

GUITAR GIRL

THE
"BELLS & WHISTLES"

MAGAZINE

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SONGWRITING
TELLS A STORY

Samantha

Fish

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EVENTIDE
CHORDBUDDY
MARTIN GUITAR
BOG STREET PICKS
PAUL REED SMITH
LUNA GUITARS

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MAMII | ARIELLE | DEAD SARA | TIFFANY LLOYD | ABBY POSNER

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GUITARS

TARA TALK

As we head into fall and I look back at our previous issues this year, we talked about electric guitars in our spring edition and acoustic guitars in our summer edition. And now we turn our attention to amps, pedals, and accessories—you know, the **"bells and whistles"** that add that extra touch to our gear and our sound.

We cover a few accessories like the **ChordBuddy** for beginner guitarists, the **Martin D-13E**, the **Eventide UltraTap** pedal, some really cool new picks by **Bog Street Picks**, a **Luna Dragon Uke** with an amp, capo, and chord, a **PRS Archon** amp and **PRStuner**, and a **Fender '68 Custom Pro Reverb** amp.

Have you ever wondered how **Paul Reed Smith** decided to start building amps? Well, we found out from the man himself! We also put together a **MESA/Boogie** guide to touch upon a few of their notable amps. And did you know that **Nita Strauss** has a signature tool kit for gigging guitarists called the **D'Addario Planet Waves Nita Strauss Hurricane Guitar Care Kit**?

Now, when it comes to interviews, for our "Inside the Industry" section, we talked to two talented ladies from Los Angeles—**Colleen Fazio**, who repairs amps and pedals, and **Virginia Castro** who designs gorgeous straps with her guitar strap company **Get'm Get'm**.

Cover artists for this edition are music icon **Melissa Etheridge**, blues guitarist **Samantha Fish**, and social media influencer and guitarist **Kiki Wong**—wow, what a great group of musicians that we are honored to have grace our covers! We talk tone with **Tiffany Lloyd** and **Abby Posner**. Rounding out our interviews for this edition are country artist **Maggie Rose**, 7 string guitar virtuoso **Berit Hagen**, aka the **Commander-in-Chief**, LA-based musician **Aviana** and the **Pure Root**, **Erika Wennerstrom** of **Heartless Bastards**, **Arielle**, and **Dead Sara**.

Our usual columns: **Ask Alexx** covers returning to live music; **Vanessa's Vibe** on Pickups 101; **Guitar Gabby** on Mental Health, while **Kathryn Cloward** talks "Come To My Window" and opening that window to bring people into your music.

Our lesson guru **Nikki O'Neill** follows up to her last lesson in our summer edition with "Demystifying the Fretboard - Pt. 2" and **Alex Windsor** talks "Bringing the Heat with Warm-Up Exercises." **Caroline Paone** reviewed *The Pedal Movie* while **Steve McKinley** outlines the "The Three 'P's of Pedals: Peripherals, Power, Placement."

It's been great to get back to live performances, and **Kirk Stauffer** and **Jack Lue** have provided some great live performance shots in our Gig Gallery. Learn more about our #guitargirl **Megan Maloney**.

For a little stress relief, try your colors on our Adult Coloring picture, find the words in the word puzzle, and answer the trivia questions!

I know you will find this issue packed full of interesting interviews and useful information.

Read on and enjoy!

~ Tara Low

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Photo of Ariel Bellvalaire by Shalon Goss

REVERB TURNS UP THE VOLUME ON GUITAR FX HISTORY IN *THE PEDAL MOVIE*

BY Caroline Paone



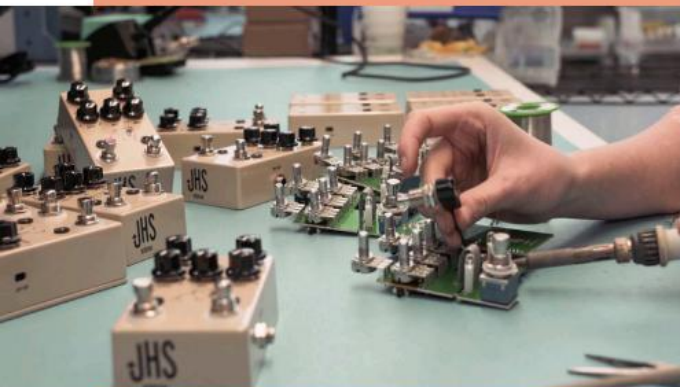
The Pedal Movie



Sarah Lipstate from *The Pedal Movie*



Natalie and Heather from *The Pedal Movie*



JHS Assembly

Imagine rock 'n' roll without guitar pedals. Jimi Hendrix. Eddie Van Halen. '70s R&B and funk. Metal and grunge. St. Vincent.

The Pedal Movie explores the world of guitar pedals and their sonic impact on the equipment industry and beyond. It's the first feature-length documentary to come from Reverb, the Chicago-based online marketplace for music gear.

"The initial inspiration for *The Pedal Movie* was us asking how this strange little pocket of the music world grew into this massive community," says Dan Orkin, co-director of the film. "Today, there are thousands of builders churning out hundreds of thousands of pedals every year."

While it's true that musicians can find at least one stompbox for any tonal color on the spectrum now, it was early tremolo units and distortion pedals that ignited today's wildly diverse pedal scene. Tinkering with volume controls was a gas, but nothing like full-blown overdrive. Without this early curiosity and desire to push limits, many genres of music would be missing their signature sounds.

When you hear Hendrix, you can't help thinking wah and fuzz; EVH—flanged and phaser, Nirvana—distortion, and Larkin Poe—peaches n scream. The examples are endless, but surprisingly the idea for the fuzz-tone happened during a 1961 studio mishap.

As the film details, a distorted tone from a malfunctioning console at the Quonset Hut Studio in Nashville inspired the first fuzz pedal, aka the "Maestro Fuzz." Created by engineer Glenn Snoddy, it was manufactured by Gibson as the Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone. The pedal gained popularity when Keith Richards used it on the Rolling Stones' 1965 hit "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction."

Countless pedal moments ensued during the mid-to-late-'60s, '70s, and thereafter. Jimi Hendrix revolutionized the wah on songs like "All Along the Watchtower" and "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)." Early on, Hendrix also used a Maestro Fuzz and a Dallas Arbiter Fuzz Face. Later, he would favor a Uni-Vibe chorus/vibrato for watery oscillations, and an Octavia (which he referred to as

Octavio) for frequency doubling with added fuzz.

In 1967, the Doors' Robby Krieger superbly stomped a Maestro Fuzz on "When the Music's Over." Fanny's "You're the One" (1971) rocked a lot harder with June Millington's fuzz-drenched solo. Since then, Eric Clapton, Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, Jennifer Batten, bass funkateer Bootsy Collins, and many others have traversed standout solos, wild sequences, rhythm parts, and funkadelic bass lines with all types of pedals.

Today's pedal community is still evolving, with boutique builders, customized units, and new gadgets and accessories popping up each year, as many artists rely on pedals for changing pitch, texturizing songs, and recording with unconventional techniques. *The Pedal Movie* opens with guitarist Sarah Lipstate (Noveller and Iggy Pop) playing guitar over her pedalboard. "I think that that's why guitar pedals appeal to me so much because it was really a way to come up with sounds that didn't necessarily sound like a guitar," she says. "Didn't necessarily sound like music that was already out there."

The documentary seeks to answer the question "How did pedals get so big?" partly through conversations with builders and leaders from more than 50 brands, including Chase Bliss Audio, EarthQuaker Devices, Frantone Electronics, Gamechanger Audio, JHS Pedals, Meris, Strymon, Walrus Audio, Wampler Pedals, Way Huge Electronics, Dogman Devices, ZVEX Effects, ThorpyFX, Fuzzrocious, Caroline Guitar Company, and many more.

All in all, it reminds us how and why we connect with music. Sometimes it's through a little box of electric magic: erupting, unchained, a voodoo chile surfing with the alien feeling outshined like a fool in the rain or a stranger in the alps with Phoebe.

Available on iTunes, Google Play, and Vudu, *The Pedal Movie* includes interviews with Peter Frampton, Patrick Carney, Billy Corgan, Graham Coxon, Kevin Shields, Steve Vai, J Mascis, Fran Blanche, Nels Cline, Steve Albini, and more. —

Photos provided courtesy of Reverb



THE THREE “P”S OF PEDALS: PERIPHERALS, POWER, PLACEMENT

BY Steve McKinley

There are already oceans written about “this” vintage, super rare, but awesome stompbox and “that” exclusive, brand-new mind-blowing pedal. Here we’re going to explore the tiny worker ants that allow the magic to happen.

Peripherals: cables and pedalboards

Peripherals are those things on the sidelines that don’t have the pizzazz of guitars, amps, and pedals. First off, we’re talking about **cables**. They are literally the veins that your emotional blood flows through, and if there is one thing that can ruin the sound of the best gear ever, it’s bad cables. Your guitar’s signal will be sliced, diced, and made into julienne fries before it gets to your beloved amplifier.

For what guitar cables to use, go with the established names that have been around a while (for instance, Mogami, Whirlwind, Planet Waves, and Fender), keep the length between 10-20 feet, and make sure there are good solid connections with the jacks and plugs because a wire break to these connections will kill a signal quicker than anything else. The same applies to the short 6-9” jumper cables between pedals.

Next up is **pedalboards**. Once you start to use more than two pedals, you will want to mount them for convenience, safety, and consistency. A pedalboard makes it super easy to plug in and play as your pedals are set up and connected.

Pedalboards come in a variety of options, from a simple plank to multi-layered platforms. It doesn’t have to be fancy. I recommend checking out ones from BOSS, Pedaltrain, and Voodoo Lab. Think about

your setup and find what makes sense. While you’re at it, keep a pedalboard case in mind. Many models have a compartment where you can store your cables.

Power: batteries, AC adapters, and power supplies

Next up is the power. First off is the best tip you’ll ever get about your pedal’s power, and that is... **batteries**. Sure, they wear out and aren’t cheap, but they are the quietest power supply of them all, which matters if you’re recording. And don’t cheap out on these either. Don’t think you’re so smart getting them at the discount stores because they will die the second you blink. And stay away from the rechargeable ones for the same reason. Stick with the winners like Duracell and Eveready.

After you tire of the rise and fall of the battery empire, you evolve to **AC adapters and power supplies**, and here, size matters. You’ve graduated from those disposable batteries as you want consistent full power every time you pedal on. The Truetone 1 Spot is here to save the day. You’ll need an outlet nearby, and it’ll power not only one pedal, but with its multi-plug cable adapter, it can power four to five pedals. Now, the catch is that some pedals don’t like a daisy-chained power supply, so the cranky pedal’s output will have a hum or some other non-musical noise, which is bad. Also, the noise will be amplified by your amp. This is where a power supply (aka power brick) comes to the rescue. It has multiple outputs to solidly power multiple pedals without breaking a sweat. Here, Voodoo Lab rules the roost along with Walrus Audio and Electro Harmonix. Some of the slanted or dual-level

pedalboards allow you to store your power supply underneath and out of sight. For pedalboards with five-plus pedals, these are a must.

Placement: the ideal order of your pedals

When laying out how to best connect, power, and mount your pedal arsenal, the question comes to mind: What should your **pedal placement** be? There are no commandments etched in stone. You can put your pedals in any order you please, but there are a few generally accepted and recommended guidelines. First up, you want to plug your guitar into your gain pedals first—like distortion, fuzz, wah, compressor, and EQ. Note that fuzz and wah pedals like to be first as they want your guitar’s pure signal. It works whichever way, but figure out what sounds best to you. Your modulation pedals like reverb, delay, echo, phase, and flange come next/last. The pro tip is to put them through your amp’s effects loop as they will sound more organic and airy (see our “Guitar Amp Love” article from August 2013 online at guitargirlmag.com). An effects loop is usually identified on an amplifier if it has input jacks labeled “Send” and “Return” or “Preamp Out” and “Power Amp In.” The great thing about an effects loop is that it allows you to plug-in effects in between your amp’s preamp and power amp. So, try your pedals in different spots on your pedalboard and also through your effects loop. When you hear the magic, you’ll know it.

To wrap it all up, having your pedals securely connected, properly powered, and appropriately mounted in your preferred order will allow you to gloriously unleash your unbridled imagination. 🎸

GUITAR CARE SPOTLIGHT: TAYLORSENSE®

With its built-in sensing technology, the aftermarket guitar care system from Taylor Guitars makes it easier than ever to monitor the condition of a guitar.

More and more people are wearing fitness trackers, so why shouldn't guitars get in on the fun?

If you've spent any time researching acoustic guitars, you've probably at least heard about the importance of protecting a guitar against extended exposure to low or high humidity. That's because a guitar's main ingredient, wood, is highly responsive to its surrounding environmental conditions. Extended humidity swings can disrupt the carefully calibrated geometry of a guitar in a way that compromises the feel and sound. Low humidity can cause a guitar's wood components to dry out and potentially shrink or crack, lowering the string action to a level that leads to fret buzz. High humidity can cause the wood to swell up, glue joints to fail, and finish to lift, along with high action and dull or dead tone (due to the extra water weight the guitar is holding). The optimal humidity range for a guitar is right in the middle, about 45-55 percent, although generally, anywhere in the 40-60 percent range is pretty safe.

Real-world humidity issues are the reason why Taylor Guitars has developed sophisticated wood conditioning systems at its factory, which

help stabilize its wood components and keep them consistent as they progress through the production process. It's also why many guitar shops keep their acoustic guitar inventory in a climate-controlled room. And it's why an in-tune guitar can seemingly fall out of tune just going from a cool room to a warm, brightly lit stage.

The truth is that keeping your guitar properly humidified might be the most important part of guitar maintenance, especially if you travel with your acoustics and regularly play in new locales. Even if you mainly play at home, if you live in a region where you run a heater in the winter, the humidity level inside your home can drop pretty low. And as it turns out, many of the most commonly asked questions about guitar service are often symptomatic of humidity issues. In fact, Taylor's repair department is always busier in the winter because of dry conditions in people's homes.

For decades now, the service team at Taylor Guitars has been banging the drum about the importance of humidity control, promoting the proper use of digital hygrometers to measure humidity levels and other tools to help humidify or dehumidify a guitar as needed.

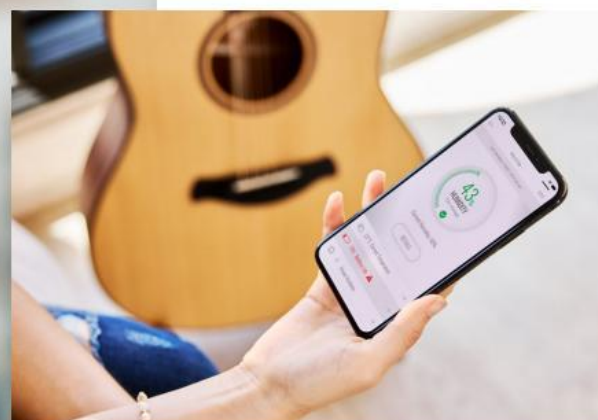
So it should come as no surprise that Taylor has taken things a step further for Taylor owners with the help of some pretty cool sensing technology that's bundled into a product called TaylorSense.

In a nutshell, it's a smart battery box that replaces the standard 9-volt battery box of a Taylor guitar equipped with pickup. Inside, sensors monitor the relative humidity and temperature around the guitar, transmitting that information to a TaylorSense smartphone app via low-energy Bluetooth. Using the app, players can check climate info in real time.

If the numbers around the guitar should rise or fall outside recommended levels and remain there for long enough to create a cause for concern, TaylorSense lets you know with alerts on your phone. The sensor box also detects significant physical impact to the guitar, so you'll know if your guitar takes a hit that you need to check on. Lastly, TaylorSense monitors the guitar's battery level, so if you play shows, you'll never have to worry about taking the stage with a dying pickup.

After a few years on the market, TaylorSense was recently relaunched on an expanded platform, with the app now available for both iOS and Android devices. Other minor refinements were added based on extensive user testing. And it's easy for anyone to install in a few minutes.

So, if you've invested in a nice Taylor and want to keep it playing and sounding its best, you might want to consider TaylorSense. It brings a whole new meaning to tracking a guitar. You can find it at local Taylor dealers and in the online TaylorWare store at taylorguitars.com.



Compliments of
Taylor Guitars

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

ANNIE ERIN CLARK, AKA ST. VINCENT



St. Vincent performed at the Moore Theater in Seattle, WA, on January 19, 2018
Photo by Kirk Stouffer

Attended Berklee College of Music in Boston for three years

Born September 28, 1982, in Tulsa, Oklahoma

Performed as part of Sufjan Stevens' touring band in 2006

Inspired to play guitar by watching Ritchie Valens and the movie *La Bamba*

Released debut album *Marry Me* in 2007

Won the Grammy for Best Alternative Music Album for *St. Vincent* in 2015

Won the Grammy for Best Rock Song for *Masseaduction* in 2017

Designed her own signature guitar with Ernie Ball Music Man in 2016

Has her own signature guitars with Ernie Ball Music Man

Made her film debut directing a segment for the horror anthology *XX* in 2016

Released six studio albums so far, with the most recent *Daddy's Home* in 2021

Produced the album *The Center Won't Hold* for Sleater-Kinney in 2019

ENTERED THE WORLD OF ACTING AND SCREENWRITING IN HER NEW FILM CO-WRITTEN WITH FRIEND CARRIE BROWNSTEIN (SLEATER-KINNEY) "THE NOWHERE INN."

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

ELECTRIC LADY
COLLEEN FAZIO:

“I REALLY ENJOY FIXING STUFF.”

BY Alex Windsor



All photos by Monika Oliver

It's no surprise that the guitar industry is dominated by, well... guitars. Amplifiers are often a secondary priority for many guitar players, despite most of their guitar tone coming from it. Even from the early days of amp development, women have played a large (but often overlooked) role in the building process. One modern-day builder is **Colleen Fazio**, founder of LA-based company **Fazio Electric**.

Fazio started her journey in Chicago as a young guitarist and eventually found her calling in amplification. Shortly after high school, she began building amps for fun and honing her skills at the legendary Chicago audio repair shop, Deltronics. Today, she is not only a versatile repair technician but a passionate builder of her own signature amps. While she's busy in her workshop, she also makes amp tutorials for her Fazio Electric YouTube channel, both educational and fascinating. Her love for her craft is contagious and enough to make players appreciate their amps a little more. We sat down with Fazio to talk all about her story and the magic of amps.

When did you first start playing guitar?

I started playing guitar when I was about seven years old. My uncle had an acoustic guitar, and he saw that I was interested in it, so he bought me my own little acoustic. My parents set me up with some guitar lessons, and then I pretty much played guitar until middle school jazz band. I ended up switching to the bass and then played bass throughout high school jazz band, then I went on to play in rock bands into my adulthood.

How did you first get involved in amp repair?

After high school, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I knew that music was such a huge love in my life. My uncles actually built some guitar amps, and that's how I found out that was something that you could do. I never really thought about amps; a lot of people don't, especially when they're younger. I saw that was a thing, and that's kind of what got me into it. My uncle taught me how to use basic tools and how to solder and stuff like that. I went on to get a job at an audio repair shop, and that's when I decided that I really enjoy fixing stuff.

Do you have a favorite type of amp that you like to work on?

Yes, definitely vintage amps. I love tube amps; that's pretty much my specialty. Anything from around the thirties to the eighties, I really like. Most amp companies during that time period used really good quality parts, and the layout makes them pretty simple to fix and service. I love old Fender amps. Those are my favorite amps by far, especially when like an old tweed Fender amp comes in that has never been touched, and none of the parts have been changed. That always really excites me. A lot of the time, women wired up those amps, and they have their names written on little pieces of tape in there. That's always really cool to see.

What do you enjoy most about repairing amps?

I definitely enjoy breathing new life into these amps. A lot of the time, they've been sitting around in a garage or a storage unit, and they haven't been played in years and years. It's so cool to be able to take an amp that hasn't worked in so long and make it work as it was intended to from the factory. That is like the biggest satisfaction—getting an old amp working again. It feels like a time capsule, too, you know? You're opening up this amp,

and the last time it saw the light of day was during a totally different period of time in the world. It's really crazy; it feels like time travel sometimes.

What are some common amp issues that players should look out for?

When it comes to tube amps, the output (larger) tubes tend to need replacement about every three to five years or so, depending on how often the amp is used and how loud it's being played. Signs that the tubes might be going bad include crackling, weird noises, and drops in volume. Another thing to look out for is scratchy controls. If any weird noises occur while you're turning the controls, that's a sign that your amp needs to be serviced.

What inspired you to begin building your own amps?

I was definitely inspired after seeing my uncle's amps. I ended up taking some classes at this place called the Chicago School of Guitar Making. At that time, I actually wasn't sure if I wanted to work with guitars or amps. I ended up building a tweed Deluxe from a kit through a class, and I thought, "oh my gosh, I am definitely more drawn to this!" I really love all the physical parts of building the amp; soldering and wiring things up is really satisfying to me. That is how I realized that I really loved building amps. Building is my first true love; repair is definitely a love of mine as well, but I really would like to be building more.

Is there a certain tone you aim for when building your amps?

The first amps that I built were modeled after Fender amps, particularly low wattage Fender amps like Princetons and Deluxes and stuff like that because that is a tried and true classic sound. Once I kind of knew what it took to build that type of amp and get that sound, I started experimenting with changing up the tone a little bit. Sometimes I would add a little bit more gain in there with a master volume control, or even improve certain built-in effects, like the tremolo circuit. Sometimes I'm able to improve that a little bit. I'm still working on my path. I'm still figuring out what my dream sound is, but it did start with the

Fender design, and it has been evolving from there.

What advice do you have for women looking to get involved in the amp building and repair industry?

I always tell people who are interested to get an amp kit or even like an effects pedal kit. They sell kits where you can build like a tweed Fender Champ. Just assemble that because you can work on basic skills like soldering and wiring, and you can learn about what the different parts are. That's a great place to start, and that's how I started. That was the thing that made me realize that I really enjoyed it.

I would recommend looking into local repair shops and asking if they offer apprenticeships or something similar. It's one of those things where there's really not much schooling for it, but you have to learn hands-on. If you're able to find somebody local who's willing to take you under their wing, that is super helpful. There are also like a lot of good books out there, such as *The Guitar Amp Handbook* or the *Tube Amp Workbook*. There are so many books out there that you can buy and just familiarize yourself with everything. YouTube is another great resource; it's been so cool seeing all of the amp repair videos that are out there. That's a great resource because there's not a lot of information out there on fixing and building amps.

The Fazio Electric Woody 15

Fazio's first prototype is based off of a Fender AA1164 Princeton Reverb. It features a 15-

watt output, 10" speaker, and built-in spring reverb and tremolo, all encased in an artistic solid walnut cabinet built by Madison Hansen. The Woody 15 has tons of headroom but can get nice and meaty when pushed. This amp is characterized by sparkling highs and sultry lows. Sound clips are available on the Fazio Electric website: www.fazioelectric.com. While this exact model has since been retired, Fazio plans to produce an updated version with similar specs and design. 🎸



Merriam-Webster Definition of Tone:

1

vocal or musical sound of a specific *especially*: musical sound with respect to timbre and manner of expression

2

a: a sound of definite pitch and vibration
b: WHOLE STEP: a musical interval (such as C–D or C–B[♭]) comprising two half steps

3

accent or inflection expressive of a mood or emotion

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

VIRGINIA CASTRO OF GET'M GET'M GUITAR STRAPS:

Bringing Beautiful, Sturdy Guitar Straps to the Industry

BY Vanessa Izabella

One of the most important accessories for a guitar is the guitar strap. For years, they were all black and boring until style innovators like Virginia Castro came along. Armed with the vision of creating something unique that resonated with artists and brought more attention to their finely crafted instruments, Castro started her own company, Get'm Get'm, designing beautiful, sturdy guitar straps.

Castro filled us in on starting her company, overcoming challenges, designing gorgeous straps, and supporting various animal charities.

You started Get'm Get'm in 1996; what was the motivation to start your own company?

My motivation to start my own company probably has a lot to do with my dad. He had a business at 31 and was a hard-working man that had the drive to achieve any goal. Also, I worked in Beverly Hills for three years selling spa treatments and creams, with \$30k a month in sales. When I was working at the spa, I took care of Rod Stewart—when no one could sell to him, let alone talk to the man.

I just treated him like anyone else. I had approached him to ask how his services were, and no one in 12 years had ever sold him anything! Lol. So I did! He was one of my all-time favorite artists! After those three years, I asked for a 5% commission, and they decided to fire me for that. That really motivated me to become my own boss and run things my way.

Then, I was at home one night watching VH1 (lol), having a glass of wine, smoking a little hay, when I noticed everyone was so awesome on stage, using these great guitars. But the guitar straps were frightening! I always was pretty creative as a kid. I said to myself, "WAIT a minute, OMG!" That's when it hit me! I wanted to design beautiful, gorgeous styles that actually reflect the musicians—bring out their personality and make them stand out from the rest!

What were some of the challenges you faced or continue to face being a business owner?
One of the big challenges that I have run into

in this music industry, of course, is arrogant, sometimes very mean, men! It's a very difficult industry and challenging, especially when you're working with huge chain stores. Ugh. Some are kind, but even when not, that never stopped me! I loved the challenge!

What type of creative process goes into designing your straps and picking the materials?

For me, the creative part of the design is just when you SEE IT, you FEEL IT! I create, and it feels so good. I've been so successful with so many of my styles, I'm grateful. I also have been inspired by the big design houses like Dior, Versace, and Gucci. When I would see their videos or ads, I would think, "Wait a minute. I'm straight on point!" Also, I always wanted to work in the fashion industry—I went to the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise, but for one year only. Then my parents took me out of school so my little sister could go. I still use every lesson I learned on the way and even worked jobs in manufacturing to know how things were done so I could use that knowledge in my approach and work.

What do you look for in artists that you endorse?

I look for great bands that perform all over the world! Truly it's their personalities I admire and of course the music. I love when they have great personalities and care about style! They want to feel good and look great on stage. When you're using a \$30,000 guitar or a \$1000 guitar, what matters is that they feel good, and that makes me feel great! I love making people happy!

We know you work with charities for animals; can you tell us a

little bit about that?

I actually started my business designing dog and cat collars! Those were the first things I designed, and I was very successful. I designed for Oprah's dogs. I owned a pet store for 15 years in Silver Lake.



Rosy Skull Scarf -- And she makes scarves too!



The Kiki Guitar Strap (named after our cover artist Kiki Wong)



The Nikki Guitar Strap (named after Nikki Stringfield)

So, I saw the crazy BS happening to animals, and I educated myself about the "disposable" mentality of the society that we live in. I worked with many organizations to shut down the selling of animals in malls—to stop the puppy mills. I rescued 324 cats and 686 dogs with my store, and I used to pull them out from the dog pounds—this was a huge awakening for me! Stop selling animals. I did so many documentaries with people in Germany and the Netherlands. They could not believe our way of handling animals and people's reasons for dropping off pets at the pounds! I've spent

25 years donating my time and money, and I give a portion of every sale I make to different rescue organizations. It's a blessing that we have come so far, but much more work needs to be done! 🐾

Photo provided by the interviewee



KIKI Wong

SOCIAL SHREDDER

BY Alex Windsor

Anyone who has spent more than five minutes watching guitar videos on Instagram or TikTok will probably recognize **Kiki Wong** right away. Not only is she a talented guitarist with a knack for writing tasty metal riffs, but her colorful and charismatic personality sets her apart from the millions of other videos out there.

