

ANTHRAX ATTACK! INSIDE THEIR FIRST ALBUM IN A DECADE

GUITAR WORLD

GUITAR & BASS
TRANSCRIPTIONS

**AMYL AND
THE SNIFFERS**
U SHOULD NOT
BE DOING THAT

THE CURE
JUST LIKE HEAVEN

**BREAKING
BENJAMIN**
I WILL NOT BOW

**Wayne
Charvel**
(1941–2026)
A TRIBUTE TO THE
SUPER STRAT
PIONEER

Mastodon

BILL KELLIHER, NICK JOHNSTON
& THE FINE ART OF MOVING ON

Lenny Kaye

PROTO-PUNK LEGEND EMERGES
FROM PATTI SMITH'S SHADOW

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"I DON'T NEED TO SHOW OFF
— I DID PLENTY OF THAT
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A JOHN WICK-WORTHY PUNCH

Funkadelic

MICHAEL HAMPTON REVISITS
A MID-'70S LOST CLASSIC

Jake Kiszka

The Greta Van Fleet
guitarist comes
out swinging

Reviewed

MORLEY X DOD WAH-OCTO-FUZZ,
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COVER PHOTO: JEFF FASANO | STYLING: ABBY GORDON | GROOMING: BRITTNEY HEAD

JEFF FASANO

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The pedal that changed me



IN MID-JULY, IN honor of Pedals Week, the GuitarWorld.com gang asked me — and a few other *Guitar World* editors — to write about “the pedal that changed me.” So, in the spirit of never letting a random, hastily written Damian Fanelli story go to waste, here’s my tale!

Fender '63 Reverb reissue

This big brown box entered my life in 2004, when my band, Mister Neutron, didn’t know if we were destined for They Might Be Giants-inspired indie rock or manic, full-on, Dick Dale-inspired instrumental surf-rock. You know, the usual dilemma for New Jersey bands in 2004.

But, as soon as I plugged into the ‘63 reissue, my TMBG aspirations packed their witty little bags and never returned. The seas parted before me, leaving a small walkway between two restless 90-foot waves. I walked forward about 15 steps when suddenly the walkway disappeared, the waves crashed down upon me, and I was awash in gloriously lush, dripping-wet, tube-driven spring reverb. Mister Neutron dived into the world of surf, released three albums, toured quite a bit and scored a top-requested track on Ohio college/alt-radio (“Super Constellation” — although “Comanchero” has been streamed far more often).

But is the Fender ‘63 Reverb even a pedal? Yes and no. It’s a practice-amp-sized box that does the *job* of a pedal, but — because it was invented before pedals were a thing — it looks more like a pipefitter’s lunchbox. Luckily, there are now plenty of normal-sized serious spring reverb pedals that’ll make you feel like you’re drowning — in a very good way. A couple that spring to mind are the Danelectro Spring King Junior, which houses an actual spring (like the ‘63 Reverb), and the Catalinbread Topanga, which sports a Dwell knob, just like the ‘63. If you’ve got a few more pesos, check out anything by Surf Industries, especially the Surf Bear Pedal Classic V3.0 Reverb. Later! — **DAMIAN FANELLI**



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Angine, Aaaaaangine – ain't it good to be alive?

[*Angine de Poitrine guitarist*] Khn is a lot more lively onstage and doesn't look all hunched over by the end of a show like he used to. Personally, I think he's the most interesting and important rock guitarist to come along since Eddie Van Halen. Sorry, haters, but the reason Angine de Poitrine got so big so fast is because of how original the music is and what great players they are, not because of the costumes. Costumes do nothing on their own. It's the people wearing them.

JIMMY M (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

There ain't nothing like a tube amp...

I'll never stop using my tube amps. I don't care how close a modeling amp can get; there's a reason why companies sink so much

R&D into getting their products to "sound like" a tube amp, so I choose to skip them and go right to the source. I'm not gigging, so amp weight isn't a consideration. Then there's that sound, that tone that comes from pushing the front end of the amp that I don't believe a modeling amp will ever replicate perfectly – and that's important to me. These are just my personal opinions and preferences.

DAVE K (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

RIP, Wayne Charvel!

[*Luthier and "superstrat" pioneer Wayne Charvel*] lived near me, so I had run into him a few times. He was a really nice guy. It was tragic when his entire shop burned down – all those guitars, all those custom-made jigs and tools. RIP, Wayne! Thanks for all the kindness and all the guitar setups over the years.

BOOGIE MCCROOGER (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

When Adrian Belew blew everyone's minds

Frank Zappa was a launching pad for Adrian Belew, and [*being in Zappa's band*] certainly solidified him as a guitar [*great*] and technical wizard. But it wasn't until King Crimson where Belew really blossomed. He used Roland guitar synthesizers extensively with King Crimson. During the 1980s, his primary weapon of choice was the Roland GR-300 synth unit paired with a custom-modified Fender Mustang (his famous *Twang Bar King* guitar) or a Fender Stratocaster. I mean, the stuff he and Robert Fripp put together [*is*] still mind-boggling – on *Discipline*, *Beat* and *Three of a Perfect Pair*. Just ask Steve Vai how difficult it is to play Robert Fripp's parts.

WARPRIDER75 (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

The Kiss of "Enough already with these guys!"

[*Kiss*] are showing the late Ace Frehley more love now than they ever did when he was alive and in the band. Plus, no one wants to hear Tommy Thayer or Eric Singer massacre their favorite Ace song. I've been a Kiss fan since 1975 – the original lineup – but I have no use for two guys dressed as Peter Dinklage and Ace, and the guy dressed as Ace made a career off of Ace's look and music. Can't this band just please go away?

GUITARMAN 60 (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

Some sweet Sweet memories

[*The Sweet recorded some*] cleverly put-together songs. It's so sad that guitarist Andy Scott is the last surviving original member.

READER ART OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue, email GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com with a .jpg or screenshot of the image. And (obviously...), please remember to include your name!



Joe Walsh

BY CHRISTOPHER J. BLAUVELT

I remember first seeing them on the BBC's teatime children's show *Crackerjack!* on a Friday afternoon playing "Blockbuster" when it came out. I had to ask my mum to buy that single, which – if I recall – cost around 50p back then. Such great memorable moments the band created!

RICKY GORMAN (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)

Never forget Tommy Bolin!

[*Your sentence*] "Tommy Bolin wields a funk-rock groove the way Bruce Lee wielded nunchucks" about Deep Purple's 1975 song "Gettin' Tighter" is so cool! Bolin seems like he was a musical swashbuckler, and his 1976 *Private Eyes* album (featuring Norma Jean Bell) emphasizes that for me. He was one of my favorite musicians.

THE IOWAN (VIA GUITARWORLD.COM)



Tony Paduano Jr.

AGE: 62

HOMETOWN: Greenville, PA (by way of Austin)

GUITARS: 2024 Gibson Les Paul Standard Goldtop, Charvel Jake E. Lee, Epiphone Les Paul Custom

Zakk Wylde, Epiphone Casino, Jackson Dinky

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Stone Temple Pilots "Interstate Love Song," Alice in Chains "Man in the Box" & "Rooster," Weezer "Say It Ain't So"

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DOGSTAR



Kevin Morby with his Jazzmaster-esque Seif guitar in Salt Lake City in May

American Beauty

Armed with an indestructible custom Seif guitar, Kevin Morby's new record roams our lost highways and finds humanity in the horror

BY JACOB PAUL NIELSEN

BY THE TIME this story runs, Kevin Morby will be a father. His girlfriend, Katie Crutchfield, aka Waxahatchee, was seven months along when I met Morby in his Detroit hotel room in early June. Relaxing on a day off in his black Hoka slide sandals – a far cry from the brown leather cowboy boots he wears on stage the following evening at St. Andrew's Hall – the Americana singer/

songwriter is eager to share in the excitement of becoming a dad.

"It seems psychedelic. I'm really excited for the human experience of it all," he says. "For the longest time, it was this question of 'Am I ever gonna do this?' Maybe not. It also feels really good to have just made the choice. I've toured so much. I've been to so many places and I've had all these great

experiences, and this feels like the actual next adventure."

As Crutchfield's due date looms, Morby sought some Southern California wisdom from his old friend, Ty Segall, who has a daughter of his own.

"He said that it's humanity – it's the whole point," he says. "That really resonated with me. We only get one shot on this earth, and it seems kind of like this beautiful thing to continue the species. Also, in the age of AI, there's something sort of beautiful about humanity."

Humanity, as a theme, permeates Morby's latest record, *Little Wide Open*. The cast of characters on the record are exactly the ones you can find anywhere in America's heartland. For example, on "100,000"



A closer look at the Seüf and [top right] the Little Wide Open cover art

Morby examines the archetypal good ol' boys that blast records like *Master of Puppets* from their muscle cars. These are the same guys who would likely leave an internet comment telling Hetfield himself to stick to the music if they ever read the lyrics to "Disposable Heroes" or "Leper Messiah."

"I think a lot of people, especially Americans, take things just at face value," he says. "They hear Bruce Springsteen sing 'Born in the USA' and they're not going to look any further than that. They're just going to extract that message from it, like, 'I was also born in the USA,' rather than look at what's happening in between the choruses."

"I have a lot of guitars, and I feel like they're all raising their hand to say, 'I have some songs in me that you're gonna want to write'"

From the couch in Morby's Detroit suite, he finds the silver lining of growing up in a place where popular culture was more or less beamed into living rooms or transmitted over radio waves.

"We moved to Kansas City when I was 10, and that's where I spent my formative years," Morby says. "My access to culture was through the radio, hearing bands like Green Day or Blink 182. You start researching where they're from, and you're like, 'California seems amazing. People just skateboard and eat burritos and play pop-punk.'"

Morby calls Green Day the greatest gateway drug, for the music they exposed



him to after seeing them live and for inspiring him to pick up the electric guitar.

"You go see them live, and they cover the Ramones, they cover Operation Ivy, and they cover the Replacements," he says. "You leave their show having found out about some of the best music ever made. I got a seafoam blue Fender Strat. I wanted one that looked like Billie Joe Armstrong's, and I wanted to learn Green Day songs."

These days, Morby has a much more spiritual relationship with the gear he uses.

"I feel like guitars find you in the same way a good book will find you," he says. "It can be a shitty \$200 Kay that's in some weird pawn shop, a \$3,000 Rickenbacker and then everything in between. I have a lot of guitars, and I feel like they're all like raising their hand to say, 'I have some songs in me that you're gonna want to write.'"

One of the guitars that is playing on this tour is a custom-made Seüf that's modeled after a Jazzmaster. It has Morby's name engraved on the fretboard and sunflowers on the neck, and since Morby is bringing it out on the road, it has to be built like a tank.

"On the road it's all about durable gear," he says. "I like stuff that I can throw around, or if it falls off the stand it's gonna be okay. The Seüf sounds amazing. The company is these twin brothers. They didn't treat the wood too much, so it's got this really nice, natural wear and tear to it."

As we wrap up our conversation, I ask Morby — someone who has traveled the world a million times over — why he keeps returning to the heartland.

"It's just the simplicity," he says. "I have a list of places I want to go to, but there's something sturdy about the Midwest. It creates this boredom, hunger and curiosity for something else. A lot of people who are the best at that thing that they did are from the Midwest. If Bob Dylan were from the coast, maybe he wouldn't have had this fire in him to want to write all those songs. Growing up this way in the Midwest can make you really curious about the world." **GW**

Left to Die's Rick Rozz
[left] and Matt Harvey



Left to Die

Buried for decades, the metal pioneers' cult demos live again on *Initium Mortis*. Rick Rozz and Matt Harvey tell GW about capturing the attitude of "kids going as sick as they can"

BY GREGORY ADAMS

▶ **MANTAS AND DEATH** co-founder Rick Rozz spent the early Eighties laying the groundwork for death metal while ripping furious riffs into a boombox with bandmate and future guitar icon Chuck Schuldiner. To somewhat soften the blow of their piercingly lo-fi recordings, the Floridian teens' shrewd production trick was to throw a towel over the microphone of their portable stereo. Cassettes containing untamed buzzbombs like "Archangel" and "Slaughterhouse" were traded around the underground, though the fidelity could leave you scratching your head over what was actually coming out of the speakers.

"We were in his bedroom with a dual cassette player, just two kids writing riffs back and forth," Rozz recalls fondly of their demonstrably raging origins. They'd flesh out those primordial monstrosities with drummer Kam Lee.

Mantas became Death in 1984, and Schuldiner would eventually lead the group through a series of revered studio albums that continually redefined the grotesque and progressive parameters of the genre — Rozz

would perform on 1988 landmark *Leprosy*. Those earliest demos remain relatively obscure, even to die-hard fans. That changes this year through the release of Left to Die's *Initium Mortis*.

The newer project was founded as a touring tribute to Death. Steered by Exhumed guitarist-vocalist Matt Harvey — also of Gruesome, a group writing original material with an explicit Death aesthetic — Left to Die's lineup also features Rozz, drummer Gus Rios and Obituary bassist Terry Butler (who'd played on Death's third album, 1990's *Spiritual Healing*). Harvey rallied the troops to finally give the deep cuts a hi-fi upgrade.

"I realize not everyone likes listening to boombox recordings of teenagers,"

"We were in his bedroom with a dual cassette player, just two kids writing riffs back and forth"

RICK ROZZ

Harvey says. "I find it really charming, because there's nothing in the way of the enthusiasm. There's no studio trickery, compressors or reverb. It's just kids going as sick as they can with all this energy."

Though he's a devout student of Death, Harvey avoided recreating Rozz and Schuldiner's early tone exactly. "Once you start getting the microscope out, you're gonna suck the life out of it," he says, reiterating that what was most important was maintaining the ferocious spirit of the demos. This meant one-and-done takes and limited punch-ins. Rozz flew in dangerously trem-quaked solo undulations with his Floyd Rose-mounted Ibanez Iceman; Harvey handled rhythms and the solos with a Schuldiner-styled melodic technicality.

Bringing these songs back to life through Left to Die is a boon for Death fanatics, Harvey included. Schuldiner passed away in 2001 following a battle with brain cancer, and the music he made with his bandmates remains revered by metalheads worldwide.

"I don't want anyone to think that I'm trying to step in and be the new Chuck," Harvey says. "From the beginning, my whole mission with Left to Die was to allow these songs to be played the best way that we can, for the people."

"I forgot about a lot of those tunes," Rozz confesses, adding of *Initium Mortis*, "I'm proud to be a part of it and put my little whammy shenanigans in." **GW**

Quicksand

Channeling Eighties hardcore on ill-gotten lawsuit guitars, Quicksand's new album is a brutal listen. So why are the New Yorkers wary of "sounding hippie"?

BY JIM BEAUGEZ

▶ **QUICKSAND BASSIST SERGIO** Vega recognizes the power in threes, and he has good reason to believe. A trio since shortly after releasing their 2017 comeback album, *Interiors*, the influential post-hardcore band released the third album of its second act (and fifth LP overall) in July, the crushing *Bring On the Psychics*.

"You start to know what you want and understand what works," Vega says of how he feels he and guitarist and singer Walter Schreifels finally gelled on album three post hiatus. "We wanted to make something that would feel urgent and feel like live music. And definitely that's where we're the most calibrated."

Schreifels went back even further than Quicksand's seminal 1993 debut, *Slip*, and 1995's *Manic Compression*, to find inspiration for the unrelenting 10-song album — all the way to his late-eighties hardcore bands Youth of Today and Gorilla Biscuits, which have both been active on the live scene in recent years. That spirit of self-empowerment imbues the urgency of songs like "Get To It" and "Regenerate," where he alternates between bludgeoning riffs and shoegazey interludes, a callback to Quicksand's early music.

"I can put a lot of tension into something that isn't really complicated to play," Schreifels says. "I just play on the margins." In the outro to "Regenerate," that means turning the thundering riff into a drone while Vega plays the progression on a Fender Bass VI, one of the most-deployed tools in his arsenal. As much as Schreifels plays with rhythms and tempo in his guitar playing, his taste in tones is rooted in relatable guitar hero-worship.

"I'm always going for an Angus Young/Jimmy Page combo, and when I use that sound in a hardcore sort of way, which is how I came up playing, it just has a different context," he says. "It has that distorted sound, but you can also hear the playing, I think, a little bit more."

While Vega switches between a Jaguar four-string and the Bass VI he began experimenting with during a decade playing bass with Deftones, Schreifels' current obsession is a Japanese-made Greco Les Paul copy — acquired with settlement money after an airline lost the Gibson Les Paul Custom he played for years.

"I was like, 'I'm gonna buy another Les Paul,' but Les Pauls are super heavy. They're breaking my shoulders," he says. The Greco isn't just lighter, he says, but perhaps has more esoteric qualities, as well. "It's got a lot of, like, good vibes. Not to sound too hippie, but it has soul. It's lived. It came all the way from frickin' Japan!" **GW**

"I can put a lot of tension into something that isn't complicated to play"

WALTER SCHREIFELS



Walter Schreifels with his Gibson SG Deluxe...

AXOLOGY

Guitars

'67 Gibson SG Deluxe, Greco Les Paul copy, Fender Jaguar, Fender Jimi Hendrix Strat (Schreifels); Fender Bass VI and Jaguar bass (Vega)

Amps

50-watt Marshall JMP combo (Schreifels); Fender Bassman (Vega)



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LOST CLASSICS

Funkadelic

From raiding Aerosmith's backline to guest solos by stray smackheads, "Kidd Funkadelic" — aka Michael Hampton — recalls the inspired chaos behind 1975's *Let's Take It to the Stage*

BY ANDREW DALY

▶ **WHEN MICHAEL HAMPTON**, who, due to his young age compared to his P-Funk bandmates, was nicknamed Kidd Funkadelic, recorded 1975's *Take It to the Stage*, he was barely 20 — but he quickly settled into the funk collective, and the good times soon rolled.

"Once I got in the band and out on the road, I just practiced and played," Hampton says. "When we got into the studio, maybe I'd bump into a few beers and just kick it and have a good time."

With this, Hampton admits he "couldn't tell you the actual process," mainly because Funkadelic was a collective of free-spirited, drug-using, hard-partying musicians looking for nothing more than a groove to accent their good times.

"Those guys were older than me," Hampton says. "They were putting it together. There was probably a lot of 'paperwork' I missed out on. [Laughs] But, hey, I'd rather have the few brain cells that I've got left than worry about any of that!"

Like most of Funkadelic's Seventies output, *Let's Take It to the Stage* was — and still is — a banger with lots of guitar heroics to spare.

"We saw it as like a battle of the bands, you know, that type of relationship," Hampton says. "We always tried to do our best on tour. That's where 'Let's take it to the stage!' came



The Funkadelic gang circa 1977, including Bootsie Collins [standing, far left] and Michael Hampton [in hat, near center right]

from. We'd be like, 'Let's *do* this sucker!' We were like a funk mob, just doing our best to smoke the stage and outdo whatever other band was coming."

Now 69, Hampton isn't a "Kidd" anymore, but he fills up with youthful energy when he looks back on Funkadelic's halcyon era.

"It means something to me on the groove trip," he says. "If you don't like it, take your dead ass home, you know? [Laughs] Shit, I still love that stuff. I love playing it. When I do, I pull out the best equipment, so that whatever I use will be louder and funkier. We still say, 'Let's take it to the stage,' you know?"

It still represents us. It's about having fun and that competition, which is alright by me."

How did the sessions for *Stage* kick off?

We went up to Michigan United Sound, which was near Wayne State University's campus in Detroit. We stayed across the street at a little motel, and that was where we came up with a lot of stuff. I'd have to listen to the album to remember exactly what happened and where, but I do remember that.

Can you remember the first song that you recorded?

That woulda been "Be My Beach." I actually did the sessions for *Let's Take It to the Stage* the same day I did the first sessions for Bootsy Collins' first album, *Stretchin' Out* [1976].

Given the free-spirited nature of Funkadelic – and your playing – what was your general approach?

I had no idea where we were going. [Laughs] I don't know what the process was because there wasn't one! We went in there, said, "We're gonna record this song," and we just did it. No one ever approached me formally and was like, "This song is gonna be on this album, and we're gonna do it this way..." We just did a lot of sessions for both albums, and they picked out the best stuff that made sense for the albums.

So you had no idea if you were recording a track for Funkadelic or Bootsy?

It wound up as a process of elimination. Everybody was just recording all the time, 24/7. It was like one giant shift; you'd get back up, go over there, play, do it, hang out, kick it, put some parts on and then come back out. It's hard to even know who played on what track, to be honest with you.

That checks out, as the credits on P-Funk albums are always murky at best.

A lot of things went undocumented. I'd have to listen to try and figure out who played with me on this or that track. There might be a log out there somewhere that had that, but I don't know. I'd go in there early in the morning and be on this or that song, but things changed so often, and the process was fluid.

Who plays guitar on "Good to Your Earhole," which features a ton of ripping guitar?

I know that one, man. That's Eddie Hazel! I didn't play the foundation of that or anything. Everybody was recording, and Eddie probably went in there, did his thing and probably did some singing because he was a great singer, too. That's the story there.

According to George Clinton, a "smack addict" wandered into the studio, laid down the solo for "Get Off Your Ass and Jam" and was paid \$50. Is that true?

I heard a story like that, but I don't wanna say the guy who did it was a smack addict, you know? [Laughs]

Paul Warren of Rare Earth has claimed that the solo on "Get Off Your Ass and Jam" was, in fact, him. Should we put the "smack addict" rumor to rest once and for all?

Yeah, I don't know! Maybe it was a guy on smack who got paid \$50. But let's just roll with



Hampton on stage in Inglewood, California, August 17, 2022

"I still love playing Funkadelic stuff. When I do, I pull out the best equipment, so that whatever I use will be louder and funkier"

what George Clinton said. [Laughs] So, yeah, sure, the original story is probably true.

Did you play on "Get Off Your Ass and Jam" too?

I did the loop when the song starts off. They looped it real fast, and then I'm in the back doing some whammy stuff later on. And it's funny because I think Tupac Shakur sampled that in one of his tracks [1993's "Holler If Ya Hear Me"]. Somebody sent it to me. They broke it down, and it's like three notes running; he made all these beats and different time signatures. It was a cool sample.

What gear were you working with?

We had a lot of Marshall amps. And we had the old backline from Aerosmith, which were Music Man amps, and Crown power amplifiers. So, yeah, we were using Aerosmith's old equipment.

How did Funkadelic end up with Aerosmith's gear?

That's a good question! [Laughs] There was a guy called "Rabbit" who we coulda asked, but I don't know about any of that, man. I don't wanna drop any names, but I just heard that's where we got the Music Man and Crown stuff. I'm not quite sure if we borrowed them, if it was an actual purchase or a trade, but there were a lot of things going on back in the day with roadies and things like that, so who knows about the actual transaction.

Is that to say maybe a side deal took place between roadies?

Well, there were some guys that worked with Aerosmith that were actually techs, and they were working with us, too. I don't know because I didn't see the guys, and I didn't talk to anybody that did the deal. I just know that we wound up with it, and that's what was used. They worked, I plugged in, and that's how it was!

What guitars did you use on the album?

I had an old Gibson L6-S. I kept it all original, and that's the guitar I used a lot back then. I also had a Les Paul and an old Framus that was kind of Les Paul-shaped [probably a 10600]. I had that guitar worked on; it had these weird augmented pickups where the coil and the wire wrapped around them made crazy sounds. I ended up having DiMarzio pickups put in there instead. And then I had an Alembic guitar that I bedazzled with rhinestones, mirrors and shit. [Laughs] Oh, and I had my B.C. Rich Bich.

How do you view the album's legacy?

Some people just have their favorites, but it doesn't matter to me too much. It's about how well you play. Once somebody gets into it, that's what matters. But it's funny because I had no idea people would like it so much. You play the songs, rehearse them and do the shows, but you don't know it's gonna be something that loops on forever. **GW**



Big Country on U.K. TV show *Hold Tight!* in June 1983; [from left] Bruce Watson, Mark Brzezicki (on drums), Stuart Adamson and Tony Butler

Country Gentlemen

Celtic rockers Big Country were gloriously inescapable in the 1980s. Twenty-five years since their frontman's tragic passing, we speak to guitarist Bruce Watson about keeping the Big Country flag flying

BY JOEL McIVER

▶ **CELTIC ROCK WAS** a significant cultural phenomenon for music fans born in the Sixties and Seventies, particularly in the U.K. and Ireland, where U2 and Simple Minds held sway over the charts and airwaves with their anthemic, soul-stirring music. Less deliberately commercial in their sound but just as accomplished as songwriters, the half-Scottish quartet Big Country spent the Eighties as a serious recording and touring force.

Their classic lineup of Stuart Adamson (vocals, guitar), Bruce Watson (guitar), Tony Butler (bass) and Mark Brzezicki (drums) formed in Dunfermline, Scotland, in 1981, rose to fame within five years and did great business until 1990, when fashions changed and their profile diminished. Sadly, their

career was curtailed by Adamson's suicide in 2001, although their music has always remained in the cultural bloodstream.

Bruce Watson now runs Big Country Redux, a band that reminds us of the innovative guitar parts at the heart of the original sound. You'll recognize his repeated, melodic figures and counter-lines alongside Adamson's from "In a Big Country," from the 1983 album *The Crossing*, as well as the interlocked riffs that the two men delivered in "Fields of Fire (400 Miles)" from the same album. He plays a righteous slide guitar on "Rain Dance," from *Steeltown* (1984), and on the group's biggest hit, "Look Away" from *The Seer* (1986), he underpins the song with melodic fills that never overpower the arrangement. All of this makes him

a highly appropriate standard-bearer for Big Country's legacy.

Big Country Redux has a new album, *Eastworld*, coming out in September.

We do. The songs on *Eastworld* are mostly Big Country demos that were never taken to a final conclusion. For example, with the "Winter Sky," from our second album, *Steeltown*, we needed a B-side really quickly. We didn't have time to get Tony and Mark up to record it, so Stuart and I wrote and recorded "Winter Sky" as a duo on a little 16-track recorder and drum machine. It was a great song, but it was still a demo, and it would have been nice to develop it live with Tony and Mark, but we never got a chance to do it at the time, although we played it live later on. The songs on *Eastworld* are all like that: songs that were never finished. I didn't want to do the lazy thing that people do and just re-record the hits: I would never do that anyway, because they would never be as good as the originals.

This is an anniversary year for Big Country, for better or worse.

KERSTIN RODGERS/REDFERNS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Yes. Unfortunately it's 25 years since Stuart passed away, and it's also the 45th anniversary of the band first getting together, as well as the 40th anniversary of our third album, *The Seer*. We're touring to celebrate that album soon.

Stay Alive, the recent biography of Stuart Adamson by Scott Rowley, content director at *Guitar World*, has also helped to bring the band back into the public eye.

Stay Alive is a great book, and a very honest one, too. I helped Scott out with information for it, and it's all true. Even the stories that other people told in the book are definitely the truth.

For those of us who didn't know Stuart, what was he like?

The way he came across in public, for instance if he was doing interviews like this, was as a very serious person, because he cared a lot about his music, and the band, and the audience. But when it was just us, backstage or in rehearsals or just hanging out, he was great fun. The public never saw that side of him, because he wanted to be seen as a serious musician. He could be a comedian at times: some of the funniest moments we ever had were with Stuart.

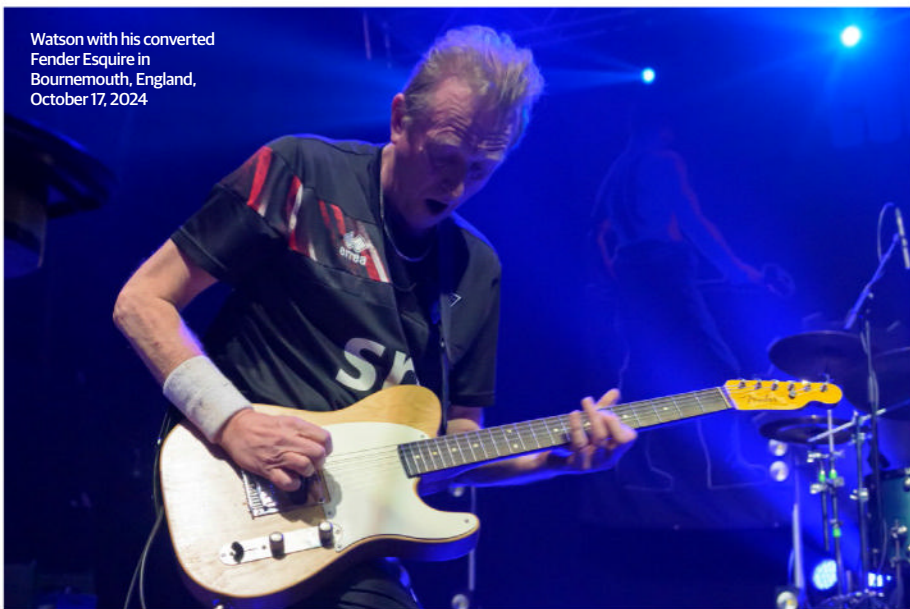
Big Country's songs often contained loads of guitar parts. Where did they enter the songwriting process?

The song was always the starting point: the lyrics, the vocal melodies, and the music. The way we used to record demos back in the day was to create a rhythm track with a cheap drum machine, then record the guitars, and then do the bass, so it would sound a bit like the Shadows without Cliff Richard. Once we had a few of those down, Stuart would take them away for a week and work on the melodies and the lyrics. Then, once he'd done his vocals, we would say, "That guitar line's gonna have to come right out," and we'd have to strip the song back a bit. We never really did guitar solos; it was more about little guitar motifs here and there.

The million-dollar question: How did you get the "bagpipes" guitar sound?

We never used pedals back in the day; it was always rack systems. The effects we used were MXR M-129 Analogue Pitch Transposers and Korg Space Echoes. We used an EBow, too. I never used distortion; I just used the gain control on a Marshall amp, or on my HH VS Musician amp, which had the "Valve Sound" circuit in it. The clean sounds came from a Music Man 130-watt amp. I bought that from Damian O'Neill of the Undertones after they split up.

Watson with his converted Fender Esquire in Bournemouth, England, October 17, 2024



What are your current guitars?

I'm playing a one-pickup Fender Esquire, which I converted from a Telecaster, and a Gibson Les Paul Junior. As I've gotten older, I've gotten more into simple guitars with one pickup; I don't even use the tone control. I like Stratocasters, but they have too many knobs, pickups and switches that get in my way. I've still got my Yamahas from the old days, too.

How did you get started as a guitar player?

In the early Seventies, me and my friends practically lived in the cinema. At the end of the movie *That'll Be The Day* (1973), David Essex goes into a music shop and sees this red guitar. That made me want to be a guitar player; before that I just wanted to play football. Also, Manny Charlton of Nazareth moved to Dunfermline and lived a door away from me. I used to see Manny going around with his platform boots on, and I thought "I want some of that!" [Laughs] My first guitar was a cheap acoustic, and then I got a Woolworth Top 20. My first real guitars were a Yamaha SG25 that I bought from a friend who worked in the dockyard with me, and then I bought a Yamaha SG500, which I used on the first two Big Country albums and I still have today, with Ghost pickups installed. I've also got a Gibson Marauder and a Gibson L6.

Talk us through "In a Big Country:"

Stuart played the clean guitar part and

"We loved groups like Thin Lizzy and Status Quo, but we didn't want to sound like them"

I played the distorted part. He played a 1978 or '79 Strat with an Antigua finish, and I was using my SG500. I think we were still using HH amps and a Carlsbro Stingray at the time, because we didn't have Marshalls yet.

And how about "Look Away" from 1986?

I tried to make each verse different on that song. I'd bring in acoustic guitars that would hide behind the electrics, so you weren't quite sure what you were listening to. I always used guitars as a means to an end, rather than being a guitar hero. We used a lot of drone strings, so most of the songs are in A, E or D.

Was there an overall guitar philosophy?

Because we were a twin-guitar band, we loved groups like Thin Lizzy and Status Quo, but we didn't want to sound like them, so we made a conscious effort not to do any blues bending. Instead, we played the melody lines with no bluesy playing, although all rock comes from the blues, of course. That's how we got our sound. When you do that it's very simplistic, so to make it interesting we added echoes and delays and harmonizers. Steve Lillywhite was on board with that, too, so the guitar parts are really simple but they sound complicated.

How do those guitar parts stand up to you nowadays?

