had a guitar and a Beatles chord book. I kind of taught myself. The Beatles’ songs were hard for me at that point. I could play the chords, but I couldn’t change them quickly. As I got older, things got easier. I listened to a lot of records and played along. I didn’t have anybody showing me what to do — I figured it out on my own. That’s what we did back then. Nowadays it’s so easy to learn guitar on the internet. All I had was my ears.

Did you have a bunch of crap bands before Zebra?

My brother and I had a band with another guy. This was in elementary school. We played a fair in our cafeteria. The woman who put it together asked if her son could play with us. It turned into a brawl, so that was kind of funny. We had all the elements of rock ‘n’ roll going on.

When you formed Zebra, were you pretty much set on the power-trio format?

No, I wasn’t. Felix and I got together, and we had a five-piece — this was his band. It didn’t last long, and then Guy and I hooked up with a keyboard player. We did kind of progressive stuff. Felix was in a funk about his band breaking up, so I got him in with us as our bass player. We went out as a four-piece and played stuff by Yes and Jethro Tull and things like that. More and more, though, people wanted dance music, and our keyboard player wasn’t into it. He left and we started looking for a singer. We shared vocals on a lot of songs, but when we did Led Zeppelin, I would sing all the high parts.

In the late Seventies, you guys headed to Long Island, where there were bands like Twisted Sister and the

Good Rats. Was it a friendly scene? Competitive?

It was competitively-friendly. There was a band called Rat Race Choir that we played shows with, and we all became great friends.

We were friends with Twisted Sister. [Guitarist] Jay Jay French would always call me after gigs and ask, “How’d you do?” He was on top of things. The bands helped each other. None of the bands were alike, so we weren’t really competing for the same crowds.

It was a great scene. The drinking age was 18 and the places were packed. We were making a living. It went all week long — we were working all the time. For a while, we lived in one house, but before long we could afford our own places. We got married. I don’t think that kind of scene exists anymore.

Even though you were making money, the labels didn’t care. Nobody wanted to sign you.

It was crazy. Nobody wanted anything to do with us. It was a total shock when Atlantic finally signed us. Bob Buckman, the program director at this station WBAB, spoke to Jason Flom at Atlantic, and he became interested. Before then, all the labels said, “You’re dated. Your time is over. It’s a little old for us.” If we weren’t doing so well, it would have been crushing, but we were playing to sold-out crowds.

The press compared you to Led Zeppelin. Were the folks at Atlantic — home of Led Zeppelin — working that angle at all?

I don’t think so. I never heard them say anything like that, though I know people in the press did write things like that. People have told me that when they heard “Who’s Behind the Door?” on the radio, they thought it was a Zeppelin thing. I think that had something to do with the open tuning I used and the sound of my voice.

On songs like “Tell Me What You Want,” your solos have a Page-like quality, especially in your rather slurry legato.

Yeah, sure. My guitar playing was greatly influenced by Page, but I never tried to copy him directly. He’s my guy as far as style goes.

The band did a couple of albums with Jack Douglas. What was it like working with him?

You know, at first, I didn’t know we needed a producer. I didn’t know what →

Zebra’s Randy Jackson with his B.C. Rich doubleneck in New York City, 1983. “My favorite B.C. Rich Mockingbird got stolen,” he says. “I never got to record with it...”

I DON’T WANNA SPEND MY WHOLE LIFE GOING THROUGH IT ALL, BUT I EASILY COULD”



a producer even did. I mean, I saw on the records that George Martin produced the Beatles, but that's about all I understood. The label said we needed a producer, so I put together a list of records I liked, and Jack Douglas had produced a lot of them. He did John Lennon's *Double Fantasy*, which sounded so clean and beautiful. Then I found out that he did all of the Aerosmith records, so I thought, "He knows how to produce." He agreed to work with us, and he was great. We had a good time with him.

Your debut album went gold. You must have thought, "We're on our way!"

We did. We thought it was going to be smooth sailing. The problem was, the songs we did on the first album we'd had for eight years. We had to scramble to come up with material for the second record. I had one song written, "Lullabye," and the rest of the tracks were from bits and pieces that were knocking around, plus some things that didn't make the first record.

You were using a few guitars during this time — a B.C. Rich Bich, a black Gibson Les Paul Custom, a 12-string Guild acoustic. You even had a B.C. Rich doubleneck.

I had the doubleneck, yeah. My favorite

Jackson on stage in Florida, 2016. "Nobody wanted anything to do with us. It was a total shock when Atlantic finally signed us," he says

B.C. Rich got stolen — a Mockingbird Supreme. I never got to record with that one. Most of my recording was done with the black Les Paul. The Rich Bich was

great, but it didn't have the meat I needed in the studio.

Around the time of the band's third album, hair metal was coming in and there was a big emphasis on videos and hit singles. Did Atlantic put pressure on you guys to sharpen up your image or hire outside songwriters?

None. No pressure at all. I stopped drinking and wrote a ton of material. We had more than enough songs for the third album. Atlantic even approved us to produce ourselves. We thought it came out well, we were very happy with it, but it just didn't seem to hit with the public. You never know about these things.

After Atlantic dropped the band, you all hit pause for a bit. You never actually broke up, though.

We never broke up, no. We were doing a few things on our own, and I was writing songs with Mark Hitt from Rat Race Choir. Eventually, Atlantic came back to me and wanted to do a solo deal, but by that time Zebra came back together and started playing shows again. There was a lot of demand for us. We

finally got around to making a fourth album, which we did on our own. We were excited again.

You mentioned Jimmy Page as your "go-to" guy. Any other guitarists you can point to as big influences?

Mark Farner. He's the guy I really listened to a lot. He played great parts, but they weren't that difficult. I couldn't do everything he did, but I could pick out most of his stuff. It made me feel good. I loved Cream, especially their version of "Crossroads." I learned a lot of Hendrix. And the Allman Brothers Band — I learned as much of their music as I could.

The influences one has in their teens sort of stick, but later in life, did you hear anybody who impacted you?

I have to say no. Not because they weren't doing anything good, but because I wasn't paying attention. I heard various things, but there wasn't anything that grabbed me and made me feel like I needed to learn it. Eddie Van Halen came along, and he was an influence on me overall. He was right in my age group, and his band came up the same time as Zebra. After that, there really hasn't been anybody. A lot of music that came out after the Nineties didn't seem to have that much guitar.

So... Zebra is working on a new album — finally.

Finally, right. We've been working on a record for 20 years. [Laughs] In fact, as soon as we finish this interview, I'm going back to it. I've got so much material — hopefully enough to make a great album. I don't want to spend my whole life going through it all, but I could easily do that. I've got a blues song that isn't just I-IV-V, so that's cool. Lyrically, the record's got an older perspective to it. [Laughs] And I'm going to have a few songs that are reminiscent of the first album. People keep telling me they love that record, so I'm going to give them some things in that vein.

With any luck, there will be an album after that. It's hard getting everybody in the frame of mind to do this. I've got stuff to do that I never had to deal with before. I've got grandkids! Time goes by and you want to hang with them while you can. But yeah, we're still making music. We'll get this record out there soon enough. **GW**

"I LEARNED A LOT OF HENDRIX AND THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND — AS MUCH AS I COULD"



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THE ART OF Myles Kennedy

We've been saying it for years, but the man best known for his soaring vocals with **Slash** and **Alter Bridge** also happens to be one hell of a guitar player. On his new album, he busts out his riffs, his roar and his signature PRS

STORY BY RICHARD BIENSTOCK PHOTOS BY CHUCK BRUECKMANN

"I'VE BEEN SO fortunate with my career,"

Myles Kennedy says, and indeed, between fronting Slash featuring Myles Kennedy and the Conspirators, and singing and playing guitar alongside Mark Tremonti in Alter Bridge, Kennedy is, to borrow a Conspirators album title, living the dream. But even while having his hands full with two projects, he continues, "As a writer, I can never totally power down. I always have the antenna up in case something comes along." He laughs. "It's like being a doctor on call."

If that's the case, then Kennedy has been one busy MD. The Conspirators recently wrapped touring for their most recent album, *4*, and before that, Kennedy was on the road with Alter Bridge in support of their seventh effort, *Pawns & Kings*. Somewhere in between, he

managed to write and record a solo album, the just-released *The Art of Letting Go*. The new effort is Kennedy's third under his own name, following 2018's *Year of the Tiger* and 2021's *The Ides of March*, and in addition to showcasing the sort of anthemic, hooky and intensely melodic heavy modern rock that has become his calling card, *The Art of Letting Go* is also his most unabashedly hard-hitting effort to date.

"The intention this time out was definitely to make a riff-based rock record, and to not be afraid of doing that," Kennedy says. "Whereas I think with the first two records I shied away from it because I was coming from two different projects that were already steeped in that sound." When it came to *The Art of Letting Go*, however, Kennedy asked himself, "Why can't I do that? Why am I setting up these parameters?" I'm known as a rock →







Kennedy
with his PRS
Myles Kennedy
Signature in Black

singer and guitar player, so why wouldn't I do that?"

Kennedy does it to great effect throughout *The Art of Letting Go*, from the first crashing chords of the opening title track through the epic closer, "How the Story Ends." In between there's plenty of raging hard rock (the hard-charging first single, "Say What You Will," and the grungy and groovy "Saving Face") and big-gesture anthems (the disarmingly major-key "Mr. Downside," the soaring "Miss You When You're Gone"), as well as mournful ballads ("Eternal Lullaby") and multifaceted, almost proggy workouts ("Behind the Veil"). And it's all shot through with Kennedy's instantly recognizable vocals and, perhaps surprising to some who see him solely as a frontman, incredibly fluid and accomplished lead guitar playing.

For Kennedy, however, the guitar component has always been central to his musical makeup. "From the time I was young I just wanted to just play guitar — I never expected to be known as a singer," he says. "The only reason I became a singer was because I couldn't find someone to sing the songs I was writing. I was like, 'I think I'm gonna have to learn to do this myself.' So what's beautiful about having this project is that it helps

fulfill my original plan: 'OK, I'm writing songs. I'm singing. But I also get to play a lot of guitar.' "

He laughs. "Someone once said to me, 'Why do you make solo records?' And it's like, 'So I can play solos!'"

You've been busy these last few years with Slash and Alter Bridge. How did this record come together?

It was one of those things where I knew I had a record coming up and I had a very finite window to write it in. So beginning in January of last year, I just started chipping away. I think I was out with Alter Bridge, so it was a lot of writing in hotel rooms and dressing rooms and trying to just get as much out as I could within about a six-month period of time, before we started rehearsals and pre-production and all that stuff. So the album was definitely a road-written endeavor this time around.

Is there a balance you have to strike when you're working in a creative realm, but also again a very strict deadline?

It can be a challenge if you're not careful. Because you can end up doing something just because you have to do it, and you have to finish it. Fortunately for me, I was



always the kid who would procrastinate when I had, like, a term paper, right? [Laughs] It was the last week before it was due, but somehow I would land on my feet. So sometimes I work better under pressure. But it's interesting — as I get older, I don't enjoy the stress of that. So I think I've gotten better at structuring my time appropriately and knowing what's coming up, and then still allowing myself to be open to the process.

As you were putting these songs together, did any theme start to reveal itself to you?

You know, subject-matter wise, this is the first one of my solo records that really doesn't have a storyline. *Year of the Tiger* was written about things I'd experienced as a child and with my family, and then *The Ides of March* was very much influenced by everything that was going on in the world at that time. So there was an arc of a narrative. This time I really just wanted it to be a collection of songs. I didn't want to do another concept record.

On the music side there seems to have been at least one concept: to rock hard.

Yes, and it was a little bit liberating in that respect. But what I also wanted to be very conscious of was that I wanted it to be riff-based and I wanted it to rock, but I also wanted to still have that bluesy element and not go into... almost where Alter Bridge can go, where there are those tinges of metal at times. So any time I had a riff that was getting a little "metallic," I'd say, "Okay, we're gonna save that for something else." I wanted these songs to stay kind of slinky and bluesy, and have that as the basis.

Another thing was, it was important to keep it so that we could play it as a three-piece [Kennedy's band includes drummer Zia Uddin and bassist Tim Tournier]. What I learned touring on those first two records is that we'd end up having to rearrange everything from what was done in the studio because I was layering all these parts, playing lap steel and this, that and the other. This time, it was about making it so we could pull it off live the way it was recorded.

To that point, on your previous record you used a wide variety of guitars and amps in the studio. What was your setup this time?

Well, like I was saying, I tried to keep it really simple so that it was something that could be recreated live. So it's the signature guitar [the PRS Myles Kennedy], strung with some D'Addario .10's. And then a Diezel Paul amp that [Diezel co-founder] Peter Stapfer had given me a few years ago for the *Year of the Tiger* tour. It's a 45-watt amp, and

it's not like the Herbert or the VH4. It's a very different animal. There's just something about that amp and that guitar together that I really love. And then I had the [J. Rockett] Chicken Soup pedal, which I've used now for a few years, and a pedal called the [Mythos] Argo, which is a great fuzz pedal. That's what you hear at the beginning of "Say What You Will."

Guitar-wise, was your signature PRS able to handle the variety of →



What Myles Kennedy — the guitarist — has learned from his 12 years with Slash and 20 years with Mark Tremonti

BY RICHARD BIENSTOCK

WHILE ALL GUITARISTS learn from the greats, few actually get the opportunity to play alongside the best in the business night after night. But with 20 years as Mark Tremonti's handmate in Alter Bridge, and a dozen with Slash featuring Myles Kennedy and the Conspirators, Kennedy has done just that. Which has afforded him, among other benefits, a unique perspective on what makes a guitar legend. What has he observed?

"With Slash, there's a few things," Kennedy says. "One is his unorthodox approach — his phrasing and the way his lines go where you wouldn't expect them to go. There's an unpredictability that I really appreciate with him. He doesn't think like other guitar players. Also, he's such a character player. Within one or two notes you know it's Slash, just because of his vibrato. He has his own way of speaking."

Regarding Tremonti, he continues, "A lesson I took from him early on was how he would approach song ideas when we were writing together. He would catalog things — 'Here's a riff, will it go with this verse...' He would have these parts laying around and put them together like sonic puzzles. I always thought that was a really interesting way of doing things, because I would try to do it all in one sitting, like, 'Okay, I have a verse, now I need to come up with a chorus.' That was my pattern.

But playing with Mark opened my eyes to trying this other way of, 'You know what? You might have to wait a month, or even a year, to find a part that's good enough to go with this other part.' I learned the art of patience."

One thing Slash and Tremonti have in common? "Their work ethic," Kennedy says. "Slash's work ethic is over the top. He goes so hard, and that's been really inspiring to me. And Mark is the same way. It's great being surrounded by people who still have that passion, even after being in the game for decades, because it would be so easy for them to go, 'I've got a catalog, I've got a legacy. I can just pick up a guitar and go out and play the hits and call it a day.' But neither one of these guys is hardwired that way.

"I've always appreciated that, because for me it's always been about the work," Kennedy continues. "None of the other stuff matters. I've found that the satisfaction comes from the creativity, and from when you know you've got something that moves you, or hopefully moves somebody else. That's where the joy is."

"WITHIN ONE OR TWO NOTES YOU KNOW IT'S SLASH, JUST BECAUSE OF HIS VIBRATO. HE HAS HIS OWN WAY OF SPEAKING"

tones — clean, dirty, overdriven, lead — that you needed for the record?

Yes. And you know, it was a lot of fun last time getting to make a record with all those wonderful vintage instruments. But for this record, I really wanted it to be streamlined and not spend a bunch of time getting tones. We knew what we wanted, and once we got the tone we didn't need to constantly stop and start and move microphones, turn up the mids, turn down the bass... it was just there. Every day I'd plug into the same guitar and the same amp and we were off the races.

One highlight is the title track, where you go for some unique phrasings and note choices.

That turned out to be one of my favorites, because when it goes from the bridge into the solo section, it's like the clouds kind of part. It's a different vibe and it's very... if I'm not mistaken, I think it's pretty "Dorian," if I'm thinking like a music nerd. [Laughs] I love that sound.

Another standout is "Dead to Rights."

That is definitely a tip of the hat to [Big Wreck singer and guitarist] Ian Thornley. I texted him while we were recording: "This is a tribute to you, brother." We became friends, geez, 25 years ago, and I just think the world of that guy. The riff, I would attribute that to playing with him a lot back in the day. And the solo as well. There's certain licks in there where I'm like, "I definitely got that one from Ian..."

Who would be another big guitar inspiration for you?

I love guys like Warren Haynes.

A lot of the way I think as a guitarist comes from that school of playing. I don't normally go into a solo going, "I want to play like this." I just do what I do. But when I think of the language that I speak a lot of times, and who taught me that language, it would be players like Warren. And the thing I like about Warren is that the way he plays guitar is kind of like how he sings. That's what I've always tried to do. Someone actually once said to me, "When you play guitar it reminds me of how you sing." And I was like, "Wow, thank you!" Because that's what I'm trying to do — vocalize through the instrument.

Given that, at this point in your career would you say you identify more as a singer or a guitarist? For instance, bilingual people often talk about dreaming only in their native language. Which is it for you?

It's always been about the guitar. I had a tech who, at the bottom of his emails, it said, "The power of the riff compels me." I always thought that was so great. Because that's how I feel; it all starts with the riff. That's the foundation. And then the chord progression and the melody and the vocal come after. With this record especially, which is more of a riff-based thing, the riffs needed to be strong enough to build the foundation on. Because that's where it all starts. So, yeah, I guess when I dream, I dream as a guitar player. [Laughs] **GW**

"WITH THIS RECORD, THE RIFFS NEEDED TO BE STRONG ENOUGH TO BUILD THE FOUNDATION ON... THAT'S WHERE IT ALL STARTS"



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DIME



FEAR BEYOND RELEVANT

An all-star panel of six-string superstars — including Zakk Wylde, Kerry King, Marty Friedman, Glenn Tipton, Alex Skolnick, Nita Strauss, Scott Ian, Bill Kelliher and Chris Broderick — explain why Dimebag Darrell is still so relevant 20 years after his tragic death

STORY BY **NICK BOWCOTT** PHOTO BY **LORINDA SULLIVAN**

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**“5” AND
DIME →**

IN 1990, A band from Texas unleashed their debut major-label release upon an unsuspecting metal-loving world. That band's name? Pantera. The album? *Cowboys from Hell*. The result was a sizable and powerful wave that quickly grew into an unstoppable tsunami once the band's next two long-playing salvos — *Vulgar Display of Power* (1992) and *Far Beyond Driven* (1994) — hit the streets. At the epicenter of this Texas tornado was a six-string whirlwind who many consider to be the world's last true guitar hero, a guy named Darrell Lance Abbott. He was better known as Dimebag.

Armed with a solid-state stack, an ungodly amount of gain and an angular Dean ML ax adorned with a lightning bolt, Dimebag took the guitar world by storm with the help of his fellow cowboys from hell, Vinnie Paul (drums — and also Dime's brother), Rex Brown (bass) and Philip H. Anselmo (vocals). And as jaw dropping as his highly creative, lightning-fast chops; innovative whammy bar work and searing yet soulful soloing was, the ace up Dime's sleeve was his world-class riff-writing ability. Coupled with Pantera's patented and genre-creating "power groove," riffs-ridden songs such as "Walk," "Mouth for War," "Becoming," "5 Minutes Alone," "Cowboys from Hell" and "This Love" are rightly hailed as timeless metal classics.

Sadly, after a live album — *Official Live: 101 Proof* (1997) — and two more studio offerings — *The Great Southern Trendkill* (1997) and *Reinventing the Steel* (2000) — Pantera unceremoniously imploded and parted ways in 2003. Dime and Vinnie went on to form the criminally underrated Damageplan. Then, on December 8, 2004, a previously unthinkable, inexplicable nightmare happened. A deranged lunatic managed to get on stage with a firearm and take Dime's life while he was playing. Millions of metal fans across the globe mourned in a state of shock and disbelief.

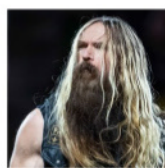
Thanks to his influential playing and timeless riffs, Dime's legacy not only lives on, but continues to inspire new generations of aspiring guitarists. Darrell's work also still impacts many of his friends and peers, to whom we posed the following question: "Why is Dimebag still so far beyond relevant 20 years after his death?"

Here are their answers.

ALEX SKOLNICK (TESTAMENT)

Dimebag is relevant for many reasons, but I think the one that best describes it is Pantera's album title, *Reinventing the Steel*. By the time the band broke through in the early Nineties, most heavier bands were following the Judas Priest/Iron Maiden/Scorpions template of twin guitars. This included the "Big Four" of thrash (Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth, Anthrax), related acts (Testament, plus Exodus, Death Angel, Overkill and others) as well as the extreme-metal scene spawned by another fallen guitar hero, Death's Chuck

the planet, and the emphasis was 100 percent on these massive riffs and songs. Then, when he had a window to show off his technical prowess via a solo, he'd just floor it — and it was a reminder of just how insanely gifted he was as a lead player. He epitomized the idea of writing powerful riffs and memorable songs, all against the backdrop of having this insane technical ability that he always had in his back pocket. That was a rare combination in the Nineties, but nearly all modern metal bands chase that duality now. It's cool to be good at your instrument and write really heavy,



"DIMEBAG BREATHES THE SAME RARIFIED AIR AS TONY IOMMI AND JIMMY PAGE"

ZAKK WYLDE

Schuldiner. Yet Dime figured out a way to match the heaviness and intensity of all of our groups — not just in the studio but live — with just a single guitar, creating a whole new approach to riffs and tone. Two guitars is still the norm because it's still so rare for anyone to achieve that kind of heaviness in a single-guitar band. Yet Dime managed to do so, inspiring generations of players in the process.

MARK HOLCOMB (PERIPHERY)

When I first heard Pantera in the Nineties, Dime was the first guitarist I'd ever known of that had the virtuosity to hang with the super-shredder, G3 crowd if he wanted to. Instead, he played in the heaviest band on

caveman music, and I think it's fair to attribute that, in large part, to Dime.

ZAKK WYLDE (OZZY OSBOURNE, BLACK LABEL SOCIETY, PANTERA CELEBRATION)

Pantera is and always will be the gold standard of the extreme metal/power groove genre they created. Obviously, Saint Dime sits at the table alongside the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen because, just like them, his playing will always be far beyond relevant. He breathes the same rarified air as Tony Iommi and Jimmy Page when it comes to world-class riff writing. Ultimately, I think that's Dime's legacy, just like with all the

great guitar players we love. It's what he wrote.

KERRY KING (SLAYER, SOLO)

Once you establish yourself onto the scene, most people can't get enough of what you're doing. And there's generally a bunch of young ax-slingers looking to unseat you. But with Dime, not only was he taken away from us way too soon, but I've yet to see that next "it" guitar guy. I'm sure there are some out there, but none that stormed the scene like Dime did. Very much like Rhoads, Eddie, etc., Dime was completely effortless and completely crushing, all at once.

ROB HALFORD (JUDAS PRIEST)

Darrell's style of playing was a badly needed game changer in the guitar world. He created a powerful magnet that drew all kinds of guitarists into his uniqueness. His flair for breaking the mold will appeal to countless generations.

RICHIE FAULKNER (JUDAS PRIEST)

In addition to having a perfect blend of melody, technique and feel, the whole sound of the band was a massive contrast to the hair metal that came before it. Pantera's music never felt over produced and was always raw sounding. There were some exceptions, but for the most part it was the solos over crushing bass and drums. No rhythm tracks. I think it just made it raw and real. Along with his melodic sensibilities and technique, it stands up to this day.

GLENN TIPTON (JUDAS PRIEST)

Darrell is still relevant because he helped pave the way for a new style of lead guitar playing, influencing many players along the way.

PHIL ANSELMO (PANTERA, DOWN)

Why is Dime still relevant? Because he is one of the greatest players of all time, hands down.

REX BROWN (PANTERA)

Dime is one of the most recognized guitar players of all time. From his tone to his phrasing of his riffs, to the way he incorporated all of it together, it was in a class all of its own. It was so special being there in real time — and that spirit is still shining bright. He was a glowing beacon of light in so many people's lives with his personality and generosity.

MARTY FRIEDMAN

Dime is more than just a guitar player.

Pantera in Tokyo, June 14, 1992;
[from left] Dimebag Darrell, Rex Brown,
Phil Anselmo and Vinnie Paul



He represents a good dude, a happy and fun guy to be around, a bro who lives and breathes guitar and heavy music. He was the opposite of the stereotypical egomaniac guitarist, and that's what all of us hopefully aspire to be. On top of this, his playing is capable of melting your face beyond recognition! He left us with music that brings people immense joy, even when channeled through other super musicians who are compelled to spread his music throughout the world. That makes him extremely relevant in my book.

a subtle but unmistakable way that was instantly recognizable as his sound and no one else's. His playing took you on a journey, from the brutal sledgehammer world of "Walk" and "Domination" to the brooding beauty of "This Love" and "Floods." He'd not only take you there; he'd leave you there — and you were all the better for it. Just like Randy, Dime was a master of crafting a melody within a melody, but in his own way. No one sounded or played like him, and no one ever will. He was so damned pure and honest in



"DIME WAS COMPLETELY EFFORTLESS AND COMPLETELY CRUSHING, ALL AT ONCE"
KERRY KING

NITA STRAUSS

I can't think of another guitarist who has the combination of stellar technique and reckless abandon that was exhibited by the great Dimebag Darrell! That's something that so many modern guitarists aspire to but can never duplicate.

JIM DUNLOP (DUNLOP, MXR)

He was completely dedicated to his craft — his playing, riffs, arrangements, solos and tone. It was almost like you took Eddie, Randy and Jimi and put them in a blender, but what came out sounded like Dime and no one else. He was a master of not only his guitar but his entire rig; he'd take things like the MXR Flanger/Doubler and use it in

everything he'd do. He was also one of the coolest people I've ever been lucky enough to hang with, and he genuinely loved and respected his fans. He never phoned it in, no matter how tired or hungover he was. He was always "on." The glass was never half-empty with Dime; it was so full, it was overflowing. You could see it in his eyes at every single show. No exceptions, ever.

MARK MORTON (LAMB OF GOD)

Dime's relevance is rooted in his authenticity. Of course, his technical skills were top notch; but it was his ability to blend elements of Black Sabbath power, ZZ Top swagger and Van Halen fireworks into a voice that became uniquely his own

that sets Dime apart as one of the greats. We love you, Dimebag!

BLUES SARACENO

Dime represented all the best parts of all that music we love. The phrasing, passion, imagination, aggression, execution, tone, kindness and fuck-yeah attitude with just the right amount of Texas swing mixed in. Unduplicatable. The Abbott brothers were originals. Anybody who had the good fortune to have them in their lives was better for it. I sure know mine was.

JOSE MANGIN (SATELLITE RADIO METAL AMBASSADOR)

His spirit. His attitude toward life and metal. He left a lasting legacy and was truly the most unique metal personality to ever come from our 54 years of music. His riffs, his music, his passion is what makes Dime still relevant. He's the greatest metal guitar player of all time, and after all these years the world still feels the same. In fact, I think his reputation is even greater now than it was 20 years ago.

CODY JINKS

What will live on, along with Dime's incredible music, is his love for his fans. As a fan, I saw how important it was to him to treat everyone right. Every day, I try to show my fans the love that Dime showed us. That's as beautiful as his music.

MATT HEAFY (TRIVIUM)

Great guitar playing is typically measured in terms of what one can do on lead guitar; but rhythm guitar needs to be equally weighted in importance. Dime had written some of the most iconic rhythm riffs — whether as simple and understated (yet perfect) as “Walk” or as intricate and

writing, rhythm/lead... He had it all and then some.

DUG PINNICK (KING'S X)

With “Walk,” he made one of the most incredibly simple yet complex and groovy riffs that anyone has ever come up with. Twenty years later, he's still inspiring the next generation.

GARY HOLT (EXODUS, SLAYER)

The riffs. Riffs live forever. Some of the most gloriously heavy breakdowns and so much more. The man could take three notes and create one of the most memorable riffs of all time, “Walk.” But also the way he lived — always up for a good time, always positive. People remember that.

TERRY DATE (PANTERA PRODUCER)

Darrell was an extraordinary talent, somebody whose guitar was part of their body and who was miles above any other player of that genre. When you combine that with Dime's charismatic personality, that made everybody feel like they were his best friend; it translates over generations. The legend carries on. Dime was totally unique. He was a one-of-a-kind guy.

CHARLIE BENANTE (ANTHRAX, PANTERA CELEBRATION)

Dime was continuously learning and developing skills and Ideas. He was so ahead of his time that guitarists are still blown away when they hear him for the first time. I don't think anyone doubts that Dime was one of the last guitar players that revolutionized guitar playing and guitar style. For me, he was the rockstar guitar player. Besides Van Halen, it's him. Dime's personality was this larger-than-life party

soul into his craft. And with that he left a true legacy.

BILL KELLIHER (MASTODON)

Dimebag will go down in history as one of the most badass Southern metal guitarists of our generation. His distinctive testosterone-driven riffs and face-melting solos will inspire legions of future metalheads to pick up the guitar. He was ahead of his time, bending strings and notes beyond the limits of human aptitude.

SCOTT IAN (ANTHRAX)

Darrell's ability, tone, style, approach, musicality, aggression, rhythm chops and smile changed guitar playing in the same way Eddie did a generation before him. Darrell's sound is unmistakable and his influence on the four decades that came after is inescapable.

TOMMY VICTOR (PRONG)

The technical proficiency of his playing is undeniable. It was pretty much spot-on consistently. A lot of guys through the years practiced to Dime because he was so good — his rhythm playing and his solos. But beyond that, I think he fused a lot of styles together. If you really listen to all his work, there's blues, there's old-school metal, there's thrash and there's hardcore punk there. Some of that New Orleans sound is in there as well. He accomplished the pure elements of rock into one package.

FRANK BELLO (ANTHRAX)

Dime was a gift to all us metal fans. I'm proud to say I was a friend of his and got to gamble, drink and tour the world with him. He was a really great person, and I think that's what I think people miss. I'm glad there are those great videos [*that show*] how much fun he was to hang out with, because that was all in one package! Imagine this: an amazing guitar player, world-class riff-meister and great soloist — and then he's this great guy on the other side. It draws you in; you were always drawn to Dime. It's fun watching the new generation be turned onto Dime, because there's a whole new flock of guitar players and metal fans that are finding out about him and wanting to know everything about him. And they should, because Dime was the real deal.

DEAN ZELINSKY (DBZ GUITARS, LUTHIER, DESIGNER OF THE DEAN ML)

Darrell is one of the most influential players of all time and was also the most genuine person I ever met. He was kind to the core, had a huge heart and loved to entertain.



“HE COULD TAKE THREE NOTES AND CREATE ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE RIFFS OF ALL TIME”
GARY HOLT

unique as the rhythm parts in “Shedding Skin” or “New Level.” Dime also wrote some of the most powerfully heavy riffs, like “Domination” and “This Love.” The list goes on. That doesn't even scratch the surface of Dime's lead playing. He was capable of shredding and out-shredding any of the virtuosos of the time while having this incredibly soulful solo style that was emotional, memorable and singable. He was masterful with tone, gear, showmanship,

figure, but he was one of the warmest, generous and loving people I knew. That side of him comes out a lot in his playing too.

OLA ENGLUND (YOUTUBER, THE HAUNTED)

There are guitar players that rip and tear, but few did it like Dime, and that's why he's always going to stay a legend. He lived and breathed guitar and poured his heart and

While fans were watching this incredible guitar player onstage, they were falling in love with his infectious persona and smile. This transcends the music, it transcends time. He clearly inspired hundreds of thousands, possibly millions around the world to want to play guitar. Everyone wanted — and wants — to be like Dime. He was a pioneer in what metal became. His playing is unmatched, even today.

JAKE BOWEN (PERIPHERY)

We're living in an age where it seems legendary artists are getting harder to come by. By legendary, I mean artists who breathe unique energy or a signature sound into the scenes they inhabit. Darrell "Dimebag" Abbott was a force on guitar very much in the way Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads were. Like the aforementioned, Dime played his instrument in a way that is instantly recognizable, when you hear one note, one bend, or even just the guitar tone you know exactly who you're dealing with. While we wait for the next generation of legendary artists to take hold, I believe people will look back to the past and realize that we had something amazing when Dime was with us. Hopefully the younger generation realizes this and figures out the formula to their own unique sound the way Pantera was able to.

SATCHEL (STEEL PANTHER)

Why is Dime still so relevant? This is a subjective question, and I'm going to give my very opinionated opinion on this, because speculating is what we do when given speculative questions... and also, I give no ducks. And that right there, I believe, is the answer: Dime gave no ducks. And he played guitar like he gave no ducks. And that, you kids out there, doesn't mean Dime didn't care; he cared about the music, the tone, the riffs, the bends, the vibrato and the motherfuckin' conviction with which he played. That's why he sounded like a beast every time he picked up a guitar. That's why he put the time in to become a virtuoso and also why he never hit a bad note — because he played every note with so much conviction that it was impossible for it to be a bad note.

He ducking cared a lot, but when he started playing, he gave no ducks. He didn't



"EVERY DAY, I TRY TO SHOW MY FANS THE LOVE THAT DIME SHOWED US"
CODY JINKS

give a duck who didn't like it. He didn't give a duck if it sold a million records. He didn't give a duck if he never won a Grammy. He gave zero ducks. And he still sounds ducking killer 30 years later. We can all learn from Dime after all these years. Play guitar like you give no ducks. When your teacher asks where your homework is, tell her you have no ducks to give about homework. When your mom asks you to clean your room, tell her you ran out of ducks to give about cleaning your damn room. When the IRS shows up at your door looking for your receipts for 2018, tell them to ask someone who gives a duck. Then crank up some Pantera.

KAYLA KENT (YOUTUBER)

The vibrato, the hick bends, his insanely clean legato and pick attack. Couple that with his original style in his music with the groove metal, and his original style aesthetically — using exclusively ML-shaped guitars. He was original at his core in the best way possible, and he always stuck to his guns.

BEN ELLER (YOUTUBER)

Attitude will never go out of style! Players like Dime and EVH had a sincerity and ferocity to their playing that will always be relevant and timeless because it's the real deal, and people can hear, feel and smell [it]!

CHRIS CAFFERY (TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA)

There are very few guitarists who actually attached a sound to their legacy. Tony Iommi, Michael Schenker, Eddie Van Halen, Yngwie Malmsteen and Angus Young all had that special quality where it changed the history of guitar and almost created its own category. This is why I use the term "un-Dime-niable." After he came along and Pantera rose to the top of the

scene, there was a new sound. Dime placed himself among Hendrix and Jeff Beck and any greats that can be used as one of the "he sounds like" guitarists! Or the ones people will say, "I was inspired by..." Twenty years from now I can only see this legacy growing. There is and always will be a Pantera sound and style. Very few bands can say this.

CHAD KROEGER (NICKELBACK)

Every generation needs a guitar hero to inspire the new flock of players. Thank God every generation will be able to look back at what Dime did for guitar playing and be able to call him a hero.