Kiki started with classical piano lessons and then discovered her love for guitar at the age of 13. Since then, she has performed in original bands such as Nylon Pink and Vigil of War, toured with legendary groups like the Misfits, and shared the stage with the likes of Taylor Swift, Usher, Bebe Rexha, and more.

When the 2020 pandemic brought live music to a screeching halt, Kiki kept all of her fans smiling through social media with an endless supply of guitar videos. From metal renditions of Britney Spears to unexpected duets of cats sneezing along to Dragonforce licks, Kiki raised the standard of the typical guitar cover with her "Shrednanigans."

She has managed to inspire countless players—myself included—during an otherwise dark period for musicians. We were able to catch up with Kiki and discover a little bit more about her journey.

You began playing acoustic guitar at a young age. What inspired you to switch it up and pursue metal?

It's funny because I started on the acoustic with every intention to learn heavy songs. I remember when I picked up the acoustic guitar, I was already wondering how it was supposed to make the distorted tone that you hear in rock songs. My acoustic ballad days didn't last too long, ha-ha.

What gear (guitar, amps, pedals, etc.) do you currently use, and why?

Oh man, gear-wise, I have a smorgasbord of things. I've got a JCM 2000 DSL 100 head and a JCM 900 cab, a Peavey XXX 2x12 all-tube combo amp, a little Line 6 Spider III 15 W practice amp, a Kemper, and a Positive Grid Spark. I also use Logic for some of my pop covers. Every piece of equipment has its own beefy tones and sounds, whether it's for live or just video creation.

The pandemic has affected a lot of musicians. What kept you motivated once live shows were postponed?

Honestly, it was a pretty big hit when the pandemic happened. I was doing a lot of travel blogging, and we had six media trips around the world planned, and all got canceled. I didn't really know what to do, so I started playing guitar and recording videos on TikTok. Eventually, they really picked up, and that's been keeping me





Photo by Jack Lue

motivated ever since. I feel like I've been able to connect with fans on a whole new level more than I would during live shows, so it's been amazing!

You've built up a large following and made a name for yourself as an influencer, but how has social media influenced YOU as a musician?

It's been a whirlwind of ups and downs the last year. I've made a lot of changes with what I do occupationally and emotionally as a person. However, one of the greatest parts of building a social media following is being able to connect with some incredible followers and musicians. It's been an absolute honor and pleasure to really get to know my fans and other musicians. People I likely wouldn't have a chance to meet I've been able to connect with. Also, people have been meeting like-minded musicians and metalheads through my platform, so it's amazing to see them connecting with each other as well.

One of your many talents is taking popular songs and recreating shred versions. Is there a specific creative process you follow for that? (For example, do you hear a song and think of adding a technique, etc.?)

I started playing in a band called Nylon Pink in 2010. We did a lot of heavy electronic covers of KPOP music, and it's one of my favorite ways to write music. Usually, I'll sit with a song and just do it all by ear, listening where I want to move the root of the chords. I also try and pick out different syncopations from the drums and apply it to my playing. Also, through so many years of listening to metal, I can sometimes just hear what metal riff will go where. It's a process; sometimes it hits really quick, others I have to take a few days to sit on it, but it eventually gets there in the end!

How would you describe your overall approach to writing songs/riffs/solos?

Unpredictable, but always fun. I'm not the best guitarist in the world by any means, but I do have a load of fun doing it!



Photo by Jack Lue

How did Vigil of War come together, and what's next?

I joined the band to fill in for a UK tour. I wasn't playing music at all, so I was really apprehensive about my playing ability at the time and almost didn't even go out of fear of failure. But once I went, it revitalized my passion for music. It was by far one of my favorite tours I've ever been on, and I'm grateful for it. We're just finishing up our EP, so stay tuned for some videos, music, and shows coming your way! Follow @vigilofwar on Instagram!

Are there any other musical projects on the horizon for you?

Lots of great things are coming, but I can't officially announce them yet! Stay tuned on IG stories @kikiwongo

What advice do you have for new players looking to enhance their metal chops?

Play the things you LOVE! I can't stress this enough. Sometimes, we get to wrapped up in the technical aspects of playing. These are absolutely ESSENTIAL, but if you're just getting started, don't worry too much about perfection. It's all about passion and feel. A little grungy, dirty sound isn't going to hurt you if you're feeling it. I'd rather hear something with a feel that's a little sloppy than something too clean and too robotic. Be you, unapologetically, and let that shine in your playing! 🤘—

Joni Mitchell Named 2022 MusiCares Person of the Year

MusiCares recently announced that **Joni Mitchell** will be honored as its **2022 MusiCares Person of the Year** at the 31st annual Person of the Year benefit gala/tribute concert to be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center on January 29, 2022, just two nights before the 64th annual GRAMMY Awards. The trailblazing musician is one of the most prolific songwriters of our time breaking down barriers for women in the music industry. Her list of accomplishments are numerous, including eight GRAMMY Awards and 16 nominations. She was recently named as one of 2021 Kennedy Center Honorees.

The tribute concert will feature renowned artists and musicians paying tribute to Mitchell's music and legacy. The line-up will be announced over the coming months.

From the press release:

"We are so excited to bring together an amazing lineup of artists to celebrate the musical legacy of Joni Mitchell," said Laura Segura, Executive Director of MusiCares. "She is being honored not only for her iconic music and lyrics, but for her trailblazing spirit and the inspiration she's brought to so many artists."



Photo by Marcy Gensic

"I'm honored to be chosen as Person of the Year by this great charity," said Mitchell, "I look forward to being part of this gala that will help MusiCares continue their inspired work in providing a support system for those in need."

"I'm honored to be chosen as Person of the Year by this great charity," said Mitchell, "I look forward to being part of this gala that will help MusiCares

Proceeds from the benefit will go toward MusiCares. Reservations for tables will be accepted starting September 8 at 10 a.m. PT at www.musicares.org/person-year. 🤘—



Photo by Joel Bernstein



Have a Seat with Songbird MAGGIE ROSE

BY Tara Low and Cece Gair

Potomac, Maryland native Maggie Rose has been making music in some way for as long as she can remember. From singing around her house as a toddler, to joining a Bruce Springsteen tribute band as a teen, to moving to Nashville all by herself, to now working and recording in the legendary likes of FAME Studios and the Opry.

We chatted with Rose and during her interview, she breaks down her upcoming album, *Have a Seat*, which dropped on August 20. She tells us about her collaborations on the album, recording at FAME, her guitar preferences, and her podcast *Salute the Songbird*.

Have a Seat is filled to the brim with collaborations. "I had members of Them Vibes, who tours with me, play down there as well with me. We had Alex Haddad on guitar, Larry Forman on percussion and vocals, and Sarah Tomek on drums—just like this amazing eclectic group of musicians, young and old. David Hood from the Swampers, and Will McFarlane, who used to play with Bonnie Raitt. That's always been one of my favorite guitar tones. Then, of course, Ben Tanner of Alabama Shakes producing. He is from Florence, AL, so he was able to pull in some amazing members of the Alabama Shakes and Brittany Howard's band. Shanay Johnson and Rhetta Simone, who sing with Emily King and Brittany Howard, sang background vocals. It was just so cool. Lloyd Buchanan on keys and Ben Alleman on keys. I was just really happy to have such a collaborative effort put forth for this record and such great musicians."

Rose and her collaborators had big plans to promote the album, but these were abruptly cut off with the onslaught of the pandemic.

"Of course, we had a whole touring schedule to go promote this stuff, and it was canceled overnight. So now we're back out and reabsorbing to touring life—it feels just right. I'm happy that we waited to have this music correlated with the reopening of everything because it's a celebration. A lot of it was written about political intentions. And then I felt like we were put in a pressure cooker over the pandemic, and all of those themes that I wrote about before I began them, felt even more relevant. So, it feels like the right moment after everything."

Not only did Rose collaborate with other artists on the recording of her tracks, she also collaborated on some songwriting. "I wrote with Alex Haddad and Larry Forman of Them Vibes a lot. I wrote with Melissa Fuller and Jason Aftable on a couple of songs. Joe Ginsburg and Megan Redmond are incredible. I wrote "For Your Consideration" with them; I wrote "What Makes You Tick" with Marcus King. One song called "Saint" was the song that my publisher sent me that four of my friends wrote. I haven't cut an outside song in years, but that's what I do every day when I'm back in Nashville is to try to help artists find their voice. It just felt like an honor to find a song that interested me so much that then let me take it and interpret it and share it with my listeners. Hopefully, they all feel the way I felt when I heard it for the first time."



When asked what song on the album speaks to her the most, Rose says that "that is a tough question. I think the song that encapsulates the theme of this record really well is "For Your Consideration" because it's about listening, sitting down with someone else, not having to agree, but having the empathy to listen to them and give them the space to be heard. I think that's the overarching theme for this record. And just finally, as we gather back together, let's have fun and passion for each other and just go at it all gently with one another. And I think people are so hungry for live music again, you know, so that in the beginning of this tour, it's like people are dying for that connection. And that's when the music becomes real."

Have a Seat was recorded at FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Rose has performed

there before, and she notes that the vibe is really something special. "It was a trip in 2018 where we performed at this event called *Music Row to Muscle Shoals* that Halley Phillips puts together which is Sam Phillips' granddaughter. The whole band just came alive, and we were performing there, and I felt like, *okay, maybe I need to get out of Nashville and just take some of the magic that's in this room because it really is a time capsule*. It's kind of like stepping on the stage at the Opry where you know everyone that's gone before you inside here. So you want to also do your best."

Recording at FAME really changes the feel of the performance, according to Maggie. "I think the vibe is just obviously the legendary room that puts you on your game. But then for me getting out of Nashville, having lived there for a long time and making lots of albums on music row, it was nice to just have a trip where we woke up, we went to the studio, stayed there as late as we could, and we went to bed at our Airbnb and did it all over again. It was a completely immersive experience, and, you know, I wasn't distracted by what I had to do at my house or anything. I just got to be in the record for days at a time when we would go down there to record these songs and arches. And that's really cool. It felt like just full escape

into the projects for a little bit at a time, which I think the music really demanded of us."

Rose compares the vibe of FAME to that of the Opry. She has performed at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, over 80 times. "I think it's 83. I usually keep counting on this because it's such a cool opportunity, and I don't take it for granted. Even with my music being kind of more funky and soulful, the Opry seems to reflect what's going on in our community of country and Americana in a way that I don't think you're seeing for trade on terrestrial radio by any means. So I think they do a really good job of showcasing what it is that Nashville has to offer, to a degree, that belongs on the Opry stage that might not be your traditional idea of what belongs on the Opry stage."

We asked Rose what important things there are to know about being an artist going to Nashville for the first time. "I think what you have to learn is that everyone is so talented; there's such an abundance of wisdom to be mined around you. Humility is probably something that every young artist should possess, especially when they're going into the collaborative atmosphere. I'm not saying don't have an ego; I'm just saying be humble, be kind to yourself, be appreciative of others, and just try and learn. Just listening actually makes you better when you're the one who has to say something eventually."

Rose touched on trends about being female in Nashville and shared some female artists she's loving right now, including Shannon McNally, Nicole Atkins, Elizabeth Cook, Molly Tuttle, Sierra Hull, Natalie Hemby, and Jillette Johnson. "There's so many talented women who are instrumentalists that are really fun to watch. I think some of these all-female bands that you're seeing dropped the all-female moniker. We don't even need to mention that anymore."

Rose has had music in her life for quite some time. "I was super young when I started singing, like before I could talk. I didn't have any other musical family members to kind of collaborate with or write with, but I definitely had a lot of appreciative fans. My family would encourage me to sing every day, all the time. When I was 15, I got linked up with a Bruce Springsteen tribute street band—up until then, I was just singing in a church choir. I was known as the singer of the community, but not the songwriter. With the "B Street Band," that's when I really started to realize that the power of performing was playing at bars for people who were getting off work and trying to get away from the rigors of life."

It was during her time with this band that she learned some important lessons about music. "I

was like, *okay, it's not just about being a good singer. This is about feelings that we're trying to evoke*. I started incorporating originals into my set. I'd kind of sneak them in and see if people noticed, then that's eventually what got me to move to Nashville. I got my first guitar when I was 17 and moved to Nashville when I was 19, getting this baptism by fire because everyone there is so good at what they do."

We asked Rose about her preference for guitars, and at the moment, she's a huge Gibson fan. "I have the Hummingbird—it has a Sitka spruce top, and I love it. It handles really nicely. I used to have a big white J-200. I play that one often and write songs on that at home." She doesn't play electric yet, but she's looking forward to learning.

When on the lookout for a new guitar, Rose looks for some of the following: "I've played Taylors, but with the guitar tone of the Gibsons that I've played, I like that they have more body; they're warm, and they're not super bright. I just think it goes better with my voice." As far as strings, Rose also has a preference. "I have D'Addario and Jim Dunlop strings. I like the lighter gauge too, even on a Gibson."

Rose also hosts a podcast called *Salute the Songbird*. It's in its second season now, with about 13 episodes per season. On whether or not she often hears common themes from the guests on her podcast, Rose had a lot to say. "Yes. Nancy Wilson from Heart is another incredible guitar player that I had on the show, and she's always been someone that I've looked up to. I'd love to play guitar half as good as she can. She's been in the industry for a while and has written some of the most iconic guitar riffs ever. She was on the show. And then, we also had new artists like Jillette Johnson on the show, and they are wildly different from each other. All of my guests share a commitment to music. That's so beautiful that we put ourselves through a little bit of departure, but there's also so much joy because it's a vocation for everyone that I talk to. And I think the thesis statement, if I had to really simplify it, would be, *if this isn't exactly what you want to do, and there's no plan B, then this is what you should be doing*. We make music because we love it."

To finish off our interview, we asked Rose if she had any advice for young artists in the music industry. "I would say don't try and chase someone else's idea of what being an artist is; chase your own. [When I was getting into the industry], I'd ask myself just the simple questions of *who do you want to be and what makes you original and authentic? What do you want to say?* So I had to kind of backpedal a little bit in my career to get back to that authenticity of who I was just because I was kind of following a template. A big machine with those questions pushed behind me, and I got ahead of myself. I think you only have one chance to make a first impression, and you want that impression to be who you are. Those are the artists that I want to watch—the ones who know themselves." —





Photo by Beatriz Fernandez

TAKE FIVE WITH MARIANA LIMA

BY Guitar Gabby

Tell us a little about your musical background; how old were you when you started playing guitar, and what inspired your passion for music?

Well, I started playing the guitar around 19 years old. I always thought I would have a lot

of difficulties with my starting to learn later in life compared to many other musicians who start their careers at a young age.

My mother was always listening to Aretha Franklin, Queen, Extreme, Jamiroquai, etc., so when it comes to my inspirations, those were my first musical references that I pulled from to craft my sound.

I had a lot of exposure in the Brazilian gospel arena, but my biggest inspiration was my first guitar teacher, who taught me almost everything I know today.

What inspires you to wake up every day and continue pursuing your dreams?

I've always had people who didn't really believe I knew how to play the guitar. It took some time, but I soon realized that my music was reaching places I had never imagined before. Countries like Japan, the United

States, and Europe were filled with people saying, "Mari, I wanted to stop playing the guitar, but I watched a video of you and fell in love with music again." This really helped me realize that I was becoming a great reference for women on the guitar. It all motivated me to continue pursuing my dreams while inspiring others to do the same.

Take us through your songwriting process. What types of environments do you feel you need in order to be your most creative?

Songwriting and composing always seemed like difficult things to do. I've been doing better at honing in on this craft lately. I love quiet environments, and I prefer to create at night because I feel more open to new music.

What guitars are you playing right now? Name your top two to three if possible.

Currently, I play three guitars. My first is a Fender Stratocaster. For most of my work, I play on my two Telecasters because they are tone-ready. In the near future, I hope to purchase a Super Strat.

Finish this sentence: I believe music...

I believe music is food for the soul! Without music, life would become meaningless. —

Brazilian guitar boss Mariana Lima started her journey listening to her mother's favorites— from Aretha Franklin to Queen to Brazilian gospel. Lima crafted her style by listening to various genres of music and making it her own. Picking up the guitar around 19, she faced many obstacles that all beginner guitarists face, pushing through the hard parts to get to the light at the end of the tunnel.

This well-versed rockstar has been playing for ten years and simultaneously inspired many women worldwide to keep playing the guitar, even when they feel uninspired to continue on. Her gift truly shines through every step of the way.

Lima took us through the ups and downs of pursuing her calling despite the world's doubt around her.



Rombo Picks

Rombo picks have once again come out with two new lines of innovative guitar picks released in September—the Jade and Crisp series feature new ergonomics and textures to aid guitar players seeking the perfect pick. Both lines are sold in packs of four and are available in four colors. There is also a multicolor pack of four that can be purchased. Both sets will be offered for sale at just under \$10.

For more information and pricing, visit rombopicks.com.





In Conversation with

Melissa

Etheridge

SONGWRITING COMES FROM A PERSONAL PLACE

BY Vanessa Izabella

Melissa Etheridge, the iconic American singer-songwriter on the music scene since 1985, has numerous accolades that include multiple Grammy awards, platinum and double-platinum records, and a star on the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame. We were able to catch up with Etheridge via Zoom from Dillon, Colorado, while she was on tour to discuss her career, life since the pandemic, her new album *One Way Out*, the upcoming Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp (an all-female music camp) that will be held in Los Angeles in January 2022, her annual cruise, and what is on her musical horizon.

First off, I really enjoy your newest record. It's awesome. The songwriting is just so raw, and the riffs and your vocals—it's just so emotional and gritty. So what was the inspiration behind some of the songs that are on this newest record?

Well, the interesting thing about the album is those songs are older songs—they come from the late eighties and the early nineties. They're the songs that I wasn't quite prepared to release, as some of them were written before I came out. I wasn't out publicly yet, and I felt like they were a little too, like obvious that I was singing about a woman or even very feminist in nature. I listen to them now, and they are just harmless, you know. But 30 years ago, yeah, it was a little intense. So, the songs are about relationships, mostly because that's what I was going through at the time. I was very confused and frustrated and also excited about the world. You know, it's a lot of all that.

So you just kind of reconnected with some of those songs. You must have a vault of songs you can kind of dive back into once in a while. Did any of them change? Are the arrangements still kind similar to how you envisioned them 30 years ago?

Well, most of them kind of stayed the same. Most of them were just really straightforward, great songs like "For The Last Time," "As Cool As You Try," "I'm No Angel," and "Wild Wild Wild." Those are very much just how they were. And then the song "One Way Out," I actually had to finish; it was like half a song. So I finished up that and sort of worked that out, but most of it, they were pretty solid.

I guess it goes to show that it's important to document your songwriting and catalog it in case you ever want to come back and visit it. Over the last 30 years, how do you feel that your songwriting has changed? I think as people go through different life experiences, they change. As a songwriter, how do you feel you have grown?

That's what happens, you know, the songwriting comes from the personal part of me, the personal place in me, my experiences, my hopes and dreams and pains and joys—all of those things—and that changes as my life goes on. Like so many songs on *One Way Out* are about a little bit of heartbreak, a little bit of desire and want and frustration. Not so much going through that anymore. Nowadays, it's different stuff. So, my subject about what I'm writing to has changed, and my musical sort of my abilities have changed and grown. So, you know, it grows with it.



Photo by Elizabeth Miranda

GUITAR GIRL



guitargirlmag.com **Guitar Girl Magazine** 23

I'd like to talk about this awesome Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Guitar Camp for women in January. There are so many great teachers lined up. Can you talk a little bit about how you became involved in the camp?

I was really, really thrilled when they asked me to do this female-focused rock and roll camp. You know, rock and roll has been so male-oriented forever. There have been so many great artists, and some will be there. Nancy Wilson. Orianthi—if you haven't heard her play guitar, you haven't lived, nobody plays better than her; she's ridiculously good. To have that female power, you know, and it's funny because I saw some social media reactions from some guys saying, 'hey, how come I can't?' You've had 30 years of this.

Yeah. Give us one little shot.

Usually, I don't like to exclude, I don't like to do that, but I think this is a really cool chance because a lot of times, well, I know myself that from my own experience, female guitarists can't just—because we're more about cooperation than competition—we'll kind of step back and let somebody else go. It's not a hundred percent in our nature to lean in and do that. And that's what rock and roll is, is leaning in and standing up and taking that spotlight playing. So I think an all-female camp gives more opportunity for women to kind of say, 'Hey, I'm safe here. I'm with girls. I'm not going to make a fool of myself in front of a bunch of guys. I'm gonna step in. I think it will be really supportive, and not only just guitar playing but emotionally too. It's a really, really cool thing to do.

Yeah. I know a few of the girls that will be teaching. We've interviewed Orianthi a few times. And we know Britt Lightning as well. When I learned about the camp, I was like, 'oh my gosh, like, this is amazing.' Honestly, if

you're a female and you play guitar, that has to be on your list of things to do in January. So during the pandemic—and now we're in this weird Delta variant situation—you were doing a lot of live streaming, and probably like most musicians to keep your sanity. How do you feel you made it through these difficult times?

Oh my gosh. Well, that was rough. Having to cancel tours is just against my nature. And then slowly realizing that music and live performance is the last thing that's going to come back. It's still just starting to. We were going to play Jazz Fest, and it just got canceled. So, it's still difficult, but the live streaming really helped me really. It gave me something to do. It gave me something to learn. I really liked that. I was able to practice and, you know, I got to know my songs. I ended up playing every single song I'd ever recorded, which is a lot of songs, over two hundred. So, I ended up doing that and really connecting with my fans and building a community. It was a great experience, the streaming, but it does not replace live music. I have to admit I'm really enjoying the live audiences and such.

It's gotta be nice to be getting back out there again. And speaking of that, can you talk a little bit about the cruise you have scheduled for November. That is probably a really great way to get in touch with your fans because they're all going to be on a ship with you.

I love the cruise. The cruise is so much fun, so, if you're a cruising kind of person, there are still a few cabins left, so come on and join us. We've got some great artists. We've got Jewel, Lindsay Ell—another amazing guitar player—Brittany Spencer, and Antigone Rising, all different kinds of music. We got a group called Dorothy that just rocks like crazy. A lot of fun artists. There's a lot of women, but everyone is welcome. Everyone is absolutely welcome. And it's going out in November on Norwegian, and they just

won a court battle to make sure that everyone's vaccinated. So you gotta be vaccinated to come on the cruise.

You recently won the Music for Life Award during Believe in Music Week in January 2021, which replaced the Winter NAMM show. Can you talk a little bit about that and what that meant to you?

Awards are fun. It's fun to be acknowledged by your peers. It was really nice. They were acknowledging the work we were doing with streaming and keeping connected with the world and with my fans. And NAMM is just a great organization.

You have had such an amazing career. As you know, musicians have ups and downs throughout their careers. Can you talk a little about your experience in having such a long career? Were there things that you consciously did to keep your career going, or do you feel that you just went with your heart, and it just kept taking you down the road?

When I started, I was 12 years old in Kansas. I started a long time ago, and I played in bands in bars. I played in cover bands. I played in bars and restaurants and all kinds of things. And then I played solo in my early twenties until I finally got a record deal. I got my first record put out when I was 27; I got the record deal when I was 25. I was always making a living at it. I could always go down to a restaurant and get a job on a Friday and Saturday. I could always pay the bills. I never thought, 'oh, I'm going to give this up.' I was self-contained—I had my own little sound system, and I could just set up anywhere. So I knew I could always make a living at it. And it was just the expansion of it, like, 'Can I get a record deal? Can I start playing? Can I get my second record, you know, can I keep doing this?' And that's just how it rolls along. And man, 40 years later, here I am. So I'm really happy with how it's gone.

We're all really happy that you've given so much good music to the world. A lot of your songs are so relatable. As you mentioned, you wrote the songs on your new album 30 years ago, and they're still just so relatable to pretty much everyone.

Thank you. That's what I always want my music to be, you know, to connect with people. And I believe if I connect with myself and I speak truthfully and really challenge myself, that I can still have people that will be interested in the new music.

As you know, we're Guitar Girl Magazine, all about inspiring and encouraging female guitarists, but at the same time, we have a lot of male fans that subscribe and read the magazine, so we're not just limited to women. There are a lot of people who want to make the transition from the practicing musician in their bedroom to the performer. Do you have any advice on what steps to take to go from the bedroom to gigging?

Well, I would say the most important thing is to love what you do and to be easy with it. There's a reason they call it 'play' music. It's playing; it's fun. And as long as you're having fun with it, then it will be satisfying to you. Also, are



Photo by Elizabeth Miranda

you a guitar player, or are you looking for other musicians to play with? Look for that community and find other musicians to play with. That's always helped me and inspired me to play better. And, you know, you find new music. Socializing with a community of musicians is important to get with. Everyone's unique. You're not going to play just like anybody else.

I had to go through a long time of going, 'Okay. You know, I'm playing lead, but I don't play like Eric Clapton.' And that's okay. I don't know all the Stevie Ray Vaughan licks. If I wanted to sit down and learn them, maybe I could, but I don't want to. I want to play. I want to play what makes me happy. So you start there, and then you just look around and play for anyone and everyone, and it just grows. As long as you're loving it, then it's going to bring you joy.

That's great. Right now, are you collaborating with anyone on new music that you can speak about?

Yeah, there's an interesting song that is coming up that I did with country artist Trace Adkins. He's got his 25th-anniversary album coming out. He did a song with Luke Bryan and Pitbull. We did a duet together, and it's a darn good song. And I love it. It's called "Love Walks Through The Rain," I think the album comes out on August 27th. I'm really excited about that song. It's a really great song. I was really happy to be asked by Trace, and I think it's just a really cool collaboration.

I'd like to ask a few fun questions. Barring the last 18 months, do you have any routines that you do when you're on the road to keep yourself grounded or keep your sanity—you know, stay mentally and physically healthy?

Well, the road becomes one big, long routine. It's, you know, workdays on and workdays off, days on and days off. When you travel, you learn to be real light on your—you don't want to carry a lot of stuff with you. You learn that 'Okay, I only need two or three pairs of pants.' Really, that's all. And to stay healthy is really the most important thing. So watch what I eat and then I'm exercising. Sleep and drink lots of water, especially here in Colorado. It's dry here, but lots and lots of water. So those things taking care of my body because I consider myself like an athlete. It's just so important to stay healthy body-wise and mind. And so those things, you know, walking, getting out—my wife travels with me, and that's probably the best medicine that I have.

It's nice to have that support and to, you know, have that familiarity with you. So, if you didn't do music, what do you think you would've ended up doing in your life—like in a different parallel universe?

That's hard to imagine because I'm really not skilled at anything else but music (laughs). My father was a high school teacher, and I always imagined that if I didn't do music, I would still like to stand in front of a classroom and teach and exchange that. So I probably would have been like a teacher or something.

That's awesome. I could see that. And now, with the upcoming guitar camp, you get to kind of

do both. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell our readers about any upcoming news or about music/life tips?