When you start out, there's a naivety about your playing, and as you get better over the years, you lose some of that. That happens to bands, too; you become more mainstream. There's loads of mistakes in the Big Country songs, but those mistakes lead you to some great places. You hear a song now and you think, "Shouldn't that chord be major, not minor?" But then you'd miss out on a load of interesting music! **GW**



Europe's John Norum
on stage in Rome on July 7

Europe's Countdown to Madness

John Norum on the secret note everyone misses in "The Final Countdown" solo, bidding on Gary Moore's Marshall and why Europe's new album is the sound of "old men" shaken awake

BY AMIT SHARMA

▶ **EVERY BAND HAS** that one song they're best known for, but in the case of Swedish quintet Europe — who came out of obscurity to conquer charts around the world with "The Final Countdown" in 1986 — their big hit ended up taking a whole new life of its own. It was, in many ways, a double-edged sword; on one hand, it gave them their first taste of international success and all the financial security that came along with it. On the other hand, its five minutes would end up overshadowing everything they'd done up to that point, as well as everything else to come. Listen to any Europe album from start to

finish, however, and you'll hear five musicians leaning on their gold-standard instinct for melody to produce arena-conquering rock anthems, heart-stirring ballads and everything in between.

This is still very much the case on this year's 12th full-length, *Come This Madness*, which sees them dialing down the Deep Purple worship in pursuit of harder-hitting

"I don't need to show off. I did plenty of that in the Eighties"

and more contemporary ideas that could easily have come from a band starting out today. The main riff from opening track and lead single "One On One," for example, isn't a million miles away from British alternative rockers Muse, with super producer Tom Dalgety [*Pixies*, *the Cult*, *Rammstein*] bringing a band with almost five decades behind them into the modern age.

"I guess we are a young band compared to Deep Purple," says founding guitarist John Norum with a laugh. "We put a lot of energy into this. Working with Tom was fantastic. He gave us that boost as if to say, 'Come on now — wake up, you old men. It's time to get to work!' So that's what we did."

The producer had been recommended by fellow Swedish heavyweights Ghost and Opeth, whose respective singers Tobias Forge and Mikael Åkerfeldt also make guest appearances on the album. After the members of Europe had done their due diligence, they decided that "Tom was the guy" because "our friends said he was fun to work with and everything he'd done sounded great."

Norum also jokingly reveals how Opeth six-stringer and Ghost studio guitarist Fredrik Åkesson had been "kidnapped" and forced to execute an octave riff while the tape was running ("I would say he's one of the top 10 players in the world right now," Norum says). The sessions took place at RMV Studio in Stockholm, which is owned by national treasure and ABBA legend Benny Andersson, with the collective aim of cutting a record that sounded fresh and exciting. Mission accomplished.

What solos and riffs are you most proud of on this album?

The title track is one of my favorites. When I heard the demo, I knew it had to either be the opening track or the title track, and we went for the latter. I'm especially proud of the solo; it came out really well. I also love the lead single, "One On One," for the melody part at the beginning and "Takin' It Back" because it sounds so blazing.

The solo you played on the title track has some aggressive blues licks leading into this dramatic chromatic climb that ultimately serves as an exclamation point.

I don't usually do that sort of thing and usually stick with more bluesy pentatonic stuff. But for this part, I thought why not try something super chromatic. It's probably the first time I've ever done it on an album. It's a cool ending that helps the solo stand out.

You recently acquired Gary Moore's 1972 Super Bass 100 at auction, which you described as your dream amp. Did that end up on the record?

LINDA FLORIN



The Gary Moore amp arrived after the sessions. It's always been my Holy Grail head. If you know anything about the history of Gary's gear, this amp was the main centerpiece of his sound throughout the Eighties. You can hear it on albums like *Corridors of Power* and *Victims of the Future*, all those recordings until 1989's *After the War*. So for pretty much the entire decade, this was his sound. Afterwards, he switched to the Marshall JTM45 for *Still Got the Blues* and then a Soldano SLO-100. I've been reading interviews with Gary for many decades where he talks about this particular head. My favorite guitar sound of all time is on *Victims of the Future*. I had to find out the serial number and history. He only had one 1972 Super Bass, which was originally purple but someone painted it gloss black. When it came up for auction, I knew this was the one. I didn't care what it cost. I just had to buy it.

What are we hearing on this album?

I used another 1972 Marshall Super Bass on some tracks. There's this great amp builder in Sweden called Baskim Zuta, and I used his GBG120 amp on some of the songs. It has four channels and looks like a spaceship. I only got it toward the end of the sessions — it takes a couple of weeks to get to know an amp and figure out how everything works, otherwise I would have used it more. I'm actually playing it all the time right now because it has such an incredible tone. I also used a 1979 Hiwatt DR504 that used to belong to Matthias Jabs from Scorpions. There was a Mezzabarba MZERO for a few solos, they're a great Italian company. As for pedals, it was a Boss DS-1W in Custom mode for my single-coil tones, but it can get a bit mushy for humbuckers, so then I'd switch to the SD-1W in Custom mode.

As for guitars, is it still a mixture of Gibson, Fender and Paoletti?

I mainly used my 2000 Gibson Flying V, nothing crazy or vintage. Or maybe it is, actually, given that it's now 26 years old. [Laughs] I still think of it as a new guitar.

"It all came from Ritchie Blackmore," says Norum about the solo he played on 1986's "The Final Countdown"



It's fitted with Black Belt humbuckers by Motor City Pickups, which were handwound and made to order. I always need a Fender, so I used my Japanese 1972 Strat with DiMarzio FS-1s. Quite often you are hearing the Strat on the left and the Flying V on the right, which is a nice blend. The only other guitar I used was my new Paoletti, which is an ES-335 shape with P90s. It's my main guitar right now. I'll be using it all over my next solo album.

It's what I used for my guest feature on the new Accept album. I've used it on stage, but the guys are always like, "Are you really going to play the jazz box?" I always tell them it's the best-sounding guitar on the rack.

You posted a photo with Greeny a few years ago. As a Gary Moore diehard, that must've been pretty special.

I'm getting goose bumps just thinking about ▶

it. I've been following that Les Paul for 45 years. Holding it was one of the highlights of my life, a dream come true. There's so much history going back to Peter Green, and now Kirk has it. We were playing the Tons of Rock festival in Norway with Metallica. I was on stage getting ready when I saw the guitar in a tech's hands. When I asked if I could take a photo, he handed me the guitar, saying, "No, you can play it." I went down on one knee and put my head against the wood so I could hear the resonance. I had a few minutes before our intro tape came on. I remember it being light and ringing super loud. Kirk had the action set quite low, but I know Gary used to have it quite high with thicker strings because he had strong fretting hands from being naturally left-handed. Higher action sounds better, so my guitars are set up somewhere in the middle. Different strokes for different folks, I guess.

The Final Countdown 40th anniversary tour is coming up. What do you remember about writing that iconic solo from the title track?

It all came from Ritchie Blackmore. I have to thank him for that. It requires a special technique and I see so many people online doing it wrong. It can sound close but never

"I've been following Greeny for 45 years. Holding that Les Paul was a dream come true"

quite right. There's a secret note that everyone seems to miss. I still haven't, to this day, seen anyone play the secret note that's in that solo. It's only played for a millisecond but it's in there. Everybody misses it, every time.

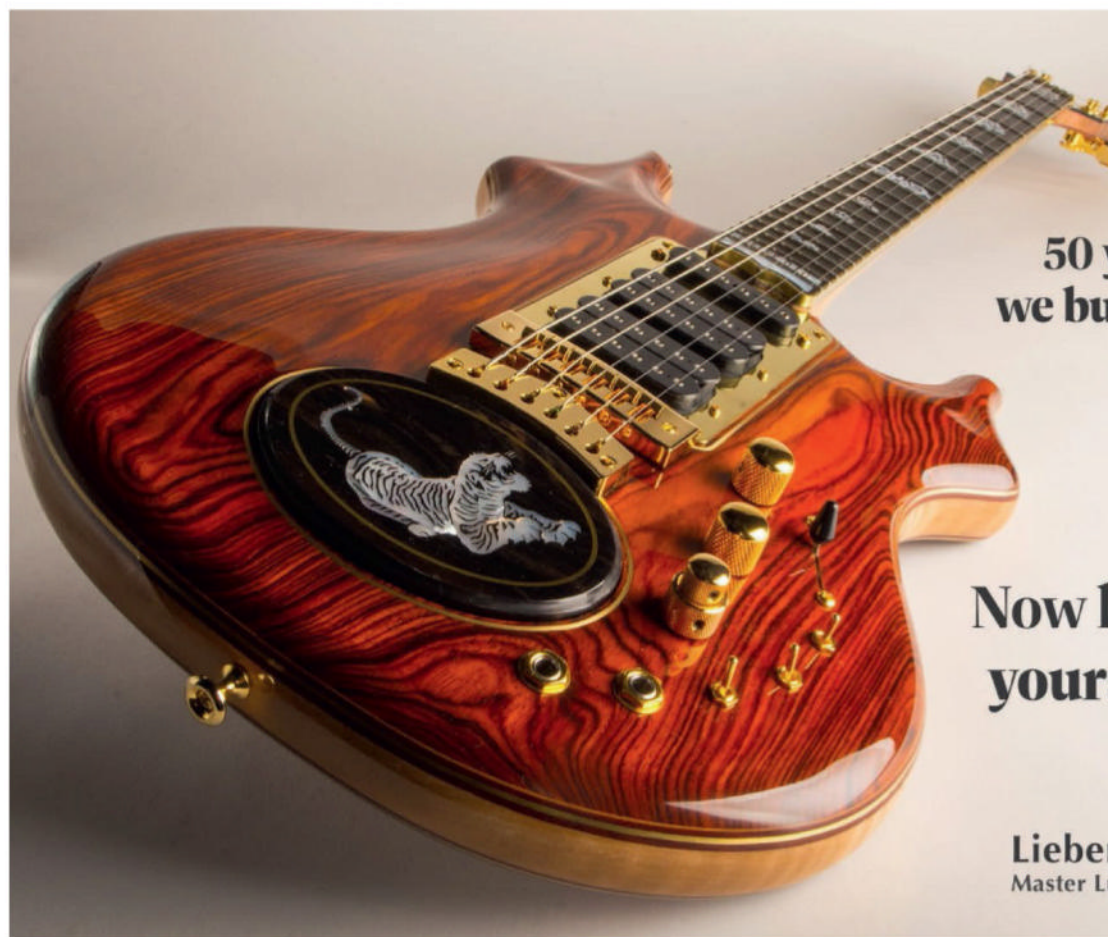
You also played some blistering runs on "Rock the Night."

That solo was totally improvised, while "The Final Countdown" was worked out. Joey Tempest [vocals] and I recorded the demos over at his house using a Rockman. For "Carrie," I composed the melody. When it's a ballad, that's what I usually do. Melody is important in those situations. A ballad solo with no melody doesn't mean much to me. I learned this from Michael Schenker, especially on those early UFO songs. It's more effective to stick the blazing licks in the middle or at the end than do it all the time. Do the melody, then burn a bit before returning to the melody. Sometimes I even take the

chorus hook and use it somewhere in the solo. Mindless noodling and showing off is a bit pointless for me. I don't need to show off, I did plenty of that in the Eighties, especially live. I watch the footage now and think, "Take it easy and slow down, dude, for Christ's sake!" But that's how it is when you're young.

You're not the first guitarist to admit that.

Well, I was hanging out with Yngwie in the Eighties, which obviously affected me. He was burning like crazy. I was one of the first people to hear him, I was 15 and he was 16. A friend of mine auditioned to be his drummer and I helped him take his kit over to Stockholm on the train. We went down the rehearsal space and I just couldn't believe what I was hearing. I stood there wondering where it all came from. Yngwie blew my mind. My friend got the gig so we started hanging out there a lot. It was horrible, like an old cellar with rats running over the Marshall stacks. We recorded some stuff together on his four-track, with him pretending to be Uli Jon Roth and me pretending to be Schenker. We both ended up moving to the States and would hang out at the Rainbow before heading to a hotel to jam all night drinking beer. We had some good times. [GW](#)



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Listen to What the Man Said

RKS Guitars co-founder Ravi Sawhney looks back on his pioneering work with the late Traffic guitar legend Dave Mason, who mingled with Beatles and Stones and added depth to Jimi's "All Along the Watchtower"

BY AMIT SHARMA

▶ BACK IN APRIL, it was announced that Traffic founder Dave Mason — the man who famously penned late-Sixties classics like "Hole in My Shoe," "Feelin' Alright?" and "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" — had passed away at age 79. There was, however, a lot more to his career than his work in Traffic, given his collaborations with some of the biggest names in business, from Paul McCartney and George Harrison to Eric Clapton and David Crosby.

He was with Jimi Hendrix, Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell at Olympic Studios in London on January 21, 1968, for example, and ended up playing 12-string on "All Along the Watchtower," as well as providing backing vocals for "Crosstown Traffic" at another session for the trio's third and final studio album, *Electric Ladyland*. A few months later he was in the same studio adding shehnai and percussion to Rolling Stones hit "Street Fighting Man." He even had Michael Jackson guest on his 1980 solo track "Save Me" and became an official member of Fleetwood Mac for a brief spell in the Nineties.

Then there's his work as a guitar builder, having co-founded RKS Guitars in 2004 with industrial designer Ravi Sawhney to focus on electric guitars made out of sustainable materials. The modular designs feature a neck-through wooden core integrated with

conductive metal ribs and interchangeable body shells made from Tenite, a cellulose-based plastic, to reduce tonewood by 66 to 80 percent. The company won awards for its cutting-edge designs, living up to its promise of reducing deforestation while also increasing personalization, with Bloomberg Businessweek hailing their work as "the most radical change in electric guitars in almost 50 years."

These instruments ended up in the hands of household names like Keith Richards, who once referred to his guitar as "a fucking impressive device," as well as Mick Jagger, Ron Wood, Don Felder, Johnny Depp and more.

In this interview, Mason's business partner, Ravi Sawhney, pays homage to a man whose list of achievements cannot be overstated.

You worked very closely with Dave. He must have had no shortage of stories.

He collaborated with so many notable musicians and was so respected by those around him. There were so many stories. He and Jimi used to hold court every Sunday at an Indian restaurant in London. Whoever was in town would show up. It didn't matter who you were — every Sunday you could go hang out with them. Sometimes the Beatles would turn up, sometimes Led Zeppelin, sometimes Clapton.

What did he tell you about playing 12-string on "All Along the Watchtower"?

I've heard different versions, but from what Dave told me, there was a party being thrown by a friend who had an advance copy of Bob Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* album. Jimi was there, and when he heard "All Along the

Watchtower," he flipped, saying, "Come on, Dave, let's go record this!" They went to the studio not long after. It was all spontaneous. Dave played 12-string and Jimi and the band did their parts, but that's why Dave continued to perform that song live. He and Jimi were joined at the hip. They were together every day, which is why he was at all of Jimi's recording sessions whether he was playing or not.

You must've been excited to start a guitar brand with him in 2004.

Dave is the only musician I know who did something beyond his music in this way. All the credit to Les Paul and Paul Reed Smith, but they were never inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for creating songs that got played all over the world, or got to work with Jimi or George Harrison. Dave actually taught George slide and, in return, George taught Dave sitar, which you can hear on some Traffic recordings. He was a big part



RKS DESIGN

"Dave's music will live on, and people will be changing the world with these guitars forever"



Dave Mason (playing an RKS guitar) in 2004 with Jeff Lynne [left] and Tom Petty

of music history. He didn't have to do this company with me. He just wanted to carry on innovating.

What was he like to work with?

He was a big personality in music, but with design there was no ego, just pure focus. We had this philosophy of bringing everyone in. It didn't matter where the great ideas came from. He'd come into the office three times a week to make sure everything was on track. If anything was wrong he'd point it out. Even if we told him our machines were technically perfect, he'd know when a neck was a 10 thousandth of an inch too thick – the size of three hairs stacked on top of each other! I correlated that to surgical levels of precision. After years of prototyping, we evolved a novelty guitar into a real player's guitar. At NAMM, musicians working for other brands would come over to our booth on their breaks. Coming up with our own sustainable line of open-ended hollow-body instruments was a huge boost to Dave's career.

What's the future looking like for RKS Guitars?

RKS is still in production on a custom basis. When I closed the factory because I couldn't run all the different businesses, a gentleman named Paul Janowski took it over and built his own factory where he makes custom versions. Guitars aren't just about what you hear; it's about what the resonance makes you feel. Carlos Santana speaks a lot about this, saying how music changes your vibrations on a molecular level. We reinvented the guitar and got our patents. We wanted to make every musician more than they were before they picked up our guitar. That's how you know you've delivered something. These guitars double Dave's legacy. His music will live on and on, but people will be creating new songs and changing the world with these guitars forever. **GW**

RKS DESIGN, JOHN FRANCIS



"Embrace the flow from one note to the next," Larry Mitchell says

Larry Mitchell

Hooked up by Nile Rodgers, hired by Tracy Chapman, befriended by Steve Vai... the NYC sessioner shares war stories from a charmed career – and his one big regret

BY ANDREW DALY

LARRY MITCHELL IS a born-and-bred New Yorker. He's brash, he's bold, and he acts swiftly – attributes that probably didn't hurt as he emerged from Queens to become a go-to session player and Knaggs signature artist. And while you might not recognize his name, you've probably heard his playing – especially if you've dug on Ric Ocasek, Tracy Chapman and Billy Squier.

If strumming a broom to Elvis Presley songs didn't ignite Mitchell's musical fire when he was a kid, maybe you can chalk it up to his childhood friendships with – get this – fellow New Yorkers Steve Stevens (Billy Idol), Jon Levin (Dokken) and Jeff Thall (Bryan Ferry), a gaggle of guitarists who fueled each other's musical dreams. Soon enough, a young Mitchell was picking up what he calls "ghost work" as a session player in Manhattan before a chance meeting with Nile Rodgers led him to hook up with Ocasek for his 1991 album, *Fireball Zone*.

"I ran into Nile one night at the China Club," Mitchell says. "He said, 'What are you doing tomorrow?' I said, 'Whatever you want me to do.'" That put Mitchell on the map. "Ric and Tracy Chapman had the same management. My name came up when Tracy was looking for a guitar player. Vernon Reid had played guitar on Tracy's 1992 single, 'Bang Bang Bang,' so they had a bit of a rock player in mind."

Fast forward to 2008. Mitchell was now a Grammy-winning producer – for Johnny Whitehorse's 2007 album, *Totemic Flute Chants* – and an Ibanez endorsee. The timing was perfect to befriend another big-time Ibanez guy, Steve Vai.

"Steve and I spoke about warming up before a show, and then [*we got*] on to life things," Mitchell says of meeting Vai at Ibanez's 100th-anniversary celebration in Nagoya, Japan, in May 2008. "We stayed in touch, and when Steve was touring through Alabama, I texted him and said I was coming. He invited me to sit in. When we jam, he just looks at me and says, 'Start something groovy' – and we get funky."

Mitchell went on to open for Vai in 2023 and 2024. "Playing with Steve has taught me to embrace the freedom and the spiritual side of guitar playing," he says. "Embrace the flow from one note to the next, and, of course, have fun on stage and in the music."

Mitchell is planning his next move with nothing but gratitude. "I produce a lot of music, and I'm touring around the world," he says. "Regrets are a hard thing. Everything in the past has led to this moment, so changing anything would lead to a different outcome. But maybe I wish I had bought a vintage 'burst back in the late Eighties." [*Laughs*] **GW**

[from left] Dogstar's
Bret Domrose,
Robert Mailhouse
and Keanu Reeves



INTERVIEW

Bark & Bite

When Keanu Reeves demanded that Dogstar rock harder, the result was their punchiest album yet. "If anyone is in the front row," they tell GW, "you've been warned!"

BY JOE BOSSO

▶ BACK IN THE mid-Nineties, the Los Angeles-based post-grunge/alt-rock trio Dogstar (guitarist-singer Bret Domrose, bassist Keanu Reeves and drummer Robert Mailhouse) established a loyal fanbase thanks in part to a solid debut album, 1996's *Our Little Visionary*, and dedicated touring. Oh, there was that other thing — their big-time movie-star bassist. That didn't hurt.

But celebrity can only take you so far, and curiosity seekers showing up at gigs to see Mr. Hollywood Guy on stage discovered that Dogstar had the musical goods going for them.

Perhaps due to Reeves' booming movie career, which took off into the stratosphere following the release of *The Matrix* in 1999, Dogstar released only one more record, *Happy Ending*, before coming to a halt in 2002. The band drifted back together in 2020 during the height of the pandemic, but it wasn't until two years later that they formalized their reunion. Their 2023 album, *Somewhere Between the Power Lines and Palm Trees*, was a spunky and freewheeling collection

of alt-rock that explored existential themes with sunny optimism. While that record was a solid comeback, Dogstar truly solidify their return with their latest release, *All In Now*.

The album is punchier and hookier than anything they've ever done. Singles like "Joy" and "This Sphere" pack brilliant moody textures, and the driving rocker "Exalted" is a winning trip down alt-rock memory lane (it's a perfect combination of early U2 and Queens of the Stone Age) that somehow still feels forward-thinking. Noted post-punk producer Nick Launay (Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Arcade Fire, among others) widens and magnifies the group's sound — there's the occasional trippy

"We're pure, old-school tone guys. I played around with [amp models], but it's not what I need"

BRET DOMROSE

effect, doubled vocals and guitars — without sacrificing an ounce of their raw, live urgency.

Reeves has an idea why the record turned out so well. "I feel like I came in and said, 'Let's try and get some rock going,'" he says. "These songs just had a lot more rock in them."

Domrose offers a different analysis, suggesting that the group's extended hiatus has resulted in a feeling of rejuvenation.

"I think that if we had been playing together all that time, you know, grinding it out every day for 35 years, we'd probably hate each other or something. We're not burned out. We're coming back, and we feel young and happy and fresh. In many ways, it's like we're starting over."

What is your musical common ground? Which bands and artists do you agree on?

KEANU REEVES: The band Venn diagrams, where do we overlap?

BRET DOMROSE: They cross like this much. [He gestures a tiny space between his thumb and index finger.] Every time we try to pick a cover song to play, it's like, "What about this?" "No, no, no. What about that?" Thank God there's only three of us.

When you get together to rehearse or write, do you loosen up with some covers?

DOMROSE: We should go away on a retreat, the three of us, and just lock ourselves in the cabin and play covers for a month. We're really bad at that. We can't seem to agree

ZACHARY GRAY

on anything.

REEVES: We're on a cover search, so right now we're looking at "Can't Hardly Wait" by the Replacements.

DOMROSE: The Cult — "She Sells Sanctuary."

REEVES: We looked at "White Wedding" by Billy Idol.

DOMROSE: "Sabotage" by the Beastie Boys. You brought that in the other day, and then we quickly realized I'm not singing like that.

So you haven't actually tried those out yet?

REEVES: On our last tour we were doing the Cure's "Just Like Heaven." I think we can all agree that we like the Cure.

DOMROSE: They are part of the Venn diagram.

Help me out here. That nearly 20-year-period when the band was inactive, was it a breakup or a hiatus?

DOMROSE: It was a break. Bo "up" was involved. [He and Reeves laugh.]

Just like in *Friends*. You were on a break.

DOMROSE: Yeah, we just drifted. We were like three pieces of flotsam on the ocean, and one day we just drifted back.

There was never a plan to get back together?

DOMROSE: Well, over the years we had gotten together. Rob's got a studio in his house, so every couple of years we would play with no intention other than just to have fun. We never wrote. We'd touch on some old songs and just have fun. "What's going on? How have you been?" It wasn't like I didn't talk to anybody for 20 years and they didn't talk to me, but there were years where we didn't really talk to each other.

When you decided to make another record, what intrigued you about working with Nick Launay?

DOMROSE: We had our own list of producers, but when Nick's name came up from management it kind of rose to the top immediately based on the work that he's done. We're big fans of a lot of records he's made over the years. He's a veteran guy. We were excited to even have the opportunity to meet with him, let alone work with him.

REEVES: He did Public Image, Gang of Four, Kate Bush, INXS, Midnight Oil, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Yeah Yeah Yeahs... He played some of the new stuff he was doing with Amyl —

DOMROSE: Amyl and the Sniffers. One of the fun things about his discography is that he's all over the place. He's current and he's classic and he's everything in between.

REEVES: When you go into a studio, you

Domrose [left] and Reeves in action at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles on June 2



"I came in and said, 'Let's get some rock going.' These songs just had a lot more rock in them"

KEANU REEVES

need a producer to help mix, produce, set the microphones — production! You need it with composition. You invite them into rehearsals, and they hear how you play. They may have ideas on songs. "How do you want to listen to it? What are you guys looking for? What are you feeling?" A producer can be like a conductor or a shepherd. He can become part of the band.

How are you guys as far as criticism? What about when Nick says, "That was really good, but it can be better"?

DOMROSE: Our egos are in check, and we're really open-minded. There was one song where we just said, "Okay, go ahead, Nick. Do your thing." And it got pretty far away from where we started, like, "Maybe that's changing too much." That song didn't make the record, but it wasn't because of bad feelings or anything. It was just like, "Okay, that's your take on that." Nick added so much to the songs that did make the record. He changed some drum parts. He restructured some things, like, "Do two choruses here instead of one." If a producer has your confidence, then he brings out the best in you, for sure.

On songs like "Joy" and "This Sphere," it sounds like there's an early U2 vibe.

Would that be a fair assessment?

DOMROSE: It's in there.

REEVES: Fair enough.

DOMROSE: But not consciously. It's interesting to hear the comments people are making, because I couldn't name you one Queens of the Stone Age song, and I get Queens references a lot. There's a lot of accidental influences. I mean, there's only so many sounds and so many notes. Eventually, you're going to start to sound like something else at some point.

Bret, you play a lot of drone chords and arpeggios on the song "Exalted." That's kind of an early U2 thing. Keanu, while he's doing that, is it up to you to keep things driving as a bass player?

REEVES: I try. I try to keep the low end and the beat on the ground with Robert, our drummer, but I also do a lot of melody off of what Bret's doing. I mean, sonically Bret's in stereo. He's such a versatile guitar player. Bret, what do you think? I kind of keep it simple with a little bit of melody.

DOMROSE: It's a different set of responsibilities in a three-piece band. You don't have keyboards filling gaps. You don't have another guitar player taking care of stuff. We have to be really mindful of who gets to go where.

You brought up "Exalted." In the choruses I'm playing just F sharp minor 7th, but I'm changing to minor 7th add 9. I'm not changing notes — I'm just changing voicings. Keanu is actually driving the melody underneath that, but he's got to play the main melody of the chorus. If he doesn't, the song's going to sound ridiculous because I'm playing one chord.

Bret, you've primarily been a Fender Stratocaster guy, right?

DOMROSE: Yeah, growing up it was all Strat, but I do go between Gibson and Fender.

We understand that you got a Gibson ES-335, and that sparked you to write the song "Joy."

DOMROSE: That was the one guitar that was on my list to complete my dream collection. I finally got it, and it did way more for me than I ever expected. It sounded so different, and we were getting tones and weird overtones and feedback. Because it's semi-hollow, that guitar does things no other guitar can do.

Keanu, you're a dedicated Fender Precision Bass player, right?

REEVES: I'm playing PJs most of the time now. I'm doing a single on the bridge pickup and a split on the neck pickup.

You're a longtime pick player. Have you experimented with fingerstyle?

REEVES: We used to have some songs where I played with the fingers. I don't slap, but I do like playing with the fingers. It all depends on the songs. When we have some of our folkier tunes, I used to play with the fingers. I like



the percussiveness of the pick in this band. And just the tonality of it... I think the fingers don't have that kind of high-end attack. Plus, I'm using rosewood necks. I have kind of a warm tone with a percussive attack.

Have you tried basses with five strings, or are you a traditionalist?

REEVES: [Laughs] I'm still trying to figure out the four strings!

In terms of effects and amps, what are you two using?

DOMROSE: I use a Dunlop Cry Baby. That's

the only pedal. I have one piece of rack gear that I use, a Roland DEP-5 multi-effects from the Eighties. I grabbed it early. I send one side to a Marshall 50-watt JCM 800, and the other side goes to a Matchless DC-30 212 combo. It's my dream setup.

Keanu, how about you?

REEVES: I'm simple. I've been playing Gallien-Kruegers since the Nineties. So it started with RB 500s, but on the last tour I was playing the Fusion 1200S out of two RBH 410 cabinets. On this tour, I'm going with four 410 cabinets.

No amp modeling for you.

REEVES: No, man.

DOMROSE: We're pure, old-school tone guys. I played around with that stuff, but it's not what I need.

You need to feel that air.

DOMROSE: Well, look at Mr. 16 Speakers over here. If anyone reading this is going to be in the front row on Keanu's side, you've been warned.

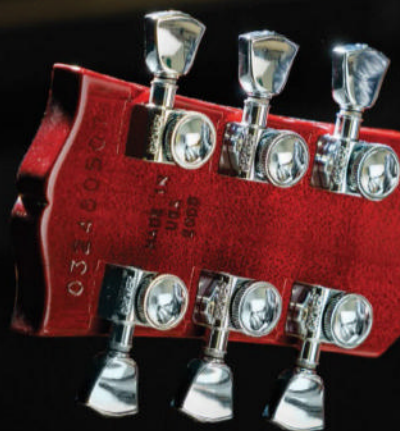
REEVES: Hey, I'm sensitive to stage volume, Bret!

DOMROSE: Your hair is going to move, but in a good way. **GW**



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Wayne Charvel in his workshop with a Wayne Guitars creation in a metal flake finish

The Hot Rod Father

An unsung hero of the guitar custom shop, DIY guitar building and the Super Strat, **Wayne Charvel** left behind a legacy that was larger than life

BY CHRIS GILL

▶ **MOST GUITARISTS TODAY** are aware of Charvel the brand, but, unfortunately, fewer are familiar with Charvel the man. Like Leo Fender and Orville Gibson, Wayne Charvel created a namesake company that lived on long after he was directly involved, thanks to his visionary spirit and distinct style, which still endures despite numerous changes of ownership. But unlike Leo Fender and Orville Gibson, Wayne Charvel has rarely received proper credit for the magnitude of his contributions to guitar history. With his passing on July 12, at the age of 85, it is time to pay the man his long-overdue respects.

Wayne Charvel's achievements were numerous and included his highly influential

roles in innovating hot-rodged guitar modifications and the guitar custom shop, sort of the guitar industry equivalent of Alex Xydias's So-Cal Speed Shop, which popularized hot rod and kustom car culture during the late Forties and Fifties. By offering a wide variety of aftermarket guitar parts with improved quality and performance, including bodies and necks in addition to hardware, his company kicked off the DIY kit guitar phenomenon. Perhaps most importantly of all, Charvel played a crucial role in the development and popularity of the Super Strat design.

Wayne Charvel was born July 1, 1941. As a teenager during the Fifties, he became

attracted to the sounds of country and rockabilly music and eventually learned to play guitar. Shortly after Charvel turned 18 in 1959, he bought his first electric – a brand-new Fender Stratocaster. By the early Sixties, Charvel played in surf bands in Southern California.

"Dick Dale was my hero," Charvel recalled. "He was left-handed and played a right-handed Strat flipped over. He also had these Fender Showman and Dual Showman amps that were really loud. In my opinion, Dick Dale invented heavy metal."

