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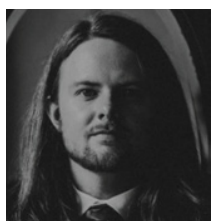
LOGY

Welcome to ISSUE

70



Hello and welcome to issue 70 of Guitar Interactive Magazine!



Once again it's been an incredible year for new products in the world of guitar. In this

issue's review section we take a look back at the very best of 2019 with reviews handpicked by expert reviewers Tom Quayle, Sam Bell, Nick Jennison, Phil Short and Gi magazine editor, Jonathan Graham. We hope you enjoy our look back at Guitar Interactive Magazine's best of 2019 and be sure to let us know if you agree with our choices, or if you feel we missed something out.

Of course, that's not all, as Guitar Interactive Magazine catches up with Wisconsin born blues-rock guitarist and vocalist, Jared James Nichols for the first time since the exciting launch of his signature Epiphone Les Paul Custom, and ahead of his first major UK tour that kicks off in February 2020.

For the last quarter-century, riding shotgun with Kenny Wayne Shepherd has been one heck of a rock 'n' roll road-trip. Erupting onto the early-'90s scene with his burn-it-down guitar solos and gut-punch songcraft—the 41-year-old he's become is even more magnetic, still pushing his Fender

Strat where others fear to fret, with an honesty that only comes with age and miles on the clock. Guitar Interactive Magazine sits down with the Louisiana gunslinger following the release of his brand new album 'The Traveler' for an exclusive interview and live performance.

As usual, with every issue, we have a whole host of exclusive lessons from Tom Quayle, Nick Jennison, Sam Bell, Giorgio Serci and Shauna Tohill for you to enjoy.

Happy New Year, and all the very best for 2020.

Guitar

Interactive

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Welcome to Guitar Interactive Issue 70

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DR STRINGS 17
ELIXIR 163&268-273
ERNIE BALL 149
EVENTIDE 105

FISHMAN 27
FRACTAL AUDIO 141
LANEY 2&3
LINE6/YAMAHA 79
MARSHALL
AMPLIFICATION 262-267
MARTIN GUITARS 15
MOOER 41
OVATION GUITARS 215
PEDALSLAKE 127
PRS 145

RODE 181
RODOSOUND 35&83
SENNHESIER 193
SHERGOLD 169
SPECTOR 239
STUDIOMASTER/
CARLSBRO 187
SUPRO 57
TAYLOR GUITARS 91
TECH 21 NYC 133
VIBES 127
VINTAGE 57



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TAB & PDF CONTENT

Turn to page 63 for your free downloadable content

ISSUE 69

Contents

INTERVIEWS

010

JARED JAMES NICHOLS:

Guitar Interactive Magazine catches up with Wisconsin born blues-rock guitarist and vocalist, for the first time since the exciting launch of his signature Epiphone Les Paul Custom, and ahead of his first major UK tour that kicks off in February 2020.



020

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD:

Still pushing his Fender Strat where others fear to fret, we sit down with the Louisiana gunslinger following the release of his brand new album 'The Traveler' for an exclusive interview and live performance.



FEATURES

032

Guitar Interactive Magazine proudly presents

THE HENDRIX SESSIONS:



COMPETITION

058

Jared James Nichols Signature Bundle Giveaway



REVIEWS - GUITARS, AMPS & FX

068 **Editor's Choice -**
Best of 2019

072 Laney Black Country
Customs LA30BL

076 Sterling by Music Man S
St Vincent

080 PRS Mark Tremonti SE
Signature Guitar

084 Marshall Studio Vintage
SV20C Combo

088 Mooer Ocean Machine

092 Seymour Duncan Dark
Digital Delay & Reverb

096 **Tom Quayle Choice -**
Best of 2019

100 Fractal Audio Axe FX II

106 Boss Waza Tube Amp
Expander

112 Eventide Rose

116 **Nick Jennison's Choice -**
Best of 2019

120 Martin OM28 Modern
Deluxe

124 Line 6 HX Stomp

128 Victory VX100 Super K

134 **Sam Bell's Choice -**
Best of 2019

138 ESP LTD MH-1000HS Q

142 Supro Blues King 12

146 Cort G Series G290 FAT

152 **Phil Short's Choice -**
Best of 2019

156 Sheptone Heartbreaker

160 PRS A265E and A270E

166 Victory V140 Super Duc

STUDIO TO STAGE

- 172** Studio To Stage Best of 2019
- 174** Tascam DR-05X - New
- 178** Audient Sono
- 184** TC Electronic 8210 DT Classic Reverb
- 190** Sennheiser XSW-D Wireless Digital Pedalboard Set
- 194** Studiomaster Sense 12A Active Stage Monitor