RABEA MASSAAD (YOUTUBER)

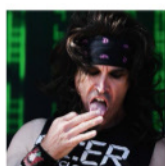
His approach to "heavy" is pretty much timeless. The tight, palm-muted chugs and tonal choices in his riffs still don't sound dated, they just sound heavy! On top of that, I think his style and attitude toward his playing is infectious. It was more than just "shred," he had soul in his playing, attitude and a charisma that made me wanna learn the parts and experience feeling what it's like to try to play those parts. He influenced a lot of guitar players from more than one angle. Riffs and lead, writing and how to be a stand-up dude with a good attitude to being a guitar player.

CHRIS BRODERICK (IN FLAMES)

1. His playing had so much of his personality and bravado in it that you can't help but connect with it in a guttural way.
2. Between his technical prowess and the unique blend of Texas shred, he and his brother could groove so hard!

DAVE DAVIDSON (REVOCATION)

As I sit here listening to *Vulgar Display of Power*, pondering Dime's legacy, a few words come to mind. Attitude. Virtuosity. Soul. Dime had all those qualities and more. His blend of aggressive riffing and guitar acrobatics were combined so perfectly that his music continues to resonate with fans of metal, young and old. Dime had a unique voice on the guitar; you can hear five seconds of a riff or a solo and can just tell it's him by his tone and feel. If you're just picking up a guitar today and want to play metal, you're going to be influenced by →



"HE DIDN'T GIVE A DUCK IF HE NEVER WON A GRAMMY. HE GAVE ZERO DUCKS"
SATCHEL

him in some way. His influence was that great on the genre. Thanks for the inspiration, Dime; you changed the way I looked at the guitar.

SULLY ERNA (GODSMACK)

Most people would say Dime is one of the best metal guitarists in the world. That's a bit vague for me. I'd put Dime in the top three against any metal guitarist. But it's beyond his playing that makes him an icon. His character and loyalty as a friend, brother and human being is what separates him miles from any other person I've ever met. And when you have talent and genuine care for people and life, that's what makes you unforgettable!

C.J. PIERCE (DROWNING POOL)

Dime was a one-of-a-kind, natural talent, a completely original musician like no other. His writing style and solos define Southern metal at its finest. I believe it says in the dictionary the definition of metal is Pantera! The music Dime created with Pantera pushed the limits and will forever live on and be relevant.

ERIC PETERSON (TESTAMENT)

Dime's riffs are still heavy hitting, perfect riff frequencies that abduct you to the bone and refresh you! My favorite thing about his solos is they don't "over shred." They fit the vibe of the songs, and he wasn't afraid to make some noise, either! Don't get me wrong though; there is shredding going on when needed, it's just very well-controlled and always fits the demeanor of the songs.

ATTILA VÖRÖS (YOUTUBER)

It's the way in which Dime could express himself through his playing. His riffs and leads are like a language everybody can understand, simply because it's never just notes being put after one another; it's always done with intention and depth. Dime was totally real and honest, and people feel that. Then, of course, there's the person he was, which, needless to say, touched and resonated with so many — and still does. Dime was like a big brother, even though I never met him.

JON DONAIS (ANTHRAX, SHADOWS FALL)

Dime is what I call an MVP guitarist. He had the riffs, songs, solos and the rockstar charisma and presence. It's rare to find someone who can check all those boxes.

PHIL DEMMEL (CATEGORY 7, KERRY KING)

Dime, EVH, Rhoads, SRV and Hendrix were dedicated to their craft from all

WE ARE THE ROAD CREW!

Pantera's OG "Crew from Hell" chime in

BY NICK BOWCOTT

"WITH PANTERA, THE thing is that their crew was such an important part of the band," says legendary Pantera producer Terry Date. "They were like family, too." If you've seen the infamous Pantera "Home Videos," you know just how true Date's statement is. As you can see below, we managed to track down a few of the original Pantera road crew.

GRADY CHAMPION (DIME'S GUITAR TECH) Dime was just so special — not only as a guitar player, but also in the way he treated people. It was always next level. Nobody was a stranger, everyone was a friend. And his playing was pure passion and skill. He always played from the heart and soul, and I don't think that's lost on anybody who listens to him play. As a guitarist and a guy, he was absolutely the complete package.

GUY SYKES (TOUR MANAGER) I think the biggest thing is the way Dime plays with so much feeling. Every note just resonates. It's as if he took Jimmy Page, Brian May, Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, Ace Frehley, Billy Gibbons and so many more and threw it in a blender with his own unique playing style and a bit of Texas shuffle. His playing seems vaguely familiar but is absolutely unique.

STERLING WINFIELD (EX-BASS TECH, ENGINEER AND CO-PRODUCER OF REINVENTING THE STEEL) As Eddie Van Halen said, Dime was an original. It takes an original to know an original; Eddie recognized that, and I think we all knew it, too. I think things like that endure; they stand the test of time. All these people you hold in high regard — Eddie, Hendrix, Page, Clapton and Iommi — they're originals; and I think there's a continuing timelessness to any original, when you hear them, you immediately know who it is. The same is true of Dime; when you hear that sound and that style you immediately know it's him. That's why Dime endures; no one did it before him. A million afterwards, but no one before him.

SONNY SATTERFIELD (LIGHTING DIRECTOR) I first saw him at a very young age. He was 16 or 17, and he was already jumping on people's tables with cocktails on them, flipping the guitar backwards while playing it; what a showman and an amazing player he was. He was doing all these tricks while playing the songs and licks perfectly. So, even back then I knew he was destined for greatness. I think that just like Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen, his legacy is going to carry on for generations, because Dime is in the same category as the other four gentlemen I just mentioned. His playing and his music stand the test of time — you can see it at the Pantera Celebration shows today. Me and Grady are there, and we see guys our age with their kids and their grandkids! And the 9-year-old is rocking out with their 60-year-old grandpa!

Special thanks to Rita Haney for her help gathering quotes.

angles, including technique, note selection and performance. But it's the instrument and the equipment that is their conduit to the listener and makes him so relevant. Players are chasing his guitar setup and his tone, and that's all thanks to him putting in the time to develop that signature sound.

BILLY GRAZIADEI (BIOHAZARD)

In 20 years, there hasn't been a single person who comes close to touching Dime. He is to our generation what Jimi Hendrix was to his! Beyond his killer guitar skills

and style, Darrell put so much heart and soul into everything he did! He set the bar so high that there will never be anyone that can come close to filling his shoes! He is the best there ever was.

RITA HANEY ("DIMEBAGZHAG")

I think it was his outlook on life and his way of life. He was totally genuine, and that came out in every single thing he did, including genuinely caring about people. To me, his 333 percent genuine heart is why he still matters so much today.



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SHINY DIME

How Rita Haney, Dimebag's soulmate and partner in crime, keeps the late guitarist's memory burning more brightly than ever BY NICK BOWCOTT

AS MOST LONGTIME Dimebag devotees know, Rita Haney (aka “DimebagzHag” — her word, not mine!) was Darrell's longtime soulmate and partner in crime. Since Dime was so tragically and senselessly taken in 2004, Haney has dedicated her time, energy and passion to keeping the flame of his memory and legacy burning brightly.

Haney has been at the epicenter of Dime Hardware — the official online Dimebag Darrell merchandise shop — and the hugely popular (and annual) Dimebash and Ride for Dime charity events. She's also the driving force behind the recent release of the Dime Signature mini Warhead amp [see the review on page 50] and Blacktooth Beverages, makers of the Dime-branded 7-Year American Rye Whiskey and other concoctions. And there are more official Dimebag offerings pending, including the much-talked-about line of Dimebag Guitarz.

If that's not enough, Haney and her crew have been omnipresent at the popular Dimebag Hardware booth at major rock festivals for the past 15 years.

What drives you to keep Dime's memory alive?

For one, I think it's easy to love Dime, and that's the one thing I know I'm good at! And two, because of everything he did for me and what an incredible life he gave me. There were so many things he wrote down, designed and recorded about what he wanted to accomplish; I have all that, and I don't just want to let them sit there and go away. I want him to still be able to achieve all of his dreams. I think that's what drives me.

Plus, I fucking love it! I love being surrounded by anything that's about him — it makes me feel like he's still always

here with me. It's wonderful passing on anything about Darrell to fans old and new. He was an incredible person, and it's the best damned job in the world to get to talk about him all day and all night! And it hasn't slowed down any since we first started doing this; if anything, it feels like it's increased.

I know it sounds weird, but there was this magic bubble around Dime, and it's hard to describe how his presence could make you feel. No matter how shitty or boring the place was, his vibe was so alive... and it still is. Having that vibe around you just made you happy, and it still does when I talk or think about him. Sometimes the day ain't going quite like I want it to, but whenever I think of him or do something about him — like this interview [Laughs] — it always puts a smile on my face.

The key thing is finding that speck of beauty in the ugly. No matter what it is, you can always find something; that was the most valuable life lesson I learned from Darrell, because that's how he lived his life.

“I KNOW IT SOUNDS WEIRD, BUT THERE WAS THIS MAGIC BUBBLE AROUND DIME”

[this page and facing]
A few different views of the Dime Rig; keep an eye out for it!





Rita Haney enjoying a Black Tooth Grin during a Dimebag Hardware festival road trip



RITA HANEY



MOUTH FOR WAR!

Meet the Dimebag mini Warhead 40-watt amp head BY NICK BOWCOTT

A WHILE AGO, a limited-edition version of the Dimebag mini Warhead 40-watt head was unleashed — with only 333 being available. Dime evangelist, YouTuber and all-around good guy Ola Englund did a video on the compact crusher, and as hoped, it sounded really freaking good and looked pretty darned good, too. Plus, the price was, er, right. And, as the Swedish six-stringer sensibly predicted, the 333 sold out instantly.

That said, if — like me — you're a Dimebag Tone Chaser, and you missed out, don't fret; a regular production model is coming soon, and it will not be limited. In fact, I just got my eager mitts on one. Here's the skinny.

It's a one-channel, 40-watt, solid-state head with a series FX loop on its rear panel. Its front panel controls are the "usual suspects," namely, from right to left: Gain, Bass, Middle, Treble, Presence and Master Volume. On plugging in — without any stompboxes — I was easily able to dial in a nice, tight, Dimebag-like tone with that signature, upper-frequency "fry." The amp's fast, punchy response immediately inspired me to butcher all the Dime riffs I know, and I had an absolute blast doing so. Its sleek, black, snakeskin vinyl is a nice touch, too.

According to the Dime camp, this amp is a two-year "labor of love." Dime's OG gear was used, and their tonal benchmark/goal



Dime's guitar tech, Grady Champion, plays the "Dean from Hell" through the mini Warhead



**THIS AMP IS
A TWO-YEAR
"LABOR OF LOVE"**

was "the Randall RG100 [head] with the parametric and 6-band [graphic EQ] built into the preamp with Darrell's main settings." And, obviously, Dime's legendary tech, Grady Champion, was intimately involved. Respect.

My conclusion? Mission accomplished, team Dime. This is a good-looking, compact, no-frills, Dimebag-inspired tone machine that boasts his iconic signature and a price tag that might surprise you. As Champion summed up so succinctly, "Dime would be so proud of us right now. Getcha pull!"

For more information, check out warheadamps.com



GUITAR WORLD

COVER
MODELS

GUITARISTS

Zakk Wylde and Dimebag Darrell

GUITARS

Camouflage bullseye

Gibson Les Paul Custom (Zakk);
Washburn Camouflage USA Trendkill
333 Dime Signature (Dime)

GW COVER DATE

March 2003

THIS INTERVIEW

October 2024

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER

Matthew Salacuse

I'm gonna start off with a really dumb question. Why did you choose to use your Camouflage finish, bullseye Les Paul Custom for this one?

ZAKK WYLDE Come on now, Father Nick! [Laughs] Surely the cover photo answers that one! Dime had this military theme idea mapped out, so I just rolled with it and brought my camo-bullseye Les Paul for beyond-obvious reasons.

I believe you nicknamed that guitar "Stormin' Norman" after the Gulf War Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, yes?

You are correct, sir!

And, as per your usual pickup MO, it was loaded with your Signature EMG active pickups — an 81 in the bridge and an 85 in the neck position.

Once again, you are correct, sir!

You ended up using that guitar to record the outro solo on "Reborn" from Damageplan's 2004 album, *New Found Power*, while you were there. Did you have any idea about that beforehand? No. In typical Dime fashion, it was totally off the cuff. He asked me if I'd like to throw down a solo, so we knocked it out.

A lot of people, including me, were more than a little surprised that you let Darrell dye your beard green, but you



went along with it without even a second of hesitation.

Totally. That was pure Saint Dime comedy, bro. He was such a sweet guy; how could I possibly say no? I just went, "Sure, why not? Go for it!" We had a blast doing that photo session with the painted beards and the camo stuff.

What other recollections do you have of that day?

Recollections? I don't remember any of it! [Laughs] First off, as you know, we were slamming back the Sarsaparillas and adult beverages the whole time we were there, so I had to have a spare liver and pancreas on

ice, available at all times. Then I missed my flight, and that's when the comedy really began; it totally turned into the Keystone Cops at that point! I was supposed to fly to New Jersey the next day for the [Christmas] holidays with my wife and kids, but that obviously didn't happen. I finally made it to Jersey a couple of days later, but I definitely wasn't getting any foot massages or shoulder rubs for quite some time after that debacle. I was in the doghouse, but luckily Dime was able to smooth things over because Barb [Zakk's wife] could never get mad at him. So yeah, I played the Dime sympathy card on that one. [Laughs]

— Nick Bowcott

THE ART OF SHREDDING

Dime's friends, bandmates, peers and admirers choose their favorite Dimebag Darrell guitar solo BY NICK BOWCOTT

THE MISSION WAS simple: ask as many of Dime's friends, bandmates, peers and evangelists to spotlight their favorite Dimebag Darrell guitar solo. Here are their answers.

ZAKK WYLDE

"Walk," just because, like with Randy's stuff, it's so memorable and the note selection is so great. You could play Dime's "Walk" solo to anybody, and they'd go, "Oh, man. This guy's great."

KERRY KING

I'm sure most readers know I had a guest slot on "Goddamn Electric" [from *Reinventing the Steel*]. And no, I'm not picking my own! I always told Dime I had no business playing on his record. My spin is this: Every time Pantera came through my town, or I was in a place they were playing in the Nineties, I'd go up and play "Fucking Hostile" with them, and it wasn't too long before I started playing that lead. So I'm going to go with that one because I got the chance to play it with them, and it was fun as hell! Thanks to Dime for being so unselfish!

ALEX SKOLNICK

"This Love." I'm sure it would have been easy for him to just wail a bunch of licks over the heavy riff; instead, he took the challenge of playing over the clean verse

section. Although the dynamic is softer, he still plays a "screaming" solo with effective use of space and melody, capturing the intensity of the song.

ROB HALFORD

Darrell's solo in "Cowboys from Hell" hit me like lightning with his totally personalized sound and phrasing that leaves the hooks and melodies ricocheting in your brain.

NITA STRAUSS

I love the classic "Cowboys from Hell" solo — so much so, in fact, that we cover this song with my solo band! It's melodic, shreddy and super fun to play.

PHIL ANSELMO

"The Sleep." It's long and has so many interlocking moments of intensity throughout.

REX BROWN

"Planet Caravan." He thought it sucked, and I told him to leave it alone, so he comped it and stayed with that one. I was literally in tears.

OLA ENGLUND

"The Sleep" shows the hunger of a young Dimebag before he took over the world. It has everything — melody, shredding, drama and tone — and [is] filled with all the Dime

tricks. It's a perfect example of Dimebag playing from his heart.

MARK MORTON

The solo in "10's" from *The Great Southern Trendkill*, which is probably their most underrated album. It's just sort of bluesy, and I think it exemplifies Dime's genuine understanding of blues guitar. But it still sounds like him playing; his touch and his voice on the instrument remain ever apparent. It's a really bluesy solo — and then he plays over the change into this soaring, kinda major lick that rides over the chords, and it's just such a beautiful, memorable moment.

BLUES SARACENO

"Cowboys from Hell." As soon as I heard the first track on that album, I knew it was game on!

RITCHIE FAULKNER

"Walk" has the perfect blend of bluesy swagger mixed with those killer slides and bends that make it 100 percent Dime. Classic, flawless execution and original. Him in a nutshell, really.

JOSE MANGIN

"Domination." That solo and breakdown is the most significant guitar part of any Pantera song. It's hard to look beyond that solo. I love "Floods," too, and I know he loved that one; hell, he had that one in his back pocket since he was a teenager. But I still keep coming back to "Domination." It will forever be ingrained in my metal heart and soul.

MARK HOLCOMB

"10's" from *The Great Southern Trendkill*. There are so many underrated late-era



"‘THE SLEEP.’ IT'S LONG AND HAS SO MANY INTERLOCKING MOMENTS OF INTENSITY"
PHIL ANSELMO

Dime solos because I don't think he was concerned with cramming in as many notes as possible anymore. *Cowboys* and *Vulgar* had some iconic solos, but from *Vulgar* onward, he started to mess with effects, dissonance, minimalism, these big, cartoonish bends and really wide, exaggerated vibrato. The "10's" solo exemplifies all of that; the entire thing just drips emotion, feel and confidence. He played with a lot more soul than he got credit for, and this solo illustrates just how perfect his feel was. Putting just the right amount of touch on those slow, wide bends is one of the [hardest] things to do — and Dime could do it effortlessly.

MATT HEAFY

"Floods." You feel every note played in this solo. You feel the emotion as if it were a person singing you the very notes being so emotionally wrought from the strings.

SCOTT IAN

"Floods" has got it all. In a catalog of fantastic solos, this is the one that moves me the most.

GARY HOLT

"Cowboys from Hell." Signature song, signature solo, my favorite work of his. And I'm ultra partial to that first record since we took them out for their first tour for that along with Suicidal Tendencies. What madness that tour was!

CHARLIE BENANTE

"Floods" and "The Sleep" are two really emotional leads that always hit me hard. The way he expresses it through his Dean was just so him. His personality was this larger-than-life party figure, but he was one of the warmest, generous and loving people I knew. I think that side of him comes out a lot in his playing.

BILL KELLIHER

"A New Level" is a bluesy, speed-metal, articulated shred-fest that will leave your jaw on the floor.

CHRIS CAFFERY

"The Sleep" is un-Dime-niable! I think it's probably one of my favorite guitar solos, ever. Like "Summer's Rain" by Savatage and "Hotel California," it's right up with my favorite guitar solos!

GRADY CHAMPION

"We'll Meet Again," which is on *Power Metal* [Pantera's fourth independent album; released in 1988, it was the first one with Phil Anselmo on vocals]. That one hit me hard because it was just so melodic and heartfelt.



Dimebag in action at the Roseland Ballroom in New York City, April 13, 1994

You could just close your eyes and it fitted the song perfectly. All his solos blew me away, but that one just stuck to me for some reason — and has done since 1988!

JAKE BOWEN

"Throes of Rejection" is often overlooked. It's played over several weird rhythms and doesn't have too many traditionally melodic moments that Dimebag solos are known for. It's unpredictable and dissonant at times, but it still remains groovy and tasty. My favorite moment of the solo is when you think it's reaching its climax; it fakes you out and goes into a second section, finally culminating into a flurry of licks with drum fills to match. It sounds like pure chaos.

BEN ELLER

His phrasing in "Cemetery Gates" is so

lyrical. He plays over the changes beautifully, and it builds perfectly with just the right amount of shred toward the end. Classic!

FRANK BELLO

He told stories in his solos. He had all this technical greatness and could speed up with the best of them, but then he had those beautiful bends. It's gotta be the solo in "Floods" because it's just so tasty, and he was telling this really beautiful story in it.

KAYLA KENT

"Psycho Holiday." The whole song is my favorite groove to jam to, and the solo is the pristine cherry on top. Not many solos can hold their own without a rhythm guitar track underneath, but that solo definitely can.



"WE COVER 'COWBOYS FROM HELL'... IT'S MELODIC, SHREDDY AND SUPER FUN TO PLAY"
NITA STRAUSS

Dimebag onstage in the U.K. in 1994



solo without mentioning the playing that leads up to it; it's a crescendo of fine playing that sets up this incredibly tasteful solo. Melodic playing was clearly in Darrell's wheelhouse — and what he laid down when recording "Cemetery Gates."

RABEA MASSAAD

"I'm Broken" is filled with a bit of everything — wild bends, licks, attitude, bluesy moments, chromaticism, tension, release and the big victory bend at the end!

DAVE DAVIDSON

"Throes of Rejection" is dripping with attitude, and the licks are blazing hot. This solo combines the best elements of what make a great Dime solo. It's got memorable phrases, but it also has those inhuman sections where it sounds like he's flying by the seat of his pants, ready to go off the rails at any moment — but it always stays perfectly in the pocket. From a compositional standpoint, it's cool to hear what the rhythm section is doing underneath Dime's solo. They keep building up in intensity, adding different layers and feels that all climax leading back to the chorus. It's truly awe inspiring and speaks to Dime's ability to not just write great solos but to also write great rhythm parts to solo over.

ATTILA VÖRÖS

The *Official Live: 101 Proof* version of "New Level." That was my first Pantera song and album (I was 11 at the time), and it changed my life. That solo speaks to me; it's heavy, cheeky, funny and super energetic, and it gives me the energy like nothing else.

PHIL DEMMEL

"Rise." It's such a rad blend of 1/4, full and 1 1/2 bends. The Floyd Rose magic dives and pulls that follow the syncopated fills in the riff. All that coupled with the drum/bass accompaniment gives it such a live feel.

TOMMY VICTOR

"Drag the Waters." I like the way it starts out on its own during a break and then into a breakdown. It kind of reminds me of an old-school-type solo like Jimmy Page. It's not all shredding; it's got this biting blues thing going on. Very cool and very different.

JON DONAIS

I heard "The Sleep" on the radio last week, and I didn't want the lead to end. That's a lead that just takes you away. It has skill, feel and is just as important as the rest of the song. A grade-A lead in my book.

Special thanks to Rita Haney for her invaluable help on this one!

SATCHEL

Let's go with "Psycho Holiday," 'cause it makes my nipples hard.

CJ PIERCE

"Floods" is such an epic song, and the solos have so much depth and feel. Dime was a genius and played with such passion. That definitely comes through on "Floods."

CHRIS BRODERICK

"I'm Broken" starts off with some country bends straight into a diminished riff! Who else could do that except Dime? And he

follows it up with this crazy descending intervallic sequential riff, into sliding 3rds. So cool! Need I say more?

GUY SYKES

"The Sleep" has so much feel and is one of his longer solos. There were so many amazing solos on that record, and it gave the world the perfect introduction to just how talented Dime was.

DEAN ZELINSKY

"Cemetery Gates." It's a guitar-playing masterpiece. You can't just talk about the



"'I'M BROKEN' STARTS OFF WITH SOME COUNTRY BENDS STRAIGHT INTO A DIMINISHED RIFF!"

CHRIS BRODERICK

A DATE TO REMEMBER

How Pantera producer Terry Date captured Dimebag Darrell's six-string mastery on tape

BY NICK BOWCOTT

WORLD-RENOWNED METAL PRODUCER and engineer Terry Date hasn't just amassed a profoundly impressive discography (Soundgarden, Deftones, Prong, White Zombie, Slipknot, Dream Theater, Limp Bizkit); he was also the man behind the desk for Pantera's first four major-label albums — *Cowboys from Hell* (1990), *Vulgar Display of Power* (1992), *Far Beyond Driven* (1994) and *The Great Southern Trendkill* (2000).

How quick was Dimebag in the recording studio?

He was incredibly fast. "Walk" is a really good example of the way he worked in the studio. Once we were done with Vinnie's drums, Dime laid down his first rhythm track really quickly; I mean, he probably did it in about half an hour. Then it took us the rest of the day to do the double and then the triple of it. We spent massive amounts of time making sure the double was the same as the first one. All the attacks were exactly on time, and all the palm-mutes on the back of that main riff were also dead on time. This way, when you listen to that riff, the thump when he palm-muted the strings at the end of it almost becomes three-dimensional. In fact, if you're sitting in the right spot, you could almost hear it behind your head. We spent hours making sure that was exactly right, and then we had the triple to do on top of that. And then Rex came in and basically quadrupled that riff on the bass. [Laughs] That song took a whole day to do the rhythm guitars and bass, I believe.

That's typically how it went as far as his rhythm; the first track would be recorded pretty quickly, and then mirror imaging took longer because Dime wanted it so tight. Plus, because we were recording on tape, you couldn't get it close and then use a computer to manipulate it. This was real

hands on strings, so it took a while. But it sounds real, too, and that's always a good thing!

All those years I worked with Pantera, we recorded those songs on 24 tracks of tape, and that was it; we didn't link two machines together. I was looking at the track sheet for "Walk" the other day, and it was pretty amazing — seven tracks of drums, three tracks of rhythm guitars, one track of lead, maybe three tracks of vocal and a bass. And that was it!

What was the recording approach when it came to Dime's solos?

On the early records I'd be with him while he did them, and Vinnie would be in the room, too. On later ones, I would back off a little bit and let Vinnie and Dime work together, because their level of communication was non-verbal. Dime would play a part; Vinnie would just give him a look and Dime knew exactly what he meant! Or Vinnie would go, "Do that Randy Rhoads part there," and Dime would know exactly what he was talking about. So I was like, "I'm not getting in the way of that!" I'll sit in the back of the room and make sure the technology was on their side, but that brother-to-brother communication was really special. That probably started on "Vulgar," and it was definitely Vinnie and Dime working on the leads together on the next two.

Our basic formula — the way we worked on his solos — was always the same. And, once again, remember we were working on tape. We would dedicate four tracks for the lead and get three really good takes of the whole thing. We would then go through them and comp the best parts of each of those takes onto the fourth track. It was always a comp situation; you and I know what that means, but the kids nowadays

probably have no idea what I'm talking about! [Laughs] [Note: Comping means to combine the best parts of multiple recorded performances onto a single track.]

We'd always be experimenting, too. I remember one time he wasn't getting a sound he liked for a solo, so I said, "Maybe we get a different pedal." Dime goes, "Gimme 15 minutes." He ran home and came back with a grocery sack full of old, rusty pedals he had lying around his rehearsal place at his mom's house. He just plugged them all in, turned them all on and goes, "How does that sound?" And, I said, "That's perfect!" [Laughs] It was that kind of shit.

What was your favorite moment working with Dime in the studio?

The one that always sticks with me is probably more of a "me" thing than a "him" thing, and I apologize if it is! Somewhere around *Vulgar* he would occasionally get frustrated with me because I couldn't keep up with what he was doing, guitar-wise. He'd be playing a part, and I wasn't able to recognize what notes or chord he was referring to. Even though I don't play guitar, I'd watched so many hands over the years I knew what was going on; but Dime was so far beyond me musically, I was doing everything I could to just keep up with him and make sure he was moving as fast as his mind worked. For the most part it was fine, but there were times where I'd get stuck and hold him up. So, one day Dime finally said, "Alright, every night from here on in, after we're done recording, I'm gonna give you guitar lessons." I said "OK," and we started that night. We sat down and he started to teach me how to play "Johnny B. Goode." We did it for about five minutes and he looked at me and said, "Fuck it, we're done!" [Laughs]



Terry Date speaks at an event in Nice, Illinois, August 18, 2016

MASTER THE MOMENT

How Dimebag's "Floods" outro was re-recorded at (literally) the last minute **BY NICK BOWCOTT**

OF DIME'S MANY great recorded solos, the one in "Floods" — from Pantera's *The Great Southern Trendkill* — is one of the most celebrated and beloved. And we're not just talking about his stunning, emotive lead break in the song. Let's not forget about Dime's hauntingly catchy a capella outro passage, which he painted with moody musical perfection on a sonic thunderstorm tapestry. In fact, when Zakk Wylde plays this arpeggiated outro live, it's one of the most emotional moments of the electrifying Pantera Celebration concerts. And the enormous impact the outro has on the sold-out arena crowds is made even more powerful by the video montage of the late Abbott brothers, Dime and Vinnie, that's projected on-screen while Wylde pays homage to his dear friend.

Built around what Dime would refer to as "the Police chord," in reference to the wide-stretch, "spread-eagle" root-5-add9 chord shape guitarist Andy Summers used extensively in "Message in a Bottle" (see

FIGURE 1), you may have noticed that the "Floods" outro has a different tone from the rest of the track. To find out why, read on. I'll briefly set the scene and then let Dime flush out the "Floods" outro backstory, one

"IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN GET A GUITAR AND A KORG G3 TO ME BY 9 A.M. TODAY?"

that I keep in my "You just can't make this shit up" file.

It was about 5:30 in the morning and I was pulling an all-nighter, working on a crunch deadline for the Dimebag "Destroyer! Pantera Returns" cover story for the June 1996 issue of *Guitar World*. I was busy transcribing the tapes of the

lengthy interviews I'd done with Dime at "Camp Strapped" (his nickname for his Texas home), when the phone rang.

"What freaking jack-off would call me at this time of the morning?" I thought to myself as I hit the pause button on my tape recorder and listened as my answering machine picked up. To my amazement, the voice I heard was the same one I was transcribing — it was Dime!

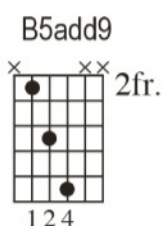
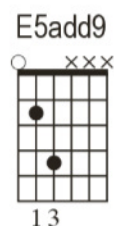
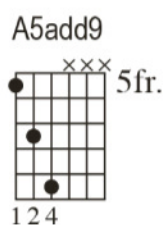
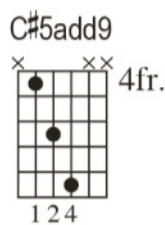
"Hitchcock! Pick up the damned phone," he shouted. Needless to say, I took the call immediately.

"Nicolas Cage! [one of Dime's nicknames for me, alongside "Hitchcock"] I'm sorry to call you at such a fucked-up time, but I need your help!" he said. "We're in New York mastering the album, and I need to re-cut a part this morning. Trouble is, I don't have any of my shit with me. Is there any way you can get a guitar and a Korg G3 [a digital multi-effect pedal Dime not only liked but endorsed] to me by 9 a.m. today? I wrote down Darrell's hotel room number,



FIG. 1

The first four basic root-5-9 chord shapes used in the "Floods" outro (gtr. tuned down one whole step [low to high, D G C F A D])



The Korg G3 — plus Dimebag's vintage Korg G3 ad and the July 1996 issue of *Guitar World*; [above] Dimebag with Nick Bowcott in early 1996



Dimebag does his thing at the San Jose State Events Center, March 10, 1991

the studio address, plus the tuning and string gauges he wanted and promised I'd do everything I could to make it happen. Dime said a Les Paul would definitely do the trick. The only problem was I'm a left-handed player, so one of my guitars wouldn't cut it, and I didn't have a Korg G3 at home either.

I poured through my address book and was lucky enough to get ahold of Steve Pisani from Sam Ash Music on 48th Street in New York City. Not only was Pisani fine with me calling him at home (I was nice enough to wait until 7 a.m.) at the crack of dawn, he also was happy to help and

"NO DUDE, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THIS IS THE PANTERA WAY — WHATEVER IT TAKES!"

stepped up to the plate like the true champ he is. As a result, a Les Paul (set up and intonated for Dime's string gauges and tuning) and a G3 were picked up and delivered to the mastering studio by 9 a.m., per Dime's plea. Phew! If you're reading this, Mr. Pisani, thanks again; you rule, my friend!

Scene set. As promised, I now hand this over to the words of the late, great Dimebag Darrell, as they will fill you in on the "before and after" segments of this unusual tale.

"This is a pretty good story," laughed Dime when we chatted about it a few days later. "What happened was this: I remember I was all buzzed-up at the studio one night while we were recording 'Floods.' It was really late, and I'd been working all night, but I just wanted to record that ending part that goes over the rain, so that I could hear how it worked with the song as a whole. So I just grabbed this guitar that was lying in the corner and laid the part down on tape in one take. The trouble was, that

guitar was way out of strobe [*intonation*] and I remember it sounding kinda sour and messed-up when the part starts to go higher up the neck. I heard it right away, but I didn't care at the time because I had intended to go back later and re-record the fucker on a properly strobed-out [*intonated*] guitar. All I wanted to do at the time was hear how the part fitted before I crashed for the night. Somehow, though, like a jackass, I forgot to fix the thing!

"So, there we were, sitting in the mastering suite in New York. I hear it and go, 'Oh, fuck, I forgot to fix the son-of-a-bitch... I can't live with that.' I just plain freaked out. I mean, how could I possibly let such a sour-sounding, outta-tune thing slip by? We were on a really tight production deadline, and it was really late, but I had to redo it, no matter what. So, we worked through the night and mastered pretty much everything except that one song. Then we split to get a few hours of sleep before finishing up, and that's when I called you.

"First thing in the morning, a runner came into the studio with the loaner guitar and the Korg G3 pedal you'd set up, and I went, 'Okay, I'm gonna record it straight to my DAT [*Digital Audio Tape*] machine and then we'll fly it in.' This dude from the record label was there and was totally freaking out. His voice was all shaky, and he went, 'You're gonna record a part when we're mastering? You can't do that! It's never been done, and I have to have the whole album finished up immediately. There's a car waiting downstairs and it's gonna leave in 45 minutes with the mastered album to get it printed. You don't understand — it's the Elektra way! We have to have it right away!

"I said, 'No dude, you don't understand! This is the Pantera way — whatever it takes!' I set up my shit in another room and went to record the part, but this dickhead from the label had gotten me all wound up. There I was, early in the morning, hung-over, trying to record this laidback, mellow part when I was anything but laidback and mellow. It just wasn't clicking. So I slugged back a few beers and a Blacktooth Grin or three [*one of Dime's drinks of choice, consisting of a healthy dose of Crown Royal or Seagram's 7 whiskey with a splash of Coke*], got in the groove and went for it again. I plugged straight into the G3 and played the part two or three times, direct to DAT. I then took it into the mastering room, got Vinnie to choose the one he liked the best, and we flew it in. And the record company man got the finished album on time, too. Goddamn! That's one hell of a story, even though I say it myself!"

THE BEST OF RIFFER MADNESS

Select highlights from Dimebag Darrell's legendary *Guitar World* column, all of which focus on the as-important-as-ever arts of riffing and rhythm work

BY DIMEBAG DARRELL

BUT FIRST, A brief backstory by Nick Bowcott! Back in 1993, *GW*'s editors decided to run with an idea that would become a mainstay of the magazine to this day — monthly artist columns. Two bona fide guitar heroes, Kirk Hammett and Eric Johnson, agreed to do six installments each, but the editors wanted to enlist one more columnist, ideally an up-and-coming player. Because I had been commissioned to work with said artists on putting together their columns, I was asked if I had any suggestions. My answer was instantaneous — “Diamond Darrell of Pantera. He’s the one!” I had previously interviewed the guitarist for a one-off lesson article for the magazine and was blown away by his playing, personality, passion and unique and colorful way of explaining things, which the guys at *GW* and I came to lovingly refer to as “Dimebonics.” He and I had also become good friends, so I knew working with him would be a blast. Editor-in-Chief Brad Tolinski agreed and, thankfully, so did the Texan Tornado. And so Diamond Darrell’s “Riffer Madness” column was born.