Well, I'm really loving being on the road. It's just really where I do my best work. I would say just in these times, health is really important. I think we're seeing how important health is. Again, health begins in the body and in the mind; if your mind is troubled, your body's going to be troubled. So find those things that work. We have more control over our minds than we know; we really can be in charge of our thoughts, and there's a lot of things out there to help you. Meditation is one thing. There's a great app called Headspace that's just really easy. A lot of people think meditation is really hard, but it's really easy. It's just about calming—giving your mind a break for like 10 minutes can do amazing wonders to your whole body. Especially in this kind of crazy time, it's good to get away from the chatter and the conflict and settle the mind—and listening to music is a great way to do that.

I think that's really important because there was an era that was not that long ago, that people didn't really want to talk about mental health, especially people who are, like yourself, in the spotlight. It was like a taboo subject, but I think with the way the world is today, having people who have so much popularity like yourself, hearing them talk about it, takes that stigma away from it being some bad thing. We all have brains; we all have bodies; we have to take care of these. In this day and age, it's good that people are connecting physical health with mental health, so I appreciate you mentioning this.

Absolutely. It's important to each and every one of us; nobody's perfect. You might go on Facebook and think there's some perfect people on there, but there's not—they really aren't. Each and every one of us has our own connection with our hearts and minds, and we're all growing. This is the life school, so we're supposed to be learning.

And I think too, it's hard in the music industry because you have this idea that if you get to be a certain age, or if you're like, 'if I don't have a record deal by 19, like, oh my god, my life is over. I'm not going to have a career.' You have to look this way; you have to weigh this much. You have to fit into these parameters that I don't know still exist as strictly as they did in the music industry in decades prior. I grew up in the early to mid-eighties, and it was a whole different ball game. How have you seen that change over the 40 years that you've been in the industry?

In the eighties and nineties, the music industry was run by the record companies and the radio stations. There was a lot of money being made,

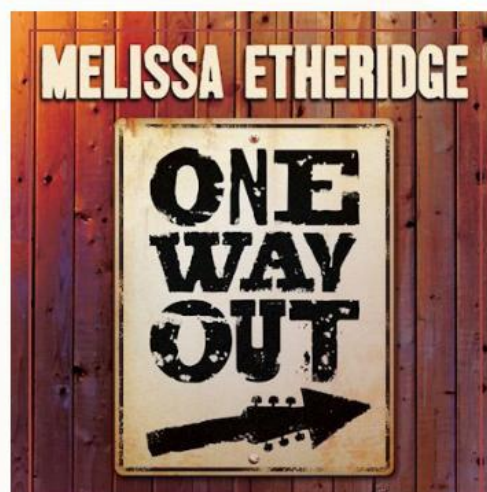
and they were really focused on the video channels and what you looked like. It was very difficult and, and it was a little crazy-making. Nowadays, there are so many ways to reach people—on the internet and on social media—to get your music out there. Those guardians of the gates that used to be there telling you that you weren't tall enough or thin enough or whatever, they don't exist anymore—they might be in our heads. If you've got good music, you can get it out there, and you can make it be heard.

The way technology has evolved, you don't necessarily even need a recording studio.

When the pandemic came, I changed my garage into a streaming studio, so it's not necessarily a recording studio, but we have done recording in it. I'm actually thinking about modifying it and really getting it to be more of a studio studio, so yeah, I do.

Thank you so much for everything that you've done for people in music, and not just women in music. Your songs connect with everyone. Best of luck with all your tours and the camp.

Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that so much that I'm looking forward to it all, and come on, gals, keep rocking! 🎸



One Way Out Tracklist:

"One Way Out"
 "As Cool As You Try"
 "I'm No Angel Myself"
 "For The Last Time"
 "Save Myself"
 "That Would Be Me"
 "Wild Wild Wild"
 "You Have No Idea" (Live)*
 "Life Goes On" (Live)*

*Recorded at the Roxy in Los Angeles in 2002



BERIT HAGEN

THE GUITAR VIRTUOSO AKA THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

THE NORWEGIAN SHRED-GREAT ON OVERCOMING A DEBILITATING ILLNESS, HER CLEAN-TONED CLASSICAL DIRECTION, AND RECORDING WITH DIGITAL EFFECTS.

BY Caroline Paone



Photos by Aina Elisabeth Hilltout

"I went to see a surgeon, and he told me, 'either you can quit (guitar), or you need to start building strength,' and I'm thinking, I've been playing for so many years. I have to build strength because I can't give this up. That would be really sad."

Strength prevailed for the self-taught guitar virtuoso, who goes by the moniker **Commander-In-Chief**. She survived a parasitic infection and shoulder injury. How? With lots of support and focusing on her mental and physical health. The year of the pandemic was a banner one for Hagen. While some were lamenting lockdown, the 7-string guitarist dove into her online business as if it were one "long launch and recording session."

Clearly excited about life—her's has gone from one extreme to the other: metal solos to classical sonnets and piano. The word *toccata* aptly mirrors Hagen. In classical music, it means: an instrumental work designed to display the technical prowess and proficiency of a performer. Emphasis on the technical, but decked out in stylish military outfits, the **Commander-In-Chief** is a full-on brand of maestro music. She once marched a heavy metal beat, but her spirit gravitated towards sweeter symphonic sounds. On landmark *2 Guitars: The Classical Crossover Album*, Hagen soared over classical-meets-metal pieces. Later, her ambitious duo albums *Berit, Vol. 1* and *Berit, Vol. 2*, stunningly weaved acoustic pieces, showcased guitar mastery, and operatic vocals on classically-tinged contemporary.

As 2021 unfolds, the **Commander-In-Chief** has a classical state of mind. Her latest recording, *The Virtuoso*, is a bath of beautiful music with delightfully fierce guitar playing. "Hungarian Dance No. 5" sways, note-for-note like never before, as well as more favorites a la the Chief. An operatic-trained singer, she's also working on a professional vocal course. But her inner metal still appears once in a while like the recent Viking-inspired voyage in harmonics "Nordic Barbarian"—an admittedly fun nod to her Nordic heritage.

"Music is music: I have a very open mind about it. And I think that gives you a healthy relationship with it—when you can appreciate all of its various templates, genres, and interpretations," says Hagen while digital-detoxing in Italy. She made time to discuss lifestyle, music, as well as the topic of mental wellness, particularly among musicians.

You've found a middle ground between classical, metal, and singer-songwriter. Do you have a musical balance?

Oh, wow! Thank you. Yeah, I do. It's quite nice to do different genres. When I first started out, I felt that I would only be doing heavy metal because I was a really die-hard metalhead. I thought that would just be a pretty straight thing and the only thing I would be doing. I think around 2013, that's when all of a sudden, I started venturing off into different sections, and it was a bit surprising to me, but actually, I'm very happy with where it has taken me.

How did you get into metal?

I've always been a music fan, but once I started playing the electric guitar, then the technical aspect really appealed to me. I started playing heavier, but I wasn't satisfied. I felt like there were so many people talking about Metallica, and I wanted to see if there was something else out there. That's when I got into extreme metal and discovered this whole universe because I started reading metal magazines. But I was coming more from the perspective of a guitar player and also a creative person. I felt I needed more influences. When I discovered extreme metal, like death metal and black metal, I thought, this is great, because now there's more diversity with all the different types of metal bands. For me, this was a very interesting exploration.

For a while, you embraced a classical meets metal style, so there have been comparisons to Yngwie Malmsteen. How do you feel about that?

Yeah. I actually think it's cool because it says to me that people are listening to the guitar thing and listening to the style because it's classical, but I mean, his sound has more distorted guitars, and I have a cleaner tone. I've been collaborating; actually, I've done two collaborations so far with classical guitar (with Thomas Valeur; Craig Ogden). Then I collaborated with composer John Haywood—like movie soundtracks, clean guitar, and rewriting classical. I had been experimenting with classical music, but I think that Yngwie Malmsteen and myself have that in common—it's classical but different variations, obviously. I think it's a cool comparison. I wouldn't mind, really.

Classical music has a cleaner tone.

Yeah, all the classical has a clean sound—all of it. I think that's nice because it just makes it prettier, and you get more dynamics in there as well. At first, my plan was to actually use the tone I had when I played heavy metal music, but once I turned the distortion on, I didn't feel like it was good for the piece that I was working on at the time. I wanted the piece to sound really nice and beautiful, essentially, because to me, that's classical.

On *The Virtuoso*, once again, you have stellar collaborations; tell me more.

That's the latest one that we did; it's a recording with classical music: me playing classical on electric guitar. We added the three vocal tracks that were taken from the two acoustic albums, but it is mainly the guitar. I collaborated with John Haywood on two of the tracks; he's worked a lot with David Garrett—a super violin composer. I worked with him on a couple of tracks where you have this combination of me playing with the clean guitar tone, and what he then brought to the table was his movie soundtrack-style because he's a composer and arranger. We rewrote "Moonlight Sonata" and cut that tune together. That was quite nice and really cool. I would like to make a full album with him. Then I also included the songs that I collaborated on with Craig Ogden, the classical guitar player. Then you have the three songs from the acoustic albums that are vocal-based to showcase the voice.

On *Berit*, Vol. 2, "The Manager" is a dynamic song on many levels. What effect are you using on that?

Actually, what I did on that song is I used PreSonus' Ampire. I'm not using a real amp. I always use Studio One when I'm recording. That's the DAW from PreSonus, their digital audio workstation, and I decided to check them out. I wanted something to go along with the song lyrics and change the guitar solo and make it cooler. Then I was thinking, 'Okay, I need to make it sound a bit wacky.' I wanted to use the tremolo bar, but you can't really do that because you don't get that type of sound (sings high). I was thinking, maybe I can get that effect by just using PreSonus' Ampire inside Studio One. That was actually the old version, and now they updated it and made it even better. But I like it because I got the audio effect that I really wanted.

Have you used pedals at all in the past?

Yeah. When I was playing metal and doing solos, I always used an MXR Carbon Copy Analog Delay. However, for the last few years, I've been using whatever I get pre-installed in Studio One. I love this change for myself because I'm getting good with this revolution in technology. It's more like PreSonus and Studio One and the guitar and myself. In terms of effects, I used the PreSonus studio on *Berit*, Vol. 1. That was the old interface that they had, and they don't make that anymore. I would have the direct input into Studio One and add reverb, beats, delay, analog delay, and pro-EQ, all of it digital. That was my sound for both albums: *Berit*, Vol. 1 and *Berit*, Vol. 2. That's it. That was like my rig (laughs). That's pretty much the style.

There are so many options in technology.

I'm actually very happy with how it has improved because when I was in high school, I remember my very first recording interface was a PreSonus product, funny enough, but it came with a recording program, and I remember using digital amps in there, and those digital amps were horrible—the digital amp world

was really not amazing then, but it has improved tremendously.

Have you been surprised by something while recording?

I am surprised all the time because I listen for input and try and listen to what other people are saying. Sometimes it can be kind of brutal, but then I go, 'Hmm?' And I'll try it out. It's always a bit of an experiment because, like with "The Manager," that was actually how the song came to be. I was working on this song, and Elizabeth, my manager, told me that she really didn't like the lyrics, the structure, and it became obvious she didn't like the song. In response to that, because we were working on the album and working every day for quite a while, I'm thinking, 'Okay. So, you don't like this. You don't like that. You don't like the key, the lyrics. So, you know what? I'm going to take the whole thing and rewrite it and call it "The Manager," and I'm going to write about this process where I'm trying things, and you're telling me that you don't like them.' It actually became a collaboration sort of a thing where you're getting feedback as a creative artist, and then you're responding, so it becomes a conversation, and that's what the song is about.

Let's talk guitars. Are you still playing an Ibanez 7-string?

Yeah, I'm currently using two Ibanez guitars, a 7-string acoustic AEL207E-TKS, and a 7-string electric S5527 Prestige—that's the current (electric) Ibanez I'm using, and I changed it back in 2014 because the 7-string I was playing gave me some problems. It was a bit too heavy, and the neck was a bit too thick. I needed something lighter, faster, and easier for me to play because back then, that was the year I did the big classical album; basically, I needed to have a tool to get the job done. So I've been playing that Ibanez guitar since then, and I love it. It's a really good guitar with a beautiful tone.

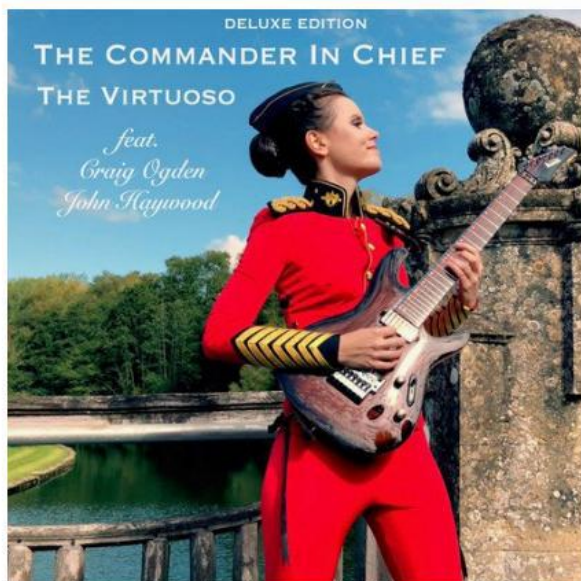
Did Ibanez customize anything for you?

No, they wanted to actually create a customized guitar, but I had a deadline with the studio, and the recording was quite expensive. I was thinking about the hours and how much I could get into each space. I was like, 'Please send me a really good guitar. It doesn't have to be custom.' I wasn't interested in waiting for that because I had part of my program with exercising and practicing, so that was on my mind. I customized it a bit with new pickups because I have an EMG endorsement, so I set it up with EMG 57-7H and 66-7H pickups. That's the only alteration.

Check out PreSonus Ampire HD Pack Demo—"Nordic Barbarian" from *The Commander in Chief* with her Ibanez 7-string and cool Neon DR Strings.

What song are you playing in PreSonus' Ampire Demo?

I created the demo video for my song "Nordic Barbarian," where I'm showcasing the latest Ampire program and the different digital amps that they have because you get a whole color of different tones. What you hear in there is a Mesa Boogie kind of amp, which is really beautiful, and I realized instantly that it is just as good as actually using a real amp. For me, that was quite eye-opening. And then you can hear me using a Vox-



type amp in there, which is really beautiful, and I think it's very nice. Very beautiful round, nice tone, nice clean tone.

During COVID, we realized musicians were really affected, not being able to play live. I saw you did an online video with some outstanding female players. How did you adapt during the pandemic? Yeah, I did. Did you see that? That was so cool. What I did during COVID was *finally*, I was able to work full hours again and be productive like I used to be before I got sick. For me, 2020 was like, 'Yes! Finally, I can be really productive,' and then, boom, all of a sudden, COVID came out of nowhere. Because things had been so bad for me with my health and income and all those things, my focus was on my online business, which is putting out new releases and showing up for work, basically. Throughout that whole period with lockdowns in the UK, I was glued to my computer. I was working every day on finishing *Berit*, Vol. 2, practicing and working on the next thing, *The Virtuoso*.

It was actually like the whole thing was one big launch and one long recording session. For me, that was really important because I'd been gone for a while and hadn't been that active because of all the health issues. So, 2020 was the year when I came back to things, believe it or not. It was important because it's a bad thing for anyone to get sick and ill, but for musicians, it's particularly hard, I think, because you need to be out there. You need to promote yourself and put out the new release and your single and all those types of things; not being active is not good. I was working and working throughout the lockdown, and it's a good thing because, at a certain point, virtually everyone was working from home, but because I was selling music online, I kept on going. You know what I mean? That was a good thing.

You already had a good online business.

Yes, I was already plugged into that whole online spirit because that's how we built up the Commander In Chief band. We built everything up, or Elizabeth, my manager, built everything up with Myspace at first and then Facebook, YouTube, and all that stuff. We always had online payment methods—that became a very good thing during COVID, definitely. I think there's a lot of good things that have happened as a result of the Internet, social media, and technology. It's a good thing if that continues; it's like, 'Yes! Let's keep that rolling.'—definitely, yeah.

What projects are you working on?

We have a couple of singles coming up, which is very exciting. I don't want to tease too much because it is a bit of a surprise what's coming next. But once again, I'm working with John Haywood, who has sold loads and loads of records with David

Garrett. He's a very professional producer, and he said a lot of nice things about working with me, and I love working with him. It's great. They're two things that are coming up. I'm not quite sure when they will be released, but I'm definitely looking forward to that.

I'm also about to launch a vocal course together with my coach/manager, who is also my mom, Elizabeth. She is a concert-trained opera singer in the bel canto technique and was trained in Italy by Aida Meneghelli (who is a soprano and actually had the same teacher as Maria Callas). My mom trained me; I can sing those high notes and stuff because of her training. The course goes through the method and everything. That's pretty exciting because I know people want advice about their voice and breathing and things like that. There's so much material, and it's hard to learn how to sing, right? But it's cool there's no course like it because it's the method you would use if you want to sing like an old-fashioned opera singer. It's the whole classical thing, very specialized and comprehensive, but it's a high-quality course.

Before COVID you had some health challenges. It really sidelined you. How did you get back to playing?

Well, first I have to thank my family because they were amazing, and I don't know what I would have done without them. It was definitely a proper lesson in the enormous importance of family and people in your life, friendships, and those types of things. But it was a very hard road back because it was a parasite infection, and that was a full-body, horrible thing.

I didn't get any help in England, which was difficult to deal with, and on top of that, I got a shoulder injury. So, it was like everything at the same time, but I was able to come back very slowly with ups and downs, but in terms of guitar playing, what happened was I went to see a surgeon, and he told me, 'either you can quit, or you need to start building strength,' and I'm thinking, 'Okay, I have been playing for so many years. I have to build strength because I can't give this up. That would be really sad.'

It was very difficult because I had to do certain exercises for my arm, and at first, it was just lifting the arm because I had impaired movements. I remember the day when I finally managed to lift it all the way up to my head. I was like, 'Yes! Big breakthrough.' It was really a tiny step. I was always focused on my health, but I became very focused on building strength like lifting weights; I mean, I've never done anything like that in my whole life. I always thought that's a "guy thing," but as a female guitar player, you really need to build your upper body strength, and that is such a must. I didn't realize that until my injury. I would do cardio and things, but you really need to build upper body strength. That became a total fixation,

and certainly, I got stronger. Finally, in 2020, I got back into a normal work routine.

Mentality draining and challenging, too?

It was a very slow road to recovery, actually. I'm surprised that I was mentally able to keep on going, but that's why I'm bringing up family as well because I felt like I lost everything, but I was able to then not lose hope, which is very important. Another important thing is, I was reading a lot about musicians having and dealing with depression and mental issues. To my great surprise, I read that around 60 percent or 70 percent of musicians, according to a survey in the UK, will have a mental breakdown at one point, which is horrible. That's really tough, but in order to keep myself focused, I was like, 'Okay, I don't want to be in the 60 or 70 percent.' I did not want to join that club. I wanted to keep myself afloat.

It was definitely a tough thing, but I was able to get through it, and I think a lot of it has to do with focusing on other things. I would focus mentally. I would focus on signing petitions, and when I could finally stand on my legs, I would do fundraisers even though I had no money because I couldn't work or anything. I would do fundraisers where I was not paid. I would do charity. I mean, it was so crazy because 'Okay, your health is horrible. You have no money.' But you know what? I want to go and volunteer my time. That actually kept me going. I think my tip, if things get really bad, is to do a fundraiser or charity, just something for someone else because, believe it or not, that really kept me up.

That really turned things around for you.

Yeah, it did because I felt, it was funny, when I could finally stand up on my legs, one of the things I did is that I volunteered my time at the local village fair, and it was hilarious because people were so happy to see me because it's very hard to find volunteers—nobody wants to help out. It's so hard to get volunteers for anything. I'm thinking, 'Wow! This is cool.' I raised money for a local community center, a couple of churches that were falling apart, and I also did a free performance for a local women's charity. Those were things that I did, and it was nice to give when I was really low, and that kept me going mentally.

What's your next step?

Personally, I would like to share how I managed to get through the illness and the long period it took me to recover so that other people who go through similar situations can do the same thing. It's not just music anymore. Now, I'm also thinking about creating courses and educational materials so other people can get help because I have a lot of experience. I've been doing this for many years now, and I think what I realized is I can point people in a lot of different directions when it comes to what to do, what not to do, and things like that. —

Seymour Duncan SSL Vintage Staggered Strat Pickups

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produces that vintage sound. The three pickup combo includes a standard wound neck and bridge pickup, with a reverse-wound middle pickup for noise cancellation. The pickups are dipped in Seymour Duncan's very own wax formula for a noise-free performance.

If you are looking for a period-correct reproduction of that '50s Strat sound, these are worth checking out. Available for right and left-handed Strats, as well as 6 and 7 string guitars.



For more information and pricing, check out seymourduncan.com.



Photo by Moe Igarashi

TAKE FIVE WITH AVIANA AND THE PURE ROOT

various strong matriarchs. And so, some years later, I decided to use it as my artist name.

Aviana And The Pure Root is also inspired by my love for Prince and the Revolution and having that "and" in the name. Its meaning to me has continued to evolve over time, and I feel like Aviana is so much more powerful of a person with the Pure Root behind her. Aviana is whimsical, a free bird, really goofy, actually lol, and at times very much so up in the clouds, completely ungrounded. The Pure Root is my ancestors, my roots, my connection to Africa and the earth, the beginning of creation, deep wisdom, and cosmic phenomenon—I'm coming with that power. There's definitely a duality going on there."

Not only inspired by Prince, but Aviana also adds to her list of artists that inspired her: Michael Jackson, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Earth, Wind & Fire, Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Smashing Pumpkins, Billie Holiday, Alice Coltrane, Miles Davis, Kid Cudi, and other rock bands from the '60s, '90s, and early 2000s. Today, Aviana is listening to "Willow Smith, Kelsey Lu, Adeline, Esperanza Spalding, Chronixx, WizKid, Masego, Skip Marley, a lot of jazz and blues from the '60s and earlier, a lot of the young reggae artists who are tapping back into roots reggae, and a whole lot of afrobeats. I totally dig it."

Aviana And The Pure Root released her first EP in 2020, titled *PROPHECY*, a five-track EP that she wrote and co-produced. "It swirls in and out of my drifting states of consciousness by experiences with spirituality and my beliefs about Africans of the Diaspora," she tells us. Adding, "I like to label my music as 'rebel music' as a nod to Bob Marley and my admiration for his commitment to being a

messenger and me sharing similar sentiments as him within my own understandings about things.

When it comes to advice for aspiring musicians, Aviana says, "Believe in your art and be an artist with integrity. We live in a really crazy world with a lot going on right now, and we need more artists to have intention behind what they do. We need more artists to create work that will help heal this world."

I read in a previous interview that you suffered from low self-esteem and stage fright. How did you overcome those obstacles?

You know what, they were both confronted at different times, and I wouldn't necessarily say that I've overcome them fully. But it's a daily choice and pursuit to be my truest self, which I believe is really a person that, at her core, is not afraid of her own power and is grounded in the greatness of all that she is and has to offer the world. I think it's more so a question of when I consciously began to start working through those things. I would say for the self-esteem thing; it really had a lot to do with my introduction to Kid Cudi when I was fresh out of undergrad at Howard University in 2008. I felt like my whole life up until that point was trying to be this person that I thought everybody wanted me to be, because the real me I figured was just too strange, too different, and just didn't fit in. All I cared about was fitting in so I wouldn't be teased like I did in my younger years. Kid Cudi's music gave me the courage to be my own person and to embrace being different. I fell in love with my own company, my own sense of style and personality, and said f*ck what everyone else thinks. It's still a struggle sometimes, but I have the ability to come back home to myself when I get too far out there. The stage fright thing came after I finished NYU for grad school and went traipsing off to Europe to find myself. I all of a sudden had this brilliant idea to pick up music and sing again (which was something my mom always forced me to do as a child, and I hated it because of the low self-esteem). I sang at little open mic nights, cabarets, and such around Paris, and

LA-based musician **Aviana** began her musical journey at an early age, largely due to her mother's encouragement; however, the young artist suffered from low self-esteem and stage fright—something she still confronts to this day. After being gifted a guitar by a family member when she was in high school, it wasn't until Aviana was in her twenties that she would take the guitar seriously.

Taking on the stage name **Aviana And The Pure Root**, she tells us the name came from when "I was backpacking in Europe, and a guy I was introduced to in Paris randomly called me The Pure Root. He was adamant about this title, wouldn't really explain it, but insisted that I was indeed The Pure Root, lol. It really resonated with me, though, and I started Googling the phrase, and a lot of stuff popped up in regard to healers, medicine women, and

it was absolutely horrible. My voice would tremble really bad, and I would break out in these sweats because I was so nervous. Eventually, I came back to the States and kept doing it. Making myself continuously get back on stage despite how nauseating it was truly helped free me from the stage fright. So yeah, repetition.

You have some family members that have a musical background. Would you please share with us a little bit about your upbringing and how you got introduced to music and performing?

I actually have a lot of cousins who played different instruments and were in bands but never knew of it until I got older and started to do my own music. It really blew my mind. I did, however, grow up knowing two of my uncles' love for music; my Uncle Charles, who was in various singing groups when he was younger (he was a huge Temptations fan), and my Great Uncle Sonny, who others outside of the family would just know him as Joseph Hull. He's a classical music composer and pianist and is talented beyond words. My mom also always had a thing for singing too and would do little talent shows with her cousins when she was younger.

I was first introduced to music and performing when I was around six years old. I did a lot of dance recitals, pageants, and school talent shows where my mother would force me to sing and dance. I was also in my church choir. My mom just forced me to sing all the time at different events, which I hated back then, but I'm so grateful for it now because it was my foundation. I played violin until sixth grade and took piano lessons sometimes with my Uncle Sonny. Everything that I was made to do as a child that I resented, I'm now revisiting in adulthood, realizing that it was my purpose all along; I was just terrified of it. I thought I had a terrible voice and that I just looked awkward and embarrassing on stage. I always envisioned that the entire room was laughing at me.

When did the guitar come into the picture, and what gear are you currently using and why?

My Uncle Charles got me my first guitar in

high school, I believe. It was a red and white Fender Squier, and he got me a Crate amp a year later. I was really into Prince growing up, and I wanted to be just like him and play "Purple Rain." I also was super inspired by the intro to "Love and Happiness" by Al Green. I never really learned how to play guitar until I was an adult, though, because I lacked the self-discipline to teach myself and never could afford a good teacher. I carried that guitar around with me all the time and even took it with me when I moved to the East Coast. It wasn't until 2015 that I really started to play. I had moved back to St. Louis, and a guy I was working with in the military historical archives volunteered to teach me a few things. He believed in me and was a mentor to me in the beginning. I was 28. I have a few guitars, but right now, I mainly play on a limited edition of the Fender Squier Bullet Strat that I got while working at Guitar Center when I first moved to LA. It's a really good version with a super smooth fretboard. I recently just scored the amp of my dreams, a Fender Limited Edition Blues Junior IV tube amp in sonic blue. I've wanted a Fender amp for so long because of its buttery and smooth, clean sound, so it's really a dream come true.