THE QUIET ROOM

- 198** The Quietroom's Best of 2019
- 200** Martin GPC-13E Grand Performance Acoustic
- 204** Yamaha CG - TA
- 208** Fishman Loudbox Mini Bluetooth Acoustic Combo
- 212** Taylor Grand Pacific Builder's Edition 717

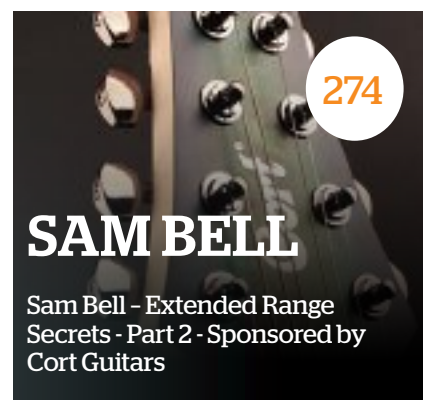
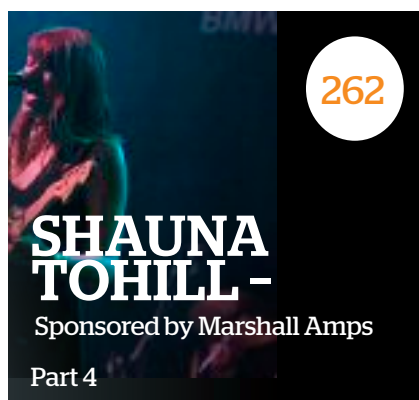
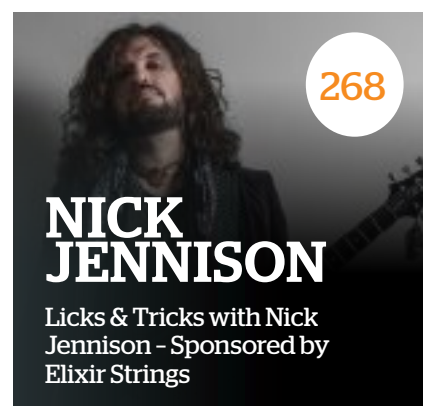
THE BASSMENT

- 226** Dan Veall 's Choice - Best of 2019
- 230** EA iAmp Classic and NL112 cabinet
- 236** Darkglass Hyper Luminal Compressor pedal
- 242** EBS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive Ultimate
- 246** Bergantino BIAmp
- 252** Spector Euro 4 LT

TECH SESSIONS

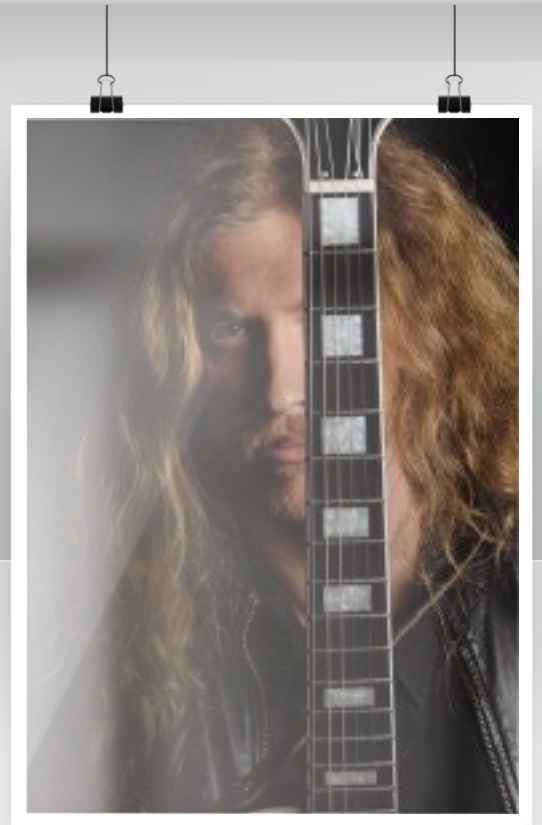


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INTERVIEWS

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INTERVIEWS_JARED JAMES NICHOLS