NOTE: Up to and including Pantera’s pivotal sophomore major-label album, 1992’s *Vulgar Display of Power*, Abbott’s nickname was “Diamond Darrell.” But when *Far Beyond Driven* was released in 1994, his name was listed as “Dimebag Darrell.” Said album reached Number 1

on the *Billboard* 200 chart, and the rest is history.

As already mentioned, the initial plan for Riffer Madness was a six-issue run. But due to the enthusiastic reader response to the first few installments, he was soon asked if he’d like to continue the column. Thanks to all the positive feedback he was getting, plus the fact that he genuinely enjoyed writing the column, he happily agreed. As a result, that first run of monthly columns totalled 28, all bearing his Diamond Darrell name. Then, in 2000, the celebrated guitarist-turned-columnist returned with another 14 installments, this time as Dimebag Darrell. His plan was to return for a third run in 2005, but, tragically, that never happened.

To celebrate the amazing 42 Riffer Madness episodes that Darrell selflessly gifted us with, here’s a collection of column highlights that focus on the all-important arts of riffing and rhythm work. So, as Dime stated when Riffer Madness debuted in the April 1993 issue of *Guitar World*, “Let’s plug in and start wailin’!”

Without further ado, I hand the pen over to Mr. Abbott.

RIFF RAP

To me and my band, guitar riffs are what it’s all about. We know that every time we jam on a great riff, we’ve got a fighting chance

of writing a great song. You don’t have to go to G.I.T. or know a bunch of weird-assed chords and scales to come up with killer shit, Jack. But, you’ve gotta be totally into what you’re doing. Check out Judas Priest’s *British Steel* if you don’t believe me. It’s packed full of god-like riffs, and most of them aren’t hard to play. If you don’t already own this album, buy it — it’s essential shit, man! Here are a couple of ideas that might help you get the most out of a good, heavy riff.

OCTAVE REPEATS

One of our audience’s favorite riffs is the main one in “Cowboys from Hell.” It’s a pretty easy one to play ‘cause it’s made up of one of the first rock scales we all learn — the E minor blues scale (see **FIGURES 1** and **2**). The first time you hear this riff is in the intro, where I play it an octave higher than I do during the rest of the track. Hearing it an octave higher is like an appetizer — it introduces you to the riff and makes you hungry for more. It also makes the full-blown version sound really heavy when it kicks in. I guess you could say the intro is the “body blow” and the main riff is the “knockout punch.”

My buddy Jerry Cantrell from Alice In Chains does the same sort of thing on “Would?” [*from Dirt*]. He starts off by playing the verse riff in a higher register then slams you in the teeth when the vocals hit by playing it an octave lower. To give the main “Cowboys” riff even more power, I play open-string root-5th power chords on the E and A notes (**FIGURES 3** and **4**) instead of just playing single notes, as I do in the intro. I also add some low-end “chunk” to the riff by applying some heavy-duty palm muting (P.M.). I use the idea of repeating a riff in different octaves during the bridge of “Cowboys,” too. This definitely makes that part sound cooler than if I had just played that [*descending*] run in the same register twice.”

[*EDITOR’S NOTE: Dime also often used this compositional technique of repeating a musical motif an octave higher or lower when playing lead, like at the start of his epic solo in the aforementioned “Cowboys from Hell” and also the one in “Psycho Holiday” (Cowboys from Hell), to name but two. Check them out. It’s an idea well worth embracing!*]

TEXAS-STYLE HALF-STEP BENDS

Using string bends instead of just playing regular, unbent notes can definitely help give certain riffs a cooler, heavier vibe. Take the opening riff to “Walk,” for example. I guess you could play the notes “straight” without the “greasy” string bend-and-

release (FIGURE 5 illustrates said “straight” approach), but the “real way” sounds way better to me, man! It’s much heavier and nastier, and that’s what we’re looking for, bud — weak riffs are out!

I do the same kinda thing on the opening riff to “Revolution Is My Name” (*Reinventing the Steel*). Here’s the twist I put on it... I call it “Texas style!” What I do is scoot back a fret from the notes I heard in my head and then bend up to each one from a half step below while also adding a pick squeal (FIGURES 6a and 6b). When I was jerking around with the original riff idea, I figured it would sound way more interesting if I did a slow, deliberate half-step bend up to each one, because as soon as each bend starts, your ear wants to hear the note come up to pitch.

Some people do this sorta thing a lot when they’re playing lead, but most of ‘em don’t bother to do it at all when they’re riffing out on the low strings. For some reason, a lot of guitarists who can play killer leads get real sterile on their rhythm stuff; they don’t bend notes, and they’re all too careful about playing their chords dead straight. Then, when they cut to lead, they start bending notes and adding vibrato all over the place.

LEAD RHYTHM & BENDING CHORDS

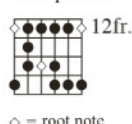
The way I’ve always looked at my rhythm playing is almost like I’m playing lead on the big strings anyway. Because of this I use vibrato and bends on the big strings as well as on the little ones... and not just on single-note stuff, either. Sometimes throwing down a bend or some vibrato on a power chord is cool, too! For example, let’s take a fairly mediocre riff like FIGURE 7a. To make it more evil and interesting sounding, try this: instead of using a regular G5 power chord, bend an F#5 shape up to G5, like in FIGURE 7b. Bending two different notes up exactly half-a-step at exactly the same time is kinda difficult at first, but stick with it ‘cause it sounds great when you get it down. You can hear me doing this at the end of “Hollow” (*Vulgar Display of Power*).

DON’T SKITZ — HANG TOUGH!

The breakdown riff at 2:05 in “We’ll Grind that Axe for a Long Time” (*Reinventing the Steel*) has got some [root/5th power] chord bends happening, too, and they’re actually whole-step bends. To do each bend, I pull the low E string (which is tuned down to D) with my index finger and the A string (tuned to G) with my pinkie, with some help from my ring finger (FIGURE 8a). The bend raises the pitch of the chord the same as if you were to slide it two frets up the

FIG. 1

E minor blues scale,
12th position



◇ = root note

FIG. 2

E minor blues scale,
open position



FIG. 3

open E5
power chord



FIG. 4

open A5
power chord



FIGS. 5-13: Guitar is tuned down one whole step (low to high, D G C F A D).

FIG. 5

Walking a “straight” line
N.C. (E5)



FIG. 6a

N.C. (E5)

(F#5)



FIG. 6b

N.C. (E5)

(F#5)

Same riff, played “Texas style”

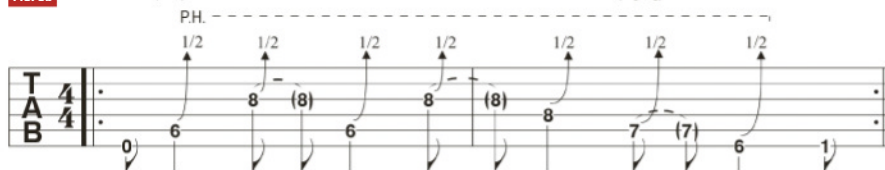


FIG. 7a

E5 G5 E5 G5

P.M. — — — P.M. — — —

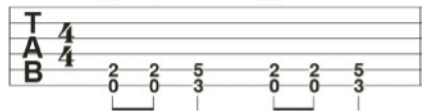


FIG. 7b

E5 F#5 G5 E5 F#5 G5

P.M. — — — P.M. — — —

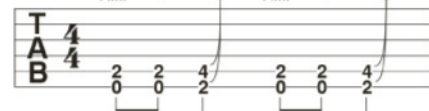


FIG. 8a

A5 B5 A5 A5 B5 A5



FIG. 8b

A5 B5 A5 A5 B5 A5



neck (FIGURE 8b), but it’s smoother sounding. That’s why I chose to go with the bend instead of the slide. Half the trick of this move is trying to keep the chord decently in tune while you’re bending it. If your 1st finger bends more than your pinkie, then the chord is gonna go sour. Don’t get me wrong — it’s cool to get a little out of whack, but at the same time you’re trying to hold

the chord in tune as much as possible while the bend is going on. It’s a total ear/feel thing — your ear is wanting to hear something and is telling you where to go while your fingers are feeling and controlling the bend.

Don’t spaz if you can’t nail these chord bends right away. Just keep hanging with it and it’ll come. Because you’re bending →



Vinnie Paul [left] and Dimebag, circa 1997

the big strings here, you might have to do it a few times to build up some strength in your fingers, if you're not used to doing it. There's a lot more mass down there, compared to the thinner strings! Also, you obviously have to bend the low strings by pulling them into your palm rather than pushing them upwards, like you normally do with the little strings, so that might take some getting used to, as well. The fact that my guitar is always tuned down a hair lower than a quarter step below concert pitch, plus down an additional whole step in this case, helps with the looseness of the strings. But it's still a pretty big bend. It doesn't have to be perfect, though. So just catch a vibe and roll with it.

UNIQUE TUNING OFFSET

Editor's Note: Per Darrell's renowned, long-time guitar tech, Grady "Dragon" Champion, here's the scoop on Dime's unusual guitar tuning offset: Whether it's down a half step (E $\flat$ standard), drop-D, drop-C $\sharp$ or some other variant, it was always an additional 60 cents flat of concert pitch (slightly lower than a quarter tone, which is 50 cents). Says Grady: "To us, E is really D $\sharp$ plus 40 cents. Likewise, A is really G $\sharp$ plus 40 cents, D is really C $\sharp$ plus 40 cents, and so on." Now you know why it's so hard to tune to a lot of Pantera songs.

SINISTER SLIDES

Sliding from one power chord to another

can also help make a riff sound more sinister. I got the idea from listening to Tony Iommi in Black Sabbath, and I do it a lot. For example, check out "Mouth for War" (*Vulgar Display of Power*). So, if I wanted to make a riff like **FIGURE 9a** sound nastier, I'd probably throw in a chord-slide and maybe a chord-bend too (**FIGURE 9b**). Which one sounds better? C'mon, there's no contest! **FIGURE 9b** kicks **FIGURE 9a**'s sorry ass! Like I've said before, sometimes even the simplest shit can be really bad-assed... as long as it's played aggressively. It's all about attitude, man — meaning playing it like you mean it!

LONG, SINGLE-NOTE SLIDES

There are two things you have to remember when doing really long slides that don't have a set starting place, like this one, "from nowhere in particular" to the 10th fret on the 6th string (**FIGURE 10**), which is along the lines of what I do in the verse riff of "Goddamn Electric" (*Reinventing the Steel*). First, you've gotta let off the strings a tad with your fret hand and just let them slide under your fingers. If you press too hard on the strings when you're doing a long slide up or down the neck, it probably won't come out right.

IT'S ABOUT THE DESTINATION, NOT THE JOURNEY!

The other thing to remember when you're sliding a long way is this: it's the destination

that's important, man. It doesn't really matter how you get there or where you start the slide. The trick is knowing where to stop and making sure that you don't get there too early or too late. So, keep your fret hand loose, use your ears and eyes and, with a bit of practice, you'll be nailing long assed-slides like the ones in the "Goddamn Electric" verse every time.

RULES? THERE ARE NO RULES!

My musical knowledge is pretty limited, scale-wise. I know the major scale, the minor scale, the pentatonic blues scale and the chromatic scale, but that's about it, man! If I can learn a new scale somewhere I'm definitely open to it. I'm not down on scales, it's just that I'm more into riffing and jamming as opposed to book-school theory reading. "Be raw" — that's what I always say. I'm always experimenting with new note ideas because in my style there are no rules. Always remember this, and never be afraid to cut loose. Hell, if you find yourself hanging on a bad note, you can always tighten it up by bending, sliding it, or dumping or yanking your whammy bar... don't skitz on this though, just keep an open mind and experiment. Whatever the song calls for and whatever you're hearing is fair game.

CHROMATIC MAN

In case you don't know what chromatic means, let me explain: it means every goddamned note! So, to play chromatically, all you do is move up or down a string one fret at a time. Simple shit, but it can sound really cool. I use chromatic movement a lot in my riffs because it adds a pushing/pulling kinda tension. It almost reminds me of running up and down a flight of stairs, one step at a time — 12 steps to the top, and 12 steps to the bottom. A chromatic passage can add mood and aggression to a part. If you've never dicked around with this idea, then check this out. Say you have a simple riff like **FIGURE 11**. Instead of just going from E to G and then back to E, try moving between them chromatically, like in **FIGURE 12**. You can do this between any chords or notes. It just depends on what you wanna create. This is a simple idea, but it kicks ass. Scope it out and then take it further. Good examples of riffs based on chromatic thinking are the main one in "A New Level" (*Vulgar Display of Power*), the pre-chorus of "Cowboys...", the first bridge riff of "This Love" and pretty much all of the riffs in "We'll Grind That Axe for a Long Time." That last cut is big-time chromatic.

Hopefully this will inspire you to jam out some cool chromatic-based riffs of your own. Keep shredding ass and hang raw!

FIG. 14

N.C. (Em)

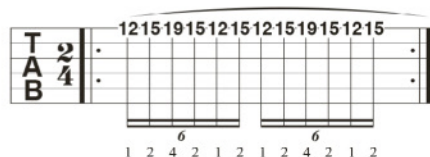
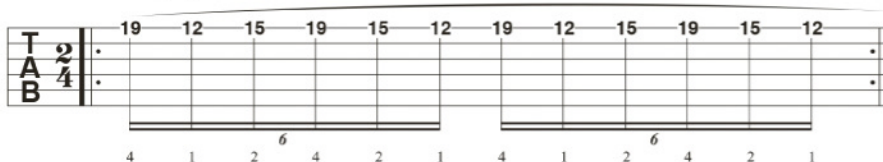


FIG. 15

N.C. (Em)



PICK SCRATCHING, NOT SCRAPING

When I play live, I jump around like an idiot for 90 minutes under a lighting rig that's hotter than hell. This makes me sweat like a pig and makes it really hard to keep a firm grip on my picks, even those that are supposed to be non-slip. Losing control of your pick on stage sucks, so either I or Grady scratch some deep Xs into both sides of my pick (see **PHOTO A**) with something sharp like a dart. Doing this makes your picks look like shit, but at least you won't look like a nincompoop when you drop one in the middle of a solo!

LEARNING FROM OTHERS BY LISTENING

Some folks tend to get really intimidated when they come across someone who really rips on guitar. But not me, pops. I get inspired! As far as I'm concerned, playing is not a competition. Hearing someone smoke always lights my fire and makes me try out new ideas and learn new shit. I don't sit down with a pile of records and try to cop licks, though. What I'm into is checking out the player's overall vibe and approach and learning from that. Use your ears and learn all you can from anything. Listen!

PINKIE POWER & EVH

When I first started playing guitar, one of my biggest influences was Eddie Van Halen. I kept seeing pictures of him doing big-assed left-hand stretches, and that inspired me to start dicking around with some wide-stretch ideas of my own, like the two E minor licks in **FIGURES 14** and **15**. Another thing I learned from studying those pictures was the importance of my little finger. It's there, so use it! It definitely gives you more reach!

AWKWARDLY COOL SYMMETRICAL RUNS

As I got to know my guitar neck better, I realized that there was an E note at the 19th fret on the A string — HOW 'BOUT THAT! Then, when I was jamming around one day, I thought to myself: "Hey I know some wide-stretch E minor licks (like the one in **FIGURE 15**) that also use the 19th fret, why don't I try moving that fingering pattern idea across each string, from high

FIG. 16

N.C. (Em)

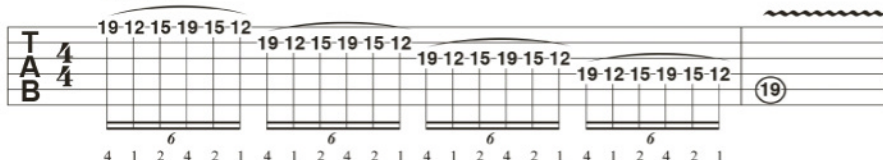
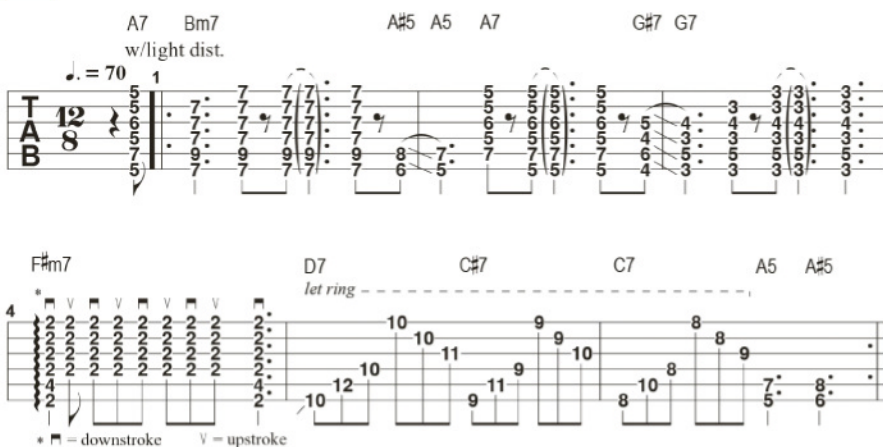


FIG. 17



to low, until I finish up on the E note at the 19th fret of the A string (**FIGURE 16**)?"

Since the fingering pattern in **FIGURE 16** is exactly the same on each string, a lot of guys call this kind of thing a symmetrical run. It's simple, but cool. To be honest,

I have no idea what the hell scales this run uses because I'm not a cat that's heavy on theory. All I know is it sounds awkwardly cool in the key of E minor, and that's all that matters. Listen closely and let your ears decide what notes are right or wrong!

PHOTO A



Anyway, because this idea worked, that's how I got into futzing around with symmetrical runs in a major way.

RUT BUSTING

Whenever you feel like you're stuck in a playing rut, always try and remember two things: One, you ain't the only player that gets hit with this shit; we all go through it from time to time. And two, you're not always gonna be stuck there, so don't freak out! The only way that'll happen is if you let it. So don't get bummed out and go, "Fuck it, I quit!" That's a dumb-assed, loser attitude. Instead, get to work, man. If you want to get out of a rut bad enough, you will. But it's up to you. No one else is ever gonna do it for you.

FATHERLY ADVICE

One day, when I was learning to play guitar, I was stomping around the house all pissed off because my playing was in a bit of a rut. My dad, who's a great guitarist, said something that I've always remembered. He asked me, "can you learn a new lick today?" I said, "of course I can." Then he said, "well son, if you decided to learn just one new lick a day, how many would you have at the end of the year?" Think about it, man! The possibilities are staggering. Shit! If I knew a lick for every beer or Black Tooth I've had, I can't even imagine how much extra knowledge I'd have!

THE IMPORTANCE OF OTHERS

To me, a sure-fire way to get into a rut is to sit around and play by yourself all the time. You've gotta get out there and jam! You don't have to necessarily be in a band. All you need is a couple of buddies who play. And they don't have to be guitarists either, jamming with a bassist or a drummer is cool. Jamming with other people creates energy and excitement. You can feed off that, and it will help push you to do things you'd never dream of by yourself.

BE YOURSELF, BY YOURSELF

If you have no buds to jam with, you can always record a rhythm part yourself and then wail a lead over it. I used to do that all the time. Don't always jam over the same

RIFTER MADNESS



BY DIAMOND DARRELL

C-CUT YA....

WELL FRIENDS, FANS & FAMILY! ITS COME TIME FOR THE LAST "RIFTER MADNESS" COLUMN... FOR A WHILE. I SINCERELY HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED THE 28 COLUMNS I'VE DONE AND PICKED UP ON ALL THE STUFF WE'VE COVER'D! DAMN WE'VE GONE THROUGH A BUTT LOAD OF COOL TECHNIQUES, KNOWLEDGE & STRAIGHT OUT CRAZY SHIT!!! - INCLUDING SOME TRICK STUFF I'M SURE MOST BLACKSMITHS WOULD NEVER REVEAL OR UNCOVER... IM GLAD I COULD & WOULD DO THIS FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT THERES MORE WHERE ALL THAT CAME FROM! HOPEFULLY I'VE HELPED OPEN SOME EARS & EYES! LET ALL THE IDEAS I'VE PUT IN YOUR HEAD COME AS THEY WILL - SUBCONSCIOUSLY & NATURALLY. AND, REMEMBER, ITS ALL GOOD, EVERYTHING GOES, AND THERE AINT NO DAMNED RULES NOR BOUNDARIES. SO GET OFF! TEAR IT A FRESH ASS, TEAR IT HARD, RIP GAPING HOLES IN IT! MAKE TRACKS - LEAVE MARKS!!!

FOREVER, STRONGER THAN ALL.

P.S. CHECK ME OUT ON 1-900-263-D-BAG.

I'LL BE KEEPING YOU UPDATED WITH WHATS GOING ON WITH ME & THE BOYZ, CUTTIN YA POINTERS, IDEAS, JAMMIN, PLAYING EXAMPLES, TALKIN TRASH, FEATURING YOU GUYS! I'M STARTIN OFF KINDA SIMPLE JUST TO GET THINGS ROLLING! THEN I'LL BE WORKIN IT UP. SO CALL UP, CHECK IT OUT & LEAVE ME A MESSAGE TELLING ME WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR & WHATS ON! LATA MAN.

sort of stuff though, or you could fall into a rut. Whenever I'd get tired of soloing over heavy riffs in E, I'd come up with something in a completely different key that had a completely different feel to it. Sometimes a change of mood and key can help you find fresh lead ideas. This laid-back, bluesy B minor riff in **FIGURE 17** is a good example of what I'm talking about here.

SIGNING OFF

Hopefully I've helped open some ears and eyes! Let all the ideas I've put in your heads

come as they will — subconsciously and naturally. And remember. It's all good; everything goes; and there ain't no damned rules nor boundaries. So, get off! Tear it a fresh ass. Tear it hard. Rip gaping holes in it. Make tracks — leave marks!!!

Forever, Stronger Than All.



DEAR DIME...

Dimebag Darrell loved digging into his "Feedback Sack" and answering readers' questions. Here are some of the best Q's and A's from his Riffer Madness days BY DIMEBAG DARRELL



GODDAMN! I JUST got done reading every one of the over 500 letters you've sent to my "Feedback Sack." Thanks for all the cool things you've said about the column. Over the past 19 issues, we've covered a hell of a lot of techniques, ideas, riffs and licks. Now, because a bunch of your letters included some really good questions, I'm gonna spend the next few columns answering some of them. The most common one of all was about my gear and how I get my tone, so let's kick off with that bad boy.

I really dig your column; it's got megs gonads! How about some advice on getting a ripping sound like yours? I'd also like to know exactly what pickups, strings, amps, pedals and rack gear you use. Thanx for all the killer lessons. Walk!

— Matt Loene, Syracuse, NY

I'm more than happy to let everybody know exactly what I've got going on in my rig, but I'm not gonna tell you how I've got it all wired up! The order in which you put your shit definitely makes a big difference, and that's something you should dick around with for yourself. For example, if you run your wah before all your forms of gain, it'll sound different than if you place it after a distortion or EQ pedal. It won't sound as ferocious or effective. It also makes a big difference if you put certain units in front of your amp instead of in its FX loop and vice-versa. For example, my bud Kirk Windstein from Crowbar uses basically the exact same rig as I do, but he wires it up in a completely different way, and he's got an awesome sound that's way different to mine! So I suggest that you take some time and try to wire up your shit in all the ways you can think of until you get the tone you dig best.

Another thing I recommend you dick with is using different forms of gain. There are very few amps that you can get as distorted as you want by themselves, so you've usually got to heat them up a little bit with a pedal of some kind. Anyway, even if your amp has all the gain you need right out of the box, if you put another form of gain in front of it then you'll get a completely different type of crunch or distortion. It doesn't have to be a distortion unit either; anything that can give you more gain is cool — like a clean boost or EQ pedal. I use a little blue MXR 6-band EQ pedal I got from a pawn shop for some of my gain. The cool thing about using a graphic EQ is you can decide what frequencies you want to add crunch to by pushing those

particular EQ bands up more. With a distortion or overdrive box though, the overall tone tends to get distorted. That's why I like to use gain units rather than distortion pedals.

Altogether, I run three types of gain before I even hit the amp — a hot pickup (a Bill Lawrence XL500L lead humbucker), my MXR graphic EQ and a Furman PQ-4, which I use for EQ and gain. Because I've got all this gain going on, my Rocktron Guitar Silencer is very important to me. I've got to have something that'll shut my shit down or there's too much hiss and uncontrollable feedback — kinda like my "Feedback Sack"!

Anyways, in addition to the stuff I've already mentioned, here's what I use: modified Dean ML guitars; Randall Century 200 125-watt solid-state heads; Randall 412JB straight 4x12" cabinets loaded with 80-watt Jaguar speakers, for my dirty sound; and Randall 412CB straight 4x12" cabs loaded with 70-watt Celestion speakers for my clean sounds; DR strings (.009-.046 for regular and drop-D tunings; .009, .011, .016, .028, .038, .050 for guitars tuned down a whole step); an MXR Flanger/Doubler rack unit; two Digitech Whammy pedals — one on stage, one backstage — see next question); and a Vox wah. I also use a Yamaha SPX90, and a Korg G3 for my clean shit.

Just so you know, even if you get all the gear I use and wire it up the same way I do, it won't be my sound exactly. Having said that, the rig's there, and it's definitely doing something! The bottom line is this: try to emulate your favorite player's sound only as a basis to find your own tone. And don't be afraid to experiment with different amps, pickups, effects, wirings, axes, etc. Try anything and everything — give it all a chance. Most important, get your rig set up the way you want it to sound.

[Editor's Note: The date of Dime's answer to the above question was November 1994.]

I thought you used a pedal to get that high squeal during the main riff of "Becoming," but when I saw you playing the song live, you weren't stepping on anything. What's the trick there, bro?!

- Ken "Z Man" Zemanek, Chicago, IL
The trick is to have a bad-assed tech like Grady Champion and let him work the Whammy pedal back there for you, so that you can dance and jam to the groove, instead of being strapped to a pedal. That riff smokes man, and there's no way I could just stand still on stage in one place and play it. Grady, if you're reading this, you @#\$%in' rule 88 bud! Jimmy Johnson plus DDS pushing 12 with your name on it. Right back at ya!

I'm completely blown away by your sound and technique, and, like any guitarist, I wish I could do more on the fretboard than I can. Like you, I'm a spazzer who can't sit down for shit and teach myself scales and things. I just like to jam! Are there any tricks of the trade you know that could give me some new lead ideas? — Wayne "Farm Boy" Farmer, Coppers Cove, TX

One word, Farm Boy – chromatics! I think a lot of people are really intrigued by all those different modes and shit, whereas I'm kinda more inclined to take a lick and then try and move it up or down the neck chromatically, one fret at a time. It's the simplest thing in the world to do, and it can sound killer! Try it, man – sit there and burn on a lick like the simple A minor one shown in the first bar of **FIGURE 1**. Then, start moving it chromatically up the fretboard, toward the bridge, like in bars 2 and 3. Although I take this lick up an entire octave (12 frets) here, you don't have to do that; you can start and stop wherever you like 'cause, for the millionth time in Riffer Madness, there are no rules! I mean, you could just stop at the 10th fret, like in **FIGURE 2**. Moving a lick chromatically down the neck works really well too. Check it out. **FIGURE 3** is just me flipping the previous lick around on its head.

Moving a riff chromatically can also be a good way of adding tension to a song. I do this sometimes, like in the middle of "Shedding Skin" (Far Beyond Driven), for example.

How did you make the cool-sounding chirping noise that ends your solo in "Hard Lines, Sunken Cheeks" (*Far Beyond Driven*)? — Tom Gillis, Seattle, WA

What I'm doing there is bending the G note on the high E string's 15th fret and then tapping the same string at the 22nd fret with the edge of my pick, while gradually releasing the bend. I start off making a straight up and down "chopping" motion with my pick that gets smaller as the "chirp" gets faster. Then, once I'm "chopping" as fast as I can, I start going back and forth with my pick, kinda like I'm sawing the string. If your pick is beat up a bit and has some small grooves in it, that'll help too. To make the trill jump out a little more on the album, I overdubbed a harmony part to it.

FIG. 1

FIG. 1

N.C. (Am) (Am) (A $\sharp$ m) (Bm) (Cm) (C $\sharp$ m) (Dm) (D $\sharp$ m) (Em)

(repeat prev. beat) (shift up one fret on every eighth note)

1

TAB

5 5 8 5 8 5 5 6 9 6 7 10 7 8 11 8 9 12 9 10 13 10 11 14 11 12 15 12

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

(Fm) (F $\sharp$ m) (Gm) (G $\sharp$ m) (Am)

3

13 16 13 14 17 14 15 18 15 16 19 16 17 20 17 17 20 17 17 20 17 20

2 2 2 2 2 2

FIG. 2

FIG. 2 N.C. (Am) (A♯m) (Bm) (Cm) (C♯m) (Dm)
(shift up one fret on every beat)

The diagram shows a guitar neck with frets 5 through 13. Above the neck, chords are indicated: N.C. (Am) (A♯m) (Bm) (Cm) (C♯m) (Dm). Below the neck, fret numbers are written: 5, 8, 5, 6, 9, 6, 7, 10, 7, 8, 11, 8, 9, 12, 9, 10, 13, 10, 13. A circled 13 is at the end. A wavy line indicates a continuation of the sequence. Below the fret numbers, there are six boxes, each containing a '2', representing a second finger position. To the left of the neck, the letters T, A, and B are stacked vertically, with a '4' next to each, indicating a four-finger position.

FIG. 3

FIG. 3

N C. (Dm) (C#m) (Cm) (Bm) (A#m) (Am)

(shift down one fret on every beat)

The diagram shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes a sequence of chords and fret numbers for a guitar exercise. The chords are N C. (Dm) (C#m) (Cm) (Bm) (A#m) (Am). The fret numbers are 10, 13, 10, 9, 12, 9, 8, 11, 8, 7, 10, 7, 6, 9, 6, 5, 8, 5, and a circled 8. The fret numbers are grouped into pairs: (10, 13), (10, 9), (12, 9), (8, 11), (7, 10), (7, 6), (9, 6), (5, 8), and (5, 8). The circled 8 is followed by a wavy line. The fret numbers are written below the staff, and the chords are written above the staff. The fret numbers are also written inside the staff lines, with some numbers (10, 13, 10, 9, 12, 9, 8, 11, 8, 7, 10, 7, 6, 9, 6, 5, 8, 5) appearing in the first four lines of the staff. The fret numbers are also written in the first four lines of the staff, with some numbers (10, 13, 10, 9, 12, 9, 8, 11, 8, 7, 10, 7, 6, 9, 6, 5, 8, 5) appearing in the first four lines of the staff.

I think it's great how you use part of your songs to make points in your column lessons. After listening to "This Love" (Vulgar Display of Power), I'm curious how you control such wide bends. I tried to figure it out but was unsuccessful. Help!

- Jake Kouns, Centerville, VA

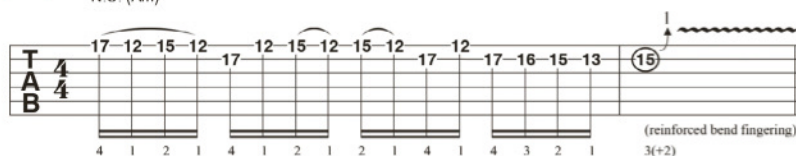
To be accurate when you're doing big-assed bends like the ones in "This Love," you've gotta use your ears, man - it's all a matter of pitch and control. Another thing that will help give you more control over your bending is using more than one finger to do the bend. For example, when I bend a note with my little finger, I help it out with my other three fingers. The guys at *Guitar World* tell me that the correct term for this is reinforced bend fingering.

Do you use your pinkie a lot? I haven't been playing long, and whenever I use mine, the tip of it hurts like hell. I'll work on it though, if you think it'll make me play better. Thanx, man, lata! — Scott Scholze, Silvedale, LA

I'd definitely advise you to use your pinkie, bro. I use mine all the time! On wide-stretch ideas, you've gotta have it there, and it comes in real handy when you're jamming on a riff on the low E and A strings too. If you don't use it much, try throwing it in there 'cause you might come up with something cool that you've never done before. I mean, the A minor blues lick in **FIGURE 4** would be pretty tough to play if you don't use your pinkie. Using your little finger definitely opens up the neck more, so why limit yourself? Don't be one of those people that goes: "Oh, my pinkie's weak; I ain't gonna use it." It's there, so why not use the #\$\$*er?

FIG. 4

N.C. (Am)



My all-time favorite Pantera cut is "Use My Third Arm" (Far Beyond Driven). It totally crushes! I've managed to figure out how to play all of it except for one single #\$\$in' chord, and it's driving me crazy! What's the shape you use during the intro and verse? I've tried everything, and nothing sounds right. Please help me before they lock me in a padded cell and throw away the key!

— Wayne Stevens, Phoenix, AZ

That's a real #\$\$ed-up chord and, to be honest I don't even know what it's called. For that song, my guitar is tuned to D standard (low to high: D G C F A D), so everything sounds a whole step lower. The chord shape you're talking about is shown here in **FIGURE 5**. I guess it's an inverted E_b power chord with an F, the 2nd, on the low E string, if there is such a chord! Remember, there are no rules! If something sounds good, run with it, bro!

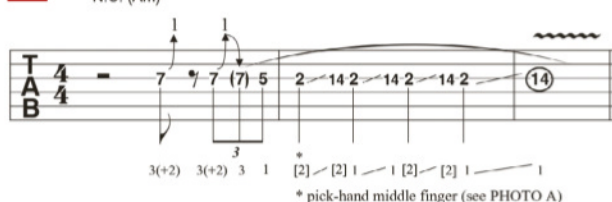
FIGS. 5 and 6: Guitar is tuned down one whole step (low to high, D G C F A D).

FIG. 5



FIG. 6

N.C. (Am)



If you have any tips on getting a record deal or anything else to do with making it in the business, I'd be grateful if you shared them. Thank you, from an aspiring guitarist. — Jason Tousignant, Corinth, NY

Two words, man — time and perseverance. That's what it takes to get anywhere in this business. My bandmates and I were jamming together for eight or nine years before we got signed. So hang tough, and give your shit to as many people as you can! The main thing is to have your own style, and that kinda thing doesn't happen overnight. Hell, it took us nearly eight years to find ourselves and get our "Cowboys from Hell" identity together. It is possible to get a deal though, I swear — I'm living proof!

PHOTO A



MATTHEW OWEN

I've been playing for just over two years now and can wail on pretty fast riffs, like the ones in "Cowboys from Hell." But I have trouble nailing some of your slower, simpler-to-play power grooves. I don't understand this, man! Slow riffs should surely be easier to play than faster ones, right? — Terry Herrington, Sydney, Australia

That's a good question, bro. Some people think that playing fast takes a whole lot of talent, but I'll tell ya: playing real slow and being able to keep in the groove while not rushing the beat is the shit too! My buds in Crowbar jam on some really slow, heavy riffs, and they definitely ain't as easy to play as they may seem. You gotta pay real close attention to the groove and resist the tendency to rush. Hang loose, hold back and let your ears decide when you should hit the next note, not your fingers!



