

GUITAR GIRL

MAGAZINE

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JESSICA LYNN
SHARON ISBIN
MORIAH FORMICA
MEG TOOHEY
SOLEIL LAURENT
CAMILA MEZA
ABIGAIL ZACHKO
ELJURI
& MORE...

NEW YORK
INSPIRED

REVIEWS

MARTIN 00L-X2E
SPARK AMP BY
POSITIVE GRID
YAMAHA TRBJP2
JOHN PATITUCCI
SIGNATURE BASS
FENDER ESQUIRE
70TH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

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MODERN YESTERDAYS

PUNK ROCK GUITAR 101

MASTERING THE MAJOR SCALE: THREE NOTES PER STRING





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TARA TALK

Sadly, it's the end of our road trip series, which began in Southern California, stopped in Austin, followed by Nashville, and finally ending in New York City. It's been a great ride and we've met so many great artists and learned so many fun facts about these cities.

Known as The Big Apple and the city that never sleeps, New York has a rich musical history from early jazz and rhythm and blues to the emerging punk rock scene in the '70s at iconic venues like CBGBs.

The city began welcoming new immigrants through Ellis Island in the late 1800s, and the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, was erected on Liberty Island and dedicated in 1886.

Visitors to New York (pre-COVID) experienced pizza, hot dogs, bagels, street vendors, street buskers, and music! Sadly, with the lockdown and restrictions placed on live music performances, venues and musicians are suffering severely, making this edition an emotional one. Here we are introducing you to some local musicians and music stores with the hope of shedding light on their talents and instruments they offer.

From classical guitarist **Sharon Isbin**, Latina artists **Eljuri** and **Sus Vasquez**, rockers **Moriah Formica**, **Debra Devi**, **Marlene Mendoza**, and **Meg Toohey** (who performed with Sara Bareilles' Broadway show *The Waitress*), to **Kaki King** known for her unique percussive style of playing, country artist **Jessica Lynn** who graces our cover, and children's entertainer **Laurie Berkner** ... and this is just a sampling.

Several guitar companies we checked out are Sadowsky Guitars and D'Angelico Guitars, both with roots in NYC. Sam Ash opened his music store in New York, and the city is riddled with unique guitar stores where you can find your perfect instrument.

Our lesson on Punk Rock Guitar 101 will have you experimenting with your new sound, while our wellness tips will hopefully help guide you on finding the proper balance between work and pleasure to have you on your best musical journey. And, of course, our mind games and fun stuff will give you something to do during your downtime.

For gear reviews, we tried our hand at the Martin 00L-X2E Acoustic-Electric Guitar, a Yamaha bass and Fender guitar, and the Spark amp, which we've been waiting on for a while, so we were excited to check that out.

During this time, let's take the time to reflect on this past year and look at ways to readjust to life in this new environment.

New York has its struggles, but New York residents are strong and are ready to bounce back. Stay safe, wear a mask, and let's get COVID behind us!

Read on and enjoy it!
~ Tara Low



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COMMUNITY

SHE Said

Blu DeTiger

"I remember thinking guitar was so mainstream. I wanted to do something different, so I chose bass and never looked back. I grew attracted to the groove, the rhythm, the backbone of the music, and the purity of the bass."

Blu DeTiger, excerpt from *Guitar Girl Magazine*
interview October 2019



We want to hear from you!

Questions, comments, suggestions, road stories!
Send them directly to: info@guitargirlmag.com



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GUITAR GIRL MAGAZINE 2021 CALENDAR

Guitar Girl Magazine's 2021 calendar is a beautiful wall calendar. This 11 x 8.5-inch calendar features the extremely talented Soleil Laurent on the cover, followed by 12 months each showcasing a fabulous female guitar player followed by a bonus four-month pre-planner for 2022 and two pages for notes.



JANUARY
Nikki Stringfield



FEBRUARY
Alex Nicole Windsor



MARCH
Guitar Gabby



APRIL
Madeline Rosene



MAY
Serena Laurel



JUNE
Aliah Guerra



JULY
Holly West



AUGUST
Moriah Formica



SEPTEMBER
Anna Sentina



OCTOBER
Tiffany Lloyd



NOVEMBER
Nikki O'Neill



DECEMBER
Jessica Kaczmarek



PREPLANNER
Indigo Una



NOTES
Jimena Fosado



NOTES
Mean Mary James



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2021 SHE ROCKS AWARDS



Top row L to R: Nancy Wilson, Amy Lee (Evanescence), Margaret Cho, Cindy Blackman Santana, The Go-Go's, Bottom row L to R: Cherie Currie, Starr Parodi, Ann Mincieli, Sharon Hennessey, Gwen Bethel Riley, Kim Warnick

Honorees for the **2021 She Rocks Awards by The Women's International Music Network** (the WiMN) have been announced, and the lineup proves to be another great awards show in the making. The She Rocks Awards show honors women who display leadership and stand out within the music industry. The show is scheduled for 6:30 pm PT on Friday, January 22, 2021. Held annually at the NAMM Show with a red carpet event, live performances, and acceptance speeches, the 2021 event will be held virtually due to the ongoing pandemic. Not to worry, the ninth annual show is sure to be a "must-see" with virtual performances, speeches, celebrity appearances, silent auction, and more. Halestorm frontwoman, **LZZY HALE**, will be hosting the event, with Yahoo Entertainment's **Lyndsey Parker** hosting the pre-show countdown. Opening the show will be the Kentucky rock band **Magnolia Boulevard**, sponsored by PRS Guitars, and featuring lead vocalist Maggie Noelle, guitarist Gregg

Erwin, drummer Todd Copeland, keyboardist Ryan Allen, and bassist John Roberts.

The 2021 She Rocks Awards recipients include:

- **Nancy Wilson** - co-founder of the multi-platinum, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted band **Heart**
- **The Go-Go's** - the first all-female band to top the Billboard charts that both wrote their own songs and played their own instruments
- **Cherie Currie** - founding member of the pioneering all-female rock band **The Runaways**
- **Cindy Blackman Santana** - respected jazz and rock drummer with **Santana** and **Lenny Kravitz** among many others
- **Amy Lee** - co-founder and lead vocalist for the rock band **Evanescence**
- **Margaret Cho** - Emmy and Grammy-nominated stand-up comedian, actress, fashion designer, author, and singer-songwriter
- **Starr Parodi** - composer, pianist, conductor, arranger,

music director, and president of The Alliance For Women Film Composers

- **Ann Mincieli** - GRAMMY-winning recording engineer, studio coordinator for Alicia Keys, and co-founder of NYC-destination studio Jungle City
- **Sharon Hennessey** - co-president and co-owner of **The Music People**
- **Gwen Riley** - Senior VP of Music for **Peloton Interactive**
- **Kim Warnick** - Executive Director of **Calling All Crows**

Laura B. Whitmore, founder of the She Rocks Awards, comments, "The **She Rocks Awards** was created to bring us together and lift us all up with an evening of positive community and shared experience. This year is no different! I am so thrilled to honor these amazing role models and share their inspiring stories."

Previous award recipients include Melissa Etheridge, Pat Benatar,

Gloria Gaynor, The B-52s, Suzi Quatro, Colbie Caillat, Sheila E, Chaka Khan, Ronnie Spector, Orianthi, Lisa Loeb, The Bangles, Tara Low, and many more, plus a collection of role models from all walks of the music and audio industries.

The **2021 She Rocks Awards** is sponsored by Positive Grid, Sweetwater, Roland, PRS Guitars, PreSonus, NAMM, Fishman, Marshall, D'Addario, Reverb, The Music People, Cuccio, MAC Cosmetics, Clif, WRiG, Berklee School of Music, Parade, Future Publishing, Guitar World, MusicRadar and Guitar Girl Magazine.

This year's virtual event is open to the public, with VIP tickets (to include a VIP gift box) available for purchase at sherocksawards.com, where you can learn more about the show and where to tune in to watch. 🎫

BROOKLYN-MADE & RESTORED

If you're looking for an experienced repair shop in the New York City area for your beloved fretted instrument, look no further than Brooklyn Lutherie. Owners Mamie Minch and Chloe Swantner joined their creative forces and opened in 2014. The shop specializes in repairing vintage fretted instruments, from acoustic and electric guitars to mandolins, banjos, ukuleles, and the violin family of instruments.

Minch and Swantner want their repair shop "to be a place where musicians of all skill levels and particularly women feel comfortable and confident bringing their instruments." One of their online listings also

refers to their shop as LGBTQ-friendly and anti-racist.

Before opening Brooklyn Lutherie, Minch, a performing guitarist and singer playing old-school blues, worked at RetroFret Guitars, where she learned her skills on the job. She told us in an interview from 2013: "So, it's a pretty old-school way of learning a trade. A lot of people either go to school for luthiery or apprentice with a builder. I started as kind of a shop assistant."

Swantner, a fiddle player, attended the Vermont School of Violin Making training under Thurmond Knight, where she learned how to construct violins as well as repair and restoration techniques. Like Minch, she also worked at RetroFret Guitars.



Swantner also custom builds instruments in the violin family on a commission basis. 🎫

THE GIRLS THAT ROCKED CBGBS

By Leigh Fuge



CBGB club facade, Bowery St, New York City (2005)

Photo by Adicarlo at English Wikipedia

One of the most well-known music venues in New York City was CBGBs, located on The Bowery in the East Village section of Manhattan. Formerly a biker bar and dive bar opened in 1973 by Hilly Kristal, the venue became the center of the punk rock universe, a staple among fans. The name originated from the music genres country, bluegrass, and blues (hence CBGB), three genres you would not have associated with this dark and seedy punk palace with its infamous bathroom.

As punk was exploding in New York in the seventies and eighties, it needed a home. Many mainstream venues would not welcome punk and its rebellious ways into their place of business, but Hilly Kristal was not afraid to take a chance, having been involved in the industry for years. CBGBs quickly gained its reputation as *the place* to play for upcoming bands, especially in the punk and new wave scene.

Unfortunately, after thirty-plus years of making noise, CBGBs finally closed its doors in 2006 when its lease was not renewed after an outdrawn rent battle, and the club that changed the landscape of punk rock in America was silenced.

The venue's spirit still lives on, and the folklore of the bands that performed there will never die. Over the years of its existence, CBGBs hosted some of the biggest names in music. Everyone from the Ramones to the Police and the New York Dolls rocked the house on their tiny, rickety old stage. But we are here to talk about several of the women that dominated the scene. CBGBs was an inclusive place—while many aspects of the music industry were very male-dominated, at CBGBs, you left your prejudice at the door. Anyone who entered was equal. Everyone who dared to get up on that stage and rock was idolized.

Some of the biggest female stars that graced their stage showed the

audience that women can indeed rock just as hard, if not harder, than anyone else.

Blondie

Technically, Debbie Harry is not a guitar player, but Blondie cut their teeth on the CBGB stage, and their early punk records are remembered as some of the best. They were a regular fixture on the CBGB circuit, and Debbie was often seen frequenting the bar hanging out with other NYC punk, early rap, and street art royalty, including painter Jean-Michel Basquiat. Blondie's support slot with Johnny Thunders' post-New York Dolls group The Heartbreakers was pivotal in CBGB history.

Patti Smith

Patti Smith was there at the beginning, and she was there at the end. One of her first-ever recorded concerts took place in CBGBs in 1975 with the band Television. Patti was relatively unknown at this point, but she went on to take the scene by storm with her unique fusion of rock and poetry.

Patti Smith, with her band, played the final ever CBGBs show to take this journey full circle. She helped put it on the map, and when the club came to an end, she gave it the send-off it deserved with a blistering three-and-a-half-hour-long set, ending with the song "Elegie" (from her classic album *Horses*) where she read the names of departed and beloved artists—from the scene.

Joan Jett / the Runaways and the Blackhearts

No stranger to the CBGB stage, Joan Jett first cut her teeth there in 1976 with the Runaways in some of their earliest shows. Once the Runaways career faltered, Jett was back on that stage, but this time under her own name with the Blackhearts. She had returned to set the world on fire and earn her crown as the Queen of Rock with her monster hit, "I Love Rock 'n' Roll." 🎸

A NEW NEW YORK

By Maggie Roberts

It's no secret that the New York music scene is ever-changing and evolving. The last century has highlighted the beginning of jazz and R&B, the greatest songwriters of Greenwich Village and The Brill Building, and the emergence of punk, rock, and hip hop. Not to mention, it's also been the birthplace for some of the most legendary venues like The Bowery Ballroom, Radio City Music Hall, Rockwood, and of course, Madison Square Garden. Unfortunately, the music scene has taken a drastic turn in 2020 and left many shut down venues, musicians without work, and NYC locals to crave music more than ever.

Previous to the COVID experience, NYC truly was the city that never sleeps. You can find subway buskers out at the crack of dawn and upcoming indie artists playing at your favorite coffee shop. Maybe you stopped in at a local bar on the weekend where some of the greatest jazz musicians of the twenty-first century took a swing at a song. You could also head down to Madison Square Garden to see one of Billy Joel's residency shows. Not only has New York been the center for jazz, R&B, rock, punk, and pop music, it's also the center for musical theater. Any night of the week, you can stroll into Manhattan to see *Wicked*, *Hamilton*, or *The Phantom of the Opera*, where some of the most famous performers grace the stage. Even Sara Bareilles and Alanis Morissette had Broadway shows.

2020 has left the music scene in discord, and shutdowns have been painful to musicians, Broadway, and small venues. It's projected that ninety percent of independent venues across the country might close permanently without government aid, severely impacting the New York City music scene. While The Save Our Stages Act is still being debated in Congress, musicians have had to adjust and reroute. Most shows from small and large artists have been canceled, postponed, or moved onto a live streaming platform. Artists that were frequent New York performers like Diplo, John Legend, and The Roots have tried out live streaming

and video formatted performances. Other small and local artists and venues have also joined this live stream moment, but are they really that profitable when you don't have hundreds of thousands tuning in?

One of the most iconic local venues, The Bitter End, has an unsure future. It was just a short couple of years ago that Lady Gaga could be seen on the balcony of the venue singing to hundreds on the street. Now, a collective of The Bitter End frequent performers, like *American Idol* finalist Julia Gargano, have held live stream fundraising events to help save the beloved venue. More venues have also taken similar approaches with live streaming the past couple of months on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitch, and Instagram, while others have decided to close permanently. With COVID restrictions and lockdowns in place, met with limited space in the city, venue owners and musicians have been left scrambling for other sources of income.

This moment will forever be marked in time. While some musicians reminisce on the past music scene, most are spending their time trying to figure it all out like the rest of us. This time last year, walking down Manhattan, you could not escape music. Every block had a performer, every restaurant had a gigging musician most nights of the week, and every day, there was a huge act coming to town to play at one of New York's finest venues. Throughout this pandemic, optimism lies underneath the chaos—guitar sales have remained strong in the city, live stream benefit concerts have picked up with large brand sponsorships, New York City songwriters have grown resilient and continued their creative journey, and music lovers are awaiting the day they can enjoy a show again in the city that never sleeps. So will the music scene ever be the same? No, I don't believe so, but once we can enjoy music free from COVID, I truly believe New York will rejoice and push for an even better scene where musicians, artists, performers, and venue owners are unequivocally celebrated. —



FIVE NYC GUITAR SHOPS YOU'VE GOT TO CHECK OUT

By Maggie Roberts

TR Crandall

If you are a pro, vintage collector, or a well-known name in the music industry, chances are you've heard of TR Crandall. Run by Alex Whitman and Tom Crandall, they've been open since 2013, offering the highest quality guitars and a repair shop for any of your guitar needs.

TR Crandall specializes in vintage guitars and has now started offering Collings guitars too. Although they carry a range of expensive pieces, they've separated themselves from the NYC guitar shop stereotype by being hyper-vigilant on how they treat those who stop in. TR Crandall truly believes in treating everyone the same, keeping the guitars tangible and not in fancy glass cases, and making sure that if they're chatting with the likes of Jimmy Page or a ten-year-old coming in to pick up their first guitar, they will both be treated with the same respect and quality customer service.

If you wander onto their website or into their shop, you'll notice the wide variety of guitars they offer. You can pick up anything from an 1850s Martin to a 2017 National Triolian. When Alex and Tom aren't busy running the shop and tackling repairs, they have a blog where you can read all things TR Crandall and see some of their toughest repairs. If you aren't able to find yourself in NYC anytime soon, you can order online.

Southside Guitars

Located in Brooklyn, Southside Guitars is a must for New York music lovers. Founded by two brothers, Ben and Sam Taylor, in 2006, Southside specializes in vintage and collector grade guitars. When stopping in, you can expect to see Southside packed with SGs, a favorite of Ben and Sam, along with any guitar you could imagine—Strats, Telecasters, Jazzmasters, Les Pauls, and more. Whether you are looking for a classic piece or something special and unique, Southside will have something in stock you'll love. From their website, Ben states, "We also have a special place in our hearts for the runts and orphans of vintage guitars, and for anything unusual or bizarre. For this reason, we literally scour the planet for the rarest and most unique guitars ever made - guitars like Stratospheres, Gruggetts, and Wandres..."

Not only do they offer a wide variety of electric and acoustic models, but Southside is also always stocked up on unique and vintage amps and pedals. While Southside is indefinitely closed to the public, you can check out their inventory online, where you're welcome to pick up in store or get it shipped wherever you live in the world.

Chelsea Guitars

Chelsea Guitars is a treat for guitar lovers and guitar history buffs in

New York. Located in the Chelsea Hotel, some of the most iconic musicians have been stopping in since 1885. Justin Timberlake, Lenny Kravitz, Joan Baez, and Elvis Costello have all graced the shop and tried out some of the rarest finds. As a mom and pop store, they not only offer a range of vintage, used, and adequately priced guitars but also run a repair shop for any of your set up or repair needs. When looking through their showroom, you can expect to see unique and rare finds, collector-grade guitars, along with the perfect guitar for beginners, starting at around \$100. When not in the city, you can browse some of their gear and guitar inventory on Reverb, where you'll see a mix of vintage Martins, pickups, audio gear, rare Gibsons, and a whole lot more.

30th Street Guitars

30th Street Guitars is a funky shop that stands out in midtown Manhattan, surrounded by rehearsal studios, office buildings, and busy travelers coming in and out of Penn Station. Owner Matt Brewster has been passionate about guitars since childhood. He opened his store in 1995, and it has a friendly, low-key vibe inspired by the shop Brewster grew up visiting (and working at) in upstate New York. He specializes in repairing some of the most delicate vintage guitars and also created the Rust

custom line of guitars and basses, following old-school designs with traditional pickups, hardware, and finishes. Next time you're in the area, check out their inventory and surround yourself with the great energy that Brewster brings to his shop, where everyone from studio pros and Broadway musicians to rehearsing bands and beginning players is treated like family.

Rivington Guitars

Vintage is the specialty of Rivington Guitars, whether it's sales, appraisals, purchases, trades, rentals, or repairs. Here, you'll find everything from vintage Fenders to Silvertones and more unusual makes. Owner Howie Statland is one of the 25 US dealers who determine values in the Vintage Guitar Price Guide. He originally opened up shop in 1998 at a small location on Rivington Street (on the Lower East Side). In 2008, he moved it to a larger space in East Village and opened a separate shop for acoustic guitars in 2014 (both stores are located on the same street). Throughout the years, Rivington Guitars has satisfied the likes of Norah Jones, The Killers, Paul Simon, The Black Keys, Courtney Love, and many, many others. With over 350 vintage guitars in stock at all times, they update their website daily. The store also offers guitar lessons, and even sell, trade and repair vintage amps and keyboards. —

JUILLIARD GUITAR PROGRAM

Known as the world's leading performing arts school, Juilliard was originally known as the Institute of Musical Arts, founded in 1905 in New York. Today, Juilliard also provides dance and drama programs. Classical guitar virtuoso Sharon Isbin founded their well-known guitar program in 1989. She works closely with every one of her students, allowing them opportunities to perform solo and in ensembles. Isbin also offers interactive community outreach programs for those outside of Juilliard that are passionate about guitar.

Photo by smial - Own work, FAL,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34655776>

PATTI SMITH

A regular at the iconic New York venue CBGB during punk's early days in the '70s

Released debut album *Horses* in 1975

Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007

Published her memoir *Just Kids* in 2010, which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction

Released 11 studio albums throughout her career

When Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe lived at the Chelsea Hotel, she would sometimes pay part of the rent with her drawings.

In 2005, France's Ministry of Culture named Smith a Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

She has always loved the work of the French poet Arthur Rimbaud and traveled to Paris for the first time in 1969.

In 2011, Smith went to Sweden to receive the Polar Music Prize.

A visual artist, writer, and performer, Smith was a member of St. Mark's Poetry Project in the early '70s, and she also did some theater acting work.

Smith's biggest hit and the most commercially successful song is "Because the Night" (1978), which she co-wrote with Bruce Springsteen.

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

PAIGE DAVIDSON, CO-OWNER OF WELL STRUNG GUITARS: INSTRUMENTS HAVE A SOUL

By Tara Low

Paige Davidson has set out to make her vintage guitar shop in Farmingdale, New York, an anti-big box guitar store. As co-founder of **Well Strung Guitars**, Davidson wants her store to be a warm and inviting place for everyone to feel comfortable learning about their instruments and possibly become a guitar collector themselves.

We first met Davidson in Chattanooga at the now-closed Songbirds Museum during an exhibit on iconic female musicians and their guitars called Six String Queens, where she cut her teeth on learning about vintage instruments. As a guitarist herself, this proved an invaluable experience. In 2019, she opened the brick and mortar shop of Well Strung Guitars featuring premier vintage instruments and memorabilia. As a small business, Davidson spends her time in various roles within the company.

We first met at the Songbirds Museum in Chattanooga during the Six String Queens exhibit, which was very impressive. Tell us a little about Well Strung Guitars: how it started, how long in business, mission, etc.?

Can you believe it was nearly three years ago that we first met? Crazy to think how much has changed since then! Songbirds was my first opportunity to work closely with vintage guitars and basses; taking on their social media and marketing really provided me with the opportunity to learn so much more than I thought possible. Flash forward, Well Strung Guitars is the brainchild of myself and my business partner and father, David Davidson. In 2018, there was a lot of speculation as to where the vintage guitar market and the guitar market as a whole were going. Around that same time, Fender had released a statistic that fifty percent of guitars being purchased by beginner and aspirational players were women. I saw this as the time to strike and open a brand new, woman-owned brick and mortar vintage guitar shop. The doors to our Farmingdale, New York, store opened in July of 2019. I handle anything from sales to accounting to dusting the showroom—a small business like this has fairly blurred lines when it comes to roles.

Our mission is to be the anti-big box store; to provide a warm and welcoming environment to not only avid players and collectors but to men and women everywhere who wish to educate themselves on the history of these iconic instruments and possibly even dive into collecting.

Do you play have a musical background?

I grew up singing in a choir and a capella groups as well as playing the guitar. It was in my blood to be



musically inclined. For as long as I can remember, vintage guitars were around me. My family was the second generation of owners at We Buy Guitars—for me, it was a natural next step.

I once had an artist tell me all of her instruments have a soul. Do you have the same feeling about the guitars that have been through the doors at Well Strung?

There is no doubt in my mind that these instruments have a soul. Instruments are fundamental extensions of the player; more than a tool, they become a part of the artist. With the guitars we sell at Well Strung Guitars, I find that to be even more true. Many of these guitars have lived long and incredible lives before walking through our doors, some having been played all over the world. They have stories to tell. You can actually hear it in the sounds the guitar pumps out and see it in the natural age the guitar displays. They have personalities all their own, and it's truly remarkable.

What has been one of the most unique instruments you've seen at Well Strung?

That's a tough question! When so many of the guitars we get in the store are unique in their own right, it's hard to objectively say which is the most unique. What I can say, though, is that we've had some of the rarest instruments in the world pass through our hands, which is extremely special.



Uniqueness for me is an equation of rarity plus cleanliness and originality. To me, when a guitar checks all three boxes, that is truly a sign of something special.

Have you faced any challenges being a female working in the guitar industry, and if so, how did you overcome the challenge?

Sadly, the work that I do is male-dominated. Like so many other women in various industries, I knew that it could be a struggle from day one. So while some people ask to speak with someone else or might prefer to work with my partner David on a deal, it's par for the course. Unfortunately, I don't know that I would say I've overcome anything just yet. It's a constant battle to be a woman, never mind a woman who owns a business. What I can say is that we are working very hard to open the minds of the people we work with each and every day, and it's working! Since opening, we have hired two additional women and don't intend to stop there. Music is for everyone, so working in this field should be too.

During this difficult time resulting from the pandemic, how has Well Strung Guitars maintained its customer base?