BLUES EVO LUT ION





Guitar Interactive Magazine catches up with Wisconsin born blues-rock guitarist and vocalist, Jared James Nichols for the first time since the exciting launch of his signature Epiphone Les Paul Custom, and ahead of his first major UK tour that kicks off in February 2020. »

JARED James Nichols has quickly become a force to be reckoned with in the blues-rock arena for his unique blues grit and gusto and bombastic arena-size rock 'n' roll. Having built up a solid reputation as a stunning heavy edged blues rock act and stage beast, Nichols has shared stages with the likes of ZZ Top, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Zaak Wylde, Glenn Hughes, Walter Trout, Blue Oyster Cult, UFO and Saxon just to name a few. His guitar playing can easily be described as raw, raucous and authentic and has even caught the attention of some of guitars biggest names, with Lynyrd Skynyrd's Gary Rossington being so impressed with Nichol's chops during his

support set that he invited him on stage to play lead guitar during a performance of "Sweet Home Alabama." Something that Skynyrd have never done before.

Jared has always been a natural performer. As soon as he got his first guitar at 14-years-old, the stage immediately called to Nichols. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that he grew up minutes away from The Alpine Valley Resort - where Stevie Ray Vaughan ultimately performed his last show. Nothing could predict just how adept at the six-string he would eventually become, however. He traces the beginning of his story back to a blues jam that his mother brought him to.



Jared James Nichols Interview



End of Time Official Video by Jared James Nichols

“Two weeks after I got an electric guitar, I was on stage with all of these old cats from Chicago playing the blues,” he recalls with a smile. “The music immediately resonated with me. It was all about the feeling and the soul behind it. None of these guys were music nerds. They were true blues guys

playing what they felt. That power and reality struck a chord in me.”

Soon, Nichols found himself practising for up to twelve hours every day. Hitting up the local jams, he ended up sharing the stage with legends including Buddy »



“I’m looking forward to playing the UK again...”

Guy, “Honeyboy” Edwards, and “Big Jim” Johnson as well as early supporting slots opening for Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Derek Trucks.

By his 21st birthday, he had logged over 500 gigs. After a short stint at Berklee School of Music in Boston, he headed out to Los Angeles where he garnered numerous accolades at the world-renowned Musicians Institute, winning the 2010 Jerry Horton guitar contest, the 2011 Les Paul tribute contest, and the 2011 “Outstanding Guitarist” award.

2012 saw him release his debut EP, ‘Live at the Viper Room,’ gaining the notice of both the guitar and music press alike and inking a deal with Sony/MTV’s Hype Music Publishing. The groundwork was laid for what would become his debut album, ‘Old Glory & The Wild Revival,’ released in 2015.

Jared returned with a brand new album ‘Black Magic’ late last year which is the follow up to ‘Old Glory & The Wild Revival.’ Featuring ten tracks recorded at The Boneyard in Boston as well as Johnny Depp’s home studio in Los Angeles and produced and co-written by Tony Perry and Jared James Nichols, the album is Nichols’ strongest yet and fully captures that incredible energy that emanates from a Jared James Nichols live show. »

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“This time we will be headlining our own shows, so it’s going to be a **special tour** for us...”



Jared James Nichols embarks on his first major UK tour in February 2020. The 8-date tour starts on Tuesday, February 25 at the Robin 2 in Bilston and ends at the Exchange in Bristol on Sunday the March 29. Special guests on all dates will be the Kent-based 4-piece rock band Collateral.

“I’m looking forward to playing the UK again,” says Jared. “The last time we toured the UK, we supported Living Colour and Wayward Sons. This time we will be headlining our own shows, so it’s going to be a special tour for us. We’ve been gradually building up a lot of momentum over the years, so the time feels right for a headline tour now.”

The tour follows Jared’s recent single *Nails in the Coffin* that was a popular A-listed radio hit on Planet Rock Radio. Recorded in Los Angeles, the single was produced and co-written by Mark Jackson and Ian Scott; best known for being the team behind the artist Dorothy and the hit single *The River* by Bishop Briggs.