At the time, Charvel was working as a spray painter in a sign shop in Southern California. Back in the early Sixties, many

COURTESY OF MICHAEL CHARVEL

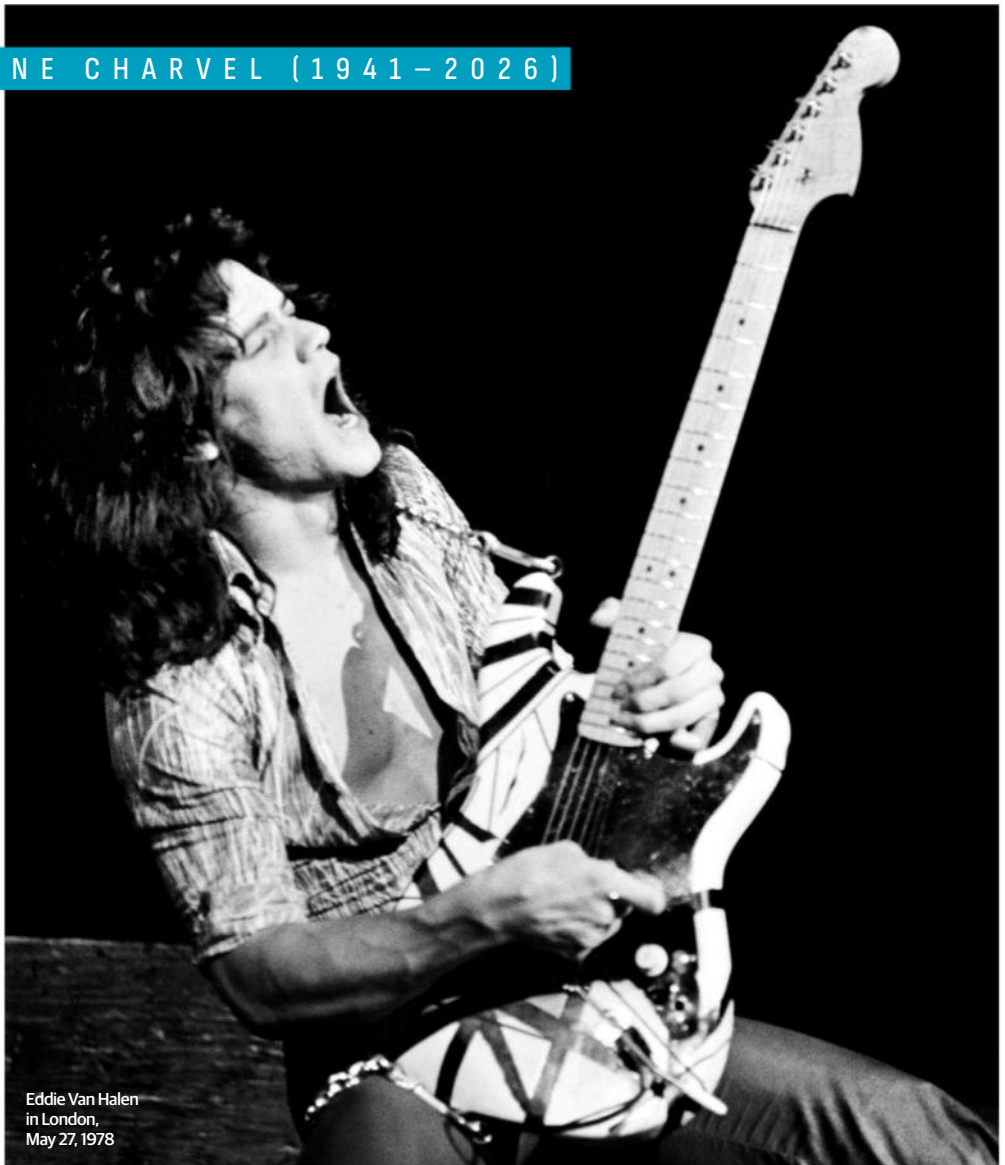
guitarists copied Dale's style and appearance down to the finish on his guitar. To stay one step ahead of his imitators, Dale frequently had his Strat refinished in bold, bright pearl and metallic colors. Dale's striking Strat probably inspired Charvel to use his sign-shop skills to refinish his own Strat with a dazzling candy apple blue finish.

Soon, other guitarists asked Wayne if he could refinish their guitars, and he started painting and repairing guitars on the side. "After I got married, I quit playing in bands," Charvel said. "This was sometime in the late Sixties or early Seventies. A couple of my good friends who worked at Fender knew that I painted guitars, so Fender hired me to do all of their out-of-warranty repairs. They didn't want to take guys off of the production line whenever a scratched-up guitar came in. They wanted them to keep making new guitars instead of fixing old ones, because that's not profitable."

Charvel set up a workshop in the garage of his house in West Covina, California, about 16 miles from the Fender factory in Fullerton. "I was painting guitars, refinishing and refretting necks and replacing Tolex covering on amplifiers and Rhodes pianos for Fender," Charvel continued. "It was great for me. I was swamped. I would go to the Fender factory twice a week to pick things up, and I got to see how they made and finished Fender guitars. I was using nitrocellulose lacquer and they were using polyester from Dunn-Edwards. The bodies were shaped using overhead pin routers, and everything was made by hand. They didn't have CNC machines back then."

Fender's transition to more durable polyurethane and polyester finishes eventually led to fewer guitarists bringing in instruments for touchups, and Charvel's workload for Fender eventually started to decline. In early 1974, Wayne Charvel decided to become his own boss and opened his own independent business, Charvel's Guitar Repair, in a small storefront on Arrow Highway in Azusa, California. Initially, Charvel planned to continue working in his garage, but his good friend Bob Luly, who designed amps for Leo Fender's Music Man company, had a better recommendation. "Bob said I'd do better if I had a shop," Wayne told guitar historian Tony Bacon. "People respect it more if you're doing repairs in a shop as opposed to your garage."

Over the next year, the shop quickly built a steady clientele from word-of-mouth and business that Fender and local retail shops like Hanich Music directed Charvel's way. One of those retailers – possibly Hanich – asked Charvel if he could make an unbreakable jack plate for Gibson Les Pauls as the store was getting a lot of complaints about the fragile plastic version on new models. Wayne



Eddie Van Halen
in London,
May 27, 1978

had a friend who owned a metal press, so he had a small run made that promptly sold out.

Wisely, Charvel realized that this simple guitar part potentially had national appeal, so he placed a tiny ad in *Guitar Player* that first appeared on page 49 of the February 1975 issue with John McLaughlin on the cover. "People started seeing my shop's name in *Guitar Player* every month," Charvel said. "Placing repeat ads helped me build name recognition and convinced players that I was legit. Eventually I started selling more parts, like a stainless steel tremolo arm for a Strat that was four times stronger than the stock arm and chrome-plated and vintage-style Strat replacement pickguards.

"I had a big advantage over other mail-order businesses that were also starting to

sell guitar parts because I had a repair shop, too," he continued. "That's because guitarists would come into the shop and tell me what they wanted. That's how I got new ideas and why Charvel expanded into other things like bodies and necks. Players wanted to build or modify their own guitars, and we provided them a way to do that."

Selling guitar parts might seem like a no-brainer today, but in the mid-Seventies it was a revolutionary concept. At the time, replacement parts were pretty hard to come by and usually had to be salvaged from older, damaged instruments. For example, Gibson sold only a very limited selection of parts – pickups, control knobs and a replacement Tuneomatic bridge and stop tailpiece. Charvel made it easier for guitarists to restore their vintage instruments, but even more importantly it became the first custom shop for players who wanted to hot rod their guitars for maximum performance.

Soon, Charvel's Guitar Repair became a hangout for pros and aspiring players. Clients included Doctor Mike "Boffin" Phillips, a road crew member for Deep Purple, and

Wayne Charvel has rarely received proper credit for the magnitude of his contributions to guitar history



ZZ Top in August 1983 with their Wayne Charvel-built "Eliminator" coupe guitar and bass

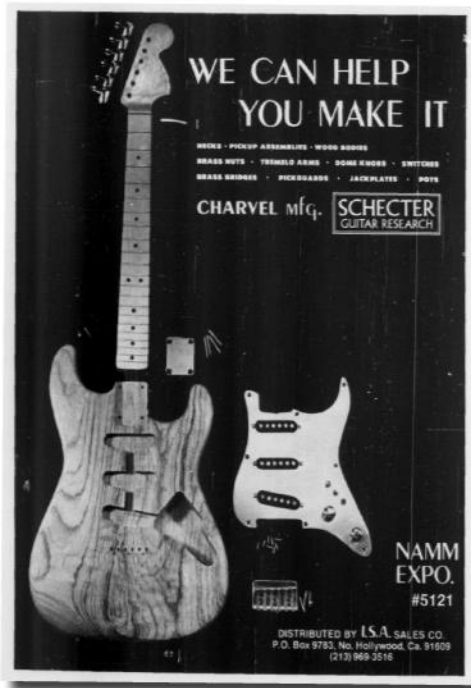
Alan Rogan, who had recently become Pete Townshend's guitar tech. Charvel customized guitars for several notable rock stars and even built a few custom instruments, like a quilted maple Strat that Tommy Bolin used on stage during the mid-Seventies.

"I was taking Fender guitars and hot rodding them," Charvel said. "Back in those days, nobody was flattening the fingerboard and installing jumbo frets like we were doing. We also did things like putting humbucking

pickups in Strats and Teles. We were ahead of everybody. I did it because I worked in nightclubs for so long and realized that Fender single-coil pickups didn't have the sustain players wanted. I started doing that, and players loved it. Then I started making bodies. I hooked up with Dave Schecter, who taught me a lot of things, and Dave and I made 100 bodies in one weekend at his shop in Reseda. Later, I taught my junior high school buddy Lynn Ellsworth how to make guitar bodies and necks, which he started building for me. He called his company Boogie Bodies and did all the tooling. He even started to make a few of his own guitars."

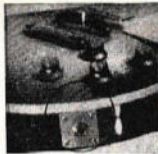
The first ads featuring Charvel bodies appeared in October 1976, and replacement necks were first offered a few months later in March 1977. Meanwhile, Charvel built a coalition partnership with associates that included Boogie Bodies, Schecter and Seymour Duncan, and his shop stocked high-output pickups from companies like DiMarzio and Mighty Mite. During the fall of 1977, the Charvel shop relocated to a larger facility in San Dimas that was better equipped for building guitars and manufacturing parts in house. Many other companies also produced guitar parts, but Charvel stood out by providing everything guitarists needed to build entire instruments from scratch. From this moment onwards, the DIY guitar phenomenon was off and running, thanks to Charvel.

Around late 1975 or early 1976, a young, unknown player named Edward Van Halen started dropping



by the shop and hanging out. According to Charvel's recollections, Van Halen first came to the shop to see if they could fix a pickup in one of his guitars that was squealing and feeding back excessively (probably Ed's 1975 Ibanez Destroyer, as the model's Super 70 pickups were notoriously microphonic). Charvel suggested dipping the pickup in wax, a process known as "potting," which he had learned about from the Fender factory.

Considering that Charvel was already installing humbucking pickups in Strats for clients at the time, it's highly likely that Eddie bought the 1961 Strat that he was



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[pages 36 to 38] Vintage guitar magazine ads, including [left] the original Charvel's Manufacturing ad that appeared in the February 1975 issue of *Guitar Player*. [facing] Eddie Van Halen with his "bumblebee" guitar in October 1979

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Although Eddie Van Halen certainly deserves credit for inventing his iconic Frankenstein guitar with a single humbucker, single volume knob and distinctively striped

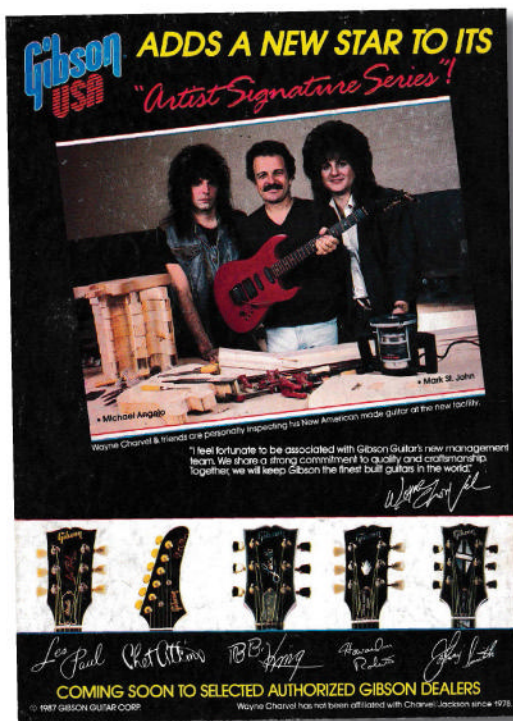
For decades, Van Halen fans assumed that the body of Ed's iconic Frankenstein guitar (first seen in February 1977 in a raw, unfinished state) was made by Boogie Bodies, but strong evidence suggests that it was actually made as part of the batch of 100 bodies constructed by Wayne and Dave Schecter. Luthier Donnie Ward, who has seen and collected dozens of examples of early Charvel/Schter and Boogie Bodies parts, has identified numerous characteristics seen on the Frankenstein body, such as the neck pocket shape, truss rod adjustment cutout and forearm and belly contour shapes, that perfectly match those of the Charvel/Schter bodies. Charvel himself supported this in an interview in 1985, long before the body's origins were questioned. "To the best of my recollection," he said, "the neck was probably an Ellsworth neck (Boogie Bodies, first seen on Ed's Frankenstein in July 1977) and the body

While EVH deserves credit for his iconic Frankenstein guitar, he got much of the inspiration for his early innovations from Charvel

was ours. That first white (striped) one, I'm pretty sure that was our body."

Van Halen loved the Frankenstein guitar he built from Charvel parts, and he repaid their help by mentioning "Charvel's Mfg." in the special-thanks section on the back cover of Van Halen's debut album. During early 1978 he asked Charvel to build him a new guitar based on his Frankenstein but with a rear-loaded humbucker. Charvel delivered the finished guitar to Ed in the late summer/early fall of 1978, and the guitarist was first photographed playing it in October 1978 during a handful of shows in Europe. Featuring an eye-catching black finish with yellow stripes painted by Wayne Charvel that inspired the guitar's "bumblebee" nickname, the guitar became iconic when it appeared on the back cover of the *Van Halen II* album, released in March 1979.

Unfortunately, Charvel's partnerships and reliance on outside manufacturers to build parts led to cash flow and debt problems for the burgeoning business, which was still building its customer base. Stressed by the challenges of operating the business, Charvel sold his company, including rights to use his last name, to employee Grover Jackson. In a cruel twist of fate, the change of ownership took place in November 1978, which was the same month that *Guitar Player's* first interview with Eddie Van Halen was published. Whereas the "Charvel's Mfg." credit only hinted that Ed's Frankenstein may have come from Charvel, suddenly the entire guitar community knew when he told the guitar's



IN MEMORIAM

Wayne's post-Charvel life wasn't quite as groundbreaking, but it still was creatively fulfilling. For a while in the late Seventies and early Eighties, he worked for B.C. Rich handling artist relations, designing a few models and setting up the factory so its manufacturing was more automated and efficient.

He also built custom guitars for numerous artists who still commissioned his talents. Notable examples include Michael Angelo Batio's original four-neck Quad guitar and a matching guitar and bass built for ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and Dusty Hill with bodies shaped like the famous 1933 Ford "Eliminator" coupe and featuring a pyro charge and motor that blew smoke out of the instruments' tail pipes.

For a brief period between 1987 and 1989, Wayne worked for Gibson and designed the Wayne R. Charvel WRC signature, US-1 and U-2 super Strat models. Charvel's association with Gibson was short-lived due

to a trademark infringement lawsuit that Jackson/Charvel filed that severely restricted how the guitars could be marketed and how Charvel's name could be used. Charvel left Gibson in 1989 to start producing guitars with the Ritz brand name for about a year until he changed the name to WRC. Finally, in 1998, Charvel and his son Michael started the Wayne Guitars company, which produces instruments with the same standards of quality and spirit of the original Charvel shop in San Dimas. Wayne Guitars continues on today under Michael Charvel's leadership.

Numerous guitarists paid tribute to Wayne Charvel when news of his passing became public in late July. His son Michael's tribute was the most eloquent, as he knew Wayne better than anyone during his father's years spent living, building guitars and running a retail music shop in Paradise, California, and relocating to Arizona after Wayne's home, workshop and business burned down in the devastating Camp Fire in 2018.

"Many of you knew him as a legendary guitar builder, craftsman and musician," Michael wrote. "I was blessed to simply call him Dad. Of everything he accomplished in his life, what meant the most to me was that he was a loving father. Rest in peace, Dad. I will miss you every day." [GW](#)

origin story and generously mentioned Charvel three times in the article.

Wayne Charvel was never bitter that Charvel's surge in success happened after he left the company. A dedicated family man, he was relieved that he could focus on raising his children rather than toiling to pay vendors.

Charvel was never bitter that the company's surge in success happened after he left — his focus was on raising his children

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THE GEAR HUNTER

Powers Electric

Andy Powers — president, CEO and chief guitar designer at Taylor Guitars — can't help but expand his vision by introducing an electric guitar. Now, with Powers Electric, he reveals the genesis and design philosophy behind his latest creation, the 30-years-in-the-making A-Type

BY PAUL RIARIO



Andy Powers with a Powers Electric A-Type

▶ WHEN I THINK of pioneers in guitar design — true heavyweights like Leo Fender, Ned Steinberger and others — it's no stretch to say that Andy Powers will likely be regarded in much the same way as those legends. Not only has he made great strides for Taylor Guitars in building musically appealing acoustics, but his forward-thinking innovations like V-Class bracing, Action Control Necks and the use of urban-harvested tonewoods, among other imaginative details, only reinforce the fact that he's relentlessly tenacious in his passion for improving the instrument.

Now, Powers has turned his sights on building his very own electric guitar model, something he's been mulling over for some time. "It's kind of like writing songs," he says. "You put all those things on your mental bookshelf. Once in a while, you take those thoughts down, blow the dust off and examine them a little bit. I have all the pieces I need mechanically, and I'm feeling the right kind of aesthetic inspiration right now. I'm going to put all these pieces together."

But don't call it a side hustle; Powers is still manning the helm at Taylor. By forming his own company — Powers Electric — a brand completely separate from Taylor, Powers has made his passion project a reality. And by doing so, he has poured all his childhood inspirations into a completely original electric guitar design that embodies Southern California nostalgia and culture. In essence, Powers' A-Type guitar offers a fresh perspective, one that hits closer to home.

"If I'd been around at the dawn of electric-guitar development, what would I have made? I find that idea incredibly attractive"

"The world of acoustic guitars is a fairly traditional mindset," he says. "Most of the time, you're celebrating beautiful wood and subtle finishes. I love that world — I spend most of my life in it — but I wanted this guitar to live somewhere different."

At what point did you decide to design your own electric guitar?

I've built a lot of electric guitars for different players over the years, and having worked on a lot of them, you kind of absorb what these guitars do and their quirks. You can exaggerate and learn how to tweak them, modify them, refine them, all that. So I thought, wouldn't it be kind of fun to build a guitar that I wish I had had? One day I was talking about that with Kurt Listug [*co-founder of Taylor*], and he said, "Why don't you just build a guitar you want?" All right, that sounds like fun. I went home and started drawing and putting all these different kinds of things that I had thought about for the last 30 years into this guitar that I wanted.

Most people would say guys like Leo Fender got it right the first time. But here you are building a new guitar from the ground up. When I play it, it seems you've got it right the first time.

I appreciate that. It is a challenge because in some ways, you're right; the forefathers of the electric guitar got it right the first time.

And that's very hard to do. Did you begin by studying those classic guitar designs and factor in what had already been done?

Let's imagine if I had been alive back then, living in Southern California. If I'd been around at the dawn of electric-guitar development, what would I have made? So you go through this kind of mental exercise and go, "What would that be like?" There are no parts catalogs to buy stuff from. And you don't know about what has already been done, right? So, you're going to have to make it entirely new. You'll have to make every part. That could be an intimidating thing, or — for someone like me — I find that idea incredibly attractive, and I get to make every part exactly the way I want it. I love woodworking, metalworking, engineering and understanding exactly how every piece functions. How to make it, how to shape it, how to hold it, what I should make it from. I came at the design from that angle.

Once you decided to build everything yourself, where did the design actually begin?

I made the first one in my home shop. A friend of mine saw it and liked it. Another friend said, "Can I have one?" Before I knew it, I realized I was going to need some help. Every line was considered. You've got to have curves that look good, feel good, sit right on you and look good under different paint colors. People would discover that it sits perfectly on your lap, and it balances when you hang it by a strap. It's easy to get around on. That's what I wanted. Something that felt intuitive.

The guitar is a hollow-body. Why did you decide to design it like that?

I've always loved hollow-body guitars. I love the way resonant chambers behave, the light weight and the way the instrument feels alive in your hands. What I don't love is uncontrollable feedback; rather than accepting that as the tradeoff, I wanted to figure out how to keep the responsiveness of a hollow guitar while eliminating the feedback that causes it to take off onstage. The body became an engineering exercise. Instead of treating the top and back as two separate vibrating surfaces, I designed them to work together. The sound posts couple the top and back so they move as one structure instead of pumping against each other. That lets the guitar retain the liveliness of a hollow body while dramatically reducing feedback. Everything comes back to how the guitar manages vibration. Every piece affects the next, and every decision is about directing energy where you want it to go instead of letting it get away from you.

The neck joint is unlike anything we've seen before. How did you come up with it?

Every neck joint has strengths and compromises. I've built bolt-on, set-neck and neck-through guitars, and each transfers energy differently. I wasn't interested in repeating any of those designs. I wanted the neck and body to become one mechanical structure. The joint is essentially a horizontally oriented dovetail that locks itself together as it's assembled. The geometry pulls



The Powers Electric A-Type in three finishes (followed by three more on page 42)

"Even before the strings go on, you can tap the neck, and it rings like a marimba bar"

the joint tighter as it seats, automatically aligning the neck while creating an incredibly rigid connection. The glue isn't doing the work — the geometry is. That idea of coupling became one of the guiding principles throughout the guitar. The better the two parts work together mechanically, the more efficiently they transfer string energy, and the more musical the instrument becomes.

Some companies focus on the shape of the headstock. You're more concerned with its function.

Most people think about the scale length between the nut and bridge, but the string continues vibrating beyond both of those points. The short section behind the nut has a tremendous influence on how the neck resonates and how the guitar feels. I positioned each tuner according to the string length I wanted behind the nut. Once the tuner locations were correct, the headstock shape simply grew around them. The headstock and fingerboard function as one continuous structure. Even before the strings go on, you can tap the neck, and it rings like a marimba bar.

You landed between the traditional Fender and Gibson scale lengths, settling on a 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch scale length. Why?

I wasn't trying to land on one or the other. I wanted a scale length that felt natural, where the strings stayed articulate without becoming stiff and where bending notes still felt easy and expressive. Twenty-four and seven-eighths inches turned out to be that sweet spot. It's familiar enough that players immediately feel comfortable, but it's different enough to give the guitar its own personality.

Tell me about the pickups.

I spent a lot of time designing the guitar as an



"The knobs come directly from my love of surfing," Powers says. "They're made from surfboard resin"



"The headstock and fingerboard function as one continuous structure," Powers says

acoustic instrument first — as a string-holder. The first question was, "How do you make a string vibrate predictably, dynamically and musically? Well, don't ruin it with a pickup." That led me to experiment with neodymium magnets. They're normally considered too strong and bright for guitar pickups, but by combining neodymium with aluminum, I could diffuse the magnetic field instead of concentrating it. You hear more of the string's natural harmonic content without damping it, and the design creates an almost perfect Faraday cage that dramatically reduces noise. From there, I could shape the pickup's voice rather than simply increasing output. One of my favorite things

"The little details matter — they connect the guitar to the culture that inspired it"



is that people describe these pickups with words that don't usually belong together. They'll say they're "warm and clear." The low notes stay articulate, but they're cushioned by warmth instead of becoming harsh.

What about the tremolo design?

I've always admired how pedal steel guitars keep chords in tune with themselves as they're bent. Traditional vibrato systems don't really do that because every string changes pitch by a slightly different amount. There have been some brilliant attempts to solve the problem, but I decided I didn't need perfection. If I could make it 90 percent right instead of chasing 100 percent, I could build something much simpler and more musical. After working through the math of string tension and scale length, I designed a cam mechanism that lets each string travel a different distance while keeping the pitches relatively even. I also built in a positive zero point, so every time you release the arm, it returns to concert pitch.

Where did the guitar's visual identity come from?

Designers have their own vocabulary, just like musicians do. Mine was shaped by growing up in Southern California around hot rods, surfboards, skateboards, custom paint and all the different ways people personalized what they built. That's why you'll find bold, solid colors and finishes inspired more by automotive design than traditional guitar making. Once you start exploring automotive paint, you realize there aren't just a handful of colors — there are thousands. That world is endlessly inspiring, and I wanted to build a guitar that could wear those ideas naturally.

The knobs come directly from my love of surfing. They're made from surfboard resin. Originally, I used hardened resin that dripped onto the shop floor while boards were being glassed. You'd machine and polish it, and suddenly something that was basically trash became beautiful. I loved that because it reminded me of an old hot-rod tradition when cars were painted by hand; layers of overspray would build up inside paint booths. Eventually, people started digging those colorful fordite layers out of the trash and turning them into shift knobs and dashboard pieces. Surfboard resin felt like the equivalent — something discarded becoming something worth keeping. Those little details matter because they connect the guitar to the culture that inspired it.

What do you hope players will discover when they pick up this A-Type?

If I ask someone what a Stratocaster sounds like, you probably don't describe the guitar — you start naming players. Jimi Hendrix. Buddy Guy. Stevie Ray Vaughan. The instrument becomes part of each player's voice. That's exactly what excites me about this guitar. Even with the first dozen instruments, it was amazing to hear how differently musicians interpreted it. One of the things I've appreciated most recently is hearing a player get one of these guitars and then, within hours or a day, they say, "This is what I want to walk on stage with. This is what I want to play." So, all right, you found something you loved in this. I can think of nothing better than that. **GW**

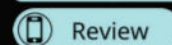
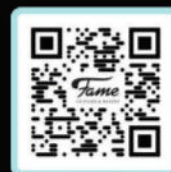
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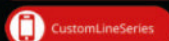
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PERSONALITIES

Lenny Kaye

Stepping out from Patti Smith's shadow with his first solo album, the punk pioneer tells *GW* about his "point and shoot" playing, the CBGB scene's "misfits and renegades" — and why one pickup is all you need

BY JOE BOSSO



▶ OVER A REMARKABLE half-century-plus career, Lenny Kaye has seemingly done it all. As the curator behind the beloved 1972 *Nuggets* garage rock compilation, he hinted at what would soon morph into punk rock — a movement he helped ignite as Patti Smith's guitarist and chief collaborator. Yet, despite his storied history and staggering resume (including producing more than 20 albums for artists like Suzanne Vega and Soul Asylum, not to mention penning books on topics ranging from rock milestones to 1930s crooners), the guitarist is checking off one more item on his "to do" list. At age 79, he's making his much-belated debut as a solo artist with *Goin' Local*.

"My daughter said, 'Dad, I don't believe you have a new job,'" Kaye says with a laugh. "It feels good to surprise people. I played the record for Patti, and she said, 'I've never heard you sound like this.' The truth is, I've never delved into this side of my artistic personality, but then again, you always have to reinvent yourself. Once you do something or understand something so completely, it's good to move forward. And I believe that's what I did."

Keen statophiles will immediately question whether *Goin' Local* does indeed qualify as a solo Kaye release. Back in 1984, while Smith took a prolonged break from music to raise a family, Kaye led the Lenny Kaye Connection and issued a zippy rock gem, *I've Got a Right*. "That was a band record, and it was also 40-plus years in the past," he says. "This record feels like a new persona, and it's certainly different from what you might expect."

He makes a point of declaring what his new album isn't. "It's not garage rock," he says. "It's kind of all over the place, and it wears its heart on its sleeve. In a weird way, it's a very personal record."

Goin' Local has a warm, friendly naturalness to it that draws you right in. Kaye, handling guitar, pedal steel and vocal duties, offers up a collection of potent and poignant tunes that include dreamy ballads ("This Love," "Let's Make a Memory") and surreal folk ("World Book Night," "Poppy") nestled alongside a number of sophisticated, riffy pop-rock beauties ("Goin' Local," "A Friend Like You" and "Solstice," the latter a collaboration with Smith). He might even have a regional radio hit on his hands with "Pennsylvania

AL PEREIRA/GETTY IMAGES

"IN A WEIRD WAY, IT'S TAKEN ME 60 YEARS TO GET TO THIS POINT, AND I'M JUST ENJOYING IT"

Girls," a lilting pop ditty on which he lists the attributes — from his POV — of the Keystone State's fairer sex.

"My girlfriend, Dawn Linden, is from Pennsylvania, and one day she said, 'We just don't get no respect,'" Kaye says, somehow managing not to imitate Rodney Dangerfield. He's quick to stress that he gave Linden songwriting credit, and he claims that he will only perform the song in the state that inspired it. "I'm not going to change the words to 'Illinois Girls' or 'Maryland Girls,'" he says. "It is what it is."

"Pennsylvania Girls" glides along over Kaye's simple yet evocative, echo-drenched guitar pattern. As always, his no-frills playing — gutsy riffs and sparky solos that don't wear out the welcome — is defined by a striking economy of notes that emphasizes mood and texture. Central to this stripped-down approach is his instrument of choice: the Unicaster, a 60th Anniversary Fender Strat modified to feature only a single Fralin pickup in the middle position and a lone volume knob.

"I wanted a guitar to be who I am," he says. "I know a lot of guitarists never use the middle pickup, but I'm all for it. I never used the other pickups, and I was always hitting the selector switch by accident. My guitar tech, Barre Duryea, fixed up the guitar and even made a new pickguard for me. So now I don't have all that stuff I don't need. It's just point and shoot."

Let's talk about your early guitar influences. I imagine as a young teen you spent a lot of time listening to AM radio.

Totally. There was AM, but there were also these fledgling FM stations out of the colleges that played folk. When I got my first guitar, which was an acoustic my uncle gave me, I started learning chords. I had this image of me being the lonely folk singer in the backyard. I loved Eric Andersen, and I kind of wanted to be him.

Of course, like most everybody in my generation, as soon as the Beatles presented a new role model of how to perform, my ambition moved to being in a band. The Beatles debuted on *Ed Sullivan* in February of '64, and my first band show took place in November of that year with a group called the Vandals. We played the Rutgers Fraternity Row. I mean, the explosion of the guitar as an instrument of possibility was amazing during this time.

I'm certainly no virtuoso. I don't pretend to be able to perform like Jimi Hendrix or Jimmy Page or Jeff Beck. These are larger-than-life figures, and you also need a certain physical dexterity to play like these people, which I don't have. I'm untrained. I play by ear. But I think in some ways that's really helped me with a performer like Patti, because come on, I wasn't going to put a bunch of Chuck Berry licks behind her.

Was there ever a period when you aspired to play like some of the greats you mentioned — Hendrix, Page or Beck? And if so, when did you say to yourself, "That just isn't me"?

It wasn't a conscious decision. You play what you can. Back in the Sixties, I was in my band as a rhythm guitar



OPPOSITE PAGE Lenny Kaye with his one-pickup Unicaster in New York City

ABOVE Patti Smith and Kaye in action in London during the *Horses* 50th Anniversary Tour, October 12, 2025



HIS FIRST ALBUM WITH PATTI SMITH
HORSES
(1975)



HIS DEBUT SOLO ALBUM
GOIN' LOCAL
(2026)

player, and then I moved up to play six-string bass, which certainly helped my sense of melody and the underlying foundation of music. I was proud of the fact that I could sit rhythmically under something. The first time I played with Patti in February of '71 at a St. Mark's poetry reading [*February 10 at NYC's St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery*], all I did was follow the way she breathed and try to keep propulsing her flights of poetic fancy.

In a sense, that's never changed. I do like to play solos, but it's not going to be a flurry of notes. I approach them melodically and with a sense of narrative arc, which, of course, ties in with my other hemisphere of the brain as a writer. Just as it is with guitar solos, a well-crafted sentence has rhythm and melody. I'm not going to demonstrate how many notes I can play in a millisecond. I'm going to try to make it sing like a vocalist sings and to compliment how the song understands itself.

It takes a certain degree of maturity to develop that kind of philosophy. When did you figure it all out?

I'm still figuring it out. You get better incrementally. At least I didn't peak early. I've moved slowly. It's why, in a certain sense, I can arrive at this solo album. It's part of the long path of who I've become and the music I've absorbed as I've moved through many genres and attempted to understand what makes them tick. I can borrow from all of them within my own musicality. I felt an accumulation of who I am as a musician in the making of this record.

People tend to mythologize New York City during the Seventies, particularly the early years that gave rise to punk. What kind of snapshot can

"THE RAMONES TEMPLATE BECAME WHAT PEOPLE PERCEIVED AS PUNK. THEN IT BECAME A CLICHÉ"



you offer of that time?

I get asked that, and I have to tell whoever's asking the disappointing truth — that it was like another night hanging out with your friends at the local bar. You didn't have that sense of "Oooh, this is special," especially in the early years when the New York Dolls scene morphed into the CBGB scene. That's not a big scene. There weren't a lot of places to play, nor were there 500 groups milling around. You'd have these misfits and renegades congregating around the only club that would allow them to hang out and actually get up on the stage.

A few years later, when all the bands had found their members and they'd defined their personalities and understood what they wanted to be, it started moving faster. Then it got a name — punk. The Ramones template became what people perceived as punk. And then it became a stereotype and a cliché.

Your longtime association with Patti Smith could fill an entire interview, but to pare it down to a bite-sized piece, did she ever verbalize to you

ABOVE The Patti Smith Group — [from left] Ivan Kral, Smith, Jay Dee Daugherty and Kaye — perform in Copenhagen in May 1976

in so many words what she required of you as a musical collaborator?

She's never said it in so many words because sometimes we don't like to say things, but I bring total belief to her. I believe in her art, her vision, her sense of honesty, her sense of righteousness. I will travel to the ends of the earth to make sure that what she wants to do on stage is realized. She calls me her knight. I've never been the best technical player in the band, but I know how to unfold what she's doing and improvise with her and help her to have a foundation to understand where she's going. To me, that's a valuable thing, and it's probably the reason why we've made music so successfully over half a century. I allow her to be who she hopes to be.