Let's talk about your EP, PROPHECY, which you wrote and self-produced and released late in 2020. You can hear a little Bob Marley in the opening track, "Wings of an Eagle." What was the inspiration behind the EP and the songwriting and recording process? Is there any particular song or lyric that speaks to you?

Well, Bob Marley is absolutely one of my biggest inspirations in pretty much everything that I do, both music and otherwise. His mission-driven work in regard to his beliefs in the unification of Africa, Black empowerment, and the idea of being connected with nature and spirituality is very similar to my own personal beliefs. And all of that goes into the music that I create. For the EP, in particular, I really wanted to create my own sound, so I really worked hard to compose the instrumentation and to really see my ideas through. I played guitar on every song, and I did a lot of songs in 432 Hertz, which is a more elevated and healing frequency for music and aligns more with the natural rhythm of the universe.

I couldn't have pulled it off without the help of my amazing Engineer Timothy McGimpsey who helped me co-produce the project. He played bass and piano on all of my tracks and helped me bring my

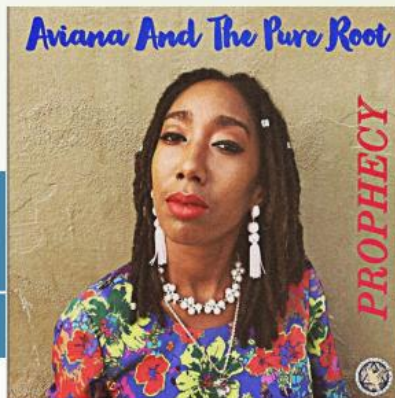
compositions and ideas to life. As an artist, a lot of my ideas are Afrofuturistic, and so common themes throughout the EP are the idea of understanding our Great Ancient Past as Africans and using that to create new present and future experiences that reflect more of our divinity, magic, and power. PROPHECY has to do with spiritual leaders, teachers, and sages of the past and present who have spoken of the times that we are in now; different revelations about the world and especially the African diaspora that are coming to pass now. It also personally has to do with elders and other important people who have prophesied certain things about my own life and my purpose as a messenger by way of a lot of different vehicles, music being one of them.

One of my favorite lines comes from the last song on my EP, "I AM," which says, "Talking to myself, I am my wishing well." I think it's really profound because it speaks to the power of personal affirmation and our own capacity to manifest the lives that we desire. You have to be careful of the words that you tell your inner self.

What do you hope fans and listeners take away from your music?

I just hope to open people's minds to something new but at the same time something that's not new at all. It's ancient. It's something in our genes, our DNA, and our history that I feel so many of us have forgotten but are increasingly tapping back into. I'm talking about nature; I'm talking about spirituality; I'm talking about anti-colonialism; I'm talking about the fact that this entire planet was birthed from the womb of a Black woman, and that's the kind of magic and power that needs to be tapped into. That's the real key to our freedom. And with music being as powerful and impactful as it is, it's important that we have music based on these messages in the world right now to support our collective awakening—and to support the empowerment of Black people. I want my music to be a source of elevation.

On upcoming plans, Aviana tells us that she is currently "manifesting a world tour, opening for some of my favorite artists, lots of big festivals, more music videos, writing music for TV, and film and putting out my next EP. I also recently started writing for other artists and lending my guitar skills to people's tracks, so I would love to continue doing that in a major way and even write for much bigger artists. I definitely wanna do some big collaborations. Oh, and getting better at lead guitar! 🎸—



PROPHECY Tracklist:

1. Wings of an Eagle
2. Children of the Dark
3. Good Morning, Come Noon
4. Rose Petals
5. I AM

ERIKA WENNERSTROM

Panic, Guilty Pleasures, and *A Beautiful Life*

BY Steve McKinley



Photo by Aaron Conway

Erika Wennerstrom of the *Heartless Bastards* recently spoke with *Guitar Girl Magazine* over the phone about their new album, *A Beautiful Life*. "It was everything I'd hoped it would be and everything I was trying for" is how she describes how the album turned out. You could feel the heat from the supernova of pride welling up from inside her as she beamed about the band, saying, "They're all extremely talented." The Ohio-bred, Austin-based singer-songwriter and frontwoman for *Heartless Bastards* exudes excitement about the release of *A Beautiful Life*, talking about its kaleidoscope mixture of Celtic, French, hip-hop, and strings to create *A Beautiful Life*.

A Beautiful Life was co-produced by Wennerstrom and Kevin Ratterman (Strand Of Oaks, Jim James, White Reaper). Joining Wennerstrom on this project are guitarist Lauren Gurgio (Okkervil River), drummer Gregory Clifford (White Denim), multi-instrumentalist Jesse Chandler (Mercury Rev, Midlake), keyboardist Bo Koster (My Morning Jacket), guitarist David Pulkingham (Patty Griffin), and longtime *Heartless Bastards* bassist Jesse Ebaugh.

What inspired you to create *A Beautiful Life*?

It came right from my experiences.

Would you say that *A Beautiful Life* is a continuation of your previous albums or its own entity?

Well, when you say continuation, I would say that me writing them [the songs on *A Beautiful Life*] certainly makes sense. Of course, it's all

connected. I would say it's more a continuation of *Sweet Unknown*. They're all each one in a way just to continue like another chapter is a good way to think about it.

With *A Beautiful Life*, you envision a world that could use a little help. How would you say that the album does that?

This idea of how we work at things if whether it's the glass half empty or half full? The song itself and a lot of the album is a constant reminder to stop to take stock and be grateful for what we have. In this day, we're just constantly advertised to and sold this idea that we need things that we don't know. It's a reminder to be secure with ourselves. It reminds us that money doesn't create happiness. It makes things easier, but with things that we want in our life, whatever it is—goals—we're never exactly where we want to be because then we wouldn't have anywhere to go. If you reach a goal or something, then you instantly create a new one. I've been working more on trying to work on the inner self rather than the sort of outer material world. With the planets and the environment, if we remind ourselves of that and how much we really need them, then maybe it will be better. I get the messages out there, and they take their own life.

Did *A Beautiful Life* turn out as you originally envisioned?

You know, it really did! It was everything I'd hoped it would be and everything I was trying for. We were able to create something that I was so grateful for. Everyone on

their own understood what I was trying to say. One of the surprises I will say is that some of these things actually managed to come together; I had a lot of trust working with all of the musicians. Like on the songs, we added layers of strings or tried to make random noises and researched the Persian rhythms. There's this Persian drum, and I went down this rabbit hole of looking up Persian rhythms because when I was younger, I had it in my head from Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* with the Siamese cats. There was something about it, certain ways of rhythm. There's a lot of inner child on the album. I really, really love it! There is this sense of elation that we managed to pull off.

Admittedly a loaded question, but what's your favorite song on the album?

It really depends on the moment and the day. Maybe a tie between "A Beautiful Life" and "Revolution" because there's some songs that just you connect with. It's funny, like when I listen to music sometimes, I think maybe I don't care for it, and then I hear it later, and it just hits me in just the right way. If I ever happen to listen back to my own material, if I'm in a certain mood sometimes, I might question that song or something, but then later, I'm really proud of it. I realize it just really depends on my mood.

“
I just can't
sit on the
couch and
stare at
a wall.”

"All I have is now, like right now."

What does it mean to you to have a beautiful life?

I think it's really about what I have in my life. So, I'm thankful for sure. I certainly have things that I would like to work towards in my life, whether it be career goals or maybe a little extra financial comfort or this or that. Right now, that won't fully be what happiness is. It's an appreciation for what I already have. I think I do have a beautiful life. I'm writing these songs, I'm doing what I've always wanted to do, and I've met so many amazing people—this whole touring and other musician things. So many good laughs and crazy times. It's certainly been challenging, for sure. I see now why it's awesome. Even the tough stuff—it's like that saying that there are no mistakes, only lessons.

When you perform *A Beautiful Life* live, how does it differ from the recording?

For one thing, in the studio, we will do the basic tracking and add as we go, like overdubs and things. For some of these songs, I actually had to figure out how to even play them live! I was like, 'is this song even going to work?' It actually came together very well, though. We have elements of live sounds along with some samples. We're just playing to the truth. We're adding a lot of that for those percussion elements—I bought all kinds of percussion instruments. It's just cool. I sampled hip-hop styles, and I've never done anything like that before, but I thought it would be cool to have real drums and the hip-hop beat drum because that's a real distinctive sound. I wanted to keep that on the recording, so we're doing both. I always think double drums are kind of cool, and it can be a machine and a human rather than two humans. We really made songs that have extra layers and strings. We really try to capture all the elements and not so much to try to one hundred percent mimic what's on the album. We really do manage to keep a lot of those elements when performing live, and I think I've got a great, great band.

How did this latest iteration of *Heartless Bastards* come to be?

Ah, well, you know, it's interesting. As far as the record itself, I just focused on making the best record I could. At the time, I asked Gregory Clifford, he was playing drums in *White Denim*, but he ended that sometime in the last year. He left that project, so I ended up asking him to join the live band. I wouldn't ask somebody if they were already in a band because it doesn't feel appropriate. It just

so happened to work out. The team, I've seen them all play in various projects, and I think they're all extremely talented.

"There's a lot of inner child on the album."

How has this time of COVID changed your perspective?

One of the silver linings is to be more present. I think when COVID first hit, I had so much worry for everybody and everything—just sort of seeing where things could potentially go. To be honest, a lot of my worries actually happened, but the reality was, it didn't do me any good to worry because it's not good to worry about things you don't have control of. Sometimes worry is also a wasted effort. To be honest, towards the end of March, I just ended up with this message that all I have is now. In that moment, I was like, 'all I have is now, like right now, this is what I have!' It's like I was kind of looking at it in that moment. I was looking at it the wrong way, but when I sort of snapped out of it, it reflected a really important message for me as a reminder. With COVID, I was just really trying to do the best I could do today with the hands that I've been dealt. So, yeah, it absolutely changed, and I'm present in the *right now*.

What's something about you that people are surprised about?

Oh man, I'm really introverted, and I have a very difficult time answering spontaneous questions. I have like major panic after interviews. Some are fine; maybe panic is the wrong word. I'm releasing my seventh album, and I've been doing interviews since like 2003 or 4. I've never felt fully used to it—it's a little awkward, but it is what it is.

What's your favorite Disney movie?

Oh gosh, I don't know if I have a favorite, but when I was babysitting when I was an older child, I've probably seen *The Little Mermaid* like 20 times and *The Lion King*. Also, *The Lion King* musical. My ex-boyfriend's parents took us. The musical notes were so cool. There is actually a lot more going on than people realize. So, you know, it's hard to pick a favorite as there are some that surprise you after the fact.

Guilty pleasure of yours?

Wow, I love cannolis! Lately, I get myself a fresh cannoli, and that's a winner, yeah. They are there to make you feel better.

What are you currently reading?

It's called *Killers of the Flower Moon*. They're actually making a movie of it right now. It's weird, but I've never known people in Hollywood or that kind of stuff, but I know like seven people working on this film!

Outside of musical pursuits, what do you find yourself doing?

Hiking is like my big thing. Although maybe the truth is that I don't believe I ever shut off the creative because I know your subconscious is always working. Sometimes I just let go; I just can't sit on the couch and stare at a wall. But if I'm not writing something, that's okay because I have a really awesome time with nature for myself to reconnect. —



A Beautiful Life Tracklist:

1. Revolution
2. How Low
3. You Never Know
4. When I Was Younger
5. The River
6. Photograph
7. A Beautiful Life
8. Dust
9. Went Around The World
10. It Doesn't Matter Now
11. The Thinker

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Samantha Fish

Songwriting is Storytelling

BY Vanessa Izabella and Cece Gair

Samantha Fish is known as a contemporary blues guitarist, but she is so much more than that. Her seventh album, *Faster*, releases September 10 and speaks to a new era for the Kansas City-born musician. In her interview, Fish talks about everything going on in her life right now, which is quite busy. She gets into everything from the new album, collaborations, guitars, an upcoming tour, and her experience as a woman in this industry.

Faster was written largely during the pandemic. We asked her about this process and how her collaboration with Martin Kierszenbaum, who produced the record, came about. "When [the COVID-19 pandemic] started, and we realized we were going to have loads and loads of time off, I just started writing. It was the first time I've ever started writing a record when I wasn't on the road a hundred percent of the time. So, it wasn't like I was just trying to find time between shows and the hotel rooms to write songs."

On her collaboration with Kierszenbaum, Fish notes that it was born out of a friendship. "He reached out to me in early summertime, and we just cultivated a friendship. We started talking about music, what my goals were, and what he wanted to do. We became friends, and we just decided at some point, like,

hey, let's do this next record together. So, we started co-writing. Honestly, I feel like this record was like it sounds. It's so much fun. It really is. I was writing from a place of where I wanted to be when at the time, I wasn't feeling very empowered or confident or energetic about things."

As described by Fish, fans can anticipate this album to have a very distinct sound. "I feel like the album has a real positive, just rock and roll, I don't-give-a-crap kind of feeling to it. It's probably my most edgy album, but also my most energetic and self-confident sounding album. I attribute a lot of that to working with Martin—he's a real positive spirit and just got a great energy and a great vibe to work with. We had a lot of fun writing these songs."

In talking about the development of her new album, we asked Fish about her approach to songwriting. "[my process] is kind of all over the place, to be honest. You know, sometimes you have an entire page of lyrics and no melody, no song structure to go with it. Especially for this last record, though, I'd have a melody come to me, and I'd sing it to my recorder and be like, *okay, let's start from here.* I don't know if this is a vocal hook or a guitar hook—this could be a bass or a piano part for all I know, but you got something to start with that's catchy and stays with you. And then I would build off of that."



Photo by Kevin King

However, even on this album, Fish admits that there are "so many different ways to [climb] that mountain. It's hard for me to pinpoint exactly what the process is, especially when you're working with collaborators. Sometimes I bring an idea to the table like, *I really want to write a song about this*. Specifically, when I was collaborating with Martin, I'd bring in something like, *I got this cool guitar riff, let's try to build something off of this* and then we'd sit there and go, *okay, like, all right, let's feel sexy. Let's come at it from this perspective*. So, you're kind of building this story out of just a guitar riff. That's awesome."

Fish also told us about her development as a songwriter, from feeling a song to telling a story. "I think early on when I was writing songs, I was writing more for feels, wanting to have a song that has *this* kind of a feel, and then you execute that, and you have a cool guitar solo. As I started to develop more and more, I got into storytelling. When I started collaborating with other songwriters, I realized just how important it is to write a story that can connect with everybody's lives. Not just some, not just a story that's about you and yours. You want it to be about them."

"I feel like solid songwriting is the most important thing. It's the thing that's going to be your legacy. Songs have staying power. Being a great vocalist or a great guitar player is awesome, but I feel like you have to have the songs as that vehicle to really push you forward. I want to write something that stays with people, that they want to listen to over and over again, that they want to come to the show and that's the song they want to hear. To me, that's powerful, and that's your legacy. It's the whole point, to connect with people. You want to give them something that they can connect to and use to tell their story."

As much as guitar and songwriting have played massively foundational roles in her career, Fish did not initially get into music as a guitarist. In her early teens, Fish's form of rebellion was picking up the drums in a family full of guitar-based musicians. "I started when I was 13, and I think I did it just because it was the one thing that nobody else in my family was doing. I came up in a family of guitar players and singers, so I was rebelling against that."

That said, Fish's love for drums was far more than just a teenage phase, and she says they helped her become the fantastic musician she is. "I still love playing the drums. I never really stopped doing it. It's just what I do professionally is play the guitar. You don't want to hear me play drums professionally. I started gravitating towards the guitar when I was 15 because I always wanted to express myself by singing and playing. I'm grateful for the fact that I started on the drums, though, because it's helped me establish that sense of timing and rhythm. I think everybody should play drums."

While unable to tour due to the pandemic, Fish picked up "like 15" new hobbies, even while trying to keep busy with her music and working on a new album. "I'm not a stick with a hobby-type chick. I didn't ever stop working—me and my team. We kept trying to find things to do. I kept pretty busy,

whether it was in the studio or sneaking out and doing COVID-safe, socially distant shows. We did these shows in October, but it was still kind of weird and freaky."

She did stick with a few of her new pandemic-born hobbies for at least some time. "I did buy a sewing machine. I told myself I was going to start making all my stage clothes, and I was going to make these really cool outfits. I got through one, and I was like, *this looks terrible*. It's an incredible skill to be able to put together clothes. So that was one failed hobby. I started cooking a lot, which I feel like I'm pretty good at. I started smoking ribs cause I'm from Kansas City. I started really getting good with the smoker, and you know, having my small group COVID bubble come over and we'd do our little Kansas City barbecue thing."

With case numbers slowly dropping and restrictions easing, Fish is finally able to start thinking about getting back on the road. "I've got my fingers crossed. We have a really great looking fall. We have a European tour scheduled to start early next year, and I'm so, so cautiously optimistic. The calendar has been like the calendar of lives the last year and a half or so, but it feels so good to be coming back to this normalcy thing. I hope we get to do it. I feel like with this new record, this new show that I'm putting on, it's like a new era for me, and that's really exciting."

On the notion of performing again, we asked Fish about what equipment she's been using these days. The first guitars she mentions are all part of Gibson's SG collection. "I've always loved the SG. I think it was kind of my little present to myself (from being inspired by) Angus Young and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. And then, you know, of course, like Derek Trucks is one of the best contemporary SG guys. I loved the monochromatic color scheme, which fit with what I had kind of going on at the time."

Fish also speaks highly of Delaney Guitars, called "playable art" on their website. "I do have a Delaney on the road with me right now. It's a 512, which is kind of like a—I hate to compare other guitars with boutique stuff—but kind of like a 339 style Gibson. I use that for a lot of open tunings. I've got a [Gibson] Firebird that I'm obsessed with and my Taylor acoustic for the acoustic numbers. And then, of course, the cigar box guitar."

Fish got her cigar box after years of fascination with the instrument, first seeing it played by street performers during the first music festival she had ever been to—King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas. "I kept seeing people on the street playing these little cigar box guitars, and they just sounded so mean. Years later, we got hired to come in and play the show ourselves,



Samantha Fish performed at the Neptune Theater in Seattle, WA on September 25, 2019
Photo by Kirk Stauffer

and I saw somebody selling them. I just was like, *I'm going to just buy this guitar, and I'll throw it in the shows randomly*, but it became so popular with our fans. Like we couldn't go through a show without pulling it out. So, I mean, here I am, five, six, seven years later, still trying to figure out what to do with it. It's a pretty aggressive little guy."

This affinity for cigar box guitars led Fish to partner with an existing cigar box festival and come up with the Samantha Fish Cigar Box Guitar Festival in New Orleans. "I mean, it's just incredible the craftsmanship that goes into [these guitars] and you can make them as simple or as intricate and complicated as you want to."

As far as pedals and amps, Fish prefers a Category Five amp whenever possible, followed by a Fender super-deluxe. For pedals, she experiments. "I've got the JHS Mini Foot Fuzz, which I'm in love with. It's tiny, it's mean, and it's easy to work with."

When it comes to getting on stage, performing solo is not all that Fish has been thinking about. She's recently been involved in several all-guitar performances with some killer performers. "I love having a conversation with another player on stage. It's one thing to go up there and be like, *okay, now we're cutting heads*, but it's like, no, we're not doing that work. We're having a conversation. I think the best person at that in our world that I got to sit in with was Buddy Guy, wow. He is an expert at having a conversation."

When asked what artists she'd like to collaborate with in the future, Fish says, "I'd love to go and do a show with the Stones or something. I mean, a lot of the people that I want to collaborate with are gone, but there's always people that come around that I'm like, *oh my God, I love them*. I just love working with somebody that I can have

chemistry with. Sometimes you don't know who those people are until you find them."

Of course, working in music doesn't just mean collaborating with other musicians. Fish has a whole team of people on this journey along with her. "I have a really great team. It starts with a good personal manager. I've always said it was the goal when I was in my bedroom playing guitar is to get out and do this thing. Now, the goal is to get back and just play guitar in my bedroom and not have to worry about this full circle of things. It's a circle, but you have to go through all this stuff. I know people who do it without a personal manager, but it does help to have somebody who can help you because there's just not enough hours in the day to do whatever you need to do."

Currently, she is quite happy with her arrangement. "I found the sweet spot. I've got a really great personal manager and a booking agency that's incredible, and I'm with a good label. So, there's like this trifecta of everybody that's working."

Nearing the end of our interview, we asked Fish if she sees any positive, exciting elements about being a woman in the music industry, often highlighted as a difficult career to choose. "I love being a woman. I love bringing the female perspective to what I do. I feel like people want to hear what women have to say. I think we've been kind of brainwashed over the years to think that they don't. But if you look at the Grammys, there's such a want for women in the industry. I love having that perspective, and I wouldn't want it any other way."

One of her favorite female-led things that she sees in the industry right now is more women picking up instruments. "I think it's great to see young women picking up instruments, not just fronting the band. The thing is, I grew up feeling

the same way. There was a time period where I wanted to play lead guitar, but no, I didn't really see any girls shredding, like, you know, like Stevie Ray Vaughan or something. So, I thought, *oh, well, girls don't do that*. That happens to a lot of girls. We don't even know it just because we don't see it. We feel like we can't do it. But gender has no effect on whether or not you can do this. I think people want to hear your voice because it is different, you know, you come from a different place, a different walk, a different kind of angst."

We asked Fish what advice she has for young women in this industry, as well as what she'd like to say to our readers who are already fans of hers. For women hoping to make it in this industry, Fish says, "together, go out there and just start performing. You see people who've never played a gig getting attention and notoriety through mediums like TikTok and Instagram. Just use the tools at your disposal to get people to look at you. I always tell people it's a competitive industry, so find what's unique about you and then sell it. Don't try to sound like somebody because you think that's the way to get you to where you need to be. You need to sound like you."

For her fans reading *Guitar Girl Magazine*, Fish has a profound thank-you. "I love you, I appreciate you, and thank you for supporting me through all the phases of this. I'm looking forward to bringing on this new era and this new show. I hope it's as empowering for you as it's been for me. I'll see you out there."

Over the next few months, particularly after her album release in September, Fish hopes to hit the road (in the States as well as Europe) and continue making music. "I'm already working on songs for whatever's to come next. Now, it's not so much an album-based industry. You can release a track digitally, which is what a lot of people do. I think

the key to fielding success in this new world is to try and do both. I love an album. I love the story an album tells. So, you know, just writing songs for whatever's next, an album or singles, just getting out there and focusing on putting on the best show possible." —



Faster Tracklist:

1. Faster
2. All Ice No Whiskey
3. Twisted Ambition
4. Hypnotic
5. Forever Together
6. Crowd Control
7. Imaginary War
8. Loud featuring Tech N9ne
9. Better Be Lonely
10. So Called Lover
11. Like a Classic
12. All the Words

PIGTRONIX WELCOMED IN THE SUMMER WITH TWO NEW PRODUCTS: INFINITY 3 AND UNIVERSAL REMOTE.



Infinity 3 is the world's most musical looping pedal. Simple to operate, yet tremendously powerful and flexible, the Infinity 3 guarantees latency-free looping. Our state-of-the-art platform provides instantaneous record, playback, dub, undo and redo, on two stereo loop pairs that can be played in series or parallel as well as synchronized and cue'd for automatic playback. On top of

superior speed and a unique, performance-friendly feature set, Infinity 3 sounds downright incredible thanks to its discrete analog limiter stages, transparent analog pass-through and 24 bit HD recording engine with variable sample rate that can be incremented in semitones over two octaves. With approximately 3 hours of recording time on up to 50 loop pairs, the Infinity 3 was designed to inspire compositional depth and engaging performances. Comprehensive MIDI control and intelligent MIDI clock jitter correction provide the ability to link the Infinity 3 to a DAW, Drum Machine or other effects pedals. Infinity 3 is the ultimate tool for writing, rehearsing and performing every style of music. The Infinity 3 retails for \$419 US MAP.

Universal Remote is a passive controller with three momentary footswitches that is compatible with a wide range of digital effects pedals from Pigtronix as well as other top manufacturers, allowing you to explore the full extent of your most robust effects. When connected to an effects pedal using a standard TRS ¼" cable, Universal Remote can perform three independent functions: Left footswitch shorts the Tip to Sleeve, the Right footswitch shorts the Ring to Sleeve and the Center footswitch shorts both Tip and Ring to Sleeve simultaneously. Housed in a sleek and durable brushed aluminum chassis with laser-etched graphics. The Universal Remote retails for \$79 US MAP.

TAKE FIVE WITH MAMII

BY Guitar Gabby

Met Mamii, a singer, songwriter, and producer from Chicago. Her latest album, *Black Phoenix*, was released earlier this year, which follows her 2019 album 18.

Tell us a little about your musical background; how old were you when you started playing guitar, and what inspired your passion for music?

My family is very musical, so it has been instilled in me for quite some time, but I wanted nothing to do with music at first. My mom told me I started singing in the choir at about three years old. At about 10 or 11, I was very inspired by my big brother to play piano, so I taught myself. When I turned about 12, I started to teach myself how to play guitar, and I fell in love! I was a shy and quiet kid. I barely expressed myself, so it gave me this confidence I had never felt before when I picked up the guitar. It opened up a whole new side of me that I didn't want to stray away from, so I continued to play, and I've never stopped.

What inspires you to wake up every day and continue pursuing your dreams?

My relationship with music has grown

into something more than just a job or a hobby. Other than my family, music has given me something to live for. I want to inspire someone like me as a kid to do what they naturally feel. I want someone to know that they can be themselves and still achieve what they've been working for their whole lives.

Take us through your songwriting process. What types of environments do you feel you need to be your most creative?

My process changes every day. Sometimes, I'll hear a melody, and then I add words to the melody. Sometimes, I hear music, and then I begin writing lyrics that match the song's emotion. Other times, I'll listen to a complete song in my dream, and I have to hurry and wake up to get the idea out. Most times, I need to be somewhere clean to write a song for it to come out the way I want it.

What guitars are you playing right now? Name your top two to three if possible.

Fender, Luna, Gibson.

Finish this sentence: I believe music...
I believe music deserves to be listened to, not just heard.



Photo by Symphony Canady



Black Phoenix Tracklist:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Black Phoenix | 10. Toxic |
| 2. Blonde Boy, Pt. 1 | 11. Idk |
| 3. Blonde Boy, Pt. 2 | 12. Chaos + Sunshine |
| 4. Intimate | 13. Riightway |
| 5. Mrs. O'reily | 14. Ode Li |
| 6. Creepin | 15. Evolve |
| 7. Milk | 16. Tie-dye T-shirt |
| 8. Jamie | 17. Whisper |
| 9. A Better You | |

LINDSAY ELL SIGNATURE PEDAL ETANA - OVERDRIVE PEDAL

BY SIREN PEDALS

This is Etana - the Lindsay Ell signature pedal.

With Etana's grace and strength of purpose, your tone will be taken to new heights. This pedal does it all - from a nice clean overdrive to an unexpected and very delightful punch.

Prepare to be marveled by her beauty and might.

Here's what you get with this amazing pedal:

- Top-mounted jacks
- Plenty of clean overdrive
- Smooth tone
- 3 clipping options

Plus, this is Lindsay's Ell signature pedal. It won't disappoint.