“*Nails in the Coffin* has many different meanings,” says Jared. “It’s about overcoming the odds, always pushing forward. Never backing down or giving up to anything or anyone.” »

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competition this issue, for your chance to win some exclusive Jared James Nichols signature gear.

END»

Jared James Nichols UK Tour Dates.

Tuesday February 25 -

The Robin 2, Bilston

Wednesday February 26 -

Rescue Rooms, Nottingham

Thursday February 27 -

Yardbirds Rock, Grimsby

Friday February 28 -

Think Tank, Newcastle

Saturday February 29 -

The Garage 2, Glasgow

Sunday March 1 -

The Craufurd Arms

Friday March 27 -

Soup Kitchen, Manchester

Saturday March 28 -

The Dome, Tufnell Park, London

Sunday March 29 -

Exchange, Bristol

For more information on Jared James Nichols, please visit:

[facebook.com/Jaredjamesnichols](https://www.facebook.com/Jaredjamesnichols)



KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD:

TRAVELER

For the last quarter-century, riding shotgun with Kenny Wayne Shepherd has been one heck of a rock 'n' roll road-trip. Erupting onto the early-'90s scene with his burn-it-down guitar solos and gut-punch songcraft—the 41-year-old he's become is even more magnetic, still pushing his Fender Strat where others fear to fret, with an honesty that only comes with age and miles on the clock. **Guitar Interactive Magazine** sits down with the Louisiana gunslinger following the release of his brand new album "The Traveler" for an exclusive interview and live performance. »

FR



THE two years since ‘Lay It On Down’ have passed in a blur. Shepherd’s most recent studio album earned praise from respected media outlets like Classic Rock magazine for its “guitar rampages and thoughtful songcraft”. Although, for the bandleader, the true measure of its success was the reaction on the ground. “For me, true success is about a fan saying how much a song affected them, or watching them sing along in the front row. And I think Lay It On Down did all of those things.” If that quarter-century journey has taught Shepherd anything, it’s that there’s no such thing as mission accomplished. In 2019, with the choruses from ‘Lay It On Down’ still on our lips, the bandleader teases us with a tantalizing

twin-comeback, with ‘The Traveler’ set for release in May and plans afoot for a third spin with his all-star side-project, The Rides, alongside Stephen Stills and Barry Goldberg. “When you feel inspired, the best thing is to keep tapping into that,” he reasons. “If you step away, it’s hard to get it going again. I’ve been prolific lately, and I want to keep that going.”

Don’t mistake his momentum for autopilot. “The spirit of ‘The Traveler’ is a continuation, but this album definitely has its own identity. It may have more of an edge, a little more rock ‘n’ roll. As a grown man and a father, there are different thoughts and feelings that have come into focus for me.” Like all the great songwriters, Shep-



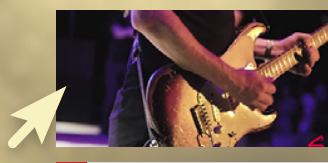
Kenny Wayne Shepherd Interview

herd's studio catalogue has always been the best way to get under his skin. His path was set from childhood, as he copped the licks from the records brought home by his concert promoter father, and was sent reeling from a "life-changing" meeting with Stevie Ray Vaughan, to make his own stage debut aged 13. With early albums like 'Ledbetter Heights' (1995), 'Trouble Is...' (1997), 'Live On' (1999) and 'The Place You're In' (2004), the blues-rock scene hailed its most honest new songwriter, who chronicled the highs and hard times, while dousing his shows with guitar pyrotechnics. "The first five years of my career," he remembers, "I was on tour non-stop. I'd probably go home for two weeks a year."

A musician in constant motion, Shepherd, has spent the post-millennium burning the tarmac and crossing continents, stopping off for releases that include 2011's acclaimed 'How I Go', 2014's rocket-fuelled collaboration covers album, 'Goin' Home', and 2017's 'Lay It On Down' not to mention, a couple of releases sprinkled in from his "side project" The Rides in 2013 and 2015. Now, 'The Traveler' reaches across the battle lines of a planet that has never

been so divided. "The album title comes from the song Tailwind," he explains. "We're all travelling together through this thing called life. These are testing times for us as a society, and it seems to me that it's been a bit crazy in the world lately, with so much division. Without making any kind of political point, it's like, 'Let's get through this together, appreciate one another and not always be trying to fight.'" The new songs typically began with a raw riff captured on Shepherd's cell phone. But they blossomed into full technicolour at Neptune Valley, Los Angeles, where the production team of Shepherd and Marshall Altman led a crack-squad studio band and sculpted a tracklisting that can be both savage and soothing. "I've always loved ballads, tender songs, emotional moments," says Shepherd. "But I also like to rock. I like to play fiery blues. This album has all those elements. It's the fans who give me that freedom, they've supported me through every kind of album I put out."