Dimebag on stage in San Diego in 2001

"THAT FAKE ECHO PART IN 'WALK' GETS ME ALL THE TIME. WHEN I SAW HIM DO THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, I HAD TO ALSO TRY TO DO IT"
CHARLIE BENANTE (ANTHRAX, PANTERA CELEBRATION)

Could you please explain how you do that cool "cross-handed sliding trick" in the second half of your epic solo in "Walk" (Vulgar Display of Power)? — Tommy Himes, Angola, IN

A bunch of you have written in, asking about the "fake echo" technique I use about two-thirds of the way through my "Walk" solo, so here goes. It's real simple, actually: all I'm doing is repeatedly sliding up the G string from the 2nd fret to around the 14th fret, alternating hands. **FIGURE 6** is an A minor lick similar to the one in "Walk" that incorporates this "fake echo" technique. Here's how it goes:

While you're doing the bend at the beginning, reach over with your right (pick) hand and "capo" (barre) the G string at the 2nd fret with your middle finger (see **PHOTO A**), before you do a pull-off with your left (fret) hand.

As soon as you pull-off your LH, start sliding your RH middle finger up the G string towards the bridge.

While your RH is sliding, fret the G string at the 2nd fret with your LH index finger.

When your RH slide gets to around the 14th fret, pull-off your RH finger off the string and then start sliding your LH finger up the neck.

While your LH is sliding, fret the G string at the 2nd fret with your RH middle finger.

Pull-off your LH finger when it reaches around the 14th fret and start sliding your RH finger up the G string.

While your RH is sliding, fret the G string at the 2nd fret with your LH index finger.

When your RH slide gets to around the 14th fret, pull-off your RH finger off the string and start sliding your LH finger up the neck.

Stop your LH slide at the 14th fret and add some vibrato.

Got it? If you don't, check out the "Walk" video 'cause there's a close-up of me doing it during the solo. And remember, there are no rules, so dick with shit, experiment and let's get it out here. Lata!

HOW I PLAY

"5 MINUTES ALONE"

A Riffer Madness recap jam session BY DIMEBAG DARRELL

I RECKON WE should take a quick look back at some of the things we've covered in my column so far. Over the past year, we've rapped about a shitload of playing ideas that are all good and important, so let's regroup and tighten shit up. We're gonna do this by simply applying some of these ideas and techniques in a straight driving tune called "5 Minutes Alone," which is on our brand-new album, *Far Beyond Driven*. Enough talk — let's jam! **[EDITOR'S NOTE: Unless stated otherwise, all bar numbers refer to the complete "5 Minutes Alone" transcription that starts on page 144.]**

RIFF WALK

For this song, my guitar is tuned down a whole step [*what's known as D standard (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D)*], plus a c-hair [*specifically, an additional 60 cents flat*]. One of the cool things about this tuning, along with sounding heavy, is that, assuming you haven't beefed-up your string gauges, your strings are loose and spongy, which enables you to do stretchy shit. The opening and chorus riff of this cut has you doing power chord slides and also working on your muting technique to make the riff come across right. I wanted this one to sound just like the demo — loose (noise) gate, nasty around the edges, raw and live sounding. Ain't nothing wrong with some noise! The "ka-chu-ka" sound at the end of every other bar is a loose fret-hand mute across the strings around the 3rd fret and the picking action I use is "up-down-up." Make sure you mute the strings with more than one finger to prevent unwanted natural harmonics from happening.

Bar 9 is the slippery-sounding, meandering single-note run that happens before each verse. This run uses three elements that we've covered in previous columns: string slides, chromatic runs and the tritone interval [*G to C# and vice versa, and F to B and vice versa*]. After compounding these three things together, the riff begins to get pretty heavy!

The verse riff starts with a palm-muted, syncopated power groove that uses an open



E5 power chord [*bars 10 and 11*]. Play close attention to the picking action indicated above the tabs. Then, at bar 12 I scoot my fretting finger back a fret to create a real dark-sounding E $\flat$ 5/E chord. I add to the tension of it by deliberately not muting the strings while switching to all downstrokes and putting some muscle into it!

Next up is the single-note riff that ends the verse. I use string bends and a release to add color to it, and a string slide too. The second note in it is not an E though, as shown in **FIGURE 1a**. Rather, it's an F note played one fret higher on the A string, at the 8th fret (**FIGURE 1b**). You'll hear right away that it's much more sinister sounding than that way.*

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Dime used FIGURE 1a in his June '94 column, and corrected it in his September '94 column, once he realized his mistake (and one commonly made in many transcriptions). That's how seriously he took "Riffer Madness." As he once mentioned at the end of a column, "P.S. Thanks for the shitload of cool letters you've been sending

in about "Riffer Madness." I've been real busy lately, but I always make time to do this column for you because of all your positive feedback. Stay driven. Keep your amp overdriven and flat-ass, straight-out jam. Lata!"

The pre-chorus [*bars 22 to 30*] has some single-note stuff happening that involves finger slides and frantic fret-hand vibrato.

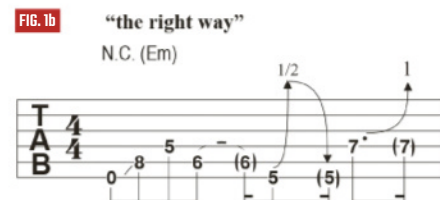
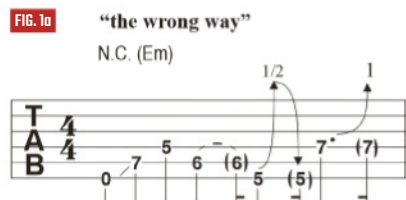
Bars 37 and 38 are the repeated two-bar riff that immediately follows the second chorus. As you can see, it combines the 16th-note run from bar 9 [*transcription bar 38*], preceded by a slight variation on it [*bar 37*]. We follow that with a similarly meandering, single-note riff [*bar 39*] that combines slides, tritones and some chromatic shit. At the end of it [*bar 40*], I use power chords to add fatness and a downhill chromatic slide to make the riff avalanche back into the main jam. This time around though [*bars 42-45*], the main riff goes half as long, with a trick fill in the middle ("cha-ka-cha, cha-ka-cha, cha-ka-cha, ching") and then finishes with a low-string bar dump.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: From here on in, all the bar numbers refer to the figures shown in this lesson, not the main transcription.]

SOLO ZONE

Now we're gonna zone in on the solo. Since I used two guitars on the record, I'm gonna show you the "one guitar" version I play live. If you have problems nailing this right off the bat, break it down into sections, focusing on one bar at a time. Go slow until you get it right, then build up speed.

The solo starts off with a bluesy, double-stop lick in G (**FIGURE 3**, bars 1 and 2). I barre the B and G strings at the 5th fret



with my ring finger and then bend them both up about a half-step. I kinda look at this as bending a small part of a C barre chord. I do this bend by pushing the B and G strings up towards the lower strings, but you could also do it by pulling 'em down toward the floor too. Try both ways, and go with the one that works best for you.

Bar 3 is the exact same lick as the one in bar 2 but moved up three frets. Then, at bar 5, we get into milking one note for all it's worth! All I basically do for the next three bars is tremolo pick the shit out of the B note at the 19th fret on the high E string, while bending and releasing it as shown. It's definitely a feel thing, though. On the record, it sounds like a siren going off because of the two-guitar doubling. You can kinda get this effect on one guitar by adding a tight slap-back echo or some loose chorus.

In bars 8 and 9, I hit a short E minor blues scale (E, G, A, B $\flat$, B, D) run. Once you get the notes right, add your own vibrato and feel. I then dive back into the bluesy theme that started off the solo. To bring the whole thing to a climax, I move this lick up the neck to B $\flat$ (bar 10) then C (bar 11) before finishing in D (bar 12). I close the whole thing off with a harmonic squeal where I use my whammy bar to pull the natural harmonic (N.H.) that lies a hair behind the 2nd fret on the G string up to D.

If you don't play much lead, don't freak out: this is the perfect simplistic lead to get you off the ground and onto soloing.

ASS STOMP TIME!

FIGURE 4 shows the "Ass Stomp" breakdown riff that happens after the solo. This riff features two dark intervals: the flatted 5th (E5 to B $\flat$ 5 and vice versa) and the minor 2nd (E5 to F5). It also has a power chord slide happening (F5 to G5). You've gotta mute the strings with both hands to keep those "holes of silence" clean, tight and abrupt. Remember: loose is cool sometimes, but for this riff, tight and abrupt is where it's at. After you've played the repeating two-bar pattern four times, then comes the curve ball — a bar of $\frac{2}{4}$ that repeats the first two beats of the previous bar [marked as the "two-beat riff" in **FIGURE 4**] — before continuing in the next bar with the E5 - F5 - E5 - F5 - G5 changes, which then repeat and are followed by some fast, percussive, muted-string "chucking." This brings the "Ass Stomp!" section to an aggressive climax that slams into the final chorus.

Until next time, crank your rig on 12, let it feedback wide-open for a good two minutes, freak your neighbors out, and ENJOY THE POWER OF THE GUITAR! "Oh, what a feeling," and it ain't no damned Toyota! **GW**

FIG. 3 solo: live, one-guitar version

N.C. (G5)

(B $\flat$ 5)

(E5)
tremolo pick, with gradual bends and releases

(G5)

(B $\flat$ 5)

(C5)

(D5)

* w/bar N.H. (D)

* "Dump" bar to slack, play natural harmonic, then pull bar up to raise pitch to D.

FIG. 4

F5 B $\flat$ 5 F5 E5 F5 E5 B $\flat$ 5 E5 F5 E5 F5 G5 (play 4 times)

"two-beat riff"

"two-beat riff" repeat

E5 F5 E5 F5 G5 N.C.

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SOUND CHECK



“The TransAcoustic effects are still thrilling to hear coming from an unplugged acoustic”

Yamaha TAG3 C TransAcoustic Guitar

By Chris Gill

THE ACOUSTIC GUITAR has always had a distinct advantage as a highly portable “orchestra in a box,” but in 2016 when Yamaha introduced its TransAcoustic technology, which produces entirely self-contained reverb and chorus effects within the acoustic’s sound chamber without external effects or amplification, they greatly expanded the tonal and textural universe for the purely acoustic player.

The Yamaha TAG3 C TransAcoustic guitar introduces the second generation

of TransAcoustic technology with improved reverb and chorus effects and the addition of delay effects and looper functions. Yamaha currently offers this technology built into an attractive cutaway dreadnought model with either a natural or sand burst finish.

Build Quality

At its core, the Yamaha TAG3 C is a pro-level acoustic constructed using quality traditional tone woods that include solid Sitka spruce (top), mahogany (solid back

and sides, neck) and ebony (fingerboard, bridge). The body has a mirror-like gloss finish, while the neck is sprayed with a matte finish. The overall appearance is relatively understated and austere, lacking fretboard inlays and headstock decorations (other than a Yamaha brand decal) and featuring single-layer black body binding, with the soundhole rosette’s blue ripple pattern providing the only attention-getting eye candy.

The TransAcoustic electronics and actuators (the devices that convert string →

Engaging the looper's Start and Stop functions and adding overdubs can also be done by tapping the circular Tap Sensor inlay below the sound hole; effects can be modified via the TAG Remote App [right]



vibrations into processed signals that are transmitted into the acoustic chamber) are hidden out of view internally. The only telltale signs of the technology within are a set of four control knobs arranged in a clover-leaf pattern surrounding a central power switch and a slotted port for a magnetic plug that recharges the Li-ion battery, both located on the upper bass bout. The battery charge lasts for about five-and-a-half hours of continuous use.

A line output jack all the TAG3 C to function as an acoustic-electric. Natural acoustic and effect processed sounds and looper signals are output together through this jack.

Playability

The TAG3 C's relatively flat 15 3/4-inch fingerboard radius, 20 medium frets, 11.0mm string spacing and slim C-shaped neck profile offer comfortable playability, and the cutaway provides easy access up to the 18th fret (the 19th and 20th frets require a bit of a stretch). Our example was perfectly set up from the factory and strung with Elixir Nanoweb 80/20 Bronze light strings.

Using the built-in TransAcoustic effects is super easy — just press the central button

to turn on the power then dial in the effects you want. Each effect is 100 percent dry with its corresponding knob turned fully counterclockwise and turning it clockwise increase the effect's volume/wet setting. The looper section involves more complex sequences to engage record, overdub, delete, undo and redo functions, but the processes are easy to remember once they've been performed a few times. Start and stop functions can be engaged via the side-mounted controls or by tapping the sensor located underneath the circle on the guitar's top located on the cutaway horn just a few inches below the soundhole and within easy reach while playing.

Sounds

By itself with the TransAcoustic effects, the TAG3 C delivers all the warm, expressive natural acoustic sounds that players look for from a high-quality flattop dreadnought. The bass, mids and treble are better balanced than a typical square-shouldered dreadnought, with the mids in particular exhibiting nice body and presence while the bass is now overpowering and the treble is crisp but not harsh.

The TransAcoustic effects are still thrilling to hear coming from an unplugged

acoustic. The reverb and chorus effects sound even more luxurious and rich than before, and the delay effects are nice additions that expand the system's capabilities in a highly useful manner. Note that the effects can be modified using the TAG Remote App, which communicates with the guitar via a wireless Bluetooth connection. The app allows users to adjust effect parameters and select effect variations like room, hall and plate reverb, analog or simple delay and double detune or four-voice chorus.

Verdict

The Yamaha TAG3 C is well worth its price for its stellar natural acoustic tones and playability alone, but when you add in the incredible expanded sonic versatility of its TransAcoustic effects and looper function it becomes an outstanding bargain. Thanks to TransAcoustic technology, playing unplugged is no longer a compromise, and guitarists can now enjoy lush studio effects and textures anywhere they go and feel like playing. **GW**

STREET PRICE: \$1,699.99

MANUFACTURER: Yamaha, yamaha.com

PROS

- + Outstanding tones woods and construction
- + Quality reverb, chorus and delay effects that nicely complement acoustic playing styles and tones
- + Looper greatly enhances solo performance capabilities with its record and overdub functions

CONS

- Players who prefer more ornate acoustics may find its appearance austere
- Controlling looper functions is not intuitive and requires a few practice runs to become used to necessary control sequences

Supro Black Magick Reverb TB

By Paul Riario

VERY FEW ARTISTS can combine guitar-sliling bravado and searing blues chops more authentically than Tyler Bryant. As a young guitarist forging a kickass path in a crowded field for bluesy rock 'n' roll, Bryant has proven he's head and shoulders above many of his six-string peers. So much so that Supro has bestowed him with a signature amplifier christened the Supro Black Magick Reverb TB, which, in a nutshell, is a high-power version of Supro's flagship Black Magick Reverb 1x12 combo.

Bryant has been smitten with the tone of Supro's 25-watt Black Magick Reverb combos, having taken them out on tour, but he eventually concluded that he needed "bigger bass response, more headroom and increased output power." Enter the 35-watt Black Magick Reverb TB, which soundly addresses each issue.

Build Quality

Supro customarily exhibits a classy look for its amps, and the BMR TB combo firmly embraces that aesthetic. Adorned in a Black Scandia tolex with cream stripe siding and black piping, silver-speckled and black grille cloth and a heavy-duty, vinyl "dog-bone" handle, the amp looks vintage cool from top to bottom. Below the top control panel, the BMR TB presents a hardwearing aluminum chassis outfitted with a chunky, custom-made Supro output transformer and a tidy arrangement of components and tubes. Instead of the unusual 6973 tubes employed by the flagship BMR, the BMR TB arrives with a matched pair of Sovtek 5881/6L6WGC power tubes to deliver a more powerful 35 watts of Class A power. The BMR TB shares the same topology as the original combo with independent Volume 1 and 2 controls,



a shared two-band EQ (Bass & Treble), tube-driven spring reverb and tremolo, Master Volume and channel input jacks (In 1+2 and In 2). Channel 1 (In 1+2) highlights a new "bright cap" modification that adds a noticeably smooth top-end sparkle to Volume 1 and the ability to blend in Volume 2 or not. Conversely, Channel 2 (In 2) retains the original Black Magick preamp circuit controlled solely by Volume 2. The amp's voice comes courtesy of a custom Supro BD12 — a high-power, oversized ceramic speaker made by Celestion.

Performance & Sounds

Players like myself who have played the OG Black Magick Reverb combo have quietly wished it had more oomph. So it's a relief that Bryant offered this useful feedback, ultimately leading to his signature amp that sounds bigger and better. Is it louder and fuller? Yes and yes. A minor criticism of mine has been that Supro combos tend to sound boxy and here, the BMR TB pushes the right amount of air to fill a room with clarity and definition and can handily compete with a stick-heavy drummer.

The "bright cap" modification on Channel 1's volume is the real star of the show when tapped from the "1+2" input, adding top-end brilliance when blended with Volume 2's volume, which simulates the "jumped channel" effect of a 4-input Marshall with a firm crunch. You'll find, like me, that the BMR TB is a muscular-sounding combo — whether you opt for dialing in punchy cleans or thickened overdrive as you crank the volumes to their limits. The BD12 speaker solidly articulates its mid-heavy voice; however, I found running the BMR TB through other cabinet and speaker choices a more rewarding tonal experience, thanks to its 16-ohm, 8-ohm and 4-ohm output options. Also, I wish the control panel orientation faces you rather than appearing upside down as you stand above it, but this is a minor quibble. The



onboard 3-spring tube-driven reverb is quite good but does have a lingering decay even at moderate levels. Despite that, the bias-modulated tube tremolo sounds hypnotic and gorgeous, and its speed range is double the rate of the original BMR.

Verdict

The Black Magick Reverb TB is one of Supro's finest combo offerings thus far; with increased headroom and output power, a more usable tonal range with its "bright cap" modification that adds sparkle to its mid-focused voice and tube-saturated drive with tingling warmth. As a pedal platform, the amp becomes even more capable and versatile, but I'm sure many players will just want to open it up by cranking its dual volumes toward overdriven glory. **GW**

STREET PRICE: \$1,699

MANUFACTURER: Supro USA, suprousa.com

PROS

- + Upgraded 35 watts of Class A power section
- + Blendable channels for tonal versatility
- + New "bright-cap" modification on Channel 1
- + Channel 2 preserves original Black Magick circuit
- + Onboard tube-driven spring reverb and pulsating tremolo

CONS

- Its mid-heavy voice might not appeal to some players
- Reverb has a long decay time



SPECS

FUEL INJECTOR

CONTROLS: Level, Tone, Drive

SWITCHES: Natural/Fat toggle, On/off footswitch

JACKS: ¼-inch Input and Output, 9-volt center negative DC adapter (adapter not included), Link

POWER BURST

CONTROLS: Boost

SWITCHES: Treble/Natural/Middle toggle, On/off footswitch

JACKS: ¼-inch Input and Output, 9-volt center negative DC adapter (adapter not included), Link

SMOOTH IMPACT

CONTROLS: Output, Comp, Tube Gain

SWITCHES: Vintage/Natural/Sag toggle, On/off footswitch

JACKS: ¼-inch Input and Output, 9-volt center negative DC adapter (adapter not included), Link

TONE SCULPTOR

CONTROLS: Six +/-10dB EQ sliders (100Hz, 250Hz, 570Hz, 800Hz, 2.2kHz, 5.6kHz), +/-12dB Level slider

SWITCHES: On/off footswitch

JACKS: ¼-inch Input and Output, 9-volt center negative DC adapter (adapter not included), Link

Vox Valvenergy 2nd Series pedals

By Chris Gill

VOX FIRST INTRODUCED its Nutube technology in a series of micro amps back in 2017, followed by their first series of Valvenergy pedals featuring an all-analog signal path and Nutube tech in 2021. Nutube involves a genuine miniature vacuum tube adapted from vacuum fluorescent display (VFD) technology to function like a traditional tube but with low-current and low-voltage specs.

The new second series of Vox Valvenergy pedals consists of the Fuel Injector Tube Overdrive, Power Burst Tube Booster, Smooth Impact Tube Compressor and Tone Sculptor Tube Preamp Equalizer. As with the previous series, these Valvenergy pedals employ Nutube to provide the dynamic responsiveness and rich harmonic overtones of traditional tube technology but without bulky designs and maintenance issues.

Build Quality

Each Valvenergy pedal is housed in a sturdy

metal case that's slightly wider and taller than a Phase 90. Because of the higher than average power consumption, using a 9VDC power adapter is recommended but an easy-access battery compartment is also provided. A Link jack allows users to connect multiple pedals together and switch between them with one foot-switch.

Controls are straightforward. The Fuel Injector overdrive provides a typical three-knob (Level, Drive, Tone) configuration plus a Natural/Fat toggle switch. The Power Burst booster offers a single Boost knob (about 20dB, but due to the character of the NuTube it will compress and distort at higher levels) plus a 3-position toggle with Treble, Natural and Middle settings. Smooth Impact's compressor controls consist of Output, Comp and Tube Gain knobs and a toggle with Vintage/Natural/Sag settings. Tone Sculptor combines preamp overdrive and graphic EQ in a single box with six EQ sliders (100Hz, 250Hz, 570Hz, 800Hz, 2.2kHz and 5.6kHz)



with 10dB boost/cut and a +/-12dB Level slider. All four pedals include an illuminated graphic waveform display instead of a typical on/off LED. This feature is particularly helpful with the compressor as it shows how much the effect is adjusting the signal and decay, while on the other pedals it's more of a novelty.

Sounds

The overall tonal character and responsiveness of all four pedals is indeed quite tubular as promised. The Smooth Impact's compression effects sound especially natural without any pumping or squashed textures. Pick attack is articulate and notes sustain with impressive body without boosting noise. The overall character is more studio processor than typical stompbox compression.

The Tone Sculptor's graphic EQ makes it perfect for players who want more control over dialing in lead tones than typical overdrive pedals offer. The EQ bands are ideal for natural-sounding guitar tones with bass that sounds full but not flabby, mids with expressive voice-like qualities and treble that cuts without being harsh. Performance is noise-free.

The Fuel Injector covers familiar "tube" overdrive territory, but in this case it

"The overall tonal character and responsiveness is quite tubular as promised"

actually delivers true tube saturation and expressive dynamics. The Tone knob is limited, but with the Fat toggle switch engaged users can dial in an attractive midrange bump. Power Burst offers a little more sonic versatility than a typical "clean" boost pedal thanks to its Treble and Middle settings, but it's really best for giving some extra push to a tone you already love. The highest output level can easily push a tube amp into overdrive/distortion territory, and it sounds equally effective with clean or distorted amp settings.

Verdict

If you simply can't live without the dynamic responsiveness and smooth, musical harmonic overtones of real tube technology but don't want the hassles of hot operating temperatures, costly and regular maintenance and bulky designs, the Vox Valvenergy second series pedals are worth strong consideration. The Fuel Injector and Power Burst pedals aren't necessarily

revolutionary, but they're great alternatives to common solid-state options. The Smooth Impact compressor and Tone Sculptor preamp/graphic EQ offer less common approaches to their effects with the distinct advantages of tube warmth and impressive, studio-quality performance. [GW](#)

STREET PRICES: \$199.99 (Fuel Injector, Power Burst — each); \$219.99 (Smooth Impact, Tone Sculptor — each)

MANUFACTURER: Vox Amplification, [voxamps.com](#)

PROS

- + Nutube technology provides true tube performance and sounds without hassles
- + Smooth Impact provides studio-quality natural-sounding compression effects
- + Tone Sculptor combines preamp and graphic EQ in a single package
- + Fuel Injector and Power Burst pedals' tone toggles expand tonal options

CONS

- Illuminated display provides eye candy but little useful info (Smooth Impact is an exception)
- Fuel Injector and Power Burst have limited EQ shaping capabilities

Bog Street Guitar Picks

By Paul Riario

BOG STREET MIGHT not have the marquee name brand recognition of other popular pick manufacturers, but once you grab hold of one of their many functionally innovative three-sided picks with a hole in the middle, you might never let go. That said, Bog Street's ergonomically contoured picks are a palpable advancement in securing grip control that keeps their picks firmly between your fingers and not on the floor. Furthermore, as an advantageous byproduct, Bog Street's specialized picks improve articulation and relaxation for your picking hand, ultimately contributing to a far more beneficial playing experience.

Build Quality

Because Bog Street offers over 20 different three-sided pick designs each made from unique materials and composites, it's best if I cover the ones that focus on the most "aggressive" grips first and then the rest. The Leap series is the company's original concept pick in "Rhythm" and "Lead" models with each of its tips fashioned in three distinct thicknesses to achieve its stated purpose. It offers the most surface area and maximum grip texture and is made from high-grade nylon. Similarly, in grip, the Scales series is made of a NEOS (nylon and ABS) composite, and addresses pick slippage with a rubberized grip in a pliant Flex (0.5mm) and thicker Jazz (1.5mm) models, and all three tips share the same gauge. Finally, the Mini Beast has the smallest surface area (think Jazz III pick) but with an ergonomically raised grip design that's dual-sided for stability and comfort. It's made of glass-filled nylon and geared for shredders that demand precision and stiffness for clear articulation.

Next up is the Axe Series of picks, which, in my view, are the most popular and

versatile in Bog Street's family of picks. These series of picks (Axe Blade, Axe Cut and Battle Axe) are constructed in either the NEOS composite or in "Ultem-Tak" (a brighter-sounding Ultem material available only in black). Both the Axe Blade and Axe Cut offer a flat flex tip in one gauge and two identical bevel tips in a heavier gauge on three sides, allowing for swift rotations between playing styles. On the other hand, the Battle Axe maintains the same gauge thickness on all three of its sharply beveled tips. The Axe Cut is also slightly larger than the Axe Blade and Battle Axe, and all three feature a raised grip texture for secureness. The Axe series comes in Light, Medium, Heavy and Textured models.

Performance

Regardless of which Bog Street pick you choose, I found that the centered hole and surrounding textured surface relax your grip by connecting the tips of your thumb and index finger where you won't feel the need to squeeze as tightly. When you strike the strings, you feel the pressure you're exerting as the pick gently undulates against your fingertips, effectively reducing tension to your picking hand and allowing you to focus on your technique rather than trying to hold onto the pick. Many will say the feel is certainly different, but the more you play these picks the more they start to make sense. Because of their broader surface area and enhanced grip, both the Leap and Scales models are not the kind of picks I'd gravitate toward, but I can admire that these multifaceted picks allow certain players an easier path to connecting with their instrument. I've been using Jazz III picks, so the Mini Beast felt like familiar territory for faster playing, but its raised dual sides added more mass between my

fingers which took getting used to. The Axe series felt more like a proper-sized pick, with the Battle Axe and Axe Blade standing out as favorites. I loved Battle Axe for its tripled consistency on each of its chiseled tips that worked smoothly for speedy runs. I also warmed up to the Axe Blade for its dual-thickness design and a rounded flat tip that capably handled vigorous strumming and then shifting toward the harder-edged beveled tips for solos.

More importantly, how do they sound? Overall, because of their synthetic makeup and composite materials, they all seem to have a brighter response with an immediate attack but there are hints of muted warmth if you use their lighter-gauged picks and ease up on your attack. No doubt, I'll be the first to admit that it's difficult to switch gears and convert to an alternatively different pick — especially if you've developed as a player with the more common and conventional plectrums you've grown accustomed to — however, it's not hard to say that Bog Street is onto something pivotal for discriminating players who want an enhanced pick that addresses grip control, comfort and increased accuracy.

Verdict

Bog Street's ergonomic contours for their picks yield relaxed comfort and the utmost grip control. Their three-sided picks with precisely rounded and beveled edges lead to cleaner articulation for your picking hand over conventional plectrums. Their novel pick material blends offer a myriad of tones from bright to mellow. **GW**

STREET PRICE: From \$25 and up; sampler pack (contains 17 picks), \$40

MANUFACTURER: Bog Street, bogstreet.com

PROS

- + Ergonomically contoured three-sided picks that mitigate pick slippage and offer utmost grip control
- + Novel and innovative use of pick materials;
- + Variety of shapes and sizes, stiffness and grip comfort
- + Bright or warmer tonal response will appeal to players of most styles

CONS

- Some may prefer more conventional materials and shapes of other brands



For Paul Riario's
new Bog Street
video, visit
guitarworld.com/
february2025



ESP LTD Deluxe EC-01FT solidbody electric

By Chris Gill

I'M A BIG believer in simplicity when it comes to the electric guitar, especially when the priority is the boldest, most dynamic tone. I often find that the best approach is to strip things down to the barest of essentials and that any and every addition to the signal path is more likely to take away than add to the equation. Hey, this theory worked for everything from Eddie Van Halen's Frankenstein to Leslie West's Gibson Les Paul Junior, and who could argue with that?

The new ESP LTD EC-01FT is a raw, streamlined take on the EC series — like a metal-capable Eclipse Junior, but it boasts several upscale details and enhancements that add an aura of luxury to an otherwise bare-bones design. These include smooth heel-free set-thru neck construction, 22 extra-jumbo stainless-steel frets, a recessed TonePros Locking TOM bridge, LTD locking tuners and (especially) the exclusive Seymour Duncan Custom 14 humbucking pickup with push/pull coil splitting via the master volume control.

Playability

The LTD EC-01FT may be stripped down, but that doesn't mean it's austere. The mahogany body and three-piece mahogany neck are seamlessly joined as if they were crafted from a single slab of wood, and body routing is kept to a minimum to ensure maximum resonance. The control cavity is a little larger than usual, but it provides ample space for a battery should you choose to later install an active pickup. The neck's Thin U profile combined with the deep cutaway facilitates fast, unimpeded playing across the entire silky smooth Macassar Ebony fretboard. The recessed bridge keeps the strings close to the body, making it easy to comfortably palm mute the strings.

Sounds

Full disclosure: I'd bet that most rock guitarists use only the bridge pickup with

the tone control wide open 90 percent of the time or more, so why bother with an extraneous neck pickup and tone controls? The EC-01FT proves that you don't need all that extra hardware to enjoy big, aggressive tones for rock. If you want clean tone, just back down the volume control. Prefer a more mellow attack? Pick closer to the neck. The Duncan Custom 14's high output (14.65k ohms resistance) can push an amp extra hard, but it delivers an alluring midrange roar with outstanding articulation, clarity and bite. The split function provides honking single-coil tone with assertive mids that fall between a P-90's growl and a Tele's twang.

Verdict

The ESP LTD Deluxe EC-01FT may be stripped down to the essentials when it comes to its single humbucking pickup and solitary master volume control, but its upscale materials, design refinements, quality hardware and impeccable craftsmanship result in a luxurious ax that's much more than a bare-bones Junior model. If you prefer to keep your tone as big, pure and uninhibited as possible, this guitar certainly meets those goals without any feelings of compromise or missing out. **GW**

STREET PRICE: \$1,099

MANUFACTURER: ESP Guitars, esp guitars.com

PROS

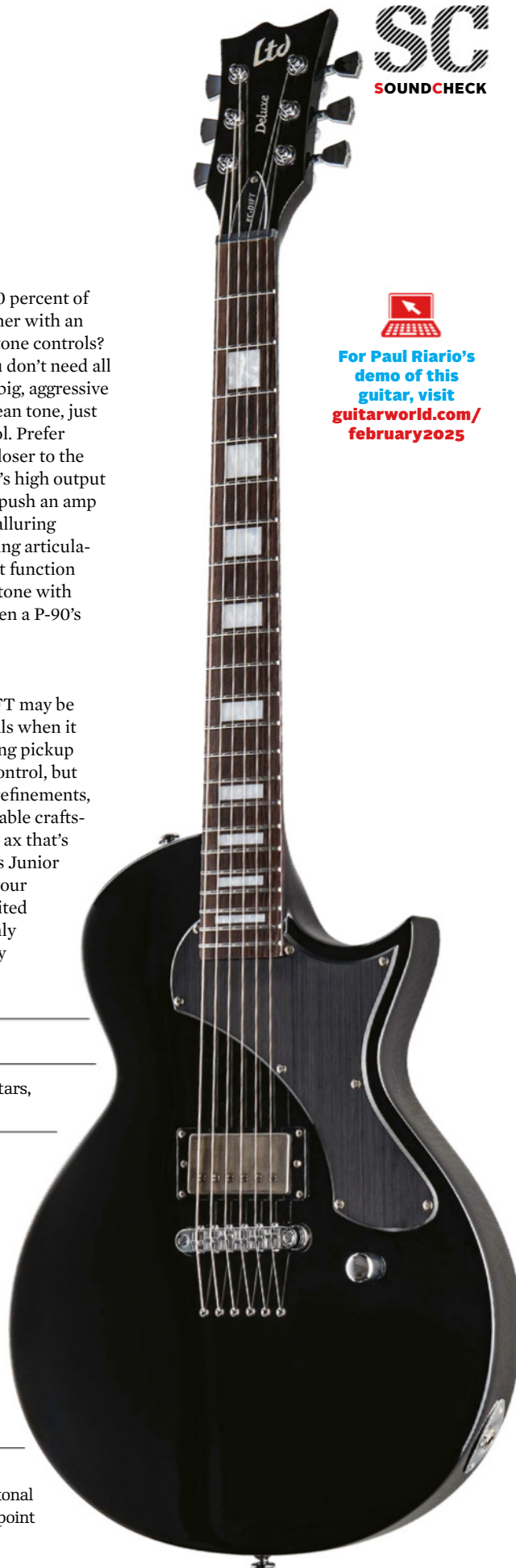
- + Exclusive Seymour Duncan Custom 14 humbucker delivers bold, aggressive humbucking tone
- + Push/pull master volume knob provides access to outstanding single-coil tone
- + Recessed bridge enhances playing comfort
- + Luxurious craftsmanship, attention to detail and tone woods

CONS

- Lack of a neck pickup limits tonal options, but that's really the point of its design



For Paul Riario's demo of this guitar, visit guitarworld.com/february2025



“The split function provides honking single-coil tone with assertive mids that fall between a P-90's growl and a Tele's twang”

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A photograph of a person's torso and arms holding a light-colored Martin D-12E acoustic guitar. The person is standing in front of a rustic wooden door with a metal handle. The background includes a brick wall and some foliage. The guitar has a dark pickguard and a brown leather strap.