That's true no matter what music she'll move to. We both love two-and-a-half minute songs with good choruses that make you want to get out on the dance floor, and we also like fields of experimental improvisation that often blur beyond the boundaries of music, rhythm and melody into what the free jazz guys call "out there."

"I KNOW A LOT OF GUITARISTS NEVER USE THE MIDDLE PICKUP, BUT I'M ALL FOR IT"

You've produced a number of artists — even had hits like Suzanne Vega's "Luka." I imagine you have a pretty good bedside manner, being that you're an artist yourself.

You know, anytime I've worked with another artist, whether it was Suzanne Vega or a lot of the English acts I've done — James, Microdisney, the Weather Prophets — I thought it was a great honor to be asked to be somebody's mirror in the recording studio. Sometimes — a lot of times — artists are going through a vulnerable time, and as a producer you need to either bolster their confidence or try to steer them away from something that's going to sink the record.

Sometimes you have to be the bad guy and tell them, "That's good, but it could be better." Artists aren't always ready to hear that.

Or not ready to do it. But here's the thing: As a producer, I always thought that I don't want to be there for the next record. If I've done my job right, you've gotten all my moves and you need to evolve unless the entire construct changes. Every once in a while, I'll pull out records I've produced. I just listened to *This Boy's Heart* by Martin Stephenson & the Daintees. Thirty years later, I'd kind

of forgotten about it, and now, listening to it with fresh ears, it was amazing to feel Martin's heart in every phrase. Another group I enjoyed working with was Soul Asylum on *Hang Time*, which I think is a classic.

In addition to the Unicaster, what other guitars are we hearing on *Goin' Local*?

I have a really nice '68 Les Paul that Caesar Diaz sold to me. He was surprised that I didn't have a Les Paul, and he sold me a great one. There's a nice Mosrite 12-string on the record, and a Collins D2H acoustic, which is one of the most beautiful-sounding acoustics around. I do play some humble pedal steel — there's a Sho-Bod pedal steel on the record. One of the things about pedal steel is that even the most simple thing you can play on it sounds brilliant.

What are we talking, amp-wise?

The smaller, the better. We all went through the Seventies where you needed a very large crew to carry everything up on stage. But I like small amps like Fender Deluxes and Princetons. I have a great little Fender Princeton, and my Deluxe has a Celestion in it, which gives it a little more grunt. I have a couple specialty amps. I've got a Silvertone 1482, which is a wonderful amp.

I just happened to walk into my local guitar store, and they had one. I thought, "Oh, this is mine!"

I have an old Magnatone Troubadour 213 that has a real vibrato on it. I used it on some stuff on the album to get that bell-like sound. My very first amp when I started playing was a Magnatone 280 — the stereo model that Buddy Holly used. I bought it from a guy down the street who kind of started playing guitar and stopped. He also had a Les Paul Standard, I believe, but in those days, Les Pauls were scorned. It was all about Fenders.

Are you planning to tour behind this album?

I don't do it as much as I used to. I don't even have a band at this point. I like to go out solo. It's almost like I'm returning to my folk roots; I can get up and sing my songs. I do play electric when I do that, but it's just me. I've spent my entire life trying to avoid having a formal job. I want to continue to enjoy it and not take it that seriously. To be honest, at this point in my life, I'm just grateful to play music and find magic within the creation of a song or surprise myself with a guitar solo and a note that I haven't hit yet. In a weird way, it's taken me 60 years to get to this point, and I'm just enjoying it. [GW](#)

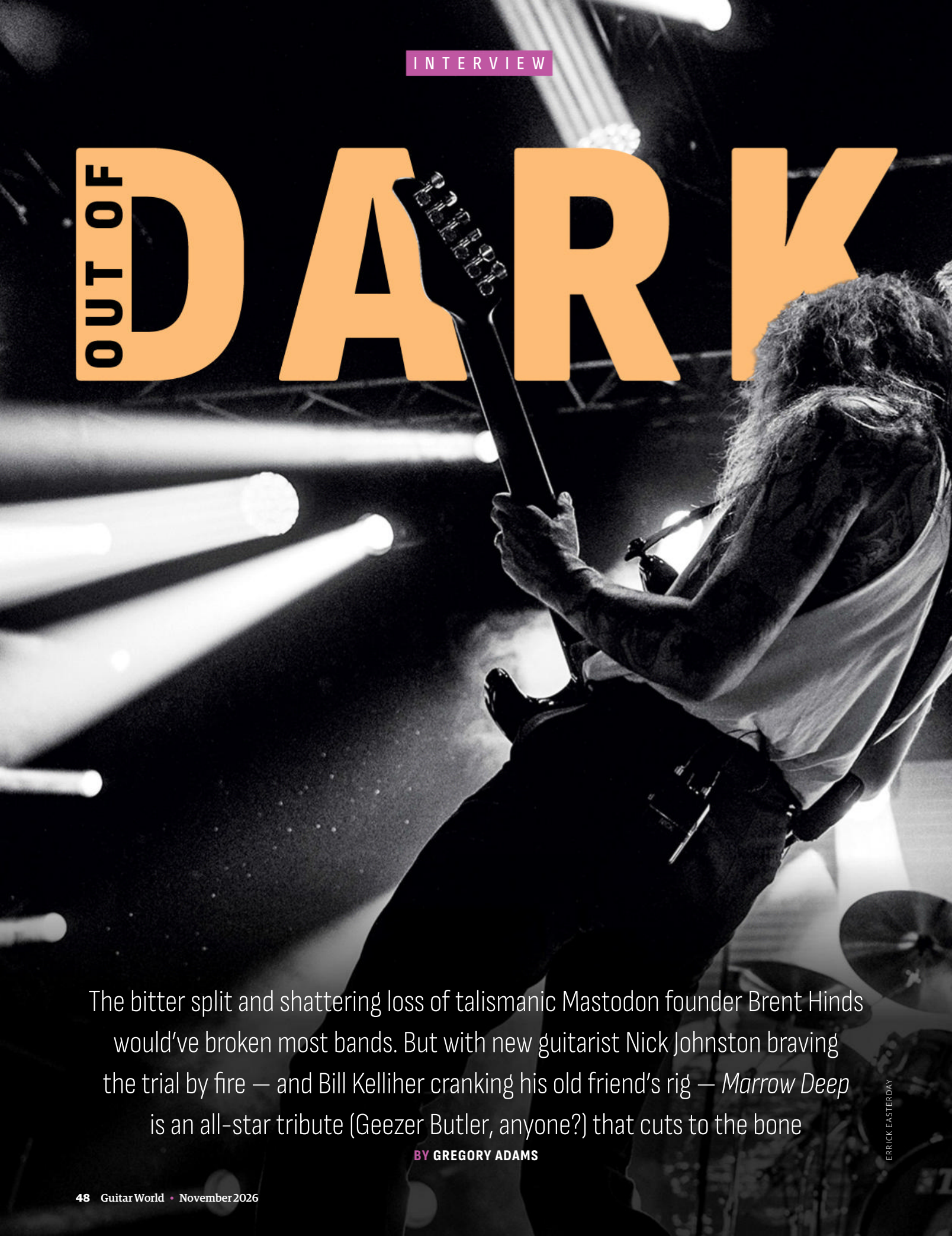
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INTERVIEW

OUT OF DARK

The bitter split and shattering loss of talismanic Mastodon founder Brent Hinds would've broken most bands. But with new guitarist Nick Johnston braving the trial by fire — and Bill Kelliher cranking his old friend's rig — *Marrow Deep* is an all-star tribute (Geezer Butler, anyone?) that cuts to the bone

BY GREGORY ADAMS

ERRICK EASTERDAY



MASTODON

MESS

MASTODON GUITARIST BILL Kelliher spent his summer taking people to school. It's a sweltering afternoon in Zagreb, Croatia, and Kelliher is sitting backstage before one of the final shows of a European tour. Naturally, the master metalmaker has been crushing it on stage with the Atlanta-formed outfit, putting on a clinic while delivering an authorial blend

of battering-ram rhythms, prog-spiraling licks and interstellar melodicism — hallmarks of classic albums including 2004's *Leviathan* and 2009's *Crack the Sky*.

Kelliher was dropping knowledge before those sets, too. All tour long he'd been knuckling into a series of one-on-one guitar lessons with fans — sometimes explaining the fundamentals, other times teaching aspiring six-stringers how to play Mastodon's most

memorable moments. Above all, he drilled in the importance of playing through your own voice, no matter whose riff it is you're riffin'. "The theme of the whole lesson is this: Don't be like, 'I'm never gonna be as good as that guy,'" he says. "I learned not to think like that a long time ago — and that rhythm is everything."

Notably, Kelliher is saying this while seated beside current co-guitarist Nick

Johnston, the Canadian virtuoso who joined last year following the departure of founding guitar hero Brent Hinds.

Nicknamed “Manimal,” Hinds’ visionary fretboard dynamism led him through countless mind-bending solos with Mastodon over the years, but he’d left the group unexpectedly in March 2025. The ensuing months found Hinds stating that his exit was not his choice – and less than amicable; Kelliher suggested more diplomatically at the time that they’d grown apart, while this year’s *The Mastodon in the Room* mini-documentary adds that Hinds’ substance-abuse issues played a part in the disconnect and departure from his bandmates. But they expected he’d eventually come back. Devastatingly, they’d never get the chance to reconnect; Hinds was killed in an August 2025 traffic accident after an SUV struck his motorcycle.

Mastodon now address the profound loss of their friend and former bandmate in “Your Ghost Again,” the first single from the act’s ninth album, *Marrow Deep*. It begins with erratically stagger-stomped brutishness, then Kelliher and Johnston team up for a dizzyingly zoetropic run. As the song cosmic-ports itself toward a melancholic, prog-tinged plane, drummer Brann Dailor and bassist Troy Sanders croon of “feelings of regret” and “visions of a future non-existent.”

While the album was written and recorded in Hinds’ absence, his presence was felt deeply within the walls of Atlanta’s West End Sound studio. Kelliher often dialed monster tones out of Hinds’ old JMP head, dubbed the “Unicorn.” The lyrics to the urgent, yet grief-stricken “Snakes for Dinner” further reference their late friend by name-checking “Hearts

“Nick is like the long-lost cousin; he just jumped right in. I know they’re big shoes to fill, but he’s got big feet!”

BILL KELLIHER

Alive,” a Leviathan track that featured one of Hinds’ most towering performances. While gone, Hinds is anything but forgotten.

“We weren’t expecting Brent to pass away,” Kelliher says. “We parted ways, we were moving forward, and all of a sudden that happened. So, we started reflecting on it. We couldn’t just ignore it and write some happy record. It was like, ‘This is the topic – we have to remember the good times, express it and get it off our chests.’”

Though he’s guarded on certain details, Kelliher admits Mastodon were on a “rocky road” while navigating their split from Hinds. Linking up with Johnston has helped put the veteran act back on track.

The Toronto-based Johnston first met the band members nearly a decade ago, through mutual friend and Dethklok guitarist Brendon Small. Johnston and Dailor stayed in touch, as the former carved out a body of instrumental solo work and collaborated with the likes of Paul Gilbert, Guthrie Govan, Intervals’ Aaron Marshall and Polyphia’s Tim Henson. Johnston was putting the finishing touches on an as-yet undetailed solo album when Dailor reached out to float the idea of jamming with Mastodon. While intimidated by the prospect of joining one of his favorite bands, the Canadian six-stringer learned their

set while “trying to unlock all the unique ‘isms’” of Kelliher and Hinds’ playing.

“Watching Bill work on a riff is one of the most amazing things, because he’ll sit there for hours until it’s sculpted into this perfect shape,” Johnston says, now that he’s peeked behind the curtain. “I’m not able to do that. I’m stunned at that ability. You hear that all through the music, that relentlessness.”

Mastodon played one show with YouTube shredder Ben Eller before Johnston made his onstage debut in spring 2025. He’s since clocked dozens of global appearances, including a memorable mini-set at Black Sabbath’s Back to the Beginning farewell show in Birmingham, England. That summer 2025 concert, both guitarists say, is what sealed the deal.

“It’s like he was the long-lost cousin,” Kelliher says. “He just jumped right in. I know they’re big shoes to fill, but he’s got big feet!”

Johnston ended up co-writing a few tracks on *Marrow Deep*. His solos run from simply-stated, yet canyon-sized bending (“Your Ghost Again”) to uproariously mercurial legato (“Out Like a Lamb”) to lysergic improvised trade-offs with keyboardist João Nogueira. Though Kelliher offered minor notes like “let’s try it a little bit more evil,” he encouraged Johnston and Nogueira to run wild and free with their playing.

Though it may be Mastodon’s first release without Hinds, the collection also surrounds the act with several lifelong friends, tourmates and studio collaborators: Queens of the Stone Age’s Josh Homme; Clutch vocalist Neil Fallon; Gojira’s Joe Duplantier; three members of hardcore band Converge (including album co-producer Kurt Ballou); and Black Sabbath’s Geezer Butler, who gets gloriously gloomy with his bass intro on “The Vanishing.”

From losses, to leads, to legendary guest spots, Mastodon’s current guitar tandem discuss the gratitude they’re feeling deep in their bones these days.

What was it like processing both Brent’s departure from the band and his death throughout this record?

BILL KELLIHER: That’s a fairly tough question, because I don’t know if I’ve really processed it yet, you know? It was a surprise, but it wasn’t unexpected. Maybe part of me was ready for it. You know, Brent was a wild man – one-of-a-kind, cavalier and incredible. There’s no one like him, one of the funniest people I’ve ever met. And like [“Your Ghost Again”] says, I still see him out of the corner of my eye sometimes, because he was omnipresent in the band, on the tour bus or in the practice room.

“Barbarian’s Blood” starts the album off with heavy patterns in 7s and 4s. How did you end up



Nick Johnston with his signature Schecter USA Custom Shop Traditional HH. “It’s a little hotter output,” he says

leaning into that sludgy groove?

KELLIHER: Most of the songs were demoed last year, but then I heard this band called Generation of Vipers. I don't really like anything contemporary, but I'd heard them and went, "Man, I gotta go back to the drawing board; we gotta be heavier." They shook my foundation.

On a day off in Belgium, I sat in my room and wrote three or four almost-complete songs, and that was one of them. When I played it for the guys, everyone was like, "That's gonna make the record, that's sick." It's a perfect opener. It's definitely Mastodon... but it's kind of left of center within our sound. And it's tuned to A, so it's fucking heavy.

I write weird time signatures. I can't explain why, it just grooves to me. It did get changed, though. We took a note away, per Brann. He was like, "What if we took one note out so it grooved like this?" And it worked!

The acoustic section in "Moth and Bone" is one of the gentler pieces.

KELLIHER: When Brann's mom passed away [in 2025], I was writing a lot on acoustic. I had it in this weird tuning, almost like an open G. It lends itself beautifully on acoustic — when you hit the two high strings it gives off so much emotion. There's dissonance. It's melancholy. So I had his mom in mind, and I came up with that pattern, which was very odd. Everyone wanted to fix it and make it straight, but I was like, "No, this is the way it goes."

NICK JOHNSTON: Once you get that groove and rhythm with your hand, it's this propulsion thing — but it's not an obvious pattern. It's just about how tight you can get all that stuff. I'm used to tracking a looser or improvised kind of playing, but this was awesome once it started to get locked in. I like the way that song ramps up, but tracking that whole heavy section was hard, with that sliding thing at the end.

KELLIHER: With the dynamics, I keep thinking, "How are we going to do this live?" Am I going to have a stand with an acoustic and a double-neck that I'll borrow from Geddy Lee?

JOHNSTON: That would be sick! [Laughs]

"Out Like a Lamb" closes with two gigantic solos — one from Nick, then an organ solo from João.

JOHNSTON: Brann and Bill had sent the song over and were like, "We need a solo as a placeholder, just to illustrate the arrangement." That was the first take I sent over.

KELLIHER: You wanted to redo it, and we were like, "No fuckin' way are you gonna redo that." [Laughs]. Oh my god, it's incredible.

JOHNSTON: I didn't expect it to make the record because part of me was like, "I'm going to go over the top at the end, just for fun, and

Bill Kelliher with his signature ESP Sparrowhawk, one of the guitars heard on *Marrow Deep*



see what happens."

KELLIHER: It was my 55th birthday and I was on an hour-long drive to pick up some Brazilian wood [to build a table out of], and that's when I put the whole record on for the first time after it was mastered. When it got to that solo, it was just tears running down my face like someone was squeezing my eyeballs.



I was about to go in and get the wood, but I was like, "I can't go in there like this; I'm a mess!"

Nick, you adapted the set-up of your Schecter signature to play in Mastodon. What went into the build of your Silverburst Traditional?

JOHNSTON: That was the first guitar I had done with Schecter that was just two humbuckers. I started out with all single-coils, and then I started doing HSSs and then felt this was the proper application to do two 'buckers. It's a little hotter output. I keep gear real simple. I usually plug right into the amp — I'm using a Bad Cat and a couple of Boss pedals to sweeten it if I need to. It's my same guitar since the beginning; it's just that now it's got two humbuckers.

Do you ever drop to low A in your solo work?

JOHNSTON: This is the first time I've even played in D standard.

KELLIHER: You didn't know a guitar could go that low!

INTERVIEW

JOHNSTON: I played in E flat my whole life. Getting used to playing in these new tunings for the record – drop C and drop A – felt great.

The finish fits the aesthetic of Bill and Troy's instruments. Is there a story behind Mastodon's love of the Silverburst?

KELLIHER: They were so rare in the wild... but I found one when I was a kid. I remember going to [Geneseo, New York's] Big B Buzzo's Music and putting \$50 down on a Les Paul Custom Silverburst – this was 40 years ago, and it was probably \$500. I never went back to get it. I always felt so shitty that I never did.

Then one time I had a guitar stolen when we were in Houston. We pulled over to a Sam Ash or a Guitar Center and there was a used Silverburst Les Paul Custom on the wall, an '82. It's my favorite guitar. I still have it. That one has tons of mojo. Brent also had a Flying V Silverburst, so we both loved them. They just look fucking cool as hell!

What were you playing on this record?

KELLIHER: I used a baritone ESP Viper on "Barbarian's Blood." I completely redid the guitars, because Kurt wasn't happy with [the original tracking]. He was like, "I can hear some tuning things – let's try this." I ended up using that on a lot of stuff. It just sounded

so big-dick-swingin'. I was like, "Woo-hoo! This thing's great!"

I played a '77 white Les Paul Custom. I used some ESP Sparrowhawks. And I used the ESP Ron Wood; that's the secret weapon. I really love the sound of it, to fatten stuff up in the frequencies the humbuckers don't pick up.

What did it mean to have Geezer Butler play the intro on "The Vanishing"?

KELLIHER: Brann orchestrated all that.

JOHNSTON: I didn't even know it was happening until it was basically delivered!

KELLIHER: Even before Back to the Beginning, Brann got heavily back into listening to Black Sabbath. He was wearing different Sabbath T-shirts for a year straight. I was like, "Wow, he has a different Sabbath shirt on again!" [Laughs]. I think he was channeling Bill Ward.

I wrote that opening riff one day at practice, and Brann was like, "That's fucking

"This is the first time I've even played in D standard, let alone drop A. Getting used to these new tunings felt great"

NICK JOHNSTON

cool, let's work on that!" It turned into an ode to Black Sabbath's "Planet Caravan," because we were about to do that show. Then Brann was like, "He's mentioned our band in his audiobook [ed. 2023's Into the Void: From Birth to Black Sabbath – and Beyond], we've toured with Black Sabbath [ed. during the 2005 Ozzfest], and we were invited to do this show... would he do this?" And then Geezer was like, "Do you want it in the style of 'N.I.B.'?"

We were beside ourselves when we heard him doing the intro, even through the cellphone. Listening to that freakin' tone was incredible.

Did Geezer come to Atlanta?

KELLIHER: No, he did it remotely. It would have been cool if he came to our little studio, put some headphones on and did it. But that didn't happen.

Marrow Deep reflects on the past, but likewise references a new day rising. Bill, how are you feeling about where Mastodon is positioned?

KELLIHER: It's never been better. We wouldn't have gotten to where we are without a quarter-century of working with Brent, but I believe everything happens for a reason. Unfortunately, they're not always the best outcomes for certain people. **OW**

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THE LONG GOODBYE

Cursum Perficio — the first new Anthrax album in 10 years — is Latin for “I complete my journey.” Could this be the NYC-spawned thrash titans’ final voyage? Anthrax lifers **Scott Ian** and **Charlie Benante** weigh in on returning to sub-four-minute thrash songs and going out “on top like George Costanza”

BY JON WIEDERHORN ■

ANTHRAX



TRAVIS SHINN

Meet the Anthrax! [clockwise from center]
Joey Belladonna, Jonathan Donais,
Charlie Benante, Scott Ian and Frank Bello

SOON AFTER ULTIMATE Music Cruises Inc. announced that thrash titans Anthrax were headlining their 2026 four-day cruise, 70,000 Tons of Metal, fans scrambled for tickets, paying thousands of dollars for cabins

aboard the ship, hoping the two sets the Big Four band played would be highlights of their lives. Maybe they were, but for Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian and drummer and songwriter Charlie Benante, the cruise was one of the lowest points of the year.

"It was everything I didn't want to do, and I got talked into doing it," griped Benante back on February 5, a few days after returning to his home near Chicago. "I ended up getting sick and burned. I was so pissed."

The ship set sail from PortMiami on January 29, and right before their show that night in the indoor theater, Benante was waiting backstage to go on when a smoke machine in the truss overhead malfunctioned, spilling hot oil.

"At first it was like, 'What the hell?,' but before we could get out of the way, it spewed out more. A chunk of it hit my left arm, and I got a second-degree burn."

"It took layers of skin off and damaged the 'Not Man' tattoo," Ian says from a Zoom call at his L.A. home.

That's when ill winds really started to blow — literally. As the ship sailed back from the Bahamas to Miami, it passed through a winter weather system and was confronted by freezing temperatures and gale-force winds. That's when Anthrax played a full outdoor set on the pool deck while far less-established European bands, including Dark Tranquillity and Eluveitie, stayed warm in the theater.

"We had to play in below-freezing weather," says Ian, standing and shifting from side to side to find a comfortable position. "They would not move us into the theater, and during the show I was jumping around and I threw out my back because of the cold weather. That boat and that promoter can go to hell for making us play in the cold."

Clearly, Ian is annoyed that Anthrax were the biggest selling point of the cruise by far, yet it seems they were subjected to defective equipment and dangerous weather conditions. He's even more upset about his back pain. He has worked on it for the past few days to no avail and thinks he might need an MRI. He winces and explains what happened during a flight to Argentina for a show with cult experimental band Mr. Bungle right after the 70,000 Tons debacle.

"I had to fly to Buenos Aires, and I was in so much pain," he says. "Any move I made was



The only photo we could find of drummer Charlie Benante with a guitar (in this case, a custom Jackson V), Scott Ian [left] and Benante in NYC '95

just lightning bolts. It took me 25 minutes to get out of my seat and go pee. And then I just stood next to my seat for two hours until I had to sit down for landing because I knew sitting down was going to destroy me again. And it did. All because of that fucking boat."

The cruise confirmed the band's determination to never again get stuck on a sinking ship. During their 45-year career, Anthrax have worked with labels that didn't support them, management companies with which they weren't in sync and booking agents that landed them on head-scratching

"I wanted to create something nobody's ever heard on an Anthrax record before"

SCOTT IAN

bills. Now, as they ramp up their schedule for their first album in 10 years, the band are working with a completely new support team.

"We cleaned house, business-wise," Ian says. "It was a long time coming, and we made the changes we needed to make going into this album cycle. It took a while to finalize everything, so we couldn't put the album out until we knew we had the right people and the right plan because what if this is the last record we ever make? We have to give it every chance to succeed."

In the months since the nightmare boat trip, Ian's back has healed. The band has opened arena tours for Megadeth and Iron Maiden, headlined dates with Testament and Municipal Waste and played major slots at festivals in the U.S. and Europe. In a metal scene that is embracing thrash at a level not seen since the late Eighties, Anthrax are in a position to retake their place near the top



Benante [back behind the kit] and Ian in 2018. "Scott and I always did the bulk of the writing and the bulk of the work," Benante says

of the metal hierarchy. And *Cursum Perficio* could be the record that will take them there.

The album, their most exciting and energized release since 1987's *Among the Living*, blends barreling speed, nuanced melody, angular precision and creative experimentation into 11 fierce and often furious tracks. There are the militant chugs and skewed, precision riffs of album opener "The Long Goodbye"; the AC/DC-meets-Pantera groove of "Infectious"; the moshpit geometry and stagedive propulsion of "NYC 93"; and the minor-key tremolo-picking and blastbeat rhythms of "Edge of Perfection."

In a strikingly candid conversation triggered as much by pain (physical and emotional) as by a desire to speak truth to power, Ian and Benante address the seemingly endless wait between 2016's *For All Kings* and 2026's *Cursum Perficio*, how playing with other bands helped them up their game, the band's unconventional approach to songwriting, their rehearsal and studio gear of choice, Ian's new signature guitar and the very real possibility that *Cursum Perficio* will be Anthrax's final studio release.

The new album has been called your best release since *Among the Living*...

SCOTT IAN: Well, first of all, we weren't out to make *Among the Living II*. It's not a top-to-bottom, ripping thrash record because that's not who we are. We're a thrash band for sure, but it's a different kind of album because we've never repeated ourselves. I think it's in the vein of our last couple of albums, but it's more intense and more riff-oriented. And certainly, it's heavier than *For All Kings*. There's more intensity on this album than we've had in a long time. But I think it's also the best thing we've done in a long time.

CHARLIE BENANTE: I wanted every song to be individual. I wanted to have different moods, different sounds, stuff we've never done before. I'm not saying this is going to be our last record, but for me, right now I don't want to write another record. So, if this turns out to be our last album, I'm really happy with it. And I've nitpicked the shit out of the songs so much because every time I hear a new album come out from a band, I feel like they're phoning it in. They're like, "That's good enough." I didn't want this to be good enough. I wanted it to be as good as we could possibly make it.

Did you enjoy the creative process, or was it like having a root canal without anesthetic?

BENANTE: If I could do it again, maybe I'd do it differently. We did six songs first and then we took a break, worked on those songs, and then I went and recorded the next six or seven songs. But I've always said I'd rather be in the studio than be on tour because I love creating.

IAN: Doing this album was totally enjoyable because the material was so good. It was so exciting to work on these songs, and that's what keeps my head in the game. Every time we would get another step further with it, I'd be so psyched. The only way it would ever be like pulling teeth with Anthrax is if I thought the songs were bad because then, what are you doing? It's pointless.

Charlie, by now most fans realize you write almost all the songs on guitar and then record full demos before the band works on them. Was there a time when that wasn't as well known?

BENANTE: There was, and it's so weird that 40-something years later I'm starting to get recognized for it. I don't want to say it was a dirty little secret. Insiders knew, but on the outside, I wasn't really allowed to talk about it in the interviews. Scott had nothing to

FIST FULL OF METAL

An album-by-album guide to Anthrax's studio output

BY ANDREW DALY



FIST FULL OF METAL MEGAFORCE, 1984

Anthrax's debut didn't reinvent the proverbial (and very new) thrash wheel, but it's every bit as riffy and

heavy as anything else from the era. "Soldiers of Metal" is memorable, as is the cover of Alice Cooper's "I'm Eighteen." But what makes this record stand out is that it's the only one to feature Neil Turbin on vocals and Danny Lilker on bass. What's more, original guitarist Greg Walls, who doesn't play on the record, claimed he "wrote the whole album." All in all, the mighty 'thrax hadn't found their footing yet.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dan Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Soldiers of Metal"



SPREADING THE DISEASE ISLAND, 1985

Much like *Fist*, the cover of Anthrax's second record featured a random person looking, er, uncomfortable.

Also present are tons of massive riffs and chords via Scott Ian and boatloads of shred-heavy solos from Dan Spitz. That's all good, as was the fact that this record kicked off the so-called "classic" Anthrax lineup, featuring Frank Bello on bass and Joey Belladonna on vocals. "Madhouse," "Aftershock" and "Lone Justice" show Anthrax making strides.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dan Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Madhouse"



AMONG THE LIVING MEGAFORCE, 1987

Here we have the start of Anthrax's halcyon era that earned them "Big Four of Thrash Metal" status.

A couple of years of the aforementioned classic lineup pounding the pavement and collecting riffs and hard-charging melodies set to mass destruction led to seething cuts like "Indians," "Caught in a Mosh" and "I Am the Law." It also didn't hurt that guitar-producing legend Eddie Kramer twirled the knobs for this one, leading to further sonic expansion and exploration. What did hurt was that while Anthrax were on tour with Metallica in 1986, Cliff Burton was killed in a bus crash in Sweden. This is why this record is dedicated to Burton, giving it a bit more juice.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dan Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Caught in a Mosh"

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Anthrax during their *Among the Living* days in Chicago, December 5, 1987

do with that, but some of the other guys felt discredited that the drummer was writing all the songs. The problem with that is I don't think it ever dawned on them the effect that it had on me — that I could never speak about it or talk about it.

Did that make you angry or resentful?

BENANTE: It was frustrating because Scott and I always did the bulk of the writing and the bulk of the work. I watch the Go-Go's documentary [2020's *The Go-Go's*] at least once a year because I relate to it so much. At one point the band wants the two primary songwriters to give up the credit and divide it evenly within the band, and when they're talking about it, I go, "That's exactly how I feel." But at the end of the day, my attitude is still all about Anthrax. If I have to take a backseat for it, I'm doing it for the betterment of the band itself. I'm just happy that after all this time, the creativity still comes.

What was the timeline for *Cursum Perficio*?

BENANTE: For me, it's probably been going on since about 2015. I'd make demos and send them to the guys. And then around 2018 we got together in L.A. and started to create the album. Then during Covid I kept coming up with riffs and making demos, knowing that eventually we'd make songs together again.

IAN: Honestly, this record really started being made after the pandemic. That's when we became serious and came up with the album you hear. There are other songs that were there early on that never made it. We tracked drums for three and guitars on a song with a working title of "Bond." I thought it was

a killer song, but it never went anywhere. Sometimes that happens. The thing is, people think we've been away for 10 years. We spent three years on a touring cycle on *For All Kings*, then Covid hit, so 2020 and 2021 were out. It was more like a solid three years of in-and-out writing and recording sessions to make this record.

Was there a point where everything clicked into place?

IAN: Charlie sent me a demo for "Edge of Perfection," and that's when I knew we were going to make a great album. It's the best song we've ever written. Even if the rest of the record was shit — which it's totally not! — I knew we would have had our best song on there. And from that point, everything else came into place. To me, a lot of it is very much a love letter to Anthrax fans.

Do Charlie's demos closely resemble the final recorded tracks?

IAN: All the parts are there. I always joke around that I'm the editor because his demos will come in, and I'll start listening to the arrangements, and I'll go, "This verse is 30 lines long now and we need to cut it down. And we need a pre-chorus here." But a lot of the ideas on the demos are very fully realized, so it's just a matter of getting into the room and making everything work.

BENANTE: Sometimes it's cool when Scott does a variation of the riff to modify it. I'm always open to that because these guys have to interpret it, too. In the past, I would feel like, let the song be what it wants to be. Don't stifle it. But I think now we're pretty much all on the same page.



STATE OF EUPHORIA MEGAFORCE, 1988

Anthrax's fourth record might not have been as critically acclaimed as *Among the Living*. Still,

it was their most commercially successful record to date. It's not hard to see why, as the commercially viable vibes intersect with Ian and Spitz's knack for taking punk roots and merging them with traditional metal sensibilities, leading to cuts like "Make Me Laugh" and "Antisocial," which, for many fans' money, are among the band's best songs on their greatest album.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dave Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Antisocial"



PERSISTENCE OF TIME MEGAFORCE, 1990

So, about the "greatest album" statement from a second ago... fans of Anthrax's 1990 offering

might have a word or two to say about that. This record showed maturity and an evolution of musicianship and sound — which was well-timed, as the grunge and alt-rock movement was right around the corner, waiting to pull the rug out from under Eighties rock bands. "Got the Time" (a Joe Jackson cover), "Belly of the Beast" and "In My World" showed growth, leading to a Grammy nomination for Best Metal Performance. But none of this was enough to keep the core lineup together, making this Belladonna's last record with Anthrax until 2011.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dan Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Got the Time"



SOUND OF WHITE NOISE ELEKTRA, 1993

Ah yes. The start of the John Bush era. Bush was no Belladonna, but this wasn't the Anthrax of old in most

respects, as *Sound* saw the band doing what many of their ilk did — make an "alternative metal" album. This was just a fancy way of saying "We're trying to compete with Pearl Jam and Nirvana." Still, Spitz and Ian still tear it up on "Only" and "Black Lodge." That said, if pure thrash is your thing, this album probably isn't for you.