World-class guitar playing has always been his calling card, but in his forties, Shepherd knows when to blaze and when to breathe. "There's some restraint on 'The Traveler'," »



Shotgun Blues -
Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band

he considers. “As I’ve gotten older, I’ve started to lean towards the approach of less is more. I play for the song now, versus what gets me more ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’. There are some real moments on here, especially the solo in ‘I Want You’. That’s a really extended song, just for the sake of playing some great guitar. ‘Turn To Stone’ is a guitar anthem as well. It just builds and builds, and it’s the vehicle for the guitar solo to shine. For rhythm playing, one of the coolest songs is ‘Woman Like You’, it’s that straight-up Les Paul sound, but the guitar part just has some really interesting timing and becomes the signature riff for the song, weaving in-between the vocal.”

As for the voice, it’s never sounded stronger, fusing heartfelt delivery with some of the most sharply observed lyrics of Shepherd’s career. Currently, Shepherd shares more vocal responsibilities with his long-time singer, Noah Hunt, than on past releases, allowing the band more versatility in both the studio and in their live show. “I still don’t sound like Muddy Waters,” he smiles. “But I’ve grown as a vocalist. I owe a lot of the credit to Stephen Stills for pushing me in The Rides to sing more,” The lyrics were important on this record, too. With ‘Woman Like You’, my goal is to glorify the woman in the relationship, not tear her down. Some songwriters focus on the negative aspects of a relationship, but this song rocks and makes you feel good.”

As the album unfolds, the lyrics continue to dodge the blues clichés. “ ‘Long Time Running’ is someone expressing what it’s like to lead a complicated existence,” says Shepherd. “‘Tailwind’ is basically saying, ‘Hey man, »

“I just wanted to write a song with that **classic groove...**”

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let's stop all the fighting. There's no need for all the hate. Let's just get along and love each other'. On the surface, 'Gravity' is about a very complicated relationship. You could conclude that someone dies at the end of the song, but there are so many ways to interpret it."

Shepherd holds listeners rapt as the mood shifts from revelry to reflection. "'With We All Alright'," he says, "I just wanted to write a song with that classic groove. We started laying it down and it felt like a party, so that's what we wrote. It's all about having a good time, no need for any fussing and fighting. 'Take It On Home' is about really appreciating my roots. That's really hit me in the last few years. That song tells my story, as a person who travels the earth playing music, but ultimately knows that it's time to go back home, be grounded and regroup. On 'Better With Time', this guy is talking to the love of this life and it's like a moment of gratitude."

It's a testament to Shepherd's songwriting that his originals stand alongside two auspicious covers. "I was asked to do an event honouring Joe Walsh," he explains, "and everybody had to choose a couple of songs

to perform. I'm a catalogue guy. I like to dig and find the hidden gems. I came across 'Turn To Stone' on YouTube and watched it over and over. So we did that song at the event, and it came off so well we did a completely live take in the studio. As for the Buffalo Springfield song, 'Mr. Soul', Stephen had the idea of getting me, him and Neil Young onstage together at an autism benefit show. It was in the back of my mind that 'Mr. Soul' would be a killer song to do, and it was just a spectacular moment. So this was my way of paying tribute to that amazing experience on record."

He may move amongst legends, but the modest Shepherd brushes off any suggestion that he belongs in the same breath as the blues greats he collaborated with on 2007's platinum-selling and Grammy-nominated documentary, '10 Days Out: Blues From The Backroads'. Yet he'll accept that with the old guard fading, there's a responsibility to carry the torch. "The inescapable reality is that I'm getting older, and the generation of blues artists that went before, well, y'know, nobody lives forever. If I live long enough, I'm gonna wind up in the category of the older statesmen of the blues. For anyone in that position, I think it's »



Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band - Shame, Shame Shame Montreux 2019



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our duty to pass it on. It's not all about me and my music, the goal is a broader one of keeping the genre alive and relevant."