"Overdrive pedals have always been one of my greatest loves and I'm so grateful to bring you all of my favorite aspects in one pedal. This circuit combines grace and strength in a way that can come across as a subtle clean boost or a large soaring solo. Thank you for wanting to be a part of my first signature pedal family!" ~ Lindsay Ell

For more information and full specifications, visit sirenpedals.com.

Price: \$199.00



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
Jessie Kaczmarek



PREPLANNER
Indigo Una



NOTES
Jimena Fosado



NOTES
Mean Mary James



Order yours today for \$14.99 on our site at GuitarGirlMag.com.



A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a light pink dress with dark red floral embroidery. She is sitting on a silver, ornate chair. A large, square pillow with a pink and white marbled pattern is resting on her lap. The background shows a large window with a view of a city skyline. The text "SERENA Laurel" is overlaid on the image in a large, stylized font. The word "SERENA" is in a bold, dark red, blocky font, and "Laurel" is in a large, red, cursive script font.

SERENA Laurel

 www.serenalaurel.com/

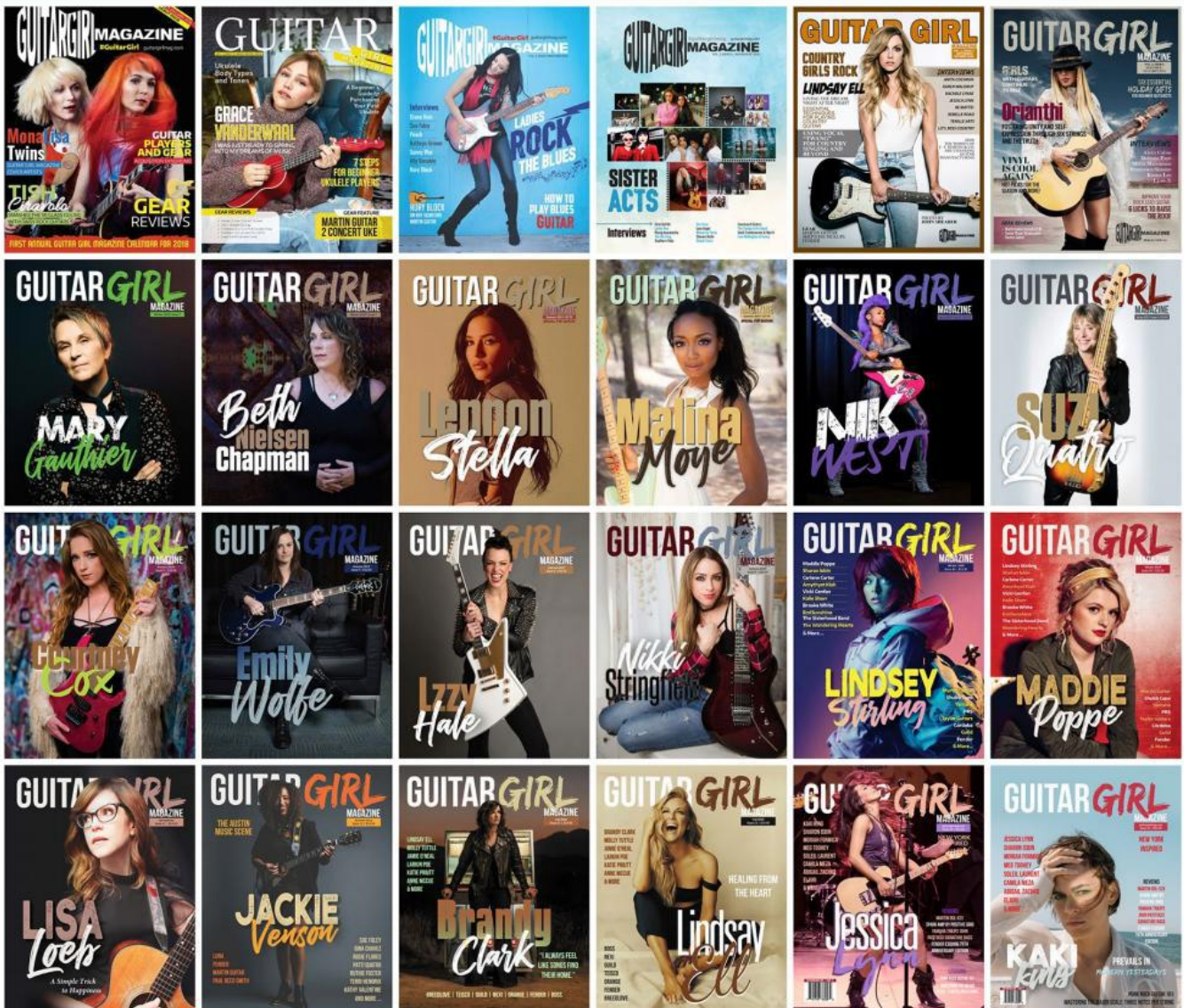
Photo by Jack Lue

GUITAR GIRL

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2018 THROUGH 2020



SHE WILL ROCK YOU:

ARIELLE'S CREATIVE JOURNEY FROM MUSIC MAKING TO GUITAR DESIGN

BY Vanessa Izabella and Cece Gair

Arielle is no stranger to the music industry. The New Jersey-born guitarist, singer, and now guitar designer has been making moves in the music industry since 2008. Discovered by guitarist Nuno Bettencourt in 2010, she set off on an amazing journey of accomplishments and setbacks. Her career has included opening for major acts, finding her own voice as a musician, and battling body image issues. Her gamble to carve her own path in the music industry has paid off tremendously, from a collaboration with Vince Gil to a self-designed guitar released by one of her idols and dear friends Brian May Guitars.

We had the opportunity to chat with this amazingly intelligent and talented guitarist. Arielle spoke with us about what she has been doing during the pandemic and her new non-

profit that is very close to her heart. She exhibits the type of musical uniqueness and drive that will allow her to have a long career in the industry. She is currently working on new music and new guitar designs, both of which we are looking forward to hearing about in the future.

On her custom-designed Brian May guitar, we got to hear Arielle's take on how it all came together. The BMG Arielle, described on Brian May Guitars' website as a "new dimension" for the company, is the first guitar in their entire line that isn't based on Brian May's own guitar. His guitar is often called the Red Special, built by Brian and used through his entire career as Queen's lead guitarist. Instead, the Arielle is based on the split-down-the-middle black and red guitar that Arielle herself uses, affectionately called the Two-Tone, which she and a friend built themselves in their teens as an ode to May's.

The story of how the guitar came to be is an unusual one, to say the least. While attending California's Musicians Institute, Arielle met a man named Patrick in her Uli Jon Roth Sky class, who built Uli Jon Roth's famed Sky guitar. She asked him if he would work on a custom guitar with her, and he agreed. "We started off, and it took about a year, I think—I mean, six months of actively working on it, but a lot of back and forth for a while about the design and what we were going to do, and all sorts of things like that. He was a guy I didn't know very well, and we just worked together on it."

Then, things took a bit of an unexpected turn. "I have this weird story how the guy disappeared in 2008," Arielle tells us. "He kept saying, *We've got to hurry this up. I gotta go. I'm like, Where are you going?* And he just disappeared one day. The guitar showed up to me in pieces at my home, and since then, I haven't been able to find him." Even now, with the guitar in major production with Brian May, Arielle's collaborator is nowhere to be seen.

The BMG Arielle wasn't designed specifically to be released with BMG, though. Before Brian suggested the idea of producing it, Arielle had plans to produce and distribute the guitars herself. "[Brian and I] were catching up for lunch when I was touring about three years back, and I was saying that I was going to be making these guitars with a friend of mine. I told him we were going to have them American-made, and they're gonna have to be expensive because of building costs. He said, *well, why doesn't Brian May Guitars do it?*"

Arielle's passion for guitar design and construction hasn't stopped with the production of one model. When asked if she has plans to release any other guitars in the future, she says "Absolutely! I've been constantly working on variations of my guitar now since I've had it for about 13 years. I have ten different models that I've experimented with—everything from the body, weight, wood type, set necks to neck-through, and the scale lengths. I'm also trying to make one with humbuckers (a two-coiled guitar pickup) on it."

We also got to ask Arielle about her friendship with Brian May. "I met Brian when I was living in LA going to music school in 2007, and that to me, that's a long time. That's about half my life—almost—that I've known the guy. We approach the guitar the same." The similarity between Arielle and May's approaches to guitar is uncanny, as Arielle tells us: "I just had an interview with him recently, and he said to the interviewer, *you know, she and I are the only two people in the world that play these pickups, these particular pickup selectors.*" However, Brian and Arielle connect on more than just music. She grew up around his children and was then invited to audition for the musical *We Will Rock You* in London. She fell in love with the city and lived between the U.S. and Britain for years before moving there in 2018.



Photo by Caitlin Brady

When talking with us, Arielle expressed her gratitude for Brian's friendship. "We've just stayed in touch. It's a real friendship. I can tell the guy anything, literally anything... it's just a thing that I'll never fully digest. Especially because he's the reason why I built the guitar and the reason I started playing guitar. The respect that I have for him, he has for me, which is even crazier. So I feel very, very fortunate to have a friend like him."

Arielle's deep interest in guitars started when she was very young, at the same time that Brian May became a major musical influence in her life. "When I was six years old, I saw a video of Queen, *Live at Wembley*, and people were paying attention to Freddie Mercury—I was fascinated with the guy with the curly hair and the cool guitar." This kickstarted an obsession with music and guitars, but it took Arielle years to convince her parents to buy her a guitar. She cycled through piano, violin, and trumpet before receiving her first guitar, a "funny, knock-off Stratocaster, called an Austin, that was red like Brian May's guitar".

From then on, Arielle's musical inspiration came from May and other greats, including Jeff Beck, Uli Jon Roth (hence the Sky class), Robben Ford, and Eric Clapton. By the time she was in her early teens, Arielle knew that guitar was what she wanted to pursue as a career. "I worked at an Italian restaurant. I was making pizzas, and I was burning my hands putting the pizzas in the oven and in my arms. I was just like, *this is miserable*." This misery got her thinking about what she'd really like to get paid to do. "I thought, *Well, I should probably do this music thing because I love it*. I never thought, *Oh, I'm gonna be a rockstar* or anything. It was more just to have something I could focus on and get better at."

Arielle is glad that she picked up guitar when she did because she believes that the onset of social media and YouTube has made it more difficult for people to truly learn—in some respects. "I graduated high school early, at 16, and I moved to LA to go to Musicians Institute. I think doing that was one of the best things I ever did. It's hard for people nowadays to actually learn something. There are so many elements to music and the guitar that you have to submerge yourself in it—which is hard to do at home or online with no real structure. I don't know where I would be had I not done that."

As we mentioned, after her time at Musicians Institute, Arielle moved to London to audition for *We Will Rock You*. When her visa expired, she made a point to return there every year on tour before getting her more permanent visa. "The main reason I wanted to live there, of course, was just because of the work I was doing, but there's something in the water over there. My favorite bands and musicians are from England."

When asked what cultural differences there are between New Jersey and California versus London, Arielle had a lot to say. "The best way to learn about a culture is submerging yourself in it entirely, from the simplest things to getting a bank account. It's been interesting to experience it on all levels. I live just outside of London, and I do have a car—and very fortunate for that—

but there's hardly anywhere to park. Everything is a lot smaller in London. It is also very expensive, and the weather is kind of crappy during the wintertime."

However, the music scene in London more than makes up for these drawbacks. "You have the most amazing people who love music, all sorts of music. I find that people tend to be a little bit more diverse in the U.K. and have a totally different approach to music and to the guitar. There are even different terms for saying certain words. Quarter notes are called crotchets, and a power cable is called a kettle lead. Being in the U.K. has taught me a lot about music and the world—and it's inspired a lot of songwriting as well."

Just like the music scene is unique from city to city, Arielle's sound and playing style are incredibly definitive and unique to her. According to Arielle, part of finding your sound is having the freedom to pick the wrong one enough times before finally settling on what you legitimately like. "The whole vintage vibe, old-school vibe, everything that I do, really works with that. I spent years trying to do things that I thought other people would like, but I didn't think that could sustain me for that long."

After a while, Arielle gave up on trying to please other people and got a lot more attention as a result of her authenticity. Although, she notes that this rawness to her natural style—which involves pulling from multiple styles and genres at any given time—has come with its own challenges. "I think because of my approach, it's moved me away from the female guitar realm, which I never meant to have happen... it's kind of alienated me from both areas of singing and playing guitar because I'm kind of in my own weird realm."

Arielle's list of past collaborations is impressive, but she has a number of names who she's dying to work with. Jeff Lynne in production, David Foster in songwriting, and collaborating with artists the likes of Vince Gill, Peter Dinklage, Steve Perry, and Sting. "For guitar, Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton on the same stage as me, and maybe throw in Bonnie Raitt too. I could die happy."

The onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't stopped Arielle's powerful progression in this industry and others. After spending a portion of quarantine in what she calls "a pretty big depression," she's used the pandemic as an opportunity to create both new music and a comfortably sustainable plan for her future goals. After touring for most of each year for the last

five years, Arielle admits that she thinks she was "overdoing it in a lot of ways."

She's also been working on creating a non-profit during the pandemic that gives back to the industry she's given her life to. She acknowledges that mass-producing guitars involve cutting down a lot of what is referred to broadly as *tonewood* trees, which are types of wood that are good for acoustic instruments and include spruces, cedars, maples, rosewoods, koa, and mahogany. To compensate for this, she's purchased properties in the U.S. and Britain that will be used to replant the types of trees being cut down to make her guitars.

Post-pandemic, Arielle predicts big changes for the music industry. "I think that live music is going to boom bigger than it ever has for independent artists and smaller artists." Before the pandemic, live music was an occasional luxury that people would pay through the nose for, but only for their biggest, most-loved artists. Arielle sees this changing. "People aren't going to want to pay a thousand dollars to get a seat at an arena tour. Maybe some people will, but a lot will just want to go to their local venues and see up-and-comers just because they're so hungry for it. That wasn't happening as much [pre-pandemic] because people weren't necessarily making the time... I think there's going to be a lot of live music and a lot of need for some new venues."

To finish off our interview, we asked Arielle if she had any advice for up-and-coming musicians. Her biggest piece of wisdom comes from how she got into guitar herself. "I always say that my guitar taught me how to play. I have a guitar that no one in the world has, which means that I have to play differently than anyone else."

As a result, she believes that how you learn how to play your instrument is a vital part of the career process. "I would say the first thing is to not learn how to play guitar on YouTube. If you want to play like your heroes, then you should learn like your heroes did. I don't mean sit there and rewind VHS tapes, keep moving the track back, or play the record slow on your record player with your vinyls. I mean to really submerge yourself into learning the guitar—get a great teacher and get on a path, a real path, and have them set you up so that you don't have gaps."

Arielle acknowledges that learning guitar requires much more independent study than just getting a teacher. "Learning even a little bit of theory can help with your songwriting and develop you as a complete musician instead of just, for example, a lead guitar player. A step-by-step regimen is where you want to be instead of just trying to learn on YouTube and getting confused. Find a great book and take your time to learn and to listen to things that influenced you. Also, try to get yourself out of the things you are sonically used to and try to experiment a little bit with the guitar." —





Photo by Eliot Lee Hazel
(LtoR) Siouxsie Medley, Sean Friday,
and Emily Armstrong

DEAD SARA

IS BACK AND MORE ROCK 'N' ROLL THAN EVER

BY Gabbi Calvert

The LA-based hard rock band **Dead Sara** is comprised of band members **Emily Armstrong** as the lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist, **Siouxsie Medley** as the lead guitarist and backing vocals, and **Sean Friday** on drums and backing vocals. The band skyrocketed to fame with their 2012 single "Weatherman" (which reached No. 30 on the *Billboard* Mainstream Rock charts) and has been a force to be reckoned with ever since. The single led them to tour with legendary alternative band Muse, build a massive fanbase, and create a sonic quality all their own.

Their 2015 album *Pleasure to Meet You* also received immense acclaim and reached No. 2 on *Billboard*'s Heatseekers chart and No. 7 on the Hard Rock Albums chart.

Dead Sara most recently released their singles "Heroes" and "Hands Up," which have received critical acclaim for their classic heavy, raw, grunge-inspired sound and have had massive success in the media and throughout streaming platforms.

Next up, Dead Sara will hit the road to tour for the first time in three years. The all-star group is putting the finishing touches on their next album, *AIN'T IT TRAGIC*, which, as of the time of this interview, was set to release on September 10.

We chatted with Armstrong and Medley to learn more about the band and their new music.

How did you come together as a band? Tell us about the backstory.

Emily: It started in high school—one of our mutual friends brought us together. I loved what Siouxsie listened to and found out she played guitar. I was looking for bandmates again because I had switched schools. What did it for me is she could actually tune a guitar, ha-ha. I loved what she listened to, and we started playing in her bedroom at her dad's house. At our first show, I think I was actually playing bass.

What was it like to tour nationally with Muse after your breakout hit "Weatherman?"

Emily: We had never really played amphitheatres,

so that was a big deal. Little by little, our venues got bigger and bigger. We were just like, 'how do we adjust to this.' We had platforms made and made friends with a guy who did lighting, and we just kind of went with it. For us, it felt monumental. But compared to Muse, we were like, 'This is f--king great; we're gonna kill it.' You kind of just grow into it and get the feel of it. Being so far away from fans on stage was the hardest part for us to adjust to but going from that to clubs felt even better. We got this sense of how "big" we felt in terms of musicianship. When we go on any stage now, we can feel it and fit any mold better.

Siouxsie: "Weatherman" was awesome; it happened so organically. The song came together very quickly. Then, we heard that Dom, the drummer for Muse, said on the radio that we were one of his favorite bands at the time. We had our management reach out and they said we were in the top five choices to open for them on tour. The next thing you know, we were it. We had the absolute best time on tour with them. We even went bowling with them—we lost.

They're over and above, just the nicest people. We had a blast. It was a huge adjustment, though; it was crazy being in a stadium. It's so different from being in clubs. It felt like a huge rehearsal and felt awkward because we were so far apart. But then the roar of 80,000 people is like a wave; it just hits you—it's so surreal. Knocks you on your ass.

You have two singles released ("Hands Up" and "Heroes") from your upcoming album, *AIN'T IT TRAGIC*. They are both great songs, by the way—love the vibe of each of them—so great in their own respects. How are you feeling about the response on those singles so far?

Emily: I think "Hands Up" was a little sweeter because it was our first single released off the album. The album wasn't even halfway finished when we released it. We wanted something released before 2020 was over; we felt we owed it to our fans. It was sitting there, already done, so why not? The response was amazing, and that's what we felt we needed to accomplish finishing the album. "Heroes" is out now, which is great. "Heroes" and "Hands Up" are more along the same lines when it comes to their sound, so I'm excited to see how our other more diverse singles do and what people are going to say. "Hands Up" and "Heroes" are songs we know our fans will love. I can't wait to see what people say about the other songs on the album that present a lot differently than the singles. If people think it's s--t, we don't care because we made it, and we love it. We didn't show a lot of people this album; we didn't care. We loved it, and we knew that we loved what we were creating as a band. **Siouxsie:** It's been a very pleasant surprise. So many new people and fans are reaching out. Everyone seems to be super stoked. We had a lot of homies involved, and we had so much fun making them. It just feels good to be getting back to it and giving our fans new music.

What is your writing and recording process like as a band? I know every band has a different process; it's always fun to see the inside perspective as the listener.

Emily: This album was a pandemic album. We started going into it with a lot of pre-production in the rehearsal space. We were well prepped, so we didn't spend too much time in the studio. We started out with "Heroes" and "Hands Up." Pandemic enters the chat, and we go, "Well, what the f--k are we going to do?" We were a week away from going into the studio. That all went on ice while we watched the news and decided what to do. We had a lot of writing to do, so that time helped us. We then recorded everything in our rehearsal space. We started taking it over and finding what the album was. We found out what was working, and we just did that over and over again. It was really going in deep within ourselves; that's why we didn't go out a lot to show people. We found the rhythm and just went with it. It's great, it's dank. Sean even played some guitar on it. It's about as authentic as you can get for us.

Siouxsie: The first two albums were more of a jamming process until we had a skeleton idea and added the fat and muscle. This album was so different. We were about to go to the studio and COVID happened. A lot of bands were doing in-home recordings. We sent it to the label, and they thought it sounded great, so we just ended up recording all of it that way. We all individually went into our rehearsal space and Sean engineered. We did the whole thing from our studio. It was a good thing, and Sean was incredible and stepped it up on the engineering and

producing. Emily really concentrated on lyrics and made sure what she was feeling was being conveyed.

How are you feeling about going on tour? How does it feel to get to make music again on the road?

Emily: Ready, but not ready. Mentally, I just want to be there. We just did two video shoots yesterday, and we start rehearsals tomorrow. I have super high expectations for this tour. We have to be ready to rehearse and also be careful with the Delta variant going on. Exciting but also stressful.

Siouxsie: I am so excited as well. I love traveling and seeing fans. I just can't wait. I'm chomping at the bit, as they say.

***AIN'T IT TRAGIC* is a huge comeback project for Dead Sara. What are some of the inspirations behind this album for the band as a whole? Any major themes you would like to discuss?**

Emily: I know artists are like, "there's this album/sound that did it for me." For us, it has been years in the making for any kind of inspiration. Whatever we were listening to just kind of made its way into this album. However, we know each other so well that we know what each other likes and what we don't. It just kind of finds its way to the end product knowing where it's going to go. "What if it sounded more like Queens of The Stone Age? What if it sounded more '90s?" It truly doesn't matter about the inspiration; it's how it feels in the moment. That was a learning curve for us—realizing that we don't have to do certain things but start focusing more on the songs themselves. It's a very angst album, I think—it's very DIY. It's cathartic and as genuine as we can get. It's spontaneous without it being that way. We didn't want it to feel like there was a ton of thought; we just wanted it to be rad.

Siouxsie: I think the whole goal was a bit of a '90s theme, but we never sat down and talked about what we wanted it to sound like. Some songs were new, and some were old that we revisited. I think there's a lot of different styles on this album. "Hypnotic" was inspired a lot by '90s hip hop. I was listening to a lot of TLC and Missy Elliot and Biggie—always listening to Biggie. Emily is always a huge Hole fan so that inspiration always comes out in our music as well.

Describe your bandmates from your own perspective. What is unique and special about the others that only they can bring to Dead Sara?

Emily: Sean, he really stepped up as a producer. He encapsulated and brought to life the sound we knew we always had. In the future, he could even do that with other bands. I feel like he is going to be something. Being a producer is new for him, but he is stepping into the role so well. When it comes to

Siouxsie, her sense of riffs is insane, and not fitting the mold is very unique of her. She's like, "This is really cool, how's this?" We just have to adapt to it because everything she plays keeps our music from sounding "square" and fitting into one box.

Siouxsie: Emily is just otherworldly. I don't think I've ever written a riff that she can't sing over. Any key, anything, she finds it and just sings over it with no challenge. Her melodies are incredible. I've never had to limit myself to anything instrumentally. Anything across the board, she can nail it.

Sean has so much harmony to him. He is a drummer, of course, but is also a songwriter. He isn't just a drummer; he focuses on the song as well. The way he plays drums is so beautiful and melodic. He's honestly more of a songwriter that plays drums. He's so goofy and keeps everything light and fun for us.

We are *Guitar Girl Magazine*, and we like to talk gear. What is your favorite guitar to play right now?

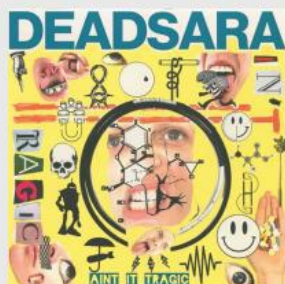
Emily: Right now, it's a good '90s Fender Strat. It's the sound of the album to me.

Siouxsie: It depends on what I'm doing, but I love my '59 Silvertone for recording—it almost has a Fender body. It doesn't translate well live, but for recording, it's like butter. For anything live, my favorite to play is my '90s black Gibson Florentine.

Being female in the music industry is already hard but being a woman in rock can be especially taxing. Share your thoughts on how to cope and how to make strides as a woman in this profession.

Emily: We have so many outlets for how to get our music out there—it's a lot. I think what pierces through that clouded and stuffy world of music is if you're as unique as you can possibly be and that is true to you, that's the way to be. If you're accepting of your music and what you're doing, that's what is important. You should never have to fit into anyone else's shoes. Never try to be like someone else. That's the death of an artist. Just say, "I don't care what people think of this; I f--king love it." And be yourself. As generic as it sounds, work hard and be yourself, and everything will work out.

Siouxsie: It's funny because it is different, but it's all I know because I'm not a man. It's funny when I was playing, I would always be seen as someone in the band's girlfriend or something. But then, when people would see me up there shredding on stage, they would be so impressed and shocked. I don't have the patience or time to care about what people think of me as a woman. Regardless of what anyone says, I'm just going to do what I want. I will say, we've had two male members for a long time, and they have always treated Emily and me with great respect regardless of us being female. We're grateful for that. 🍌



Ain't It Tragic Tracklist

1. Starry Eyed
2. Good Times
3. All I Know Is That You Left Me For Dead
4. Hypnotic
5. Heroes
6. Hands Up
7. Lover Stay Wild
8. Gimme Gimme
9. Lights Out!
10. Uninspired
11. Losing My Mind

TONE TALK WITH TIFFANY LLOYD, AKA TIFFS BASS

Hi! I'm Tiffany Lloyd, the recording and performing artist known as TiffsBass, based in Washington, D.C.

I was just afforded the amazing privilege to be globally listed as one of the Top Ten Female Entrepreneurs Guiding Us into a Better 2022 by the writers of Forbes magazine.

Recently, I finished working on an off-Broadway show in NYC for a few months, a play called *For Colored Girls* at The Public Theater in Manhattan.

In my artist show performances, I deliver a variety of styles of music in a way to take my listeners on a ride of what TiffsBass is thinking. When it comes to working with other artists and bands, I cover a variety of genres as well.

To know me is to know that I believe in showing love in life, and my music gives me the platform across the world to do that. I have some music on iTunes, and much of my work can be navigated to right on my website. My mission in the music industry includes but is not limited to positively affecting each individual in the world that is meant to receive a message of love through me.

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

To me, tone is the way that one sounds when interpreting a piece of music. Tone begins with preciseness and overall attack of notes and technique. However, it also varies not only person to person, but also from song to song with an individual. I may give off a completely different "tone" from one song to the next; it all depends on the mood of the song and the mood that I'm in as well. My tone has changed slightly over

the years; it developed along with the maturity of my thoughts and personality.

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

I use Elrick Basses, GRBass Amps, and occasionally my BOSS pedalboard. Elrick Basses give off such a rich, warm tone all by themselves, but the winning factor is that while you are hearing gold come out of them, the playing experience is amazing! Basically, I feel like myself and the bass are one unit. Elixir strings and Elrick basses are just that incredible. GRBass amplifiers literally compliment Elrick bass guitars with a very clean output. EQing a GRBass amp is far too easy to bring out the best in my Elrick bass, so that is why I use those particular amplifiers and cabinets.

What about strings?