LEAD GUITARIST: Dan Spitz

KEY TRACK: "Only"



STOMP 442 ELEKTRA, 1995

Yet again, *Stomp 442* saw Anthrax venturing away from what made them...

Anthrax. This time, New York's favorite thrash sons dropped the grunge vibes in favor of groove metal, which was in vogue, thanks to Pantera. The record lacks a certain sonic quality because Spitz had left,

Do you work on the longer, more complex songs or the shorter, simpler pieces first?

BENANTE: I just start writing songs without any limitations, but I'll know where the record is going after the sixth song is written. And once I get that vibe, boom, the next five or six come out and they don't sound anything like the first six.

IAN: After we had the first batch of five or six songs, which included "Edge of Perfection," I remember saying, "We've got a lot of these epic six-minute songs. I would really like to write some three-and-a-half, four-minute thrash songs, too." Because I felt like it, and so did Charlie. That's when we did stuff like "NYC 93" and "It's For the Kids." "It's For the Kids" came out of different musical ideas from me, Charlie and Frank. Then, I sat in the house, plugged in a guitar, took all of our parts and put together an arrangement, [and my son] Revel engineered it in Logic on his Mac, and it totally worked.

Like several songs, "It's For the Kids" features some crazy, galactic-sounding guitar effects.

IAN: A lot of the weird stuff was me in the studio just wanting to create something nobody's ever heard on an Anthrax record — or maybe on anyone's record — before. I was looking for sounds that are fun and make me laugh. I wanted to make these little segues, so one song would go into the next. I used a bunch of pedals, including the Old Blood Noise Endeavors BL-44 Reverse; Beetronics Zzombee Filtremulator; TC Electronic Chorus, Pitch Modulator & Flanger; Gamechanger Plasma distortion; some Death by Audio stuff; and the Strymon Cloudburst ambient reverb. I used the Cloudburst for the clean intro on "Edge of Perfection" and in the bridge section of "Infectious."

You said "Edge of Perfection" is your best song. Which one is your favorite?

IAN: "NYC 93," maybe, because it's the most

personal. It's a snapshot of me in New York City, talking about being there at that time and my experiences, and how fun and how crazy it was. It really captured the mood I was in writing this record.

"The Long Goodbye" is a tribute to your father, who died after a long battle with dementia.

IAN: That was one of the last few tracks we worked on. Charlie had this demo, and something about it reminded me of *Persistence of Time* [Anthrax's 1990 album]. I started calling it "Persistence of Memory," literally after the Salvador Dalí painting, because your memories are what really keep things alive. Charlie and I were talking, and he said something about where the time went, and it struck me hard. I started writing words about my dad and losing him. At the last minute, I changed the title to "The Long Goodbye," because it was a key lyric in the song. It was something that someone had said to me while my dad

EDGE OF PERFECTION

Jonathan Donais — Anthrax's lead specialist since 2013 — talks about his role within the group and having to channel his inner Angus Young

BY JON WIEDERHORN

OVER THE DECADES, Anthrax have featured the nimble-fingered talents of lead guitarists Dan Spitz and Rob Caggiano, but Jonathan Donais of Shadows Fall proved a natural successor when he joined the band in 2013. *Cursum Perficio* is only his second studio album with Anthrax, yet it showcases an impressive range of lyrical bends, fluid phrasing and rapid-fire shredding that perfectly complement the band's mix of melody and menace.

Below, Donais discusses his evolving technique, his approach to crafting solos and how he stayed busy while waiting for Anthrax's follow-up to *For All Kings*.

How does your playing on *Cursum* differ from *For All Kings*?

I'd like to think I've grown as a guitar player in 10 years because I still practice a lot. I'm always online checking out lessons, and everything I've picked up over the last decade has worked its way into my playing.

Have you focused on any particular techniques?

I really got into economy picking, which has helped improve my precision because I'm not moving my hand as much, and I can anchor it on the guitar. To me, it sounds a bit cleaner than always doing alternate picking.

Your solos balance melody with some incredibly fast playing.

Some of my favorite guitarists growing up were Alex Skolnick and Yngwie Malmsteen, so playing fast was a huge part of learning guitar. I didn't use many sweeps on the last album, but on this record there are quite a few moments where I use sweep picking and arpeggios.

Do you pre-write leads or build them on the spot?

I'll loop the rhythm track and write piece by piece. Once I get the intro done, I'll think, "Okay, where do I need to go from here?" Then I'll practice

it until I can play it straight through, record it and send it to the guys. Sometimes Scott might say, "We want an Angus Young feel here," and I'll try to channel that into my style. Sometimes it only takes one demo. Other times I might write six leads before they're happy.

What gear did you use?

I use my Dean Signature Exile on all my leads. I recorded with my Kemper using the same lead sound I use live, though I've since switched to a Neural DSP Quad Cortex, which I love. These profilers have gotten so good, and they're affordable, even for bedroom guitarists. They make traveling much easier.

Is it still as exciting to play with Anthrax as it was when you joined?

I love every second of it. I still can't believe I get to play with one of my favorite bands. We did some shows with Megadeth and Exodus, and the teenager inside me was completely freaking out because Anthrax, Megadeth and Exodus were three of my favorite bands from junior high onward.

Did the long gap between albums make you hungry to contribute?

Oh man, it felt like forever. I wasn't there every day, so I didn't know what was going on. The first song I wrote a lead for came in the summer of 2023.

What kept you busy while you were waiting?

I wrote a new Shadows Fall record during that time. After this tour I'm heading back into the studio to finish the remaining leads. I also have another band, Living Wreckage, and we're working on a record. Between all three bands, I'm never bored!

was in the throes of it — that it's the worst because the person has been gone for years, they're not even there anymore. He didn't know who I or my brothers were for years.

That must have been awful.

IAN: It was so strange. We'd sit there and think, "Who does he think we are?" It's just this paradox that is unfathomable. At one point, we were visiting and I was playing guitar in the house. He goes, "Oh, you play guitar. My son plays guitar. He's in a big band. Have you ever heard of Anthrax?" They tell you not to remind or correct people when they're like that because it confuses them, but my brother Jason couldn't help himself.

We walked into the den and my dad was pointing at a picture of me from *Sound of White Noise* [1993] that was inside a gold record plaque on the wall. He goes, "That's my son right there." Jason points at me and says, "Dad, that's Scott; that's him." My dad turned around and looked right at me, but he just couldn't make the connection. There was no ability for him to connect that the guy standing in his house was the son in the photo. He just turned to me and said, "If you keep practicing, maybe someday you'll have one of these on your wall."

I can't even imagine. On a much less-horrible note, "Infectious" feels like a real celebration.

IAN: It came out so great. It's like a doomy "Back in Black" — a solid four-on-the-floor with this great riff. My rhythm playing usually sits on top of the beat. It's part of the Anthrax sound. So, it was a learning process in the studio for me to get behind the beat to get the right Malcolm Young-style groove. That took me a minute because it would always sound right to me, and then producer Jay Ruston would say, "You're still a little bit on top of it. Pull it back." Then, it feels like I'm lagging behind, but it didn't take long before I got it right and then it was so great.

BENANTE: We love AC/DC. We don't sound like AC/DC, but, oh my god, we want to be AC/DC.

What was the hardest song to play?

IAN: "Watch It Go." That beat and groove Charlie's playing has a weird count, and the guitar picking is relentless. We rehearsed a lot, and we did a lot of pre-production on it so we could play it as a band, but it was not easy.

The song has a guitar part reminiscent of Pantera's "Primal Concrete Sledge."

IAN: We definitely had the riff before Charlie was playing in Pantera, but we didn't have the riff before Pantera wrote "Primal Concrete Sledge." That part is definitely a nod to Dime. I have no problem paying tribute to our buddy. Obviously, Charlie's in that band, so I think it's okay.

"Sometimes I'll hear a riff in my head, but it will sound too happy in standard tuning"

CHARLIE BENANTE

Did touring with Pantera have any impact on these songs?

BENANTE: There's probably a song or two that's influenced by me being in Pantera. When Dime and Vinnie were around, we were really close. We talked about music all the time. Me and Dime used to have these 2-in-the-morning calls about bands we loved — like King's X. Darrell used to snap his finger and say, "watch it go," and that always stuck with me. It was just going to be the working title of the song, but Scott liked it and it stuck.

Charlie, what did you use to record the demos?

BENANTE: I used to use a Vox AC30 a lot. I cherish that amp, but in the past couple of years, I've used the Line 6 Helix or AmpliTube. The HeadRush is another one. I can just dial in my own sounds and they're. And I know the tone is going to be exactly what I want because I made it.

What guitars did you use?

BENANTE: I have two EVH Stars. One is in standard tuning, and the other is tuned down a half step because sometimes I'll hear a riff in my head and it will sound too happy in standard tuning. I also like to sit around at home or on tour with my Taylor GS Mini and mess around.

Scott, what have you been playing?

IAN: A bunch of my Jackson X King Vs. And also my new Jackson signature. We did a limited edition of my original Not Rhoads that I got back in '82 that I ordered through Sam Ash on West 48th Street in New York. It was custom-shop built, and there's a picture of it on the back of Spreading the Disease. It's a white Randy Rhoads and it has an anarchy sign and says "not" on it. There's just one little difference. It used to say "NYHC," and now it says "SINY" because I don't want to make any claim to the New York hardcore logo. This is my thing — Scott Ian New York. I played it on the video for "It's For the Kids."

What about amps?

IAN: Just my Marshall JCM800 with the TC Electronic Boost in front of it. It's the same tone I've been using forever, and it's balanced with the EVH 5150 because the EVH supply has a bottom end I can't get out of the Marshall. You're hearing the mids from the JCM800 on top, and it's a really clean tone compared to just plugging into an EVH.

but Dimebag Darrell was there to lend a hand.

LEAD GUITARISTS: Paul Crook, Dimebag Darrell, Zach Throne, Mike Tempesta

KEY TRACK: "King Size"



VOLUME 8: THE THREAT IS REAL IGNITION, 1998

For Anthrax's next offering, which marked the end of their major-label days, they tapped into another flavor of the day: nu-metal. Admittedly, it's kind of weird to see one of the so-called "greatest metal bands of all time" endeavoring to compete with Limp Bizkit, but people gotta eat and keep the lights on, right? Anthrax still hadn't hired a proper replacement for Spitz, so Dimebag Darrell popped into the studio to help again, as did Paul Crook. The result is a weird album that features some unique moments, including "Inside Out" and "Born Again Idiot."

LEAD GUITARISTS: Dimebag Darrell, Paul Crook
KEY TRACK: "Inside Out"



WE'VE COME FOR YOU ALL SANCTUARY, 2003

For Bush's final act with Anthrax, he and his bandmates unfurrowed *We've Come for You All*, which came after a five-year break. And while the Nineties might've been over, what wasn't over was Anthrax's dabbling with alt-metal, groove metal and nu-metal — all in one record! What also wasn't over was Dimebag's involvement, which led to him playing lead on "Strap It On" and "Cadillac Rock Box." This was kind of interesting, as the band had formally hired Rob Caggiano as their full-time lead guitarist. All in all, this record was basically one for the diehards, as it's just too weird. Just ask Roger Daltrey, who provided "additional vocals" on "Taking the Music Back."

LEAD GUITARISTS: Dimebag Darrell, Rob Caggiano
KEY TRACK: "Strap It On"



WORSHIP MUSIC MEGAFORCE, 2011

Finally, vocalist Joey Belladonna returned to Anthrax. Along with him came a return to the thrash-oriented sound that made the band famous. This was good news, as the band re-signed with Megaforce/Nuclear Blast Records and experienced some of the best reviews they'd seen in years. As evidenced by songs like "The Devil You Know" and "I'm Alive," Ian and Caggiano seemed to develop a real groove as a guitar duo. Sadly, it wouldn't last.

LEAD GUITARISTS: Rob Caggiano
KEY TRACK: "I'm Alive"

Cursum Perficio features guitar rhythms in various voicings besides power chords.

IAN: Being around the guys in Mr. Bungle for six years has opened my caveman world. Outside the basic realm of major and minor, I didn't really know a lot of other stuff. Getting to play with them has definitely made me a better player. And playing a lot of crazy cover songs like Olivia Newton John's "Hopelessly Devoted," I've learned grown-up chords. I still don't know the names of most of them, but I know how to play them, and I'm moving them around the neck now. Also, I learned a lot of cowboy chords playing on and off with [my wife] Pearl [Aday] over the years. Any time you dip your toes into another genre, it's only going to make you a better musician.

Cursum Perficio is Latin for "I complete my journey." That supports speculation that the album will be your last studio release.

BENANTE: I felt like our journey has come to an end. As I said earlier, this may be the last record that I want to write for the band, and I just had this whole idea of the journey being over. Then there was this Marilyn Monroe documentary I was watching, and one of the tiles in her house said "Cursum perficio," and it translates to "I complete my journey," so that became the album title.

The artwork features characters from the covers of the band's other albums, which supports the idea that this record is an amalgamation of some of your best moments.

BENANTE: That's pretty much what I wanted to do, and it came together like the album title. I was looking to capture the look of those old Harry Houdini posters. Then, I'm watching a six-part documentary series on [magician] David Blaine, and in the first episode this piece of art comes up, and it's exactly what I wanted. I paused the credits, found the artist's name, and we contacted him. He ended up doing the cover.

Scott, what does the album title and artwork mean to you? Does it seem like this is the band's final chapter?

IAN: It's up to Charlie whether he wants to write more Anthrax songs. I could keep going. But you know what's crazy? We're going to tour this album for about three years, and by the time we're done, we'll be three years away from our 50th anniversary. I'm not saying for sure, but that would be a cool time to say sayonara and do a big world tour. I'm very much of the mind that you always want to go out on top like George Costanza. But, you know, if *Cursum Perficio* turns out to be our final statement, I'm really happy with it. **GW**



FOR ALL KINGS
MEGAFORCE, 2016

While it might not have the chart hits or greatest-hits cachet of Anthrax's Eighties work, *Kings* is in league with the band's classic era. Newcomer Jonathan Donais injected heaping loads of shred and is the band's most talented shredder since Dave Spitz. His flash and ability leave Ian to do what he does best — bludgeon you with riffs and rhythms.

LEAD GUITARIST: Jonathan Donais
KEY TRACK: "Breathing Lightning"



CURSUM PERFICIO
MEGAFORCE, 2026

This brings us to their hyper-delayed and long-awaited return. Why did it take so long? Maybe it was Covid. Maybe it's because Charlie Benante was kicking it with Pantera. Maybe it's because Bello was writing his book. Regardless, it's here, and it captures the band's spirit and edge. Donais and Ian deliver the amp-blowing rage fans have come to love and crave. For us, this album isn't the band's absolute best, but it represents some very good Anthrax. Let's be thankful for that.

LEAD GUITARIST: Jonathan Donais
KEY TRACK: "The Edge of Perfection"

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Live by the Sword

Greta Van Fleet's detractors are loud as ever — but on new album *Palace for the People*, Jake Kiszka and his Gibson "Excalibur" come out swinging. "If you're not pissing someone off," he tells *GW*, "you're probably not making great art"

WORDS BY ANDREW DALY PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF FASANO

THE OBJECTIVE FOR Jake Kiszka is the same as ever — to play guitar-driven rock 'n' roll from the heart. But after years of success with Greta Van Fleet, Kiszka stepped away, formed another mega band in Mirador and, shall we say, expanded his portfolio. Circling back to Kiszka's objective, with his attention back on Greta Van Fleet via a new album, 2026's *Palace for the People*, yeah, it's the same, but with a twist.

"The sonic identity for me, from a guitar perspective with Greta Van Fleet, is to do something much wider than I'd ever done before," Kiszka tells *Guitar World*. That meant Kiszka needed to take inventory of what the guitar meant to him, what it could do for him and how he'd wield what he calls "Excalibur" in the studio and on stage.

"It's a utility of projection," he says. "It's a vehicle that can take what's in your heart,

mind and body, and translate it in some ways." This mindset extended to the rest of Greta Van Fleet while recording *Palace for the People*. Also on the band's mind is the Internet's habit of slogging the band at every step.

Not that this is a hindrance. "It's never really a factor," Kiszka says. "Experientially, we see it as if you're an artist, if you're not pissing someone off, you're probably not making great art."

Greta Van Fleet has certainly done plenty of that. Sure, their social media following is in the millions. The members — brothers Jake, Sam and Josh Kiszka, along with Danny Wagner — have become cultural icons on the backside of hit records, including 2018's *Anthem of the Peaceful Army*, 2021's *The Battle at Garden's Gate* and 2023's *Starcatcher*, but that hasn't stopped people from labeling them as "imitators."

Further complicating matters is the mantle of "saviors of rock 'n' roll" that was unfairly thrust onto the band. And then they delivered the goods — but critics and certain sectors of fans still turned on them. But through it all, Kiszka remained level-headed and is more confident than ever as the band prepares for the post-*Palace* windfall.

"This album is an interesting intersection of our musical journey," Kiszka says. "It just sort of came about through having more worldly influences than ever before. A big part of the project itself was the title. It comes from the Alexandra Palace in north London. The idea was, it's this palace built for the people by the British monarchy, and we thought that was a beautiful concept. It became identifiable, a *modus operandi* and our philosophy for this record."

Kiszka reflects on his journey like a man beyond his years. He broke in so young, and ▶



it seems like he's been around forever, so it's hard to believe he's just 30. Couple that with the shots he's taken versus the immediate and ongoing praise, and you have an artist with thicker skin than most.

"No matter what you are, you're fighting an uphill battle," Kiszka says. "The idea, or the objective of the spirit, of the fighter, or the reluctant one, is that in the soul of the artist, we're not only going to climb the mountain, we're going to the summit of the bastard!" [Laughs]

Kiszka's laughter reminds us that there's plenty of levity left in his spirit. Coming from the right place from the jump saw to that.

"With music, and specifically the guitar, I really feel like the boy who pulled the sword from the stone," Kiszka says. "And that's beautiful. I guess it's been a self-fulfilling prophecy in some ways, you know? There was hope and destiny that I'd find some sort of freedom through this thing – and that's exactly what happened."

Ironically, that proverbial sword has brought Kiszka everything he could have asked for, but it's also brought the greatest challenges of his life. "I couldn't have imagined it would have happened so young," he says. "There was this explosion; Greta Van Fleet's first record absolutely erupted."

This brings us back to the never-ending cycle of pop culture-driven love and hate that Kiszka and his cohorts experience. But Kiszka is here for all of it. "That just kept going," he says. "It was a rocket, an explosion. It's been an enchanting, wild and frenetic adventure ever since." For Kiszka, it's all about perspective, which can only be gained through the give and take, the push and pull, his career has afforded him.

"To wrap up why we're put here... yeah, there's been a lot of achievements," Kiszka says. "On paper, I guess you could look at it that way. But I think the greatest accomplishment for us so far is the beauty in seeing the lives we've touched, the love we've conveyed to people and the hope we've brought. But all of that comes with great sacrifice, and this is still just the beginning."

That last bit ensures that the rumors that Kiszka is breaking up Greta Van Fleet in favor of Mirador or going solo can be put to rest. If anything, Greta Van Fleet are stronger and more apt to take on a cruel world than ever. "This is who we are," Kiszka says. "We're just the same as everybody else. We've got a beautiful story to tell. All we want to do is bring that love and light to the world."

As for Kiszka personally, who in recent years has seen his success elevate him to A-list status when it comes to six-strings, he's aware of it, but not letting it inflate his ego. "I'm now a piece of the lineage," he says. "I've walked in the footsteps of my heroes. In so

many ways, I'm just very grateful, you know? I'm just another guitar player. In some ways, I'm just another guy who fell in love with the guitar and rock 'n' roll."

The last few years have certainly raised the stakes for you. But you're still so young, and it's still early in your journey. Have you taken a step back and thought back to when you first picked up guitar, and what that young kid might have thought about all this?

That's a profound question!

Gotta get you thinking right out of the gate!

Exactly! Let me dissect this... it's interesting. At this point, in achieving the things we've been grateful to achieve, and putting out work that I suppose the world has come to appreciate and herald... that feeling of reciprocation and reaffirmation that what we're doing has a social or popular-culture impact... that's the main thing. It's surprising in so many ways.

Dig into that for me.

When I picked up a guitar when I was a kid, it was this object or artifact... a monolith of freedom and self-expression. Being raised in the place we were raised in [*Frankenmuth, Michigan*], I think when we're all coming up, we're learning who we are, what we're meant to do and where we belong.

And the guitar helped you with that?

There's this sense of great repression in some ways – social confines. To me, the guitar was something no one could take away. I had so much taken away at a young age, and this was sort of a defiance against structure and systems. It was an object of fighting for freedom, like Excalibur or something. I really felt that way.

With that object of freedom, you've made a cache of memorable records. But this is the Internet Age, where artists are peppered with criticism, especially a band like Greta Van Fleet, which has gotten so big so fast. So, while the guitar gave you freedom, it also, ironically, presented challenges for you to navigate at a young age on a big stage.

Brilliant! Another good one. That's interesting, isn't it? The idea of freedom, and I guess, creation and the idea of dreams, right? Like, everything that surrounds us, in some ways, is brought through this filter of human

"To me, the guitar was something no one could take away. It was an object of fighting for freedom, like Excalibur"

imagination, with guitars being one of those things. So, that question becomes paradoxical in a sense because the sole reason why I do what I do, why I play guitar and why Greta Van Fleet does what it does is we're trying to bring a sense of imagination, hope and love to a generation through rock 'n' roll.

Have you always seen rock music as a vehicle for that sort of imagination, hope and love?

I guess it's the one that chose us, you know? That's just what we grew up with, so that's the music we play. And in some ways, it's ironic to see the turmoil or the sense of cultural degradation – or even devolution – in the realm of the Internet.

As in keyboard warriors and the like?

It's the lack of, I guess, consequences – or even accountability for things people say. If no one is held accountable, they don't feel an obligation to be sensible or caring. There's no sense of character anymore when it comes to the Internet. It's like this Wild West and free form of shit-talking and spreading hatred... but I guess that sort of applies to everything and everyone.

In that context, your mission, if we can call it that, of spreading imagination, hope and love feels important.

That's why the human experience is so important. That's why music and many other forms of art hold ground so strongly against devices of evil. It's the human experience. When we're all at a concert, we're sharing this emotive collective energy, this consciousness, where everybody feels each other, and there's this emanation of spirit. That polarizes the hypocrisy of the Internet and the hate.

With that comes pressure, which you've managed well over the long haul. But have you ever felt the need to step back and go within? And if so, how did that help you grow?

That's the challenge. Having a sense of soul really does help. I can't speak to those who have walked this path alone because I've done it with my brothers in many ways. That sense of shared experiences and brotherhood, you know, siblinghood, is a support in having a unified mission statement. But there's that point where we as humans – there's this idea of stagnation, whether it's guitar or any art, that follows us through our journey in life. It always comes to these points where we have to surrender the pieces of us that no longer serve us to reinvent them.

It becomes that mythological story of the phoenix in some ways, like being reborn. Greta Van Fleet has been turning up the road below us for years, and all of a sudden, we had to take a step back. We started when we were kids, so the majority of life has been

in the spotlight. I think walking away and returning, so much of ourselves had changed. So much of the introspection had happened. A sort of rebirth had occurred, and I think we approached our music and returned to our instruments in a very different way.

During that time away, you had success with *Mirador*, which must have been gratifying. Can you track where you were as a player and songwriter when you returned to Greta Van Fleet after so much success outside it?

It spreads you out a bit further. It expands that conscious thought of approaching something musically. For me, working with other people in *Mirador*, those guys are all English and European, so the approach to music and their thought process was different.

I'd only ever shared that sort of kinship with my brothers, and in that sense it was a different lens. So, you're always learning something, and that's the object. There's this insatiable lust to try to find something new beyond the horizon. It feels like constantly pushing against the wind. I discovered a lot of that, and I was able to bring some of that self-discovery and new ideas to Greta.

It really felt like a new creation. I think we were surprising each other. Everyone was going, "What if we did this?" And then, it was like, "Where are you even coming from with that idea?" There was a lot of excitement in that. We were sort of trying to impress each other, like we might have when we were teenagers in our parents' garage. *[Laughs]*

Diving into *Palace for the People*, you can hear that. The classic rock riffs are there, but there are underlying prog influences and other new sounds throughout, too.

I would say this record's influence is far more eclectic than anything we've previously recorded. The problem we've always had — which is in opposition to most people's problems — is we've had too much material. That's a good thing in the long run, but it's about pulling apart all these different things. But I'll say this: it's when we put something through the Greta Van Fleet filter that it comes out a certain way. There's always going to be elaborate guitar pieces, riffs, heavy, explosive drums, soaring vocals, and bass and keys that will be interesting and detailed. That's the siphon, so it's about filtering influences through Greta Van Fleet in a way we hadn't done before.

Tell me about "Tear It Down," which features a sort of off-the-rails guitar solo.

Yes. *[Laughs]* Mike Elizondo produced the record, and his studio is battle-ready. There are all these amplifiers strung up on the wall, and cabinets out in an isolated booth. You could press any button, and pretty much





activate, or make combinations of amps, and throw those through any cabinet you want.

And then, there were pedals laid out, like, built into this shelf Mike put together. It almost removed the entire factor of having to find the equipment, pulling it off shelves and finding the sounds. It was really just plugging in and playing with it. It was a really quick workflow for me. It also gave me the ability to just *be*, you know? I probably played more guitars through more amplifiers than any other record I've ever recorded. *[Laughs]* It was very electric, but with "Tear It Down,"

that was my '61 *[Gibson]* Les Paul SG going through a modern Fender Champ.

And there might have been a Klon *[overdrive]* and some stereo reverb from an EMS outboard. I think I used that on the solo as well – which I've never used before. But I used it a lot across the record. And specifically on the solos, I used a Dan Armstrong Orange Squeezer. I don't know if you've ever seen one before?

I can't say that I have.

It's like a physical compressor box that I'd

stick onto the guitar. Look it up! It's really strange, but Mike had one, and he was like, "Do you want to try this?" I'd used a compressor pedal before, but this was on a whole 'nother level. I think Ry Cooder used that quite a lot when he was playing with John Lee Hooker.

Another memorable track is "Dreams You Told," which has an underlying, almost quasi-Eighties metal-meets-prog vibe. There's a vibe I couldn't quite put my finger on, and that's very different from typical Greta tracks.

Yeah, that's a really strange one. *[Laughs]* That song was written, probably two or three years ago. But I think it was written in the consciousness of the rest of the record, where there were pieces and an arsenal of songs.

"The most singular objective for me is to create things we've never heard before. It's channeling different concepts to push into new territories and not stagnate"

But yeah, that one started with the riff, as many Greta tracks do. What was interesting was the idea of taking all these alternative concepts and putting them together, and then you had Sam exploring with synthesizers, which was huge. Sam's interpretation brought this edge of modernity to it.

The highest and most singular objective, you know, the mission statement for me as an individual, and with Greta Van Fleet, is to create things we've never heard before. It's channeling different concepts to push into new territories and not stagnate. When we heard that, it was mesmerizing, like, "Boom. We hit the mark."

It's something we've never heard before. I think you're right *[about the sound of the track]*, but your interpretation is interesting. I hear it in a certain way, and some of the stuff you said I totally agree with, but some of it I hadn't thought about until now. I think you're totally on it, but it was just a product of combining different ingredients.

Toward the back end of the record, there are two really memorable solos on "So You Stand" and "Call My Own." Both are soaring, but your work on "Call My Own" is atmospheric and casts you in a different light, sonically.

"Call My Own" was an interesting one. It was done on my Telecaster with a B-bender, which has very early T-Top humbuckers. Honestly, most of the solos on this record were done through combo amps, and "Call My Own" was probably an old Magneto, and there was a lot of stereo reverb. That gives everything much more space, where you can put vocals right through the middle. So, there's a lot of stereo slap, and stereo phasers and stereo reverb. If you listen to the record on headphones, you'll get the full effect. *[Laughs]* It's quite radical!

What gear did you use for "Saw You Stand"?

That was my '61, the beloved Number 1 *[Gibson Les Paul SG]*. But that was another one, where, you know, I don't like to take more than a few takes of a solo. Typically, I can somewhat get it early on, but I also sort of design it in my head.

Why is that?

Because there's a separate, I think, for me as a guitar player. I often approach something with an idea I construct in my mind, then have a layout with a map or blueprint and parameters to work within. But then some solos are off the cuff and very much made up in the moment. I think "Saw You Stand" was one of those solos I had already orchestrated and wasn't improvised. And because it's quite a long solo, if I continued to do takes, it might have sounded too refined for me... maybe too manufactured. 

HIGHWAY TONE

Jake Kiszka's top five tone tips

BY ANDREW DALY

IT GOES WITHOUT saying that Jake Kiszka, the six-string slinger behind the roaring attitude inherent to Greta Van Fleet and Mirador, knows a thing or two about tone. In fact, Kiszka believes he used more toys than ever while recording GVF's latest offering, 2026's *Palace for the People*. It's with that in mind that *GW* tabbed Kiszka to offer up his top five tone tips. Take it away, Jake...

1. RELY ON THE AMP AND LESS ON PEDALS

There's a purity between playing and the directness from the heart to the hands to the amp. Anything in between maybe distracts from that. When you're first learning to play — and really, in general — you can sort of expand from there, but there's a directness to that, too.

2. START ACOUSTICALLY

My father basically took away my electric guitar when I'd first gotten it, which was quite a bummer. *[Laughs]* I'd just received it, and he was like, "No, no, no..." So, there's some sort of disciplinary action that happened. I thank him for that now because it taught me the foundation. We all want to be Jimi Hendrix or another great guitar hero who played electric guitar, but I would say that starting acoustically, and playing some Bob Dylan or even something rudimentary, is a good foundation for tone.

3. CHOOSE YOUR GUITARS WISELY

There are many different ways of looking at this. There's the guitarist, the guitar player, the collector — and there's the dentist. *[Laughs]* Now, I'm just kidding, but for me, if you're looking at guitar playing for the sake of the "soul of playing," and what can be accomplished through playing the instrument, choose your weapons wisely. For instance, if you have two 12-string guitars and one is a baritone and the other is a straight 12, and then you've got one classical guitar and one parlor guitar... you've got one of each of these things because they're all tactile. They all have their own qualities and do something different, but you don't need two of the same thing. So, in some ways, if you're specifically looking at guitar playing for that reason, choose your guitars wisely and love them equally.

4. IF YOU'RE IN THE STUDIO, SPECIFICALLY FOR SOLOS, USE COMBO AMPS

If you're playing a solo that requires more nuance and single strings, as opposed to chord structures and that sort of thing, I would suggest combo amps. I actually would suggest combo amps overall, in general. Period. *[Laughs]* There's just something great about them. And for what they're used for, and for as much as they've been used in the past, I think they've been forgotten about in our generation. So yeah... crank up that little combo amp and play through that. I think they do a lot. They simplify what you're hearing, but they also magnify you as a player and add nuance.

5. PULL THE MIC OFF YOUR AMP

For crying out loud, pull the mic back and embrace the room! Embrace the breathing of it, you know? If you're going to record in that way, if it's guerrilla warfare out there, and you're doing it in your garage or anywhere in your home or whatever space, distance adds depth. Pull the mics off and let the amp breathe.





It's not about perfection — it's about a vibe.

I don't want to play it perfectly. I want to play it from the gut. I want to shoot from the hip. I want it to feel human. So, with "Saw You Stand," I came back the next day and had it in one or two takes; on that second day, that's how it landed.

There is also some great acoustic work on *Palace for the People*. You have a sort of shaggy style, which interweaves really well with your electric tone.

I like it! That's why they call me Shaggy Jake. [Laughs] But that's brilliant! What a great term because, yeah... it is a bit shaggy, isn't it? My playing is a bit messy. But I like that because I try not to perfect anything. That's a good question because on this particular record, I tried to take the acoustic element of Greta Van Fleet a little bit further.

On "Boughton Bliss," for example, there's acoustic layering with electrics throughout. But there's moments on the record where it's more prevalent, so I was trying to push that a bit further. And I used a lot of Nashville tuning, some Martin 12-string. And for the solo on "Boughton Bliss," typically, that's something I'd have been inclined to take up

"I don't want to play guitar perfectly. I want to play it from the gut. I want to shoot from the hip. I want it to feel human"

with an electric guitar. But instead, I favored a classical guitar with nylon strings, so that was another thing where I pushed into stranger territories.

Pushing boundaries, having the confidence to lay down solos in fewer takes and owning your sloppiness — in a good way — it all shows the trust you have in yourself and your growing confidence as a player. Have you had time to reflect on that?

That's another good question. You're full of them today! [Laughs] It took a long time for me to approach my instrument that way. It took a long time to get my playing to where I'd be able to record something and just let it be what it is. That's a byproduct — and also the essence of — feeling comfortable with your identity as a player.