For Shepherd, that means travelling on. "Being on the move is just a part of who I am and what I do," concludes the bandleader, his eyes on the horizon. "Now that the album's finished, it'll soon be time to hit the road again. I don't have any intention of sitting idly. I just want to keep moving and keep creating and keep doing what I love – for as long as I possibly can..."

END «

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD BAND

the Traveler

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Woman Like You | 6. We All Alright |
| 2. Long Time Running | 7. Take It On Home |
| 3. I Want You | 8. Mr. Soul |
| 4. Tailwind | 9. Better With Time |
| 5. Gravity | 10. Turn To Stone |

**KENNY
WAYNE SHEPHERD
BAND**

*the
Traveler*



For more information on Kenny Wayne Shepherd,
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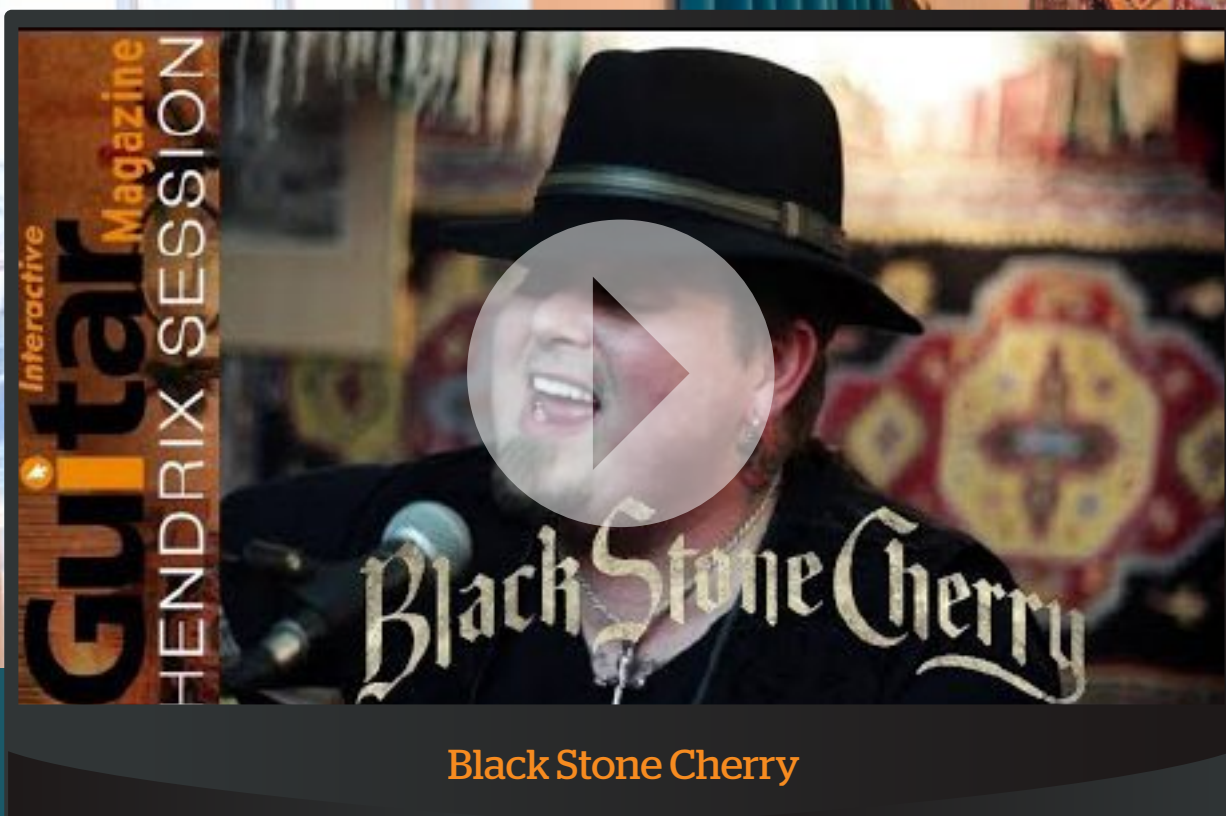
The **HENDRIX** *Sessions*

Guitar Interactive Magazine proudly presents *The Hendrix Sessions*—featuring live performances from some of the biggest names in music captured live in Jimi Hendrix’s 1960s Mayfair Flat. See all of the exclusive performances to date below.