We have been extremely fortunate that amidst all of the craziness 2020 has thrown at us, our customer base has shown up time and time again. Our online business was thriving during the earliest days of the pandemic and continues to do so now. Though our physical store was closed for ten weeks, we were lucky enough to speed up rather than slow down.

What advice do you have for women wanting to pursue a career in the music industry?

No matter what path in the music industry you choose to pursue, find your voice, and amplify it. The more strong and modern thinking women we have in this world, the better off it will be. 🎸

Photos provided by company



INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

LAFRAE SCI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WILLIE MAE ROCK CAMP: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MUSIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Tara Low

Don't be misled by the name thinking it's your typical a one-week music camp for girls where they learn instruments and put together a rock band. **Willie Mae Rock Camp** offers so much more. Founded by former Executive Director Karla Schickale in 2004 as The Working Group, the non-profit organization has grown over the past sixteen years into a program to empower "girls and gender expansive youth to find their voice and express themselves loudly and freely" through music and social justice. While music is part of the program, the organization also offers workshops on social justice, Afrofuturism, podcasting, digital music production, songwriting, and more.

Current Executive Director **LaFrae Sci** took the time from her busy schedule to fill us in on its history, mission and programs, the inspiration behind the name, and their new building.

The non-profit was founded in 2004 as The Working Group. Can you fill us in on the backstory on the beginnings of the non-profit, its mission,

and how it grew into the organization now known as **Willie Mae Rock Camp**?

I remember reading an article about the first rock camp in Portland, so when I saw the sign advertising a planning meeting to discuss creating in NYC what became Willie Mae, I answered the call and worked and volunteered as a drum teacher and band coach. I love that we are named after Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton—a great woman of the blues who changed the world with her voice and songwriting. I believe the decision to seek 501c3 status was made so that we could be eligible for support from grantmakers. We met regularly and discussed so many details. I recall that it was very important to us to center the creative freedom of the student without forcing technical instruction. We also chose a holistic approach that was more about personal expression and community building. We gave the campers space to figure things out over a one-week camp session, and it was amazing to see girls take a couple of chords and a drum groove and find a way to collaborate. Over time we saw how this approach actually fostered agency and critical thinking.

How has the creative team developed over time?

Willie Mae grew in part because of its volunteer community and the shared vision held by the founding Executive Director, Karla Schickale. Over the last 16 years, there have been a few shifts and changes in staff composition as the organization has grown. Willie Mae continues to serve the community year-round through camp and in-school partnerships. As the new Executive Director of Willie Mae, I have introduced a year-round schedule of programming informed by the philosophy of Afrofuturism that combines STEAM and social justice called Willie Mae Future Sounds!

Share with us some of the work and special projects the camp has been involved with.

Due to the pandemic, we pivoted to an online format and had summer camp last July. Willie Mae Future Sounds Summer Camp 2020's focus was to "reboot the Zoom," encourage interdisciplinary expression adhering to the Mission of Willie Mae, and building community while encouraging critical thinking and collaboration. The campers met for

two weeks on the Zoom platform, where they attended workshops on Social Justice, harnessing social media as a medium for change, Afrofuturism, film making, radical podcasting, gender identity, songwriting, and how to use a collaborative digital audio workstation. In addition to choosing a focus as a fan and collectively creating their content, special guest artists performed each day—allowing for Q&A and leaving inspirational pearls.

Are the programs year-round?

Yes! We are committed to providing online COVID response programming. Our Digital Mentorship Winter Session starts in January. Because we are online, we encourage people to sign up, even if they are not in New York.

At what age can campers join?

Our in-person rock camp programs are open to participants eight to eighteen. Our online programming is focused on ages ten to seventeen.

How has COVID affected the teaching environment?

We are not in person at all due to the pandemic. While it's not possible to rock out together, we can still create together, using music technology and an interdisciplinary approach online. We had students incorporate animation, poetry, podcasting, and filmmaking with music technology and collaborative songwriting. The students are using technology to co-create amazing projects.

I see that the organization was a recipient of the 2019 Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact. Where else do you get your funding?

The Mayor's grant allowed us to create programming for the residents at a center for family homelessness in Brooklyn. I had the privilege of teaching for that program. As an organization, we get our funding from a combination of individual donors and state and local grants.

In what ways does the camp empower young attendees to instill the value of inclusivity and forge a path for social justice?

Well, this is all in our mission statement. We are not a music camp. We are an empowerment through music and social justice camp. We encourage girls and gender expansive youth to find their voice and express themselves loudly and freely. We encourage them to source their own stories and be aware of social justice issues happening in their communities and the world around them.

Have graduates of the program gone on to pursue a career in music?

We do have a few former campers at Berklee College of Music and NYU right now—but again, we aren't in the business of making musicians; we foster a space that encourages creative expression, self-awareness, and leadership.



What future goals and plans are in the works for Willie Mae Rock Camp?

WE HAVE A HOME! Recently, we moved into a 1500 square foot teaching studio in Brooklyn that has a soundproofed studio. The idea is the participants can learn about music technology and rock it out on instruments year-round. We look forward to the day when it is safe to continue programming in person.

What's the best piece of advice you can offer to a camper dreaming of becoming a professional musician?

Believe in your dream. Your voice matters. Find a crew. Create as much as possible. Don't quit! Also, remember that you don't need fancy gear. If you have a cellphone, you can use apps to record and make a music video. 🎧

Photos provided by organization.

Willie Mae
**ROCK
CAMP**
FOR GIRLS

TONE TALK WITH SOLEIL LAURENT

Soleil Laurent is an artist dedicated to empowering the people. The core of her message is "OWN YOUR GREATNESS." Her inspirations are Carlos Santana, Spiros Exaras, Robert "Smitty," and Gary Foster (three of those people were her mentors, I bet you can guess which ones). Laurent's current project is *Black Butterfly*; a project about how she overcame the most painful parts of her life and claimed her power. Her motivation is to help people that suffer from depression. To go through the journey in life and choose yourself, your purpose, and your power.

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

Tone is all about frequency. To me, when you have great tone, you can play one note, and it will hit your soul. I truly focus on the roundness of my sound, and what I mean by that is the "fullness." I feel it in my body. Great tone will allow the player to access someone's deepest emotions.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

I'm currently a Fender Strat girl. I'm actually looking to buy another one of their guitars because the neck is sooooo smooth; also, they are

a company that truly supports black people (which is important to me). I have another guitar that I love, but it's hard for me to pick it up and play because of the company's lack of support for #blacklivesmatter.

What about strings?

Strings always vary for me because it keeps me on my toes—lol. I love trying different gauges to challenge myself and gain more strength in my fingers. For my comfort, I usually go with 10s/11s and Ernie Ball.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

Yes! I do not use the plugins the computer has because I feel that my pedalboard gives the sounds that I am looking for. I've truly perfected my sound in my pedalboard, so I always want to real that in a song.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

Saving your settings is key! Also, people think I am crazy, but I will carry my preferred amp everywhere. (no matter how big). So I get the exact sound I want. I am crazy like that because when you plug in different amps, you will get different sounds, no matter how much you tweak the pedalboard.



Photo by Jonathan Adjahoe

What does your practice consist of?

A lot of YouTube. Also, I will review the knowledge I already know, but during practice, my goals are to expand my knowledge. When you practice, you shouldn't sound good; it's an opportunity to make mistakes and GROW.

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

Take advice, but never let anyone discredit your greatness. You have the vision of your artistry and what you stand for—BELIEVE IN IT AND STAND UP! Do not leave wiggle room for any doubt. 🎧



Take Five with VickiKristinaBarcelona



(L to R) Rachelle
Garniez, Amanda
Homi, Terri Radigan
Photo by Albie
Mitchell

When three singer-songwriters came together to perform at a neighborhood bar and the crowd response was so overwhelming, the three came together to form **VickiKristinaBarcelona**. Rachelle Garniez, Amanda Homi, and Terry Radigan make up the power trio creating reimagined versions of songs from the Tom Waits catalog.

With three-part harmonies, the trio's instrumentation pulls together the sounds of an eclectic group of instruments from electric and acoustic guitars and banjitar to the accordion, kazoo, harmonica, a slew of percussion instruments, and several others.

How was the band formed, and what inspired the name?
The group was formed for fun, inspired by a love of harmony singing and a cool hang. We started playing for other singer-songwriters at a regular gig in a neighborhood bar, and as people really seemed to dig the concept and sound, we decided to buckle down and get serious. The name is a sly wink and a little twist on the Woody Allen film title—we spell Kristina with a K. We've appropriated

the story of three women in the throes of painful romantic entanglements; in our version, the women come out on top.

How would you describe your music?

There's a Global Americana flavor, centered around guitar and acoustic sounds while simultaneously incorporating styles of music from every corner of the globe—after all, America is indeed a country of immigrants. In addition to swampy blues and Appalachian Back Porch, we have a lot of fun adapting the tunes to different grooves—Jamaican Dancehall, Bachata, Cajun Zydeco, Klezmer Gypsy, Belly Dance rhythms, and Irish Fiddle tunes are just some of the approaches we've chosen. Tom Waits likes to shout out to citizens of the world in his lyrics, so it's not exactly a stretch to explore those avenues.

Speaking of Tom Waits, you've been reimagining songs from his catalog. What drew you to his music and share with us some of your favorite tunes?

As songwriters with extremely different styles, we're able to find common ground in the Waits catalog. Each of us is especially drawn to stories and characters, a definitive aspect of his songs. We tend to gravitate individually toward specific songs; it's an organic process. We divide our repertoire into songs that either feature one person singing lead or that we split verses on or sing entirely in harmony. It's hard to play favorites.

Rachelle: "Innocent When You Dream" has sentimental value, "Jersey Girl" is just plain romantic.

Amanda: "Tango Till They're Sore" reminds me of a cinematic Roma romp. (I love the rooster.) "I Don't Wanna Grow Up" we tried a couple of different arrangements, and nothing felt right until Rachelle suggested a Zydeco feel. It was extra fun for me to play a washboard and Cajun triangle.

Terry: "Soldier's Things" and "Gun Street Girl." The communal storytelling in our own unique voice is one of the things I love most about VKB.

Tell us about the instruments each of you plays.

Terry provides the consistent element of the group sound with her signature Gibson ES-140 riffs. She bops, twangs, and gets real sweet without being overly sentimental. Rachelle alternates between accordion and banjitar, adding the element of improvisation and drama as well as special effects, including kazoo, bottle blowing, concertina, harmonica, and assorted bells and whistles. In addition to rocking a custom cocktail-style drum kit, Amanda takes full advantage of her deep collection of percussion instruments and knowledge of rhythms from around the globe. She plays Brazilian shakers, finger cymbals, and Indian hand drums, to name a few, and also plays harmonium, alternately adding soulful drones and unexpected scenarios.

With the shutdown of live performances during the pandemic, what has the band been doing to stay in touch with fans and keep your music alive?
Truthfully, it's time for us to step up our internet presence! We had one wonderful outdoor gig at a festival in New Jersey in August; since then, we've been mostly hunkering down, getting a fresh batch of Waits songs together to record. We're setting up a performance space in a top-secret location to shoot videos of us playing, which we'll be sharing with fans on various platforms. It's not meant to be a live streaming situation, as the "pajama-concert" mode isn't especially appealing to us. We're in the process of figuring out some creative ways to connect. —



At Brooklyn Bridge -
Photo by
Charged.FM

MILITIA VOX

CREATION WITH A VENGEANCE

By Shawn Sixx

Whether it's solo works, video productions or her duties as stage-commanding frontwoman for **Judas Priestess**, the New York-based artist **Militia Vox** fearlessly moves from idea to manifestation. The pandemic and stopping of most live music events have obviously presented new challenges to the ever-changing world of music, but she is not willing to be complacent.

This year has been tough on everyone. How have you been holding up with how the world has changed for music?

I've been great so far. As an artist and a New Yorker, I am used to being highly adaptable. Not performing live in the traditional sense has been annoying because I miss its energy and the people that I meet. So far, I loathe doing at-home concerts, but I'm making the best of it when I do them. I'm spending most of my time writing, recording music, creating content, streamlining my socials, reading, hiking, visiting local weird or haunted places, having cyber tea with friends, and feeding my head.

How has the pandemic changed your idea of what music is and how you make it?

It's definitely changed how I make it. I'm more self-sufficient now. I can write, play, record, mix, and master completely on my own. Quarantine was very useful for me. I may not have learned to do all these things otherwise. As far as the music itself, I've

become more experimental with what I make and the sounds I use. I'm not bound by style, sounds, words, vibes, rules, or limitations of any genre. I am the genre.

With so many different types of things you are involved in, what have you been spending most of your time on during these strange times? It's not like we all haven't had enough free time lately...

I always feel like I never have enough time! There's so much that I want to do and be great at. To some, it might seem like I have ADD, but I do all of these things because I'm a naturally curious person. I'm always pushing myself with new challenges, whether it's writing new songs, composing, learning about music, creating music videos and visual art, or just creating for fun. 2020 has been an awakening for me—about the kind of world I want to live in, the life I choose to have, and what I want to offer people. Thanks to this break from touring, I've marched in protests, become a Harvard-certified music nerd, am officially graduating from college after being kicked out years ago for "insubordination" and some truly sketchy circumstances, and finessed my home studio and recorded myself guest singing on some f**king amazing projects. I sang and recorded an obscenely cool song and shot the video in LA. I've been writing and recording with a new metal band. I created, organized, and added to my music library for licensing. I created and recorded my first spoken word with music project. I kept a houseplant alive for more than five months, and I finally learned to play chess.

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I just released my first spoken word with music “THE RAVEN” by my muse Edgar Allan Poe.

I'm also working on a new progressive doom metal band with old friends of mine from Berklee College of Music. It's f**king killer; I can't wait for people to hear it.

You have talked about musical artists needing to up their home studio game since the shutdown took place. Do you think artists have responded well to the new challenges?

Thank you for actually reading my posts! Some artists have responded well to the circumstances of this era. Others have not. Some are grappling with depression and other issues, such as isolation, affecting them negatively. Most artists are typically used to 'flowing with the go,' and the upside is we have music as our creative outlet.

What have you improved in your skillset during 2020?

I've learned to master. It's a b**ch—LOL. And I like my mastering guys, but I needed to teach myself instead of constantly outsourcing the job. I've also been upping my writing game—going into new territories rhythmically, lyrically, and sonically. I'm writing some of my best work right now.

You have an extensive background in the video aspect of music, being on both sides of music video creation, and being a VJ. How do you feel about bands video streaming virtual shows?

Thank you for doing your research! I think virtual shows are great if they look and sound good. Right now, it's still in the preliminary stages, kind of like the early days of MTV. The art of the video had not been perfected yet. Early music videos and live footage look kind of weird and clunky. Virtual shows are NOT going anywhere. They are going to be part of the

new normal. Most people will never get to see every band they want to see live and in-person. You can reach way more people through virtual shows.

You have always had a diverse set of projects going on. Do you think other artists and musicians have been doing a good job of diversifying to survive during the collapse of live entertainment?

Some artists have really taken to this new opportunity to adapt and evolve. Others have sat back and complained about how they miss playing shows. It's a choice.

You are the frontwoman of the all-female band Judas Priestess. What made you take on such a huge task as channeling the music of Judas Priest? Did you ever feel like people would be too critical of your tribute?

I wanted to do it because I didn't want anyone else to! I discovered Judas Priest's music in the '90s, and I loved how intense, theatrical, dynamic, and smart the vocals are. I knew that if the band was killer, it would be an excellent opportunity to make a real statement in heavy metal. We wanted to challenge the stereotypes of women in metal: "women can't play," "they're just eye candy/decoration," "women are groupies," and the "just a panty band" thing. We got hate mail before we played our first show. We knew people would be critical—until they saw us play.

Do you think the stereotypes are less prevalent nowadays?

The stereotypes are probably always going to be there, but I've got no interest in them. I think things are better than they were, but that's because there is more representation and awareness.

You've worked with another artist who has championed the change of stereotypes and biases: Corey Glover. He and his band Living Colour set the rock world on its heels when they came on the scene. He raves about you and your work. How does that make you feel?

I feel great about it. I adore Corey so much—he is my friend. He's brutally talented: singing, songwriting, performing, acting. I'm so thankful that we know each other, and I want to do lots more with him in the future. We are such kindred spirits.

Switching gears a bit, tell me about Mecha Sonic. I have a B.F.A. in metal sculpture, so I'm intrigued by the concept. I cannot claim any kind of responsibility for the astounding

aesthetic of Mecha Sonic. I was merely being brought in as a guest singer, and they were going to play some of my songs while clanging on metal percussively in an ironworks shop and setting things on fire. Unfortunately, COVID had other plans. We will do it once it's safe and sanitary. Stay tuned ...

You went to the Boston Conservatory and you were also part of a band that had a great following on the east coast. How did your experience in that music scene influence who you are now?

The Boston scene was a blast when I was there. My first band was an industrial-dance band called Disciples of Astaroth (DOA). Our sound was in the vein of My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult and Lords of Acid, but more gothic. I was barely legal when we started. We played some great shows—our first

In the Lower East
Side - Photo by
Vonesper Studios



show was at the legendary Middle East, and our last Boston show was at Machine. Our audience was this funky splay of college kids, club kids, goths, and drag queens. We used to have local drag stars as our opening acts. It was wild, and by the end of our shows, everyone would be dancing together like mad. Goth, industrial and club culture are my roots, and it's definitely embedded in my sound. I learned how to create songs in that band.

Did you hear that they closed the iconic Boston-area spots ManRay and Machine to build luxury apartments on their footprint? It's getting harder to find spots to expose the arts to the masses and provide a safe space for all people to hang out.

Living in New York City, I know this all too well. It's a shame. ManRay and Machine were legendary. I had many delicious nights at both. But I hear that currently, wealthy people are moving out of the cities in droves. That will leave the artists and creatives that thrive in urban environments to rebuild. It'll be up to artists to keep the cities alive and initiate new spaces. And then three to five years later, it'll happen all over again!

What's next for Militia Vox? What can people expect from you in the near future?

I just released my first spoken word with music **"THE RAVEN"** by my muse Edgar Allan Poe. This was huge for me because it's the first project that I narrated, engineered, mixed, and mastered by myself. That was a b**ch, but so worth it. It's out now on Bandcamp and streaming sites.

I've got a very cool 'guest sing' coming out soon with The Vaticants out of LA. It's an orchestral hard rock song called "Living For Nothing." Wait till you see the video—it's badass. I also will be releasing an album of solo songs that feature various remixes by Shane Boulos (Toxic, Militia Vox), Blak Emoji, legendary Detroit techno DJ Stacey "Hotwaxx" Hale, and CX KiDTRONiK (Atari Teenage Riot, Saul Williams). It'll be out early 2021.



I have a new solo EP called **HISS** coming out sometime in mid 2021.

I'm also working on a new progressive doom metal band with old friends of mine from Berklee College of Music. It's f**king killer; I can't wait for people to hear it.

And last but not least, Judas Priestess' European tour that was originally scheduled for 2020 is now slated to happen in the fall of 2021.

Where and how do people find you and your projects?

If you made it this far, reading this interview, cheers! I applaud you! You're hardcore—let's connect. I'm @militiaismyname on all socials. Definitely check out my Bandcamp to get music, merch, and join the 'militious' community. Thank you. 🖤

JAGGED LITTLE PILL



Alanis Morissette's Grammy-award-winning album comes to life on Broadway in *Jagged Little Pill*. Packed full of high-energy music and dance numbers by the talented ensemble, expect to hear some of Morissette's biggest hits like "You Oughta Know," "Ironie," and "Hand in My Pocket." Writer Diablo Cody's ("Juno") story of the Healy family is brought to life on stage. *The New York Times* said the Healys are "a family with a lot of healing to do." Due to COVID, the show has been on hold for now and is set to reopen on June 1, 2021. The show has been received recognition by the TONY Awards, garnering fifteen nominations, including Best Musical, Best Director, Best Leading Role, and more. Morissette recently released a behind the scenes book.

PIGTRONIX AND SUPRO

Pigtronix and Supro, names synonymous with New York, were recently acquired by D'Angelico Guitars. Pigtronix is known for their boutique pedals while Supro is a manufacturer of amps that have can be heard on some of the greatest rock albums of all time.

"The acquisition of Supro and Pigtronix by D'Angelico creates a trifecta," says Dave Koltai, former co-owner of Supro and Pigtronix. "It's a perfect fit, and I am thrilled to be able to continue making new gear for musicians around the world." Koltai will be onboard as Chief Technology Officer, continuing to design

and develop both Supro Amps and Pigtronix Pedals, alongside D'Angelico's Executive Vice President of Product Development, Ryan Kershaw. "This is going to allow us to take everything we do to the next level," says Kershaw.

With this acquisition, look forward to exciting news in 2021.



Sus Vasquez

From Colombia to NYC

By Enmaria Cumisky

Sus Vasquez is a talented guitarist, born in Colombia but now living in New York. She has played guitar for great artists, including Luis Fonsi and Karol G, but also has her own music venture called Top Queens.

In her interview, Sus talks to us about her start as a guitarist, her future projects, and her decision to move to New York.

How long have you been playing guitar professionally?

I've been playing professionally for over seven years now, two of which have been in NYC.

Have you always known that you wanted to have a career in music?

Since I started playing guitar, I knew it was something that was going to be there for my entire life. As time went by and I graduated from high school, I decided to pursue music full time.

Did you have any particular musical influences growing up?

The first time I listened to the band Blink-182, I absolutely felt a connection with that style of music and started to listen to it a lot. With time, I discovered other genres and began to expand my musical ear, taste, and knowledge.

You've been a guitarist for some pretty incredible artists, including Luis Fonsi. How has that experience been?

Amazing! It is still hard to believe that I've been playing for some of the top Latin artists in the industry in front of thousands. It's the reward for hard work and patience, which can take you anywhere you want to go.

Are there any other artists that you'd like to play for or work with?

There are so many, to be honest. This is just the beginning, I believe. I would like to get more involved with US artists.

You also have your own music project, called Top Queens. Can you talk a little bit about that?

I love the feeling of playing others' music and working for them, but I also wanted to have a project where I could express myself and create the music I wanted to. The drummer and founder of the band called me to see if I wanted to be a part of it, and since then, we've been pushing to make great things with our all-female funk band.

Would you ever like to do Top Queens full time, or do you like balancing your own project and playing for other artists you currently have?

Not full time, but I'd love to continue to have it as a very important part of what I do for sure. I love the feeling of playing on multiple different musical projects and learning so much from each one of them. Whether it is a small bar in NYC playing rock or an arena performing urban music in front of thousands, I love and appreciate each of those experiences.



Photo by Stefan Vojnić

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The amount of diversity, music, and culture in the city is amazing.

You're from Colombia, but you now live in New York City. How does the music scene in Colombia differ from what you've experienced in New York?
It's totally different, which is actually why I decided to move to NYC. The amount of diversity, music, and culture in the city is amazing. It constantly challenges me, but that's what keeps me moving and motivates me the most.

What made you decide to move to New York for your music, instead of somewhere like Los Angeles?

There's an energy and vibe in the city that I haven't felt anywhere else. I feel a constant drive to hustle every time I'm here. It's definitely not an easy city to live in, but the number of amazing things happening every day makes it totally worth it for me.

What have you been doing during the pandemic to stay creative and remain in touch with your fans?

I try to keep active on my social media posting and talking with people. Nowadays, it's something we need to do; we must support each other during these crazy times. 🎸

Jackknife STILETTO

PUNK ATTITUDE WITH A FRESH SOUND

By Amy Epperley aka Platinum Viking

Jackknife Stiletto is an all-female rock 'n' roll band from New York City. The trio is known for their aggressive drive and punk attitude with a fresh sound. Think Rancid meets Black Sabbath—with chicks. Jackknife Stiletto has toured nationally, sharing the stage with acts such as Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, Cheap Trick, Murphy's Law, Cherie Currie, Less Than Jake, Anti-Flag, and Bret Michaels. Their powerful live performance has also commandeered SXSW and Warped Tour. Members **Annie Stoic**, **Mel Funk**, and **Foxy Roxy** believe in loud, melt-your-face-off music, guaranteeing one hell of a sexy, unforgettable rock show.

Their latest release, *Chronicles of Jane*, is a series of EPs and comic book narrative, featuring illustrations by Toronto artist Becca T-R. The project debuted on the NACC Top 200 charts at #103 and was nominated for Best Rock EP by the Independent Music Awards. *Chronicles of Jane: Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* are available now on Blackheart Records. The band is currently in the studio working on their next album, with tours to follow.

Jackknife Stiletto's known for your hard-rock raw edge and a rebellious punk rock attitude. What inspired your sound?