And that's what's taken me the longest. I've played since I was quite young, and Greta has been going for a decade, so it's been a really long journey from the boy who

pulled the sword from the stone, you know, this manifest destiny, to being here now and coming to terms with who I am as a person.

But also, the identity as a guitar player, and how I approach the instrument itself, you know? I've been through some things at this point with Greta, music and life, and I'm strong in my identity. I've been able to just let it be recorded as imperfectly and as humanly as possible, you know, to let it bleed.

All of that has seen you elevate to an A-list player by most people's accounts.

I don't know... for me, it's the highest honor that, in some ways, maybe... yes, I'm conscious of the fact that perhaps people celebrate my guitar playing. I'm really grateful for that. In some ways, my greatest achievement as a guitar player is that, as a kid, the guitar heroes I looked up to, and the dreams, influence and inspiration they imparted on me and awakened in me — perhaps I could do the same for this generation or the next. ▣

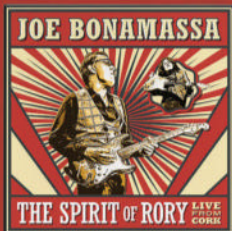
JOE BONAMASSA

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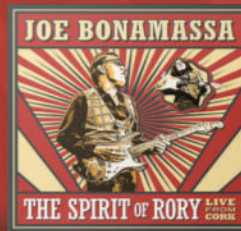


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Earlier, we talked about the almighty Internet culture swirling around us. Within that context, Greta Van Fleet — and Jake Kiszka — aren't just musicians or a popular rock band; you've become cultural icons and had tracks in video games, yet people still take a lot of shots. With that, the negative perception doesn't always align with reality. From your perspective, what do people get wrong?

I suppose in a sense... I guess there's the social or political construct or people saying, "There's a lineation between innovation and imitation," right? In many ways, people

"We're [just] guys from Michigan who fell in love with American blues and music of all cultures from all places"

perceive our sound to be one way, but in reality, it's far more complex and nuanced than that.

Can you dig deeper into that?

I'm not necessarily saying just strictly music, but the story, and who we are as human beings. A lot of people have looked at Greta Van Fleet, and, as you said, there's a lot of controversy on the Internet, which has expedited and proliferated it, where it was a fire in the corner, and now it's a conflagration of some sort. That being said, Greta Van Fleet has become quite a massive thing — to my surprise — in some ways. But we're polarizing, I think, so there's a lot of attention on that. Some said we were the "saviors of rock 'n' roll," or whatever, and I think that's a misconception as well. All of that, I think, is balled up in one, and it makes it sort of an inaccurate representation of us.

So, who are you really?

I think we're a bunch of young guys who grew up in mid-Michigan, in a little town somewhere, and in a garage, we fell in love with American blues and music of all cultures from all places. We fell in love with the idea of manifest destiny and adventure. We became a part of that. People can perceive this as one or another, and there's a lot of attention. Let's say there's a lot of negative commentary that perhaps comes from the evolution of Greta Van Fleet, and how quickly it exploded and how polarizing it has become. I think that would be something that people misperceive or get wrong.

The "saviors of rock 'n' roll" thing has always been sort of ridiculous to lay on anybody. It's really a label perpetually thrust on young bands, and when they don't deliver — because no one can — it's used against them, just as it has □





been against Greta Van Fleet. And really, does rock 'n' roll really need saving anyway?
Exactly! It's an interesting thing, man. Because is rock 'n' roll dead? I don't think so. It never truly dies; it just lays in wait, you know? And then it's there for the next generation to pick up.

To be an artist, I think, is to want to be understood. If you *are* understood is another matter entirely. What do you want people to

understand about you?

That's a complex question, and it's deserving of a complex answer. Ultimately, do you mean as a human being or an artist?

Both. There's certainly an intersection, if you're an artist, where your humanity overlaps the artistry.

Yeah, absolutely. Perhaps in both senses, as a human being, I'm as imperfect, flawed, ridiculous and mad as anybody else. I'd

certainly have to be a little insane, or a little mad, to carry the torch or climb this hill. *[Laughs]* In that sense, I bleed just like everybody else. But I enjoy the human experience, all the pain, all the beauty and all the things I've seen in this lifetime. And so far, all of that has greatly informed the music I create and the guitar I play. All of that has become sort of a manifest. It manifests in myself, in my music and my guitar playing and as an artist overall. I think that's the idea... with all of the good and evil in the world, it's the artist's job, or the modus operandi, to take all those things, internalize them intrinsically and reflect them back onto society.

Sparking not just curiosity within yourself, but within others...

Yeah. In some ways, you question things. Like, how to create what the universe cannot naturally. We take the emptiness of these voids, and we inherently intersect them, sew them back together, and weave them to bring them back to the people. I think that's what we've done. Salvaging what's there culturally, I think, is sort of what Greta Van Fleet is about. But also, as an individual, I think the conveyor of truth is there's a lot of people — and there's no right or wrong with this — who play an instrument, or an artist, and there's some sort of persona in place.

And that's brilliant in so many ways that someone can take a creation and characterize themselves with that. But I will say that, with Greta Van Fleet, and with myself as an individual, I don't so much do that. We truly are who we are on that stage, as much as we are off of it. I'm maybe a personification of myself on that stage — but it's truly me. I play that way. I truly play through my experiences, through my life, my head and my heart. And so, through and through, I suppose that, in part, is who I am. So maybe I'd like to just state that what you see is just the truth.

Where does Greta Van Fleet go from here?

Only up, Andrew! Right to the top! *[Laughs]* I don't know... I just think it's marching forward boldly and gorgeously. We've said it in this interview, but there's been quite a bit achieved at a young age for us. We're young men now, but there's a long, long way to go. And yeah, it's exciting because there's so much to invent, you know? There's so much to create and so much to bend and break. But we've got a lot of surprises for this year for sure — and for the coming years within the musical sphere and realm. And even outside of that as a creative entity. I suppose we're looking forward to all of it. **GW**

"Is rock 'n' roll dead? I don't think so. It never truly dies; it just lays in wait, you know? And then it's there for the next generation to pick up"



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KEELEY

Gibson Victory Floyd Rose

An unlikely success story gets even bolder

BY DARYL ROBERTSON

▶ BACK IN 2024, Gibson set out to give an obscure Eighties model a second chance at joining the ranks of the Les Paul, SG or ES-335, and, well, it was mission accomplished. This new version of the Victory was sleeker, meaner and, by all accounts, more modern, too. It went down well with Gibson fans as well as guitarists who often steered clear of the Nashville guitar giant's offerings. It would seem that after decades of trying, Gibson finally managed to introduce a super-strat alternative that players actually wanted – it only took 45 years!

But it seems fans of the updated model have been very vocal about a small missing detail – the lack of a locking tremolo system. According to Gibson, fans have been asking for the guitar to be equipped with a Floyd Rose, and the company listened.

Aside from the new whammy bar, this supercharged Victory sticks to

the same specs as the previous version. Much like many Gibson options, it pairs a mahogany body with a rather striking figured maple top. The body is also deeply beveled and contoured for maximum comfort.

The Iguana Burst top is even more striking in person than in the promo shots. We'll be the first to admit that traditionalism makes sense when it comes to Gibson finishes; red ES-335s, Sunburst Les Pauls, TV Yellow LP Juniors, but somehow, this wild finish suits the Victory's unapologetically modern styling. It's got a sharp, contemporary vibe that works – and it might just entice a few PRS fans over to Gibson, too.

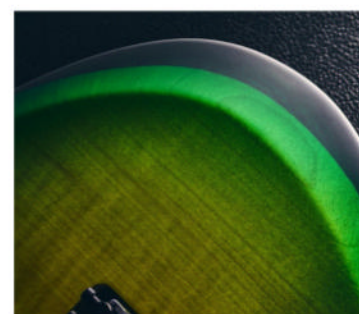
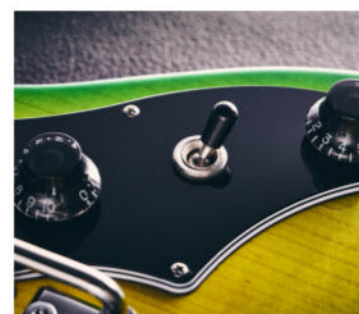
Out of the case, this is a guitar that feels reassuringly solid, and there are

The Victory is reaching its most evolved and powerful stage yet

certainly no finish issues or stray marks to distract from its handsome good looks. We'd say the construction is up to Gibson's current USA standards with a clean and tidy build. The fretwork is on point, being well polished and installed flawlessly. There are no fret nibs, those little extra pieces of binding that cover the ends of the frets you typically find on Gibson models. This means there's no fear of snagging your high-E on a wayward piece of plastic. No fret nibs can mean you feel sharp ends if the frets haven't been dressed perfectly, but thankfully that isn't the case with the Victory. The fretwork is spot on.

That said, we can't help wondering why Gibson hasn't gone with stainless steel frets for this model. We've seen them use this fretwire on the very modern Epiphone Futura, and it feels like a natural fit here, too.

The deeply contoured body and those bevels make the Victory



PHIL BARKER





genuinely comfortable to play standing or seated. And even with that elongated peghead, there's no neck dive here.

The hardware is all solid and dialed in. The Floyd Rose is set up perfectly from the factory, and it feels rock solid. There's no weird creaks, no tuning instability, and crucially, no sense you'll need to reach for an Allen key every five minutes. The Grover Mini Rotomatics hold their own, even if they're mostly for show with the locking nut in play.

If we were to have one gripe with the build, it is the placement of the volume control. It sits directly under the Floyd arm, and we found ourselves accidentally rolling down the volume mid-dive bomb. It's

a common complaint for Strat users, so it's not wholly unique to the Victory, but if the volume control was scootched back a touch, it would solve the issue.

There's a distinct feeling when you pick up a guitar with a well-set Floyd. It can make you play and approach things differently. A Floyd Rose can be freeing to perform with, and we joyfully relived our Razorback-toting youth over some backing tracks.

We found the SlimTaper neck profile to be genuinely fast, but never felt too skinny or insubstantial. The compound radius, which morphs from 10" to a flatter 14" as you reach the higher frets, is pretty subtle but made a real difference for shred runs and wide fret-spanning legato licks.

STREET PRICE: \$2,799

MANUFACTURER:
Gibson, gibson.com

PROS

- ✦ Looks incredible
- ✦ Seriously playable
- ✦ Rock-solid Floyd Rose
- ✦ Pickups have plenty of bite without being too much

CONS

- ✦ Placement of the volume is awkward when using the trem
- ✦ More modern features like stainless steel frets would be a great touch

VERDICT: This is the super-S-style alternative some Gibson fans have quietly wanted for decades, and it stands up to anything from the big names in the shredder world. Everything about the Victory Floyd Rose feels right, from the bold finishes to the rock-solid hardware and the great-sounding pickups.

This is a slick-feeling guitar, for sure. The set-up is low — at 1.25mm on the low-E and 1.00mm at the high-E — and buzz-free, and the trem stayed exactly where you'd want it, even after some aggressive use.

It's a guitar that made us want to keep playing, whether burning through scales or just messing around with some classic Floyd Rose flutter. The only real adjustment was getting used to the volume knob placement, which is a small price to pay for everything else that works so well.

The Victory is served by a pair of Gibson 80s Tribute pickups. These are higher-output passive humbuckers featuring Alnico 5 magnets and can be found in the Eighties reissue of the Explorer and Flying V.

For testing, we plugged into a Positive Grid Spark Live and its matching cab. We dialed up the gain and added a splash of delay. Now, while they aren't what we'd call super high-output by modern standards, these pups aren't shy either. We felt there was enough oomph for hard rock and metal, but enough note definition and clarity if you wanted to clean things up. The mids are smooth and up front, the lows are tight, and the high end has a pleasing bite and top-end. The result is a pickup set that perfectly fits the vibe this guitar is going for.

The push/pull volume for coil splits and the push/pull tone for inner/outer coil selection give you a lot of tonal options for a two-humbucker guitar.

Switching from the high-gain amp to that of a Roland JC model, we wanted to see how it handled the cleaner side of things. Popping up the volume coil activates the coil split. Okay, so single-coil sounds aren't going to fool anyone into thinking you're playing a Strat, but they're more than usable for a gig.

Experimenting with the inner and outer coils in the middle position, suddenly it has an almost out-of-phase character that's genuinely cool for funk, or anything where you want to step outside the standard Gibson box. A very useful tone indeed.

It rounds out an impressive package. We're seeing the Victory reach its most evolved and most powerful stage yet here. The Floyd Rose genuinely feels like the finishing touch this model always needed. **GW**



HalfLife unleashes a full-scale assault of saturated ecstasy

using the O knob or controlled dynamically with an expression pedal connected to the Octave EXP jack, allowing the octave to be blended in as needed.

The final Magnitude stage is designed to overload your preamp tubes with a clean, high-impedance boost while preserving your amp's natural character, driving it harder without adding coloration or introducing distortion of its own.

While it nods heavily to the classic ProCo Rat design, HalfLife departs from its saturation in a more symphonic fuzz-stortion that's tightly layered and articulate. What's interesting is you can hear the fuzzy textures become progressively darker in its clipping modes as you sweep from the brighter and grittier frequencies found on OpAmp, to the warmly compressed Big Muff-style saturation in Asymm, and finally plummeting down to the deep hirsute fuzziness in Symm mode.

We can only imagine that if we brooded in bands like Boris and Burning Witch, we'd dwell within the sludgy depths of Symm mode.

The highly responsive Filter knob swept from dense darkness to the cutting slice reminiscent of a cranked Sunn Model T's Brite channel. The upper octave tracked clearly on single notes above the ninth fret, provided you are flying high with your neck pickup. Here, the spiked upper octave tones added a clanging, metallic ring to the signal. It's an intensely fun pedal that can easily coax the bottom-heavy fuzz found on *Gish*-era Smashing Pumpkins as well as the shimmering, furry pulse of My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless* (yes we're dating ourselves here).

Finally, the highly transparent Magnitude clean boost was loud with a capital "L." Be mindful of your level setting, as its massive output — combined with the Amplitude stage — can quickly push an amplifier into explosive meltdown and endless sustain. Not that there's anything wrong with that! **GW**

EarthQuaker Devices Sunn O))) HalfLife Octave Distortion + Booster

Delivering the droned, bottom-heavy fury inspired by Seattle drone metallers Sunn O))) with uncompromising force

BY PAUL RIARIO

IT SEEMS EARTHQUAKER

Devices is in a constant flux between light and dark duality — call it Yin and Yang, if you will — across most of its recognized pedals. On one side, it's known for beautifully ambient pedals that create luminous soundscapes, while the other side unleashes bellowing, sonic mayhem. Its latest stompbox, the Sunn O))) HalfLife Octave Distortion + Booster, falls under the latter description.

The HalfLife stompbox (as you probably guessed with its play on words) is a more compact, condensed and pedalboard-friendly version of the Sunn O))) Life pedal and lives on as a successful ongoing collaboration between Sunn O))) — the loudest of drone metal doomsayer bands — and EQD. Like the Life Pedal before it, HalfLife is designed to capture Sunn O)))'s core front-end signal chain driving multiple vintage Sunn Model T 100-watt tube stacks into glorious saturation.

Inspired by the vintage Shin-Ei FY2 Companion and FY6 Super Fuzz

boxes and a vintage white-logo RAT distortion-style circuit, with a low-pass filter control, there isn't much to deal with in this triple-threat of a stompbox arriving in a more pedalboard-friendly size. Most of your guesswork will be made by using your ears and selecting which of the three clipping modes will provide the utmost in aural black magic.

The first OpAmp removes the clipping diodes entirely, unleashing its full output for an aggressively brighter, high-volume attack. Assym employs an asymmetrical clipping configuration using two silicon diodes and one LED, producing a slightly compressed, smoother amp-like crunch. Finally, Symm recreates the original double silicon diode configuration, delivering the classic, familiar rodent-like saturation that made the white-logo circuit a favorite.

Unlike the original Life Pedal, which features a dedicated Octave footswitch, HalfLife's upper octave is only controlled by dialing it in

STREET PRICE: \$259

MANUFACTURER:
EarthQuaker Devices,
earthquakerdevices.com

PROS

- ✦ Sunn O)))'s Life Metal octave, distortion and boost tones in a compact pedal
- ✦ Massive distortion/fuzz, powerful clean boost
- ✦ Expression input for the Octave effect

CONS

- Pricy
- Drone or doom metal tones are not for everyone

VERDICT: The Sunn O))) HalfLife unleashes a full-scale assault of saturated ecstasy, proving once again that this Machiavellian alliance with those shadowy Sunn O))) guitarists is a notorious victory for EQD.



Orange OR60

The U.K. amp pros swap the grit for growl to make their purest-sounding premium all-tube head yet

BY MARTIN SMITH

ORANGE HAS LONG been known for its iconic brand of sonic savagery, and its punchy low-end served up with crispy treble has helped define the music of a great many artists. While the primary drive of the tube-amplifier industry leans toward refined vintage tone, Orange filled the niche for a more aggressive sound. Styles such as punk, doom-rock and indie-rock embrace the more cutting frequency range and punchy response these characterfully colored cabinets exude.

However, with this new amp, Orange offers its take on a more

refined all-tube design, aiming to please a wider range of tastes while sticking with brand-building features such as pedal-friendliness and huge overdrive ability.

Those all-tube refinements carry through to the ECC82-buffered effects loop to provide enhanced clarity and coherence when using modulation-based effect processors, always best placed in the effects loop.

We have two wattage options incorporated into the standby switch, selecting between the full 60 watts or 30 watts to better match smaller environments. Improved top-end

tailoring comes in the form of a redesigned presence circuit that works more effectively across the amp's entire volume range, and a three-position Bright switch allowing for neutral, narrow-band (think "sparkle") and wide-band (including some upper mids) options.

Orange has also included a bass Resonance control — a feature becoming de rigueur for modern high-gain amps. This, along with the Presence control, functions within the negative feedback circuit to tighten or extend the range at both ends of the frequency spectrum.

PHIL BARKER

From spanky cleans to all-out Armageddon, this amp has you covered

spanky cleans to all-out Armageddon, whatever your particular gain needs are, this amp has you covered.

If you are, however, the kind of player who simply has to put a boost before anything, the OR60 is more than ready to play ball. The Orange reputation for pedal-friendliness is fully in evidence. However, there isn't a great necessity to add extra gain for most sounds.

That solid, almost compressed sound for which Orange amps are famed is still very much in evidence and, as expected, our Stratocaster's single-coil pickups came punching through with impressive authority. A rich and full sustain renders lead licks with plenty of fluidity of the bravado-inspiring kind.

We found the Bright switch well tuned to best present a variety of guitars. The sparkle setting introduced the chimey top-end that flatters cleaner sounds wonderfully. The neutral position is recommended to get the most flexibility from tone-shaping pedals and the full-bright position introduces a wider band of top-boost starting lower down the frequency spectrum where upper-mids reside.

This setting brings back some of the traditional treble aggression that metal and punk players will expect from Orange but with a more refined air. The sandpapery grittiness, long described as an Orange hallmark, is less apparent and a smoother, more fluid voice takes its place.

As the gain level gets irresistibly nudged further clockwise, the Resonance and Presence controls help sculpt the response and we found it a doddle to dial up mosh-pit-approved tight low-end. With the Bright switch and the Presence control, it was possible to get an appropriate, aggressive top-end from any of our guitars.

We found the frequency response of the mid-control well tuned to either get that U.S. scoop or, at the other extreme, the U.K. mid-forward classic rock sound. The range of sounds achievable from the OR60 is huge, not due to channels and switches but simply from the power of the gain and EQ controls. **GW**

STREET PRICE: \$2,499

MANUFACTURER: Orange Amps, orangeamps.com

PROS

- ✦ Classier, less abrasive top-end will suit players of more classic styles
- ✦ Resonance and Presence add modern control over power amp response
- ✦ Excellent construction quality

CONS

- ✦ An included footswitch for the switchable volume control would be a worthwhile addition
- ✦ Slight interference was occasionally detectable on the volume control

VERDICT: If the abundant punch and gain of the Orange sound appeals but the trademark top-end sizzle doesn't, the OR60 could be the solution for you.



And, yes, we're looking at you, detuned metal players!

A second footswitchable volume control (not master volume as, strictly speaking, this is not a master volume-equipped amp) allows solo boosting for stage use, an indication of the type of environment Orange foresees this amp being used in.

Built in England using the same familiar chunky cabinets that have become a trademark, the brand continues its reputation for hardy, giggable construction quality. An assembly inspection shows care was taken to withstand the rigors of the road. A heavy-duty PCB board lies at the heart of this cathode-following, self-biasing design using two 6L6 valves to produce 60 watts.

The OR60 can be biased to accept other common output valves such as

the EL34, though the real-world wattage that will be achievable would be governed by the valves' output rating. Worthy of mention is that the smaller OR30 30-watt version turns into Class A operation with the wattage switch at half power, imparting a highly musical touch-sensitivity.

Plugging in our Les Paul, we spent a few bemused moments checking out the pictures that label the controls. We're undecided if the quirky fun is worth the brain resources needed to convert these cryptograms back to knob names, but it's something die-hard Orange aficionados might enjoy. First, we were astonished by the range of gain available from the first control as the second and third gain stages are being controlled by this one knob. From



Darkglass Anagram Limited Edition Guitar Essentials

A respected bass ace turns its attention to guitar. But what does that mean for you?

BY PETE EMERY

THIS ISN'T JUST any addition to what is a fiercely competitive amp-modeling and multi-effects market; Darkglass' established pedigree in bass tone makes this guitar-based expansion of the Anagram an especially interesting proposition.

The Anagram was originally aimed at bass players as a multi-effects and amp modeler that can run as part of a pedalboard or as an entire rig in its own right.

This Guitar Essentials Limited Edition version is exactly the same device, and it comes with all that bass goodness. The differences are the black finish and the inclusion of the Guitar Essentials package, which is a selection of amplifiers and effects deemed "essential" to every guitarist,

curated with input from experienced retailers Sweetwater and Andertons – which have the exclusive on this hardware edition.

Once the limited run of the hardware is sold, the Guitar Essentials will be available for every user of the original Anagram to buy and add to their device.

The Anagram's premium feel is the first thing that jumps out. It's an aluminum chassis in a classy black finish that is solid enough to inspire confidence that the unit will last. And unlike its direct competitors, the Anagram includes a soft-shell-style case that houses the hardware neatly and is about as sturdy as lightweight soft cases can be.

The only minor complaint we have is that the mains adapter feels a little

flimsy for a bit of gear that could potentially replace an entire rig. Ease of use is make-or-break for these feature-packed units, but the Anagram does well here thanks to a small but intuitive suite of six encoders, three footswitches and a useful touchscreen.

It's the familiar three modes of Presets, Stomps and Scenes, but what is slightly different about the Anagram is the way you view your rig in one of three ways. Chain, which shows your signal path; Name, which displays your preset name and footswitch assignments in text; or Bindings mode, which, in our view, is the highlight.

It allowed us to assign and stack whatever parameters we wanted from any block to the six encoders, whilst

LUCY ROBINSON



also displaying what we have on our footswitches. A godsend for when you need to regularly and quickly adjust something during a gig.

The only tripping point in using the unit was when we were scrolling through the icons that represented the effects, we were sometimes relying on the text within the imagery to discern what the effect is. This text is quite small and is not always easy to read.

The Anagram's features can be expanded through Darkglass Marketplace, where third parties can sell effects to be bought and downloaded for the Anagram. More than this, it can be even further expanded by using NAM.

NAM (Neural Amp Modeling and not to be confused with the separate company Neural DSP) is an open-source, capture-based tech that is completely free, with the capture files accessed through a website from Tone 3000. The downside to all this at the time of writing is that there is no mobile app yet, so you will need to go relatively old school and connect the

Anagram to a laptop via USB-C to make use of the Marketplace or NAM.

The range of guitar sounds here is not as expansive when compared to guitar-first modelers like the Helix Stadium and Quad Cortex, which is as the "Essentials" title suggests. However, the amp models are almost universally stellar and react to the guitar's volume control and the player's picking dynamics brilliantly.

We particularly liked the Leonardo Twin, which gives an accurate feeling, mid-scooped Fender Twin Reverb clean, and the Admiral JJM800 with its biting, mid-forward hi-gain Marshall JCM800 thing. The only one we were not enamored with was the 5150-inspired Phoebe SISO, which, while it is a good high-gain sound, lacks the tight low end of the real thing.

The drives were impressive too, with models such as the Valve Crier 808 adding the rewarding mid-humped sound associated with the famous Tube Screamer, albeit missing some of that compressed feel. A particular highlight was the Green

STREET PRICE: \$1,299

MANUFACTURER:
Darkglass, darkglass.com

PROS

- ✦ Fantastic amp models and effects
- ✦ Compact
- ✦ Handy Bindings view for parameter control
- ✦ NAM A2 capture compatible

CONS

- ✖ Not as extensive as some other guitar-first modelers
- ✖ Icon labeling can be a little hard to read at times
- ✖ Would prefer a more robust power supply
- ✖ Expression input takes up the effects return

VERDICT: Relatively speaking, it is not the widest selection of sounds (as its name suggests), but it does more than enough — and does almost all of it brilliantly.

Pie Rate Fuzz, which is a hugely rewarding, thick, mid-scooped Big Muff sound.

There are 10 modulation models — Chorus, Flanger, Whammy, Phaser, Tremolo, Pitch Shifter, Vibrato and then three Octavers. They follow suit in their rewarding and easy-to-use nature, with the only exception being the Pitch Shifter, which loses a bit of high end but is still handy to have. We all like a bit of space around our sounds, but we were a little limited when it comes to delays here, with only three to choose from. These are named Analog, Digital and Mod and perform well as you would expect.

The five reverbs are of similarly high quality. We particularly liked the authentic drip of the Spring, but the Shimmer feels a little bit separate from the dry signal, resulting in a sound that came across as unnatural. Also included in the EQs, Filters and Dynamics section is a collection of envelope filters, compressors, limiters, EQs and autowahs.

We found the Luminous FET compressor was fantastic for funky compressed cleans, and the amusingly named "Mo**erf***er" provided a Moog Moogerfooger-style envelope filter for those times when we wanted things to get a little outlandish. **GW**

LUCY ROBINSON

Not the widest selection of sounds, but it does more than enough — and does almost all of it brilliantly



MixWave Yvette Young

This inventive player's first signature software release is an inspiration

BY PHIL WELLER

▶ AS THE MODERN-DAY darling of spangly math-rock guitar and ambient tones, Yvette Young getting a signature plugin is no surprise at all. The *Covet* songstress's MixWave collaboration follows its work with Spiritbox's Mike Stringer, Unprocessed's Manuel Gardner Fernandes and JHS, and here strives to transfer every facet of her live rig into the digital realm, from its centerpiece Vox AC30 to a glutinous feast of stompboxes, while showing a little creative license.

Chiefly, the combo's amp and cab are treated as separate entities. Its four speaker cones can be either Alnico Blue or Greenback speakers, and there are 15 different microphone options. Its virtual pedalboard, meanwhile, takes in nine different pedals, ranging from reverb, analog delay and chorus to overdrive, fuzz

and octaver. Surreal soundscapes are conjured with the unique lo-fi modulator and a compressor with "infinite sustain."

Coming from a player who likes to do freaky things to her signal chain 90 percent of the time, it makes sense that the plugin is armed to the teeth with ways to get weird, but MixWave is also showing an attention to detail beyond the sounds alone via Vibe, Focus and Contour EQ features, and a sandbox-style signal chain. That's a lot of bang for your buck.

For anyone familiar with plugins, the interface is as familiar and intuitive as any, and we don't foresee any major stumbling blocks for a novice. With the customizable signal chain, everything is laid out in a row in a click-and-drag-able block and invites us to get granular and enjoy oodles of tonal possibilities.

Left-clicking on a block brings it up full-screen, and right-clicking engages/disengages the effect. A rummage through its built-in presets, including contributions from Holy Fawn, acclaimed producer Taylor Larson, and Ryan "Fluff" Bruce, makes for an excellent cheat sheet in seeing how the sausage is made. Getting acquainted with this massive toy box came in double-quick time. We also really enjoyed the tuner for its clear and aesthetically pleasing display, making it very easy to use.

Its quartet of inputs, however, could be a little confusing to anyone not accustomed to an AC30. The virtual cables often got in the way of the text beside each input, with the font size brutally small to begin with. We understand that MixWave and Yvette Young have gone for authenticity here, but a better display format

MIXWAVE



STREET PRICE: \$139

MANUFACTURER:
MixWave, mixwave.com

PROS

- ✦ Fantastic for math rock and ambient tones
- ✦ True-to-form analog feel
- ✦ A wonderful pedal platform with a customizable signal chain
- ✦ Lots of useful production tools

CONS

- ✦ The input section of the amp is poorly laid out
- ✦ The cab section can be a little intimidating
- ✦ We wish there were a middle dial

VERDICT: Yvette Young's first signature plugin successfully carries her trick-filled live rig into the digital realm, with its analog amp feeling a pleasant juxtaposition to the amp's realm of creative effects. That results in a canvas for everything from luscious ambiance to house-of-mirrors madness.

With the overdrive pedal dialed moderately and placed in front of the amp, we only needed the reverb and delay for heavenly magic, and there are lots of controls to get the most out of both pedals. The drive's optional boost and tweakable silicon/mosfet/open diode modes offer customization aplenty, while the Pitch feature on the reverb is ideal for a little wackiness — with the chorus's lag feature doing likewise — and the high and low cut dials ideal for getting the track to sit better in a wider mix. The sync feature, as on the delay, tremolo, and lo-fi modulator, quickly became a highly useful feature for us, too.

Beyond that, the tremolo can go from slow drama to head-spinning silliness, the chorus offers effortless color, and the fuzz remained articulate, however hairy we made it. Just be aware that, by default, the pedal was always set with everything maxed. Don't engage it blindly if you like your ears!

With a three-octave span and a direct dial, the octave can add as much or as little grit and/or top end as needed. Yet, despite our prior excitement about the lo-fi modulator, we didn't find a need for sounds as warbly and wonky as it produces. Young's music often sees one riff repeating for a long time, with little nuances pushing it along with each loop, making it a very "her" pedal that will no doubt delight others. **GW**

would have been a smart way to digitize the original's design.

The same goes for its controls, with the lack of a middle dial, while again faithful, felt like an opportunity missed. Neural DSP often adds in extra features the real amps its plugins are inspired by don't have. Here, it would have made dialing tones feel far more universal.

Elsewhere, the cab section is a dream for the most scrupulous tone-tweakers, with mic choices and placement details, with the axis, distance, angle and delay adjustable, allowing for personalized precision. Further still, the polarity can be inverted for each mic, and the Vibe dial is a hack for getting a little more top end, especially if the OD is quite woolly. But equally, building off a provided preset means you don't

have to be so intricate if you don't want to be. That makes it pretty well idiot-proof as a tool.

Given Young's tonal craft, we felt the plugin could dislodge Neural DSP's Tim Henson X as a go-to ethereal amp. And yes, this plugin is absolutely killer at creating atmospheres that shimmer like a golden lake, but it does so much more.

The amp boasted an impressive shiny clarity in our testing, and there's a real touch-sensitive, amp-in-a-room feel to it; it felt as unforgiving as an analog amp should be. It's an interesting counterbalance to the slew of effects because, no matter how washy and wild we got, we were forced to be sensitive to the cleanliness and dynamics of our playing. That's no bad thing.



Morley x DOD Wah-OcTo-Fuzz

A fantastic, wacky and eccentric three-in-one stompbox that harks back while creating something fresh

BY DARYL ROBERTSON

DOD AND MORLEY have joined forces for the aptly named WTF, or Wah-ocTo-Fuzz. Combining three pedals in one, it's a triple-threat that promises to be a sonic Swiss Army knife, packing a wah pedal, octave and fuzz into one unapologetically wild box.

Built around the classic Morley wah tank-like chassis, the pedal, of course, features the Illinois-based firm's tried-and-true Electro-Optical design, switchless operation and a glow-in-the-dark treadle ready to spring into action the second your boot hits it.

For the fuzz, Morley brings its notorious Power Fuzz circuit, a Seventies-inspired gain machine used by the likes of Metallica's low-end master, Cliff Burton. You get a Level knob for volume tweaks and an Intensity control to dial in as much filth as you see fit.

Octave duties are courtesy of DOD's cult-classic FX35 Octoplus circuit. This monophonic sub-octave pedal, long-coveted since its discontinuation in 1994, is all about thick, synthy, glitch-happy low end. It's even rumored to be the secret behind Alain Johannes' massive detuned sound on Eleven's "Reach Out."