About the Flat

The flat on the upper floors of 23 Brook Street was found by Jimi’s girlfriend, Kathy Etchingham from an advert in one of the London evening newspapers in June 1968 while he was in New York. He moved in briefly in July before returning to the United States for an extensive tour. He spent some time decorating the flat to his own taste, including purchasing curtains and cushions from the nearby John Lewis department store, as well as ornaments and knickknacks from Portobello Road market and elsewhere. He told Kathy that this was ‘my first real home of my own’. »





He returned to Brook Street in January 1969 and almost immediately launched into an exhaustive series of press and media interviews and photo shoots in the flat. On 4 January he made his infamous appearance on the BBC Happening for Lulu TV show, and gave his two Royal Albert Hall concerts in February. In March he was back in New York again and although Kathy remained at Brook Street for a while longer Jimi did not live there again.

Over the years the flat was used as office space until it was taken over in 2000 by the Handel House Trust. The intention of the Trust at the time was to restore the Hendrix flat alongside the restoration of Handel's house next door at 25 Brook Street, but this proved to be unachievable at the time. Instead, the space became the administrative offices of the Handel House Museum. From 2006 to 2013 the rooms were opened to the public as part of the Open House Weekend, and in 2010 as part of the exhibition Hendrix in London they were open to visitors for 12 days. »