We've all been in different bands over the years and have a varied taste in music. We can't really say there's a certain band or influence that started this band. It was more the situation of a few girls who wanted to form an all-girl rock/punk band, work as hard as possible to get our music out there, and tour a lot!

Generally, how does this group go about writing music?

It really varies from song to song for us. Our songs can be inspired by anything from bad relationships to stalkers to tacos. Whatever we may be feeling at the moment, a book we read, or something that might have happened years ago can spark our songwriting process!

What gear are you currently playing with/out of?

Annie: Gibson Les Paul Studio; WBGear: SIT Strings, InTune Picks; MesaBoogie

Mini Rectifier Head; 4x10 Marshall Cab; Pedaltrain board with Electro-Harmonix pedals: Pitch Fork, East River Drive, and Canyon; Shure GLXD16 Wireless System; Bullet Spark Plug cables.

Roxy: Warwick Streamer LX 4 Bass with D'Addario EXL170 strings; Fender Rumble 200 combo amp; Darkglass Microtubes B7K Pedal (V1); Temple Pedalboard; and Hosa cables.

Mel: SJC Custom drum kit; Soultone Cymbals; Ahead drumsticks; Cympad Cymbal Felts; and ToneAlly Stick Trainer

What are some of your favorite songs you've written? What's your favorite song to play live?

Annie: I like playing "Dear Jane" live; vocally, it's a very erratic song to sing. I am looking forward to releasing our new songs!!

Roxy: Favorites to play live are "Schadenfreude" and "Fall Back Down." The new, unreleased songs are my favorite songs written.

Mel: My favorite song to play live is "Heart in a Holding Cell." I love a driving tom-heavy drum beat. And I agree that I am so excited to release our next album with all of our new favorite songs!

So you are out on Blackheart records, which is, of course, Joan Jett's record label that includes such rockers as L7 and The Dollyrots, among others. How did that come about?

When we finished our first EP together *Chronicles of Jane: Vol.1*, with our producer, Dave Caggiano, we were really proud of it and knew we had something there to send



to them. Annie has been with the Blackheart touring team for a while and showed the songs to them; they loved the EP and said they would put it out on Blackheart Records. We are so thrilled and honored to be next to such amazing artists and trailblazers.

You've essentially created your own genre called VAGXCORE for women who rock by women who rock. Tell us more!

VAGXCORE is female rock 'n' roll in every way, shape, and form. We work hard at promoting female musicians in the industry and strive to make a community of female musicians supporting each other.

Your recent series of two EPs called *Chronicles of Jane* are now out, and it's also out as a comic book narrative with illustrations by Toronto artist Becca T-R. How did that collaboration form?

Annie: We were really looking for a female comic artist who saw our vision, and I literally just searched through Instagram hashtags and found Becca. We emailed her our ideas, and the first thing she drew for us was right on point. We love working with her; every vision we had, she was able to bring to life!

Along with all the major changes and shutdowns in the music industry over this past year, you have started your Music Monday Hangouts where you Livestream with special guest artists and bands for a fun Q&A, music, and quarantine talk, as well as live streaming DIY home shows. What made you want to go down that route and how has it been?

Well, there isn't really another route right now. We wanted to stay in touch with our fans and keep them entertained any way we could. It's a time where they can see us at home and in our real environments, so it lets people into your lives on a more personal level. As for Music Monday Hangouts, we wanted to stay in touch with the bands and musicians we normally get to see on tour, plus be able to introduce each other's fans to each other while we are all unable to tour. It's been great being able to see our friends (virtually) whom we would've seen this year, but we can't travel to them!

You've shared some cool stages with some big names all across the country. Once touring can resume, what would be your dream tour?

Annie: Dream tour would be

Jackknife Stiletto, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, and Halestorm (How about that for 2021?!).

Roxy: I'd love to play with Hole, Garbage, Alice in Chains, and Rancid.

Mel: A tour with Dresden Dolls, Halestorm, Sum 41, and Foo Fighters, with an epic drum breakdown with me, Brian, Arejay, Frank, Taylor, and Dave jamming together. Ha-ha, yeah, that'd be great.

New York City has always been a hugely important center for music and its development. How has getting started in such a rich cultural center inspired you? What have been the challenges?

Mel: From an inspirational standpoint, there was certainly no shortage of shows to see and musicians to learn from. Going to a music college in NY created many networking opportunities, which is so important in the entertainment industry. It's how Annie and I met and started this band.

Roxy: The challenge with NYC is that the music scene is oversaturated. You could have like ten plus shows going on in one night, so it's always tough to get people to come out, especially when they could be seeing a bigger band on the night that you're playing. Also, parking is difficult, and lugging your gear down long city blocks is never fun.

If you could have a one-on-one cooking or music lesson with a famous (or not so) musician (living or dead), who would it be?

Annie: I'll take a music lesson with Nita Strauss and a cooking lesson with Eddie Money!

Roxy: I'd like a music lesson from Eddie Van Halen.

Mel: Music lesson from the late and great Jaco Pastorius, and a cooking lesson from Snoop Dog.

What's next? What are you most excited about for 2021?

More live streaming for now, and we have new videos out every Thursday on our YouTube channel. But we are excited about our new record and hopefully playing live again! 🎸

Photo provided by artist with permission to use.

Korg USA Promotes Morgan Walker to Director of Marketing Communications

Morgan Walker is a marketing expert, former lacrosse player, and the new Director of Marketing Communications at Korg USA Inc. Korg is well known for their production of musical instruments and equipment from speakers to special effects machines, synthesizers, and more. With Walker at the head of Marketing Communications, Korg USA plans to expand its marketing efforts to gain recognition as a global brand. Walker will execute these efforts through event planning, content creation, and go-to marketing strategies. Outside of Korg USA, Walker has been selected to be part of the inaugural Smart Women in Music (SWIM). This organization supports the development of leadership proficiencies and aspirations of women within the music products industry.



TONE TALK WITH DEBRA DEVI

Photo by Anjanette McGrath



Jorgen grew up in Sweden and is an ABBA fan. The record closes with "Canna Indica," a trippy guitar instrumental I played in this tuning: C#G#C#FG#C#.

I knew this was a special project, so I reached out to my dream mixer, Sylvia Massy. I was over the moon that she agreed to do it! She brought out the power in the recording and gave it a beautiful shimmer. She also cut a radio-friendly version of "When It Comes Down."

Growing up in the Midwest, I longed to play electric guitar but got the message that this was not for women. I am so glad girls get a far more encouraging message today—thanks to *Guitar Girl Magazine* and other outlets. After seeing Bonnie Raitt my senior year of college, I bought a Fender Mustang in a pawnshop and moved to New York City. There, I joined punk bands, teaching myself to play along the way. I toured all over the US, Canada, and Europe. I loved being able to see the world because I played guitar.

My name is **Debra Devi**, and I'm a rock guitarist and singer-songwriter living in Jersey City, New Jersey—New York City's "sixth borough"! I'm super-excited about my new EP, *A Zillion Stars Overhead*, which emerged from a recording session with Gov't Mule bassist Jorgen Carlsson, drummer John Hummel, and keyboardists Rob Clores and Peter Vitalone.

I love Gov't Mule, and when I met Jorgen, we got into a deep chat about production and decided to try recording together. I was thrilled—and a bit terrified. He's one of rock's greatest bassists; a truly intimidating musician. Luckily, he's also very nice. We hit the studio when he was on the East Coast and had a blast laying down some tracks—without necessarily trying to make a record. But the session went so well that it became *A Zillion Stars Overhead*—"five fiery tracks of searing guitar rock," as the *Jersey Journal* calls it.

The EP opens with a nine-minute rock/jam version of "When It Comes Down" that features killer playing from Jorgen and John, and my live-in-the-studio guitar solo. We also did a dreamy rock cover of "The Needle and the Damage Done." The EP includes a catchy disco/rock song, "Stay," which I threw into the mix because

Eventually, I started my own band and developed a '70s-influenced classic rock/blues-rock vibe. Blues guitarists like Son Seals and Freddie King had an impact on me. I love jamming, too, as is obvious on *A Zillion Stars Overhead*!

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

Starting off in punk bands, my holy grail was a Marshall stack. But all I could afford was the single-speaker Marshall Reverb amp. It packed a punch, though! Then I had a hand-built wooden cabinet with two Celestion Sidewinder speakers that I would roll around. Finally, I got my 4 x12 Marshall cabinet and the Marshall JCM 2000 Triple Series Lead head. I felt very macho!

I needed something that loud for the band I was touring with at the time. The songs were in drop tunings and needed that thick bottom end. But I didn't like the fuzzy distortion channel on the amp, so I used a BOSS Metal Zone pedal with just a little gain from the amp. That combination had great tone and fabulous chonk.

When I started singing, I discovered that I sound more like Sheryl Crow than Al Jorgensen. I had to dial down the distortion and ease up on my rhythm playing to make space for my voice. On *A Zillion Stars Overhead*, I mostly used my versatile Homestead HS50 combo amp and an Orange AD30. I also used a JCM-800 Marshall head and 4 x12 1960 cabinet. I shoot for vintage warmth with modern power and punch.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

My main guitar is a 1986 Fender Stratocaster hot-rodged with jumbo frets, Seymour Duncan Vintage Rails, and a Hot Rails humbucker in the bridge. I also play a 1992 mahogany Les Paul Special, customized with a Gibson super-ceramic humbucker in the bridge. My acoustic is a 1964 Gibson J-45 that gets better sounding every year. And I have a beautiful Stylus prototype guitar with 24 frets, created by luthier Aaron Green.

I also play a Fender Telecaster tuned to Open-E for slide on songs like "One Way Out" by the Allman Brothers Band. I use the Rock Slide, an innovative slide with a dished-out segment that keeps it from rolling on your finger, and a cutaway that makes fretting more comfortable.

I play the HS50 2 x10 combo amp from Homestead Amplifiers, a company I endorse. This amp was developed by Homestead founder Peter McMahon with Warren Haynes during the recording of his *Ashes and Dust* album. The amp has two Celestion V-30 speakers. It's full-bodied but also beautifully glassy and well-balanced.

What I love most is how responsive and dynamic the HS50 is, with sweet harmonics. It really sings, even at low volume, and has gorgeous reverb and three pull switches: Bass Cut, Mid Boost, and Bright. Honestly, this amp makes me play better!

I use BOSS pedals because they do not suck tone, unlike many pedals. On my Pedal Train board, I have Warren Haynes's old G-Lab wah-wah pedal that Peter McMahon lent me, and three BOSS distortion pedals: Super OverDrive SD-1 for vintage bluesy tones, OverDrive Distortion OS-2 for modern bluesy tones, and Waza Craft Metal Zone. The Waza Craft Metal Zone has a new Custom mode that sounds natural and open—perfect for a rounded blues-rock tone. I use the BOSS Digital Delay DD-5 and the TC Electronic Polytune2.

My secret weapon is a Hughes & Kettner Tube Rotosphere MK II on loan to me from Lisa Swarbrick, a talented songwriter who was married to Gov't Mule guitar tech Brian Farmer. This is his Rotosphere, and it provides a stunning Leslie-speaker sound. I find it works best last in my chain. I endorse Shubb Capos; they keep my guitar in tune and have such a clean, modern look.

What about strings?

I use and endorse DR Strings. DR Strings feel more stretchy and playable to me, yet they stay in tune and maintain a crisp tone better than any other strings I've tried. They sound awesome! I love that

they come in a 9.5 gauge, which is perfect on my Strat. I use 10s on my Les Paul.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

For distorted tones, I like to put several mics on the guitar amp—one close up at a right angle to the speaker cone, one a few feet away, and, ideally, a 360-mic in the room. Then I crank up the amp until it really starts to sing and give off nice harmonics. I like to use a long-enough cable to get away from the volume but also get near the amp when I want feedback. Use a top-quality cable, so it doesn't diminish the sound in any way.

For recording acoustic guitar, I use a slim condenser mic on the neck like the Shure SM81 and try a more dynamic tube mic about twelve to sixteen inches away from the 12th fret of the guitar. You don't want to put a mic in front of the soundhole. That can get too bass-y.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

I try to keep my stage volume in that sweet spot where it's getting a nice tone but isn't too loud. This gives the soundperson flexibility in mixing because the stage volume is not overwhelming. Always have a friend in the crowd listening to make sure the mix is good—and signaling you if there's a problem.

If you're sitting in with another band, make sure there is a mic on your amp! I learned this the hard way when I sat in with (former Gregg Allman keyboardist) Bruce Katz. My band opened for Bruce. After our set, I didn't notice that the soundman moved the mic on my amp to another amp. As I was jamming with Bruce, I noticed Bruce giving me puzzled looks. He couldn't hear my guitar in his monitor at all!

What does your practice consist of?

Because I jumped into original bands when I started playing, I never learned many covers. I'm changing that now that I have opportunities to sit in with other artists. So I always start

practicing by working on a YouTube playlist of covers I'm learning.

I find learning something new on the guitar sticks in my head better if I write a song with it or learn a song that uses it. I learned to play slide in Open-E by learning "One Way Out," for example. I developed my major-scale pentatonic playing by stealing Warren Haynes licks on "Soulshine." I wrote several songs in DADGAD when I learned that tuning. If I learn something, but I don't use it, I forget it.

I always start with "Cissy Strut" by The Meters to warm up. I play little chromatic exercises along to it, plus some fun speed-picking exercises I learned from a Yngwie Malmsteen video lesson, believe it or not! Then I jam with live versions of Freddie King and Eric Clapton playing "Farther On Up the Road" and Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Mary Had a Little Lamb." I force myself to solo in all different sections of the neck. The Joe Pass CAGED system makes the most sense to me in terms of opening up the neck, so I use it. Then, I work on my new songs and any solos I'm working out.

As a self-taught musician, I didn't learn any theory. I'm filling in that gap now with *Music Theory You Can Use: One Man's Journey Toward Understanding the Guitar* by Steve Maase, edited after his passing by his daughter, guitarist Lily Maase.

Favorite guitar riff or lick that inspired you to play guitar?

Jimmy Page's heavy, twisted, odd-time riff from "The Ocean." I spent hours puzzling that thing out!

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

Anyone entering the music industry has to be very innovative and creative—as it is so in flux right now. Be confident and know that you have something to contribute no matter how rudimentary your skill level. You have your own unique voice and sound, and that is the most valuable contribution to music that anyone can make. And don't sleep with your bandmates—that creates way too much drama! —

STRUNG JEWELRY

Musicians Jenny Mann and Tim Barbour have spent the last ten years playing over 2,000 shows with their rock band, Blameshift. One day while on tour in 2014, Mann watched Barbour change out the strings on his guitar and noticed something: the old strings looked just like a bracelet. Tapping into their creative mindsets, they started hand-making bracelets out of their recycled guitar strings. Fans took notice, bracelets were selling out, and as they say, the rest was history. **Strung Jewelry** was formed in July of 2014. Songs inspire their creations, and the design reflects a nod to the name. Think "Livin' on a Prayer" with an angel charm or a "Song for Mama" with a Mom charm.



INNOVATION IN ADVERSITY:

KAKI KING

PREVAILS IN *MODERN YESTERDAYS*

By Daniel Corey

Kaki King is one of the most exciting and innovative guitarists working today. Hailed by *Rolling Stone* as “a genre unto herself,” King is as prolific as she is unique, having released ten albums, created two groundbreaking multimedia live shows, and received a Golden Globe nomination for her work scoring the 2008 feature film *Into the Wild*. King’s latest album, *Modern Yesterdays*, is a companion piece to her latest live show, *Data Not Found*. I had a chance to speak with King about the project. I learned quite a bit about her ingenuity and craft, as well as the difficulties of creating an album during a pandemic.

With the *Data Not Found* show, were you building on some of the concepts from your previous multimedia project, *The Neck is a Bridge to the Body*?

One of the things that I brought in from *The Neck* was the projection of video images onto the guitar, except that it was more of a feature than the main event this time.

Let’s talk about the latest album, *Modern Yesterdays*. The title itself is an interesting irony, and the cover photo is a really excellently visceral, angry image of you. I like it a lot. Is it safe to say you’re expressing some feeling about the notable events of 2020 here?

No. In fact, I don’t think I look angry. I think I look hot. (Laughter) I look like a total babe that just got shoved into the sand. This was all pre-pandemic. The album features a large group of songs that were in *Data Not Found*. So

it’s not exactly the soundtrack, but it is a companion piece. *Data Not Found* also happens to feature a lot of sand and beachy, desert-y imagery. That was going to be my big project.

I went into the studio to make *Modern Yesterdays* on March 2nd and finished before lockdown, except for the last mix. I had ideas and demos worked out. It was going to be fairly cut-and-dry. I was making the album with my sound designer from *Data Not Found*, Chloe Thompson. Then coronavirus happened.

So what seemed to be kind of an average, “spend a couple of weeks in the studio, bang a record out, have a little fun,” became really intense. I won’t say the album itself was difficult because it poured right out, but the time period was insane, and we all ended up getting COVID, anyway.

Right off the bat, the album takes off like a rollercoaster with the opener, “Default Shell.” Are you speaking of the human body?

I’ll just Google-search whatever—I like little strange word combinations. It’s some term for a particular kind of coding. But I thought, “Oh, the default shell. That’s the human body.” That’s sort of the place where we have to start from. And slowly over time, we roboticize ourselves in one way or another.

Photo by Ebru Yildiz

When you say you roboticize yourself, is that what you're expressing in that hard opening rhythm of the song?

Yeah. I think that song requires a level of competency in my concentration that I normally don't possess. The precision and accuracy of playing that song is incredibly difficult. So it's mechanical, and it sounds like that. I don't even know if the song is very pleasing. It's not the top of the *Data Not Found* show, but it's the "welcome to everything you're going to see here," where everything is popping off, and it looks and sounds crazy.

If I had just written an album like I normally do, I probably wouldn't have included that song. But I'm glad you think that it does push you out of the gate. For me, it was something to use on stage to grab an audience's attention and hold them, so the physical playing had to be incredibly precise, strict, mechanical, and somehow expressive.

Tell us about the second track, "Can't Touch This or That or You or My Face."

That was named after it was written by a great Scottish Flamenco player named Ali Tod. I'm on a group chat with some amazing guitarists. They're really fun, and she's one of them. I told them: "Guys, I hate naming instrumental songs," knowing that they were in the same boat. And a lot of them sent me fun song titles.

You start with this simple rhythmic riff and slowly build on it, almost with a Philip Glass sort of minimalism. You've got moments of peaceful release and then go back to the main rhythm. I thought maybe that had something to do with life in quarantine?

Not really. It was just a title that made sense in my brain because it's a dark song. There's not a hell of a lot going on from a guitar perspective that is brilliant. What's brilliant is Chloe's sound design and the weird thing she was pulling out and remixing. It's very cool what she and Arjan Miranda—her boyfriend who was engineering and mixing—could do with those sounds, and it's because of them that the record sounds the way it does.

Were they responsible for a lot of the ambient sounds?

All of them. I did what I do best: showed up, played guitar, wrote some things, played a few pieces of percussion, and then I just left it in their hands. I was there, and I would raise my head and comment. I had been working with Chloe for almost a year at that point, so we were already very much on the same page. I can put my song into her hands and trust completely that she would do the right thing with it. I was just there to say, "I like A a little bit more than B."

Of course, I was the one reading the news to them while they were mixing: "Oh, my god, guys. No one in Italy has been outside their house for a month."

For the third track, "Teek," you did a really cool video, where you have a camera roaming continuously around the room as you play, showing various objects. Did you film it during lockdown?

Definitely. It's funny because I look at it and think: "I could've done a much, much better job with this." But in a way, it's kind of perfect because I put a GoPro camera on my son's train track; he's three and obsessed with trains. The objects are things in my house or studio that I look at every day: same poster, same postcards, picture frames, plant. We're all used to it now, but at the time, it was really novel to not leave your house. I thought: "Let me set up all the junk that I have and let the little train look at it."

"Godchild" is a beautiful piece, very spacious in its phrasing with a lot of ambient sounds. You play out of time in the opening before finding a rhythm; then you go out of time here and there for these beautiful riffs. What are you expressing? Is it like a musical growth cycle?

Yes. That's not a song that has an official, formal structure. It's improvised every time. It was part of a moment in *Data Not Found* where, visually and from a storyline perspective, you are at this point of great release and death. It's definitely meant to take you someplace. When I play it, I'm sitting in this giant pile of sand inside a tent that had previously been a projection screen. I've got a huge ocean washing over me and everything around you that you see. I mean, it brought a lot of people to tears.

In "Rhythmic Tiny Sand Ball Patterns," there's a discordant sound and rhythm that repeats throughout the song. It sounds like an Asian instrument, like a shamisen. How did you create it?

That is amazing programming done by Chloe and also Bobby McElver, who was the original sound designer when we were first building the show. It's played on one of the crappiest, tiniest little instruments I've ever had: a tourist-grade cavaquinho, which is like an itty-bitty, steel-string ukulele. People play them in Samba music—they're really fun. The grandeur of that song really belies its origin. And, again, all of that is

fascinating filtering and signal-processing from the sound design world. I would just call it a motif in the show.

"Sanitized, Alone" is another very beautiful piece. It sounds at points like you're playing ambient sounds from your acoustic. Is that sound design, or are you using an EBow?

I'm basically using a giant, permanently installed, crazy EBow-type thing. It's called a Vo-96. You're not hearing anything but the guitar. The Vo-96 is able to change the pattern of how the strings vibrate as I play. It's amazing, and Paul Vo is the maker. He's an inventor in Asheville who worked for Moog for a long time. That thing is really special and probably underused in my world.

But that song was written and titled for the album. It has nothing to do with *Data Not Found*. I wrote it late in tracking: I think they were mixing, and I was writing in the other room—very much in the moment. You can see how "Default Shell" and "Godchild" were done the first week—we were just getting these pretty guitar tunes recorded. The second week was, like, "Oh, dear" (laughs). On March 9-14, things had changed. March 9 was not like March 2; I can tell you that. Everyone had lost all their gigs and money. I lost money, and I also lost money for Chloe because she was going to come on these gigs. It was terrifying. The live arts, the big gatherings, all of that fell first. It was really, really sad. We did not even know how bad it was going to be.

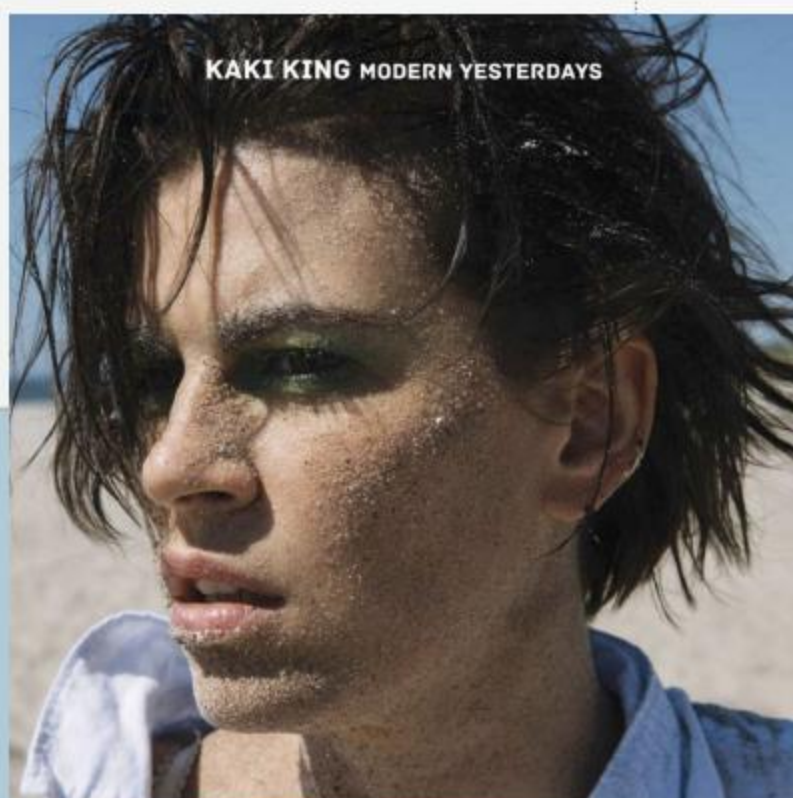
On the final track, "Forms of Light and Death," you credit Ulfur Hansson with the arrangement. Tell me about the collaboration, and what were you hoping to leave us with at the end of *Modern Yesterdays*?

Woo! That second one is too much for me to deal with. I'll tackle the first. Ulfur was a partner of Chloe and Arjan in their studio called Circular Ruin. Again, it was just crazy timing. He used to live right around the corner from me, which I didn't know. He has a daughter a little bit older than my daughter, so we thought: "Now we can be friends, and our families can hang out," and it was really fun.