I use Elixir nickel-plated steel strings, light/medium gauge. That gauge goes perfectly with my bass and playing style—the sweet thing is that even when I have to play aggressively, say with a slap tone, the light/medium gauge of Elixir Strings still gives me the durability and beautiful clean sound that I need! I really can't imagine playing bass on any other type of strings. Elixir is just that amazing! Elixir strings have an awesome silky feel, all while giving so much power and rich tone to any bass or guitar that they're on.

Playing Elixir Strings gives an experience that you can only get with this brand. An added bonus is that they last much longer than many other brands.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

In the studio, my main, simple preference is to record through a personal preamp before going into the system.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

Onstage, the main way I keep my sound consistent is to use my own amp head, and of course, using the same bass. Controlling my output (personal amp) is the best way to get my consistent sound every time.

What does your practice consist of?

My practice routine consists of many hours of transcription of other instruments on my bass (sax solos on bass, piano solos), technique exercises, fretboard exercises, theory refreshers (chording, scales, etc.), and overall ear builders. Practice also, of course, consists of time spent learning music for shows.

Favorite bass line that inspired you to play bass?

For me, it was moreso a favorite bass exercise by a favorite bass player that first inspired me to really delve into the logistics of playing bass skillfully. That player is the late Jaco Pastorius!

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

For all young women that aspire to work in the music industry, I advise them to first practice exercising discipline in every area of their lives, get a highly recommended instructor, and also study the industry so that they'll have just a glimpse of what to expect. Everything else will come along and serve as a learning tool as you go. Another piece of advice I would offer to young women desiring to work in the music industry is to remember that you, yourself, are a business leader, and you have to view yourself that way and carry yourself accordingly. Everything you do and say needs to be thought out and carefully executed. —

Photo by
Roy Cox

TONE TALK WITH ABBY POSNER

My name is Abby Posner, and I have been a huge fan of *Guitar Girl Magazine* for a long time now, and I have always geeked out reading the past Tone Talks. As a gear-head, and someone that values tone, it is important to hear what other musicians are doing to sculpt their stage sound and recordings. I find it inspiring and thrilling! Hopefully my Tone Talk will inspire other musicians to find their unique sound, and keep trying on new things!

When I was arranging the instruments for my upcoming album *Kisbee Ring*, I wanted to create a vintage vibe, that is both intimate and raw. I am a huge fan of Nick Drake and Elliot Smith, so I really studied the way those guitars were mic'd and what reverbs would capture this energy the best. Being in the studio is like painting with sound. It is my dream playground!

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

This is such an important question because tone is the beautiful vibrant color that makes the sound complete. It is the sprinkles on top of the cookie. I am a big fan of the vintage analog tone; recording to tape has always been one of my favorite things to do. I think tone changes depending on genre, vibe, recording stylings, and live performances. Personally, I always want to keep my music sounding classic, yet modern and fresh. I love a whisper of warmth and analog, but I also dig a clean, crisp guitar sound.

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

When I am playing solo, I use my Roland AC-60 Acoustic Chorus amp with my pedalboard. I love this amp because you can plug ANY stringed instrument into it, and it sounds incredible. I play my mandolin, banjo, and acoustic through that amp, and you would be surprised to know that my electric sounds great plugged into the amp as well. I have an OCD Fulltone distortion pedal that I love, a Dispatch Master Reverb, Ekko 616 Analog Delay, Wah Pedal, Black Cat

Mini Trem, Freeze Pedal, and my trusty BOSS Loop Station. These pedals sound awesome with my Gibson SD going through the Acoustic Chorus—bluesy, folky, warm, and rocking!

What about strings?

Martin Authentic Acoustic! I always go with Martin Strings for my acoustic and Ernie Ball Regular Slinky for my electric.

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

My go-to is recording my acoustic with my Neumann TLM 103 near the 12th fret, then panning it to the left and tracing over it with a brand new track miked slightly closer to the soundhole. Then I pan that track to the right, and it sounds like a full warm wall of acoustic sound. I am a big fan of M. Ward, Bright Eyes, Nick Drake, Laura Veirs, and Elliot Smith's doubling/recording techniques.

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

I always have my amp and pedalboard dialed in pretty much the same each show—I tend to turn the bass down on my amp if I want to easily

switch from guitar to banjo because the banjo is very sensitive with the low ends.

What does your practice consist of?

Honestly, I have been learning so much through teaching my private lessons. Sometimes we will unlock a whole new door that inspires me to practice more myself. I love weaving the notes together and adding 7s and 9s into folky chords. I also love practicing the pentatonic scale up the fretboard and then running Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian in different keys to match the pentatonic scales.

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

Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here" solo, and Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Pride and Joy."

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

Always continue to be YOU. The weirder and more out of the box, the better! Be authentic and vulnerable when you are sharing your music. Write music from the heart, not from the head! 🎸—



Photo by Rolence Patugan

WANT TO BE FEATURED IN GUITAR GIRL MAGAZINE'S TONE TALK COLUMN?



Submit your answers to the questions below by either going to this link or the QR code:

<https://guitargirlmag.com/tone-talk-interview/>

For our introductory paragraphs, please tell readers about yourself (background, etc.), musical influences, and your current projects—basically, what you would most like for them to know. (Please do not cut and paste your website bio. Be creative and use your own words.)

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

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

What about strings?

Are there certain recording techniques you prefer in the studio?

How do you keep your sound consistent onstage?

What does your practice consist of?

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

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

Submit approved photograph with photographer credit along with payment of \$50 USD to PayPal at info@guitargirlmag.com



SHE SAID!



Photo by Maeva Komenan

"Don't let anyone, even yourself, stop you from doing what you're passionate about."

Tone Talk with Karen Culi, July 2021



Photo by Jim Louvou

"Learn as much as you can, especially from people who you really admire. When they give you advice, take it. If you don't know the answer, ask questions. Ask as many questions as possible. Know about the business; know about where your money is going. As an artist, stay true to yourself. If something doesn't feel right, don't do it. If it really makes you excited, go for it! If it doesn't make you excited, but you're told you have to do it, don't do it. I have done that before, many times."

Interview with Orianthi in Winter 2021 Edition - Acoustic Amplified!

"The music business can be tough, so be as prepared as possible, keep your head on straight, listen to your critics with an open mind, and don't try to please everyone or you'll lose yourself. Follow your passion, and be friends with your muse— your muse is the best friend you'll ever have."

Tone Talk with Kelly Richey, January 2019



Photo by Jeff Shiflett

"My advice is to never give up. We need more women producers, engineers, and writers. Keep honing your skills and networking. Also, always lift up other women in the industry."

Tone Talk with Lindsay Manfredo, May 2021



Photo by Mr. Homebrew Photography

"In a world where women are constantly criticized for their actions/appearance and feel the need to suppress their opinions, their bodies, their truer self... I say use your voice for the greater good. Sing out and don't hide behind what society has made you feel like you need to be. Wear that crazy outfit on stage, sing that high note you're not sure about into the mic, and let the criticisms of others roll off your back. Letting go and pouring your soul into your music will set you free."

Tone Talk with Maggie Noelle in Winter Edition - Acoustic Amplified!



Photo by Hunter Selman

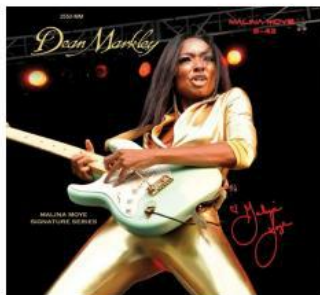
"... zone in on what their sound is and what they need to do to achieve that. Also, knowing what your mission as an artist helps to keep you on track creatively. When you are confident in who you are as an artist and what sound you want to represent you, it's harder to get sidetracked and pulled off course."

Tone Talk with Kyshona, January 2020



Photo provided by management

All quotes are excerpts from interviews on GuitarGirlMag.com.



Malina Moya Signature
Dean Markley Guitar Strings



Gibson Custom Shop
1958 Korina Flying V and Explorer Reissue



Jim Dunlop
STO Way Huge pedal



Ciari Guitars Ascender
Front Back White



D'Addario VariGrip
& FiddiLink Bundle



Fender Player Plus Series



Keeley Electronics Compressor
Mini Effects Pedal
Black and White



Orange Amps OE-1 Guitar



Orange Amplification
Super Crush 100 Head and Combo



Gibson Mod Collection



Luna Art
Vintage Nylon
Acoustic-Electric

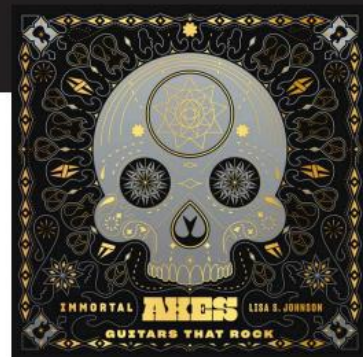


Cort Artisan B4 Element Bass Guitars



LISA S. JOHNSON

From Lisa S. Johnson, the photographer of the critically acclaimed coffee table book 108 Rock Star Guitars, comes a new collection of beautifully shot guitar photos, documenting the legendary instruments of B.B. King, Kurt Cobain, St. Vincent, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, and more than one hundred and fifty legendary rock icons. Her new book, "Immortal Axes" is now available with a Foreword by Peter Dinklage, Afterword by Suzi Quatro.



Immortal Axes is available at your favorite book retailer on September 28, 2021 Visit immortalaxes.com

Fender Classic Colors Quick-Change Electric Guitar Capo

This summer, Fender and Kyser partnered together and released the "Classic Colors" Quick-Change Electric Guitar Capo. The capo has a newly designed 9.5" radius contoured to fit the fingerboard of most electric guitars.

The colors are a nod to the legendary vintage instruments of the '50s and '60s—Surf Green, Butterscotch Blonde, Olympic White, and Daphne Blue.

"Fender is excited to partner with Kyser, joining two classic American brands rooted in musical traditions to help players jam and write songs

with more ease," said Richard Bussey, Vice President-Accessories, Lifestyle and Licensing. "With an all-new radius redesign specifically engineered for Fender fretboards, the Classic Color Collection represents the proud lineages and bright futures of these brands"

"We felt this series would bring us back to the roots and classic colors that have been highly admired and embraced by musicians for so many years," said Meredith Attebery, owner and president of Kyser® Musical Products. "We aim to continue to achieve Kyser quality, as well as industry collaboration and



community, through this series and all of our products."

For more information and specifications, visit: "Classic Colors" Quick-Change® Electric Guitar Capos
Price: \$29.99

Antares Introduces Auto-Key® Mobile: Like Having Perfect Pitch in Your Pocket

Antares Audio Technologies, creators of Auto-Tune® and a global leader in vocal effects and pitch correction technologies, have introduced Auto-Key, a new free mobile app for iOS devices.

Designed as a companion app to the company's pioneering Auto-Key desktop software, Auto-Key Mobile offers a portable, easy-to-use, and accurate platform for detecting the key of any audio source. By simply tapping a button and holding the phone up to any audio source, Auto-Key Mobile will automatically detect the musical pitch of a song, chord progression, or loop and display both the major key and relative minor.

Auto-Key Mobile is designed to seamlessly sync with every current edition of Antares' legendary Auto-Tune and Harmony Engine software, making it easy to quickly analyze and transfer pitch information to your recording session in real time. It can also be used as a stand-alone mobile application, enabling any user to immediately identify the key of a song for collaboration, recording, or performance.

For artists, songwriters, and composers, Auto-Key Mobile is an

ideal tool for pinpointing musical keys. For recording and mixing engineers, Auto-Key Mobile offers an easy and immediate way to find a song's key for employing Auto-Tune within your DAW of choice.

"Auto-Key Mobile can quickly identify the key of any song, which is an incredible power to give to anybody who makes music," remarked Steve Berkley, CEO, Antares Audio Technologies. "From casual musicians to the most highly technical recording engineers and producers, Auto-Key Mobile is an invaluable time-saving tool that can be used anytime, anywhere, by anyone. It's like having perfect pitch in your pocket."

Antares Auto-Key Mobile is compatible with iOS and Mac devices and is now available for free download from the iTunes store. Auto-Key Mobile for Android and Windows devices will be released soon.



For more information and pricing, go to antarestech.com/auto-key-mobile/.

Source: Press Release

PRS AMPS: HOW IT ALL BEGAN!



Paul Reed Smith met Texas amp builder Doug Sewell at the Dallas Vintage Guitar Show in 2006. Paul's band was scheduled to play, he needed an amp, and was introduced to Sewell. "I loved the way his amps sounded, and after barely saying hello, Doug and I were inside rewiring the amp I was going to play through," said Paul Reed Smith.

Soon after that meeting, Doug moved to Maryland to work with Paul and the team at PRS. Sewell and Smith have since spent years building, listening, studying, and finalizing circuits for PRS amplifier designs. The goal, as always, is to produce highly usable and musical tools for musicians. 

"This amp is killer, and I love the rich growl it gives! And to top it off the sleek black exterior is next level!" ~ CJ English, GFM (Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh)



D'Addario Planet Waves Nita Strauss Hurricane Guitar Care Kit

"The Hurricane kit was born out of total necessity as a touring musician," Nita Strauss said. "I was so tired of rummaging around in a gig bag or backpack for the tool I needed at the moment I needed it. With this kit, all the touring guitarist's essential tools are finally in one convenient place!"



Every great guitar player knows it is essential to maintain their instrument, and it's just as important to have the right tools for the job. Launched in 2020, the D'Addario Nita Strauss Hurricane Kit is an all-in-one resource for cleaning, maintaining, tuning, and restringing your guitar. The kit consists of the exact items that Nita herself takes on tour.

- The Hydrate Fingerboard Conditioner nourishes your fretboard, while the XLR8 String Cleaner prolongs the life of your strings; together, they help keep your neck playing like new.
- The Pro-Winder, Multi-Tool, and String Height Gauge make changing the strings and setting up fast and easy.
- The Multi-Tool is especially convenient for players with a Floyd Rose Tremolo system, as it includes several different Allen wrenches.
- The polishing cloth and Eclipse Headstock Tuner provide the final touch of getting the guitar performance-ready.
- A small flashlight (complete with Nita's

logo) is included to help players reach areas that might be harder to see.

- The case itself has many advantages; it has several pockets for strings and batteries, it's magnetized to hold tools in place, and it even glows in the dark to make it easy to find in dimly lit spaces.

This comprehensive kit is ideal for electric guitarists of all skill levels. 

Price for kit PW-NSHK-01 : \$79.99
For more information,
visit daddario.com



The MESA/ Boogie Guide

BY Alex Windsor

With so many guitar amplifiers on the market, it can be difficult for players to know what to choose. Players looking for a beefy sound with unparalleled gain and maximum tone control need to look no further than MESA/Boogie. MESA not only has an impressive history, but as the newest member of the Gibson family, the company has barely scratched the surface on all of its possibilities. If you are new to the world of amplifiers or just looking to learn a little more about the

brand, we've put together this little overview to help you out.

A Brief Company History

Founded by Randall Smith in the late 1960's Northern California, MESA/Boogie was born during the height of the rock 'n' roll revolution. Smith was working at an amp repair shop when he developed a new "cascading" tube preamp circuit that could produce more input gain, effectively making the amp louder and more distorted. Upon completion, he immediately reached out to local guitar hero Carlos Santana to test out the new amp. Santana played the amp long enough to attract a crowd, and his response was, "man, this thing really boogies!"

The name stuck, and the first line of Boogies went into production. The company would continue to innovate throughout the '70s, '80s, and '90s, with Mesa Engineering leading the way in tube amp technology. The company was bought by Gibson Brands, Inc in early 2021 with a promising future. Today, thousands of players across the genre spectrum prefer MESA/Boogie.

Amps to Know

While MESA/Boogie has several different amp options available, let's explore their two most iconic lines: the Mark Series and the Rectifier series.



Mark Series – Packing high gain into a compact chassis, the Boogie Mark I was the first amplifier of its kind. It helped shape the music of the '70s and gave players the ability to hold notes indefinitely with groundbreaking sustain. The second version, the Mark II, was launched in 1980 as the world's first channel switching amp. The series' newest development is the Mark V, which is available as a head or a 1x12 combo. It carries all of the advancements made by its predecessors, including three footswitch channels, versatile Multi-Watt and Simul-Class technology, and 5-Band Graphic EQ for optimal control. The Mark series is the preferred tone of guitarist Mosahefu from San Francisco-based blackgaze band Embrium. With shimmering highs, warm lows, and a consistently full-bodied tone, the Mark series delivers an uncompromised sound for all types of players.

Rectifier Series – High gain was redefined once again in the early '90s with the birth of the Rectifier series. Arguably the most iconic of this series was the Dual Rectifier, a high-gain workhorse that once dominated the hard rock airwaves. In addition to the standard preamp and power amp tubes, the Dual Rectifier boasts two Rectifier tubes, while the Triple Rectifier has three Rectifier tubes (with two extra power tubes) for maximum gain. The modern Rectifiers are most commonly found in head form, but the Badlander and Recto-Verb come in a combo and even a rackmount option. These heads are best paired with their namesake cabinets, which are available in several 12-inch speaker combinations. Despite being a favorite among metal players, the Rectifier series is packed with versatility and range. It's no wonder that the Dual Rectifier head and 2X12 cabinet is the chosen rig of shredder Corey Cooper from the Christian rock group Skillet.



CHORDBUDDY:

AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR LEARNING CHORDS WITH NO PAIN OR BUZZING

BY Bri Foxx

As a former elementary school guitar club instructor, my main advice for the students was to look up and practice chords so they could play their favorite songs. But building calluses is always tricky, so it wasn't uncommon for my class to feel defeated from time to time. I often wondered if there was an easier path to learning faster and practicing longer. Even though I don't teach anymore, my heart will always go out to the novice, and a ChordBuddy could make those first steps of playing enjoyable.

The ChordBuddy is a device that wraps around the guitar neck and sits on top of the first three frets. In order to play one of the available chords, you have to push a series of color-coded buttons while strumming. An adjustable screw on the side provides firm, rubbery pads to secure the device to the neck.

Putting the device onto my ride-n-die-acoustic was puzzling at first, but it made total sense once I figured out the correct placement (the base should rest just above the guitar's nut). Using the button mechanics was way too much fun. The first one I pushed was yellow for E minor. I was astonished at how similar it felt to playing the keys of a piano. The guitar sounded clear in every little strum and fingerpicking lick, no matter if I attached the ChordBuddy to my electric or acoustic guitars. The installation was a little bit easier on the electric, due to the width of the neck.

The winning traits of the ChordBuddy is that it fits on most guitars, including $\frac{3}{4}$ -sized. The color coordination system is a highly useful feature, and the device is made of a really hard plastic, so the chances of it outright falling apart is highly unlikely. Personally, I would love to see variations of the product, with chords like A minor and E major, but it still allows a novice to play a lot of songs, especially in the key of G.

Along with the device comes a 32-page instructional called *2 Month Lesson Plan* and at least one additional booklet of songs. The instructional is created in partnership with music education publisher Hal Leonard, and it's compact and straightforward. One aspect I appreciate is that the lessons guide the player to eventually play the guitar without the product. The developers at ChordBuddy have also released an app with instructional videos that accompany the lesson plan.

The song booklet features country, Christian worship/prayer, classic soft rock, bluegrass, and an occasional blues tune. This selection is, in my opinion, catered to a more "mature" audience, but there are a couple of gems like "Let it Be" and "Folsom Prison Blues." Luckily, the ChordBuddy sheet music website offers a wider selection, including songs by Lady GaGa and Little Nas X.

One additional beauty of this gadget is that it could allow people to play the guitar, who would otherwise find it too challenging for medical reasons: for those with carpal tunnel or arthritis, the button key system only needs a minimal amount of finger pressure. Physical therapists could use it for patients with paralysis to help them get the feeling back in their hands. For cognitive rehabilitation, this could be perfect for practicing hand-eye coordination. It could aid in motor-skill development for those recovering from a stroke or seizures. I can also see this product going into the hands of a person with special needs since the color-coded system makes the learning experience more visual, and the divots on the keypads can be comforting for those who have heightened sensory experiences beyond their physical and mental control.

But chances are simply that you have friends who've never played guitar, but they hope to jam with you one day. The ChordBuddy is great if you don't have the time or patience to sit down for long periods of time to try and explain a new craft to them. Now you can just say, "strum and press the yellow button for four counts."

For more information and full specifications, visit chordbuddy.com.
Price: \$49.95



Martin Guitar D-13E Ziricote Dreadnought Acoustic-Electric Guitar: Well-balanced, clean & beautiful sound

BY Kate Koenig

In the world of guitars, there are few instruments that are more reliable than a Martin dreadnought. Introduced to the Martin Road Series in January 2021, the D-13E acoustic-electric dreadnought is no exception. The Road Series includes guitars designed for the busy, traveling musician looking for a guitar with a solid back and sides for an affordable price. It features guitars that range from \$799 to \$1,499, and, ranging from \$1,299 to \$1,349, the D-13E fits into the higher end of the group.

The D-13E has a Sitka spruce top, with the option of siris or ziricote veneer back and sides. Both of the latter tonewoods have a rich, chocolatey hue, with the siris being a little darker. The nut is made of white Corian and the saddle, compensated white Tusq, while the bridge and the fingerboard are made of FSC-certified Richlite. A paper-based product that's pressed with special resin under high heat, Richlite is very similar to ebony in terms of hardness and vibrational qualities.

The neck is designed with Martin's high-performance taper; it's 1-3/4" wide at the nut and 2-1/8" wide at the twelfth fret, inviting slick movement as you go from high to low on the fretboard. The binding is done in white, which matches the white heelcap at the base of the neck joint, and the rosette is done in black and white. The body is structured with traditional scalloped X-bracing. It also comes equipped with Fishman MX-T electronics—the "T" stands for the tuner that's located underneath the base of the soundhole.

Out of the two back-and-sides tonewood options, siris, also known as East Indian walnut, is both lighter and denser than East Indian rosewood. It shares tonal characteristics with koa, hitting somewhere in between the overtones and volume produced by rosewood and mahogany.

The Ziricote model is made of a fine veneer, and on the other hand, offers a booming bass response paired with a light, airy high-end and natural reverb.

This guitar has a clean, beautiful sound. It's very well-balanced; the lows are pronounced yet not overpowering, and the highs are crisp and bright. It's a joy to take a pick to it—strumming yields a range of distinct yet complimentary

overtones. I always find that a guitar's look and feel have an effect on both players and audience members; it can lend itself to how you play it and what it sounds like to your ear (which can be so subjective). In this case, the D-13E's strong yet simple, traditional and classic personality gave me confidence that its assertive voice spoke to what a great guitar is meant to sound like.

One of the guitar's drawbacks is that I didn't hear a lot of resonance when performing fingerpicking pieces on it. Normally I look for bold overtones that might ring out when playing in certain fret ranges, yet as I explored the neck, the body didn't quite sing as I was hoping it would. But to reiterate, it is very satisfying to play with a pick.

I tested out the Fishman MX-T electronics on my Roland CUBE Street amp and found them to be excellent. The entire setup includes the preamp, a Fishman Sonicore undersaddle piezo pickup, tone and volume wheels located under the top of the soundhole, and a tuner under the base of the soundhole. The great thing about the tuner—aside from the fact that its circular screen lights up, making it easy to see under any lighting—is that it mutes the guitar when you switch it on. This way, if you're playing in front of an audience, they don't have to listen to you tune! The sound that came through the amp had high fidelity to the guitar's acoustics; there were no extra squeaks and clicks that you sometimes will hear from an overly sensitive setup, there was no unwanted crunch when I played loudly, and the sound was crisp and clear.

I took the guitar out to a local open mic to test it out in front of an audience. I love the high-performance taper—as opposed to a bulky vintage neck as it allowed me to slide up and down with ease. The guitar's action was set up perfectly, and together, these aspects made it very comfortable to hold and play. And since it comes equipped with great electronics, you don't feel as though you lose the guitar's charm when plugging it into a sound system.

When an audience recognizes a Martin dreadnought, they know what to expect—and the D-13E lives up to those expectations. **A—**

For more information and full specifications, visit martinguitar.com.

Price for siris back and sides: \$1,299.00

Price for ziricote fine veneer back and sides: \$1,399.00



BOG STREET: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR GUITAR PICKS!

BY Bri Foxx

Finding the right guitar pick for your playing style is like going to the store for a pair of shoes; so many options, you gotta try them all! Every handyperson has multiple wrenches if I do say so myself. Let me make this simple. Have you ever seen a guitar pick with textured edges? How about one with a functional hole in the center? Don't even get me started on the **LEAP Series**, where the triangular design has three different widths, making it the only pick you'll need. **Bog Street**, only being a two-year-old pioneer, is making waves in reimagining what a pick can do for the player's fickle hands. I was lucky enough to try the **Bog Street Original Sampler Pack (15 Picks)**, which has a little bit of everything on what they have to offer. Although I won't go into all of their selection, I will narrow this down to my personal favorites: The **Axe Cut Medium (Clay Red)**, **Axe Blade Medium (Candy Apple)**, **Battle Axe Medium (Purple Haze)**, **Mini Beast (Jazz)**, and the **Leap Series Rhythm**.



The **Axe Cut Medium (Clay Red)** is a .6mm flat tip with 2mm rounded chisel tips. I was very surprised at how durable this pick was for playing most styles. As I strummed each chord, I took notice of how the divot in the pick with the hole made it easy to hold onto the product. This pick is perfect for progressive strumming, with a hint of Americana and Country playing-idealizations.



The **Axe Blade Medium (Candy Apple)** has a more defined divot than the previous pick, which is perfect for the attack on single strings, making this pick catered to people focusing on lead-type playing where the focus is dedicated to the use of the single string versus chords.



The **Battle Axe Medium (Purple Haze)** has no divot but all the control in your fingertips. I would recommend this type of pick for heavier strings for the overall warmth for acoustic guitar chords. That Em chord rings to your soul using this style of pick. I would recommend this pick for any rhythm player because the smooth edge glosses over the strings like a chocolate fountain on a cold strawberry.



Moving on, the **Mini Beast (Jazz)**, made of *Glass-Filled Nylon*, has a very complex gripping system. Unique to the style of pick, the gripping system is raised so the player won't lose the pick in even the most intimate of jazz solos. The color is a smooth-ebony for those who don't prefer flashy colors. Truly a gem, I would recommend this pick to mandolin players as well because the attack is on point as it moves effortlessly in your hand.

Lastly, I want to idolize the (my personal favorite) **Leap Series Rhythm Ergonomic Guitar Pick!** Now, this is a pick like no other. 10/10, would strum again. My first impression of this pick was that I thought it was a bass-pick since the design is a perfect triangle. As I took a closer look, I noticed that there are **three edges with different widths!** Personally, I prefer a product



that is versatile, allowing me not to spend as much money to find something that will last as I play different styles with different people. Ranging from .45mm-8mm, this pick allows options. I find this is great for people playing in cover bands who have to play in different styles; instead of wasting time choosing the perfect pick for the song, it's all there by the flick of a nail; how genius is it to be able to have a pick that can literally do it all. Again, the gripping system is fully functional, matched with the equally matched hole in the center for perfect control.