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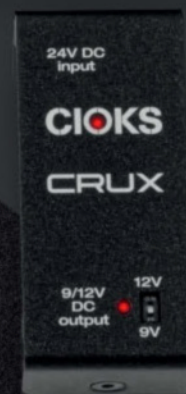
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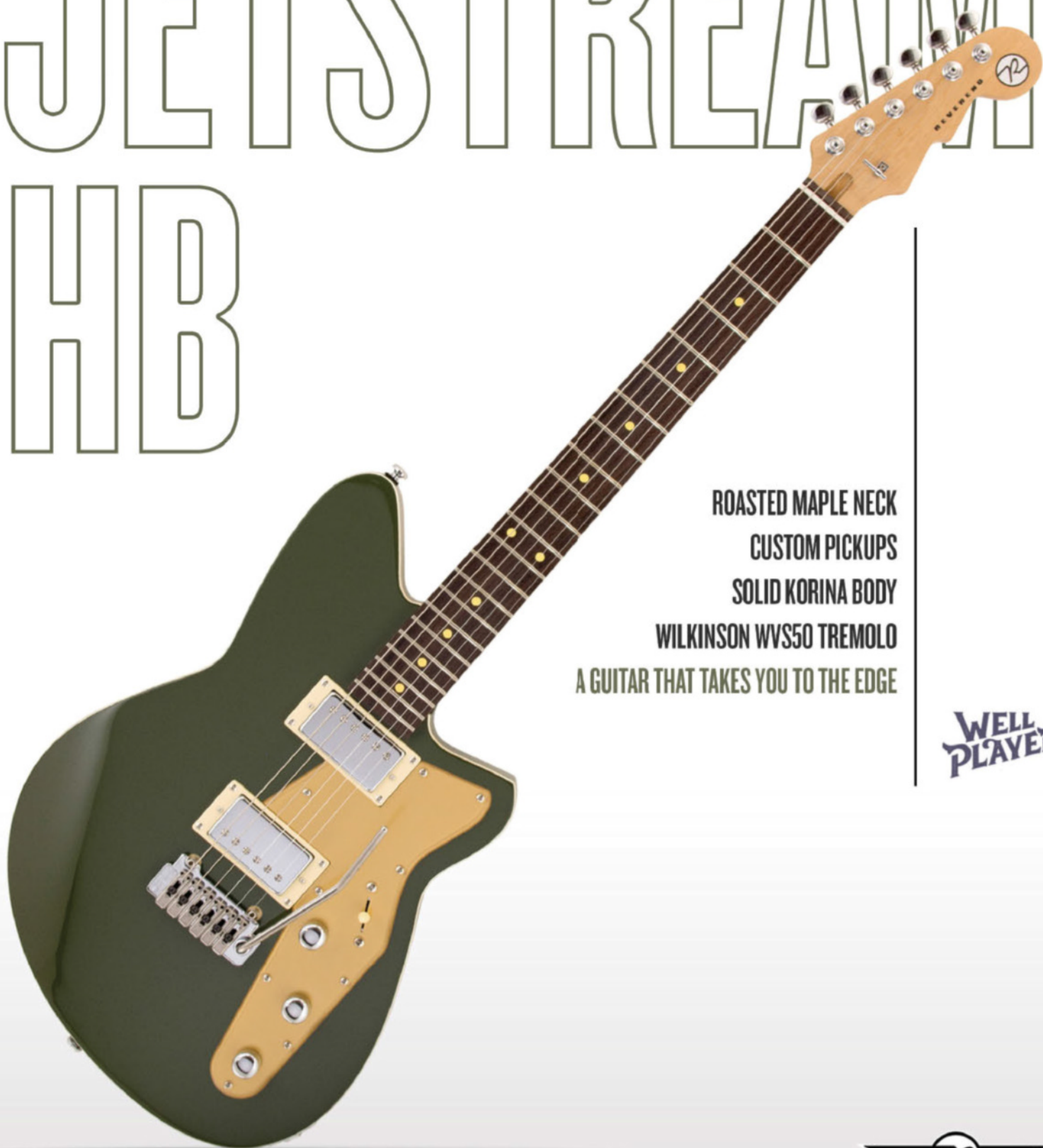


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ON THE COVER: (main image) PRS SE NF; (clockwise from top) Klön Grand Cutaway Mini, Interstellar Audio Supernova Zoeldrive, Dr. Z Z-80 amp and Nakupenda Guitar Stool

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- Unique core to wrap & tension ratios for a balanced & smooth playing experience



AKG C414 XLS and XLII

AKG's C414 range contains the most respected studio and stage microphones in audio history. The new C414 XLS and the C414 XLII offer nine pickup patterns that enable them to choose the perfect setting for every application. Both mics have three switchable bass cut filters as well as three pre-attenuation levels that allow lead vocals and solo instruments to be placed in even the densest mixes. The C414 XLS maintains the sonic character of the legendary C414 B-ULS, the longest-lived C414 model. The C414 XLII is the successor of the famous C414 B-TL II. It shows the unique sonic signature of the highly sought-after AKG C12, which enables lead vocals and solo instruments to be placed even in a dense mix. The up-front sound is also well known for distant miking applications like classical music recording or drum ambience miking. **\$tbc, akg.com**



Big Bends Nut Sauce

Nut Sauce is a special state-of-the-art lubricant that is the secret sauce to keeping in tune and eliminating string breakage at all times. This special nut sauce is applied to the guitar's nut, string guides, bridge, saddle and pivot points. Big Bends Nut Sauce is the perfect way to precisely apply lubricant at the exact place you need. Your guitar is guaranteed to remain in tune, no matter how hard you strum the strings and yank the whammy bar. Used and trusted for more than 20 years by professionals the world over. **\$12.45, bigbends.com**



Cableworks Backline Cables

Cableworks has added new XLR cable sizes to its Composer and Backline Series. The new 15- and 25-foot XLR cable options enhance the versatility of both series, catering to a range of audio needs both in the studio and on the stage. The Backline Series by Cableworks offers reliable and durable XLR cables, designed with flexible jackets, high-quality connectors and oxygen-free copper conductors that ensure clear signal transmission for musicians and audio professionals. This series is ideal for those looking for dependable, cost-effective solutions for live sound or studio environments. For those seeking a more advanced option, the Composer Series provides professional-grade XLR cables, featuring low-capacitance conductors and enhanced shielding for superior signal flow and reduced interference. The Composer Series also includes Cableworks' patent-pending connectors with TORIColor ID rings, making cable identification easier when managing multiple connections. **\$tbc, gatorco.com**



Charvel MJ DK24 HSH 2PT Mahogany

The MJ DK24 HSH 2PT blends Charvel's legacy of designing high-performance instruments with an assortment of top-end features and stunning finishes: the company has now unveiled the MJ DK24 HSH 2PT Mahogany. Crafted from a mahogany Dinky body with a flame maple or solid top, the DK24 delivers a punchy tone with solid high-end response and a touch of brightened treble. The instrument features a scalloped lower back bout and a sculpted shredder's cut heel, and the bolt-on wenge neck is reinforced with graphite for stability, complemented by a hand-rubbed oil finish. The heel-mount truss rod adjustment wheel allows for quick neck relief tweaks, ensuring optimal playability. At the heart of the MJ DK24's sonic capabilities lies an HSH pickup configuration, featuring a custom Seymour Duncan Full Shred TB-10 humbucking bridge pickup, a Seymour Duncan Custom Flat Strat SSL-6 middle pickup, and a custom Seymour Duncan Alnico II Pro APH-1N humbucking neck pickup. **\$1,999 (black), \$2,199 (other finishes), charvel.com**



Ciari Guitars Ascender Standard

The Ascender Standard is the world's first and only patented, professional-grade, full-sized, folding electric guitar. Combining award-winning design with expert luthier craftsmanship, the Ascender Standard embraces an asymmetric satin basswood body style, three-over-three headstock, natural-neck finish with ebony fingerboard, Ciari locking tuners, Seymour Duncan 59 Dual Humbucker Pickups, master tone and volume electronics, and a pick-up selector. The patented folding system combines an aircraft-grade mid-neck hinge, a translating locking strut to selectively immobilize the hinge, and a floating tailpiece to selectively tighten and loosen the strings, which enables the Ascender Standard to fold in half symmetrically for a folded length of 18.5". When the Ascender Standard is folded, string management keeps the strings in place and under light tension. Custom locking tuners ensure everything stays crisp and in tune when unfolded for play. [\\$1,799, ciariguitars.com](http://$1,799, ciariguitars.com)



ENGL E658 Steve Morse Signature 20

Steve Morse, the guitarist known for his work with bands like Deep Purple and the Dixie Dregs, has recently announced a new collaboration with ENGL Amps. The new Steve Morse Signature 20 is a compact and versatile amplifier that packs a punch in terms of both features and sound. With two channels, guitarists will have the ability to dial in a wide range of tones to suit their playing style. The E658 features a built-in noise gate, making it perfect for high-gain playing without any unwanted noise, plus a built-in delay and reverb as well as an IR loader, MIDI, headphone out. Whether you're a fan of Steve Morse's playing or just looking for a versatile and powerful amp, the ENGL Steve Morse Signature 20 is definitely worth checking out. With its compact size and impressive features, this head is sure to become a go-to for guitarists of all styles and genres.

[\\$tbc, engl-amps.com](http://$tbc, engl-amps.com)



Ernie Ball John Mayer Signature Silver Slinky Strings

These new Silver Slinky strings are the result of a new partnership between Ernie Ball and John Mayer. They feature a never-before-offered gauge combination along with Reinforced Plain Strings (RPS) for added tuning stability and durability. Each string has been meticulously engineered with specific gauges and core-to-wrap ratios to meet John's exacting standards, delivering the perfect balance of tone and tension. This combination consists of 10.5, 13.5, 17.5, 27, 37 and 47 gauges.

[\\$tbc, ernieball.com](http://$tbc, ernieball.com)



EVH Star T.O.M.

EVH has announced the Limited Edition EVH Star T.O.M., a modern interpretation of the iconic guitar that helped shape the sound of Eddie Van Halen. This instrument includes modern performance enhancements, crafted from a resonant basswood body. Its single EVH Wolfgang humbucker captures the essence of Van Halen's powerful sound, while the momentary kill switch allows players to create unique stutter effects. The guitar features a 1-piece bolt-on quartersawn maple neck with an EVH modified "C" back shape, paired with a fast-playing ebony fingerboard. The 12" to 16" compound radius and 22 jumbo frets ensure that guitarists can execute pummeling riffs and lightning-fast licks with ease. Additionally, the Tuna-Matic Stoptail bridge provides exceptional sustain.

[\\$tbc, evhgear.com](http://$tbc, evhgear.com)



Fender Buck Owens Signature Telecaster and Kingman

Fender has honored the late country great Buck Owens with a pair of signature guitars — the Limited Edition Buck Owens Telecaster and the Buck Owens Kingman. The Tele boasts the same Blue, Red and White Sparkle finish that was used on an older limited-edition run of Owens Teles way back in the 1990s. Under the bling, it's a regular Tele at heart, boasting a bound alder body and vintage 7.25" radius maple fretboard. It's joined by a similarly styled Kingman acoustic, which looks to recreate the vibe of the Harmony H169 that has become synonymous with Owens.

\$1,999 and \$699, fender.com



Focusrite Adam Audio Speaker Monitors

Adam Audio is an established manufacturer of modern monitoring solutions. The T Series is their range of affordable, professional 2-way powered studio monitors, offering high performance at an attractive price point. The A Series delivers accurate, transparent sound across a full line of monitors. It is the right fit for professional and home studio, as well as broadcast, immersive and home audio environments. The S Series is Adam Audio's flagship reference monitoring range, made in Berlin. Complementing the portfolio of studio monitors is a range of professional subwoofers, designed for various applications and acoustic environments.

From €449.99, adam-audio.com



Focusrite Scarlett 4th Gen

Scarlett offers studio-quality connectivity, including Hi-Z, instrument and line inputs, ADAT, S/PDIF and MIDI. Hi-Z ensures great guitar tones, while line inputs facilitate synths, outboard gear and all other analog devices. ADAT and S/PDIF enable I/O channel expansion. The all-new headphone amp design sets the stage for the best playback you've ever heard from a Scarlett interface, driving high-impedance headphones louder and clearer than ever before. Focusrite Control 2 is a powerful app for your Scarlett to make session setup painless, so you can focus on what matters — capturing great performances. Available for iOS and Android.

\$tba, focusrite.com



Fractal Audio VP4

The VP4 is a powerful, compact virtual pedalboard processor. It provides four simultaneous effects with a user-friendly experience inspired by traditional guitar pedals. The effects are based on the award-winning Axe-Fx III, with 400+ classic stompbox and studio effects to choose from, including drives, delays, reverbs, choruses, flangers, phasers, pitch, plex, EQs, compressors, wah, tremolo and many more. The VP4 is designed to work seamlessly with a traditional amplifier and also excels at providing pre- and/or post-effects with any modeler. Now you can choose your ideal setup and still enjoy Fractal Audio's legendary effects, vetted by the world's greatest guitar heroes.

\$tba, fractalaudio.com



FU Tone Acoustic Bridge Pins

These Titanium and Brass bridge pins are designed for acoustic guitars — it looks like titanium and brass upgrades are not just for locking tremolos anymore. Take your acoustic guitar to the next level with the ultimate in acoustic upgrades. This is the easiest and most dramatic upgrade for your acoustic guitar, with increased sustain, clarity, definition and tone.

\$99.95, fu-tone.com



Fuchs Audio ODH Amp

Featuring an ODS-style all-tube preamp, operating at True High Voltage into a fan-cooled Ice power module, the ODH brings high-powered clean and overdrive tones to a compact size and affordable price point. A unique tube limiter circuit controls the Ice Power module input, while any signal clipping is (intentionally) non-linear so it responds just like a real tube amp. The ODH includes a two-way footswitch for channels and gain boost. A 30-second mute timer assures the tubes are warmed-up before the power amp goes live.

\$tbc, fuchsaudiotechnology.com



Gator Flying V and Explorer Cases

Gator Cases has expanded its Traditional Deluxe Series with two new custom cases designed specifically for Flying V and Explorer-style guitars. Constructed from plywood with a black Tolex exterior, both cases offer protection against bumps and dings during transit. Each case features a custom-molded interior tailored to fit the unique contours of its specific guitar. The inside is lined with thick plush padding to gently cushion the instrument, ensuring its angular body shape is supported at every point. The precise fit prevents movement during transport, reducing the risk of damage. For added convenience, the cases include an internal storage compartment for accessories, keeping essential items stored alongside the instrument.

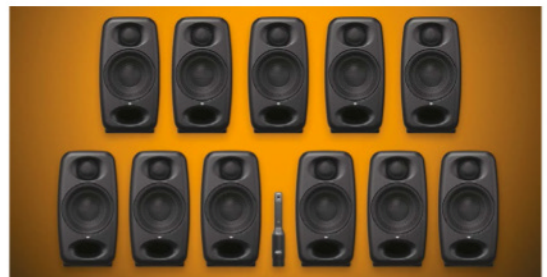
\$tbc, gatorco.com.



IK Multimedia iLoud Micro Monitor Pro Immersive Bundle 11

IK Multimedia has announced the iLoud Micro Monitor Pro Immersive Bundle 11 release, which incorporates IK's latest addition to the iLoud monitor lineup, the Micro Monitor Pro, and provides a cost-effective and versatile monitoring solution for anyone interested in immersive audio. With its ultra-compact size, super lightweight design and pro-quality performance, the Micro Monitor Pro is an immersive monitor setup that offers superior sound for this price and form factor.

\$2,779.99, ikmultimedia.com



JBL Bags Subpole 2032

JBL Bags has announced the release of a new low-profile subwoofer pole, designed to mount loudspeakers onto subwoofers for a more compact setup in smaller spaces. This shorter speaker pole offers a height adjustment range ideal for more intimate events, complementing JBL Bags' existing lineup of standard-sized subwoofer poles. It supports up to 132 pounds and adjusts in height from 20 to 32 inches. It features four preset locking pin positions, while also allowing users to secure the pole at any position within the height adjustment range. At the subwoofer end, a removable piece fits into 35-millimeter cup mounts, or when unscrewed, reveals M20 threads for threaded subwoofer mounts. The speaker end includes a removable sheath that expands to fit 38-millimeter speaker mounts or can be removed to fit 35-millimeter mounts.

\$tbc, jblbags.com



JBL Eon One MK2

This array of eight 2" tweeters includes a 10" woofer in an acoustically optimized cabinet that generates natural, smooth low end, down to 37 Hz. Variable Power Performance automatically optimizes the power performance to provide 4 dB higher output when connected to an AC source: 123 dB peak SPL using AC power, 119 dB peak using battery power. An easily swappable battery provides six hours of play time; the battery is integrated into a column spacer to improve stability and to optimize the cabinet acoustic volume for superior low-frequency response. The built-in 5-channel digital mixer is designed by mix engineers for optimized workflow, and three fixed EQ knobs allow fast, hands-on access to onboard EQ.

\$1,299, jbl.com



JBL IRX One

This C-shaped array of six 2" tweeters delivers superior clarity and rich sound. The 8" woofer with bass-reflex design generates natural, smooth low end, down to 40 Hz, with a built-in 3-channel mixer. The product features fixed bass and treble control, Automatic Feedback Suppression (AFS), phantom power and system tuning presets. Soundcraft Easy Ducking automatically turns down music when speech is detected. The column spacers and array cabinet conveniently fit into the back of the base unit, and the speaker automatically adjusts tuning depending on how many spacers are used for optimum sound performance.

\$949, jbl.com



Joyo Audio BSK-80 Acoustic Guitar Amplifier

The BSK80 is ideal for busking and street performances, boasting 80W of solid state acoustic amplification, with a huge range of inbuilt features and effects. With an inbuilt Lithium battery, the amp can be used on-the-go with an 8-hour battery life, and it even has a dedicated 9V/500mA output to power your effect pedals at the same time. Inbuilt effects such as Chorus, Delay, Reverb and an Anti-feedback control are all processed by the built-in high-performance DSP chip, plus the included footswitch allows you to control the effects, mute the output, and operate the built-in 30-second looper while you play. The BSK80 also features Bluetooth connectivity and an AUX input so you can connect your device and play along to your favourite songs and backing tracks.

\$649 approx., joyoaudio.com



Knaggs Anniversary Navajo Sun

Knaggs Guitars has released its new Navajo Sun inlay package to celebrate the company's 15th anniversary. Featuring a new Navajo Sun fretboard inlay design and a Morning Star headstock inlay comprised of gold mother-of-pearl and Bloody Basin Agate or mother-of-pearl and turquoise, the Navajo Sun package includes Navajo Sun inlays and Morning Star headstock inlay, a maple top, maple binding and multi-level matching neck stains.

\$tbc, knagsguitars.com



Korg Multi/Poly Analog Modeling Synth

This analog modeling synthesizer delivers breathtaking analog sounds combined with extraordinary digital power and flexibility. The original Mono/Poly boasted an unusually rich sound from its four stacked oscillators, as well as unique, experimental features like flexible x-mod and sync routing. Previously only attainable in large modular systems, the Mono/Poly delivered these features in a compact, user-friendly instrument. The new Multi/Poly is the first instrument to use Korg's next-generation analog modeling technology and builds on that distinctive combination of big sounds and modular-derived experimental features.

\$tbc, korg.com



Latin Percussion Alex Van Halen Signature 8" Cowbell

The new, American-made Alex Van Halen Signature 8" Cowbell is based on the classic LP Bongo Cowbell. The chrome-plated, mountable bell is embossed with Alex's signature and the iconic Van Halen logo. It is fitted with the patented Jenigor Ridge Rider Bar for dampening and durability and the patented, self-aligning eye-bolt that mounts to any 3/8" to 1/2" diameter rod. It pumps out high-pitch sound with dry overtones making it great for punching accents into any big groove. "I have loved every minute of working with LP to create my signature cowbell," Alex says.

\$99.99, lpmusic.com



LD Systems Anny

Enjoy complete freedom of movement when making announcements with the headset microphone connected to the Anny bodypack transmitter. With an 80-metre wireless range, you can even run across a field without losing the connection. With the integrated wheels on Anny 10 or the protective backpack for Anny 8, you can take your sound anywhere: in the city, in the garden, at gatherings, sports events, school and dance events, in bars or at parties. With Anny at your side, you'll create unforgettable moments wherever you are. Your setup options with Anny are as versatile as you are. With a built-in mixer and up to seven audio sources, you can create a wide range of setups with a mix of speech and music. And it's not just inputs: there's also a mix output to record your mix or send it to an additional loudspeaker.

\$tbc, ld-systems.com



Lollar Pickups Dogear P-90s

Lollar Pickups make it easier than ever to take your Casino or similarly-styled guitar to the next level with high quality, handmade pickups and pre-wired component kits, proudly American-made in Tacoma, Washington. Lollar's Dogear P-90s are available in a variety of cover options, including the classic Casino chrome. Pre-wired kits include your choice of paper-in-oil or Orange Drop capacitor.

\$115, lollarguitars.com



Louis Electric Cobra 183

The Cobra 6L6/183 sports a hand-selected, durable, and sleek brown leather cover with black and white accents designed to add a classic touch to any gear collection. Enjoy countless combinations of tone to discover your personal sound with the 6L6/183's 10-position custom feedback control rotary knobs. Designed with user experience and tone at the forefront, the 6L6/183 packs rich sound into a portable package. Sizing up at less than two feet long and a foot tall/wide, the 6L6/183 is suitable for on the road, at the gig, and plug-and-play jam sessions right at home. Controls are input, volume, treble, middle, bass, overdrive gain and level, master volume, presence and feedback.

\$4,495, louiselectramps.com



Luxe By Martin Acoustic Cable

This advanced acoustic guitar cable helps unleash your unique sound. Carefully crafted and engineered for exceptional sound quality and durability, it uses the finest components to transmit more of your passion, timbre, and tones. The superior 99.9 percent oxygen-free copper, infused with silver multigauge conductor wires, delivers your instrument's expressive sound with all the rich harmonics and sustain possible, while incorporating a special dual shield construction that creates one of the quietest and most flexible cables available. Its advanced low capacitance design produces an expanded, more natural sound, allowing you to enjoy your instrument's full potential. These cables also have a lifetime guarantee to keep you sounding your best for years to come.

\$89.99, martinguitar.com



Martin Capo

Martin's first guitar capo delivers smooth, quick and reliable one-handed operation, all while accommodating a plethora of neck shapes. It also adjusts to fit any guitar neck profile.

\$14.99, martinguitar.com



Martin Reverb Select Custom 0012 Tasmanian Blackwood

Martin has released its latest Reverb exclusive: the Martin Reverb Select Custom 0012 Tasmanian Blackwood. This limited-run 12-fretter combines the striking look of flamed Tasmanian blackwood back and sides with a western red cedar top. Tasmanian blackwood is a close relative of koa, offering a balanced tone with a distinctive midrange punch. With African padauk binding and a gloss toasted burst finish, this Grand Concert beauty is a delicate dance of aesthetics and acoustics from Down Under. The Custom 0012 Tasmanian Blackwood follows the success of previous releases like the Custom GP Blonde, 1930 0012-42 Conversion and Custom M/0000 Satin Black models found on the Official Martin Guitar Reverb Shop.

\$tbc, reverb.com



Mooer Audio GE150 Pro Multi-Effects Pedal

Back in 2019, Mooer released its GE150 multi-effects pedal, offering guitarists a wide range of amp simulations and effects in a compact package. Building upon the features of the original, the GE150 Pro provides guitarists with 200 factory effect presets, ensuring that there is an effects chain for any scenario. Furthermore, 55 preamps and 26 high-quality cabinet simulations are provided. The pedal even supports the loading of up to 10 third-party IR cabinet simulations, adding to the versatility of the GE150 Pro's functionality. This pedal can be mapped to effect parameters for dynamic live control and also features a 'toe tap' feature to switch the mapping Expression to Volume control mode.

\$tbc, moeraudio.com



Mooer MSC20 Pro

Recently, Mooer has been focusing on getting back to basics with its classic electric MSC10 Pro — and now the MSC20 Pro. Unlike the GTRS intelligent series of electric guitars, the MSC20 Pro doesn't come with internal amplification and effects, but that's precisely what makes it so special. It's ultimately an enhanced version of this year's MSC10 Pro, featuring a similar Strat-style poplar body but augmented with a slick, gloss finish and selected ash top. Like the MSC10 Pro, this predecessor assembles its body and neck through bolt-on construction, a bone nut, a dual-action steel truss rod, and MTN-1 chrome tuning pegs. However, instead of the original tech ebony fingerboard, the MSC20 Pro features a unique Jatoba style, giving it a more organic, wooden feel. This natural look is added to with the guitar's minimalist White Shell dotted inlay across 22 nickel-silver frets, keeping things simple but classic.

\$tbc, moeraudio.com



Protec Accessories

Established in 1969, Protec was one of the first specialty bag companies to design protective gear for professional musicians. Protec specializes in a wide range of bags, cases and accessories for brass, woodwind, fretted instruments and more. New products include leatherette mouthpiece pocket pouches for trombone, trumpet, and cornet; Micro-Zip cases for alto saxophone and tenor saxophone; Micro-Zip four-piece and six-piece mouthpiece cases for trumpet and trombone; vegan leather mouthpiece guards for trumpet; and two-piece and three-piece mouthpiece pouches for clarinet and saxophone.

\$various, protecstyle.com



Roland EARTH Piano

Roland's EARTH Piano is a powerful software-based musical instrument available exclusively on Roland Cloud. EARTH Piano brings Roland's acclaimed piano sound technologies to computer production workflows, offering multiple acoustic piano types and deep customization options via an intuitive user interface. EARTH Piano is available with a Lifetime Key purchase or Roland Cloud Ultimate membership, which users can try for free with a 30-day all-access trial. It features Roland's best and most modern piano sound technology, combining detailed multi-sampling with proprietary modeling techniques for the perfect blend of realism and playability. It includes seven distinctive instruments that can be modified to taste. There are resonant concert grands for jazz and classical styles, polished and punchy pianos for studio tracks, and upright, felt, and toy pianos filled with atmosphere and vibe for pop, electronic and cinematic productions.

\$249.99, [roland.com](https://www.roland.com)



Xvive A58 Guitar Wireless

Xvive has created a new wireless option for guitarists and bassists: the A58 Guitar Wireless System. Whereas the popular U2 Guitar Wireless System broadcasts on the 2.4 GHz band — with excellent performance when there are obstacles between the transmitter and the receiver — the A58 system uses the 5.8 GHz band, a less crowded frequency that is less likely to encounter signal interference. The A58 system also boasts a wireless range of 100 feet, is compatible with active as well as passive pickups, automatically selects the most stable wireless channel, allows for onboard batteries to be easily serviced or replaced, and utilizes the industry standard USB-C charging cable. A58 offers both Active and Passive modes, making it compatible with all pickups from passive to high-output active units.

\$tbc, [xvive.com](https://www.xvive.com)



Xvive P3D Bluetooth Receiver

The P3D is an XLR Bluetooth audio receiver for mixers and active PA speakers. It connects smartphones, tablets and laptops to audio broadcast systems via Bluetooth to amplify music or other audio. P3 is for mono audio; P3D includes two P3 Bluetooth audio receivers for stereo audio. An internal rechargeable battery provides eight hours of operation, with a USB Type-C port for charging via any 5V USB power source. It offers stable connectivity over a 100-foot range (line-of-sight without obstacles).

\$tbc, [xvive.com](https://www.xvive.com)



Xvive U8 Acoustic Pickup

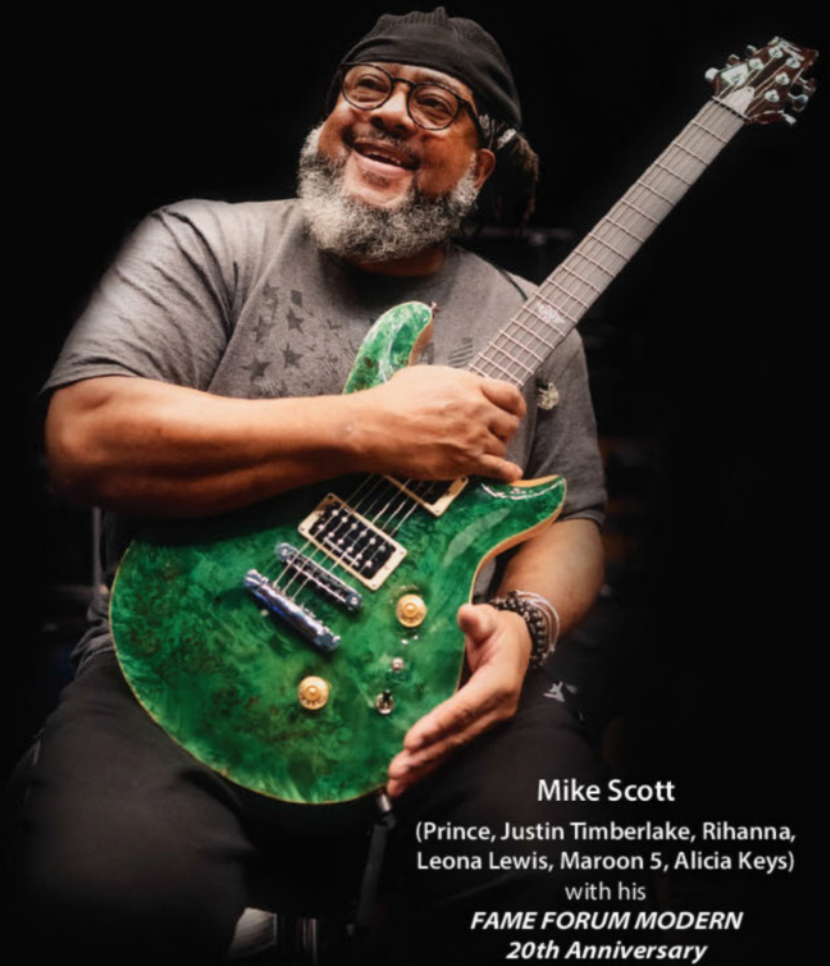
Xvive went to great lengths to custom design a supercardioid small-diaphragm gooseneck microphone that would accurately capture the nuances of acoustic guitars. This mic boasts a sensitivity of -45 dB and max. SPL of 142 dB, and can be positioned as desired relative to the instrument. It connects to a small wireless transmitter, clipped on the body of the guitar, which sends the audio signal over the 2.4 GHz wireless band to a small wireless receiver, plugged into an input on the soundboard. The system features high-fidelity, 24-bit/48 kHz audio, and has an imperceptible latency of only 5 ms. The wireless range is 90 feet (27.4 meters): truly liberating for acoustic and classical guitarists who want to take the music directly to their audience.

\$219.99 MAP, [xvive.com](https://www.xvive.com)



Fame

handmade in Europe



Mike Scott

(Prince, Justin Timberlake, Rihanna,
Leona Lewis, Maroon 5, Alicia Keys)

with his

**FAME FORUM MODERN
20th Anniversary**

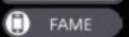
FAME Forum IV 20th Anniversary Burl

Stonewashed Blue Highgloss / Natural Gloss

Limited anniversary edition with burl poplar top,
Seymour Duncan pickups and piezo pickup system

- Body made of Khaya mahogany with poplar burl top
- Sapele mahogany neck with „D“ profile
- Ebony fingerboard with „20th-Anniversary“ inlay at 12th fret
- Seymour Duncan SH-2n Jazz neck pickup
- Seymour Duncan SH-4 JB bridge pickup
- Coil split via mini-switch
- GraphTech Resomax Tune-O-Matic bridge with Ghost piezo pickups, active piezo preamp
- Stopbar tailpiece
- Gotoh locking tuners
- Gig bag included

each \$ 1,321



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20-WATT ALL-TUBE **STEVE MORSE** SIGNATURE 20



Designed in collaboration with the iconic guitarist, ENGL's new Steve Morse Signature 20 is a compact and versatile 20-watt all-tube amplifier that packs a punch in both features and sound. The clean channel is warm and articulate; the lead channel delivers classic tone with just the right amount of grit. Go from smooth and creamy to aggressive and punchy with the twist of a knob. Plus, the Steve Morse E658 also delivers the features that modern musicians need... a precise noise gate, IR loading, power soak, MIDI, built-in delay and reverb, and more. Get all the specs and details at engl-usa.com today.



Exclusively distributed in the US and Canada by **ESP**. Visit engl-usa.com for more information.



Dean Vengeance Select Floyd Fluence Charcoal Burst

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, August 2024

The Vengeance is a stylish metal machine that's available in both the USA Custom Shop and offshore-produced Select line, with options in pickups and hardware (including the Evertune bridge) to suit different needs. The Select Floyd Fluence carries a Floyd Rose 1000 bridge and locking R3 nut and a pair of Fishman Fluence Modern humbuckers: an AB1 (alnico) at the neck and a CB1 (ceramic) at the bridge. Powered by a nine-volt battery housed in a flip-open compartment on the back, these pickups offer Voice 1 (modern, high output) and Voice 2 (crisp, clean) modes that are activated by a push-pull function on the tone control. The Vengeance dishes out a fat, sustaining bridge pickup sound that is killer for lead with the tone knob pushed in. This setting also yields a wailing distortion tone from the neck pickup that is cool when going for a classic sound.

\$1,599 street, [deanguitars.com](https://www.deanguitars.com)



Donner Hush-X

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, February 2024

Way back in the early Forties, Les Paul invented a minimalist solidbody electric guitar that he called "The Log." About 80 years later, Donner Music has introduced perhaps the closest soulmate to that guitar since the introduction of the Steinberger in the Eighties. Donner calls the Hush-X a travel guitar, but it's really a full-size instrument that feels, performs, and sounds like a traditional solidbody, albeit one that can be packed into a compact case that looks like a carrying bag for a two-piece pool cue. Weighing less than five pounds, the Donner Hush-X is super comfortable to play, with the metal frame extensions helping balance the instrument and preventing neck dives. The neck feels the same as any good C-profile neck, and the fretwork is outstanding. The humbucker has a great classic rock growl through an overdriven amp, while the single-coil pickup has a Strat-like presence and zing that's perfect for blues, funk and slinky rock rhythms.

\$349, [donnermusic.com](https://www.donnermusic.com)



Epiphone Inspired by Gibson Custom 1959 ES-355

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, November 2024

Often considered an ES-335 with fancier looks, the ES-355 stands further apart thanks to its ebony fingerboard and Grover Rotomatic tuners, both present here. Most originals had a stereo output, rejected by many players as cumbersome, so the mono version with stop-tail — upon which this Epiphone Inspired by Gibson Custom 1959 ES-355 is modeled — has always been considered the design's zenith. The looks are all there, for sure. The top is trimmed with seven-ply top binding, with three on the back, five ply around the headstock and one along the fingerboard. Gold-plated hardware, a bound tortoise pickguard, and mother-of-pearl block inlays and split-diamond headstock inlay complete the luxury appointments. The pair of Custombucker pickups are the same PAF-style humbuckers used on the majority of Gibson Custom models, and produce a tone that stands out beautifully through myriad rhythm and lead applications.

\$1,299 street, [epiphone.com](https://www.epiphone.com)



Epiphone Joe Bonamassa 1963 SG Custom

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, February 2024

Epiphone's latest limited-edition release focuses on a particular 1963 Gibson SG Custom that was special-ordered and obviously treasured by its original owner, and is now part of Joe Bonamassa's collection of prized vintage guitars. Finished in Dark Cherry Red to match the rare color worn by the original guitar, the JB 1963 SG Custom features a mahogany body and a glued-in neck that's carved in a SlimTaper C profile that melds into a smoothly contoured heel unique to this guitar. As such, the playing feel is very comfortable and bending strings is glassy smooth, courtesy of an ebony fingerboard with 22 medium-jumbo frets. The attention to detail is impressive, as evidenced by the flawless multi-ply binding and split-diamond mother-of-pearl inlay on the headstock, and by the single-ply binding around the fretboard, which has mother-of-pearl block inlays that are set without a trace of epoxy visible.