He had done an arrangement which I loved. And the idea was that we were going to have live string players come in and play the f**king arrangement that he had written. He put everything together beautifully, sent some temporary tracks and MIDI tracks, and said, "Then we'll have the score." So none of that happened.

Ulfur is from Iceland, and he had to go back. He said, "I cannot have my family here without universal healthcare." He and his family are good, and all of that worked out, but at the time, it was panic. With it being the last track on the album, it also happened to be the last track we were mixing, which we did in lockdown. I think it took a couple of days because it was hard. Nowadays, we're used to working remotely and doing our Zoom calls, but it was hard to mix this song because we weren't sitting in the room together. They were emailing me a mix, and I would give them my feedback and send it back. It was not a fun process, but I'm glad that we stuck it out.

I'm glad the record was finished, even facing the unknown. I'm proud of us all for not giving up and grateful for everyone willing to see it through. —



KAKI KING MODERN YESTERDAYS

NATALIA ZUKERMAN

Transitioning During Lockdown

By Mandy Rowden

What a pleasure it was catching up with Natalia Zukerman. Raised in NYC, Zucker has been a resident of Brooklyn until recently, when she relocated to upstate New York. Zucker's music has been heard on *The L Word* and ABC Family's *Chasing Life*. As of 2020, she has released seven albums and has been touring internationally as a solo performer since 2005, backing up artists like Shawn Colvin, Richard Thompson, Janis Ian, Ani DiFranco, and many more. She is currently supporting *The Women Who Rode Away*, the soundtrack and accompanying book from her one-woman show at NYC's Cell Theatre. Read on to learn about Zucker's experiences in quarantine, upcoming projects, and more.

Tell us all about your latest project! I know there's a great story there, so let's hear it! Since the start of the lockdown, I've been writing a lot of poetry—creating a morning practice of stream-of-consciousness writing and trying each day to get to that before turning on a device or looking at a headline. I haven't had perfect attendance, but that's not (or shouldn't be!) the point of creating a practice. I do, however, have several notebooks filled with snippets and musings. I've made some musical beds and image-based videos for a few of them and posted them to my Patreon along the way, and I'm thinking of creating a book (or maybe several!) with illustrated poems and songs/music to accompany them.

What's a favorite experience you have of playing live shows in NYC?

I always had a great time at Rockwood—all the rooms there are unique and special, and the place, in general, feels like it's NOT in NY. You don't feel hurried in and out, and somehow there's always parking. So maybe my favorite thing about playing live shows in NY has been when it doesn't feel like it's in NY!

How have you adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep your music career up and running?

The first thing I did was create a giant online music festival with my friend Kelly McCartney called Shut In & Sing. By the closing set of the festival on May 10th, 163 musicians played

thirty-seven shows over the course of eight weeks, selling 6,673 tickets, and making \$69,000! Twenty-six percent of the performers were queer, twenty-one percent were artists of color, and sixty-seven percent were non-male. I was and am really proud of that. It felt really generative, cooperative, and perhaps like a new model was forming. It did make me pretty weary of streaming music, though, so for a while after the close of the festival; I didn't play at all. I took some time to decide that any online shows I was going to do, I wanted to partner with an organization outside myself, whether it was a venue, a non-profit raising money for various needs, or partnering with another musician. I've been able to stick to that, and for me, I feel not only less lonely singing into my computer screen but also feel like I've been able to remain connected to a larger community.

Conversely, has the altered pace of the pandemic inspired you, opened any new avenues for writing, or made space for any new projects?

YES! I have been doing a lot of stop motion animation and drawing in different mediums that I haven't had time to explore in the past or thought I didn't! I have been making all kinds of things, feeling freed up from the thought of how to market it or what exactly it'll become. I feel more in touch with a really early, explorative part of my maker self.

Coming from a classical background, what helped you most in bridging the gap to the world of songwriting and guitar? I'm asking for the girls and young women who come from formal music lessons, or maybe band or orchestra, who want to follow this path but don't know where

to start. Any tricks that helped you translate from one world to the other?

The rigor that classical music gave me has been invaluable for everything in my life. There is almost an athlete-like approach to practice that was instilled in me at a young age that I still use, a work ethic that I apply to all my endeavors. I also really appreciate that I can "speak" music. I read music, I can write it, and I understand how to translate what I hear with a language that is shared. Is that completely necessary? No, but having those tools in my toolbox sure helps!

Any new gear in your world? Any gear you can't live without?

I really love my new Ear Trumpet Edwina mic. It's great for live streaming. I also have a Peluso condenser mic that is my mainstay for recording. I did just get a new BOSS loop station, but I haven't used it live yet. It's been really fun for messing around and noodling with. I actually wanted to use it for vocals to teach and run some live stream singalongs, so I'll probably do that soon. 🎸



Photo by Jen Lee

ABIGAIL ZACHKO

Photo by Aaron Zachko

GROWING AS A MUSICIAN

By Enmaria Cumisky

Eighteen-year-old New Jersey native **Abigail Zachko** is already a musical phenom. The Berklee College of Music student was named the 2018 Young Guitarist of the Year. She has released her own music in her band *this was planned**, and before the pandemic, was on tour with Mura Masa. Zachko fills us in on how she started playing guitar, how she would describe her sound and her role as an *Elixir* artist.

How long have you been playing guitar?

I started playing guitar around five or six years ago.

You're still a teenager, yet you've already released your own music and been declared 2018's Young Guitarist of the Year. What a great accomplishment. How does that feel?

That whole competition came sort of out of left field for me; I'm still not entirely sure what happened. It was a whirlwind sort of weekend and a whole lot of fun. I think in a lot of ways, the competition sort of propelled me towards a lot of the gigs and opportunities I have now. I find being a younger person in the music industry to have both its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, my experiences touring, recording, and playing feel more fantastical because I'm meeting new people from all over the world and constantly learning new things about music and the community/cultures surrounding it. On the other hand, it can sometimes feel like I'm at a disadvantage because I don't have those experiences already under my belt. I think it's become a balancing act of trying to continue to grow and learn whilst trying to sell myself as an already working professional.

You're currently a student at Berklee College of Music, which is quite an accomplishment in itself. Has that always been the goal, or did you ever think you wanted to do something different in post-secondary school?

I think once I picked up the guitar, I knew I wouldn't be able to do anything else. I'd never really cared much for most classes at school and always struggled with grades. I think I'd have rather tried to be good at this one thing and go to a school where I knew I could thrive than to be a mediocre student and struggle through a more traditional college.

Before the pandemic, you were on tour playing for artist Mura Masa. Have you been able to continue working with them in some capacity since the shutdown, or is it still on hold?

I've kept in touch with some of the cast and crew and have tried to keep up my chops for the rest of the tour (someday, fingers



crossed) post-pandemic. Everyone in the band and crew was really lovely to work with and definitely a joy to talk to whenever I get the chance.

You also have a band called *this was planned. How does being in a band compare with touring with other artists?**

I think *this was planned** is special in that I composed the majority of the music. I really enjoy creating things—songs, riffs, progressions, etc. I think that *this was planned** was a great outlet for that sort of thing. I also sang a bit in that band, which is not something I normally do. I do not consider myself a good vocalist by any means, but the great thing about *this was planned** was that it was a space in which I could flex that creative muscle and challenge myself to step outside of my comfort zone without ruining someone else's creative vision. This is contrasted with me performing other people's music on tour. I think they both have their value. For instance, the majority of an instrumentalist's work is going to be playing for various singer-songwriter types and performing other composers' music, so it's always good practice to learn from other people's compositions. I also think playing other people's music has helped me create my own sound, in a way, and helped me grow as a more versatile musician.

Your sound has been described as math-rock. Do you think that's an accurate descriptor?

I'm not entirely sure everyone in the math-rock community would agree with that description, but in some ways, I feel like I've drawn a lot of inspiration from those players. I really like the sound of those open chord voicings and fluttery guitar

riffs that have been a staple in that genre since the early 2000s/late '90s. I also admire the way that math-rock bands like TTNG and American Football make those odd time signatures feel danceable and catchy despite their somewhat more inaccessible and heady nature.

Well, how would you describe your sound to someone who's never heard your music before?

I think I'm always trying to change and get better, so it's hard to say where music I make five years from now is going to fall on the spectrum. At the moment, however, I feel like I take a lot of inspiration from old jazz players, R&B, and a bit of the aforementioned math-rock/prog.

Do you have any current projects in the works, or are you focusing on school for the moment?

I'm always working on a couple of songs here and there that might be released at some point. I am focusing on school, but I feel like once I'm in Boston, there will be plenty of projects and gigs to announce in a post-pandemic world.

You're an artist for Elixir. How did you discover their strings?

I feel like I met some of the people from Elixir when I was maybe at NAMM a couple of years ago, and they have been kind to me ever since. They are definitely great people selling a great product, so I've stuck with them.

What have you been doing during the pandemic to continue with your music and stay involved with your fans?

I mean, I've been trying to keep creating little songs and ideas to put up online. It's also just a good exercise for me to stay in shape musically. I've also played on some other people's tracks and worked with some people on some upcoming tunes that may or may not be released. I have been suffering a bit from the infamous quarantine burnout that I've seen so many other creatives go through in these troubling times. Still, it's always nice to know that there is something to look forward to, whether Berklee or other musical projects. —

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TONE TALK WITH *ELJURI*

Born in Guayaquil, Ecuador to Lebanese and Spanish parents and raised in New York City, Cecilia Villar Eljuri is a compulsive genre-fuser writing songs that mirror the experiences of her life. Touted as one of the best Latina guitar players in the world, Eljuri navigates through musical landscapes ranging from rock and pop-punk to bolero, reggae, and Afro-Caribbean rhythms, all presented with an elegant and empowering female voice. This impassioned singer, songwriter, and guitarist has released four solo albums and tours internationally as a power-trio performing her global rhythms and universal truths. Eljuri is an activist—passionate about her songs and empowering her listeners through her performances and lyrics that aim to create positive change.

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

My definition of tone is my "unique sound." I think of playing as making my guitar sing, and my distinctive sound is what differentiates me from others. It's different than "style" or "technique," which can vary, but tone is the unique sound of your soul, an identifiable sound through the instrument regardless of the gear.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

For recording, I use a mix of guitars, pedals, and amps, including:

Guitars (electric): As an endorsee of Gibson guitars, I primarily use Gibson Les Paul Customs/Standards, also use D'Angelico EX-DC semi-hollow, Fender Strat, Peekamoose guitars, and a custom electric Tres (that I invented).

Guitars (acoustic): Martin (JC-16 GTE) Jumbo Cutaway, Epiphone Masterbilt AJ-500, and D'Angelico Sunburst Excel Gramercy.

Pedals: ZVEX (Fuzz Factory, Double Rock, Wah Probe), Pigtronix Philosopher's Tone, Cry Baby Wah Pedal, Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail, customized tones in Line 6 Helix and Line 6 HX, and DigiTech Whammy.

Favorite amps: Fender Twins, Bogners, Orange Tiny Terror.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

Many. I like miking the isolated amps with different mics so I can record in a single take and then choose single or blend of mics. I also prefer to pick the guitar and effects to get the sound I'm after before recording and not at the post-production stage.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

For live, I tour with my Gibson Les Pauls and program my sounds into Line 6 pedals (Helix, HXFX) or the Tech21RK5 pedal and a mini Cry Baby Wah Pedal for one-off fly/guest gigs. My backline is usually a Fender Twin Reverb amp. I usually also

travel with my Epiphone or D'Angelico acoustic and a Fishman Aura Spectrum DI, and occasionally a BOSS RC-20 XL Looper.

In this time of COVID-19 without live gathering concerts, what is your setup for live streaming shows?

It's important that I achieve high-quality audio when live streaming from my home studio. My DAW of choice is Pro Tools, so I sing and play through a Pro Tools session and route back out directly to the streaming device (iPhone, camera, MacPro, etc.). Since everything is going through the box, the choice of DAW plug-ins for vocals and guitar is critical. For amp sims, I mostly rely on IK Multimedia AmpliTube with my favorite amps from the Fender Collection custom shop. I occasionally use the Avid Eleven plug-in for guitar or bass amp tones or the amp modelers in my Helix pedal. Since I am in my home studio, I am not limited by what I can bring on tour and have complete access to my different guitar pedals.

What does your practice consist of?

I vocalize with scales every day. As for guitar, first, it's exploration of

parts and sounds when creating new songs. Then, mostly translating recorded parts and sounds for live, and rehearsing/playing and singing for live shows, special events, radio/tv performances, and touring.

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

Find your voice and commit to it. Take the time to develop all the skills needed to hone your craft. Search out mentors and teachers. Believe in yourself and go for it! —



Photo by Robert Cooper, Courtesy of Manovill Records

CLASSICAL GUITARIST SHARON ISBIN

A PASSIONATE AND DEDICATED TEACHER AND PERFORMER

By Enmaria Cumisky

Classical guitar virtuoso Sharon Isbin is internationally known for her guitar skills, having produced dozens of albums, studied with unbelievably talented guitarists, and toured the world on multiple occasions. We've had the fortune to chat with Isbin on multiple occasions throughout her career. This time, we have connected to discuss her role as the founder of the guitar department at Juilliard School of Music in New York. She talks about her experience being the chair, how her career as a guitarist affects her teaching, and what advice she has for her guitar students.

You founded the guitar department at Juilliard in 1989. What inspired you to launch that endeavor?

Joseph Polisi invited me to create Juilliard's first guitar department a few years after he became President. We met when I was an undergrad at Yale University and again on faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, where he was the Dean. He admired my playing and thought it would be a great mix. I was honored and thrilled!

What was the process of creating the department? Did it present any challenges that you didn't expect?

The other departments were enthusiastic to have me join as it meant their students could collaborate with mine in chamber music! I suggested that we start by offering a Master of Music degree. I brought Mark Delpriora onboard to teach fretboard harmony and guitar history.

How has the program developed over the years?

We added the Bachelor's degree program in 2011 and DMA in 2019. I've had students from over twenty different countries, many of whom now have impressive careers performing, recording, and teaching.

What is one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching guitar?

It's a joy to mentor talented young players, helping them grow in their artistry, technique, and profession. Seeing them thrive is gratifying! They have also introduced me to beautiful new music over the years. Since I like to look at each score with fresh ears, even if it's music I've performed and taught before, this process keeps me ever inquisitive, engaged, and discovering.

If you could create or teach another course at Juilliard, what would you want to teach?

Ha! Cross-country skiing, only in the winter, of course, and only during the one or two days a year



Photo by J. Henry Fair

we have enough snow in Central Park. I actually did that one winter at the Banff Festival in the Canadian Rockies. I was required to teach five hours a day for two weeks, but there was only one guitar student. Since nobody said *what* I had to teach, I taught the student for an hour each day on guitar and then dragged him out onto the slopes. He'd never been on skis before and fell down a lot, but he has since forgiven me and claims he actually enjoyed the experience. I was relieved to hear that years later! We had to keep it a secret from the administration, of course.

Your work as an internationally famous guitarist often takes you away from New York. How do you balance teaching classes with your other musical projects?

I take only a handful of students, and they are all independent and advanced enough to make great use of the time while I'm away. Juilliard has four months off every summer, one month of which I spend directing the guitar program at the Aspen Music Festival, with lots of great hiking in the Rockies!

How has COVID-19 affected your teaching and chair-duties at Juilliard?

Teaching has been virtual since March. My Juilliard students email me audio recordings with scores, which I then critique by email in great detail as if I were their own personal recording producer! Since there are no visual distractions, everyone has been sharpening their listening skills, achieving amazing progress and results.

How has teaching young people about what you do best affected how you look at your career as a guitarist?

It makes me realize how many challenges students face in learning the craft, growing as artists, and forging a career. It's such hard work; one really has to be passionate, dedicated, patient, and creative to navigate with purpose and meaning.

What characteristics does it take for a guitar student at Juilliard to become a professional musician?

Passion and love for music, a personal voice with something unique to offer, creativity, a super-strong work ethic, courage, proactive personality, joy in performing and collaborating with others, humanity, kindness, generosity, and eagerness to learn and grow.

Do you have any advice for your students on what it takes to play guitar for a living?

I encourage them to be open-minded about what a career in guitar can mean. Many secure teaching positions which give them security while offering opportunities to perform. Some focus on community outreach, others on contemporary music and chamber ensembles. Some may go into the music business, including management, producing, and engineering recordings or concert presenting.

COVID has given many of us time to think and dive into new interests. Have you begun working on any new projects since the pandemic?

This year without travel has been a welcome respite and very productive for me! I released two albums in May, *Affinity* and *Strings for Peace*. I set up basic audio, video, and lighting technology to do over fifty radio, press, and video interviews from home in support of the rollout, as well as some virtual performances. I completed my edition of the *Joan Baez Suite*—composed



for me several years ago by the late John Duarte—which will be published in January by Mel Bay, in time for Baez's 80th birthday. I also secured the digital re-release of my GRAMMY-winning Sony album on which it appears, *Journey to the New World*, with guests Joan Baez and Mark O'Connor.

I'm excited to have overseen closed captioning for the one-hour award-winning documentary *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, to be available for streaming and download on Amazon before the December holidays while continuing to be available on DVD and Blu-ray formats and PBS television broadcasts as well. Also, this month, I'll be judging the finals of an international guitar competition in China, virtually from my living room, and learning a fun Alison Brown bluegrass tune she wrote for me to record with her band. Looking ahead, Joseph Schwantner has composed a new work for me to premiere with the Pacifica Quartet, though the NYC performance is now postponed until next season.

I've been jogging up a storm several times a week along the Hudson River in New York City, exceeding all my previous endurance times! I've perfected making organic lentil stew and organic cherry-apple pie over the last many months, and now really need to expand my culinary repertoire. Over the holidays, I'm looking forward to reading Barack Obama's *A Promised Land* and finishing Anne Nelson's brilliant *Shadow Network*. —

Photo by J. Henry Fair

Moriah Formica

Moriah's on Fire



By Alexx Calise

Photo by James F. Wertman Jr.

You may remember **Moriah Formica** as the big-voiced chanteuse who turned all four chairs on Season 13 of *The Voice* with her spirited rendition of Heart's "Crazy on You," but the now eighteen-year-old singer, songwriter, and guitarist proves she is so much more than just an alumnus from a talent competition. An old soul who is wise beyond her years, Formica possesses an absolutely incredible, awe-inducing voice that only comes once every few decades. With millions of hits on social media (her recent post covering a Van Halen song has already received over one million views), and some of the biggest names in music calling her the next big thing, Formica is positioning herself to be a major figure in the rock world. We caught up with Formica about her newly formed all-girl band and how she's been dealing with the pandemic.

Your voice calls to mind some great powerhouse female rock vocalists like Ann Wilson and Pat Benatar. Besides listening to a lot of these iconic musicians growing up, how else would you say you've developed your vocal timbre?

Well, first off, thank you so much for even suggesting my voice brings to mind Ann Wilson and Pat Benatar. They are both the "standard" for female rockers and to be mentioned with them in any way is humbling. I guess the most important piece of developing my voice is the music school I've been going to since I was nine. It's called Modern Day Music, and I've been taking voice lessons there forever. I still go and plan on going as

long as I can. I've had the chance to work with three different vocal coaches there (Lesley O'Donnell, Katie Johnson, and now Nicole Minielli). I've been able to incorporate several techniques from each one. Most importantly, they've taught me how to protect my voice and use my diaphragm.

You're obviously a rocker at heart. Has anyone in your career ever tried to steer you in what they would call a more "pop" or "mainstream" direction?

Definitely. More so since I was on *The Voice*. I would have people in the industry try and steer me away from rock and metal. I understand where they were coming from, though. To try and write some mainstream hits and get your foot in the door, then you can kind of do anything you want after that. I actually did write a few with that in mind when I was fifteen to sixteen ("I Will," "No Regrets," and "Here's My Heart"). I actually have written a lot of pop songs that people may never hear. However, I am incorporating some of those in my sound, and I think people will be surprised to hear some stuff I'm working on. I can guarantee everyone that every song I write and release will have real instruments and a definite rock edge.

You were on Team Miley on Season 13 of *The Voice*. How has being on the show changed the trajectory of your career?

The show had a huge impact. It got my name out there to millions. It allowed me opportunities to play shows across the country. It probably was instrumental in having me open for Joan

Jett twice. So many opportunities came out of that. The thing is, with all of these shows today (and I was in Season 1 of *American Idol* last year for a minute), none of them are making stars anymore. It's not like back when I was a young kid and *Idol* had Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Daughtry, etc. That show was a new concept, and stars were made. There were no competing shows. Now, there are a million shows, and talent is watered down. So these shows are really only good for exposure for the contestants. That's it. They're only concerned about ratings, not making stars.

Lzzy Hale from Halestorm recently announced via an Instagram post that you were looking for some new bandmates. Have you put together your new lineup already? If so, can you tell us a little bit about your new members and where you recruited them from?

Lzzy has been amazing to me. I'm her biggest fan. I got to meet her first when I was fourteen after a show. I played in a music festival called Rock 'N Derby, and they were headlining the same night I played. Anyway, she has been supportive of me in so many ways. Regarding the band, yes, we have a lineup. I am super excited about this next chapter. The lineup is Brooke C, a/k/a Rock Angel on drums, Ashley Suppa on bass, and Bella Perron on guitar. They are all amazing, beautiful, and badass women. I heard about Brooke a long time back from some members of my previous band, and I checked her out. I was floored. So my dad reached out to her dad last summer to see if there would be any interest in working

together. We got together and jammed, and there was an immediate connection. I love her. She was also friends with Ash, and so eventually, we all got together and jammed, and it was awesome.

Brooke and I decided to do a cover of "Barracuda" in April because of the whole COVID thing and not being able to play live. That video went viral. I think there are over six million views across both of our social media platforms. That brought out lots of attention. I was signed by Surface Management (owners of Pavement Entertainment, a large indie rock label). Bella heard about the opportunity because of Lzzy's post and reached out. She is an amazing guitarist and musician. She's a freshman at Berklee. We've got some songs ready to go and are working on some cool things behind the scenes. We plan to launch around January.

You recorded a new single, "Champion," in January. Is this going to be a part of a larger body of work, like an EP or album?

It's just a single. The only EP I've done to date was my debut EP, *Bring It On*. That was a collection of songs I wrote from eleven to thirteen years old. After that, we decided that making an EP or album was too time consuming and cost too much. I'm not really a "known" artist, so my fan base is smaller and probably doesn't want to wait six to twelve months to hear music. We didn't want them to lose interest, so we decided to try and release a single every three to four months.

You often cover a lot of celebrated classic rock songs on your social media pages. Which one so far has been the most challenging to learn and perform?

That's easy. "I'll Never Let You Go" by Steelheart. That guy has an insane range and voice.

The pandemic has threatened a lot of people's livelihoods, particularly creatives. How have you adapted to this drastic change, and what have you learned during this time of uncertainty?

Yeah, it's been crazy. I don't think anyone thought we'd be shut down this long. I didn't. I was supposed to go on tour in the spring with Michael Sweet (Stryper) and Tony Harnell (TNT), but that was obviously canceled. To be honest though, this whole time has been a blessing for me. I had just decided to start over again and look for a new all-female band. So it allowed me to be patient and not lose live show opportunities like it would have if the pandemic never happened. More importantly, it gave me time to relax and really think about my future and what I want out of life. It gave me time to slow down and connect with my fans on a deeper level than I've ever had. I had the idea months ago to post about doing covers for people for a small fee to try and make some money to help offset losing so much. The outpouring was amazing. The videos have gotten a lot of attention, and lots of opportunities have come my way (behind the scenes). The whole thing is horrible, and I grieve for those who have died and those

who have lost loved ones. However, regarding my career, it's been the most productive six months of my life. I've learned not to take anything for granted. My life. My freedom. My health. My career. I am going to continue to work every day and connect with fans every day and try and bring people some joy.

What do you think will become of live music after the pandemic? Do you think it will continue to include more virtual performances, or do you think that people will be so starved for an in-person experience at that point that they will come out in droves to music venues again?

Honestly, I have no idea. Things have been so unpredictable in the last six months in general. I would like to think people will come out in droves, but who knows how deep the fear of this whole thing will go. I'm prepared to bring my message and my music to any platform.

A lot of music fans over the years have lamented that "rock is dead." As a musician who has been touted by Miley Cyrus as a "rock goddess" and Lzzy Hale as "the future of rock," what do you have to say to those people?