The WTF wraps everything up in a slick navy blue, cold-rolled steel enclosure, a nod to classic DOD styling, with standard 1/4" ins and outs, 9V power from a battery or pedalboard power supply and buffered bypass.

For being a three-in-one pedal, the WTF is pretty straightforward to operate, with somewhat minimal controls. Starting with the fuzz, there are only two controls for dialing it in – Level and Intensity – which let you adjust the volume and gain level. We like simple pedals, but can't help but

The real magic happens when you combine two or three of the effects



STREET PRICE: \$249.99

MANUFACTURER:
Digitech, digitech.com

PROS

- + Switchless wah is seamless
- + Fun glitchy old-school octaver
- + All three effects can be run separately or together
- + Very well made

CONS

- Footswitches are a little cramped
- The fuzz is pretty thin on its own

VERDICT: Morley and DOD's pedal is a wild mashup that thrives on weirdness, combining what could be three run-of-the-mill effects into one stomp that's fun to play with. We can't help but wonder what madness would ensue if Morley took a stab at combining more DOD classics in its format.

feel that a tone control would have come in handy here. Fuzz by its very nature is bright, so being able to knock some of that fizzy top end back a touch would be useful.

We opted for a Gibson Firebird and a Fender Telecaster going into a Fender Blues Jr amp for testing, while drive duties were handled by the JHS AT+. If you're aware of that classic Morley tone, you know exactly what we have here. It's wide, throaty and vocal, with a sweep that covers glassy funk to classic rock solos and everything in between – and it sounded killer to us.

The fuzz circuit, inspired by Morley's Power Fuzz, is a raspy, unapologetic beast. To our ears, it was a touch thin. Comparing it to the Big Muff that's a staple on our 'board, the Morley lacked the bottom-end weight of the Electro-Harmonix and could sound a little brittle. That said,

it certainly can cut right through a mix with its snarling highs and abundance of bite.

The octave circuit is where the WTF really shows its eccentric side. Borrowed from the FX35 Octoplus, it's monophonic, analog and gloriously glitchy. As we played single-note riffs, we were greeted with a satisfying sub-octave growl that wobbled with artefacts.

While the effects here sound decent on their own, the real magic happens when you combine them together. Adding the octaver to the fuzz, and suddenly it transformed into a monstrous wall of sound, thickening up and adding that depth it was lacking when soloed. For us, this is an instantly inspiring sound and one that just seemed to produce riffs out of nowhere. Throw in the wah, and you can almost create talk-box-like sounds. **GW**

PHIL BARKER

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B6AMAG



RAW DAWG

BY ERIC GALES

Shape Shifting

Using position shifts to shape melodic ideas

AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT in my improvisational style and approach is the use of position shifts, which serve to spark the development of new and spontaneous melodic ideas. As the saying goes, “there are a million ways to skin a cat,” and I am always searching for new ways to get from one area of the fretboard to another.

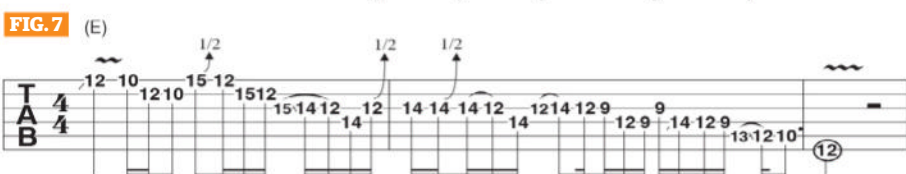
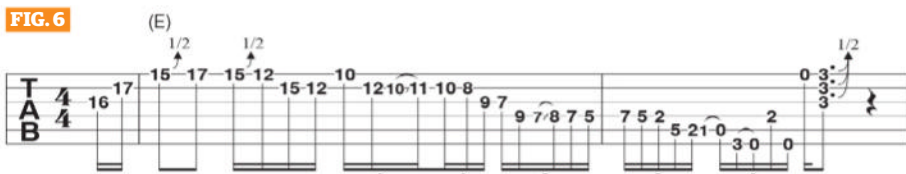
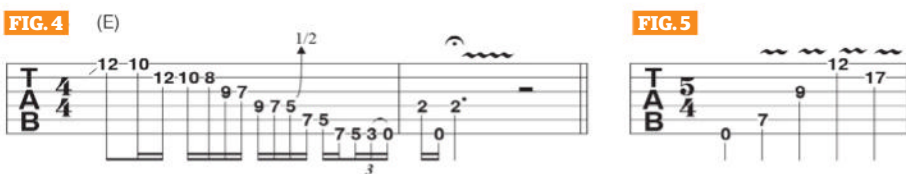
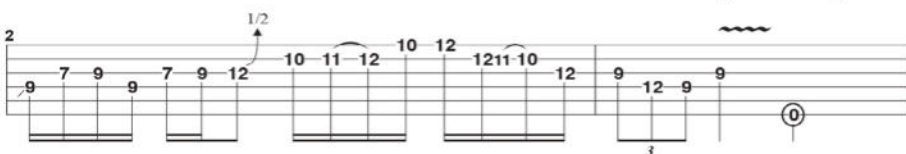
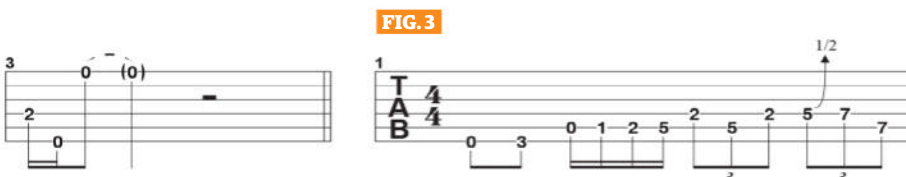
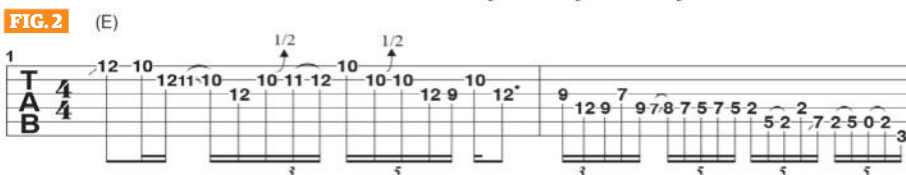
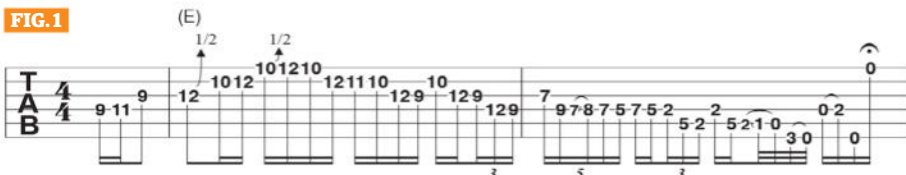
FIGURE 1 offers an example of some free improvisation in the key of E: though the majority of the lines are based on the E blues scale (E, G, A, B $\flat$, B, D), I begin with the notes B, C $\sharp$ and E, referencing E major pentatonic (E, F $\sharp$, G $\sharp$, B, C $\sharp$), switching immediately to the E blues scale, in 9th/10th position, in bar 1.

On beat 1 of bar 2 I shift down to 7th position then immediately shift down to 5th position. From there I shift down to 2nd position on the upbeat of beat 2. These shifts set up the final move to open position, where I perform some quick finger slides and pull-offs to the open strings and wrap up the phrase.

Also based on the E blues scale, **FIGURE 2** offers another example of how I might move from the treble strings and higher region of the fretboard down to the low strings and 1st position. Bar 1 sits squarely in 10th position, with slides, bends and hammer-ons used to evoke a vocal-like legato quality. In bar 2, I gradually work my way down to 9th, 7th, 5th and 2nd positions, utilizing quintuplet note groupings to give the lines an unusual and fluid rhythmic feel.

The opposite approach would be to move up the fretboard. In **FIGURE 3**, I begin on the bottom three strings in 1st/2nd position, ending bar 1 in 5th position and then shifting up to 7th, 9th and 10th positions in bar 2. Once I reach the high E note, I descend back to the G and D strings in 9th position.

I should point out that none of these



position shifts are predetermined; I'm improvising spontaneously here and following where the melodic shapes and ideas will take me in an instinctive, natural way.

The way I developed the ability to move up and down the fretboard like this was to initially practice and memorize all the minor pentatonic and blues scale “box” patterns and positions, moving across all six strings, ascending and descending. Once I'd learned every pattern, I could easily envision each one as I jump from one area of the fretboard to another.

FIGURE 4 shows the E blues scale played in a descending manner, traversing the neck

from 10th to 2nd position.

For any key you're playing in, it's very beneficial to visualize all of your root notes on each string as you move up the board. For example, **FIGURE 5** shows the E root note on five different strings. That awareness will facilitate the phrase shown in **FIGURE 6**.

It feels very natural for me to start high and end low. **FIGURE 7** is played in this manner, sticking mostly with the higher portions of the fretboard.

Try the “step ladder” approach, move up two positions, then back one, then up two more, then back down, etc. The possibilities for new melodic discoveries are endless. **GW**

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/november2026

According to Eric Gales' website, the Memphis-born southpaw is “widely regarded as one of the best blues guitarists in the world” — and we do not disagree! His latest album is 2025's *A Tribute to LJK*. For more info, check out ericgales.com.



WORKIN' MAN

BY CHARLIE STARR

Depth of Field

The art of overdubbing

IN PUTTING THE music together for my band Blackberry Smoke, I'll often come up with a primary guitar part – the one that plays the principle riff of the song – along with a complimentary part that sits under it and offers musical and rhythmic support. A good example of this can be found in “Morningside,” which we recorded for our 2021 album, *You Hear Georgia*. I wrote this song with my good friend Nick Perri, who's a fabulous guitar player you may have heard of from his work with Perry Ferrell, Matt Sorum and many others.

“Morningside” opens with a heavy single-note riff that's played in the key of B and with a triplet, or swing, 16ths feel, illustrated in **FIGURE 1**. The riff is based on the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F#, A) and alternately references the I (one) and IV (four) chords, B, and E, bar to bar. The triplet feel gives the riff a nice swing-type groove, especially as it's played against a slow, half-time feel.

At the verse section, the guitars settle into ringing chords that serve to lay down a solid foundation for the vocals. **FIGURE 2** shows the B root note octaves played as whole notes by the main guitar part, which I slide into. **FIGURE 3** depicts the complimentary ringing 1st-position chords played by the second guitar part, which is treated with a tremolo-type modulation effect and alternates bars of Bm7add4 and E7/B.

This is followed by a return of the intro riff, which leads into the second verse and a reprise of the ringing parts shown in **FIGURES 2** and **3**. We then go to the chorus, the complimentary guitar parts for which are illustrated in **FIGURES 4** and **5**. The primary part (**FIGURE 4**) simply rides on major and dominant 7 chords with the progression E - F#7 - G7 - A7. At the end of the phrase, it reverts back to the single-note B minor

w/swing 16ths feel (♩ = 16th)

FIG. 1 (Bm)

FIG. 2 (Bm) (E)

FIG. 3 Bm7add4 E7/B

FIG. 4 E F#7

FIG. 5 (E) (F#7) w/hybrid picking, let ring

FIG. 6 D5 D5/C# C#7 F#m E

pentatonic riff.

While the main guitar lays down the foundation of the progression of full chords, I felt that the complimentary guitar part, shown in **FIGURE 5**, needed to “dance” with the vocal melody. This part adds syncopated, hybrid-picked dyads over each chord in the progression. While downpicking the low 6th-string root notes in a steady eighth-note rhythm, I fingerpick moving two-note figures on the D and G strings over each chord.

Notice that the pattern always begins with the B note on the G string's 4th fret as the highest note, which then descends, offering its own countermelody behind the vocals.

I wanted the solo section that follows to

move to an entirely different feel. As shown in **FIGURE 6**, a D5 power chord moves down to D5/C#, followed by C#7 then F#m and E. Underneath this part, the complimentary guitar arpeggiates the related but slightly altered progression Dsus2 - A/C# - C#7 - F#m7 - Esus4 with somewhat different voicings.

The modus operandi throughout this song has been for the primary guitar to “sit” in a very clear place while the complimentary guitar moves around it in various ways. Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, a master of layering multiple guitar parts, refers to the process as the “ancient art of weaving,” which is a perfect way to describe how two guitar parts can compliment one another. **GW**

No Pick Necessary

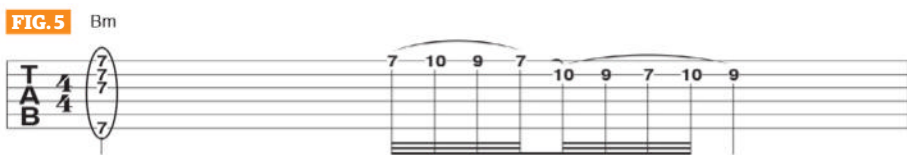
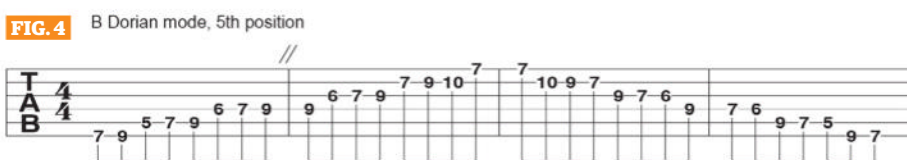
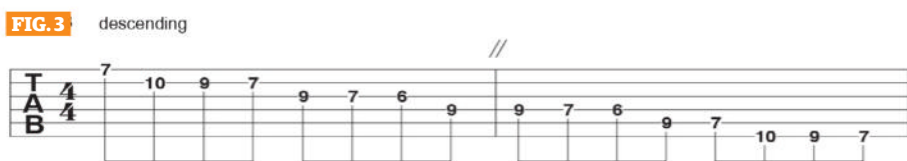
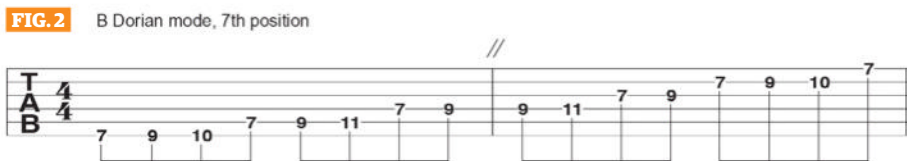
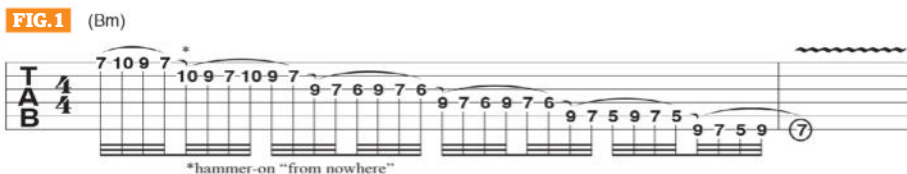
Further explorations of legato phrasing

IN MY INTRODUCTORY column last month, I discussed a few different approaches to legato phrasing. The term legato means “smooth and connected,” and on the guitar legato articulations include hammer-ons, pull-offs and finger slides. Legendary fusion guitarist Allan Holdsworth is widely considered as the greatest legato player of all time, and he was certainly a major influence in the development of my own approach to legato-style phrasing.

Last month, we analyzed a legato phrase that I played on the Testament song “So Many Lies,” which is in the key of E and based on the E Lydian $\flat 7$ scale, also known as the E Lydian-dominant mode (E, F $\sharp$, G $\sharp$, A $\sharp$, B, C $\sharp$, D). I would now like to take the same melodic and fretboard pattern and apply it to a different mode.

FIGURE 1 presents a fast cascading legato phrase that's based on the B Dorian mode (B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A), starting in 7th position and then, as the phrase progresses, shifts down to 6th and then 5th positions. I begin with my index finger on B, 1st string, 7th fret, and then hammer-on to the 10th fret with my pinkie, followed by a double pull-off to the 9th and 7th frets with my ring and index fingers. The pinkie then hammers on "from nowhere" to the 10th fret on the B string to sound A (the note is not picked).

Similar pull-offs and hammer-ons are then performed on the B string in virtually the same sequence, followed by a move to the G string and a repeat of this melodic “shape,” fretted with the pinkie and middle and index fingers. Beats 3 and 4 continue the crosses to the lower strings, rearticulating the identical melodic pattern while remaining diatonic to



(within the scale structure of) B Dorian.

A great way to execute legato phrases like this is to utilize a “three notes per string” fingering. As shown in bar 1 of **FIGURE 2**, this approach is applied to ascending through the first octave of B Dorian in 7th position. In bar 2, the three-notes-per-string approach is applied to the second octave; the exception is the G string, where only two notes are sounded.

In **FIGURE 3**, the same fingerings are illustrated through B Dorian played in a descending manner.

One should practice the scale in as many other positions as possible. **FIGURE 4** illustrates B Dorian as played in a combination of 5th, 6th and 7th positions, once again favoring the three-notes-per-string approach, played ascending and descending.

In **FIGURE 5**, I begin by sounding a Bm7 chord first, in order to provide the proper

tonal reference for the B Dorian single-note line. When moving the lick to different areas of the fretboard, I suggest playing a Bm7 chord initially, in order to keep that harmonic reference clear.

Keep in mind that B Dorian is the second mode of the A major scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#), also known as the A Ionian mode. The other six related modes that begin on each scale degree of A major are C# Phrygian, D Lydian, E Mixolydian, F# Aeolian and G# Locrian.

FIGURE 6 demonstrates the same type of fast, cascading legato run from **FIGURE 1** applied to the A major scale in 5th position.

Now that you have a clear picture of the note sequence, or “melodic shape,” as it descends across the fretboard, try applying it to the six other modes in various positions. This is a fantastic way to sharpen your fret-hand legato technique. **GW**

Alex Skolnick is best known for his work with Bay Area thrash legends Testament (not to mention Trans-Siberian Orchestra and Savatage), but you're just as likely to see him in action with his modern-jazz/instro-rock unit, the Alex Skolnick Trio. Check out alexskolnick.com.

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS

BY JIMMY BROWN

AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS

"U Should Not Be Doing That"



SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE.

This fun, upbeat new song is built around a handful of punchy, pick-style bass riffs, which,

accompanied by a solid, straightforward drumbeat, create an open-sounding counterpoint to frontwoman Amy Taylor's spunky punk rock vocals.

Using a pick and a bright, growly, compressed tone, Bassist Gus Romer kicks off the tune with a pickup phrase that leads into bar 1 and quickly establishes a driving eighth-note groove and an implied A5 tonality. Guitarist Declan Mehrtens enters in bar 2 with two sparse parts (see Gtrs. 1 and 2) treated with distortion and tremolo and plays ringing, understated single notes and dyads (two-note chords) that float nicely over the groove. The guitarist continues this approach throughout the intro and 1st verse (sections A and B), so as to keep some sonic energy and rhythmic density in reserve for later in the arrangement.

At the chorus (section C), Mehrtens and Romer octave double a fat-sounding single-note riff based initially on notes from the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) then the A blues scale (A, C, D, E $\flat$, E, G) to craftily imply an E5 - D5 - A5 progression without playing any actual chords.

As the second verse begins (section E), Mehrtens introduces high, chime-y natural harmonics (N.H.), adding color and sparkle to the groove. Notice in bar 34 that he strums 7th- and 5th-fret natural harmonics together, which is an unusual thing to do. To perform a natural harmonic, pick the string while lightly touching it directly above the fret indicated, not behind it, as you would do when fretting.

Mehrtens serves up an effectively "trashy" guitar solo at section G, relying on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G) and using bends, vibratos, finger slides, natural harmonics and percussive, fret-hand-muted strums. He brings the solo to an angst-filled climax in bars 71 and 72 by riding out on an oblique bend on his G and B strings and pushing the G string higher and higher, creating raunchy dissonance. Bend the string with your ring finger, supported one fret below by the middle finger, for added strength and control.

THE CURE

"Just Like Heaven"



THIS CATCHY, UPTEMPO

pop tune from 1987, which helped catapult the Cure to international fame, is based mostly on a

repeating four-chord progression. But rather than just strum full A, E, Bm and D chords repeatedly, which he does in his supportive acoustic Gtr. 2 part, guitarist-vocalist Robert Smith crafted hooky, two-string melodic riffs on a clean-tone electric, treated with a rich chorusing effect. These parts layer beautifully over the basic changes and add melodic interest and depth to the arrangement.

The song begins with drummer Boris Williams and bassist Simon Gallup laying down a sprightly eighth-note beat and introducing the song's foundational four-bar phrase structure. In bar 5, Smith enters with a low electric guitar figure built around major and minor 3rd dyads, which he plays entirely on his low E and A strings, shifting his fret hand up and down the neck to each two-finger

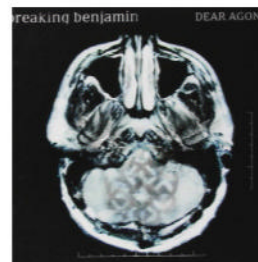
Playing low minor 3rds creates a dark, melancholy sound

shape. Notice how, by doing this instead of crossing over to the A and D strings for the Bm and D shapes, the guitarist maintains a consistently chunky timbre throughout the riff, which he strums entirely with downstrokes. Also note Smith's choice of the E/G $\sharp$ shape, which doesn't actually include an E root note, but rather the underlying chord's major 3rd, G $\sharp$, and 5th, B. This low inversion gives the riff a somewhat dark, melancholy quality and also makes for smoother voice-leading than what would result if he played E and G $\sharp$ way up at the 12th and 11th frets.

The real standout part is the high melody Smith introduces at section B (see Gtr. 3). Here, the guitarist cleverly uses his open 1st string as a ringing drone along with notes that he plays mostly on his B string, again shifting his fret hand up and down the neck while strumming consecutive downstrokes. When fingering the melody notes, take care not to inadvertently mute the ringing open high E string.

BREAKING BENJAMIN

"I Will Not Bow"



IN 2009, GUITARIST and singer Benjamin Burnley wrote this hard-hitting song with Jasen Rauch, and the band's lead guitarist

Aaron Fink contributed tasteful melodic parts to the arrangement. The result is widely considered one of modern hard rock's most emotionally and musically spirited anthems.

The song's noodly, hypnotic intro guitar riff (see bars 1-4) was actually composed and recorded by bassist Mark Klepaski, who employed two-hand tapping, with all the fret-hand notes hammered on "from nowhere," meaning they're stand-alone fret-hand taps. So all the notes in these first four bars are sounded without any picking.

Note the use of an upward legato slide at the end of bars 1 and 3. When playing this tapping section, with its high-gain tone, you'll definitely want to palm mute the unused 5th and 6th strings with your pick hand, in order to keep them from ringing sympathetically. This will suppress any unwanted noise and make for a cleaner-sounding stream of 16th notes.

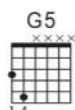
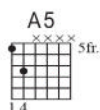
In the song's second chorus (section J), Fink plays a countermelody with natural harmonics (N.H.) over top of the previously introduced heavy low riffs from the first chorus. The challenge here is to quickly and accurately shift your fret hand up and down the neck to sound the harmonics at the 12th, 7th and 5th frets in quick succession. Use whichever finger works best for each harmonic and lay the finger flat across the strings, as if you were barring, as opposed to using the fingertip.

In his guitar solo at section L, Fink employs a wide fret-hand stretch between his 1st and 4th fingers to sound notes at the 15th and 19th frets together on the top two strings (note the directive "let ring" in bars 63, 64, 67 and 68). Allow your wrist to rotate as needed to reach the notes while taking care not to inadvertently mute the 1st string with your pinkie as it frets the 2nd string.

The quick ascending and descending pinkie slide in bar 66 can be tricky to perform cleanly with this weakest of fingers. When sliding, don't press down on the string any harder than necessary to fret the note cleanly, as doing so will only cause undue friction and drag. **GW**

AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS

"U Should Not Be Doing That"

AS HEARD ON **CARTOON DARKNESS**WORDS AND MUSIC BY **AMY TAYLOR, FERGUS FOSTER ROMER AND BRYCE WILSON**TRANSCRIBED BY **JEFF PERRIN**All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E $\flat$, A $\flat$, D $\flat$, G $\flat$, B $\flat$, E $\flat$).Bass tuning (low to high: E $\flat$, A $\flat$, D $\flat$, G $\flat$).All music sounds in the key of A $\flat$ minor; one half step lower than written.**A** Intro (0:00)Moderately Fast $\text{♩} = 126$

N.C. (A5)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist. and tremolo effect)

(G5)

GTR.1**GTR.2**

1 (pick w/fingers) let ring

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass (w/pick) Bass Fig. 1

Good

A5 G5

let ring

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1

TRANSCRIPTIONS

B 1st Verse (0:18)

morning can you sink off your skin I was struggling to tell you where I have been 'Cause I've been
I am trying my best to get it on Not everybody makes it out alive when they are

N.C. (A5)

Gtr. 1 (w/pick)

Rhy. Fig. 2

10

GTR.1

young running around making mess of meself I know how you feel about that You told me once when I showed you that but
I was in Tokyo showing off my crack and you told me that I should not be doing that Hey

(A5)

(G5)

end Rhy. Fig. 2

14

C 1st and 2nd Choruses (0:49, 1:50)

I was in L.A. shaking my shit off while you were down in Melbourne saying Fuck that bitch off
I was in Tokyo popping shit off while you were down in Sydney trying to get jacked off

(E5)

(D5)

(A5)

18 Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR.1

GTR.2

Bass
Bass Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

2nd time, skip ahead to **F** Bridge (bar 50)

You were in New York gettin' shit on And they were down in Melbourne saying You should not be doing that
I was in London being the queen And you were in my head saying You should not be doing that

(E5)

(D5)

(A5)

22

*Notes played first time only.

D (1:04)

(A5)

(G5)

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

Gtr. 1

(pick w/fingers)

let ring

let ring

GTR.1

26

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 2)

30 A5 G5 I'm in my
let ring let ring

E 2nd Verse (1:19)

head doing the work I'm putting on me shoes and me socks 'cause I gotta Get outta here

N.C. (A5) N.H. (G5)

34 (w/pick) pitches: E F#

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 2)

Another person sayin' I'm not doing it right Another person tryin' to give me some kinda internal fight but

(A5) (G5)

38

I'm working on my worth I'm working on my worth I'm working on who I am I'm working on what is wrong what is right and where I am

(A5) (G5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 10)

Gtr. 2

GTR. 2

42 N.H. N.H.

pitch: E E B G

Go back to **C** Chorus (bar 18)

I know my worth I'm not the worst You told me once I was

(A5)

I cannot do this anymore

(G5)

I gotta hit the buzz 'Cause

46 N.H. N.H. N.H.

pitch: E G D E B

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see below bar 69)

F Bridge (2:06) (♩ = 128)

(D5)

(A5)

(F5)

(D5)

I know my

(A5)

50 Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR. 1

GTR. 2

Bass

TRANSCRIPTIONS

worth

Let's go

54

(F5)

(B5)

(A5)

[illegible]

G **Guitar Solo** (2:19) (♩ = 126)

(A5)

(G5)

Gtr. 1

GTR.1

57

57
 7^{*} (7) 7 7^{*} (7) 0
 7 (7) 5 7^{*} (7) 2/15 7/19 1 0 2^{*} (2) 2.3 2.3 0 2.3 2.3
 pitch: D A

pitch: D

*Harmonic node located approx.
3/10ths between 2nd and 3rd fret.

end Rhy. Fig. 3

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 3

GTR. 2

The diagram illustrates the four segments of the 12-tone scale. It consists of four horizontal bars, each divided into two equal parts by a vertical line. Below each bar, the number of tones in each segment is indicated. The segments are: 5 tones (left) and 5 tones (right); 5 tones (left) and 5 tones (right); 3 tones (left) and 3 tones (right); and 3 tones (left) and 3 tones (right).

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 2)

(A5)

(G5)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 57)

Gtr. 1

(w/random harmonic node points)

GTR.1

[illegible]

(A5)

(G5)

65

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is a bass clef. The melody is written in the upper staff, and the bass line is in the lower staff. The first measure of the melody is a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter note B-flat4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and then a quarter note B-flat2. The system ends with a double bar line.

(A5)

69

The second system of the musical score for 'The Little Boat' consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of notes: a half note G4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a final half note G4. The lower staff contains a sequence of notes: a half note G3, followed by quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, and a final half note G3. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line. The first measure contains the first eight notes, and the second measure contains the last two notes.

Bass Fill 1 (1:48, 2:47)

(G5)

“U SHOULD NOT BE DOING THAT”

(G5)

71

1/4

1

1 1/2

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see below bar 69)

H 3rd Chorus (2:49)

I was in Naarm working on my shit While you were down in Tassie saying Flash those tits

(E5) (D5) (A5)

73 Gtrs. 1 and 2

I was in Gadigal showing off my flesh While you were up in Brizzie trying to tell me I can't do it like that

77 (repeat previous four bars)

I **Outro** (3:05)

(E5)
(D5)
(A5)

81 Gtr. 2

GTR.2

14 14 14 12 14 12 (12) 14 12 14 13 12 14 12 12 12 12 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 12 10 12 14

Gtr. 1

GTR.1

7 7 7 5 7 5 (5) 7 5 7 6 5 7 5 5 5 5 0 3 5 (5) 3 5 3 5 3 5 7 5

(E5) (D5) (A5)

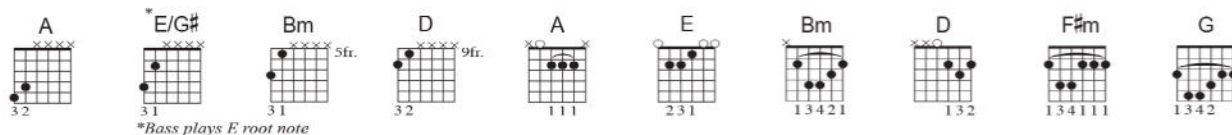
85 Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

THE CURE

"Just Like Heaven"

AS HEARD ON **KISS ME, KISS ME, KISS ME**WORDS BY **ROBERT SMITH** MUSIC BY **ROBERT SMITH, LAURENCE TOLHURST, SIMON GALLUP, PAUL S. THOMPSON AND BORIS WILLIAMS**TRANSCRIBED BY **DANNY BEGELMAN AND JIMMY BROWN****A** Intro (0:01)

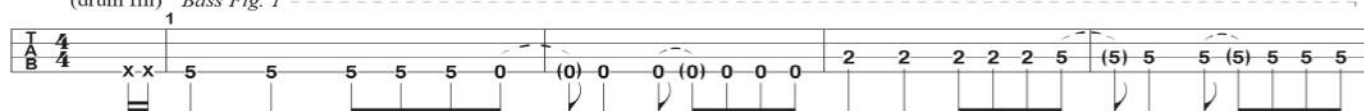
Moderately Fast ♩ = 153

N.C.(A)

(E)

(Bm)

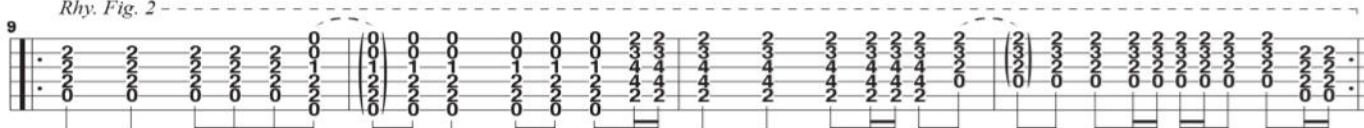
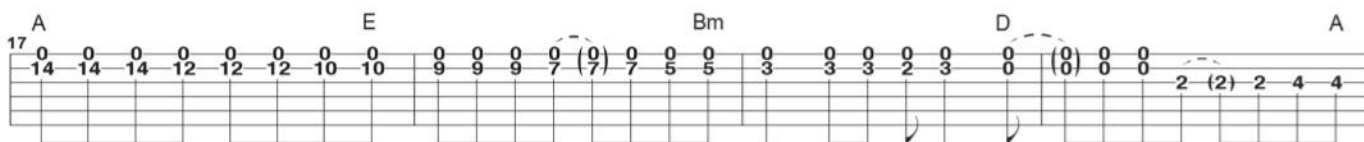
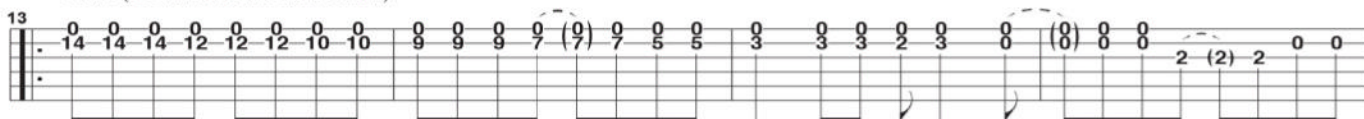
(D)

Bass (w/pick, chorus effect and light palm muting throughout)
(drum fill) Bass Fig. 1A E/G# Bm D
Gtr. 1 (elec. w/clean tone and chorus)
Rhy. Fig. 1**GTR.1**

Gtr. 2 (12-string acous.)



Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 seven times (see bar 1)

A E Bm D A
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 5)
Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 2**GTR.2****B** (0:25, 1:16)A E Bm D A
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 5)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times simile (see bar 5)
Gtr. 3 (elec.w/clean tone and chorus)**GTR.3**

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"JUST LIKE HEAVEN"

21 

C 1st and 2nd Verses (0:51,1:29)

show	me	how	you	do	that	trick	The	one	that	makes	me	scream	she	said	The
2. Spinning	on	that	dizzy			edge	I	kissed	your	face	I	kiss	your	head	An
A			E/G#					Bm				D			A

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times simile (see bar 5)

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 on 2nd Verse (see below)

Gtr. 1

GTR.1

[illegible]

one that makes me laugh she said and threw her arms around my neck
 dreamed of all the different ways I had to make her glow
 A E/G# Bm D

33

E/G# F#m D

A

4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 2 4 (2 4) 2 4 2 4 (2 4) 2 4 2 4 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 9 10 (9 10) 9 10 9 10 (9 10) 9 10 9 10

Show me how you do it and I'll promise you I promise that I'll run a
Why are you so far away she said But won't you ever know that I'm in

37 A E/G# Bm D A

way with you I'll run away with you
love with you That I'm in love with you

41 A E/G# Bm D

Fill 1 (1:29)

(A) (E) (Bm) (D)

Gtr. 3 (clean elec. w/chorus)

(play 4 times)

GTR.3

T	4	.	-	-	-	7	7	7	7	7	7	.
A	4	.				7	7	7	7	7	7	.
B	4	.				7	7	7	7	7	7	.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

D 1st Chorus (1:55)

You soft and only

You

F#m

G

F#m

G

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR. 1

GTR. 2

Bass

Lost and lonely

You

Strange as angels

F#m

G

Dancing in the deepest ocean

Twisting in the water

You're just like a dream

D

Gtr. 4 (piano arr. for gtr.)

GTR. 4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR. 1

GTR. 2

Bass

E Piano Melody (2:11)

You're just like a dream

A

E

Bm

D

A

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times simile (see bar 5)

Gtr. 4

GTR. 4

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

A

E

Bm

D

A

"JUST LIKE HEAVEN"

GTR. 4

F 3rd Verse (2:36)

3. Daylight	whipped me	into	shape	I	must have been	asleep		for	days	And
moving	lips	could breathe her	name	I	opened up	my	eyes			And
found myself		alone	alone	alone	along	a	raging		sea	that
A		E/G#			Bm		D			A

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 four times simile (see bar 5)
Gtr. 1

(play 3 times)

GTR.1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

stole the only girl I loved and drowned her deep inside of me
A E/G# Bm D

GTR.3

G 2nd Chorus (3:02)

You	soft	and	lonely
You	lost	and	lonely
You	Just	like	Heaven

GTR.3

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR.1

GTR.2

Bass

BREAKING BENJAMIN

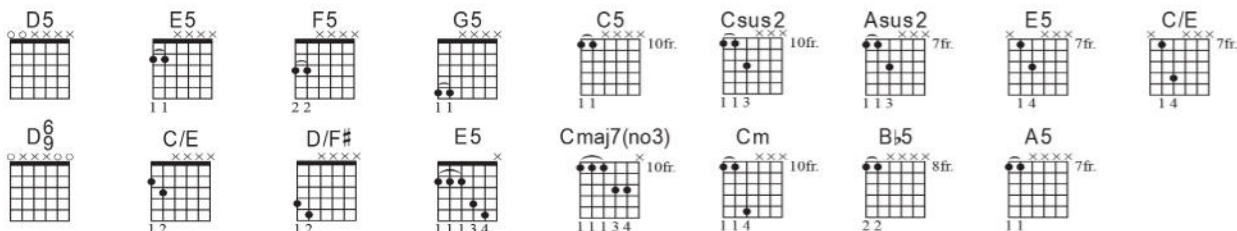
"I Will Not Bow"

AS HEARD ON **DEAR AGONY** AND IN THE FILM **SURROGATES**
WORDS AND MUSIC BY **BENJAMIN BURNLEY** AND **JASEN RAUCH**
TRANSCRIBED BY **JEFF PERRIN**

All guitars are in drop-D tuning, down two whole steps (low to high: B_b, F, B_b, E_b, G, C).

Bass is in drop-D tuning, down two whole steps (low to high: B $\flat$, F, B $\flat$, E $\flat$).

All music sounds in the key of C minor, two whole steps lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 108

N.C. (D5) (E5) (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (C5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (D5)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist. and prod. filter effect)

Riff A - - -

GTR.1

TAB 4/4

1 2 4 9 2 4 7 2 4 10 2 4 9 2 4 7 9 2 4 9 2 10 2 4 9 2

fret hand fingering: 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3

*All fret-hand notes performed with hammer-ons 'from nowhere.'

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist. and prod. filter effect)

TAB 4/4

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

(D5) (E5) (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (C5) (D5) (E5) (D5)

Gtr. 1 plays Riff A (see bar 1)

3 Gtr. 2

w/fdbk. (overdub)

GTR.2

The first system of the musical score for 'The Little Boat' consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the treble clef and contains a melody with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F#2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F#1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F#0, E0, D0, C0, B-1, A-1, G-1, F#-1, E-1, D-1, C-1, B-2, A-2, G-2, F#-2, E-2, D-2, C-2, B-3, A-3, G-3, F#-3, E-3, D-3, C-3, B-4, A-4, G-4, F#-4, E-4, D-4, C-4, B-5, A-5, G-5, F#-5, E-5, D-5, C-5, B-6, A-6, G-6, F#-6, E-6, D-6, C-6, B-7, A-7, G-7, F#-7, E-7, D-7, C-7, B-8, A-8, G-8, F#-8, E-8, D-8, C-8, B-9, A-9, G-9, F#-9, E-9, D-9, C-9, B-10, A-10, G-10, F#-10, E-10, D-10, C-10, B-11, A-11, G-11, F#-11, E-11, D-11, C-11, B-12, A-12, G-12, F#-12, E-12, D-12, C-12, B-13, A-13, G-13, F#-13, E-13, D-13, C-13, B-14, A-14, G-14, F#-14, E-14, D-14, C-14, B-15, A-15, G-15, F#-15, E-15, D-15, C-15, B-16, A-16, G-16, F#-16, E-16, D-16, C-16, B-17, A-17, G-17, F#-17, E-17, D-17, C-17, B-18, A-18, G-18, F#-18, E-18, D-18, C-18, B-19, A-19, G-19, F#-19, E-19, D-19, C-19, B-20, A-20, G-20, F#-20, E-20, D-20, C-20, B-21, A-21, G-21, F#-21, E-21, D-21, C-21, B-22, A-22, G-22, F#-22, E-22, D-22, C-22, B-23, A-23, G-23, F#-23, E-23, D-23, C-23, B-24, A-24, G-24, F#-24, E-24, D-24, C-24, B-25, A-25, G-25, F#-25, E-25, D-25, C-25, B-26, A-26, G-26, F#-26, E-26, D-26, C-26, B-27, A-27, G-27, F#-27, E-27, D-27, C-27, B-28, A-28, G-28, F#-28, E-28, D-28, C-28, B-29, A-29, G-29, F#-29, E-29, D-29, C-29, B-30, A-30, G-30, F#-30, E-30, D-30, C-30, B-31, A-31, G-31, F#-31, E-31, D-31, C-31, B-32, A-32, G-32, F#-32, E-32, D-32, C-32, B-33, A-33, G-33, F#-33, E-33, D-33, C-33, B-34, A-34, G-34, F#-34, E-34, D-34, C-34, B-35, A-35, G-35, F#-35, E-35, D-35, C-35, B-36, A-36, G-36, F#-36, E-36, D-36, C-36, B-37, A-37, G-37, F#-37, E-37, D-37, C-37, B-38, A-38, G-38, F#-38, E-38, D-38, C-38, B-39, A-39, G-39, F#-39, E-39, D-39, C-39, B-40, A-40, G-40, F#-40, E-40, D-40, C-40, B-41, A-41, G-41, F#-41, E-41, D-41, C-41, B-42, A-42, G-42, F#-42, E-42, D-42, C-42, B-43, A-43, G-43, F#-43, E-43, D-43, C-43, B-44, A-44, G-44, F#-44, E-44, D-44, C-44, B-45, A-45, G-45, F#-45, E-45, D-45, C-45, B-46, A-46, G-46, F#-46, E-46, D-46, C-46, B-47, A-47, G-47, F#-47, E-47, D-47, C-47, B-48, A-48, G-48, F#-48, E-48, D-48, C-48, B-49, A-49, G-49, F#-49, E-49, D-49, C-49, B-50, A-50, G-50, F#-50, E-50, D-50, C-50, B-51, A-51, G-51, F#-51, E-51, D-51, C-51, B-52, A-52, G-52, F#-52, E-52, D-52, C-52, B-53, A-53, G-53, F#-53, E-53, D-53, C-53, B-54, A-54, G-54, F#-54, E-54, D-54, C-54, B-55, A-55, G-55, F#-55, E-55, D-55, C-55, B-56, A-56, G-56, F#-56, E-56, D-56, C-56, B-57, A-57, G-57, F#-57, E-57, D-57, C-57, B-58, A-58, G-58, F#-58, E-58, D-58, C-58, B-59, A-59, G-59, F#-59, E-59, D-59, C-59, B-60, A-60, G-60, F#-60, E-60, D-60, C-60, B-61, A-61, G-61, F#-61, E-61, D-61, C-61, B-62, A-62, G-62, F#-62, E-62, D-62, C-62, B-63, A-63, G-63, F#-63, E-63, D-63, C-63, B-64, A-64, G-64, F#-64, E-64, D-64, C-64, B-65, A-65, G-65, F#-65, E-65, D-65, C-65, B-66, A-66, G-66, F#-66, E-66, D-66, C-66, B-67, A-67, G-67, F#-67, E-67, D-67, C-67, B-68, A-68, G-68, F#-68, E-68, D-68, C-68, B-69, A-69, G-69, F#-69, E-69, D-69, C-69, B-70, A-70, G-70, F#-70, E-70, D-70, C-70, B-71, A-71, G-71, F#-71, E-71, D-71, C-71, B-72, A-72, G-72, F#-72, E-72, D-72, C-72, B-73, A-73, G-73, F#-73, E-73, D-73, C-73, B-74, A-74, G-74, F#-74, E-74, D-74, C-74, B-75, A-75, G-75, F#-75, E-75, D-75, C-75, B-76, A-76, G-76, F#-76, E-76, D-76, C-76, B-77, A-77, G-77, F#-77, E-77, D-77, C-77, B-78, A-78, G-78, F#-78, E-78, D-78, C-78, B-79, A-79, G-79, F#-79, E-79, D-79, C-79, B-80, A-80, G-80, F#-80, E-80, D-80, C-80, B-81, A-81, G-81, F#-81, E-81, D-81, C-81, B-82, A-82, G-82, F#-82, E-82, D-82, C-82, B-83, A-83, G-83, F#-83, E-83, D-83, C-83, B-84, A-84, G-84, F#-84, E-84, D-84, C-84, B-85, A-85, G-85, F#-85, E-85, D-85, C-85, B-86, A-86, G-86, F#-86, E-86, D-86, C-86, B-87, A-87, G-87, F#-87, E-87, D-87, C-87, B-88, A-88, G-88, F#-88, E-88, D-88, C-88, B-89, A-89, G-89, F#-89, E-89, D-89, C-89, B-90, A-90, G-90, F#-90, E-90, D-90, C-90, B-91, A-91, G-91, F#-91, E-91, D-91, C-91, B-92, A-92, G-92, F#-92, E-92, D-92, C-92, B-93, A-93, G-93, F#-93, E-93, D-93, C-93, B-94, A-94, G-94, F#-94, E-94, D-94, C-94, B-95, A-95, G-95, F#-95, E-95, D-95, C-95, B-96, A-96, G-96, F#-96, E-96, D-96, C-96, B-97, A-97, G-97, F#-97, E-97, D-97, C-97, B-98, A-98, G-98, F#-98, E-98, D-98, C-98, B-99, A-99, G-99, F#-99, E-99, D-99, C-99, B-100, A-100, G-100, F#-100, E-100, D-100, C-100, B-101, A-101, G-101, F#-101, E-101, D-101, C-101, B-102, A-102, G-102, F#-102, E-102, D-102, C-102, B-103, A-103, G-103, F#-103, E-103, D-103, C-103, B-104, A-104, G-104, F#-104, E-104, D-104, C-104, B-105, A-105, G-105, F#-105, E-105, D-105, C-105, B-106, A-106, G-106, F#-106, E-106, D-106, C-106, B-107, A-107, G-107, F#-107, E-107, D-107, C-107, B-108, A-108, G-108, F#-108, E-108, D-108, C-108, B-109, A-109, G-109, F#-109, E-109,

B (0:09)

D5 E5	F5 E5	N.C. (C5)	D5 E5	F5 E5	G5
-------	-------	-----------	-------	-------	----

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (w/dist.)

GTR.1

GTR.2

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

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"I WILL NOT BOW"

C5 **Csus2** **Asus2** **D5** **F5** **D5**
 7 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

GTR. 3

17 17 17 17 17 17 16 (16) 12 9^{*} 12 14^{*} 16 (16) 16 1/2
 15 15 15 15 15 15 14 (14) 10 7^{*} 10 12^{*} 14 (14) 14

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR. 1
GTR. 2

10^{*} 10 10 10 12 (12) 12 (12) 9^{*} 9 0^{*} 3 (3) 0
 10^{*} 10 10 10 10 (10) 10 (10) 7^{*} 7 7 7 0^{*} 3 (3) 0

Bass

10^{*} 10 10 10 10 (10) 10 (10) 7^{*} 7 7 7 0^{*} 3 (3) 0

C 1st Verse (0:18)

Now Leave the dark begins to rise Save your breath it's far from over
 Leave the lost and dead behind Now's your chance to run for cover
 E5 C/E D⁶₉

9 (16) (16) (14) (14)

(first time only)

Rhy. Fig. 1 w/tremolo effect

let ring — end Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass Fig. 2 end Bass Fig. 2

2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5 7 5 7 2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5 (5)

D (0:35)

I don't want to and change the world
 light the fuse burn it up
 E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M.

GTR. 1
GTR. 2

13 2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5 7 5 7 2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5 1/4 (5)

Bass

2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5 7 5 7 2^{*} 2 (2) 2 (2) 2 (2) 0 5 7 5

I just wanna path that leads it to colder nowhere To
 Take the path that leads it to colder nowhere
 C/E D5

15 P.M. P.M.

3^{*} 3 (3) 3 (3) 0 2 0 5 4 0 2 0^{*} 0 (0) 0 (0) 0 (0) 0 5 0 4 5 4

3^{*} 3 (3) 3 (3) 0 2 0 5 4 0 2 0^{*} 0 (0) 0 (0) 0 (0) 0 5 0 4 5 4

TRANSCRIPTIONS

E 1st Pre-chorus (0:53)

All is lost again

C5

Gtr. 3 (w/clean tone)

D5

But I'm not giving in

D/F#

C5

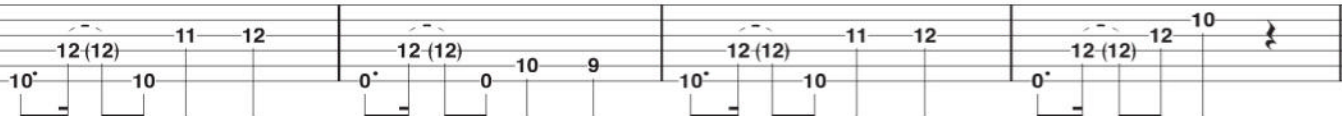
D5

I will not

17 Rhy. Fig. 2a

end Rhy. Fig. 2a

GTR. 3



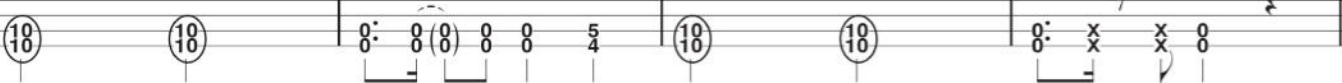
Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 2

GTR. 1

GTR. 2



Bass



F 1st Chorus (1:02)

bow I will not break

D5

I will shut

C5

the world away

Cmaj7(no3)

C5

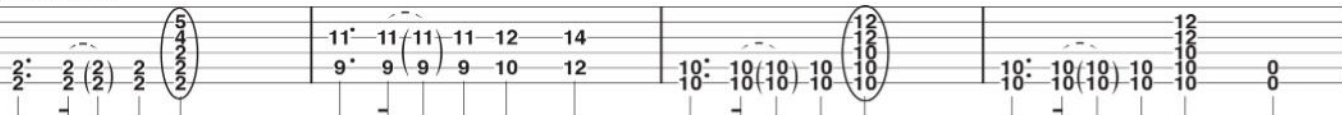
I will not

Cmaj7(no3) D5

Gtr. 1

21 Rhy. Fig. 3a

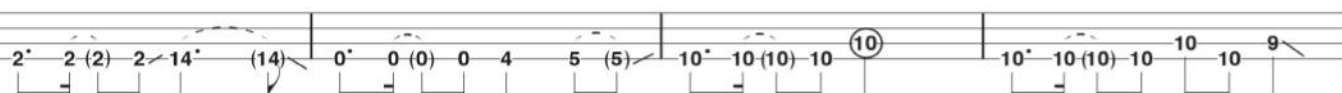
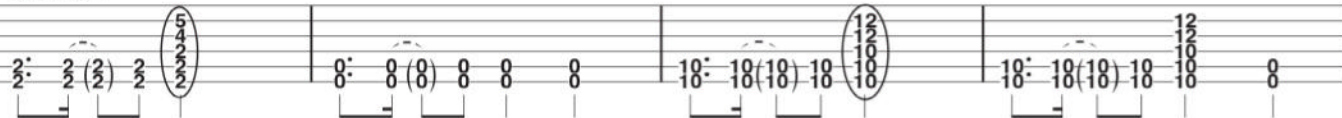
GTR. 1



Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 3

GTR. 2



fall I will not fade

D5

I will take

C5

your breath away

Cmaj7(no3)

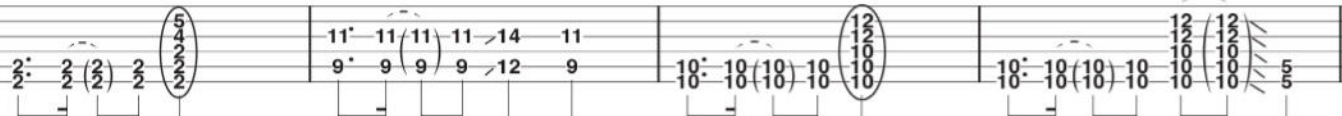
C5

Fall

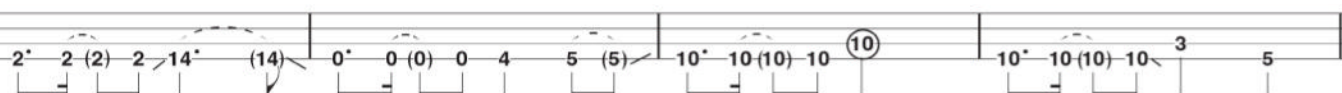
Cmaj7(no3) G5

25

end Rhy. Fig. 3a



end Rhy. Fig. 3



G (1:20)

D5 E5 F5 E5 N.C. (C5) D5 E5 F5 E5 G5
Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR.1

GTR.2

29

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)

C5 Cm Csus2 Asus2 F5
Gtr. 3

GTR.3

GTR.1

GTR.2

31

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

H 2nd Verse (1:29)

Watch the end through dying eyes Now the dark is taking over

E5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 9)
Gtr. 3

GTR.3

33

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 9)

Show me where forever dies Take the fall and run to heaven
D5 E5 D5 E5 D5 E5 D5 D/F# G5 C5 D5 C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 D/F#

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR.1

GTR.2

37 P.M. P.M.

I 2nd Pre-chorus (1:47)

All is lost again But I'm not giving in I will not

C5 D5 D/F# C5 D5

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a (see bar 17)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

41

J 2nd Chorus (1:55)

GTR.3

49 Bass

GTR.3

57 Bass

GTR.1

GTR.2[illegible]

K (2:31)

N.C. (E5)

Open

D5

your

F5 D5
w/wah - - - - -

61 Gtr. 1

P.H.

P.H.

pitch: D

A

GTR. 1

Gtr. 2

P.M.

GTR. 2

Bass

L Guitar Solo (2:36)

eyes

E5 G5 E5 B $\flat$ 5 A5 F5 E5 G5 E5 N.C.

let ring - - - - -

let ring - - - - -

let ring - - - - -

63 Gtr. 3

GTR. 3

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 4

GTR. 1

GTR. 2

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

E5 G5 E5 B $\flat$ 5 A5 F5 E5 G5 E5 N.C.

65

17 $\cdot$

15

(19)

19

15

16

15

19

15

19

20

19

15

19

15

19

15

16

15

2 $\cdot$

5

(5)

2

8 $\cdot$

7

(7)

3

2 $\cdot$

5

(5)

2

7

8

7

10

2 $\cdot$

5

(5)

2

8 $\cdot$

7

(7)

3

2 $\cdot$

5

(5)

2

3

2

5

TRANSCRIPTIONS

E5 G5 E5 B♭5 A5 F5 E5 G5 E5 N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 4 (see bar 63)

Gtr. 3

GTR. 3

67 let ring ----- let ring ----- let ring -----

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 63)

E5 G5 E5 B♭5 A5 F5 E5 G5 E5 D5 I will not G5

Gtr. 3

GTR. 3

69

Gtrs. 1 and 2

GTR. 1

GTR. 2

Bass

M 3rd Chorus (2:53)

bow I will not break I will shut the world away I will not

E5 D5 C5 Cmaj7(no3) C5 Cmaj7(no3) D5

N.H.

N.H.

71

pitches: E
B

pitch: E D E G F# D E D E G F#

fall I will not fade I will take your breath away And I'll survive

E5 D5 C5 Cmaj7(no3) C5 Cmaj7(no3) G5

Gtr. 3 plays Riff B (see bar 45)

Gtr. 2 plays last four bars of Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 25)

Gtr. 1

GTR. 1

75

Bass

POWER TOOLS

Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man

1978–1984, 1996–Present

CATEGORY: ANALOG DELAY/CHORUS-VIBRATO PEDAL

BY CHRIS GILL

▶ AS MENTIONED IN a previous Power Tools column about the Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress flanger (January 2024 *GW*), the introduction of low-cost bucket-brigade device (BBD) integrated circuits kicked off a revolutionary period for the guitar-effects marketplace. Dozens of companies introduced new chorus, flanger and analog delay pedals all around the same time in 1976, which makes it nearly impossible to determine which product came first. Like the Electric Mistress, the Electro-Harmonix Memory Man can't be verified as being the very first analog delay pedal on the market, but it was certainly among the first.

The original 1976 Memory Man was a basic analog delay effect featuring three controls and a maximum 300ms delay time. In 1977, EHX rolled out the first version of the Deluxe Memory Man with four knobs (a Level control

was added) and a slightly increased delay time. The model that really put the Deluxe Memory Man on the map was the five-knob version (generally known as the EH-7850, then EH-1343B, then EH-7850C) introduced in late 1978 that added a chorus/vibrato effect and individual wet and dry outputs. With its maximum delay time increased to about 550ms, this version of the Deluxe Memory Man provided almost twice the maximum delay time of more expensive competitors like the MXR M-118, which topped out at 300ms.

Thanks to its affordable price and expanded features, the five-knob Deluxe Memory Man became an instant hit. Its modulated delay sounds quickly made the pedal irresistible to numerous pros in the studio and on stage for crafting warm, lush textures and complex rhythms. The preamp is also a key element of the Deluxe Memory Man's sonic personality, adding sumptuous grit and body to the sound when the Level control is cranked up far enough to make the overload LED illuminate. Many players, including Adrian Belew, Geordie Walker, Robert Smith and (most notably) the Edge, used the box as a cornerstone of their signature sounds during the early Eighties and beyond.

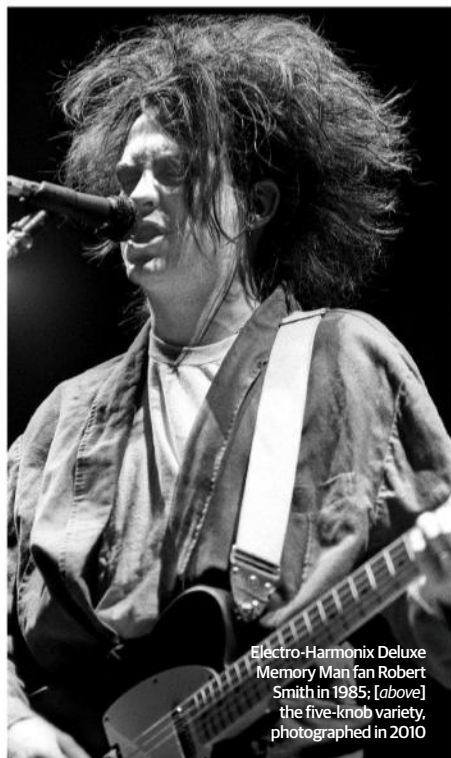
The Deluxe Memory Man virtually vanished from guitarists' thoughts when Electro-Harmonix temporarily went out of business in 1984 and digital delay pedals started gaining popularity. However, the original "big box" version made a comeback as the reissue



EH-2000 and EH-2002 versions produced between 1996–2007. With the exception of a few modifications like true bypass switching and an external 24vdc adapter, the reissues offered an accurate reproduction of the original unit that even looked like the real thing. This version was promptly embraced by a new generation of grunge and alternative artists seeking retro tones.

Initially the reissue even used the same pair of Matsushita MN3005 BBD chips as the earlier version. Online forums are filled with varying opinions about whether the dual MN3005 configuration sounds better than the quad MN3008 circuit and whether the Xvive MN3005 reproductions featured in the current pedals sound as good as the originals.

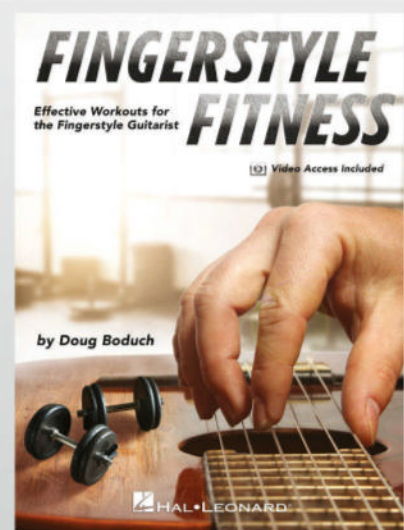
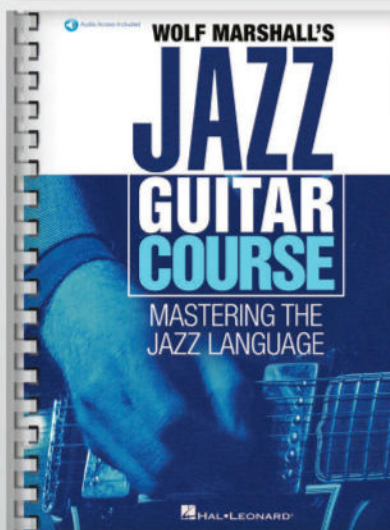
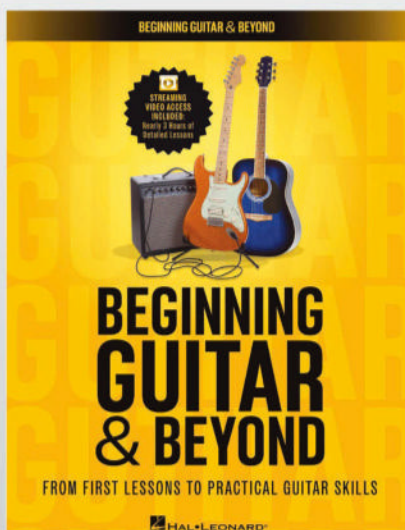
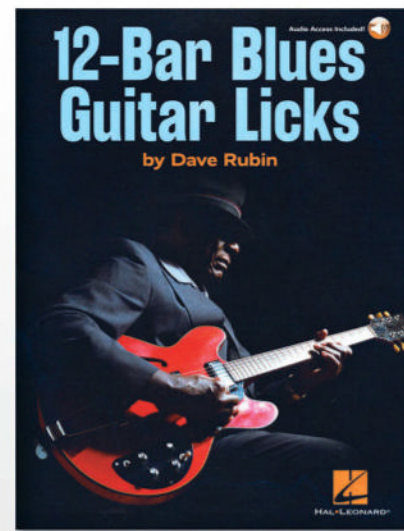
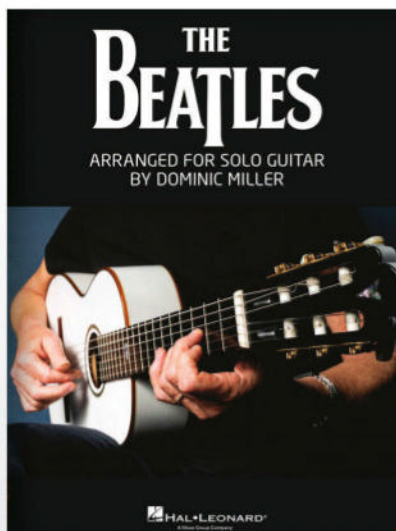
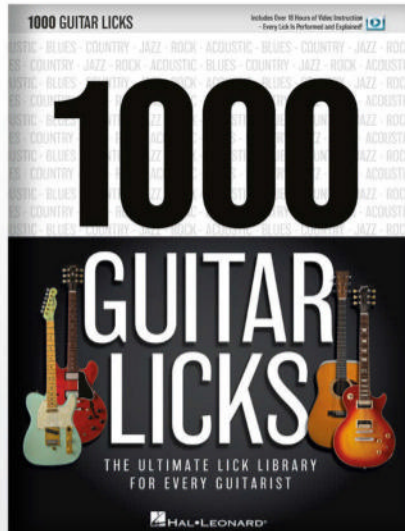
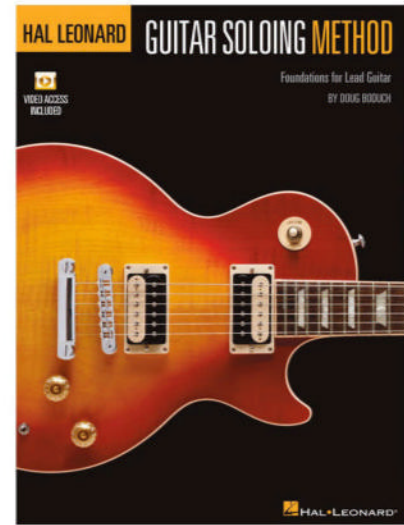
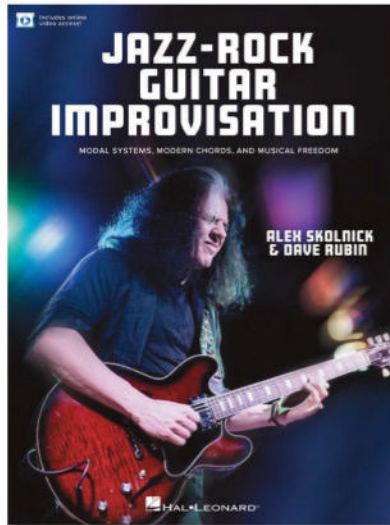
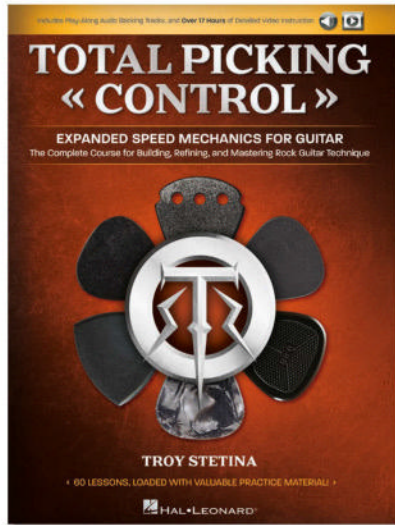
As with any musical gear, users should let their own ears be the guiding force. It's worth noting that a properly calibrated original or reissue is going to sound much better regardless of what type of chips it has inside. Anyone looking for a 2007 or earlier unit should also replace the electrolytic capacitors, which also can improve sound and performance considerably. **GW**



Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man fan Robert Smith in 1985; [above] the five-knob variety, photographed in 2010

JESSE WILD, ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS

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