\$tbc, [epiphone.com](https://www.epiphone.com)



Ernie Ball Music Man Axis

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, December 2024

The Ernie Ball Music Man Axis was the original Edward Van Halen signature model before its name changed in 1995. However, the Axis has enjoyed immense success on its own terms for three decades now. Tweaks made to its design when the new name was adopted include the signature on the headstock being replaced by the Axis name; the three-way toggle switch moving from the treble horn to a position below the volume knob; the volume knob being properly marked “volume” instead of “tone”; a belly contour being added; the neck width around the 12th fret being widened by 1/32-inch; and the locking tremolo saddles with offset intonation adjustment screws replaced by non-offset saddles. Recent upgrades include a roasted maple neck and stainless-steel fret material. The finish options have also changed — the current offerings include Matcha (green), Honey Pot (amber), Charcoal (gray/black) and Ollalieberly (vivid purple/magenta).

\$3,199-\$3,339, music-man.com



Ernie Ball Music Man Luke 4 SSS

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, March 2024

Music Man released its first Steve Lukather signature guitar — the Luke — back in 1994, and over the years it has evolved with various Luke II and Luke III models. To celebrate the Luke’s 30th anniversary, Music Man has introduced the Luke 4 30th anniversary model with an HSS pickup configuration similar to the original, plus new Luke 4 HH and SSS models. The 30th anniversary version is a hot-rodded Superstrat, but the SSS model we reviewed is more of a “Superbstrat,” based on the traditional triple-single-coil ’50s standard solidbody that guitarists know and love, but packed with a ton of high-performance upgrades, refinements and modifications. Most Strat connoisseurs should find that the pickups deliver the tonal qualities of their dreams. The midrange dip is right in the sweet spot to accentuate percussive treble snap and bouncy bass, while still providing full body and depth.

\$3,199, music-man.com



Fame Forum IV Modern 20th Anniversary Burl Stonewashed Blue

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, August 2024

Fame's Forum IV Modern 20th Anniversary model has a striking Burl Stonewashed Blue top and high-gloss finish. The guitar is loaded with features that include a GraphTech Resomax Tune-o-matic bridge with a Ghost piezo pickup that augments Duncan humbuckers. Gotoh tuners adorn the headstock, capping off a fingerboard that features a 20th Anniversary inlay. For about \$1.3K, you get a beautifully crafted guitar capable of a broad tonal spectrum. It is a beautiful beast with an attainable street price.

\$1,308 street, fame-guitars.de



Fender 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, October 2024

The Fender 70th Anniversary Vintera II Antigua Stratocaster stands out for many reasons. It's the only Vintera II model in the lineup; it's the only hardtail; and it's the only model that's unapologetically based on Fender's '70s designs. Does the hardtail design's extra mass of wood beneath the bridge and pickups make a difference? It certainly seems that way. The tone is all a true Strat aficionado could ask for, from the instantly recognizable "quack" of the second and fourth dual-pickup settings to the Beck-like throatiness of the bridge pickup with its tone knob backed all the way down.

\$1,499, fender.com



Fender Vintera II '50s Jazzmaster, Telecaster and Mustang

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, March 2024

Fender's recently introduced Vintera II series features classic colors, accurately replicated pickups and period-correct neck shapes. The popularity of Fender guitars from the 1960s has lifted the prices of vintage models, so it was cool to receive the very affordable Vintera II Strat and Telecaster. The '70s Mustang [pictured above] sports a pair of single-coil pickups with black plastic covers, and a pair of three-position slide switches to turn the pickups on and off individually, with center being off. All are hip guitars for those who appreciate Fender's outlier models.

\$1,249, \$1,149, \$1,149, fender.com

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G&L Espada HH Active

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, January 2024

The Espada's body is clearly a descendant of Leo Fender's seminal Broadcaster and Esquire solidbody designs of 1950, but with more comfortably rounded edges and a ribcage-sparing belly contour. The guitar is available in two wood choices, alder and ash, with two finish options for each of those timbers. The ostensibly Gibson-style, full-size humbuckers are a departure from the circa-'69 Espada design, comprising a G&L AS4255C and AW4368C with chrome covers, all made with alnico magnets. Meanwhile, the rest of the electronics and control section retain hefty portions of Leo's design DNA. The active and active-bright settings on the Espada HH Active are well specified, as the latter never sounds too bright even with the pickups in single-coil mode and the treble control up full. This model delivers an enticing blend of classic and modern, and proves itself incredibly versatile.

\$2,099, [glguitars.com](https://www.glguitars.com)



Gibson Jason Isbell "Red Eye" 1959 Les Paul Standard

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, November 2024

Any 1959 Gibson Les Paul is sure to set players' and collectors' hearts aflutter, so when the Gibson Custom Shop and Murphy Lab apply their skills to re-creating a legendary 'Burst from that same year, you can bet it will result in off-the-chart excitement. The guitar in question is Red Eye, the '59 Burst formerly owned by the late Ed King of Lynyrd Skynyrd, which now resides in the collection of Jason Isbell. It's crisp and clear into clean settings, yet still has lots of dimension and swirl — thick without being bloated. Unsurprisingly, the guitar really shines into edge-of-breakup or fully overdriven amp settings, with tons of texture to individual notes and a three-dimensional feel induced by the abundant harmonic overtones. Even into a hard-driven amp, it retains great string articulation, while the bridge is snarky and mean, and that in-between position — as discussed by Isbell — offers loads of nuance and shade in the blending.

\$21,999 list, [gibson.com](https://www.gibson.com)



Guild Polara Kim Thayil Signature

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, Holiday 2023

Guild's new Polara — a model originally introduced in 1963 sporting a “kickstand” body shape and a distinctive spear point on the headstock — is the offset-batwing version that Soundgarden's Kim Thayil has been playing since 1978. This offshore-made version of the USA-built flagship model that features premium old-growth woods and Jason Lollar pickups has a gloss-black mahogany body and a glued-in mahogany neck with a comfortable soft-U carve. Sitting atop is a 24.75”-scale rosewood fingerboard that looks suitably upscale, with pearloid blocks and ivory binding, and carries 22 polished narrow-jumbo frets. A sweet player thanks to its slim neck and wide-ish, 12.5” radius fretboard, the Polara also benefits from a good factory setup that provides low, buzz-free action and tuneful intonation all the way up the neck. A solid-feeling guitar that sustains well and displays good vibrational qualities when played acoustically.

\$899 street, guildguitars.com



Jackson American Series Virtuoso

By Jude Gold, *Guitar Player*, April 2024



For a long time, aside from buying pre-owned, the only way to get a coveted US-built Jackson was to order one from Jackson USA, and then wait. That all changed a year and a half ago when Jackson introduced the American Series Soloist SL3, the first U.S.-built production model Soloist available. Now that guitar has a baby brother: the new Jackson American Series Virtuoso. As you'd expect with two brothers, the Virtuoso and the Soloist have several core traits in common. These include a wide-radius, shred-friendly ebony fretboard replete with two octaves worth of fat, slippery nickel rails, a Floyd Rose locking trem, a pair of headstock-mounted Floyd-friendly hex wrenches, and locking tuners. If a modern shred axe with a bayonet-sharp headstock and a floating Floyd suits your musical vibe, you'll be thrilled with how useful this new Jackson is. Priced at just under two grand, the Virtuoso is a welcome addition to the Jackson American Series family.

\$1,949-\$1,999, jacksonguitars.com



Knaggs SSC-J Steve Stevens Signature

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, July 2024

To date, Knaggs has released several Steve Stevens models, including the SS1 SS2, SSC, SS Severn XF, and SS Potomac acoustic guitar. Now comes the SSC-J, a stripped-down LP Junior-inspired affair that has the distinction of being Stevens' first signature model without a maple top. It features a 24.75"-scale mahogany set neck and a non-contoured mahogany body of choice with sumptuous graining. Weighing in at under seven pounds, the guitar feels light and nimble. It's an inspiring player, with its low action and well-groomed medium-jumbo frets on an East Indian rosewood 'board adorned with pearloid SSC block inlays that are like rectangular versions of Gretsch "thumbprint" markers. The neck pickup is great for blues in clean and overdriven modes, while the bridge 'bucker is killer for lead and dirty rhythm. It's pricey for sure, but you get your money's worth in a guitar that's the ne plus ultra of LP Junior-style axes.

\$4,550 street, [knaggsguitars.com](https://www.knaggsguitars.com)



PRS SE CE24, SE Custom 24 Quilt and Swamp Ash Special

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, May 2024

The latest additions to PRS's offshore-produced SE line include two guitars that date back to the 1980s — the Custom 24 and the CE24, introduced, respectively, in '85 and '88 — along with a reissue of an outlier model called the Swamp Ash Special. Featuring a mahogany body and a maple top with a shallow violin carve, the SE CE24 is a sharp-looking guitar with its striking Blood Orange quilted maple veneer. The exposed edge shows off the thickness of the maple cap beneath, while giving the effect of a binding layer between the top and the tightly grained mahogany back. The SE CE24 is a toneful and great-playing guitar that offers a lot of bang for the buck. However, if you have an extra \$300 in your wallet, you might consider the top-line SE Custom 24 Quilt. Making a comeback for 2024, and available only in the SE series, the Swamp Ash Special features a shallow violin carve on the top, and a bolt-on Wide Thin-profile maple neck.

\$699, \$999, \$849, [prsguitars.com](https://www.prsguitars.com)



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PRS SE NF3

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, November 2024

PRS's SE NF3 is so named for its Narrowfield Deep Dish (a.k.a. DD) "S" pickups. These unique PRS-design units have deeper bobbins to accommodate more windings and extra metal pieces between the magnets to yield a more powerful "single-coil" tone, while remaining noise-free because they are in fact humbuckers. A control set consisting of master volume, tone and a five-way blade switch allows the usual selections of bridge, middle and neck pickups by themselves and the neck-plus-middle and bridge-plus-middle combinations that allow the SE NF3 to veer into Strat-like territory in switch positions two and four. All of this makes the SE NF3 quite different from standard humbucker-equipped PRS guitars, although it follows the specifications of many other SE models. The flattop body on my lightweight review sample was finished in pearlescent Polar White and is contoured on the edges and the back for comfortable playing. **\$799 street, prsguitars.com**



Reverend Chris Freeman Signature

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, June 2024

The Chris Freeman Signature feels great in the hand, with a comfortable Reverend neck carve and smoothly dressed frets. I found it an inspiring instrument that sent me in some unexpected directions. Reverend's take on the P90 in the neck position offers few surprises, but it delivers a very capable performance for clean tones that are rich and warm. This was my first encounter with the Nuevo 90, however, and I dug it immediately. Blending slug-pole clarity and blade-pole beef between the plain and wound strings, respectively, it somehow still sounds like all six strings are firing through the same pickup, and delivers a great marriage of clarity and depth in the process. This position is not intended only for emo fans; I found it was fantastic for meaty twang and girthy chime alike, and when applying some gain, Reverend's clever Bass Contour circuit dialed it between Tele and PAF-like tones, all noise-canceling for worry-free lead work. **\$1,439 street, reverendguitars.com**



Yamaha Pacifica Professional

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, June 2024

If there's one thing that's overshadowing the stellar Yamaha Pacifica Professional guitar, it's the startling price tag. It's difficult to shake the fact that the Pacifica — which many consider the benchmark in budget electric guitars — now arrives in a Professional version at a cost that might be slightly out of reach for most players. Even so, it would be a shame for that to be the only reason to overlook this thoughtfully designed superstrat that undeniably proves it's a world-class performance instrument through and through. Yamaha partnered with Rupert Neve Designs, the company renowned for its pro audio recording consoles and preamps, to develop uniquely wound pickups that cover an exceptionally wide tonal response. The result is pickups unlike anything I've experienced before. Though it may sound like a fault, the Reflectone pickups lack coloration, but this is exactly what makes them extraordinary.

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



Yamaha Revstar Element

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, December 2024

The Revstar Element sports a chambered mahogany body with precisely sculpted tone chambers that reduce weight but significantly promote the guitar's clear breath of hefty, solid-body tone. I'm impressed that the Revstar's offset double cutaway frames the guitar with polished style and modern dimension. The Element's VH3 humbuckers feature Alnico V magnets and are controlled via a three-way blade selector and heavy-duty, knurled-chrome master volume and tone controls. The tone control is a push/pull that engages Yamaha's proprietary "Dry Switch" — an innovative high-pass filter that tamps down the lower frequencies and channels in single-coil tones without the hum or drop in volume. The guitar features a set-in mahogany neck with a rosewood fingerboard, an adjustable bridge with stopbar tailpiece, a 24.75" scale, a flat 12" fingerboard radius, 22 jumbo frets and diecast Kluson-style tuners.

\$549.99, [yamaha.com](https://www.yamaha.com)

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Bourgeois Touchstone Signature OM

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, July 2024

The Bourgeois Touchstone Series is intriguing because of its hybrid design and a build concept that involves Eastman Guitars overseas, making the crossover product much more affordable than a full USA hand-build. The intention is to deliver the essence of a full Bourgeois experience at almost half the price. Primary Bourgeois hallmarks include a hand-tuned top and a six-bolt neck attachment, and all Touchstone Series models retain these features. The neck profile is modern slim, and the factory action was nice and easy, but it's not trying to play like an electric guitar. A slight V is a historic nod that's great for a bit of a thumb anchor without being severe, like some classic acoustic designs. The width at the nut measures a unique 1.72 inches, making it slightly narrower than the modern standard of 1.75 inches and not quite as narrow as the 1.69 inches more common in the past, particularly on dreadnoughts.

\$3,599 street, bourgeoisguitars.com



Klōs Grand Cutaway Mini

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, May 2024

Carbon fiber lifestyle brand Klōs (pronounced “close”) is rolling out a gang of new gear, and the Grand Cutaway Mini is particularly compelling because of its unique size and features. Travel guitars put Klōs on the map and remain its most popular size, but the company is gaining ground in the full-size market, and the GC Mini essentially splits the difference. The concept is a road-ready, seaworthy instrument that delivers fuller sound and better playability than a typical travel guitar, along with gig-worthy electronic options. It's significantly smaller than a triple or double O, but not too tiny, and the depth is similar. The 24.75” scale length is just long enough to give the Mini a proper string feel under the fingers, and the flexibility to handle dropped tunings while facilitating easy bending. In addition to being a great grab for a quick play at an office desk, it's ideal for nature treks, sailing trips, or a van-life excursion.

\$1,959 acoustic, \$2,399 with L.R. Baggs Anthem pickup, kloguitars.com



Martin DJR-10E Bass

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, February 2024

This little acoustic-electric bass is ideal for guitar players interested in doing a bit of bottom-end grooving without the heft or freight of a full-scale bass and requisite amp. The DJR-10E isn't even the size of a full dreadnought — it's a Junior — and the street price is pretty junior as well. The DJR-10E is available in natural spruce or sunburst, but the 'burst looked a bit more beautiful to these eyes, so that was the review unit requested. It's dusky, handsome and sports a flashy mother-of-pearl pattern rosette on a solid spruce top, with matching 28-style dot inlays on the Richlite fretboard. Of course, it's not as loud or robust as a full-sized acoustic bass, but it certainly delivers an impressive punch for its diminutive body, which sounds not at all boxy. When you want more juice, it's nice to be able to plug in and play. The onboard Fishman Presys VT Bass electronics do a fine job of bringing more bump, especially through a PA.

\$tbc, martinguitar.com



Martin GPCE Inception Maple

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, May 2024

This acoustic bears an imaginative design using sustainably harvested tonewoods, with a predominantly maple construction — hence its moniker, the Inception Maple — found along its sides and visually striking three-piece back made of maple, along with a prodigious centerpiece wedge of black walnut. Martin intended to make “maple sound better than it ever has,” and undoubtedly, the Inception succeeds in removing the strident and compressed overtones of maple and replaces it with a softer brightness, ringing midrange and a firm bass as you strum through cowboy chords. It's certainly a louder Martin guitar that belies its GP-body size and powerfully projects a crisp and airy tone with a snappy response. For fingerstyle playing, the Inception maintains a focused balance between the bass and treble registers where each note is heard cleanly. Its low oval neck profile and fantastic fretwork makes playing the Inception worth your time.

\$3,999, martinguitar.com



Orangewood Juniper Sunburst Live

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, September 2024

Coming out of its included gig bag, the Juniper Sunburst Live feels solidly built with Orangewood's custom parlor-sized construction and a 24.75" scale length. At the heart of the Juniper's sound is Orangewood's methodical design for its rubber bridge. It is undeniable how much fun it is to play a rubber-bridge guitar, and the Juniper Sunburst Live is a solid and reliable vehicle to bring inspired life to this "deadened" and muted sound — which is further enhanced by the flatwound strings. Still, it's an entirely different universe compared to traditional acoustics, since all the ringing dynamics are dampened, but what you get in return is a plush tone that softly chimes like a plucked harp. **\$395, orangewoodguitars.com**



Taylor 50th Anniversary 858e LTD Grand Orchestra 12-String

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, September 2024

Equipped with ES2 electronics and shipped in a lovely Western Floral hardshell case, this 858e LTD designed to go on the road, not simply hang on the wall. The exquisite Indian rosewood selected for the back and sides is dusky and handsome, punctuated by its contrast with the bright white binding on the body and neck heel cap. The seams on the three-piece headstock-neck-heel design are barely noticeable. I couldn't find a blemish anywhere. It's a modern take on a classic Taylor tone. Rosewood and spruce is a tried-and-true wood combination, and if this were a Grand Auditorium it would essentially be a 12-string version of Taylor's most recognizable sound. **\$3,999 street, taylorguitars.com**



Taylor GS Mini Sapele

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, February 2024

Over the last 14 years, Taylor has introduced a wide variety of GS Mini models and expanded the line, which now ranges in price from \$499 to \$1,199. The Taylor GS Mini Sapele occupies the lowest end of that price spectrum, and its top is solid Sitka spruce while the back and sides are layered sapele — an alternative to mahogany that is stronger and harder, resulting in slightly brighter overall tone. The ebony fretboard and bridge also remain from the previous iteration, but the neck is now tropical mahogany and the saddle is Micarta instead of Nubone. Tonally, the GS Mini Sapele sounds as good as ever, with impressive volume output and projection, rich, reverb-like resonance, brisk treble, and sweet, sonorous midrange. **\$499, taylorguitars.com**



Taylor 222ce K DLX

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, August 2024

Koa is a very attractive looking tonewood that is commonly associated with high-end models, and due to its higher cost, many guitarists haven't experienced koa's distinctive tonal qualities. Taylor is now making full-size guitars with tops, backs and sides made of Hawaiian koa more accessible to the masses with the introduction of two new 200 series guitars, including this one. With its compact Grand Concert body that measures about 15 inches across the lower bout and X bracing, the 222ce-K DLX provides a well-balanced overall tone that is particularly well-suited for fingerstyle playing. The treble has a sweet, alluring chime that accentuates upper spectrum harmonics but never sounds thin — a quality that also comes through quite nicely via the Expression System 2 electronics when amplified. The warm, full midrange and focused bass will certainly please traditionalists, and thanks to the aging characteristics of koa the sound will continue to become sweeter and warmer the more it's played over the years.

\$1,999 street, taylorguitars.com

Positive Grid Spark Live

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, August 2024

Positive Grid's line of compact guitar amplifiers — including the Spark, Spark Mini and Spark Go — has kept guitarists continually plugged in and engaged in the practice zone with immersive sound and a companion app with more than 50,000 preset tones. Now, with the release of Spark Live, Positive Grid has determinedly set its sights on the stage.

Spark Live, the company's most prodigious Spark to date, arrives as a portable and gig-ready, four-channel multi-instrument smart amp and 150-watt PA system with a mixer. It's also moderately lightweight at 26 lbs, with compact combo dimensions, and can be battery-powered. Much like the other amps in the Spark series, it's an intuitive and uncomplicated plug-in-and-play affair — yet for the first time, Spark Live can accommodate bass, vocals and keys, in addition to electric and acoustic guitars — all at once — in its specific channels. You'll find a compartment on the back for the Spark battery (sold separately) that can power Spark Live for up to eight hours. There's also an extendable tilt stand to position Spark Live as a wedge or kickback, and a port on its side to mount it on a speaker stand.

\$549, positivegrid.com



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A woman with blonde hair, wearing a floral headband, a white lace top, and a blue patterned skirt, sits on a tree stump in a lush, misty forest. She is playing a brown acoustic guitar. Golden musical notes float around her, creating a magical atmosphere. The background features tall trees and a small stream.

Sonic Bloom



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Blackstar HT Series MKIII HT-20, HT-5 and HT-1

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, October 2024

There will always be a time and a place for big, powerful 100-watt tube amps, but for a vast majority of guitarists today a smaller amp is much more practical for everyday recording, practice and performance applications. As with Blackstar's MK II versions, the MK III HT Series consists of a 1-watt head (HT-1RH) and combo (HT-1R), a 5-watt head (HT-5RH) and combo (HT-5R) and a 20-watt head (HT-20RH) and combo (HT-20R). Each combo has a single speaker — an 8-inch speaker for the HT-1R or a 12-inch speaker for the HT-5RH and HT-20H. Blackstar also offers matching 1x12 and 2x12 extension cabinets. The 1-watt, 5-watt and 20-watt models each have different tube complements, which gives each version its own distinctive tonal range and character, although there is an overlapping “Blackstar” personality throughout. The HT-1 amps have single ECC83 (12AX7) preamp and ECC82 (12AU7) power amp tubes; the HT-5 amps feature an ECC83 preamp and 12BH7 power amp tube; and the HT-20 amps provide a pair of ECC82 preamp and dual EL84 power amp tubes.

HT-20 \$749, HT-5 \$679, HT-1 \$449, blackstaramps.com



Dr. Z Z-80

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, May 2024

While Dr. Z has a strong reputation for originality, the Z-80 has its roots in Brad Paisley's beloved and ultra-rare Vox AC80. Designed by Dick Denney in 1963, the AC80 (also called the AC80/100 or AC100 “80 to 100-watt amp”) was created to help the Beatles rise above the noise of screaming teenage girls for the North American tours of the mid '60s. Fewer than 300 units of this 80-watt masterpiece of cathode-biased sonic splendor were built before the more familiar fixed-bias, 100-watt AC100 was introduced around mid 1965. Following the urging of Paisley, a frequent Dr. Z collaborator, and six years of development, the Z-80 tracks the circuit of the best-sounding of these early AC80s and adds a few features to suit the needs of 2024, without adversely impacting the tonal blueprint. At its heart it's an 80-watt, four-EL34 amp with two 12AX7s in the preamp and a 12AU7 phase inverter, with a single channel and a simple control set featuring volume, treble, middle, bass, and master.

\$3,599, drzamps.com



Fender Tone Master Pro and FR-10 Powered Cabinet

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, January 2024



The rampant quest for suitable amplifiers and speakers to reproduce all that DSP-generated guitar tone as sound waves has yet to produce a clear winner. Powered cabs by Kemper, Atomic, Line 6 and Friedman have won over some fans, while others have conscripted powered monitor wedges. But the gasp of relief heard around the world when Fender introduced its first full-range, flat-response (FRFR) powered cabs, the Tone Master FR-10 and FR-12, suggests that this sector is still very much up for grabs. Designed as a Hot Rod Deluxe combo cab with a top rear-facing control panel, this box looks almost identical in its black Tolex with silver grille cloth. The FR-10 is made from light plywood and contains a 1,000-watt, Class-D power amp driving a 10-inch special-design speaker and a one-inch wide-dispersion high-frequency tweeter. I found it was great sounding and extremely easy to use, delivering an impressive marriage of full-range response and amp-like feel, and giving an overall performance that I felt at home with much more quickly than some FRFRs at twice the price.

\$799, fender.com



Gibson Falcon 5 and 20 Combos

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, February 2024

These American-made Gibson amps include the Falcon 20 1x12 combo and Falcon 5 1x10 combo. In broad terms, these amps — the Falcon 20 in particular — pay homage to a short-lived version of the GA-19RVT Falcon from 1961. That combo had onboard reverb a good two years before any Fender amp did, and it provided a range of features and a power level perfectly suited to club gigs and studio dates. There's definitely more gusto in the bigger amp overall, and very usable headroom and punch on its full-power setting. There can be a certain magic to vintage single-10 combos, and the Falcon 5 reflects that in the detail and immediacy of its sound. Overall, I probably preferred the fuller midrange and overt throatiness of the Falcon 20's 12-inch speaker once I start to push it a little. And again, it's hard to avoid noticing that you get a lot more out of the larger combo for a mere \$300 extra.

\$1,499, \$1,799, gibson.com



Peavey Classic 20 112

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, May 2024

With its vintage-style tweed cloth covering and oxblood-color grill cloth, the Classic 20 112 retains the vintage visual styling of Peavey's Classic amp models from the Nineties. However, whereas those versions had top-facing controls like a Fifties Fender tweed amp, the Classic 20 112 features front-facing controls that are preferred by most modern players. The cabinet houses a Peavey Sheffield 1230+ 12-inch speaker, and an 8-/16-ohm impedance switch allows users to pair the amp with a single external speaker cabinet as an option to the internal speaker. The Classic 20's tones are very solid and working class, perhaps lacking the finesse of more expensive tube amps but still providing a good base for most styles of music as well as an attractive foundation for a pedal-based rig. Channel 1 is clean, generating only a hint of overdrive with the main volume control cranked. At the full 20-watt setting, this amp is very loud and can easily compete with many 50-watt amps — something to consider if you're looking for a compact amp for a club gig. At a price that's a penny below \$1,000, it's packed with a variety of useful features.

\$999.99, peavey.com



PRS DGT 15

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, September 2024

"I wanted a lower-power version of my 30-watt amp so that I could get the same vintage output-stage overdrive at a lower volume, and I wanted it to be much more affordable," David Grissom says. Tucked into a blond Tolex-covered cabinet that measures 9.25 by 17.25 by 9 inches (HxWxD) and weighs 21.5 pounds, the DGT 15's steel chassis carries two EL84s in the power section, four preamp tubes — three 12AX7s and a 12AT7 — and a GZ34 tube rectifier. The DGT 15 and 1x12 cab makes a righteous rig for anyone who plies the club circuit, although as Grissom states, "I could play Madison Square Garden by putting a mic on it. I always mic the speaker — always." That explains why there's no "speaker simulated" out to be found here, and it also underscores the DGT 15's mission of delivering the best guitar tone possible from a modern design that embraces the best of vintage amplifier technology.

\$1,199, prsguitars.com



PRS Mark Tremonti MT 100

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, August 2024

When PRS introduced its first Mark Tremonti signature amp — the 15-watt MT 15 “lunchbox” head — in 2018, many guitarists welcomed it with arms wide open, but some wondered when a full-size, high-output version would follow. Six years later, after a period of extensive development and refinement, PRS has introduced the 100-watt MT 100. Its three channels (Clean, Overdrive and Lead) are fully independent and individually voiced, operating essentially like three different preamps. The design is straightforward and uncomplicated, providing fully independent sets of bass, middle, treble, presence, volume (Clean) or gain (Overdrive, Lead) and master volume controls for each channel and no shared “master” controls. Each channel has its own preamp tubes (V2 Clean, V3 and V4 Overdrive, V5 and V6 Lead), while V1, V7 and V8 are shared among all three channels for input, effects loop and phase inverter functions, respectively. The MT 100 can be considered a “metal” amp, but it’s also one of the most versatile amps that PRS has ever produced.

\$1,849, prsguitars.com



Suhr SL68 MKII

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, November 2024

The SL68 MkII offers guitarists everything they would ever want, from a blazing Marshall 100-watt plexi and more at a cost that is a small fraction of inflated vintage prices. The SL68 MkII features the same familiar tone and volume controls and four inputs as a classic Super Lead, but it adds one of the best designed master volume circuits available today, Fat, Boost and Bright switches and a Variac low-power mode. The tubes are a quartet of EL84s for the power and three 12AX7s for the preamp and phase inverter. There are numerous plexi clones on the market these days, but the difference between the Suhr SL68 MkII and most other clones is like the difference between a Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Grand Cru Burgundy and a mass-produced USA Pinot Noir. Every element, from the carefully selected components to the attention to the finest detail, is on another level. A key feature is its custom output transformer, which is designed to provide clarity, dynamic responsiveness and the elusive expressive feel of the real deal.

\$3,449, suhr.com



Taylor Circa 74 AV150-10 Acoustic Amplifier

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player*, April 2024



The AV150-10 is a handsome, wood-crafted acoustic guitar-and-vocal combo packing 150 watts into a 1x10 enclosure with a tan grille cloth. It sits on a neat wood stand and looks like it would fit as easily into a home’s decor as it would a studio setting. The AV150-10 features truly furniture-quality craftsmanship, with an elegant aesthetic that harks back to the golden age of vinyl, but it’s also both modern and classic enough to work in a variety of settings. Solid mahogany never goes out of style, and the way the amp and its lovely mahogany stand fit together is rather ingenious. There’s real power here from the Class D solid-state amp as well. Turn it up, and, boy, is it punchy. The AV150-10 helps notes sing out with strong sustain, and the mahogany cabinet seems to contribute to the punch and projection as you crank it up. This exciting era of acoustic-electronic innovation hasn’t seen much action on the amp front, which makes the AV150-10 such a welcome addition. The fact that it comes from Taylor makes it feel familiar even as it arrives out of left field.

\$1,119 street, taylorguitars.com



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Boss BP-1W Booster/Preamp

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, June 2024

With the exception of the limited edition TB-2W Tone Bender, which was anomalous in numerous ways, all of the previous Boss Waza Craft pedals were based on pre-existing Boss pedal models. The BP-1W takes a radically different approach by adopting specific elements of classic Boss and Roland products — in this case, the preamp sections of the Boss CE-1 Chorus Ensemble and Roland RE-201 Space Echo — and reconfiguring them in the familiar Boss compact pedal format. The BP-1W's analog circuitry provides the preamp tones of the CE-1 and RE-201 in a pedalboard-friendly format without the excessive bulk of those devices or impedance mismatch issues that are optionally resolved by placing a buffer before their inputs. The BP-1W also includes a Natural setting that provides a transparent/"clean"-sounding boost effect. With the Level and Gain controls fully maxed, the overdrive texture is delightfully aggressive and gritty, but it never becomes flat or compressed. Attack remains razor sharp and note-to-note definition is precise.

\$129, boss.info



Donner/Third Man Hardware Triple Threat

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, May 2024

Combining three analog effects in a small package with a low price tag makes the Triple Threat an outsider among today's boutique boxes. However, it all makes sense considering that Jack White conceived this sleek little multi-effector for his Third Man Hardware line, partnering with Donner to produce the pedal in China. The Triple Threat features distortion, phaser, and echo effects that are arranged in right-to-left stompbox order, each of which can be controlled with a trio of small knobs. There's volume, gain and tone for distortion; level, rate, and depth for phaser; and level, feedback (repeats), and time for echo. Yellow rubber surrounds on the knobs make them easy to grip and more identifiable on the black top panel. Even though they're close together, I didn't find it a problem to reach down and turn them in live situations. Roughly the size of a TV remote, the aluminum-alloy enclosure has front-mounted input and output jacks, a center-negative jack for the included adapter, and an LED above each switch to indicate on/off.

Standard edition \$99, limited edition \$129,



EarthQuaker Devices Shadows II

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, October 2024

Time Shadows is an advanced multi-effects unit with three very distinctive algorithms or modes. EQD mode (developed by EarthQuaker Devices) is "an envelope-controlled suboctave filter delay" or "pitch-morphed fuzz delay filter;" DBA mode (contributed by Death By Audio) is a "multi-delay regenerating filter" or "multi-delay filter remorphinator;" and !; mode, a new addition that wasn't featured on the initial limited-edition version of the pedal, is a "pitch-warping dual delay" created by EQD's Jamie Stillman and completed for the new version of Time Shadows. Each mode has its own distinct personality, which gives the box functionality similar to three entirely separate multi-effect and/or synth pedals. Time Shadows provides only three controls for tweaking sounds — Time (delay time), Filter (filter frequency envelope and gate for EQD mode, filter frequency and phased delay line shift point for DBA mode, mix for !; mode) and Span (intensity) — but this modest seeming array can summon a multitude of compelling effects and textures.

\$199, earthquakerdevices.com



Electro-Harmonix Lizard King Bass Octave Fuzz

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, December 2024

Delivering massive tones, the Lizard King is certain to please the most aggressive, distortion-loving bassists. However, guitarists are equally well served by its truly distinctive tones that hit many ideal sweet spots. Whereas most octave-up fuzz effects for guitarists sound like squealing mosquitoes in a bottle, the Lizard King produces a gut-punching effect that is the guitar equivalent of the King of the Monsters, featuring an updated circuit optimized for bass and a wider selection of controls for tweaking a bigger palette of sounds with greater precision. In addition to Volume and Octave knobs — the latter now dialing in more intense octave up effects when adjusted clockwise past 12 o'clock or providing deeper growl when twisted counterclockwise — the pedal also has a Blend knob for adjusting the mix between dry and effected signals, a Tone knob that provides full frequency response at maximum and rolls off high frequencies as it's turned down, and a Sun/Shadow micro toggle switch that boosts the fuzz effect's mids while scooping mids from the dry signal in the Sun setting while providing an unadulterated, tight fuzz effect in the Shadow setting.

\$129, ehx.com



Eventide Riptide

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, February 2024

The Riptide is a compact 2-in-1 pedal with an onboard overdrive and Uni-Vibe effect that can be run in stereo. Similar to the pedals in Eventide's streamlined dot9 series, Riptide's advanced functionality is buried under the hood and simplified to good old-fashioned knob twisting and button pushing on its surface. Its controls consist of Vibe (Mix for chorus/vibrato), Speed and Intensity, for "Vibe," while the "Drive" section includes Drive, Tone and Level... all easy to comprehend so far. The bonus here is that Riptide has dual voicings per effect that are accessed by pressing the LED buttons just above their corresponding Drive and Vibe footswitches. The color of the LED (green or red) identifies the voice selected. For Drive, green designates a dynamic, mid-focused "Screamer" crunch, while red introduces a smoother, crunchier boost. On the Vibe side, green ushers in a vintage Uni-Vibe swirl, and red delivers a deeply phased vibe. For even more versatility, there's an LED Swap button allowing you to change the order of the signal chain (Vibe into Drive or Drive into Vibe) and any combination of parameters can be mapped to an expression pedal.

\$299 street, eventideaudio.com



Interstellar Audio Machines

Supernova Zoeldrive

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, December 2024

You may have already encountered Interstellar Audio Machines' unmistakable pedals online and in social media feeds if your search history consists of words like "Klon" and "fuzz." Each pedal is painted with eye-popping sci-fi artwork, and a new overdrive/boost pedal has entered Earth's atmosphere called the Supernova Zoeldrive from IAM. It features the common three-knob control set for Volume, Tone and Drive, along with a two-way Voice toggle switch that affects midrange response. The Zoeldrive features top-mounted 1/4-inch input and output jacks, a bright red LED indicator, and it's powered via a 9-volt battery or 9V power supply. As a bonus, the pedal's box is packed with "case candy" of IAM stickers, pick, pin-back button and an intergalactic IAM membership card. Whereas IAM's Octonaut Hyperdrive builds upon the iconic Klon sound, the Supernova Zoeldrive is an in-your-face overdrive/boost with classic "tweed-like" breakup and growl. It shares some of the warmth of the Hyperdrive but with more clarity and presence when the Voice switch is in the up position and the gain is turned down.