First off, that statement pertains to America only. Rock and metal are still huge just about everywhere else. I think people say that because you don't see rock and metal represented in the mainstream at all anymore. You don't see it on award shows. You barely see it in *Rolling Stone* magazine or other large publications that were once rock heavy. If you do, it's always classic bands. So I understand what they mean. You can't hear rock or metal on popular stations. You don't see them on the award shows, and when you do, it's always throwback acts. However, rock is definitely not dead in America. There are lots of fans. More importantly, there are tons of young fans yearning for this. I've seen it firsthand at shows I've played. I see young girls and boys who have never been exposed to rock before blown away. Almost like they're looking at me or my band like, "What is happening right now?" Just the visual of real instruments being played and kick-ass music. I personally believe all it's going to take is that one band for a major label to believe in and push like they do for major pop acts, and there will be a major rock explosion in our youth. That's always been my mission, and hopefully, my new band will be that act. —

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Photo by Brian Michael Baldwin



FROM BERKLEE TO BROADWAY

MEG TOOHEY

By Tara Low

Meg Toohey is a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, who most recently played guitar in Sara Bareilles' musical *Waitress*. She also wrote the song "Lucky Streak"—a tribute to the late Nick Cordero, who starred in the show. Toohey's life has always been in music, and here she shares her experiences with her training, the LA music scene, and the reality of being a guitarist on Broadway.

When you look at your career from your time with The So and So's through today, how have you grown as an artist?

I was very young when The So and So's were taking off. We had a lot of opportunities, but I wasn't as serious about doing the work to get the band to the point it could have been at. It's not that we didn't work hard; it was more about the focus. My focus was on the short game instead of the long.

I learned a lot about working relationships in that band and how I contributed to a collaboration. In hindsight, I could have been a better leader in that group, and it's since made me show up harder as a team player in any project I work on now. I think

I've grown most as a songwriter. For many years, I was writing to sound like a certain genre I was into. My lyrics were obscure, and my recordings were super dense. I was too afraid of being labeled as a "folk" or "country" artist because I identify so much with artists that don't fit that category. When I simplified and stayed true to my own voice, I really started finding my way as a writer. Now I don't really care about what genre people think I fall into as much, and I'm just making music that I love.

What inspires your songwriting, and what does a Meg Toohey songwriting session look like?

I'm usually inspired by everyday life and the people around me. When I sit down to write, it's almost always from a place of joy, even if it ends up being a sad song. I usually start with guitar or bass and a beat. From there, I either find a sound I like or a melody that I start singing gibberish over. That sparks a word or a phrase that becomes the catalyst for the rest of the song. I often keep first takes on my recordings because there's something about an initial idea that sticks. I

think when you start tinkering too much, you lose the vibe. Basically, it's like sitting down to do a puzzle and fit all the pieces together.

As a multi-instrumentalist, what instruments do you play, and which came first?

I started out taking piano, clarinet, and violin lessons in public school band and orchestra and took private lessons after school when I was really young, but I didn't really love it. In junior high, I switched to playing drums in band and got into drum corps and marching band where I became the drum major. I was the guitar player in the jazz band. Sometimes I filled in on trumpet or sax if there was a part that needed covering because I could learn things very quickly. I found the guitar at ten years old and just became obsessed with it. I had a drum kit, bass rig, and guitar rig all in my bedroom as a kid, so I pretty much played all of the time, and I would put together garage bands with kids in the neighborhood. My dad was also a junior high music teacher, so he would constantly bring home different instruments for me to try out. Because of that, I can play pretty much anything brass, woodwind, or string. I'm definitely most

proficient on the guitar, bass, keyboards, and drums. I also took years of voice lessons and was a vocal performance and songwriting major at Berklee. I mostly have been hired as a guitar player, though.

I mainly am my own "rock band" (guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards). I also am mostly my own engineer, producer, and even mixer at times, so I've spent a lot of time learning how to use Pro Tools and Logic.

From Boston to Los Angeles to New York, what have each of those experiences brought to your music?

I had a pretty good amount of success growing up in Boston. When I was in my early 20s, I moved to LA, and I was the smallest of fishes in a huge pond. I had to work really hard to get my name out there, and it wasn't easy. After living there for twelve years, I definitely became a part of that music community, and I LOVED being there. NYC was unique in that I relocated for something specific (*Waitress*). I was the new guy in town, so to my surprise, I immediately got offered work based on my reputation. That felt good.

You were fortunate to be a part of the Broadway musical, *Waitress*. How was that experience?

It was life changing. Being on Broadway was a dream I had since I was a kid. I loved musical theatre and was in all the shows back in high school. When Sara [Bareilles] first started writing *Waitress*, I had the thought that maybe I'd like to do something like play on or write a musical someday. When she called me and asked to play the show and move to NYC, it was sort of kismet. It was incredible to be around all these crazy talented people firing every day at 100%. I loved the family that I gained by joining the NYC Broadway community, and I loved having some structure for a while, which was something I hadn't really had as mainly a freelance touring musician and composer. It was the hardest job I ever had—eight shows a week, no matter what else is happening in your life, through sickness and health. But it renewed a work ethic for me and gave me a whole new networking system, which in this business is priceless. Sara is always wonderful to work with, too, so that definitely sweetened the gig. I certainly didn't mind playing her music almost every day for four years.

How many band members made up the *Waitress* band?

There were five of us on stage and one keyboard player in the basement because he didn't fit with his rig on the set that was built! It was one of the first Broadway bands to be featured on stage as opposed to in the pit. We had a few mics on the stage so we could communicate, but Adam (keyboards) would entertain us on a nightly basis because he happens to be one of the funniest people in all the land. He would just talk through the show from the basement. We had the greatest time, and there was rarely a night we didn't laugh our asses off.

What equipment did you use for the show?

The fine folks at Reverend Guitars set me

“I had the great honor of working with a legendary performer named Manolo Garcia. He's basically the Bruce Springsteen of Spain.”

up with a couple of guitars to use for the show. I specifically picked colors I thought would look cool with the set. I had a Charger and a Tricky Gomez on stage, then I used a Warhawk for a couple of songs that were played offstage. I also used my Gibson CJ-165 for an acoustic. I had a Fractal AX8 that served as my effects and amp, and each song was programmed. It was super easy and sounded great. Once the sounds were set, we weren't really allowed to swap anything out since the show was all tuned into the theater and the actors' voices.

With eight shows a week, was there also practice time?

Yes. There, we constantly cast changes, which means we had to do full run-throughs of the show on a regular basis (called "put-ins"). Imagine already having played the show six times that week, then having to do an EXTRA show with no audience. It was grueling. There were also press opportunities, charity events; you name it. Let's just say we were playing the show more than we weren't playing the show.

When you talk about the NYC Broadway community, share with us a little about that community.

With the above answer, obviously you end up spending a ton of time together. It's very much a family. After the shows, we would often hang and grab a bite, or on our "night off," someone in the cast would be singing somewhere, or someone in the band had a gig that people would show up to. It's an incredible support system.

Sadly, one of the original cast members, Nick Cordero, passed away this year from complications of COVID, and you wrote and produced a song "Lucky Streak" as a tribute to Cordero. What was that process like?

My *Waitress* family had all been very connected throughout Nick's illness. We would Zoom and share our concerns or text back and forth: "Have you heard this update?" He was on our minds 24-7, and when he passed, it was so hard not to be able to get together in person and mourn him. I went to my basement studio the night he passed, and "Lucky Streak" just happened. It was written in thirty minutes, and by the next morning, I had sent it around to the band. Everyone was moved by the song, and I asked them if they would play in the track.

When Sara heard it, she said she also would love to be involved. When she sent back her vocal, I was so moved at what we had all created together—and her voice and the part she added was so gorgeous on it. We sent the finished recording to Nick's wife, Amanda, and she gave us her blessing to release it. It felt so good to offer something to his family. I'm so proud of that song, and I do feel like Nick somehow sent it down to me.

You've also been busy on another project, *She Is Risen*, which recently released Volume II. Tell us a little about the project and your involvement.

Morgan James found me through Ann Klein, another killer player. We got asked to do a live show of JCS [*Jesus Christ Superstar*] featuring an all-female cast and band. The show was super successful, and after it was over, my partner, Dawn Kamerling, was instrumental in figuring out how we could continue the project. We met with Morgan and her team and came on board as producers of the recording. We got it to happen in record time, recording the whole score in basically forty-eight hours of studio time, band, vocals, and orchestra. All-female engineered and mixed and mastered by the fabulous Rachel Alina, who mixes pretty much everything I produce. We had a bit of a time trying to release *She Is Risen* because right when we finished it, all of these other *Jesus Christ Superstar* productions came out, including the NBC live version. Because of that, we had to release the work in volumes, but it looks like we are hoping to put the whole thing together in the spring of 2021, possibly followed by some more live shows! It's one of my favorite things I've ever worked on, and the guitar score is SOOOO fun to play.

Share with us a memorable performance?

I had the great honor of working with a legendary performer named Manolo Garcia. He's basically the Bruce Springsteen of Spain. I did a record with him in New York along with Cat Popper (Jack White), Sarah Tomek (Steven Tyler), and Gerry Leonard (David Bowie). It went on to win Rock Album of the Year at the Latin Grammys. Working with him was like working with Yoda. He taught me so much. He asked me to tour with him in 2018. I spent two glorious months living in Spain and playing to sold-out 20k+ venues. I love his music, and I loved the people of Spain. Incredible audiences. 🇪🇸

Tone Talk with Meg Toohey

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

I've always been obsessed with figuring out how each guitar player gets their signature sounds. The more I plug different things in, the more I realize it really is in your fingers first. That really got me listening in a different way. I do love me some crazy washy wall of sound effects. Strymon and Eventide are killing it for me.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

For guitars, I'm obsessed with all-rosewood necks. I first got introduced to them when I got the SVT Music Man. Since then, I have bought an all-rosewood Tele and Strat, and between those three, I'm hooked on the feel and the sound.

I also use a Nashville-tuned Tele and a Danelectro baritone a ton in my studio for different textures. I'm really lucky in that I have a lot of guitars, so I can really play with different pickups and vibes.

When I was making the JCS record, I started working with Taylor Guitars. They sent me an acoustic to borrow for a session, and I instantly fell madly in love. I have not put the guitar down and refused to give it back. Playing it has found me at least fifty songs. I feel like it's my muse. It is a short-scale 612e 12-fret. Everywhere I play it, sound engineers are like, "WHAT IS THAT?!"

I use stereo Princetons. I've tried a lot of different amps, but I always go back to the Princeton and the classic Fender tube amp. They sound awesome, and they don't hurt your back trying to get them out of your trunk. I run them stereo because I love bouncing reverbs and delays around. It's such a full and glorious sound.

What about strings?

Ernie Ball Super Slinky 10s on most of my guitars, 9s on my Strat, 11s on my SG for slide. D'Addario extra light customs gauge for acoustic. I use .06 Delrin picks on acoustic and .08 on electric.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

I am always trying to get better at recording. I think some things do benefit from happy accidents due to not being a "trained"

engineer, but I also think if I could have an engineer on hand, I would prefer to not have to do it myself. I do love producing and spending hours going down the rabbit hole of synth patches and drum loops. I write a lot during the recording process because I will find a vibe that sparks something just by laying down a beat and a guitar loop with crazy delays. I love playing with plug-ins on everything. My go-to's are The Soundtoys Echo Boy, and I love the Scheps Omni Channel for playing with vocals and crunchy drums.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

It's a work in progress. I'm constantly trying to get a balance of clean and distorted, to find the right boost pedal, and to get the least ground hum from a lot of pedals and stereo amps. I wake up in the middle of the night and think about it.

What does your practice consist of?

I usually look on YouTube for something specific I'm interested in. Right now, it's pedal steel 24-7. I also use Patron and follow Rich Hinman on pedal steel and Duke Levine. They are two of my favorites. I also have a loop pedal that I often play along with to keep trying different things.

Favorite guitar riff or lick that inspired you to play guitar?

Bonnie Raitt on "Love Me Like A Man," Hendrix "Purple Haze," David Bowie "All The Young Dudes," Led Zeppelin "Over The Hills And Far Away." The bass line from "Reflections" by The Supremes, "Barracuda" by Heart. Oh, so many.

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

Play like you mean it. Don't get discouraged by dummies who think women aren't as capable players as men. It's all so outdated and so dumb. Support your sisters! Competition is healthy, but don't get caught up in it. —



Photo by
Dave Doobinin

MEG TOOHEY'S GUITAR GEAR

Waitress:

Reverend Tricky Gomez
Reverend Charger P90s
Reverend Warhawk
Gibson CJ-165
Fractal AX8

Touring Rig:

Ernie Ball Music Man St. Vincent Signature
Fender Ltd. Edition Rosewood Telecaster
Taylor 612e 12-fret
Two Fender Princeton amps, stereo

Pedalboard:

Strymon Big Sky
Strymon Night Sky
Eventide H9
Line 6 M9
Hudson Electronics Broadcast- Ariel Posen
Wampler Tumnus
Wampler Boost
Keeley Dark Side
BOSS Volume Pedal
BOSS Expression Pedal
BOSS Tuner

Miscellaneous:

EBow
Songhurst Brass Rock Slides

Studio:

Gibson SG Classic P90s
Fender American Stratocaster - Rosewood
Fender Telecaster '62 Reissue
(Nashville Tuning)
Bonneville Jazzmaster custom built
by Lindz McKay
Reverend Jen Wasner Signature with Bigsby
Reverend Pete Anderson RT
Fender Mustang Bass (Japan)
Gibson L2
Dickerson Lap Steel
Dekley Pedal Steel
Peavey Nashville Amp
Fender Champ

TONE TALK WITH MARLENE MENDOZA

Marlene Mendoza is a solo metal artist from New York City. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Lehman College with her Bachelor of Science Degree in Music and three certifications from Berklee College of Music in Music Production. Since then, she has toured in several bands as a guitarist and is now working on her own music in which she sings, plays guitar, and writes for. She has two singles available now: "A Battle Between Two Lesser Evils" and "Not Afraid." When not writing new music, she teaches guitar, piano, ukulele, and bass at a music school.

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

I always say this to my students, "The tone comes from your hands." You can have the most expensive gear in the world but if you don't strum properly, maintain your instrument, or/and practice, your tone will not sound good. But tone has changed over the years based on the genre of music you play. If you play heavy metal, you want a guitar tone that's very dirty. If you want to play djent, you want a tone that's punchy and tight. And to be honest, you can manipulate that sound digitally with editing if you're recording. That's what has changed over the years.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

I currently play Ibanez guitars. I love how

lightweight they are, which is very important to me due to my height, plus I love being able to spin my guitars around without breaking my back (ha-ha). I like using Marshall

Amps on stage, and I use the Line 6 Pod HD Pro X for live gigs. My next goal is to get a Kemper or Axe FX that I can incorporate into my shows and recording.

What about strings?

It depends on the guitar. On my acoustic guitars, I love using Ernie Ball Light or Medium Earthwood strings. They sound super warm and have nice clarity. On my seven-string guitars, I like using the D'Addario NYX strings. And on my regular electric guitars, I like using Ernie Balls as well.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

I like to just use a guitar plugin amp when it comes to recording. But depending on the song, I can reamp it or use my Line 6 Pod HD PRO X to the computer to get the sound I would like. As long as everything is neatly organized and not too time-consuming, I am fine with any technique that will yield the sound I am looking for.



Photo by Derek Soto of Sinestra Studios

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

Using a rack setup helps keep my sound consistent onstage. I don't have to worry about knobs being accidentally touched during travel, which can compromise my sound. I like to turn it on to a save preset and just go!

What does your practice consist of?

I have a few guitar books that I look back into that consist of practices that I can do each day. It's fun doing those with a metronome to keep my timing right.

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

You're stronger than you think! Do not give up! You got this. And women's intuition is real; listen to that feeling because it's there for a reason! Always believe in yourself because there will be people that do not. And most importantly, have fun! 🎸

Sam Ash Music

Founded nearly 100 years ago in 1924, Sam Ash Music is the largest family-owned chain of musical instrument stores in the US and is headquartered in New York, where their first-ever location opened. Initially, Sam Ash Music only offered sheet music, music instrument repairs, and phonographs, but eventually became the first store in the area to carry guitar brands like Gibson and Fender. Sam Ash Music started as a small shop in Brooklyn owned by Sam Ash and his wife Rose and supervised by their fifteen-year-old son, Paul. Today, the store operates in sixteen states with forty-four locations and is still run by Ash family members.



Camila Meza

MUSIC AS A HEALING FORCE

By Alexx Calise

Singer-songwriter **Camila Meza** is a gifted and exceptionally soulful musician who has been creating quite the stir in the New York jazz scene. With her major album debut, *Ámbar*, the improvising guitarist truly shines alongside her chamber-jazz collaborators in The Nectar Orchestra and takes listeners on an introspective journey deeply rooted in her Chilean heritage. We caught up with the honey-voiced Meza to chat about her migration to New York from her native Santiago and how getting back to nature inspired her breathtaking single, "Kallfu."

You can definitely hear the George Benson and Pat Metheny influence in your playing. What originally got you into that particular style of music over others? When I grabbed the electric guitar around fifteen years old, I was mostly checking out rock players since I loved the idea of soloing, playing riffs, and the powerful energy of the music.

But soon after, there was something missing; I would get bored of playing the songs the exact same way every time and wanted to get deeper into harmony because I loved colors and tensions, but I didn't know much about it. So some of my first introductions to the endless well of jazz and its branches were George Benson and Pat Metheny. When I listened to their sound and their improvisations, I immediately knew I wanted to do THAT. The fact that they were creating in the moment, had absolute command of their instruments, and would also make music that was emotionally connected—I felt like I finally had found my music home.

How did it feel to actually perform and act as musical director for Metheny's 2018 NEA Jazz Masters induction ceremony at The Kennedy Center? That must have been an incredible honor.

Definitely one of the highlights of my career! I still look back at it as a dream. During the process, I got to share some really deep conversations with one of my ultimate music heroes and dive into his music, along with some amazing peers and legends for this celebration. It was also very empowering to be chosen by him to make the arrangement. I'm a huge dreamer, but this one exceeded my capacity of envisioning!

You're originally from Chile, and you moved to New York to study guitar at the New School. Is that where you became acquainted with some of the members of your jazz octet, The Nectar Orchestra? Most of the members of The Nectar Orchestra I actually met playing and hanging in the New York Jazz Scene. I arrived in New York when I was twenty-three years old and had already started a career of performing live in Chile. So even though I moved to go to school, I felt the need to go out and become

Photo by Chris Drukker



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Emily Remler was a great inspiration growing up! Mary Osborne, an unsung legend. Other great players of today are Sheryl Bailey, Mary Halvorson, Leni Stern, and Dida Pelled.

part of the scene from day one. However, school was a super enriching place for me. I learned from great mentors and teachers and connected with tons of peers who I'm friends with until today.

Your song, "Kallfu" from your latest album, *Ámbar* (as well its accompanying music video), has so many incredible and colorful textures. Can you tell us about how your trip to Patagonia inspired you to write it?

Yes. This song was the final song I wrote for *Ámbar*—interesting because it ended up becoming like a prologue for the album. *Ámbar*'s leitmotif was the idea of music as a healing force, and my trip to Patagonia was medicine and liberation. I remember looking at the mountains turning blue against a lake during a beautiful dusk and feeling all preoccupations fading away, all confusions from our current civilization's paradoxes and problems become so insignificant and irrelevant. It reconnected me to nature and its perfection! A Mapuche (Native Chilean) told me they called that area "Kallfu" in Mapudungun, which means blue. So I decided to title the song that way.

You've been doing a lot of great collaborations on social media with other jazz musicians. Which was one of the more "fun" sessions you've had?

I'd say the most recent one with my friend Shai Maestro on piano. He was in Israel, and I was in the US. I told him the name of the song and the

key and just to do his thing. We've known each other for around ten years, and every time I play with him, it feels like he can read my mind; it's always so fun. So this was no different, just a different space and time.

Many artists have begun writing new material since live, in-person playing is still off the table in many areas of the world. Are you working on any new projects in addition to doing your live streams? Also, have you been collaborating virtually with The Nectar Orchestra?

I've been mostly dedicated to envisioning my new album/project called *Portal*. A lot of my bandmates are currently in different parts of the world, so I'm deciding whether to do a remote recording or wait. I have a Patreon account where we have met with members of The Nectar Orchestra to revisit some 'Behind The Scenes' material that has been really fun to share with the public. I'm definitely feeling more creative these last few months; I was in quite an adjusting mode at the beginning of the pandemic and really didn't feel inspired. But I'm back!

Who are some other awesome female jazz guitarists that we may not (and should!) know about?

Emily Remler was a great inspiration growing up! Mary Osborne, an unsung legend. Other great players of today are Sheryl Bailey, Mary Halvorson, Leni Stern, and Dida Pelled.

JODI HEAD GUITAR WEAR N.Y.C.



How did guitar straps that were made in a dark basement workshop in Manhattan make it on to the shoulders of David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Lenny Kravitz, Madonna, and more? By the talent and passion of Jodi Head. Head started out selling jewelry on Philadelphia's streets, where she encountered a few rock stars. Eventually relocating to New York,

Head started attending local rock clubs and got into the music scene. She tapped into her knack for finding rock stars, handed out her decadent straps to them, and grew her company into what you see today. From there, the rest is history. Jodi Head Guitar Wear is known for constructing high-quality, uniquely designed guitar straps and accessories made with love in NYC.

The Bitch Movie

"BITCH WAS THIS DIRTY ROCK AND ROLL PARTY AT THIS CLUB CALLED DON HILL'S, IT SOUNDS LIKE FOLKLORE, I KNOW, BUT IT REALLY HAPPENED." — Militia Vox

In the early 2000s, Don Hill's was a music venue that sat on Soho's fringe on the West Side of Manhattan just a few blocks from the Hudson River. It was a place where a new rock 'n' roll scene gathered. CBGB had established its punk stars and loyalists, but Don's was for a new crop of misfits. Owner Don Hill launched a weekly show called BITCH, which ran off and on from 2001 to 2012 and hosted some of the most passionate performers who could perform rock and metal music along with the house band. Hill passed away in 2011, and the venue sits quietly on the corner of Greenwich and Spring Streets. Some of the best BITCHes have moved, passed on, or since pursued different career paths. But thanks to a new documentary, "THE BITCH MOVIE," this moment in NYC HERstory has been immortalized. VH1 filmed several shows and conducted interviews years ago but shelved the project. Fast forward to now, filmmaker and avid BITCH night attendee Director Damian Kolodiy acquired the footage, conducted new interviews, and created "THE BITCH MOVIE," which premiered at Wacken Open Air in 2019. The film gives you a good taste of the energy, the talent, and the noise made at this Wednesday night mass at one of NYC's rock 'n' roll churches.



Jessica Lynn

LYNN IT TO WIN IT

By Alexx Calise

Meet the fiercely independent **Jessica Lynn**, a New York-based country chanteuse who proves through hard work and blood, sweat, and tears that a one hundred percent DIY artist can still make waves—and a difference.

The affable, family-oriented Lynn (who actually has several family members in her employ) is a proud supporter of the U.S. military and regularly participates in various humanitarian causes. With a strong sound and resemblance to country queen Shania Twain, Lynn has written with some of Nashville's top writers, and her last single, "Crazy Idea," even broke the Top 50 on American Country Radio.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Lynn hasn't succumbed to the pandemic depression that so many have experienced during this tumultuous time. Instead, she's hosting and

performing for her own Christmas special and spearheading her own living room concert special, which airs on Public Television. We caught up with Lynn to talk about her favorite D'Angelico guitars and how she's shifted her creative energies during the time of COVID.

You're a multi-instrumentalist, playing guitar, piano, harmonica, and drums. When you set out to write a new song, which instrument do you normally start hashing it out on?

I usually grab my guitar because it's the easiest, or if it's a big ballad, I might sit down at the piano. I am not the type of person who can sit down and say, "I am going to write a song."

I really need to feel the inspiration hit, and then I just go for whatever is closest, so I don't miss the spark!

You've been a D'Angelico artist for a few years now. Which model do you feel most comfortable playing?

My acoustic is a Brooklyn model, and I've had it for so many years. It has been through a lot with me, and I am very attached to it. I have so many memories from around the world playing it, literally from Mexico to Poland, that it is just as much a part of the band as I am. I have such a level of comfort with their instruments. They're so well-made with such beautiful designs and colors.

Photos by Scott Vincent





New York isn't necessarily the first place I would think of when I think of country music. Have you found it harder to be a country artist there since it's (from what I've always understood) very Broadway and jazz-oriented, or do you find that it actually gives you an edge in that there isn't as much competition?

In the beginning, I would say that I had a lot of doors slammed in my face because I was "different," but as you grow, you realize that being different is your greatest asset. It has set me apart from other artists and made me a stand-out within my genre, not just because of where I come from, but because of my mentality and my

different vibe and sound that came with it. Country music is now very popular in New York; however, the only time you would not have much competition is if you didn't plan on leaving New York. I have very big dreams and goals for myself and have been competing on an international stage, far beyond the borders of New York state, which has an immense amount of competition and saturation.