All of the picks Bog Street makes are passionately designed for optimal use for all players. Beginners to experts, the mandala-like grip is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it especially tailors to the overall sturdiness a grip should offer. The whole reason why I am a finger picker versus a pick-player is because I had a hard time gripping picks because when I play passionate and heavy, my hands would sweat so heavily that most industrial picks would either slip into the soundhole, break, or fall onto the floor. Using these picks brought back the unkindled passion I forgot was there. I was able to play music I had completely forgotten about, rock on to music that was dusty, all in one setting. No mishaps at all. It was great to sample

each of the picks and how I was able to explore all different playing styles. I recommend getting the **15 Sampler Pack** because you get to try a little bit of everything.

Bog street uses a diverse range of materials. The Axe Series picks are made from an Acetal resin called "Lupital™" and they also come in Black Ultem the company brands as Ultem Tak™. The Mini Beast is made from glass-filled nylon and the LEAP series picks are molded in Nylon.

Through exploring their products and researching their background, I discovered that Bog Street is known for its excellent customer service and ingenuity. They took a product that has made modern music into what it is today—the guitar pick—and made it essentially better. I am surprised more people don't know about this pick!

The price of the pick is a little high for my taste; however, this is because Bog Street manufactures their products in the US, and they put so much thought into the product using a two-part process where the picks are injection molded, and then laser finished so that there's a perfect edge all the way around the pick.

As a musician, in a world where sometimes it's hard to find the right product, I can honestly say that when it comes to guitar picks, Bog Street has you covered. As the company states in its mission statement, "*Bog Street designs and manufactures accessories...designed to amplify the guitar playing experience through exceptional products*". From my review, I can truly state that the motto is honest and accurate. 

Price of Sampler Pack of 15: \$35.00
 *Price of Axe Cut: Medium: \$20.00
 *Price of Axe Blade: Medium: \$20.00
 *Price of Battle Axe: Medium: \$20.00
 *Price of Mini Beast (Jazz): \$20.00
 *Price of Leap Series Rhythm: \$25.00

**Price includes a pack of six guitar picks!*



Fender '68 Custom Pro Reverb: Classic American Tones, Modern Performance

BY Bri Foxx

It was a long time coming. I closed my eyes to hear my bandmates setting up for soundcheck at The Masquerade in Atlanta. As I turned on the switch of this **Fender '68 Custom Pro Reverb** amp and was greeted by its luxurious spring reverb, I wondered if my '60s idols shared my rush of emotion when they played the predecessor of this amp?

This upgraded amp embodies the late-'60s Fender sound and look, while the mechanics are updated to current performance standards. Its single channel with two separate inputs offers two different approaches: the first input allows the user to get full input sensitivity. The second input's lower sensitivity allows instruments with higher outputs like keyboards and bass guitars to have a cleaner response, but it's also ideal for your pedalboard.

The bright switch (a high-frequency boost) pairs well with the controls for bass, treble, and the added midrange, allowing players to sculpt a broad range of tones. As the volume is increased, the clarity of the bright switch lightly recedes, and the amp goes into overdrive. Fortunately, the new design—with its reduction in negative feedback—gives the amp a wider dynamic range than its predecessor. Then there are the amp's signature traits that create those classic American tones: reverb and tremolo.

We live in the age of nostalgia, and the Fender '68 Custom Pro Reverb is a beautifully crafted amp with plenty of retroelements: silver control panel, vintage teal font, woven silver grille cloth, blue jewel power light, and the two-

button footswitch. This 40-watt combo amp features one 12" Celestion Neo Creamback speaker that ensures rock and roll overdrive without mush.

In my band, I sing and play a Takamine EF341SC acoustic-electric guitar, and my playing style involves progressive scratching and lead-like fingerpicking. As I got to test this amp during a show, I was able to hear it over a powerful bass rig and drumkit. Granted, the amp was mic'd up, and my guitar has volume controls, but at one point, I turned the guitar up to eight for extra punch, and the amp took me there. I did notice that the tone was fairly clean at the halfway point of the volume dial, and there was a slight difference in distortion once I went into the higher volume. Once I hit eight, it was absolutely perfect for my heavier sounds.

The treble control was impeccable for bringing out certain notes when I wanted to play lead. Balancing the treble and middle, along with turning on the bright switch, gave me a grungy edge for rhythm guitar playing, and I could let the others in the band do their solos without anybody getting lost in the overall mix. I have an unconventional technique where I play my 6th and 5th strings like a bass guitar for a song or two, and turning up that bass made my guitar sound just like a Fender Jazzmaster. When I did hand percussion tricks on the guitar's body, I turned down the treble to three and left the middle halfway turned. Everything I wanted my guitar to be that night, it was.

This amp is known for its spring reverb and tremolo sounds. As you turn up the reverb knob, you can get great new wave/



shoegaze tones. I was also impressed by how well the reverb sounded through the speaker. With the speed and intensity dials for the tremolo, you get a wide spectrum from midnight pulsations to hummingbird-like chorus effects that beat many pedals.

The only qualms I have with this amp is that it isn't cheap, so it needs to be treated with care and respect. Because it is so lightweight, it can be stolen easily by those who have an eye for pawn. I will also say is that when plugging an acoustic guitar into this amp, it is a bit more subject to feedback versus using an electric, so you should adjust accordingly.

The Fender '68 Custom Pro Reverb shouldn't just be looked at as a nostalgia centerpiece. As they say, it is the voice that makes the singer, and this amp sure has one heck of a voice. 🎸

For more information and full specifications, visit fender.com. Price: \$1,399.99



SPARK V2

Introducing Spark - the smart guitar amp that jams along with you using intelligent technology.

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LUNA GUITARS HENNA DRAGON MAHOGANY TENOR UKULELE AND SUITCASE AMP: A FUN PACKAGE FOR QUIET JAMS & ROAD TRIPS

BY Bri Foxx

The aesthetic focal point of Luna's tenor ukulele model, the **Henna Dragon Mahogany**, is a carved dragon swirling around the top of the instrument's mahogany body. Created by Alex Morgan, a UK henna artist, the dragon design is meant to symbolize—and inspire—courage, strength, and perseverance. Other aesthetic features include a slotted headstock in a classical guitar style and a pau ferro fretboard with Luna's signature moon phase fret markers.

Both the body and neck of this ukulele are made of mahogany, and as we played it, the wood reverberated in all the right places. The tone has a gorgeous mid-range roundness with a slight brightness, preventing things from getting too bass-heavy. The pre-amp, a Luna UK-T2 with a built-in tuner, is straightforward and comes with an equalizer, allowing you to control the bass and treble further.

Luna's 5-Watt **Suitcase Amp** has a 9V battery compartment, and a single input system allowing you to change the tone, insert headphones, and plug in music from your device with an auxiliary cord, so that you can play the ukulele along to your favorite tracks, without depending on an external power source. Being only five watts, it will distort if you turn it all the way up, so it works best for very quiet rooms, small coffee shops, or busking (unless you intentionally want your ukulele to have a raw lead guitar sound for some songs). With

a revamped boho suitcase look, this very portable amp comes with a vintage tolex body, leather handle, and a set of Hawaiian travel stickers.

Luna also provides additional accessories, including the **Luna 25 FT Cable 90-Straight**, woven out of a special poly-blend material to ensure flexibility, durability, and no cable tangling. The easy-to-use **JX-09U Ukulele Capo** is very similar to Luna's guitar capo (see the JX-09 Guitar Capo review in this edition).

With everything together, this is a great, cost-efficient setup for college dorms, in-the-round jams, patio parties, quiet coffee shop gigs, and road trips.

For more information and full specifications, visit lunaguitars.com.

Please note that these products are sold separately and not as a bundle.



Price of Luna Suitcase Amp: \$99.00

Price of Luna 25FT Cable 90-Straight: \$29.99



Price of Uke Capo JX-09U (Wood Finish): \$12.99



Price of Henna Dragon Mahogany Tenor Uke: \$189.99

LUNA GUITARS JX-09 GUITAR CAPO (WOOD FINISH): STANDOUT FUNCTIONALITY AND LOOKS

BY Bri Foxx

Of all the capos out there in the world of six-stringed fun, **Luna Guitars** has released one that combines pleasing aesthetics with a distinctive functionality.

The **JX-09 Guitar Capo** is a "trigger curved" model, which allows you to easily move the capo and change keys with just one hand. It features four padding bars made of hardened rubber. One is located on the outermost lever for comfort, resting nicely on the palm. It allows the user to easily pull on the second lever without disturbing the integrity of the hand. Because there is extra cushioning, the lever won't dig into your palm muscles.

The second padding is on the bar that goes over the strings. I noticed that this padding has an upside-down, three-dimensional trapezoid shape, which not only limits the amount of fret noise when changing keys but also keeps the width/height of the strings and the tension it takes to push them down consistent. In other words, you can use it on a guitar with a .009 or a .013 string set, and the sound will stay balanced.

The third and fourth padded bars are on the inward lower section that wraps around the guitar neck. I personally like this aspect because the capo fits so snugly.



When it comes to practicality, the JX-09 can be used for any acoustic guitar. Luna Guitars stays true to the brand by designing a capo in a pretty wood finish that harmonizes nicely with any acoustic guitar that has a natural finish.

Because of how unique the look is, there is a higher likelihood that you won't lose the capo at the end of that jam session. Made of durable metal, it's high quality, and the price is very fair. The JX-09 Guitar Capo makes a statement, as you become sublime to shine under the limelight.

For more information, visit lunaguitars.com
Price: \$12.99

Eventide UltraTap Pedal: A Multiverse of Tone

BY Lynnay Della Lucé

Eventide has always been known for having high-quality guitar pedals that go a little farther than other pedals. To me, they have this reputation of having crazy effects that you never knew you needed—until you heard it! I was curious about Eventide's new **UltraTap** multi-tap effects pedal because I fell in love with the Eventide Rose, and I am a sucker for delays, reverbs, and modulation.

"The possibilities are endless"

The UltraTap is a unique multi-tap delay pedal that delivers rhythmic delays, glitchy reverbs, huge pad-like volume swells, and expressive modulated effects.

Released in April of this year as part of the dot9 pedal family, the UltraTap is the result of 40 years of development that began in 1981 with Eventide's Digiplex and Multitap Delay algorithms.

The two footswitches give you control of Active (momentary or latching), Tap Tempo and Preset Selection. With its six knobs, you have control over 12 different parameters (Mix/Tone, Taps/Slurm, Length/Predelay, Feedback/Chop, Spread/Spd/Rise/Rel, and Taper/Out Level).

Right out of the box, I tried the first preset and I was hooked! It is superbly named "UltraTap," and I was welcomed with a swelling and trailing reverb delay that made my guitar seem like it was dancing on clouds.

"Control over 12 different parameters"

After messing around for a few minutes on my electric guitar rig, I hooked up the UltraTap to my acoustic pedalboard and started layering some really cool ambient loops. This setting (after I tweaked it to my personal preference) was perfect for laying down an ethereal rhythmic pattern. Then I engaged my boost pedal, threw on a little distortion, and started soloing for days. Okay, it was probably an hour or two, but

the point is I just got lost in the moment. To me, when I play a guitar or find an effect that sounds great right away and I completely lose track of time, that is when I know I have come across something really special—I have to have it!

With the ability to morph how you want the delay to sound, you can go from rhythmic patterns that give a more percussive groove all the way to shimmer and volume swell kind of soundscapes. I personally love the more ambient tones, and you have so much control over the actual delay.

You can choose how many taps you want in between each hit, where you want the taper to fade, and you can even change the spread of the rhythmic pattern to give the delay more dimension instead of just quarter, eighth, and dotted eighth notes. On top of that, you can morph the delays into chorus and reverb. The Slurm control can smear the sound, so it's smoother, and it becomes more ambient because the delays are swelling together.

It is really remarkable the amount of control you have with all of these functions. Describing it in words does not do it justice. This is one of those pedals you just need to get your hands on and try.

"Unique multi-tap delay pedal"

The footswitch comes loaded with five presets, but if you download the Eventide Device Manager application (EDM), you have access to up to 127 stored inside, and they are also accessible via MIDI. It has two stereo out jacks, which adds more dimension because the delays can actually pan back and forth to each output. There is also an option to have the pedal act as



a latching switch which means you hold down the button, and the effect goes through. When you release it, it turns off instead of just clicking it on then clicking it off. A guitar line/level switch is on the back so you can match your line levels with different instruments like synths, not just guitars.

Surprisingly enough, this pedal has really been an amazing addition to my acoustic looping board. I love that there are so many options for sound layers, and it's so thick and creamy sounding. It also gives my solos an extra "Wow" factor. The amount of control over the delay's actions and sensitivity is what really makes the UltraTap stand out from other delays, reverbs, and modulation pedals. This pedal is great for guitar layering, soundscapes, church players, shredders looking to add thickness to their solo sound, people who want glitchy reverbs and funky rhythmic patterns—the possibilities are endless. I'm excited to explore the UltraTap even more. Every time I dive into it, I find a cool new sound.

For more information and full specifications, visit: <https://etide.io/UltraTap-pedal>
Price: \$297.00



PRS Archon 50W Combo Amp: Versatile Toneshaping

BY Bri Foxx

The newly redesigned **PRS Archon 50W Combo Amp** is a two-channel amp with clean and lead tones. Both channels include volume, master volume, controls for bass, middle, and treble, plus a bright switch so that you can get more out of your high frequencies.

I chose an Ibanez AR420 Artist solid body electric guitar to explore the full capacity of the amp. Outfitted with one single Celestion V-type 12" speaker, the amp tone remained consistent all the way up to full volume. There's also a generous amount of headroom (the height of loudness and tone that an amp can handle), which contributes to Archon 50's impressive sonic versatility.

Starting with the clean channel, I moved on to experimenting with its tone-shaping options. "Warm" is a word I can use to describe the sound before adjusting anything. The bright switch is perfect for achieving controlled trebly highs before dialing up the treble and mid controls. As I got deep into the features, I was able to produce a broad range of tones, from a stripped down, almost acoustic-electric sound, to a jazzy or bluesy depth and roundness, all the way to a crispy, twangy

treble fitting for country.

Going on to the lead channel, the tonal versatility was just as notable, since you can dial in serious levels of heaviness and hard edge without muddying up your sound. There is a slight hint of distortion the louder you go, but it's integral to the overall sound. The 6CA7 power tubes ensure that the warmth remains intact, but just like in the clean channel, flipping the bright switch allows you to amp up the trebles if needed.

The PRS Archon 50 is not for the novice. I recommend that you have a sense of self musically speaking, and know what you're going for before you spend the money. In my opinion, this amp is tailored to lead players, but with that said, it should please players of practically any genre. The clean channels are perfect for country and pop, and the lead channels will serve metal and hard rock needs well. With its remarkable versatility (and a reasonable weight at 43 lbs), it's a great amp for club gigs and practice nights. It also works well with pedals. **A—**

For more information and full specifications, visit: [PRS Archon 50W Combo Amp](#)
Price: \$1,199.00

PAUL REED SMITH CLIP-ON TUNER REVIEW

BY Bri Foxx

Alrighty, so you've got your PRS guitar, amp, chords, and strap. What else do you need? How are you, as a rockstar in training, going to keep your guitar in tune? Lucky for you, Paul Reed Smith has truly thought of everything. Introducing the PRS Clip-On Tuner, one of the most accurate and "pretty" tuners on the market today!

"Pretty" is a term that I use very strongly. One does not usually equate beauty to a standard guitar tuner; however, I found this product unique to most standard tuners because PRS sticks to its guns with the "dive-bombing" Cooper's Hawk Bird. Usually seen on the frets of most standard PRS axes, the "pre-bomb" position from the 12th fret made the cut. Those iconic PRS wings are (in my opinion) symbolism for the player expressing their utmost potential, no matter what tuning! The accuracy is definitely worth the price (\$29.99) because even though there are tuning pedals with similar accuracy, this product is essentially more cost-efficient because it allows the player to have the same

strobular .5cent accuracy. There's a \$20 margin of gain, for all of you professionals who factor in expenses for those late-night gigs, versus a pedal costing on average \$50.

Now, the aspect I wish this tuner had was that it was ready to go before the first use. One must charge it to full battery before rocking out, but on the upside, the benefits outweigh the minor inconvenience. This is because it has a specially designed cord to charge this tuner rather than batteries, making this product more convenient—this is especially crucial to the everlasting, gigging musician. Instead of having to leave the venue for a specific battery only found at a random department store out of bounds of your bandmates, this simple charge system makes the price even more worth it. Not to mention the fact that this durable machinery can tune most modern non-orchestral stringed instruments. This PRS Clip-On Tuner comes jam-packed with four different tuning modes, catering to even the most fickle of players. **A—**



For more information and full specifications, visit [us.prsaccessories.com](#)
Price: \$29.99

BRINGING THE HEAT WITH WARM-UP EXERCISES

BY Alex Windsor

Whether getting ready for a big show or just sitting down to run through a few songs for fun, every guitarist can greatly benefit from warming up first. The concept of “warming up” is getting your hand muscles ready to play. There are many ways guitarists can warm up; some like to play certain scales while others focus on more specific exercises. As a gigging musician, there are at least two warm-up exercises I like to use to improve my overall hand dexterity before hitting the stage or the studio. The goal of these exercises is to challenge each fretting finger to work independently up the neck.

I always begin by extending my fretting arm straight out and giving each of my fingers a gentle stretch forward and backward. First, I start with my first finger on the fifth fret of the low E string (I usually begin these exercises on the first fret, but we will start here for the sake of physical ease). Then, I place my third finger on the seventh fret, followed by my second finger on the sixth fret, and finally, my fourth finger on the eighth fret. I pluck each note using an alternate picking style (with an up-down-up-down motion). Once I play those four notes, I move up to the next string and repeat the same pattern: first finger fifth fret, third finger seventh fret, second finger sixth fret, fourth finger eighth fret. I continue this pattern all the way up to the high E string. From there, I shift my hand up one fret and play the same pattern back down, except backwards: fourth finger ninth fret, second finger seventh fret, third finger eighth fret, first finger sixth fret. When I reach the low E string again, I slide up to the next fret and repeat all the way up the fretboard. Use the tab in Example 1 as a guide. As a bonus, practice saying the names of the notes out loud while playing.

Example 1

```

E |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
B |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
G |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
D |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
A |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
E |-----5-7-6-8-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-----|
  
```

The next exercise is similar in concept to the first one but with another string added. I place my finger on the fifth fret of the low E string—just like before—but then I move my third finger to the seventh fret of the A string. I then go back to

the sixth fret on the E string with my second finger, followed by the eighth fret of the A string with my fourth finger.

Here is where we change it up again: I use my third finger to play the seventh fret of the E string and my first finger to play the fifth fret of the A string. Finally, I use my fourth finger to play the eighth fret of the E string, followed by the sixth fret of the A string. After that, I move down to the next string and repeat the pattern. Once I get to the last note on the high E string, I slide up to the next position and reverse the order of the notes going back down to the low E string: fourth finger ninth fret E string, second finger seventh fret B string, third finger eighth fret E string, first finger sixth fret B string, second finger seventh fret E string, fourth finger ninth fret B string, first finger sixth fret E string, third finger eighth fret B string.

Just like we did in the last exercise, I slide up another fret again on the low E and continue the pattern all the way up the fretboard. Use the tab in Example 2 as a guide.

Example 2

```

E |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
B |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
G |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
D |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
A |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
E |-----7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-----|
  
```

Once you feel comfortable with each exercise, practice playing along to a metronome and gradually increasing BPM each time you run through it. You can also challenge your picking hand by plucking each of the notes twice instead of once or skipping a string in the second exercise (strings E and D instead of E and A, for example). Once you're finished, give your hands another gentle stretch and shake it out.

Time to rock! 🎸

Meet Abigail Ybarra - “The Queen of Tone”

Known as the Queen of Tone, Ybarra was a pickup winder with Fender, where she began in 1956 in the machine shop grinding frets, later moving to the main assembly line, before ultimately settling in as a pickup winder in 1958, where she would remain until her retirement in 2013. In an interview in 2009 with the NAMM Oral History Program, Ybarra says, “Working there, to me, all of it was not really like a job. It was fun.”

Her perfection and expertise garnered her recognition in the industry and the title Queen of Tone. Her signature can be

- Hired in 1956
- Retired in 2013

seen on the pickups she wound, and her initials approve the work on the pickups of the employees she oversaw. Think iconic guitars including Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and countless others.

In a video clip on YouTube from 2011, Ybarra is shown winding a pickup by machine guiding it by hand and says, “Doing it with an automatic coil winder, it winds really uniformly.” Further saying, “Winding it by hand, it winds it different. It’s not as uniform as a machine.” She had it down to a science!



Abigail Ybarra at Fender factory – date unknown-
Photo provided by Fender



Photo by Matt York
provided by Fender



Photo by Vanessa
Izabella taken at Winter
NAMM 2020

FOR FILLS, SOLOS & PLAYING YOUR CHORDS IN NEW PLACES

BY Nikki O'Neill

GUITAR GABBY ON BEING A BOSS: MENTAL HEALTH

BY Guitar Gabby

Part seven 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.



Photo by Jawan Scott

The last few years of my journey have been difficult. There were times I felt so unsure, and there were times I was confident in the direction I was going in. I used to feel pressure from social media to keep going, even when I didn't feel like it. I used to place a lot of pressure on myself to push through, even when I knew I needed a break.

I eventually hit a wall and then kept hitting that wall until I fell into a mental "ditch." I was at a loss. I didn't know how to approach the feeling I had inside, which I never experienced before. It took some time and a lot of falling, but I developed a system that would help me identify red flags before getting to that ditch and the steps I needed to take to preserve my mental health.

It started with identifying the various aspects of who I am in a work environment. I realized that I have two different work modes—corporate and personal. I spent the majority of my career thus far split between nonprofit and music, so I have been no stranger to working 9 am to 5 pm and then building my business from 5 pm to 2 am. I spent many years doing that, plus law school, leaving very little time for sleep and working out. My next step was to isolate the developed habits that were adding to my decline and stop them where they were.

I noticed my productivity level slowly decreasing in many areas of my work which led to the added pressure to get more

done. I then began to see how this pressure weighed on me internally and realized I had to do something about it. I wrote down my red flags and began mapping out how to tackle them.

Over the years, I have had an organizational system that helps me categorize where I am and where I want to be, and the "how" between changes over time. Two things that I have found most helpful on the journey to keep mental health at the forefront have been 1) my affirmations board in my yoga corner and 2) the everyday essential to-do list that keeps me on track to maintain my peace. I have become intentional about spending time in each of these realms as much as possible and have found that it provides the internal stability I needed. When life presents challenges, I don't feel as overwhelmed as I used to. I now feel more equipped to find a way out and elevate to the next level of growth.

Finding your system may take time. I learned that I needed a lot of patience with myself and, more importantly, consistency. It can prove to be difficult at times, but I encourage you to keep pushing. The things we typically want most in life require discipline that we learn from falling then getting up. Understanding your triggers helps you strategize through those challenges, and I firmly believe the central part of success included putting my mental wellbeing first. I don't feel ashamed about it and am excited to continue my journey.

Keep your axe safe and secure while playing with guitar strap locks designed to keep your strap from falling off your guitar. There are many brands to choose from, so make sure to purchase a reputable brand like Dunlop, D'Addario, Ernie Ball, and others.



Orange Amps Rockverb MKIII

"The first time I plugged into the Rockverb MKIII I felt an instant connection ... the tone I had been looking for, very responsive and powerful at a low volume and when cranked up it never loses clarity ... this amp is the lion of amps in the rock jungle, check it out." ~ Orianthi

Source: Orange Amps



Photo by Ross Halfin

COME TO MY WINDOW

BY Kathryn Cloward



Photo by Maria Orlova from Pexels

When *Guitar Girl Magazine* publisher Tara Low told me Melissa Etheridge would be on the cover of this issue, my mind immediately bolted to the melody of her hit song, "Come To My Window." Then, as the next few days went by, every time I thought about what I wanted to write for this article, I found myself singing her lyrics, "Come to my window. Crawl inside.

Wait by the light of the moon. Come to my window. I'll be home soon."

During one of those vocal sequences, I had a beautiful light bulb aha moment, realizing the concept of "my window" was what I was sitting with most. I envisioned my window like a portal to my truth, my being, and wondered what someone else was seeing and experiencing with access to that portal. And more importantly to my wandering mind, what was I willing to show them? What am I willing to show you? Am I even open to the idea of allowing you the opportunity to come inside and actually know me?

Sidebar for a moment. Yes, I am aware that the iconic love song's lyrical story was more about a lover coming over and experiencing the freedom of that love. Yet isn't that the beauty of a song's artistry? You can listen to a song a thousand times and hear something different each time, extracting meaning and symbolism for your own journey within the resonance. It can be by way of feeling the whole song or having a billboard size aha moment with one captivating lyrical line—all of which can certainly shift and reshape as time goes on.

Instead of attaching myself to the resonance of a lover's meaning at this phase of my journey, the melody of "Come To My Window" has my mind streaming with the awareness that I am at a new phase of my life. I'm in a renewal of deeper discernment about what truly being seen feels like to me and what feels safe and not safe.

We are in hyper-exposed times. Social media has connected us to one another and also created an interesting portal into what matters most to people—or what we perceive to be so based on what's presented. To each their own, as I have found social media to be an interesting experiment.

My truth is that I am a really private person. But I wasn't always so private. I used to publicly process a lot on social media, and that wasn't always so wise. But I had to learn. I got burned and burned myself a few too many times and realized, damn girl, shut that door, close that window—CLOSE THE CURTAINS—and get back to honoring your privacy again.

I remember about nine years ago, I was writing a book about my life when I came to a very clear awareness that I did not want those stories to be the stories I was telling for the next ten years. I knew I had more life to live and more wisdom to gain, and that moment in time was NOT the version of me I wanted to cement in print. That was not the window I wanted to be open for all to see, so I stopped writing the long-winded explanation of me and shut it all down.

That's when writing songs started stirring within me again, after many years of that creative portal being closed. And soon, I came to realize that songwriting is my window.

Through songwriting, I invite you into my world—into my inner being. My heart and life experiences are revealed in a tapestry of wordplay. Through songwriting, I am open.

Through songwriting, I invite you to come to my window and see me. And perhaps within that invitation is an opportunity for reflection—to see yourself, too. The portal of opening up to feeling music and hearing lyrical stories allows us an opportunity to experience resonance with each other, and while we are all different, some experiences and feelings align.

There is a window invitation awaiting all of us—an offering of our being to the world if we are willing to be open to it. I think that's what we've gained over the years through Melissa Etheridge's musical journey. She's given us windows to see her and to see ourselves—the window of watching her own the stage with her guitar. The window of hearing her soulful empowerment revealed with lyrical power. The window of watching a woman in her own process be open, daring, and vulnerable. The window perhaps we all needed to see what was possible for ourselves to know we, too, could rock the stage of our lives.

None of us have the same vantage point, for we all experience and perceive from our own awareness. Yet when we open up the window of our being and share with others, whatever we are willing to share, it is through that opening of being seen that we connect deeper to ourselves.

What's your window? —

ASK ALEXX

RETURNING TO LIVE SHOWS

Dear Alexx,

How has your experience been with the recent return of live music performances? How have you felt about performing live—nervous, anxious, relieved, thrilled? What was your first time back on stage like for you? What has it been like booking gigs? How have the audiences treated you?