\$199, interstellaraudiomachines.com



Keeley Angry Orange, Blues Disorder and Super Rodent

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, July 2024

Keeley Electronics' recently introduced 4-in-1 series pedals offer something guitarists haven't really seen before. Combining two distinct effects in a single box, the pedals feature switches that allow users to mix and match the tone and drive sections of each effect. The 4-in-1 pedals all share identical configurations with Tone, Level and Drive knobs, Tone and Drive setting mini toggle switches on the top panel and mono 1/4-inch input and output jacks on the rear panel. The Angry Orange combines a "78 Japanese Orange Distortion" (Boss DS-1) with a "91 Soviet Civil War Fuzz" (Sovtek "Civil War" Big Muff); the Blues Disorder provides a "Bluesy Breaker" (Marshall Blues Breaker) and "OC Distortion" (Fulltone OCD) combo; and the Super Rodent delivers "classic yellow Japanese Super O-Drive" (Boss SD-1) and "Rodentia Michigander" (ProCo Rat) circuits.

\$199 each, robertkeeley.com



Line 6 HX One

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, July 2024

The Line 6 HX One offers guitarists a quick and easy way to add Line 6's HX effect models to their rigs with minimum hassle. The unit is about as big as an average mid-sized stompbox (like an MXR Phase 100 but taller) so it can easily squeeze into a packed pedalboard, and its controls are smartly designed to enable quick tweaks on the fly just like a regular old effects pedal. Yet underneath its modest-looking exterior is an advanced processor that provides more than 250 pristine-sounding stereo effect models. Unlike larger HX units that provide simultaneous multi-effects, HX One is a "one effect at a time" processor, making it more of an effects stompbox with multiple personalities. The pedal sounds good when either plugged straight into a guitar amp's input or into an effects loop, but for optimal performance I recommend using the "four-cable method" where the signal is routed to an amp's input and effects loop simultaneously. Each preset can be programmed to "Pre" or "Post" insert positions, which allows users to route effects like delay or reverb to the effects loop and distortions, compressors, wahs or dynamic filters to the amp's input.

\$299.99, line6.com



MXR Joshua Ambient Echo

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, July 2024

It's amazing how many players have chased after and adopted the Edge's signature delay tone. It's so identifiable that nearly every digital amp or guitar modeler would seem incomplete if there weren't a preset titled "Streets" in its menu. Yet, from U2's early recordings to his current rig, the Edge has always had that sound — whether he employed an EHX Memory Man Deluxe pedal or Korg SDD-3000 rack delays, and whether he merged longer and shorter repeats from these legendary delay units. It's no secret that the name of the MXR Joshua Ambient Echo is an overt tip of the hat to him and U2's *Joshua Tree*, the 1987 album that popularized many of the trademark delay sounds the Edge created. Despite the name, it's not a signature pedal. Still, it animates many of those modulated and textured delays, with primary and secondary echoes, reverb, up and down octave blends and rhythmic echo divisions. For those who revel in sonic soundscapes, let's just say this pedal's arrival is better late than never.

\$239.99, jimdunlop.com



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Revv Amplification Tilt Boost

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, March 2024

Session guitarist extraordinaire and influencer Shawn Tubbs stumbled onto something good when he partnered with Revv Amplification to release his signature Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive pedal, which featured dual footswitchable overdrive and boost. Tubbs discovered that many players who had been using the pedal had become enamored with its boost side, with some foregoing the overdrive altogether and having the boost always on because of its tone-shaping abilities. Well, if all you need is boost and so much more, Revv Amplification has got you covered with the Tilt Boost, which is essentially the extracted boost portion of the Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive, but with additional tone-shaping capabilities that push it far beyond other mere boosts. Much like the Shawn Tubbs Tilt Overdrive, the Tilt Boost's simplified control set is divided between its boost and Tilt EQ functions. On the left side, the Boost control adjusts output level and the two-position drive switch activates boost (up to 20dB of clean boost) or engages touch-sensitive clipping (fat, medium-gain overdrive). For the right side, the Tilt EQ control simultaneously attenuates bass and treble frequencies by adding more fullness and low-end clarity.

\$169, revvamplification.com



Strymon BigSky MX Reverb

By Christopher Scapelliti, *Guitar Player*, October 2024

Strymon's newly released BigSky MX pedal delivers new reverb machines, dual-reverb capability, full IR functionality and much more. Strymon didn't just revise BigSky's features for this new incarnation; they used the same kind of neural-tweaking techniques behind A.I. to create lifelike virtual spaces that respond to your playing. As for its sound, the 3-D realism is remarkable. Comparing my original BigSky to the BigSky MX... well, there is no comparison. The improved detail, sonic nuance and sense of being within an actual physical space is apparent, and the new presets do a good job of demonstrating what this box can do. Some of my favorites include the Impulse engine's 250 Long, Gate Reactor and Slinky presets, the Magneto machine's Moody Bounce and SmartWhales settings, and the Chamber's Sweet Neck, Pretty Chamber and Warm Chamber offerings. For raising the ambience bar to a new level, BigSky MX earns our Editors' Pick Award.

\$679, strymon.net



UAFX Anti 1992 High Gain Amp Pedal

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, Holiday 2024

Most guitarists know that the most famous high-gain amp to emerge in 1992 was the 5150, and that's exactly the primary character of what the Anti pedal offers. However, it goes further than that, thanks to its slightly wider EQ and gain range, built-in noise gate that delivers outstanding noise-free clarity and definition and TS overdrive (Tube Screamer) and TC preamp (possibly based on the rare TC Electronic Integrated Preamp used by Meshuggah?) overdrive/boost features. It also includes mic/speaker emulations of five 4x12 and one 2x12 speaker cabinets, three of which being "bonus" download cabs provided to encourage registering the pedal. As a result, Anti is more than just an amp emulator as it actually provides the sounds and performance capabilities of a full rig. Anti features the same six-knob, three-toggle, dual-footswitch configuration of UAFX's other amp pedals. Here, the knobs consist of Pre Gain/Resonance, Presence/Gate, Output, Low/Overdrive, Mid/OD Tone, High/OD Level controls. The two footswitches can be set to four different modes: Live/Preset, Overdrive/Live-Preset, Gate/Live-Preset or four-cable mode.

\$399, uaudio.com



Universal Audio UAFX Lion '68 Super Lead Amp

By Art Thompson, *Guitar Player*, April 2024

The latest amp-emulator pedal from UAFX offers three models from a stable of 1968 100-watt Marshalls: the Super Lead, Super Bass, and Brown. Even with standard guitar amps, Lion performed admirably as a distortion pedal. Straight into a Fender Deluxe Reverb or '48 Dual Professional set clean, and with the cab simulation disabled, it was easy to dial in happening tones by turning up the volume I and II knobs for the desired level of grind and treble/bass balance. With its ballsy presence and smooth top, the Brown setting delivers killer saturated grind that's aggressive and heavy, yet can pull back to a fat, loose, clean tone when the guitar is rolled down. The convenience is unreal, too. By configuring Brown on the left foot switch and either the Super Bass or Super Lead as a preset for lead or rhythm on the right-hand foot switch, it was really easy to use Lion live. Another good option is to toggle between Brown and either of the other Marshalls with the right foot switch and deploy the left switch to activate a boost. **\$399, uaudio.com**



Vox VRM-1 Real McCoy Reissue Wah

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, October 2024

As Vox puts it, “the Real McCoy is voiced for the iconic nasal tone of the original wah model, with an accentuated midrange that imparts a warm and melodic character to your guitar.” In general, the Real McCoy lived up to Vox’s statement, although arguably with more nuance than this description might imply. “Nasal” might indeed describe the frequency range accentuated by this circuit, but depending on which other wah-wah you’re comparing it to (and certainly the V846 Vintage, in this case), I’d say maybe “warmer, throatier, and mellower” might also be appropriate adjectives. It does a good job of taming the Stratocaster’s potential bridge-pickup spikiness, for example, relative to many other wahs at least, and delivers a rounder, slightly darker rendition of that vocal-vowel sound that I believe a lot of players will enjoy. The throw from the rocker action is relatively short and sharp, as were the originals, so teasing out that chewy, vowel-per-note “talking” sound takes some precise foot work, but the circuit adds a little grind of its own that produces some appealing textures even in clean playing.

\$279 street, voxamps.com



Warm Audio Warm Bender and RingerBringer

By Chris Gill, *Guitar World*, October 2024

The Warm Bender is both a faithful reproduction of a Tone Bender with Attack and Level controls and a modern enhancement, thanks to the addition of a three-way switch that selects three different fuzz circuits. It's housed in a familiar-looking wedge enclosure with a gray hammered metal powder coat finish, but it's scaled down to about half the size of the original. The RingerBringer is pretty much a dead ringer for the discontinued Moogerfooger pedal it's based on, housed in a nearly identical enclosure with wood sides, and featuring identical top-panel control knob and rear-panel jack configurations. Even the rocker switches are the same shade of blue. If you're not familiar with what a ring modulator does, the simple explanation is that it takes a modulation signal (such as an electric guitar, synth or vocal mic) that is combined with a carrier signal (usually a sine wave at a set frequency) and outputs the sum and difference to create unusual, atonal, metallic-sounding textures (the middle section of Devo's “Too Much Paranoias” is a classic example of ring modulation).

\$199, \$219, warmaudio.com



The Epiphone logo is written in its signature script font, tilted slightly to the right. It is positioned at the top center of the advertisement, above the main headline. The background of the entire image is a photograph of a stage with four guitars on stands, a microphone on the left, and stage lights creating a warm, orange glow.

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Nakupenda Guitar Stool

By Jimmy Leslie, *Guitar Player* May 2024

Nakupenda has put a ton of research into making what it calls “the world’s first ergonomic guitar performance stool,” which is designed to hug hips and align the spine and pelvis to improve posture, thereby relieving back and neck pain by evenly distributing the player’s weight. The chair is handcrafted from FSC-certified sustainable North American walnut and is available in two heights. Once while attempting to get comfortable on a bar stool at soundcheck, Leo Kottke remarked, “I always feel like a marionette sitting on one of these things.” Not so with the ergonomic Guitar Stool. Better still, it has a handy built-in guitar stand on the back.

\$495, nakupenda.co



Tonespeak Manchester 1290 Guitar Speaker

By Dave Hunter, *Guitar Player*, October 2024

The Manchester 1290 represents Tonespeak’s take on a high-wattage driver that captures vintage-inspired personality and responsiveness. Using Celestion’s Classic Lead 80 as a jumping-off point, this 90-watt speaker employs a fiberglass coil-former and 1.75” copper voice-coil with large-diameter dust cap centered in an engineered-paper cone. The Manchester 1290 showed a distinctively British character while proving somewhat more balanced throughout the spectrum than the Birmingham. Displaying less distortion at edge-of-breakup settings, it admirably lived up to the goal of a more characterful voice at clean and semi-clean settings and presented no detrimental artifacts when used with lower-powered amps. Hit with more volume from a cranked 50-watt head, or slammed with overdrive pedals, it remained tight and articulate through the distortion, without flubbing out on the low end or caving into a hazy slur in the midrange.

\$149 street, tonespeak.com



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

By Paul Riario, *Guitar World*, October 2024

Ultimate Ears Pro’s new, affordable line of premium in-ear monitors — the UE 150, UE 250 and UE 350 — feature a universal fit that offers sealed-in comfort, high fidelity and durability. All three IEMs come with an assortment of foam and silicone tips in every size (XS, S, M and L). These IEMs feature more drivers as you go up a model, with the UE 150 having a single driver, the UE 250 with two and the UE 350 with three, and with both the UE 250 and UE 350 including a two-way crossover that enhances musical detail. Testing out all three in several environments — monitoring music and backing tracks, as a guitar IEM for my amp modeler and blending a separate monitor mix of instruments and vocals — I got a good read of the strengths of each model. Most importantly, these IEMs fit snugly in my ear and never fell out, which is surprisingly great for a universal fit.

\$199-\$399, pro.ultimateears.com



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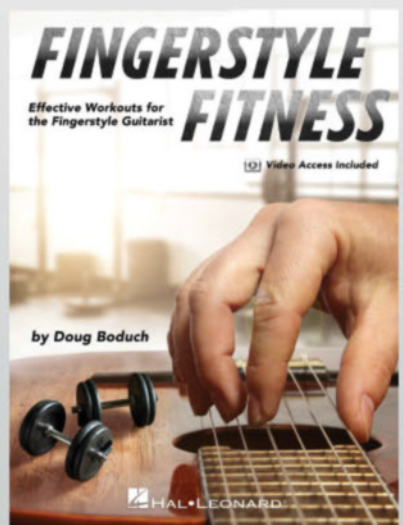
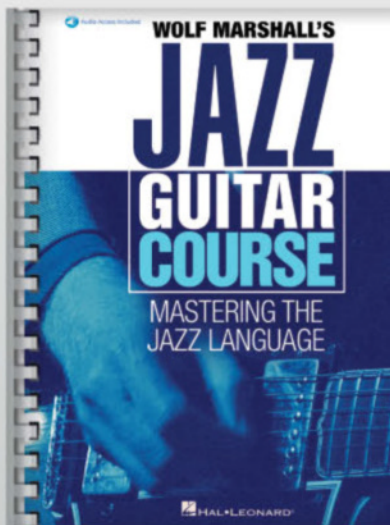
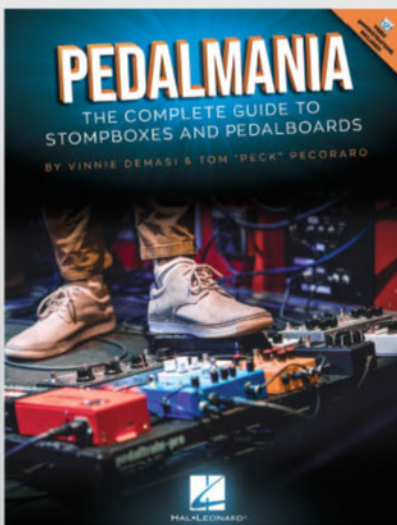
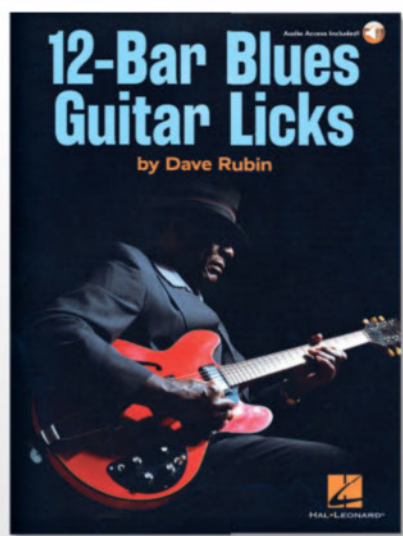
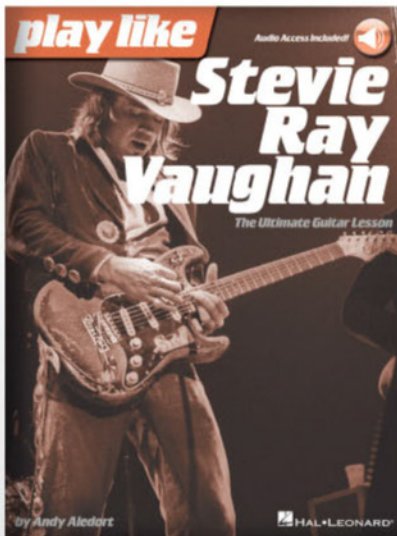
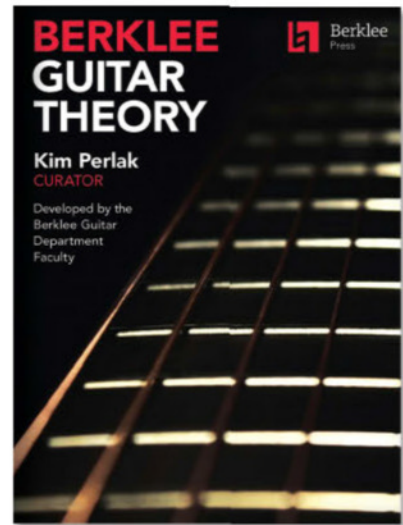
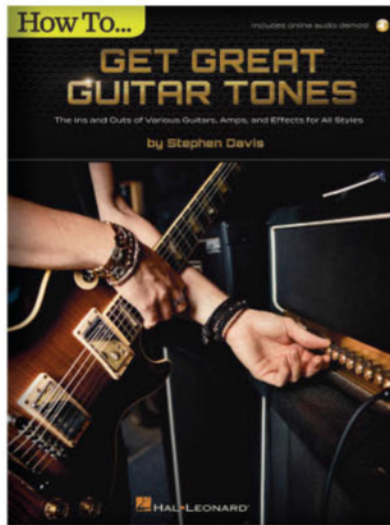
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GLISSIN' IN

Using glissandos in melodic themes

I'M A BIG fan of Steve Vai and Guthrie Govan, both of whom are known for liberally employing legato articulations in their melody playing, such as slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs, bends and *glissandos* (long slides). These techniques are very effective for giving your lines a slippery, rubber band-like sound. The chorus melody from the title track to my latest album, *Charisma*, offers a nice example of how I use these techniques to create see-saw-like melodic figures during this section.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the eight-bar chorus melody of “Charisma.” In every bar here, I play a melodic line up and down the G string, with combinations of slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs. As this recurring phrase serves as the centerpiece for the chorus melody, it’s essential for it to be performed in this specific legato fashion.

The song is in the key of F, and the chorus section begins on the IV (four) chord, B $\flat$, starting with the notes D and F, which are, respectively, the major 3rd and 5th of B $\flat$. I then shift to legato phrasing via the slide from C down to A on the 2nd string, followed by the slide and pull-off down to G and F on the 3rd string.

I continue this phrasing approach through the G, C and A notes, all played on the G string and performed through the remainder of bar 1 through the first half of bar 2.

The impetus for this melody came from open-voiced triads, often referred to by guitarists as “Eric Johnson” triads, as illustrated in **FIGURE 2**. Each is played on the A, D and B strings, starting with B $\flat$, and followed by Gm, F, C/E and B $\flat$ /D.

FIGURE 3 indicates this initial melodic phrase, which kicks off in the pickup bar with a long slide from F up to B $\flat$ on the 5th string and then moves into the glissando-based chorus melody. The melody is constructed of the four-and-a-half beat primary line, which is played four times and culminates each time with a different three-and-a-half-beat ending. The first of these endings is played in bar 2 of **FIGURE 1** and also illustrated in **FIGURE 4**. Here, a Gm(add9) arpeggio is built from the note stack G - D - A - B $\flat$. Bar 2 of **FIGURE 4** illustrates how I then move to a restatement of the primary melodic line.

The second ending is shown in bar 4 of

FIGURE 1, beats 3 and 4, and zeroed-in on in **FIGURE 5**. Here, I slide up to D, on the G string’s 19th fret, which is followed by the notes G, A and D on the top two strings. I then move back down through the same notes.

The third ending is shown in **FIGURE 1**, bar 5, beats 3 and 4, and also in **FIGURE 6**.

This can be analyzed as a fairly simple idea based on the F major hexatonic scale (F, G, A, B $\flat$, C, D).

The fourth and final ending is shown in bar 8, beats 3 and 4, of **FIGURE 1**, and in **FIGURE 7**. Like **FIGURE 6**, this is another simple line, this one based on F major pentatonic (F, G, A, C, D).

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/february2025

SRV

The blues guitar mastery of Stevie Ray Vaughan

IT HAS COME to my attention that, of all of the columns I've created for GW, I have yet to talk about the great Stevie Ray Vaughan. Oh my god! As a child of the Seventies, in 1983, when I was all of six years old, there were two guitar players that changed the game for me: on the rock side, it was Eddie Van Halen. The other was Stevie Ray Vaughan, who came out of Austin wielding an old Stratocaster and a Fender amp set to stun, and turned the blues guitar world on its head. We all play like Stevie — we all share this connection to his incredible debut album, *Texas Flood*, and the great records that followed.

For the examples in this column, I'm playing a 1964 Candy Apple Red Strat with a "hardtail," which means there's no tremolo system. In that way, it's like a Telecaster, and I'm a big fan of hardtail Strats.

When I first heard Stevie, I heard licks like this (see **FIGURE 1**), which is played in 5th position, in the A blues scale (A, C, D, E $\flat$, E, G) box, with the inclusion of the 9th, B, and the flattened 9th, B $\flat$, Stevie routinely tore through licks like these on tracks like "Texas Flood," "Pride and Joy," "Say What!" and many others. A real signature of his is the lick that falls on beat 2 in the first bar: on the B string, after bending G up to A, I move to the high E string and play A to B, followed by a quick hammer/pull from A to B $\flat$, followed by a pull-off from G to E on the B string as the phrase then continues moving down the scale all the way to A on the 6th string. The roots of this lick go back to T-Bone Walker, as well as Jimi Hendrix, and overall Stevie melded the combination of those two influences, as well as Albert King's, in his own inimitable way.

Live at El Mocambo explodes with phenomenal playing, with tunes like "So Excited." **FIGURE 2** is played in that style and ends with an aggressive slide down the high strings. Stevie's playing on all of his records changed the world for me: it was the tone, phrasing, infinite amount of ideas and flawless articulation, with a very simple toolkit of a Strat, a couple of Vibroverbs, a Tube Screamer and a wah pedal.

Jackson Browne lent Stevie his Dumble amp for the *Texas Flood* recording sessions, and **FIGURES 3** and **4** illustrate phrases

FIG. 1 (A7)

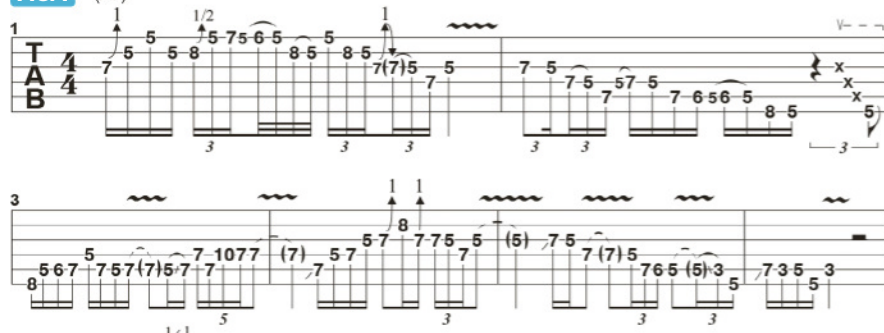


FIG. 2 (G7)

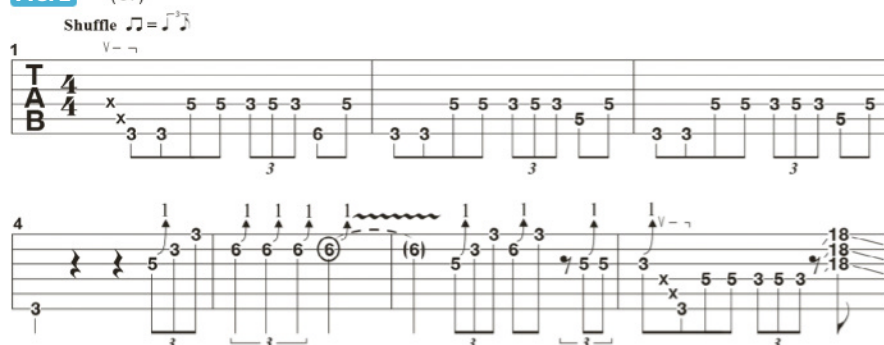


FIG. 3

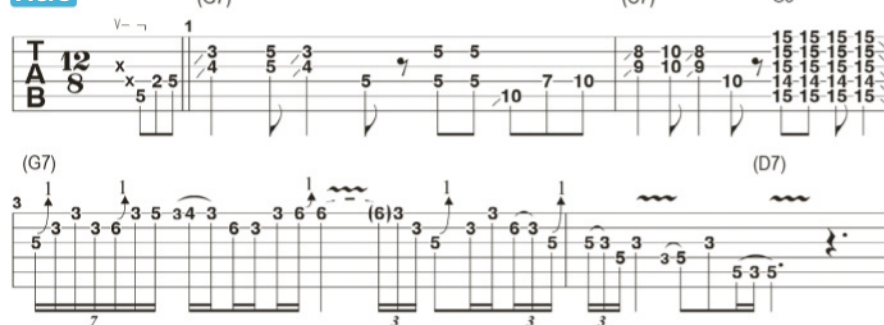
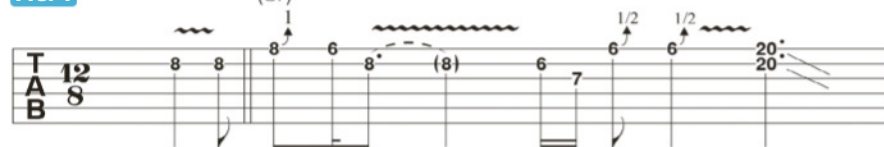


FIG. 4



played in the key of G, along the lines of how Stevie kicks off the title track. **FIGURE 4** is a good representation of Albert King's influence, delivered as only Stevie could.

I spent countless hours jamming along to "Tin Pan Alley" (*Couldn't Stand the*

Weather), and at that time, Stevie was certainly one of my biggest influences. He redirected the future of blues guitar from his very first release, and his influence continues to inspire new generations of aspiring players.

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
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PLEADING THE 5TH

Putting the 5th in the bass in a blues shuffle

THE SHUFFLE IS a popular rhythmic feel used in various styles of music, especially blues. I play a lot of blues-based music in my live sets, and a fair amount of those tunes feature a shuffle feel, which is built on an undercurrent of eighth-note triplets and “swung” eighth notes.

A cool variation on the stock Jimmy Reed-style “root-5th/root-6th” blues shuffle rhythm pattern (heard in “Bright Lights, Big City” and “Baby What You Want Me to Do”) is to begin with the 5th of each chord as the lowest note in the voicing, or “in the bass,” instead of the root note being on the bottom. With the 5th as the lowest note, you can alter the voicings on every beat, so that the bass notes move up and down the neck.

FIGURE 1 presents a rhythm pattern for a 12-bar blues shuffle in the key of G, with all of the chords in the I - IV - V progression — G, C and D — voiced as three-note shapes with the 5th in the bass. Using fingerpicking, I begin the pattern with a voicing that places D, the 5th of G, on the low E string, B, the 3rd, on the D string, and G, the root note, on the G string. **FIGURE 2** offers a clear picture of this voicing. While maintaining the high G note, the D then moves up to E while the B moves up to C, sounding a C/E chord. This shift is illustrated in **FIGURE 3**, beats 1 and 2.

Bar 1 of **FIGURE 1** ends with F/A, voiced A, F, C, low to high. Bar 2 moves to the IV chord, C, and here I simply transpose the G/D voicing down to C, with G, the 5th of C, now in the bass, and E (the 3rd) and C (the root) above it. Beat 2 repeats the F/A chord, followed by C7/B $\flat$, as the low A note moves up to B $\flat$, the 7th of C, and the F moves up to G, the 5th. **FIGURE 4** offers a clearer look at these voicings.

Bar 3 of **FIGURE 1** ends with the previous C/E voicing, followed in bar 4 by a set of chord substitutions: G - F - Em - D, with each chord having its 5th in the bass. Bars 5 and 6 are essentially the same as bar 2, and bars 7 and 8 emulate bar 3. One twist here is that I end bar 8 with a chromatic walk-up from C/G to C $\sharp$ /G $\sharp$, setting up the move to the V (five) chord, D/A, in bar 9.

For the V chord, I transpose the previous move up a whole step, sounding D/A - G/B

FIG. 1 (G7) (C7) (G7)

1 fingerstyle G/D C/E G/D F/A C/G F/A C7/B $\flat$ C/E G/D C/E G/F C/E

4 G/D F/C Em/B Dm/A C/G F/A C7/B $\flat$ F/A C/G F/A C/G C/E

7 (G7) (D7) G/D C/E G/D C/E G/D C/E G/D C/G C $\sharp$ /G $\sharp$ D/A G/B D7/C F/A

10 (C7) (G7) C/G F/A C7/B $\flat$ C/E G/D C/E G/D C/E G/D G/B D/A C/E (G7) G/D

FIG. 2 G G/D

T 4 12 9 12

A 4 12 9 12

B 4 10 10 10

FIG. 3 G/D C/E G7/F C/E

T 4 12 10 12 12 10 12

A 4 12 10 12 12 10 12

B 4 10 12 13 12 10 12

FIG. 4 C/G F/A C7/B $\flat$ F/A C/G C/E G/D C/E G7/F G/B

1 T 4 2 5 3 5 5 3 5 2 5 10 12 4 9 12 10 12 12 5 7

A 4 3 5 6 5 3 3 12 3 12 10 12 10 12 13 7

B 4 3 5 6 5 3 3 12 3 12 10 12 10 12 13 7

4 D/A G/B D7/C F/A C/G F/A C7/B $\flat$ C/E G/D

T 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 12 12 9 12

A 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 12 12 9 12

B 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 12 12 9 12

- D7/C. Bar 4 of **FIGURE 4** focuses on the shifts between these voicings.

Our 12-bar progression wraps up with a return to the IV chord, C, in bar 10, and the I chord, G, in bar 11. Bar 12 ends with a move to the V chord, D, followed by a final C/E, which I use to set up a return to G/D.

This approach may seem complicated, but it's actually not, when you look at each of the three primary chords in the progression. Using these wider voicings creates an interesting and warm-sounding rhythm pattern that's also fun to solo over, which I will demonstrate next month. See you then!

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*.

JIM OBLON

HARDWIRED

by Jared James Nichols



For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/february2025

VOCALIZE IT

How to make your solos “sing”

THIS MONTH, I'D like to discuss a topic that's very near and dear to my heart. Whether I'm improvising guitar solos or writing riffs for songs, I'm always envisioning the phrases I play as being like vocal parts. For me, this approach imbues a part with the most effective sound and feeling that can connect to the listener.

The first thing I think about is intent — what am I trying to say, musically? There are so many different ways to express something when you play. The listener will sit up and take notice when it comes across in the right way. They hear it and decipher it, and the musical statement becomes more than just a simple guitar riff.

Let's start with the riff in **FIGURE 1**, which is played in the key of E, or E minor. After the initial E5 chord, I play a one-bar phrase based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), with the inclusion of the 6th, C♯. When playing this riff, I think about altering its character by articulating the phrase in as many different ways as possible. One way is to back off my guitar's volume and play more delicately, as I do in **FIGURE 2**. In **FIGURE 3**, I have the volume knob cranked up and change the phrase a little bit, adding the slide down the G string, from B₅ to A, followed by a pull-off to G.

Likewise, I'll sometimes utilize my tone knob to make a phrase “speak” in a completely different way. I can play a lick with the tone on 10, which yields a sharper, more intense sound; I can also roll it back to zero, creating a warm, mellow sound. It's all about finding what works best for each riff and making the vocal qualities shine through via the tone and the feel of how the riff is presented.

FIGURE 4 illustrates another riff in E, this time initiated with hammer-ons and slides up the low E string. When playing a lick like this, I'll ask myself, “How can I make the notes on the low strings not sound so ‘guitar-y’ and sound more vocal-like?” As shown in **FIGURE 5**, one way to achieve this is to add a little vibrato in the spots where there's a pause. Another option is to purposely not pick every note, using hammer-ons and slides to create more of a smooth, breathy, vocal-like quality.

The concept is to phrase like a singer when playing single-note riffs. **FIGURES 6**

FIG. 1

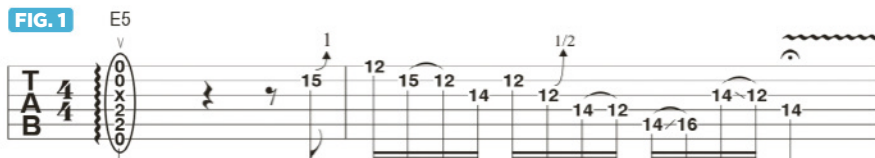


FIG. 2

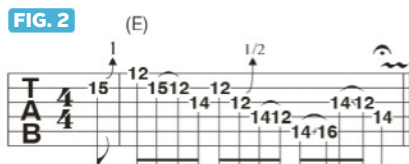


FIG. 3

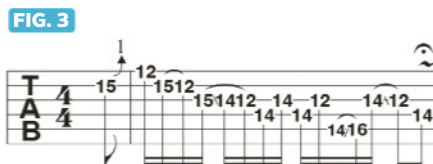


FIG. 4

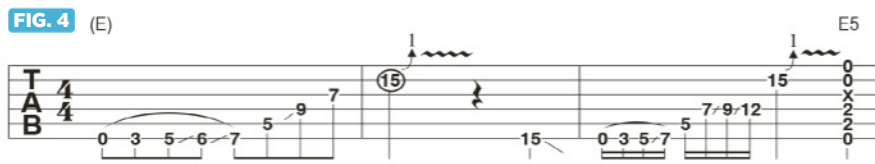


FIG. 5



FIG. 6

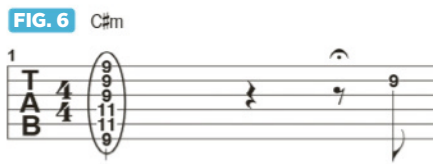


FIG. 7



FIG. 8

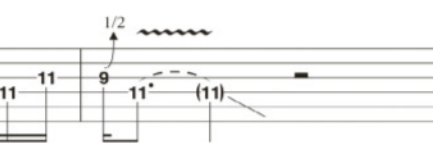


FIG. 9

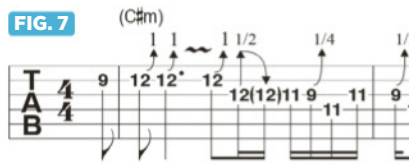


FIG. 10

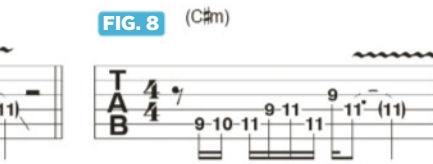


FIG. 9

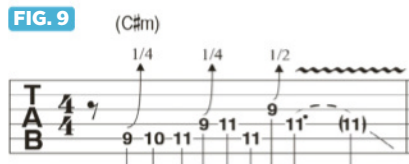
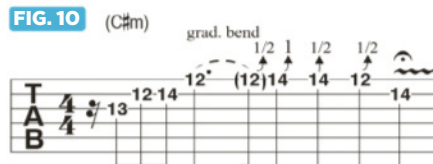


FIG. 10



and **7** are based on the C♯ blues scale (C♯, E, F♯, G, G♯, B), and in both examples I follow the 3rd-finger whole-step bend on the B string, from B to C♯, by catching the G string under the fingertip, producing a half-step pre-bend and release from G♯ to G. This is a lick made famous by Jimi Hendrix.