In addition to being an international performer, you're involved with many different humanitarian causes. In particular, you've done a lot of work with the U.S. military. How does it feel when you get a chance to play for all of those who have so bravely fought for our freedom?

I am hugely patriotic and grateful for all the men and women who have sacrificed

so that I can live in this incredible country and enjoy the freedoms I have. To give back to them means the world. One of my favorite moments doing this was when we donated our time and played at the U.S. Military base in Wiesbaden, Germany, on the fourth of July last year. It was such a great time and what a way to celebrate.

Several members of your family accompany you each time you play. Your mom sings background vocals, your father plays bass, and your husband plays guitar in your band. What are some of the cool points and (ahem) pain points of playing with people so close to you?

Ha-ha! The best way I can describe this is that we have a very special bond because we get to experience some really amazing things together that truly makes us a unique family. To get to travel around the world and not ever feel like we are far away from "home" is something not many families get to experience. We all get to



Photos by Scott Vincent



“We are going to play all the classics with a great attitude and hopefully bring some happiness to people that truly need it, as well as all the kids we hope to raise money for with Toys for Tots.”

see together someone in the crowd get emotional from a song or the funny person we met at this rest stop, etc. It's amazing not to have to tell those stories after the fact and never quite relay them in the way it felt actually being there. It's a feeling I can't quite describe.

From what I've seen, many artists have either gotten really inspired during the pandemic, or they've (understandably) experienced a creative "drought" of sorts. You have been plugging away, doing weekly streaming concerts that have charted every week on *Pollstar's* Livestream Chart, and you have a new TV special, *Jessica Lynn - Live at Dramatic Hall*. What has been keeping you going during this time? Have you found it's been more difficult than before to find inspiration and motivation to continue forging forward? I am not the type of person that will let something beat me up. It may be

the hard-headed New York Italian in me that always wants to fight back! As soon as I lost my world tour, over eighty cities in over twelve different countries, I definitely cried for a few days and let myself feel the sadness of all my loss, but then I dusted my shoulders off, got back up, and decided to make the most of it. We immediately upgraded all our cameras and gear for better live streams, we turned what was supposed to be a six-song EP into my debut thirteen-song album to be released this upcoming year, and I amped up everything on my social media to where I am now reaching over sixteen million people a month. I have actually found it easier to find inspiration and motivation because, for me, that comes from pure and raw emotion, which this time has truly elicited within me.

You'll be hosting and performing for your very own Christmas special again this year, which has been touted by the

press as the "#1 Great Thing to do in The Hudson Valley for The Holidays." This year's show, however, will be live streamed for the first time. How have you adapted it for this kind of viewing?

This show was a very hard loss for me this year. It has become such a tradition for us and so many families, with people even flying from overseas to come and see the show every year, that it was extremely heartbreaking when we found out we could not do it. Although it will not be the same huge spectacular it normally is, I feel very comfortable relying on the pure joy that Christmas music and cheer brings to people regardless. We are going to play all the classics with a great attitude and hopefully bring some happiness to people that truly need it, as well as all the kids we hope to raise money for with Toys for Tots. —

L. ELLIS HAHN

OF LEH GUITARS

LUTHIER EXTRAORDINAIRE

By Tara Low

Located in the Redhook neighborhood of Brooklyn, **L. Ellis Hahn** transforms planks of wood into beautiful, high-quality instruments. Specializing in the offset design, Hahn states on her website the idea behind her creative designs:

"The Offset was born out of an idea to evolve one of my favorite shapes into a professional music machine. I had a sketch of this bass under my bench for several years. Then one day, I was challenged to make it a reality. Rather than translate a drawing into an instrument, and assume everything would be fine, I roughly drew the existing design onto a plank of wood and kept carving until it felt right and was well balanced. Then I contoured it until it felt completely natural under the hands." -L. Ellis Hahn

Gaining a solid background in lutherie at New York's famed instrument maker Sadowsky Guitars, Hahn took her passion for the instrument and opened her boutique shop, **LEH Guitars**, creating stunning four and five-string basses.

How did you get started as a luthier?

It all started around 2001 when I broke my guitar and had a bad experience at a repair shop. I walked away from it thinking that I could do a better job myself. So I bought a book, found an apprenticeship, got my hands dirty, and have been obsessed ever since.

How long have you been building your own line of guitars and basses?

I dabbled for a long time before I was able to really engage with the process. I attempted to build my first guitar about a year into my first apprenticeship around 2003. But it wasn't until 2010 that I started seriously building under my own name. In the time between, I spent thousands of hours honing my skills working in all levels of the production process at one of the top guitar shops in NYC: Sadowsky Guitars. That gave me some time and experience to find out what works and why, talk to players about their needs, and prototype a lot of different designs. I needed that time to let my ideas gain some natural momentum.

What drew you to this line of work?

A love of music, first and foremost. But what I love about this line of work



now is how it brings together the different mediums of design, art, ergonomics, electronics, math, production processes, and the wildcard of working in the organic medium that is wood.

Where do you draw the inspiration for your designs?

I design instruments that are personally exciting to me, that I think are awesome. I design instruments that sit well on the body and feel good in your hands—instruments that I wish existed.

How do you choose the woods you work with?

For my core building, I like to stick with some of the more traditional woods used for guitars like alder, ash, maple, and mahogany—but I like to play around with different combinations.

For instance, a very classic body wood to pair with a maple neck is swamp ash. However, I prefer to pair it with alder because it adds to the characters of maple versus having similar characteristics to maple.

It's kind of like learning a scale when you are playing a musical instrument: once you've internalized it, you can experiment with it and come up with lots of new and different combinations.

What about the electronics?

The design behind the electronics on my instruments is a combination of tone and tactile. I use a Nordstrand 3-band preamp that I have modified to be "boost only." The thought there is that the combination of woods and construction for the instrument should produce a pretty good "base" tone on its own. The preamp is really only there to boost whatever is already happening. You shouldn't ever have to dial anything out. Also, "boost only" is a good simplification that prevents players from getting lost when dialing in their sound—which can be an issue when you have too many options. I have also modified the actual tone stack of the preamp to hit some of my own frequencies. Eventually, I'll



produce an original preamp for my instruments, but one step at a time!

I also utilize a patented fader design for my three-band EQ. My feeling there is that a three-band EQ is not useful if you have trouble dialing it in while you are playing. With the faders, it's literally under your fingers in a way that a bunch of knobs are not, and you can visually see how each frequency compares to the others.

What has been the most challenging part of being a luthier?

Letting customers come to some conclusions and realizations on their own. It's tempting to put an instrument in a customer's hands and overexplain what's going on with the woods and electronics. (Especially when you've spent countless hours in a room by yourself creating that instrument!) But I think that it's more rewarding in the end for all parties to let them play and listen and feel what's going on and come to their own conclusions.

How about the most rewarding?

For me, the most rewarding thing is putting a new bass in someone's hands and seeing their excitement.

What is your definition of tone?

To me, tone is personal, tone is your sound. It's not just some magical combination of gear—it's what you put into the playing and the instrument. It's how the instrument reacts to what you put into it and how that psychologically contributes to your playing. I could play the same exact set up as someone else and still not sound the same.

And I think, to some degree, that's why musicians are always on a tone quest. We're always changing: the bass that felt perfect ten years ago isn't right for where we're at now or vice versa. It's an evolving thing. Life is an ever-shifting tone quest.

As a musician, what musicians have made the biggest impact on your music?

I draw a lot of personal inspiration from bands born out of the post-punk years like Bikini Kill that stick to a basic musical formula but ultimately use it for complex emotional and political expression. I like music that punches me in the gut and makes me think.

What advice would you offer to someone interested in becoming a luthier?

You don't need a shop or expensive tools or a guitar school education to get started: grab a good book. Take a hard look at that guitar or bass you are playing now and try to make it better. Learn to do setups. Learn to recognize that moment when you get a dramatic improvement in playability from tweaking the truss rod and action. Learn to fix the bad wiring and irregular switches and jacks that make your life miserable. Work on your friends' instruments. Talk to a local shop about an apprenticeship or an entry-level job and see where it goes. If you want to get into it because you want to work on guitars for the rich and famous, this may not be the job for you. But if you like assessing and solving problems and really chasing things down, this might be the profession for you. —



Photos by Glen Craig

Take Five With Laurie Berkner

Laurie Berkner found success as a children's entertainer when her love of entertaining meshed with her teaching music in pre-school. Berkner has received critical acclaim from numerous media outlets throughout the US, performed at many prestigious venues (Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, White House, to name a few), written music and lyrics for Off-Broadway children's musicals, and released thirteen best-selling, award-winning albums.

The Laurie Berkner band is Susie Lampert (keyboard), Brady Rymer (bass), and Bobby Golden (drums and percussion).

Having been referred to as "the undisputed queen of indie rock" and "the Adele for the pre-school crowd," how did you become a children's entertainer?

I started out by playing in rock bands at night and teaching pre-school music by day. I had my own original band called Red Onion, and then I joined an all-female cover band called Lois Lane (because she don't need no Superman!). Over time, I found that the songs I was writing for the kids I worked with were really fun to sing and perform and that both parents and kids were enjoying them. I went from playing those songs in schools, daycares, and at birthday parties to recording them and performing at festivals and in theaters. Along the way, I did a few celebrity parties (Madonna's daughter, Sting's son), which led to a couple of performances in Rockefeller Plaza on the *Today Show*, a book deal, and finally some videos for Nick Jr. (originally called Noggin) as part of a new series called *Jack's Big Music Show*. That really cemented my career switch from pre-school teacher to children's entertainer and allowed me to write music, record, and perform for kids and families full time.

Tell us about your bandmates.

Right now, the Laurie Berkner Band is made up of Susie Lampert on keyboard, Brady Rymer

on bass, and Bobby Golden on drums and percussion. Susie was the keyboardist in Lois Lane and was the first musician to join me in playing music for kids. She is an incredibly intuitive player who has a long musical history dating back to when she was a teen, including playing with Ruby and the Rednecks (who opened up for Iggy Pop) and in the Playhouse of the Ridiculous off-Broadway. She is also brilliant at decoupage, speaks Portuguese fluently, and is one of my closest friends. Bobby Golden is not only a talented and creative drummer and percussionist, he is also an incredibly accomplished songwriter, recording engineer, music producer, and potter! He has written music for countless shows, including John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*, and was the house drummer on NBC's *30 Rock*. We met when he was producing and recording the music for *Jack's Big Music Show* and have been playing and laughing together ever since (I think he was a comedian in another life). Brady Rymer is the most recent addition to the LBB, replacing Adam Bernstein in 2011 (who replaced my husband, Brian Mueller, in 2005). Brady is a very accomplished kids' musician in his own right, with three GRAMMY nominations for his family music. Before moving into this genre, Brady was the bass player for the RCA Records band From Good



Homes, who recorded and toured with acts like Dave Matthews and Bob Dylan. He is also a talented visual artist and just a wonderful human being. I love all three of them so much, and I feel so lucky to get to play with them—or I WILL when we finally can do that in person again!

What brand of guitars do you play and why?

I play Taylor guitars. I have tried a lot of other brands, and there are many great guitars out there, but I have always loved the sound and feel of a Taylor. I love the slim neck for my smaller hands, the different—but always pleasing—tones of the various models, and the beauty of the instruments themselves. I also am treated really well by the Taylor family and can always count on their help if I have any trouble with any of my guitars. I currently have seven different Taylor guitars.

What would be your one piece of advice you would offer parents and teachers to instill the love of music in their children?

Share music with them in any way that feels authentic to you. If you are a musician, share your love of your instrument or the music you make. If you aren't a musician, find a way that you connect to music, and do it with your kids. Do you like to dance? Do you have music that you like to listen to? Share those things. Then

My team creates an hour-long pre-show with games and develops live, interactive graphics to use during the concert.

Photos by Jayme Thornton



notice what your kids respond to and join in with them. Are they dancing? Dance with them! Are they banging on a drum? Do it too! Encourage whatever they are drawn to. Show them you love them when they are engaged with music *by being with them while it happens*. If you can help them to connect music with love from you, your kids will always feel it, regardless of whether or not they become musicians. Music will always hold a special place in their hearts and remind them that they are loved.

With the shutdown of live performances during the pandemic, what have you been doing to stay in touch with fans and keep your music alive, and what's been one of the most memorable moments.

Once I realized live performances were being canceled and there was no foreseeable date for them to resume, I started doing live performances on Facebook every weekday. Parents and kids badly needed something they could count on every day, and I was glad to be able to personally and musically give that to so many of them. I continued with these daily concerts and did almost fifty shows that way before scaling back when schools let out in June. (That was also when I started getting more sleep!) Since then, I have started putting on ticketed full-length, themed, livestreamed family concerts about once every six weeks, which have also, happily, been really successful. It's hard to describe just how special these shows are. They take weeks to prepare

for and plan. My team creates an hour-long pre-show with games and develops live, interactive graphics to use during the concert. There is a lot of audience participation—including a craft project for each theme—a full set, stage lighting, and special guests. The most memorable moments for me come from doing the virtual meet and greets after these shows. Getting to actually see the faces of some of the kids who were watching, and see the art they made, or the costumes they chose, or the decorations their families put up to prepare for the concert, and hear them tell me about their favorite song or what the music has meant to them, always feels like such a gift and reminds me of how lucky I am to be able to do what I do. —

TONE TALK WITH DEVON

My name is **Devon**. I'm an alt-pop artist based in NYC, and I aim to spread a message of self-love through inspired self-discovery with my music. I write and produce my poppy bops in my East Village apartment, and it is a pleasure to share them with you. Thanks so much for listening!

From the beginning, I've always been a singer-songwriter, starting my writing process on either guitar or piano and finding the words that I need to say. A few lyricists who particularly inspire me are Adam Duritz (Counting Crows), Sara Bareilles, Sam Melo (Rainbow Kitten Surprise), and Joni Mitchell. From a production standpoint, I typically take my acoustic tunes, start creating a track to express the sentiment of the lyrics, and work outwards to figure out how the rest of the song will support the idea. I've been listening to a lot of The 1975 and HAIM lately, so I've been experimenting with more synth sounds on my newest release *Sitting Up Straight*.

I am fortunate to have had my music licensed for TV shows on NBC, ESPN, FOX, and FS1, and it has been a pleasure sharing my new music with the digital world through some exciting live streams during quarantine. Check out the recap of my recent live stream in partnership with Sam Ash Music Stores, and follow me on Instagram to stay updated on all new music and happenings! @devonsounds

What is your definition of tone, and how has it changed over the years?

I think of tone as the aesthetic of the sound. People often refer to it as color. If we stick with that analogy, then I would say that my tone started out as a somewhat pastel, organic, real instrument driven sound and has now developed into a more vibrant, floral, synthetic vibe.

Which guitars, amps, and pedals are you currently using and why?

My electric guitar is pretty special to me because it used to belong to Jeff Lee Johnson. Jeff was a legendary guitarist and a legendary man, and I had the honor of including his guitar parts on my first album. I now play one of his custom guitars, which I think started as a G&L hollow

body electric, but Jeff swapped out pretty much everything on it. It now has two vertical humbuckers, and it rocks.

When it comes to acoustic tunes, I play a Taylor GS Mini—the mini still has such a full sound, but it feels better for my size and allows me to dance while performing. :)

When I have my full pedalboard, I use my Fender Bassbreaker 15 amp because it has a great clean channel, which allows me to get all the gain and effects from my pedalboard. When I'm not using all my pedals, I use my Mesa Boogie Mark V amp because it's just a fantastic all-around amp.

But what does my pedalboard look like? Thanks for asking! For heavier songs, I use the Friedman Dirty Shirley because it's an awesome high gain foundation overdrive. For lighter distortion, I pretty much always leave on my Mojo Hand Fx Rook Royale to give my guitar more of a full tone overdrive. And then I use an Aqua-Puss Mk II for delay, but I do a very short timed delay so that it acts more like a reverb.

What about strings?

I typically use 10-gauge Ernie Ball classic rock n roll regular Slinkys on my electric and 12-gauge Martin Authentic Acoustics on my acoustic guitar. The heavier gauges sound fuller to me, and they're also less likely to break on stage.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

I like to record live cabinets whenever possible, but when I'm recording in my apartment, I have to stick to direct in for the sanity of my neighbors.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

Every room is different, so I just try to find what feels right for the space. Sometimes for bigger stages, I bring the Mesa Boogie vs. the Fender amp because it can get super loud.



Devon at
Mercury Lounge
in NYC
Photo by Kiley
Schlappich

What does your practice consist of?

I do a little bit of drills and jamming with my brother, but it's always best to play with the full band because there's no better practice than locking in with real people. COVID has made that dynamic pretty challenging, but I can't wait to get the band back together!

Favorite guitar riff or lick that inspired you to play guitar?

I've always loved "Barracuda" by Heart, and I greatly admire women in rock, like Nancy Wilson, for paving the way for all these badass female artists breaking through today!

What is your advice for young women who hope to work in the music industry?

The music industry is an incredible community of creative and motivated people, and I find the network of women within the industry to be especially inspiring. I think my favorite piece of advice that I've received is to celebrate the successes of your peers—women championing other women can be so powerful, especially when women tend to forget to champion themselves. So the second part of that advice is to do what you love and to promote it—I want to hear about what you're up to, and so does everyone else. Let us know if there's anything we can do to help! We gotchu girl! —



While there have been so many great new guitars and accessories released, we highlight a few of our favorites here.



Fender Tash Sultana Stratocaster – \$1,099.99

Fender released the first Artist Signature Series collaboration with Australian songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Tash Sultana. Finished in a vibrant Transparent Cherry and furnished with all-gold hardware, the Tash Sultana Stratocaster® has good looks to match its upscale appointments – the clarity and sparkle of the Yosemite single-coil Strat® pickups combine with the powerful Double Tap humbucking bridge pickup to deliver a wide range of tonal options at your fingertips. The Deep “C”-shape maple neck with 9.5”-radius and 22 medium jump frets provides comfortable modern playability, while the vintage-style synchronized tremolo offers classic Strat vibrato action. Other features include a matching painted headstock and custom “skull” neck plate.



Luna Guitars
Fauna Phoenix A-E Black
lunaguitars.com



D'Angelico Guitars
Premier Grateful Dead SS
dangelicoguitars.com



Luna Guitars
Uke Bamboo Soprano
lunaguitars.com



Harmony Guitars
The Harmony Comet
harmony.co

Jim Dunlop Cry Baby
Junior Wah Pedal
jimdunlop.com



Spark Amp by Positive Grid
positivegrid.com/spark



D'Angelico Deluxe Series Limited Edition Guitars
dangelicoguitars.com



Yamaha Pacifica
612VIIIFMX and
612VIIX Electric
Guitars Feature New
Colors and Premium
Components
yamaha.io



GUITARS TO KNOW

By Alex Windsor

When you think of NYC, you might picture a bustling home for innovation with all class and no-nonsense. It is no coincidence that you would also be describing D'Angelico Guitars, the legendary musical instrument company located in the heart of Manhattan. Since the company's inception, D'Angelico has been a manifestation of the straightforward New York spirit. If you are new to the world of guitar or just looking to learn more about the brand, we've put together this little overview to help you.

A Brief Company History

D'Angelico was founded in 1932 by skilled luthier John D'Angelico, who valued craftsmanship over big-name branding. His humble shop in Little Italy consisted of only two other workers and produced about thirty-five guitars per year. During World War II, D'Angelico gained a reputation for producing high-quality instruments and became popular for both servicemen and civilians alike. Fast forward to 2011—forty-seven years after John D'Angelico's passing—a guitar exhibit in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, along with a revival of archtop tone, launched a renewed interest in D'Angelico guitars. The D'Angelico team quickly began working under the radar to produce a quality line of reissues for an affordable price. Today, D'Angelico is a heavy hitter among many female artists, from Susan Tedeschi to Melissa Etheridge and more.

Guitars to Know

D'Angelico has up to three guitar tiers, ranging from affordable to professional: Premier, Excel, and Deluxe. As the player upgrades from one tier to the next, they will notice enhanced woods, pickups, and hardware. Below are the highlights of some of their most popular models (available in all three tiers) and the exemplary female players that wield them.

DC Model – Sleek and comfortable, it comes as no surprise that the DC model is a best seller. This semi-hollow workhorse is as stylish to the eye as it is to the ear. All versions of this model come equipped with two humbucking pickups, two tone knobs, two volume knobs,

a three-way pickup selector switch, and classic block inlays on the fretboard. New tailpiece, feedback-fighting center blocks, and coil-tapping become available in the Excel and Deluxe series. A mini version is also available for players that need the same punchy tone in a smaller package. The DC model remains a favorite of Melanie Faye, a R&B player who launched her career through social media in 2017; "it has this responsiveness to it; if I pop something, the sustain just rings out. It's beautiful." The DC model is also played by Emily Elbert, who has performed with the likes of Esperanza Spalding and Jenny Lewis.

SS Model – Another highly sought after semi-hollow model is the SS. This single-cutaway model has a warm, robust sound that is ideal for players looking for that full-bodied jazz sound. Players can also choose between a stopbar tailpiece or a signature Stairstep tailpiece for more sustain. All versions of this model come equipped with two humbucking pickups, two tone knobs, two volume knobs, a three-way pickup selector switch, and classic block inlays on the fretboard. Feedback-fighting center blocks and coil-tapping becomes available in the Excel and Deluxe series. The SS model can be heard in the hands of Nai Palm, the neo-soul jazz rocker from Australia and frontwoman of Hiatus Kaiyote. The SS model is also notably played by June Millington of Fanny, Jane Wiedlin of the Go-Gos, Emily King, Poppy, and Emily Browning.

Atlantic Model – Branching off into the world of solid-body electric guitars, the last stop on our D'Angelico tour is the Atlantic model. Like their other solid-body guitars, this guitar has a unique body shape that is completely original, yet appealing and recognizable. The slip C-shape neck profile gives players endless comfort. Players have versatile tone at their fingertips with coil taps. The Atlantic model is available in the Premier and Deluxe tiers, with upgraded Seymour Duncan pickups in the latter. This model is frequently played by rising R&B superstar H.E.R. and can also be found among songwriters such as Lindsey Lomis and Hannah Joy of Middle Kids.



"My D'Angelico Excel SS is, in a word, amazing. It's sexy, sassy, soft, passionate, and will absolutely get the job done!"

~ June Millington



Linsey Lomis: Deluxe Atlantic



Abigail Zachko: Excel Mini DC



Camila Meza: Deluxe Brighton



Melanie Faye: Excel Mini DC



Gina Sobel: Premier Tammany



Lari Basilio (Excel SS)



Photo by Scott Vincent

"I've been playing D'Angelico since 2014, and I have such a level of comfort with the instruments. So well-made and such beautiful designs and colors. They have never failed me in years of worldwide touring, and I have such an emotional attachment to them with so many wonderful memories."

~ Jessica Lynn

Photos provided by D'Angelico Guitars (except where noted) with permission to use



Leah Wellbaum: Premier Gramercy



Emily King: Deluxe SS LE



Emily Browning: Deluxe SS LE



Destiny Petrel: Deluxe Bedford SH LE



Alice Phoebe Lou: Excel Mini DC

Sadowsky® Guitars

HIGH-END GUITARS AND BASSES FROM NYC

By Caroline Paone

New York-based Sadowsky Guitars is a premier company building hand-crafted instruments for over forty years. Roger Sadowsky is known for creating high-end guitars and basses with a distinctive appeal and tone.

In his early career, Sadowsky worked as an apprentice alongside luthier Augie LoPrinzi. He gained experience doing high-end repair and restoration work, but his passion for flat-top acoustic guitars led him to guitar making in the '70s. In 1979, he founded Sadowsky Guitars and started building electrics in 1980 and basses in 1982.

Sadowsky became particularly known for his Fender-style basses made with the upgrades and modifications he had been doing over the years. Early on, high profile musicians like Will Lee, Verdine White, and Marcus Miller enlisted his work. Over the years, Sadowsky has also worked with legendary guitarists, such as Pat Metheny, Paul Simon, and Earl Klugh.

For today's top players, Tal Wilkenfeld, Adeline Michele, Gretchen Menn, and others, Sadowsky is keeping the tradition of personal service and thoughtful design at the forefront.

Session bassist Tanya O'Callaghan, who has worked with Orianthi, Dee Snider (Twisted Sister), Steven Adler (Guns N' Roses), and Nuno Bettencourt (Extreme), is a Sadowsky devotee.

"It's so important to have a relationship with the company you use," says Tanya. "People throw gear at you left and right, but you want to have a genuine relationship with the company you use and really love the instruments and gear. I am lucky to work with such a high-end company like Sadowsky."