Looking forward to your reply, as I'm cautiously optimistic and excited to get back to playing live myself!

~ Taters Branzino

Dear Taters,

Those are great questions, Taters! To say I'm excited about returning to the stage again is a gross understatement—I am absolutely ELATED. I had no idea just how much I missed the feeling of playing a live show until my band Batfarm performed again recently. I had been feeling so lost throughout the pandemic, questioning all kinds of things about myself and my career. But as soon as I played that first chord on our first gig back, I was at peace again. I was definitely nervous and probably a little stiffer than I normally would have been in the past, but I suppose that's what over a year of not playing will

do to you. After that initial show, though, it was like riding a bike.

We've been getting a lot of show offers as of late, so we're seizing those opportunities and playing for whoever wants to listen. We're just so glad to be back and playing again, so we'll play wherever, whenever. We were just starving for that live energy. While live streams are cool and all, it's just not the same, and you don't get that in-person feedback or response.

The crowds have all been very kind and supportive of us when we've played. They've tipped really well and bought merch, so we can tell they really appreciate us being there. I hope that trend continues and that people realize just how important and integral the live music experience is.

I've also talked to some booking agent friends lately, and they've said they are absolutely slammed after not having worked for well over a year. People are aching for live music and the social connections that it brings. I'm excited myself to be attending concerts again as there are so many shows coming up that I can't wait to see!

Ultimately, it feels so good to be doing what we love again, so for that, we are truly grateful! Thanks so much for writing in, and here's hoping you get back out there soon yourself!

~Alexx Calise



Photo by Anabel DFlux

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

VANESSA'S VIBE

PICKUPS 101 - SINGLE COIL & HUMBUCKER PICKUPS

By Vanessa Izabella

Whether you are an acoustic player looking to purchase your first electric guitar, a new player starting out, or a seasoned pro/veteran, knowing what kind of tone you like can be a big factor in which guitar you purchase. Guitar tone is made up of a series of factors—a few of the main ones are your guitar's pickup(s), amplifier, and effects pedals. Although there are smaller things that can also affect your tone, like your choice of guitar strings or what type of wood the guitar is made of, pickups, amps, and pedals are the main ones. In this edition, I wanted to talk about the two main types of guitar pickups found in some of the most iconic electric guitars—the single coil and humbucker pickups.

The single coil pickup was invented sometime in the 1920s by George Beauchamp, who was experimenting with amplifying the guitar by using a phonograph pickup. It was a success, and these pickups are in some of the most iconic guitars ever made. The Fender Stratocaster and Fender Telecaster are two guitars that sport these legendary

pickups, and the tones that come from them have been made famous by the likes of Bonnie Raitt, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, to name a few. The single coil tone can be described as bright, clear, and precise. It is a favorite of musicians who play in the country, blues, funk, and rock genre. However, one of the downsides of the single coil pickup is that it was a bit noisy. This is where the humbucker enters the picture.

Essentially, the humbucker pickup, invented by Seth Lover of Gibson, is two single coil pickups, wound (pickups are wound with copper wiring) in opposite directions of each other. Guitar technicians found that this technique helped eliminate the hum. They also discovered that in creating the humbucker, the guitar tone was fatter, more powerful, and created a much bigger tone than the single coil. Humbuckers are most famous for being the pickups for the iconic Les Paul guitar. Humbuckers are great for hard rock, jazz, and heavy metal, to name a few

genres. Some iconic players who use humbuckers include Les Paul, Jimmy Page, Billy Gibbons, and Slash.

Each pickup has its place in music, and nowadays, you can even purchase a guitar that has "coil-splitting," which has switches and knobs that can produce both the single coil and humbucker tone from the same pickup. There are also combinations of both types of pickups in one guitar for those looking to have both tones available.

The subject of pickups and electronics on a guitar can get very broad and deep, so this is just a general overview for those wondering where to start. There are plenty of resources online to answer your questions about pickups and the tones they produce.

Some of the biggest and most well-known guitar pickup makers are Fender, Gibson, DiMarzio, and Seymour Duncan. I encourage you to learn more about pickups, as they are key to YOUR tone.

Happy tone hunting!!! 🎸



Photo by Jack Lue

GIG GALLERY

We're so excited that live performances are returning. We attended The Gorge on August 14, 2021, in Quincy, WA, and were able to see Brandi Carlile, Sheryl Crow, and Amythyst Kiah and The Watershed Festival in George, WA, from July 30 thru August 1, 2021. Enjoy these photos!

Photos by Kirk Stauffer

The Gorge



Amythyst Kiah



Sheryl Crow



Brandi Carlile



Watershed Festival



Brittany Spencer



Ashley McBryde



Callista Clark



Lindsay Ell



Sarah Jones



Kylie Morgan



Alana Springsteen

Live performance shots from Jack Lue Photography



Constance Antoinette
live w/ Spencer Krasch
at Warner Park on
August 8, 2021



Temper Mental on July 16, 2021



Temper Mental on July 16, 2021



Pvris at the Fonda Theater in Los Angeles on September 2, 2021



Lindsey Stirling at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on August 30, 2021



Disrupted Euphoria at Whisky A Go-Go in Los Angeles on August 26, 2021



Through The Oculus at Fitzgerald's Irish Pub in Huntington Beach, CA, on August 7, 2021

Meet Me at the Alter performed at FivePoint Amphitheater in Los Angeles on August 27, 2021





Liz Cooper
Hot Saw
September 3, 2021
Thirty Tigers



Terri Hendrix
Pilgrim's Progress Project 5.5
September 3, 2021
Independent Release



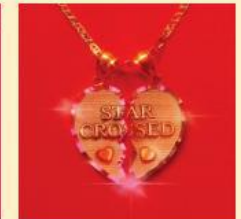
Heartless Bastards
A Beautiful Life
September 10, 2021
Sweet Unknown Records/Thirty Tigers



Riddy Arman
Riddy Arman
September 10, 2021
La Honda Records & Thirty Tigers



Samantha Fish
Faster
September 10, 2021
Rouder Records



Kacey Musgraves
Star-Crossed
September 10, 2021
MCA Nashville, Interscope



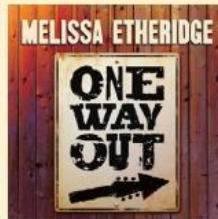
Slothrust
Parallel Timeline
September 10, 2021
Dangerbird Records



Caterina
Perfect
September 10, 2021
Dark Lit Studios



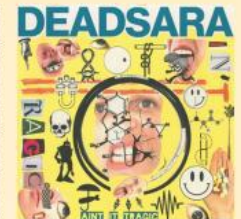
Kristen Merritt
Joi
September 14, 2021
K-MUSIC



Melissa Etheridge
One Way Out
September 17, 2021
BMG



The Cocktail Slippers
Shout It Out Loud
September 17, 2021
Wicked Cool Records



Dead Sara
AINT IT TRAGIC
September 17, 2021
Warner Records



Anna Egge
Between Us
September 17, 2021
StorySound Records



Charlotte Wessels
Tales From Six Feet Under
September 17, 2021
Napalm



Japanese Breakfast
Sable
September 23, 2021
Sony Music Masterworks



Emily Fremben
It's Me or the Dog
September 24, 2021
Independent



Jane Mathew
SUCH PERFECT LIVES
September 24, 2021
Independent



Esperanza Spalding
Songwrights Apothecary Lab
September 24, 2021
Concord Records



Joanne Shaw Taylor
The Blues Album
September 24, 2021
KTBA Records



Brandi Carlile
In These Silent Days
October 1, 2021
Low Country, Elektra



Swellshark
All of My Almost
October 1, 2021
Independent



Lala Lala
I Want The Door To Open
October 8, 2021
Hardly Art



Side Pony featuring Alice Wallace & Caitlin Cannon
Lucky Break
October 8, 2021
Independent



Ladyhawke
Time Flies
October 8, 2021
BMG



LP
Churches
October 8, 2021
Block 13 Productions



Shannon Lay
Geist
October 8, 2021
Sub Pop



Gypsum
Gypsum
October 12, 2021
Sonic Ritual



Allie Dunn
As Gone on Gene
October 15, 2021
Porter Rose Records



MaHA Rocks
I Will Survive
October 17, 2021
Independent



Katie Callahan
The Water Comes Back
October 22, 2021
Independent



Jackson+Sellars
Breaking Points
October 22, 2021
Anti Records



Sue Foley
Pinky's Blues
October 22, 2021
Stony Plain Records



Natalie Jane Hill
Solely
October 29, 2021
Dear Life Records



Aimee Mann
Queens of the Summer Hotel
November 5, 2021
SuperEgo Records



Joan As Police Woman
The Solution Is Restless
November 5, 2021
PIAS America



Courtney Barnett
Things Take Time, Time Takes Time
November 12, 2021
Milk!

#GUITARGIRL

MEGAN MALONEY

About Me: My name is Megan Maloney. I am a rock guitarist based in Raleigh, NC. I am the lead guitarist in the mostly all-female Rock band The Phobes. (The Phobes band).

My gear: My go-to guitar is the Ibanez RG with a Floyd Rose Tremolo. I LOVE this guitar because its versatile. I have to have the Floyd especially when playing rock because I like to bend notes like Eddie Van Halen. When it comes to my gear tone, I like the authenticity of tube amps and analog pedals. I use a Fender Hot Rod tube amp for most gigs, mostly because its compact, lightweight, and loud. It's a great amp if you are on the go. My favorite pedals are the MXR Super Badass distortion pedal and MXR Carbon Copy, and the Vox Wah. I really like to use Ernie Ball nickel wound strings on my electric guitars. I love how smooth they feel, and they last forever. I've had a bunch of strings wear out on me after just changing them, but Ernie Ball seems to last.

Favorite guitar riff or lick that inspired you to play guitar?
Not really a riff, but the chords to "Blitzkrieg Bop" by the Ramones. My big sister let me borrow her greatest hits CD by the Ramones, and I wore the album out. They were the reason I wanted to play guitar. It was punk rock—it was fast, rebellious and easy to play along with.



Photo by Bobby Roebuck -Shot to the Head Photography

M U D S P U I Y D H E G Q Y B R D N A L G T D U R Y C P L S Z X I D H M K E N L
T B X A I W U J L W H S S E P T M R P M C M U E U L I R O R I M V A A P L R B P
Q S J F Q N G I G G A L L E R Y Z B G C N Q X S G C A E L I G V J B G L P Y F P
Q W V E I W G M X N I X S F H U Y A G S U R C I K B T D G E I H J V A D K X O O
W T S I D J H L P U W Y S D T A E N U T Q S N S Q C N N I M V R Y U L G N O K P
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Z V Y C A I Z R P C B K W B R T X Z L D K X P F R T H F N P I D T I W A M L U O
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C I O I B H R O U Z F I F W J I U F E H A J Y Z A H I V O R G D M Z C S G C R F
V T U R L A S E C E O M L Q W D K A F W T V H N S N Q O Y W I Y S I P I Z A M P
W I R E A J R H I K D A Q U V F U F K S D I G H U Y O Z C F N K Z F T T X K A D
T W D D D R U A L V A M U T G S L L X W B N M F O F Z H G B I W I B E A O L R D
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G V N A P H J Z Q D O M D C H Q L A X C R O S F D M N A Z R C O P B N A J Y I R
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T H A M M E D Z O I I E W A O R Y M V A D H N U U L E E S E S D C F S I S B G S
X S N O R Y U T O L A Y D T D L F E N B W O C Y E D W R D S T B J H R A W O U A
V C H C N P B K C T A H T R U E L V O X A K T N I R A H L F R O C C O N P Q I E
K M A R I A N A L I M A T G L F P G Y E E I Q L L N C Z D U O H M G L A Q O T O
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D K X P D Z C Y K B Q L K A J T N B J B L I W V S H P Z W O Y P B K A N O V R L
G Y N W C S L Y S F J Q I E R E O Q M O H W G J V Z J L L O F A K I T D I C C L
I E R F I C R J S L Q S I E N Q X F L Z L R Q T P S H Q S S J U K K T G O O S
M N U R S R D A U G B K E F E N H T L R I G R A T I U G Q S A N Z I B H N I L O
A R F E K T J H T L N T K K N M Y E N O L A M N A G E M R W M P G W V E I R L P
P R B T C A N O B I D I G W P I Q O N Y A O H N U O E E K A A O U O H P T A E A
I M U B I E F M P B U D R T H Z T G U R T X X X S L I G L K N C D N D U I D E C
C Z T O P S K K Z A T G O T R L E S I U Z A X X I F V G J D T O C G G R D N S
K F U A O A E D J M J K A X S P N E V G R L L S I Y L P N A H W U J N E W A F Z
U Z O R B E D C R O K U I N K R L Z S P B N S L H O Q H S E A J S E D R G D A B
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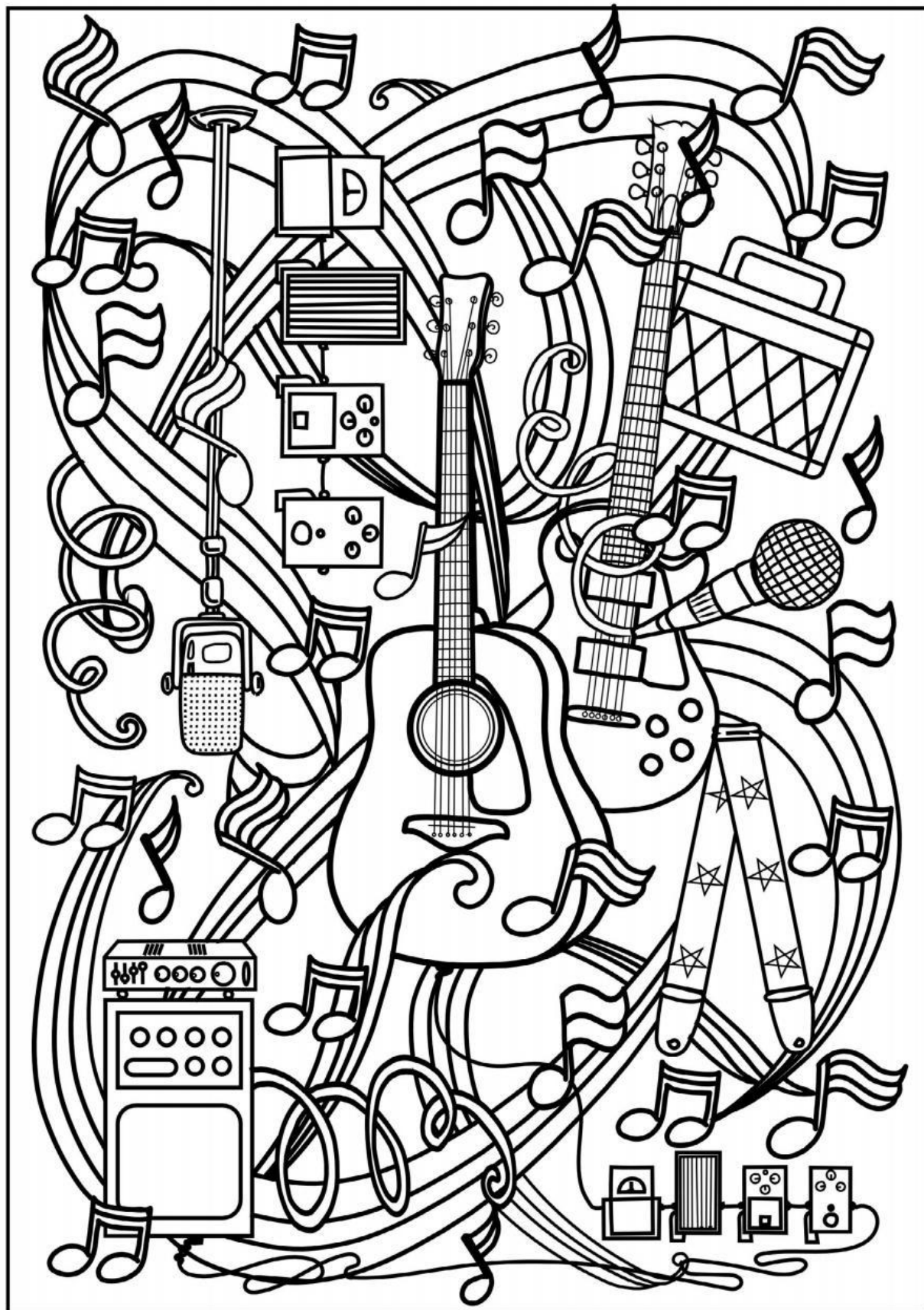
WORD LIST

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. AMPLIFIERS | 11. DADDARIO | 22. IMMORTAL AXES | 33. NAMM | 44. SEYMOUR DUNCAN |
| 2. ARCHON AMPS | 12. DEAD SARA | 23. JONI MITCHELL | 34. ONE WAY OUT | 45. SINGLE COIL |
| 3. ARIELLE | 13. ELIXIR STRINGS | 24. KIKI WONG | 35. PAUL REED SMITH | 46. SONGWRITING |
| 4. AVIANA AND THE PURE ROOT | 14. EVENTIDE | 25. LUNA GUITARS | 36. PEDALBOARD | 47. TAYLORSENSE |
| 5. BOG STREET | 15. FASTER | 26. MAGGIE ROSE | 37. PEDAL MOVIE | 48. TIFFS BASS |
| 6. CAPOS | 16. FENDER | 27. MAMII | 38. PEDALS | 49. UKULELE |
| 7. CHORDBUDDY | 17. FRETBOARD | 28. MARIANA LIMA | 39. PICKS | 50. VIRGINIA CASTRO |
| 8. COLLEEN FAZIO | 18. GIG GALLERY | 29. MARTIN GUITAR | 40. PICKUPS | |
| 9. COMMANDER IN CHIEF | 19. GUITAR GIRL | 30. MEGAN MALONEY | 41. ROCK AND ROLL | |
| 10. CUTAWAY | 20. HAVE A SEAT | 31. MELISSA ETHERIDGE | 42. ROMBO PICKS | |
| | 21. HUMBUCKER | 32. MESA BOOGIE | 43. SAMANTHA FISH | |

TRIVIA

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. What camp will Melissa Etheridge be appearing at in January 2022? | 6. Who is this edition's Artist Spotlight? |
| 2. Joni Mitchell was named Person of the Year for what organization? | 7. How many knobs does the Eventide UltraTap have? |
| 3. What guitar does Megan Maloney play? | 8. What body styles does the Martin D13-E have? |
| 4. What was Guitar Gabby's Being a Boss tip about? | 9. What is the name of Samantha Fish's new album? |
| 5. What is the name of Arielle's guitar? | 10. What is the name of the company that Victoria Castro owns? |

→ Mind Game answers on page 77



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JENNIE VEE (EAGLES OF DEATH METAL)
RHONDA SMITH (PRINCE, JEFF BECK)
GRETCHEN MENN (ZEPPEARELLA)
ROXY PETRUCCI (VIXEN)
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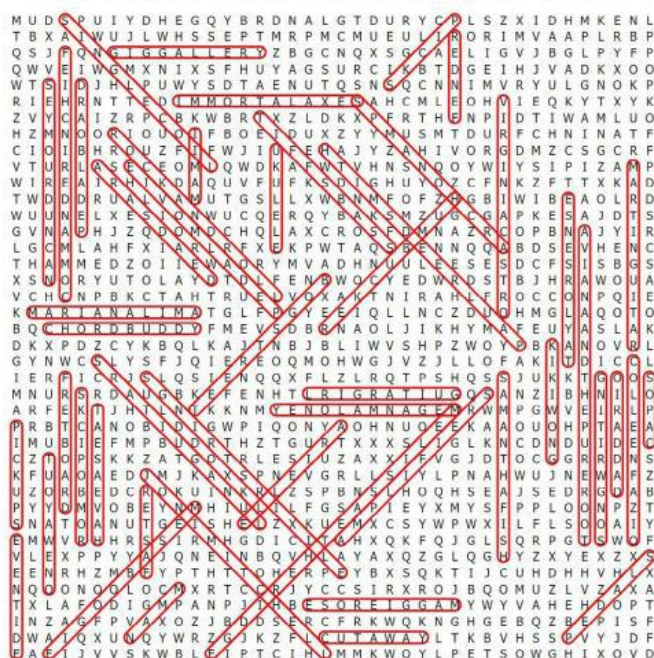
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WORD SEARCH ANSWER



1. Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp
2. Music Cares
3. Ibanez RG
4. Mental health
5. Two Tone
6. St. Vincent
7. Six
8. Dreadnought
9. Faster
10. Get'm Get'm

Trivia Answers

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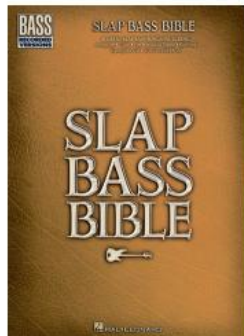
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WHAT WE'RE READING NOW!

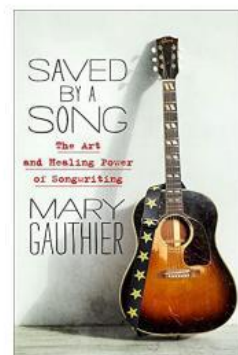


Immortal Axes: Guitars That Rock
Lisa S. Johnson
September 28, 2021

Lisa S. Johnson has done it again! The photographer behind the highly successful *108 Rock Star Guitars* has created her second hardcover, coffee table style book highlighting iconic guitars of some of the greatest in the industry—B.B. King, Bo Diddley, Orianthi, Nancy Wilson, Suzi Quatro, and many others. The foreword was written by Peter Frampton and the afterword by Suzi Quatro.

Saved by a Song: The Art and Healing Power of Songwriting
Mary Gauthier
July 6, 2021

In this memoir, Mary Gauthier details her life from childhood to today—a life with a dysfunctional family, on being adopted and searching for her birth mother, dealing with addiction, coming out as gay, friends that were lost due to AIDS, discovering and pursuing her passion as a singer-songwriter, and writing with SongwritingWithSoldiers. Many times tearful, Gauthier has a knack for storytelling by giving readers an insight into several of her songs and the inspiration behind them, and how she approaches the songwriting process, and most importantly, how songs can help heal a soul.



FAN FAVORITES

This summer marked the music industry's return to NAMM after a year and a half of seclusion, mask wearing, and social distancing. It was great to see people out again in restaurants and on the streets, but while the vibe felt the same approaching Music City Center, the comparison to previous shows was faint to say the least. We were pleased to see iconic names like Martin Guitar and Taylor Guitars in their similar locations inside the hall, but strolling the floor revealed that many of the instrument manufacturers which have been so key to the success of previous shows in Nashville did not make the trip this year.

But the good news for GGM, is that some great reconnections occurred including some time spent with Guitar Girl Magazine's cover artist Lindsay Ell who was in the Siren pedal booth demoing her signature Etana pedal. Lindsay has so many cool things going on—her new pedal, heading out on tour with Blake Shelton, and she was just fresh off her Fox and Friends Summer Concert Series appearance performing her latest single "Hits Me," a song about a breakup with a very smooth country blues blend. We also caught up with our good friends, the founders of Keep Music Alive, Joann

and Vincent Pierdomenico, who recently released their second book on how music can change your life, aptly titled *88 More Ways Music Can Change Your Life*, which was a follow up to a previous book *88 Ways Music Can Change Your Life*. We caught up with one of our early Guitar Girl's, Arielle, who was showcasing her signature model Brian May Guitar "Arielle." We met guitarists Sybil Grace and Savannah Rae, along with a new pick company that endorses Grace called Bog Street Picks. They have some really amazing guitar picks and they're made here in the USA.

Enjoy some of our photos from Summer NAMM 2021 in Nashville, Tennessee!



Arielle and Sybil Grace



Yamaha



Lindsay Ell at Siren Pedals



Bog Street Picks



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. alexcalise.net

Gabbi Calvert is a writer, publicist, and artist from Findlay, OH, who now resides in Nashville, TN. Gabbi is incredibly passionate about all things pop culture, but her forever love is music. Following her passion for entertainment and music, she graduated from Belmont University in April of 2021 with a B.S. in Creative and Entertainment Industries with a minor in music business. Her academic endeavors led her to find a home working in music public relations and she is now a senior publicist at Publicity Nation PR. Not only does Gabbi work and thrive in the music industry, she is also a musical artist herself. She began singing and playing gigs at the age of 12 in her hometown and has an extensive background in performance. Under her stage name Gabrielle Vaughn, she has released two singles. Gabbi is also a member of the all-female cross-genre supergroup The Highway Women. In her free time, Gabbi loves spending time with friends and family, attending drag shows, and bonding with her two guinea pigs Queenie and Peach and her cat Mitzi.

Kathryn Cloward is an award-winning book series author, performing songwriter, media publisher and producer, director, and serial entrepreneur. She's the founder and CEO of Kandon Unlimited, Inc., a heart-centered mindful media company intent on creating positive and empowering media for people of all ages. kathryncoward.com

Bri Foxx is a 26-year-old rock musician who fronts a band called Toxic Foxtrot. She is a self-taught acoustic-electric guitar player of fourteen years but originally a classically trained vocalist. Music is the coal that kindles her soul, and she strives to help the world be a better place. At two years old, she was diagnosed with autism, and she has seen a lot of obstacles in her life. With the support of her family, music was very therapeutic to her development. Eventually, it led to a life of many hours on guitar and rock and roll. Even though she has had her setbacks, Foxx wants to help anyone who is struggling with the struggles of self-identity and the place one finds in the world through the power of the revival of rock. "No one should ever have to feel like they're alone."

Cece Gair is a freelance copywriter based in Toronto, Canada. When she's not doing work for *Guitar Girl*, she writes all kinds of web content and dabbles in ghostwriting. If you're looking for her, she's probably in the nearest bookstore. Find her on Twitter at @CumiskeyCollect and Instagram at @emmariacumiskey.

Kate Koenig is a songwriter, music journalist, and music teacher based in Brooklyn, New York. From 2016 to 2018, she was the editor of *Music Alive!*, a music education magazine for middle schoolers, and associate editor for its sister publication, *In Tune Monthly*. Since her time at *In Tune*, she has been a regular contributor to *Guitar Girl*, *Acoustic Guitar*, and *Premier Guitar* magazines, as well as the annual *Martin Journal*. As a songwriter, she's released two albums—*Haircuts for Barbers* (2018) and *Etemenanki* (2021), both of which are available on all streaming platforms.

Lynna 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).

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

Jack Lue: I'm best known as GNR's first photographer and for my early work from the Sunset Strip back in the early '80s. I can actually say, I used film!

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

Steve McKinley is the bass player for Joel Kosche (of Collective Soul) in his solo band and

for the Led Zeppelin tribute Led Zepplified. He's been part of the Atlanta music scene for years playing in bands (i.e., Julius Pleaser, Sid Vicious Experience, Pretty Vacant, et al.). He has recorded and toured throughout the Southeast and is an ASCAP member. His songs have been played on the radio and television. With his electronics skills and experience, he runs Atlanta Tube Amp and Steve McKinley Electronics and is an Instructor on JamPlay.com. He roots for Atlanta United, works on cars, and drinks his coffee strong, hot, and black.

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.

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

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. Kirk Stauffer Photography

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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