FIGURE 8 offers a simple C♯ blues scale phrase, and in **FIGURE 9** I add microtonal

bends for a more vocal-like effect.

The first time I heard microtonal bends like this was from Eric Clapton. **FIGURE 10** illustrates how to employ subtle half-step bends to yield a more vocal-like feeling. This is a great exercise to take your playing from sounding very “straight” to musical phrases that are funkier and express more emotion.

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

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

"EMOTION SICKNESS"

Queens of the Stone Age

[from left] Queens of the Stone Age's Troy Van Leeuwen, Dean Fertita and Josh Homme perform in Berlin, November 9, 2023



ONE OF MODERN rock's most distinctive and creative bands, QOTSA consistently serve up well-written and -produced songs

that feature their signature style of catchy and often quirky guitar riffs, great vocals and sardonic lyrics. This single from the group's latest album features frontman Josh Homme and co-guitarists Troy Van Leeuwen and Dean Fertita presenting a tastefully layered arrangement of fairly simple, meat-and-potatoes rhythm and lead parts that together form a rich sonic tapestry as the song unfolds and develops.

Notice how, during the verses (sections B, D and G), every other bar begins with a rest, or "hole of silence," which creates a playful, tricky-sounding groove that also breathes nicely. At sections F and J, the holes become even wider and more dramatic, as all instruments, except for the drums, play absolutely nothing during beats 1 and 2 of each bar, with the guitarists developing a short, syncopated eighth-note motif beginning on "3-and." Be sure to completely mute the strings during these rests. (Not a peep!)

The arrangement "opens up" at the chorus (section E), as Homme (Gtr. 1) strums ringing B, A and E chords with added melodic fills while Van Leeuwen and Fertita play soaring, sweetly harmonized slide melodies up and down their B and high E strings, using notes that live within the B Mixolydian mode (B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A), with the single-note lines mostly harmonized in diatonic 3rds.

When fretting the B5 power chords in bars 30-32 and elsewhere, mute the 6th string with the tip of your 1st finger, in order to choke the open low E note that's interjected between certain chord strums, so that the note doesn't bleed into the chord. This is one of those subtle techniques that can't be notated but is essential to employ, in order to ensure a clean performance.

The harmonized slide melodies were probably recorded on a lap steel by Leeuwen (as he is credited as playing on the track). But live he and Fertita play the two independent single-note lines on their electric guitars with slides. If you watch live performance videos of the song, you'll see close-up shots of Leeuwen fretting some of the quickly moving notes with his first two fingers, so as to ensure spot-on intonation, switching to the slide for all the gliding portamentos.

"DEAD & BLOATED"

Stone Temple Pilots



THIS SLOW-TEMPO but hard hitting opening track from STP's classic debut album, *Core* (1992), showcases the DeLeo brothers' — guitarist Dean's

and bassist Robert's — knack for crafting super-heavy-sounding riffs and parts that have the kind of epic quality and hard rock swagger often associated with the most celebrated songs by Led Zeppelin, Van Halen and Guns N' Roses.

While Robert tunes his bass to drop-D for this song, Dean plays in standard tuning and uses a couple of chord voicings that "sub-stack" the 5th on the bottom, or "in the bass," namely D5/A and Bsus2/F#. Doing so creates the sonic illusion that his guitar (a Les Paul, plugged into a Marshall) is either tuned to drop-D or has a low B string, with his high-gain, bridge-pickup tone enriching the "fattening" effect of these voicings.

In his opening riff (see section B), which then serves as the chorus accompaniment and, interestingly, is the unusual length of *three* bars, Dean makes great use of pull-offs and double-stop slides. These are fairly easy to perform, provided you use the fingerings shown below bars 6-8. Notice that the D and G notes at the 5th fret on the A and D strings are initially barred with the 1st finger, which then slides down to the 3rd fret, but are then fretted individually, with the tips of the 3rd and 4th fingers, which then pull-off to a 3rd-fret barre. Fingering these two notes with separate digits makes it easier to shake the G/D chords in bars 7 and 8 than it would be if you were barring the strings. To produce a smooth, even vibrato here, bend and release the two strings in tandem, by about a quarter step, pushing them slightly upward, toward the low E string.

The bridge (section F) features a cool, descending progression of two-note chords, with a couple of 1st-inversion (3rd-in-the-bass) voicings (F#/A# and E/G#) used to create a chromatic drop. What makes the section even more interesting is Robert's contrary-motion line beneath the first three chords in bar 26 (B5 - F#/A# - A5), for which he ascends. His second note, D, played under Dean's F#/A# chord, creates an enigmatic-sounding D augmented triad (D, F#, A#).

"EVEN FLOW"

(CORRECTION FOR MAY 2024 ISSUE, PAGE 100)

Pearl Jam

Words by EDDIE VEDDER • Music by STONE GOSSARD

Dark ceilings grin He can't help when he's happy looks insane Oh
ceilings few and far between all the legal halls of shame yeah

C D C D C D

19 Gtr. 1 P.M. Gtr. 3 plays Fill 4 second time (see below bar 17)

Gtr. 2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass

2nd time, skip ahead to **D** (bar 41)

yeah
N.C. C D C D

22

w/wah pedal

25 C D N.C. P.M. D

N.H.

pitches: D A *Perform harmonic slide technique.

"5 MINUTES ALONE"

Pantera

As heard on **FAR BEYOND DRIVEN**

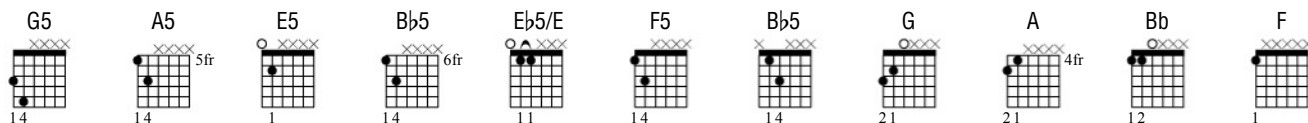
Words and Music by VINCE ABBOTT, DARRELL ABBOTT, REX BROWN and PHIL ANSELMO • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one whole step (low to high: D, G, C, F, A, D), plus an additional 60 cents (slightly more than a quarter step) flat.

Bass tuning, low to high: D, G, C, F, 60 cents flat of concert pitch.

All music sounds in the key of D minor (one whole step lower than written), 60 cents flat of concert pitch.

To play along with the recording, tune all instruments accordingly.



A Intro (0:01)

Gtrs. 1 and 2
(w/heavy dist.)

G5 A5 E5

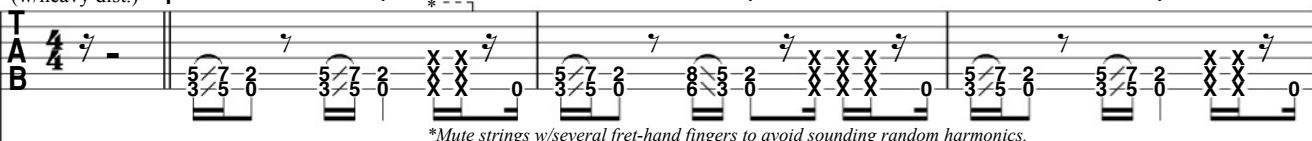
G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

Bb5 G5 E5

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5



Bass

Bass Fig. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 three times
(see bar 1)

G5 A5 E5

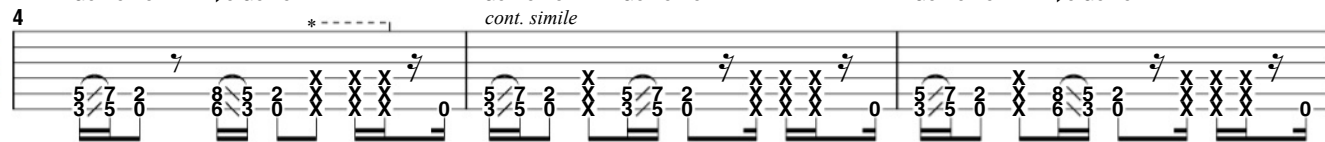
Bb5 G5 E5

G5 A5 E5
cont. simile

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

Bb5 G5 E5



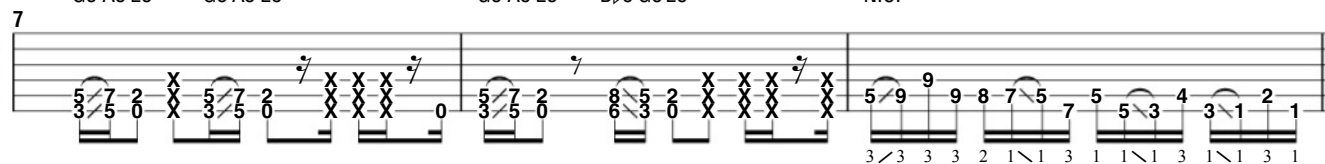
G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

Bb5 G5 E5

N.C.



Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see below)

B Verses (0:24, 1:39)

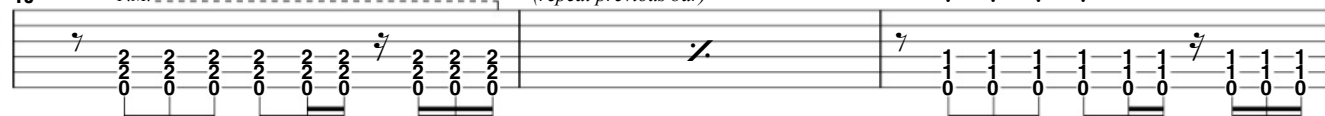
1. I see you had your mind all made up you group of pitiful liars
2. I read your eyes your mind was made up you took me for a fool

Before I woke to face the day
You used complexion of my skin

E5

P.M.

(repeat previous bar)

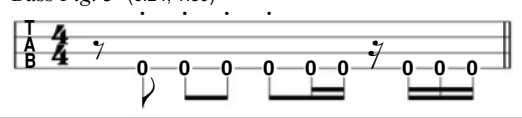


Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 eight times (see below)

Bass Fig. 2 (0:22, 1:37)



Bass Fig. 3 (0:24, 1:39)



"5 MINUTES ALONE"
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your master plan transpired
for a counter-racist tool

Something
You can't

told
burn

me
me

this job has more to meet the eye
I've spilled my guts out in the past

E5

P.M.

13

My song is not believed
Taken advantage of

E♭5/E

My words somewhat deceiving
'cause you know where I've come from

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

16

Bass

*grad. release
**grad. bend

Now I'm unwhole
My past

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 (see below)

Gtr. 1

19

w/bar*
1/2
*add third-fret note
first time only

C Pre-chorus (0:54, 2:09)

You've waged your war of nerves

but you can't crush the kingdom

E5

P.M.

N.C.

22

Fill 1 (0:51, 2:06)

Gtr. 2

Can't be what your idols are

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

N.C.

Can't leave that scar

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

25

(1.) You cry for compensation
(2.) I bury your compensation

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

I ask you please Just give us
I ask you please Just give us

N.C.

28

D 1st and 2nd Choruses (1:17, 2:31)

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

five minutes

alone

G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5

31

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

1.

2.

2nd time, skip ahead to **E** Bridge (bar 37)go back to **B** 2nd Verse (bar 10)

Just give us

Yeah

G5 A5 E5

Bb5 G5 E5

G5 A5 E5

Bb5 G5 E5

N.C.

34

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see 1st page)

E Bridge (2:52)

(2nd time) Take bites of broken glass

(3:02)

N.C.

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

37

(play 3 times)

Bass

Bass Fill 2

(play 3 times)

(3:12)

Huh

Five minutes

a -

A5 G#5 G5 F#5 F5 G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

40

*N.H.

Bass plays Bass Fill 2 (see bar 39)

Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

pitches: D (Gtr. 2)
C (Gtr. 1)

lone

Just gimme

Yeah

G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5

G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 E5

N.C.(E5)
grad. dive and release
-1½

Gtrs. 1 and 2

43

Bass

F Interlude (3:25)

N.C.(G5)

(Bb5)

46

G Guitar Solo (3:35)

N.C.

Gtr. 1

49

Gtr. 2 (w/delay and reverb)

P.H.

grad. bend

-1½

grad. release

pitch: B

Bass

54

H 2nd Interlude (3:55)

F5 B $\flat$ 5 F5 E5

1., 2., 3.

E5 B $\flat$ 5 E5 F5 E5 F5 G5

(D5)

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 2 (see next page)

Gtr. 1

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/dist. only)

P.M.

P.M.

4.

(4:15)

I ask you please just give us

F5 E5 B♭5 E5 F5 E5 F5 G5 E5 F5 E5 F5 G5

E5 F5 E5 F5 G5 N.C.

P.M.

P.M. _____

P.M. _____

P.M. _____

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I 3rd Chorus (4:19)

five minutes alone

G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 E5 G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

63 *cont. simile*

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see meas. 1)

J Outro Chorus (4:40)

Yeah I ask you please just give us I ask you please just give us

G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 E5 E5 G A E5 Bb

Gtrs. 1 and 2

66

Bass

I ask you please just give us I ask you please just give us (w/vocal ad lib until fade) I ask you please

E5 G A *F5 (F) G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5

69 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

*Gtr. 2 plays F chord (see beginning of transcription)

I ask you please (5:20) (play 6 times and fade)

G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 E5 G5 A5 E5 G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 E5 G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 A5 E5 Bb5 G5 A5 E5

72 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

(play 4 times) (play 4 times)

Fill 2 (3:53)

Gtr. 2

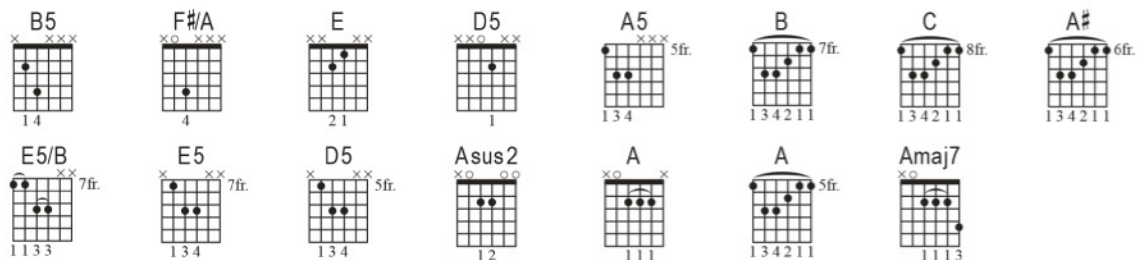
pitch: C C# D

"EMOTION SICKNESS"

Queens of the Stone Age

As heard on **IN TIMES NEW ROMAN...**

Words and Music by JOSHUA HOMME, DEAN FERTITA, TROY VAN LEEUWEN, MICHAEL SHUMAN
and JON THEODORE • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 122

B 1st Verse (0:16)

1. Use once and destroy

single servings of pain

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist. and sub octave effect*)

(humming)
(approx. 14 sec.)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)
Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

*set to approx. 75% wet/25% dry mix

1/2 1/2

7 7 5 (5) (5) 7 7 5 (5) (5)

4 4 4 2 2 0 2 2 0

9 11 11 9 (9) 7 9 9 7 9 11

B5 F#/A E A dose of emotion

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

Gtr. 2

Bass

7 7 5 7 7 5 9

9 11 11 9 9 9 7 9 11 7

"EMOTION SICKNESS"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY JOSHUA HOMME, DEAN FERTITA, TROY VAN LEEUWEN, MICHAEL SHUMAN AND JON THEODORE.
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sickness I just can't shake Then my fever broke

B5 F#m E D5 B5 F#m E D5 A5

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

end Bass Fig. 1

The musical score is written for three instruments: Gtr. 2, Gtr. 1, and Bass. The Gtr. 2 part is in standard notation with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with various chords and a 1/4 note pickup. The Gtr. 1 part is in standard notation with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature, featuring a melodic line with various chords and a 1/4 note pickup. The Bass part is in standard notation with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature, featuring a melodic line with various chords and a 1/4 note pickup. The score is divided into four measures, each corresponding to a line of lyrics. The first measure is marked with a '6' in the top left corner. The second measure is marked with a '1/4' in the top right corner. The third measure is marked with a '1/4' in the top right corner. The fourth measure is marked with a '1/4' in the top right corner. The score ends with a double bar line and the text 'end Bass Fig. 1'.

[illegible]

Well hoo (Hoo hoo) hoo hoo 2. You got

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff contains the vocal melody with lyrics 'Well hoo (Hoo hoo) hoo hoo 2. You got'. The second staff contains the guitar accompaniment, featuring a complex sequence of chords and arpeggios. The third staff contains the bass line, and the fourth staff contains the drum line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

D 2nd Verse (0:48)

no possessions just your flesh on yeah See the sights Holy Braille feel as you might

A# B C B A# B A# B A# B C B A# B A# B E5

18

Rhy. Fig. 2

Bass Fig. 2

Oh ah Rip some pieces free Oh atrocious F - ferocious yeah

D5 A A# B A# B C B A# B A# B

22

Check the price Alibi buy by the slice

Yeah Absolutely

A# B C B A# B A# B E5

D5 Baby don't N.C. (E5)

26

*Top notes played by overdubbed gtr.

end Rhy. Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

go oh

Asus2

A

A5 B

42

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass

(Gtr. 2 overdub)
w/dist. and sub-octave effect

*Notes played slightly behind the beat ("late").

F Interlude (1:43)

Yeah

46

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 3

Bass
Bass Fig. 4

A B E5/B E5 D5 A B

end Rhy. Fig. 3

end Bass Fig. 4

Fill 1 (2:36, 3:44, 4:15)

A5 N.C.
Gtr. 2 w/slide

TAB 4/4

(16) 5 (5) 7 9 7

Fill 2 (3:57)

A5
Gtr. 2 w/slide

Amaj7

A5

TAB 4/4

(11) 19 9 17 5 14 (5) 14 12 (12) 14 16 16 14 16

Gtr. 3 w/slide

Oh!

A B E5/B E5 D5 A B

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 46)

50 Gtr. 3

Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 46)

G 3rd Verse (1:58)

3. Gonna vacuum all the perfume now Hit the lights keep your shit out of sight

A# B C B A# B A# B A# B C B A# B A# B E5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 18)
Gtr. 2 (w/dist. and sub octave effect)

54

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 18)

No It's giving me the creeps Wanna chew gum go and get some yeah

D5 A A# B A# B C B A# B A# B

58

Go back to **E** Chorus (bar 30)

Put up a fight Well let's have it right now Baby don't

A# B C B A# B A# B E5 D5 N.C. (E5)

62

(sub-octave effect off) w/slide

H (2:38)

go on the breeze For a whole life possibly I don't really

B5 N.C.

Riff B (both gtrs.)
Gtr. 2

66

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 30)

Asus2

Amaj7

A5

end Riff B

70

I 4th Verse (2:54)

So smooth and clean

How we grow

B5 F#A

E

D5

B5

F#A

E

D5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 2)

Gtr. 2 (w/dist. and sub octave effect)

74

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 2)

is so painful

believe you me

Then my fever broke

B5 F#A

E

D5

B5

F#A

E

D5

78

J (3:09)

Then my fever broke

A5 B5

A5 B5

E5/B

E5 D5

A5 B5

Riff C

end Riff C

82

Go back to **E** Chorus (bar 30)

Then my fever broke Baby don't

A B E5/B E5 D5 A B

Gtr. 3 plays Riff C (see bar 83)
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 46)

87 Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 46)

K (3:46)

go on the breeze For a whole life possibly I don't really

B5

Gtrs. 2 and 3 play Riff B (see bar 66)

93 Gtr. 1

know oh

N.C. (A5)

Baby don't

A5

97

Gtrs. 2 and 3 play Fill 2 (see below bar 48)

care for me Baby don't care for me Had to let her

B5

101 Gtrs. 2 and 3 play Riff A (see bar 30)

go oh

N.C. (Asus2)

People come and

Asus2

Amaj7

N.C. Gtr. 1 plays Fill 1 (see below bar 46)

105

(begin fade)

go on the breeze For a whole life possibly I don't really

B5

Gtrs. 2 and 3 play Riff B w/ad lib variation (see bar 66)

109

know oh

N.C. (A5)

oh

113

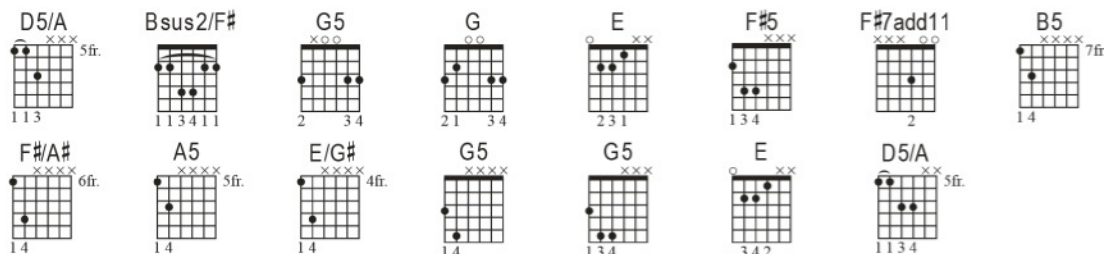
"DEAD & BLOATED"

Stone Temple Pilots

As heard on **CORE**

Words and Music by SCOTT WEILAND, DEAN DELEO, ROBERT DELEO and ERIC KRETZ • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

Bass is in drop-D tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G).

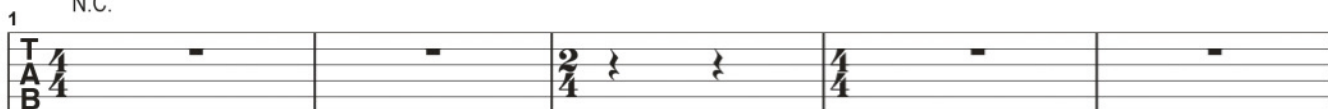
**A** Intro (0:00)

Slow Rock ♩ = 61

I am smelling like a rose that somebody gave me
on my birthday deathbed

I am smelling like a rose that somebody gave me 'cause
I'm dead and bloated

N.C.

**B** (0:17)

D5/A

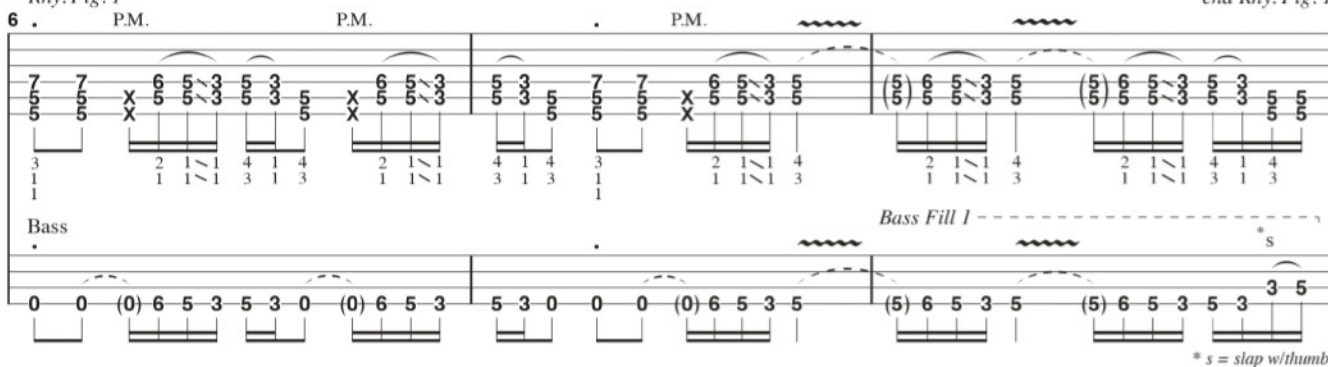
Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.)

Rhy. Fig. 1

G/D

D/A

end Rhy. Fig. 1

**C** 1st and 2nd Choruses (0:28, 1:39)

I am smelling like a rose that somebody gave me on my birthday deathbed
I am smelling like a rose that somebody gave me on my birthday deathbed

D5/A

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 6)

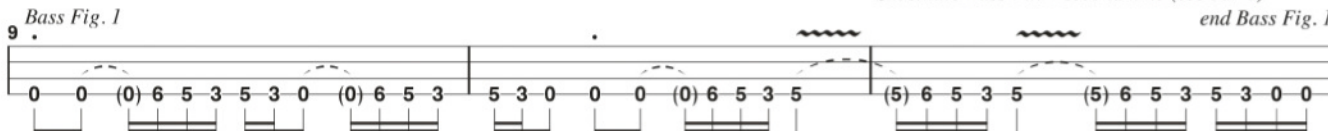
Bass

G/D

D/A

Substitute Bass Fill 1 second time (see bar 8)

end Bass Fig. 1



I am smelling like a rose that somebody gave me 'cause I'm dead and bloated
I am trampled under sole of another man's shoes guess I walked too softly

D5/A G/D D5/A

12 .

D 1st and 2nd Verses (0:52, 2:02)

Oh yeah yeah And she says it's natural

Bsus2/F#

*G5

E

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 2

15 .

*Gtr. 1 plays open G major chord (see chord frames above bar 1)

Bass

I feel I've come of age

When she peaks I start to run

Oh yeah yeah

Bsus2

G5

E

Bsus2

G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 three times (see bar 15)

Bass

17 .

And she says it's natural

I feel I've come of age

When she peaks I start to run

E

Bsus2

G5

E

20 .

E (1:23, 2:33)

1.

2.

1st time, go back to **C** 2nd chorus (bar 9)

You can't swallow

what I'm thinking

what I'm thinking

*F#5

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 (see below bar 40)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

23 .

*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

Bass

F Bridge (2:49, 3:44)

thinking 'bout tomorrow

B5 F#/A# A5 E/G# G5 A5 G5 E G5 E G5 E G5 E

w/slide

26 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) w/slide

(play repeats simile)

(play repeats simile)

Gtrs. 1 and 2
Rhy. Fig. 3

P.M. - P.M. - P.M. . P.M. - P.M. - P.M.

end Rhy. Fig. 3

The musical score for Guitars 1 and 2 shows two staves. The first staff has a pink highlight under the first measure and a yellow highlight under the second measure. The notation includes various note values, rests, and fingerings. Above the staves, there are labels for 'Gtrs. 1 and 2' and 'Rhy. Fig. 3'. There are also labels for 'P.M.' (Pickup Measure) above specific measures. At the end of the sequence, it says 'end Rhy. Fig. 3'.

end Rhy. Fig. 3

Bass Fig. 2 end Bass Fig. 2

2 5 (5) 7 (7) 6 6 5 7 5 5 2 2 5 (5) 2 2 2 0 2 2 5 2 2 2 5 (5) 2 2 2 0 2 2

thinking 'bout tomorrow

B5 F#/A# A5 E/G# G5 A5 G5 E G5 E G5 E

(omit repeat first time)

29 Gtr. 3

(omit repeat first time)

29 Gtr. 3

(omit repeat first time)

G (3:12, 4:30)

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 3

32

11 11 11 11 14 14

*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.

[illegible]

Bass

The first system of the bass staff contains two measures. The first measure has a duration of 4 and contains the notes 2, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 2, 4. The second measure has a duration of 4 and contains the notes 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4. The notes are grouped into pairs: (2, 4), (4, 2), (4, 4), (2, 4), (4, 4), (2, 4), (4, 4).

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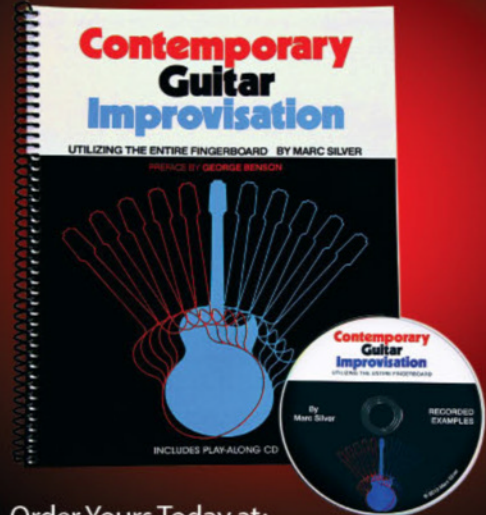
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1964-82 FENDER CHAMP/VIBRO-CHAMP 1967-80 FENDER BRONCO

CATEGORY: **COMBO AMPLIFIER**

ALMOST EVERY INTERNET forum discussion of classic late-Sixties and Seventies-era recordings where an artist vaguely cites using a “Fender Champ” will result in some belligerent blowhard insisting that it was a tweed Champ. Sometimes this is correct, but more often than not the amp in question was more likely a blackface/silverface Champ or Vibro-Champ from the mid-Sixties onwards. The main reason is pretty simple: blackface and silverface Champ family amps were commonplace new products during those eras. Studios bought them because they were inexpensive, highly useful, reliable tools, and guitarists picked them up for backstage warmups or hotel practice.

The other reason is that, while a tweed Champ can sound pretty damn good, it’s mainly ideal for raunchy overdrive tones with honking mids, albeit also with sloppy-sounding bass and noticeable rectifier sag. The later blackface and silverface Champ AA764/AB764 circuit delivers a much wider range of useful tones with increased clean headroom, tighter response and bass that retains definition and punch even when the amp is pushed to its full extremes of overdrive. In short, Champ and Vibro-Champ amps produced during the mid-Sixties onwards are simply better sounding and more tonally versatile tools, especially for studio recording.

The blackface Champ produced from 1964 through 1967 is essentially identical to the silverface version offered from 1968 until 1982, with only a few minor component changes and a switch in transformer brand/model that frankly doesn’t make a significant difference in the amp’s overall character. It features a dead-simple set of controls (Volume, Treble and Bass), high- and low-level inputs, a 4-ohm 8-inch speaker (usually an Oxford 8EV, but sometimes a Jensen speaker was used), and 5Y3 rectifier, 6V6 power and 12AX7 preamp tubes. The Vibro Champ adds an awesome-sounding bias vary tremolo circuit driven by an additional 12AX7 and featuring Speed and Intensity controls. Many players consider it their favorite in-amp tremolo effect thanks to its deep, rich “helicopters over Hanoi” pulsations. Fender also offered the Bronco amp from very late 1967 until



This blackface 1968 Fender Vibro-Champ lives at Snap Studios in London

“The tone fattens up as the amp is pushed into overdrive, and fully cranked up it pumps out deliciously gritty crunch”

1980, which was identical to the Vibro-Champ with the exception of its name painted in red.

These Champ/Vibro-Champ/Bronco amps deliver classic Fender blackface clean tones ideal for country or really any time you want pristine clean tones with percussive snap, sparkly high end and round, bouncy bass. The tone fattens up as the amp is pushed into overdrive, and fully cranked up it pumps out deliciously gritty crunch.

These amps pair very well with pedals, and thanks to their small size, they’re also very fun to experiment with in the studio by placing them in unusual environments like closets, cardboard boxes or metal garbage cans. These amps also work well with external speaker cabinets, but be absolutely certain to use only a 4-ohm cab as extended use of an 8- or 16-ohm cab runs the risk of blowing up the transformer.

Blackface and silverface Champ and Vibro-Champ amps have been used on way too many recordings to list here. Perhaps the most famous example is “Funk #49,” where Joe Walsh used only a Telecaster plugged into a blackface Vibro-Champ. Other more recent Champ fans include Jim Campilongo, Mike McCready, Derek Trucks and Jack White. **GW**

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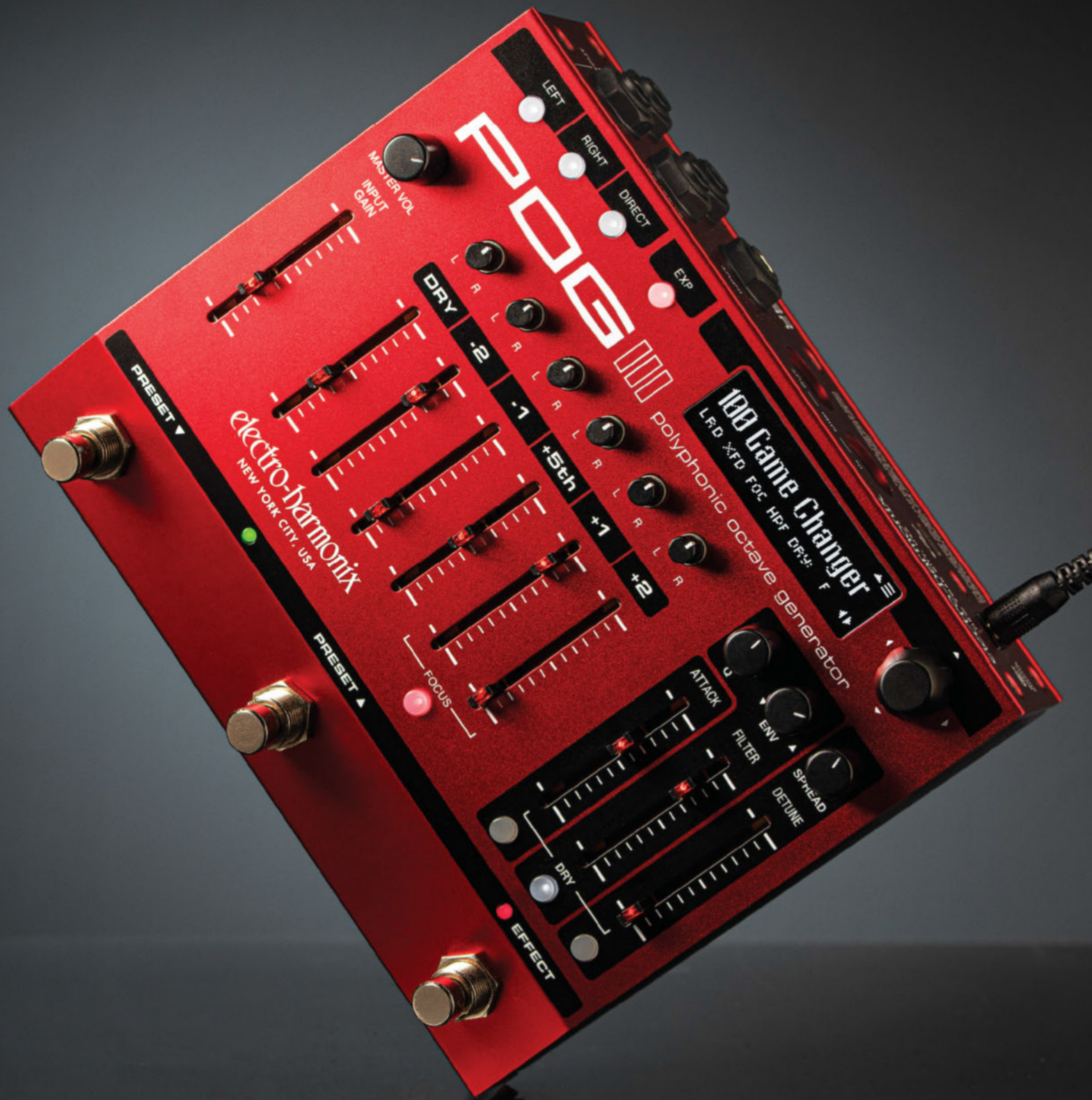


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