The brand has grown in popularity among professional musicians and the general guitar-loving community alike for their NYC Custom basses, Archtop series guitars, MetroLine Basses, Sadowsky Preamps, and Electric Nylon string guitars.

Nowadays, the talented team focuses on refining their techniques and seeking the most innovative materials to meet their signature artists' needs and worldwide customer base. Last year, Sadowsky announced a manufacturing and distribution partnership with Warwick where they will build and distribute their MetroLine and MetroExpress instruments, as well as distribute their strings and accessories. —



Tanya O'Callaghan
Photo by Sean Larkin
Photography

"I have the most beautiful bass on the planet, a Sadowsky [NYC J-style]. I always wanted to be a Sadowsky player; it's the Holy Grail of basses. I got to know Roger at a bass convention, and he is just one of the best humans on the planet. Then, when I was in New York, I would use his basses for TV shows when I was playing with Jordan Fisher. Then it just evolved, and I became a Sadowsky player. I fell in love with the NYC basses, and I haven't put them down since."



Camila Meza
Photo by Chris Drukker

"The Sadowsky LL-15 has a perfect balance of warmth and versatility, allowing me to project its pristine acoustic sound and experiment with effects in different stages and settings, always keeping its consistent and great tone."

Adeline
Photo by Dennis Manuel

"What I love most about my Sadowsky is its versatility. Mine is a jazz bass, but I can make it sound like a P bass if I want to. For live shows, it's the gift that keeps on giving when every room sounds different. And the mega plus is that it's light, and the neck feels so smooth."



Gretchen Menn
Photo by Diana Cordero

"My Sadowsky electric nylon string taught me a lesson: If you pick up a guitar, and it inspires you to play things you've never played before, it's not an extravagant indulgence, but a legitimate creative tool."



Tal Wilkenfeld performing at She Rocks Awards 2020 in Anaheim, CA with Sadowsky NYC bass. Photo by Jack Lue.



Martin 00L-X2E Acoustic-Electric Guitar

By Lynnay Della Lucé

Martin's X Series guitars are made for all kinds of players with a price point that is appealing and quality that surpasses many in this price range. Whether you need durability on the road or you just want to jam with some friends or in your room, the performance turned out to be impressive when we put an X2E model to the test (they have a wide range of models in this series).

The 00L-X2E is the upgraded replacement for the 00L-X1AE. It has a more stable neck and scalloped bracing to make it more responsive and resonant to project a sweet tone. It has a Sitka spruce top and HPL back and sides (High Pressure Laminate is a sustainable material Martin has been using for the X series). This reviewer finds it to be more durable and happens to own three Martins made with HPL

and use them at shows, including two older Custom X versions when the series first started.

The 00L-X2E is the Grand Concert model. It's reminiscent of classical guitar bodies providing a nice mid-range tone. The neck is slightly wider like classical guitars, but it still offers versatility and comfort when playing chords. The Fishman MX electronics project a sparkling tone and a considerable amount of resonance for a smaller guitar (as opposed to a dreadnought).

We recommend the X Series because these are workhorse guitars that sound great, are durable, comfortable to play, and won't break the bank. 🎸

Street price: \$599.00

For more info: martinguitar.com/xseries



Positive Grid Spark Guitar Amp

By Amy Epperley aka Platinum Viking

We reviewed the Spark 40-watt combo amp by Positive Grid, which works with electric and acoustic guitar as well as bass, and right out of the box, it was fun to get into.

The built-in presets and onboard control knobs allow for a quick plug and play. Two onboard full-range stereo speakers and a bass port forgoing the tweeter give the Spark a good overall sound and big bottom kick, making it a valuable option for bass players.

It's a really portable practice amp (twelve pounds) that doubles as a Bluetooth speaker, sporting a thick carrying strap and sleek low profile. Hook a phone or tablet up to it with your playlists, and you have a high-quality wireless speaker option that's loud enough for most sized rooms and applications. If we'd request any future upgrades, it would be a battery compartment, so it can be taken off grid, and a footswitch for changing between the four-channel presets.



Auto Chords, an app that offers features for learning, jamming, and more, allows players to see the chords to a song laid out in real-time and play along. They can also slow down tempos and loop songs to learn at their own pace. The addition of the Smart Jam is cool to use for songwriting, soloing practice, jam session, or woodshedding ideas: you start by tapping out a wanted tempo, play a few chords over it, and the Spark will come up with an individualized backing track with drums and bass accompaniment.

The Spark also triples as a basic home recording studio interface, where all you need is a computer, USB cable, the Spark, and a pair of headphones. You can record and mix your guitar or bass as a mono track and monitor your playback through the amp. A copy of PreSonus Studio One Prime recording software is included with the purchase, or you can use the Spark App, which we found to have an intuitive and easy-to-use interface. You can easily access and scroll through all the guitar amp modeling and multi-effects options through a clean, intelligent Graphical User Interface. There's an ever-growing 10,000 tones through Positive Grid's BIAS engine to play with, including guitar and bass presets from established players and tone creations by other users sorted by genre.

There's certainly a lot in this powerful compact package at a low price for those who want a great-sounding practice amp, learn a massive song library, or write songs. If only we had this kind of amp available to us back in the day... 🎸

List price: \$299.00

For more info: positivegrid.com/spark





Yamaha TRBJP2 John Patitucci Signature Bass

By Amy Epperley aka Platinum Viking

John Patitucci and Yamaha teamed up to create a multi-stringed bass that is versatile for studio and stage. We take a closer look at it in this review.

Bassists who do a lot of recording and multi-genre projects (including this reviewer) will appreciate how much attention was paid to the versatile tonal features in the TRBJP2, which can be rare in other multi-stringed basses. This bass is completely at ease in everything from jamming with the R&B Jazz band on the local stage to unleashing monstrous, low death metal riffs in the studio.

Patitucci was involved in the patented bolt-on neck design, custom Alnico V humbuckers, and custom-voiced pre-amps (with preset notch points for low, mid, and high frequencies). As a result, this bass becomes both a pocket groove machine and a soloing beast: focused warm lows, no overpowering mids or excessive edginess, a cutaway easily accessing the twenty-six frets up

and down the thirty-five-inch scale neck, and clear, truly open highs throughout. Inspired directly from the same bass Patitucci has used for decades, the body of the TRBJP2 uses a laminate of ash and alder sandwiched between gorgeous figured maple for a clear, focused bass tone. A solid brass bridge completes the sound with a huge sustain.

While this reviewer personally prefers a heftier bass in most applications, the only potential limitation for some players may just be the sheer size of this bass, coming in at eleven pounds, with wide string spacing on the thirty-five-inch scale neck.

The TRBJP2 is a stylish beast ready for any job. You get a tried and true pro-quality, well designed, versatile, and really quite gorgeous bass that's easily one of the best values in its price range. 

Street price: \$2,899.99
For more info: yamaha.com

Fender Esquire 70th Anniversary Edition

By Lynnay Della Lucé

Here, we'll take a closer look at the 70th Anniversary Edition Esquire with its lightweight pine body, punchy tones, and historic accuracy to the original, which was the first Fender solidbody.

This guitar has bite. It's got that snappy chime that makes you want to play gritty Delta blues, throw on overdrive and delay for rock and roll, or clean it up and do some country chicken pickin'. It's a fierce replica that really makes you understand the origins of these guitar sounds. Fender has built upon this general model for the past seventy years via the far more famous Telecaster, which came shortly after the Esquire was released. It's cool to see how straightforward the Esquires were built: one pick up and a three-way switch. The forward/bridge position bypasses the tone control, so it lets all those bright highs shine through. The middle position activates the tone knob so you can tame the sound more and make it less aggressive, and the back/neck position is a preset tone roll-off that gives a darker timbre.

The body is surprisingly light (due to its contemporary roasted treatment), and it has a nitro finish, which will give it more of an aged look as years go by. The U-shaped, lacquer-finished neck with twenty-one vintage tall frets gets a little thick, but it's



still comfortable to play around the twelfth through fifteenth frets, and the fretboard is rolled so that the edges have a nice, smooth feel.

The anniversary model Esquire is sleek, it wails, and it's a smooth player that's

lightweight, yet solid and sturdy. It's a worthy tribute to a timeless classic, but keep in mind that this anniversary issue only will be in production in 2020. 

Price: \$1,999.99
For more info: fender.com

GIG GALLERY

With the cancellation of festivals and live performances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we decided to go "back in time" and share a small sampling of past live performance photos of some New York artists. Looking forward to live performances again!

Photos by Kirk Stauffer Photography



St. Vincent (Annie Clark) performed at the Moore Theater in Seattle, WA on January 19, 2018



Marnie Stern performed at SXSW in Austin, TX on March 14, 2013



Ani DiFranco performed at the Moore Theater in Seattle, WA on February 22, 2014



Mindy Smith performed at the Tractor Tavern in Seattle, WA on January 27, 2010



Michaela Anne performed at the Ballard Homestead in Seattle, WA on March 7, 2020



Dawn Landes performed at the Columbia City Theater in Seattle, WA on September 18, 2013



Julie Byrne performed at Neumos in Seattle, WA on April 11, 2017



Rosi Golan performed at the Triple Door in Seattle, WA on October 21, 2014



LP (Laura Pergolizzi) performed at the Showbox in Seattle, WA on February 14, 2018



Aoife O'Donovan performed at the Triple Door in Seattle, WA on December 9, 2012



Dar Williams performed at the Triple Door in Seattle, WA on September 30, 2009



Gillian Welch performed at the Moore Theater in Seattle, WA on July 13, 2011



Girl Blue (Arielle Paige) performed at the Triple Door in Seattle, WA on November 24, 2019



Ingrid Michaelson performed at the Moore Theater in Seattle, WA on April 21, 2012



Norah Jones performed at SXSW in Austin, TX on March 17, 2012



Rachel Platten performed at the Showbox in Seattle, WA on February 24, 2015

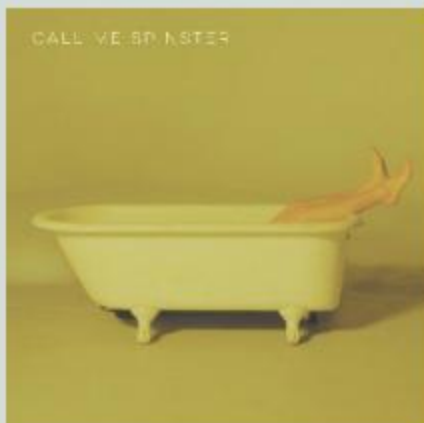


Sharon Van Etten performed at the Neptune Theater in Seattle, WA on August 7, 2012

MUSIC RELEASES



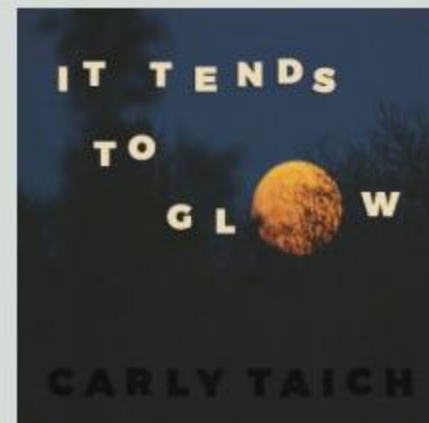
Alaska Reid
Big Bunny
December 11, 2020



Call Me Spinster
Call Me Spinster
December 11, 2020



Maggie Rogers
Notes from the Archive: Recordings 2011-2016
December 18, 2021



Carly Taich
It Tends To Glow
December 18, 2020



Karen Elson
Radio Redhead Vol. 1
December 18, 2020



Morgan Wade
"Don't Cry"
December 18, 2020



Hayley Williams
Petals for Armor: Self-Serenades
December 18, 2020



Sophie Gray
"Better With You"
January 1, 2021



Danielle Durack
No Place
January 15, 2021



Diamond Dixie
Growing Wings
January 15, 2021



Kate Davis
Strange Boy
January 15, 2021



Mary Timony
Mountains 20th Anniversary Expanded Edition
January 15, 2021



Lizzie Weber
How Does It Feel
January 22, 2021



Maggie Lindemann
Paranoia
January 22, 2021



Victoria Rose
"I Don't Miss You"
January 29, 2021



Ani DiFranco
Revolutionary Love
January 29, 2021

PUNK ROCK GUITAR 101

If you want to hang with the New York City punk rock royalty, you have to get your punk rock guitar chops in top working order.

By Leigh Fuge

In this lesson, you're going to learn the essentials of punk rock guitar so that you can go forth, armed with your guitar and melt some faces.

Power Chords

Power chords are essential in punk. They are simple chord shapes that you can move all around the guitar. Your power chords get their note name from the root note, which is the lowest note you play in the chord.

This means you need to know a little about how your fretboard works if you want to know the names of them.

Alternatively, you could just move the shape around until it sounds great!

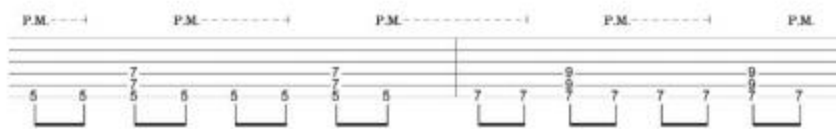


Palm Muting

When you want to make your riffs and rhythms chug out a little, you have to palm mute them. This is a technique that involves resting your palm on the bridge of the guitar where the strings cross the saddle. This creates a deadened version of the notes.

Make sure you get your hand right on that bridge; otherwise, you're muting the strings totally and losing the note pitch. You should hear the notes as you play them but as a deadened form.

Here is a great exercise that uses palm muted single notes paired with power chords that aren't palm muted. In this example, you're palm muting the single notes and lifting off for the chords.



Downpicking Stamina

Punk is all about speed and intensity. Many punk players prefer to downpick rather than strum up and down. Constant and consistent downpicking creates intensity in the riff.

This example is just straight sixteenth notes (four per beat). Play this along with a metronome. Start by downpicking four times per beat at a slow tempo and then slowly increase the metronome speed as your stamina increases.



Simple Chord Progressions

Punk doesn't have to be complicated. Many punk players stick to the traditional 1-4-5 progression that you see most commonly in blues music (for instance: A-D-E). As you write your punk rock masterpiece, you can use simple patterns like this one below.

As this is a transposable idea, you can move these chords to whatever area of the fretboard you want while keeping the shape of the pattern the same.



Crossing Strings

If you really want to get adventurous in your chord progression, you can add the two chord from the major scale as a power chord along with your 1, 4 and 5. Many punk players probably don't think in theoretical terms, so you could think of this as a 4-note box pattern.

Imagine your power chords are rooted on the fifth fret of the E, the seventh fret of the A, the seventh fret of the E, and the fifth fret of the D.

Look at the pattern of root notes here (A-E-B-D). You can move that around as you please too.



MASTERING THE MAJOR SCALE: THREE NOTES PER STRING

By Alex Windsor

The major scale is, by far, one of the most recognizable sounds in contemporary music. Many of us learn the notes of the major scale early on in our musical journey. In fact, some of us even remember singing along to "Do-Re-Mi" from *The Sound of Music* (1967) before realizing we were singing a major scale! Knowing how to locate the notes of the major scale is an essential step in memorizing the guitar fretboard. In this lesson, we will discuss one way to incorporate the major scale into your warm-up routine.

First, let's determine what makes a major scale. We will be using the key of G Major throughout this lesson, so our starting (root) note will be G. From there, we can figure out the next notes by following this formula (remember that a whole step is two frets and a half step is one fret)

whole step – whole step – half step – whole step –
whole step – whole step – half step

In the key of G Major, the notes in this pattern are G-A-B-C-D-E-F#-G. These are the only notes we will be playing in this exercise. Also, we will only be playing three notes on each string, then continuing with the next notes on the next string. Begin with the G note located on the third fret of the sixth (low E) string, followed by A on the fifth fret and B on the seventh fret. Next, move up to the fifth (A) string and play the note C on the third fret, D on the fifth fret, and E on the seventh fret. Move up again to the fourth (D) string and play the note F# on the fourth fret, G on the fifth fret, and A on the seventh fret. Continue this pattern all the way up to the note C on the first (high E) string and play the pattern back down. Use the tab in Example 1 as a guide.

Example 1

```

e |-----5--7--8-----|
B |-----5--7--8-----|
G |-----4--5--7-----|
D |-----4--5--7-----|
A |-----3--5--7-----|
E |-----3--5--7-----|

e |-----8--7--5-----|
B |-----8--7--5-----|
G |-----7--5--4-----|
D |-----7--5--4-----|
A |-----7--5--3-----|
E |-----7--5--3-----|

```

Next, we are going to shift up to the fifth fret of the sixth (low E) string and continue playing the notes of the G major scale, with three notes per string, but beginning on the note A. From there, we play the note B on the seventh fret and the note C on the eighth fret. Move up to the fifth (A) string and play the note D on the fifth fret, E on the seventh fret, and F# on the ninth fret. Move up to the fourth (D) string and play the note G on the fifth fret, A on the seventh fret, and B on the ninth fret. Continue this pattern all the way up to the note D on the first (high E) string and play the pattern back down. Use the tab in Example 2 as a guide.

Example 2:

```

e |-----7--8--10-----|
B |-----7--8--10-----|
G |-----5--7--9-----|
D |-----5--7--9-----|
A |-----5--7--9-----|
E |-----5--7--9-----|

e |-----10--8--7-----|
B |-----10--8--7-----|
G |-----9--7--5-----|
D |-----9--7--5-----|
A |-----9--7--5-----|
E |-----9--7--5-----|

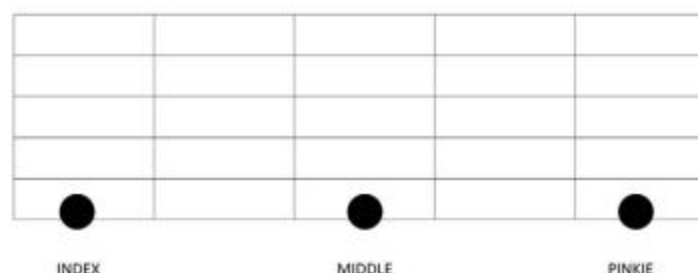
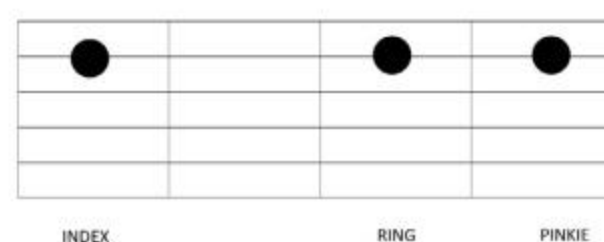
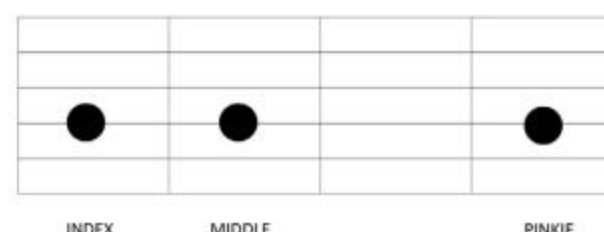
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Next, move up to the note B on the seventh fret of the sixth (low E) string. We play the note B on the seventh fret, the note C on the eighth fret, and the note D on the tenth fret. Move up to the fifth (A) string and play the note E on the seventh fret, F# on the ninth fret, and G on the tenth fret. Continue this pattern all the way up to the note E on the twelfth fret of the first (high E) string and play the pattern back down.

Keep moving down the fretboard by starting on the next note of the scale on the sixth (low E) string: C, D, E, F# and finally back to G. Once you feel comfortable in this key, pick a different key and practice the pattern.

For best results, try to use alternate picking and one finger per note on your fretting hand. See Example 3 for finger positioning.

Example 3:



GUITAR GABBY ON BEING A BOSS: BALANCE

Part five in a twelve-part series, where Guitar Gabby walks us through her journey of "Being a Boss" and shares insights and tips for other women to pursue their dream of becoming a boss.

This pandemic has changed so much for us all. It has interrupted business flow, education, engaging with friends and family, and most relevant to artists like myself, the music industry. Coming into 2020, I was wrapping up my second independent tour, which was partially spent opening up for the legendary Indigo Girls, headlining Seattle and Chicago Pride, headlining the Loud Women Festival in London, and much more. I was devastated when I realized that live in-person shows would have to pause until the far distant future. I tried my best to think fast and pivot with the circumstances but had to change everything I was planning on doing in the year 2020.

Fast forward to entering this past October. I found myself stepping into a dream I have had since the beginning of TxLips Band, LLC—building out The TxLips Academy, a virtual music academy in which TxLips gang band members teach girls, non-binary, and LGBTQ+ youth to inspire the next generation of rock stars. But right after starting the TxLips Academy, I lost my job. I worked part-time for an Atlanta nonprofit with a minimal staff of two people (including myself). The Director was a person that did not care to consider my health and safety amidst the increasing pandemic numbers. I was working in a very toxic environment, one that was tearing me down instead of building me up. Still, I felt myself placing the stress of being creative in my business endeavors on my shoulders. Our TxLips Academy partners depended on this summer to be excellent—not just for the Girls Rock Camp staff around the world but also for the

youth who have been forced to be young kids and teens amidst a crazy time in history. I had to pivot and push through to the finish line quickly, and I am proud my team and I made this summer one to remember for the campers.

One lesson 2020 taught me amidst all of this is "balance." My mom would, and still does, tell me that "life is about finding a balance. There is nothing wrong with wanting to push through to your goals. It's amazing to have the work ethic that your father and I passed down to you and your sisters from the generations of Logans and Tollivers. But you have to find a balance so that you can see those things you desire through to the end. You cannot pour from an empty cup." It took me a while to understand this, and it took even longer to put this action. And I admit I still work at this every day, but the truth is, I am human. I work hard for what I want and what I believe in, but I have learned over the years what balance looks like to me. I have learned to prioritize my "me time" and have learned to be strict with that. Everything else will get done.

To all my boss ass females out there: I know the world puts a lot on our shoulders. I know that society generally expects more from women, and we can sometimes push ourselves harder than we ought to. But I encourage all of us, including myself, to take time when needed and don't feel bad about it. Say "no" when you need and don't apologize for it. You are only as good as the energy you can give out. But don't forget to save some of your energy for yourself. 🍷



PERMISSION TO PAUSE

By Kathryn Cloward

As we start journeying into this new year, we all get to choose for ourselves how we will create, express, and share our music with the world over another collection of days, weeks, and months.



When I got into the industry, I thought the main way to get my music out into the world was through live performance. It seemed that was the right path to follow, and I started pouring a ton of my energy into gigging out at every venue I could get booked. When I started, my big goal was to play at the Belly Up in Solana Beach, California. It seemed so far out of reach at the time. When the day came that I was booked for my first headlining show at that premier hometown venue, I was beyond excited.

Over the next few years, I independently booked and energized performances at other legendary venues—Hollywood's Troubadour, opening for '80s popstar Tiffany at Whisky a Go Go, and opening for Nashville Unplugged in Las Vegas. All this for a woman who launched herself into the music industry at the age of forty.

What became extremely apparent to me was that I was focusing way too much energy on the live show performance side of the music business when it wasn't netting the results and fulfillment I hoped it would. I found I was on an endless loop of rehearsals, pitching and marketing for shows, managing a band, stressing over whether sold enough tickets so we'd get booked again, figuring out what worked and didn't work with the crowd, and then repeating this cycle month after month.

The truth of all truths is this wasn't good business. I spent too much energy and financial resources while getting nowhere near what was needed for that arm of my career to be a sustainable and viable long-term option. Artists don't talk about this truth—the fact that we often end up paying out more to play than we take in. They often keep on the gigging treadmill because, well, for one thing, performing is fun. But more importantly, for independent artists trying to take their careers to the next level, often there doesn't seem to be any other way forward.

I ultimately realized all the energy I put out for stage shows wasn't moving me forward. I recognized what wasn't working for me, not just on the business level of things, but also on a personal level. I knew I was out of creative integrity with myself. I wasn't spending the larger chunk of my time

doing what I truly loved doing. I knew I needed to make some major adjustments. And that's what I did.

I stopped performing and took a break. I let myself regroup. I gave myself "permission to pause" and admit what aspects of the music business were fulfilling and what aspects were sucking the life out of me. I paid attention to where my energy naturally flowed. Soon enough, in that wide-open space of no longer focusing my energy on preparing for and energizing the next live show booking, I got back to focusing on my first love of music—songwriting—it's my passion. I love crafting songs, and it's what naturally flows through me.

Back in alignment fully with my natural introverted nature, I started picking up my guitar again. Inspiration just came to me—lyrics, chords, and melodies in harmony with my truth. I was able to get back to what nourished me again: creating and writing. I was drawn to finally doing something else I'd been yearning to do for a while, and that was, shift my sound and do a pop album. Why not?! I explored and discovered ways to get my music out into the world without being on stage all the time—and hello, there's a big ol' world for that to happen.

With refreshed energy, new songs became singles and albums. I started writing and producing for other artists—which had always been a big desire of mine. I also became more purposeful in helping other independent artists navigate their careers. I figured out ways to do what I love to do and remain in full creative integrity with myself. And truly, I feel like I've written my best work to date. My forward feels very me! I'm experiencing personal fulfillment, and I'm energizing projects I'm deeply passionate about.

I share my experience with you because perhaps you have found yourself on a treadmill going round and round with an aspect of your music career that isn't working for you in a way that feels good to you. Perhaps you're struggling with your forward at the moment and wondering how to get back to your center, back into your natural creative alignment. Perhaps what felt good in the past no longer does. Take the time to look within. Perhaps there are areas you need to energize less, so you can have space to create momentum for other aspects of your career that can produce the desired results.

Perhaps, what's needed at the moment is to give yourself "permission to pause."

I encourage you to sit with yourself and be honest about your career—what feels good and what doesn't. Then, give yourself the latitude to make adjustments to move forward into 2021 and beyond on your unique musical journey with joy, integrity, abundance, and personal fulfillment. You are worth it, and the world needs your truth, your gift, your talent, and your music!

And, if you're wondering... the first single released after giving myself "permission to pause" was "She Roared"—an upbeat, dance-inspired song about fiercely protecting my son and honoring the roar in all women who are simply loving wholeheartedly.

I paused, and then I roared. I can't wait to see what your pause brings forth. —



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Militia Vox has curated a Spotify playlist called **QUEENS OF NOISE: NYC** featuring the sounds of New York City's rock, punk, metal and more influential and underground female artists of the concrete jungle.



Find it here

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3Ly10qn52jwslyDloNWqDE?si=3uj_ZbefQ9Ge0W7zJA2AHQ



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YOUR AD HERE

Contact media@guitargirlmag.com

GUITARGIRL

ASK ALEXX

Dear Alexx,

Q. How do you deal with stage fright?

~Marc Becker

Dear Marc,

You know what? I actually don't deal with stage fright very often. I've been very lucky in that way, I suppose. It's almost as if I feel more at home on stage than I do in everyday life. A lot of other musicians will probably tell you the same thing.

I have definitely felt jitters in the past, though, before an important show or if I have to "show my stuff" for labels, judges, or industry peers. What I've done previously (and I don't necessarily condone this behavior) is take a shot of whiskey to calm my nerves, or I've really just tried to sink into the moment and give in to the power of the song. I forget all about being scared when I'm busy having a great time and rocking out.

Another thing that has given me "stage fright" is a lack of preparedness. I've definitely felt nervous if I didn't have enough time to practice or play a brand new song that no one has heard before. There are a lot of things

that can go through your mind, like "Are they going to like it?" or "I hope I don't mess up this one part." You can get tripped up, and your fear can ultimately take you down, causing you to muck up your own song. I try to eliminate any possible uncertainty by making sure I know my material inside and out. It's a sign of personal pride, and it shows that you care about yourself and your audience.

Other than making sure you know your songs cold, I would also recommend some breathing exercises before going on stage to calm your nerves. Remember that it's okay to not be one hundred percent perfect, especially on your first try; just be yourself. Assert yourself, stand tall, and be confident in who you are. Smile and engage your audience in a way that feels natural, and think of them as your friends. You're likely judging yourself far more harshly than anyone else in the audience. Eliminate any bad thoughts that may cause anxiety or fear by focusing on your greater purpose, which is contributing something of value to the audience.

Even if you don't give what you may think is an extraordinary performance, what's most important is that you put yourself out there and gave it your all. Ultimately, just have fun, and don't ever let your own fear get in the way of your happiness or success!

~Alexx Calise



Photo by Anabel DFlux

Have a question for Alexx?
She has an answer!
Email info@guitargirlmag.com.

#GUITARGIRL

Every month, we select a guitarist from social media that has tagged themselves with #guitargirlmag to be featured on our website and here in our magazine. So, head on over to **Instagram** and tag yourself.

YOU MAY BE NEXT!

About Me: Hey! My name is Jennale Adams. I've always loved music, and being a musician just always felt right for me. Playing guitar has always been my source of peace and clarity. I've been playing guitar since I was fifteen, so about thirteen years now. I've always known that I wanted to be a musician, and I've never looked back. I love guitars just as much as I love playing them. Growing up in New York has given me the opportunity to see a lot of my guitar heroes live and learn a lot about music. I'm really grateful that the New York music scene is so diverse and vibrant. New York is a really amazing place; it's really where dreams come true, and anyone can follow their dreams here.

My Inspiration: I have always been inspired by Carlos Santana (he's inspired me to play since I started almost thirteen years ago). I am also inspired by Jimi Hendrix, Henry Garza, Joe Satriani, Prince, and Lenny Kravitz. I Love all genres of music, R&B especially. I love Sade, Mariah Carey, Anita Baker, and Janet Jackson.

My Gear: I play a Fender American Special Ash Body Limited Edition Stratocaster and a black Mexican Fender Strat (my first Strat). I also play a PRS SE custom 24 Trampas green electric guitar. I play those with my Fender Mustang III amp. I use two pedals: a BOSS RC-30 Dual Track LoopStation looper and a Cry Baby Wah pedal.



JENNALE ADAMS

Photo provided by artist



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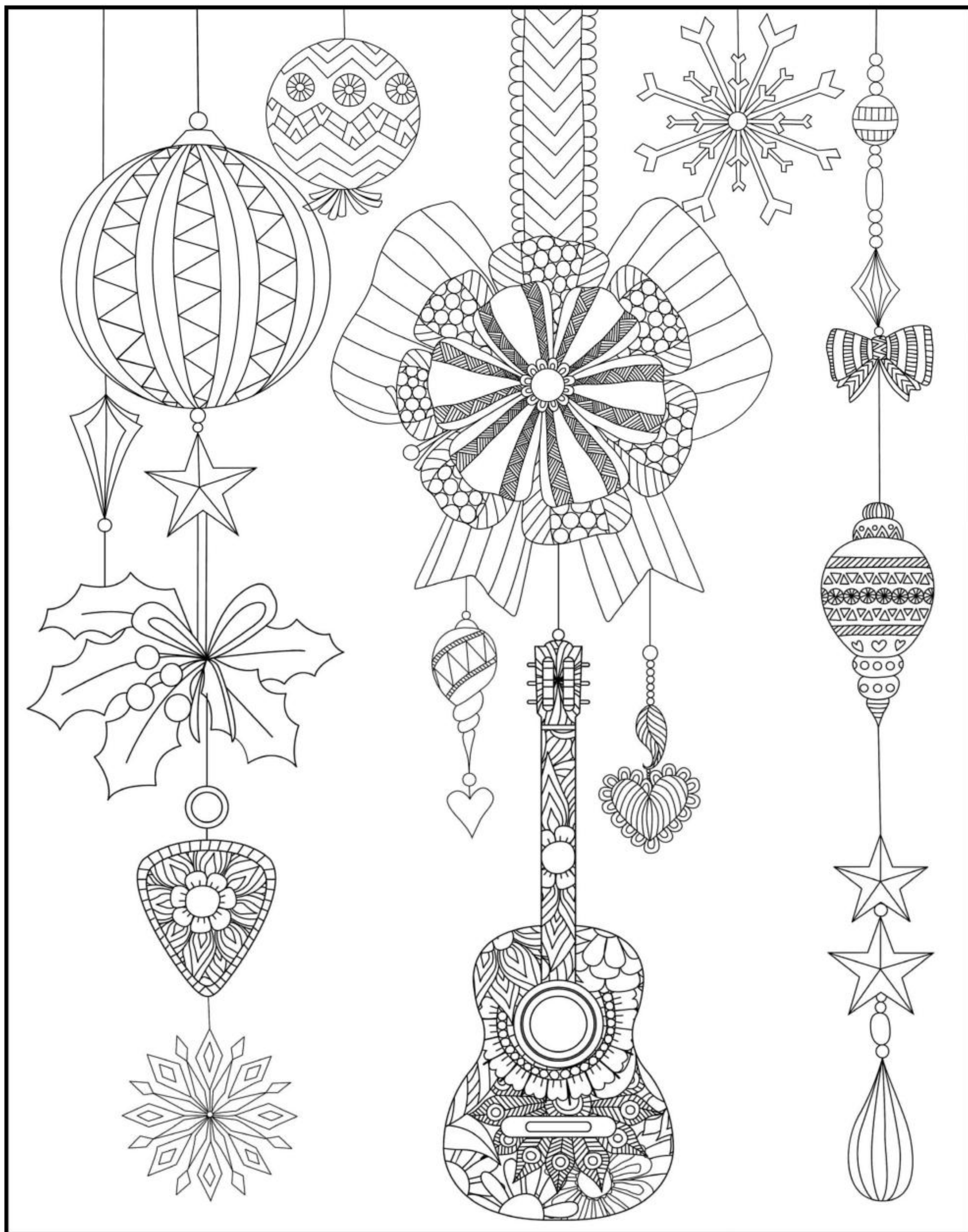
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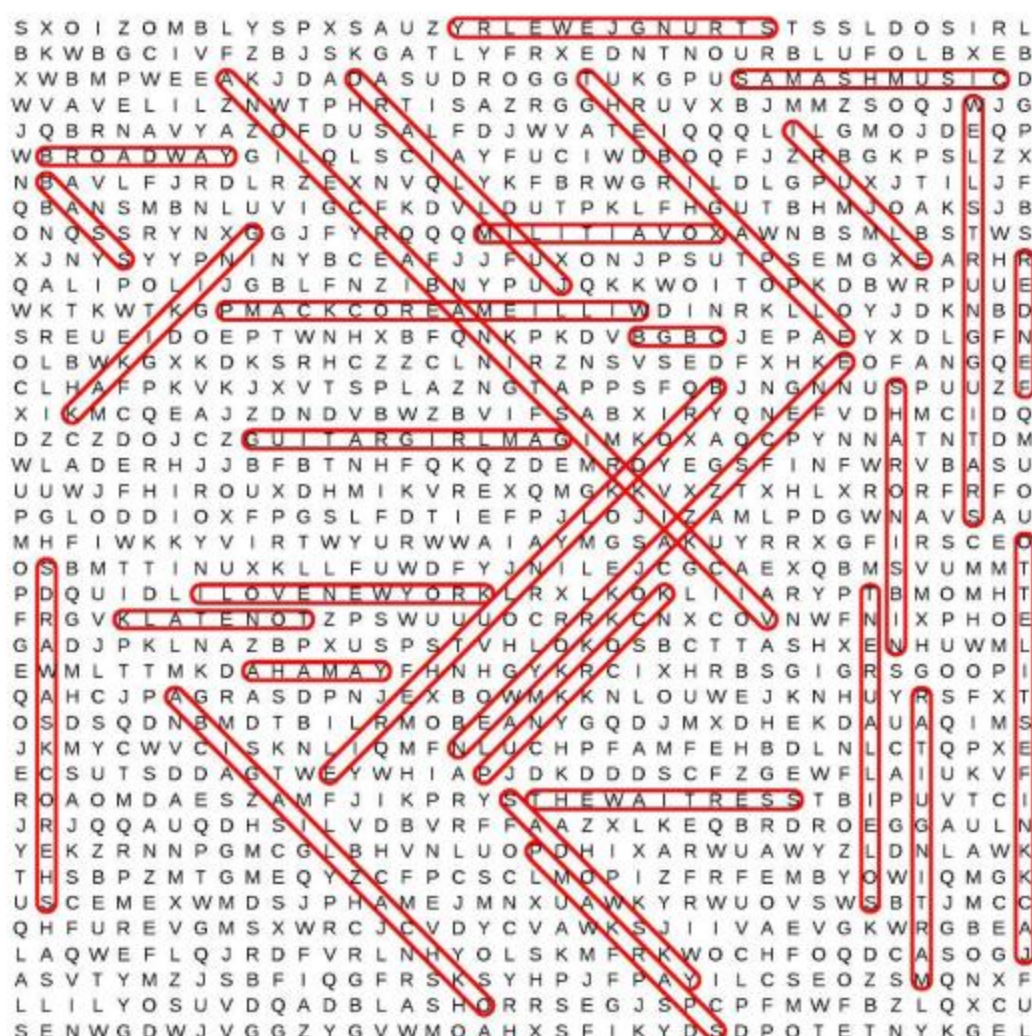
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BROADWAY
BROOKLYN LUTHERIE
CBGB
ELJURI
FENDER
GUITAR GIRL MAG
I LOVE NEW YORK
JACKKNIFE STILETTO
JUILLIARD
KAKI KING
MARTIN GUITAR
MILITIA VOX
NEW YORK JAZZ SCENE
PUNK ROCK
SADOWSKY
SAM ASH MUSIC
SHARON ISBIN
SHE ROCKS AWARDS
SOLEIL LAURENT
SPARK AMP
STRUNG JEWELRY
THE BIG APPLE
THE WAITRESS
TONE TALK
VICKIKRISTINABARCELONA
WELL STRUNG GUITARS
WILLIE MAE ROCK CAMP
YAMAHA

TRIVIA

1. Who founded the guitar program at Juilliard?
2. Where did L. Ellis Hahn apprentice?
3. When was Sadowsky Guitars founded?
4. In what Broadway show did Meg Toohey play guitar?
5. What type of wood is on the top of the Martin 00L-X2E?
6. June Millington plays what model of D'Angelico Guitar?
7. What is the name of Kaki King's most recent project?
8. What members make up the trio VickiKristinaBarcelona?
9. What school is Abigail Zachko attending?
10. What is the name of Camila Meza's latest album?

→ Mind Game answers on page 64





1. Sharon Isbin
2. Sadowsky Guitars
3. 1979
4. The Waitress
5. Sitka spruce
6. Excel SS
7. Data Not Found
8. Rachelle Garniez, Amanda Homi, and Terry Radigan
9. Berklee College of Music
10. Ambar

Trivia Answers

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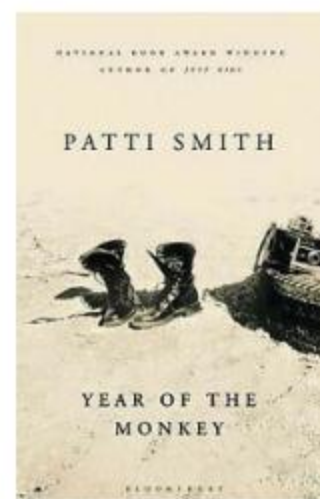
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WHAT WE'RE READING NOW!



Year Of The Monkey
Author: Patti Smith
Publisher: Knopf;
Illustrated edition
(September 24, 2019)

Patti Smith takes us on a deep dive journey through her life in the year 2016 in the *Year Of The Monkey*.



Jagged Little Pill
Author: Alanis Morissette
Publisher: Grand Central Publishing
(November 10, 2020)

A behind-the-scenes look at the hit Broadway show featuring photos and interviews with Alanis Morissette, writer Diablo Cody, and the cast and crew of the high-energy musical.



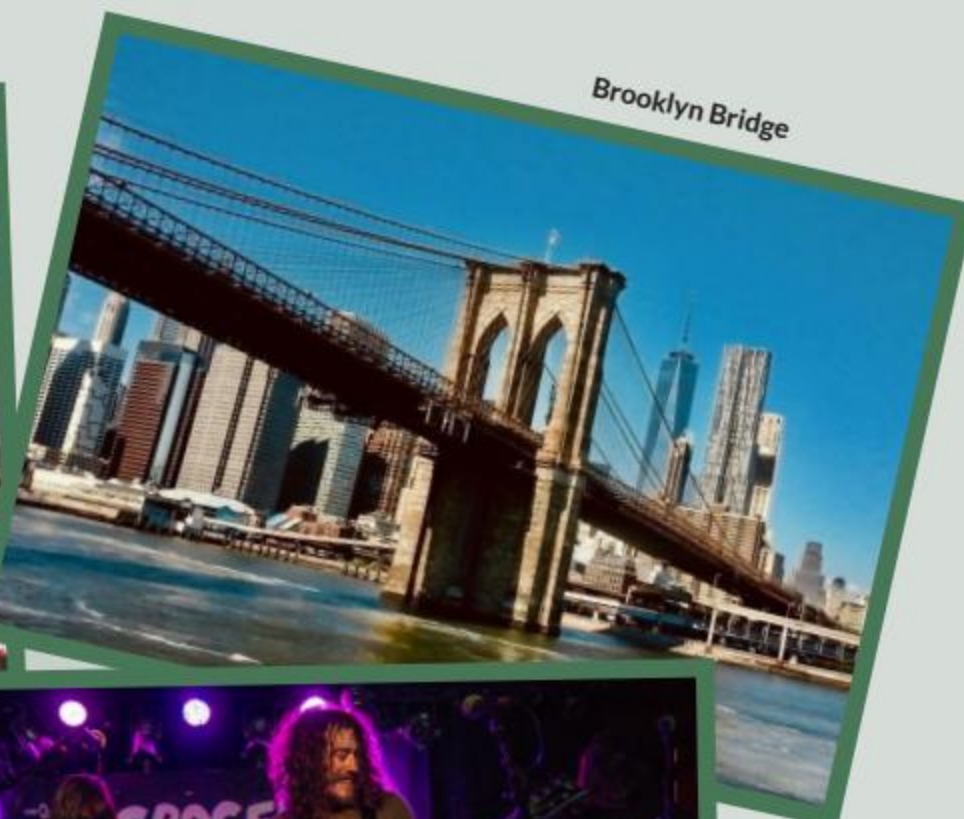
FAN FAVORITES

Enjoy some photography of iconic sites in New York, as well as a few of Debra Devi, who is featured in this issue in our Tone Talk column.

Times Square



Brooklyn Bridge



Statue of Liberty



Debra Devi, drummer John Hummel, bassist Max Feinstein at Arlene's Grocery. Photo Credit; Capacity Images



Broadway



Debra Devi, Mark Bosch (lead guitarist for Ian Hunter, Garland Jeffreys) at Lola NYC; Photo: Jini Sachse

CONTRIBUTORS

Alexx Calise is an accomplished singer, guitarist, and songwriter. Perhaps best known for her hit song, "Cry," which became a staple on the show *Dance Moms* and boasts millions of hits on YouTube, Calise's raw emotion, heart-and soul-lyrics, and unmistakable vibrato have impacted thousands of young girls all over the world. Calise is currently working on new solo material and songs for licensing, and she recently released a new EP with another music project, Batfarm. Besides her musical pursuits, she also works in public relations and marketing. When not playing shows or writing music, she enjoys horror movies, exercising, or taking a well-deserved nap. alexscalise.net

Daniel Corey is a writer and comic book creator based in Los Angeles, CA. His graphic novels have been distributed worldwide, and he has been recognized as a noted influencer in VR and new media. Daniel is also a singer/songwriter, has worked in broadcast news, serves on the Creative Writing Program Advisory Committee at Full Sail University, and speaks at pop culture conventions around the country. Learn more about Daniel's work and contact him through his homepage, DangerKatt.com.

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Amy Epperley, aka Platinum Viking, is an Atlanta-based classically trained multi-instrumentalist specializing in cello and electric bass guitar. She is currently a full-time musician that not only does studio session and recording work but also teaches music lessons and theory. She is involved with multiple projects and bands spanning everything from cover bands to tribute bands such as Siamese Dream (Smashing Pumpkins Tribute) and Evil Women (All Female Black Sabbath Tribute) to original bands Vices of Vanity, Sash the Bash, and Motorage. She has played with, been direct support to, and toured with several national and international recording artists and bands and will be releasing new material and on tour starting in 2019. Her recent project is Sonisphere Podcast.

Leigh Fuge is a professional guitarist and tutor from the UK. He works as a session guitarist, plays with several live bands, writes for various high-profile guitar publications, and works daily with his own music students to develop their skills and careers. He is passionate about sharing knowledge and helping aspiring players hit their potential with technical and songwriting abilities. leighfugeguitar.com

Vanessa Izabella is a professional guitarist that started playing music at a young age. Progressing through high school, Vanessa was playing and performing on multiple instruments, including guitar, piano, and trumpet. She was awarded a scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. During her time there, she studied the guitar playing of such influences as Pat Martino, Slash, Pat Metheny, John Scofield, Eric Johnson, and many others. After graduating with a degree in Music Business, she went on to work with such artists as Pat Metheny and Christian McBride. Vanessa has traveled the world playing guitar, visiting countries such as France, Germany, Egypt, Italy, Japan, South America, and the Caribbean. She has performed on the bill with such renowned artists as Darius Rucker, L.A. Sno, KISS, Skid Row, Paramore, and Joan Jett. She is currently recording and performing as the frontwoman for rock trio BAST. vanessaizabella.com

Gabriella "Guitar Gabby" Logan is an Atlanta Native and proud graduate of Spelman College and Vermont Law School. Her background in environmental and music law fueled her desire to start and manage the international all-women touring collective, TxLips Band, LLC. Logan believes it is important for artists to be well rounded and versed in many areas of the music business, thus inspiring women worldwide to be an unstoppable force. She is the Board Chair for Girls Rock Asheville and the Diversity Editor for *Guitar Girl* Magazine. @guitargabby

Lynnay Della Lucé was born in Morristown, NJ and grew up in northern New Jersey. In 2009, she came to Atlanta to pursue better music and job opportunities and quickly made a name for herself in the local scene. She is a multi-instrumentalist playing guitar, bass, and drums as well as a singer and songwriter. Her past projects include Chaos, Rocket 88, Project X, and Ballbreakers (Atlanta's All-Female AC/DC Tribute).

Nikki O'Neill is an Americana singer, guitar player, and songwriter with a deep love for soul music. Her records have been played on many blues and roots music stations in the US, Canada, and the UK. Based in Los Angeles, she performs actively with her band, nikkioneill.com

Caroline Paone is a freelance music journalist. Her work has appeared in *Bass Player*, *Guitar Player*, *ROCKRGRLL*, and *Bass Frontiers* magazines and websites *Classic Rock Revisited* and *SFGate*. @CarolineRex

Maggie Roberts is a recent graduate from The College of Saint Rose's Music Industry program where she spent her college career

concentrating in guitar studies and music business. She is now a digital marketer and journalist, working to help emerging artists accomplish their dreams in the music industry.

Mandy Rowden: Brought up in East Texas, Mandy Rowden has been a practicing musician since the tender age of six, when she began learning classical piano and guitar. In 2007, she founded *Girl Guitar*, a comprehensive rock and roll and songwriting school for women. A lifelong musician, multi-instrumentalist, and educator, Mandy is based in Austin, Texas, where she writes, records, performs, and teaches. girlguitaraustin.com

Shawn SixX is a self-proclaimed old school music fan first and foremost. It seems that ideal though, has been lost in translation more often than not in today's world of music journalism. Thankfully Shawn is making it his mission to report about the "feeling" of music more than your typical wiki-page bullet point run down. Imagine a long-haired and tattooed Edgar Allan Poe meets Hunter S. Thompson, and you should get it!

Shawn got his start in the music industry as a radio producer and production assistant for the legendary WBCN 104.1 and 98.5 The Sports Hub in Boston and currently is a producer for CBS Radio Boston's WZLX 100.7, WBMX 104.1, and AMP 103.3. He is also the creator and host of the nationally known "SixX Strings" music podcast/column featured on CBS Radio's WZLX and WZLX.COM. Shawn's work has been featured in *UltimateClassicRock.com*, *TEAMROCK.COM*, and *BLABBERMOUTH.COM*. He has also been a contributing editorial columnist with *AMP* magazine, *Hails and Horns Magazine*, *New Noise Magazine*, and held the nightlife and entertainment blogger duties for *CBSBOSTON.COM*. Even though he covers festivals and music events all over the country, Shawn currently resides and is based out of Massachusetts.

Kirk Stauffer is a Seattle-based photographer who has two passions—live music and photography. Over ten years ago, he began to combine them and has covered nearly 2000 performances to date. His photos have been published commercially, featured in *Rolling Stone* magazine, and one found itself on the front cover of *Pollstar* magazine. Kirk has been a contributing photographer for *Paste* magazine, *LiveDaily*, *No Depression*, and *Back Beat Seattle*, and is a regular SXSW attendee. KirkStaufferPhotography

Alex Windsor is a passionate musician and educator with over sixteen years of experience. While she holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Jazz Studies (Bass), she has also extensively studied rock, blues, and classical guitar. She currently serves as the Educational Affairs Specialist for *Guitar Center Lessons*. Alex can be found regularly performing around the greater Los Angeles area. alexnicolewindsor.com

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