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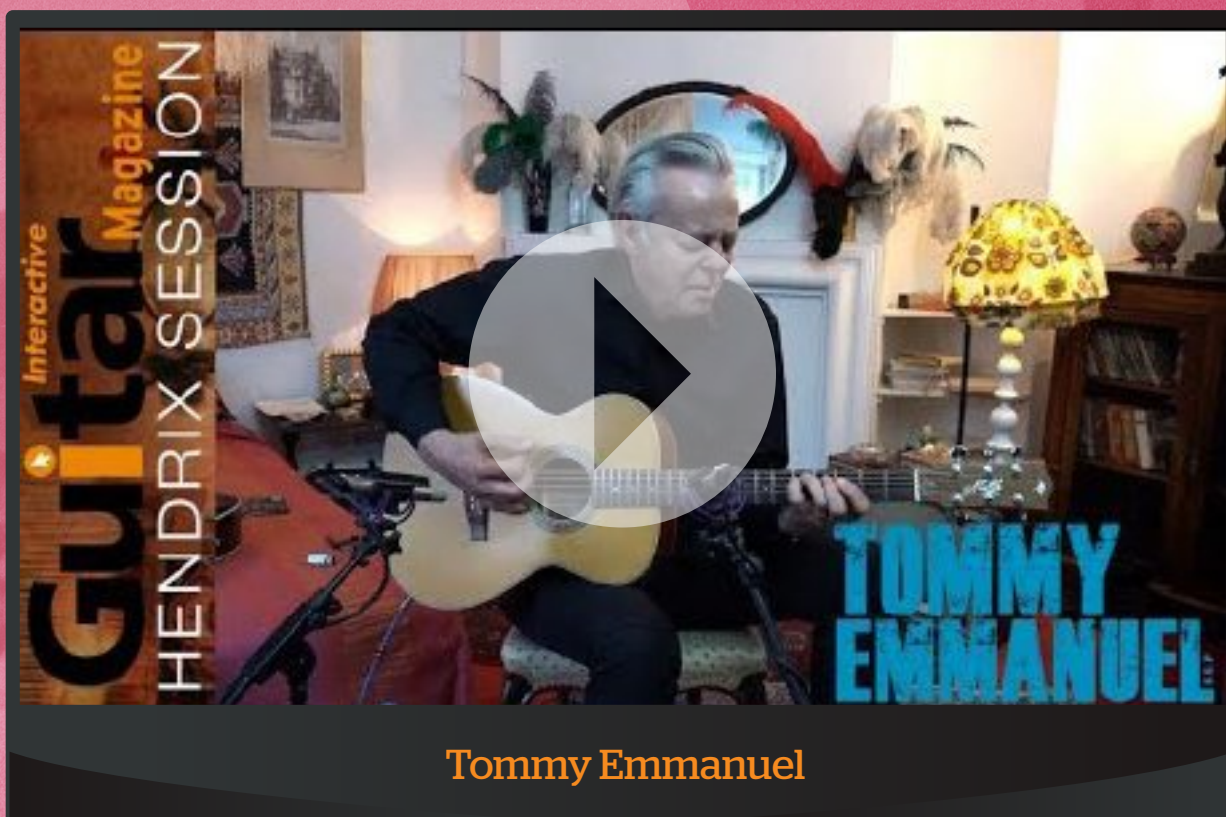
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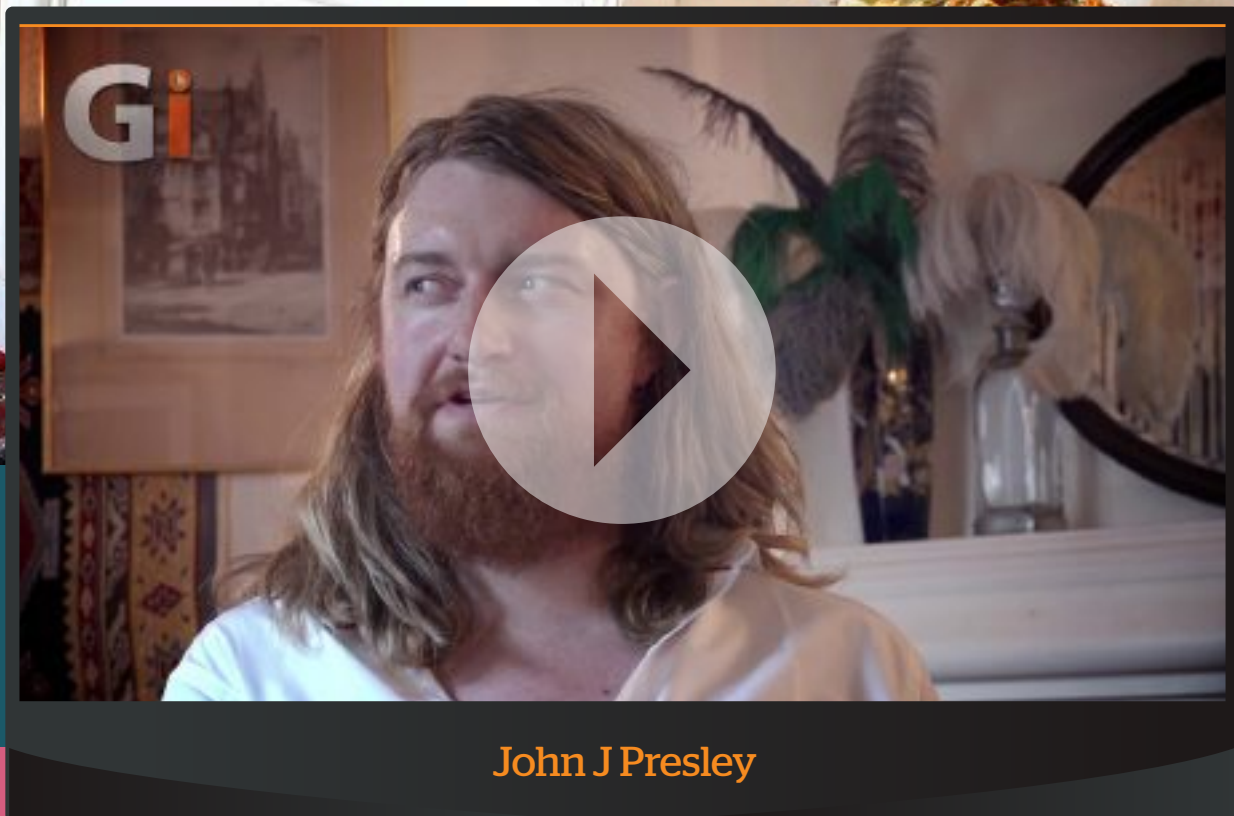
Halestorm



Doyle Bramhall II



In 2014 the Handel House Trust was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to restore the Hendrix Flat permanently, as well as creating a new studio space and improving visitor facilities. The Flat opened to the public in February 2016.



For more information on Handel & Hendrix in London, please visit:
handelhendrix.org





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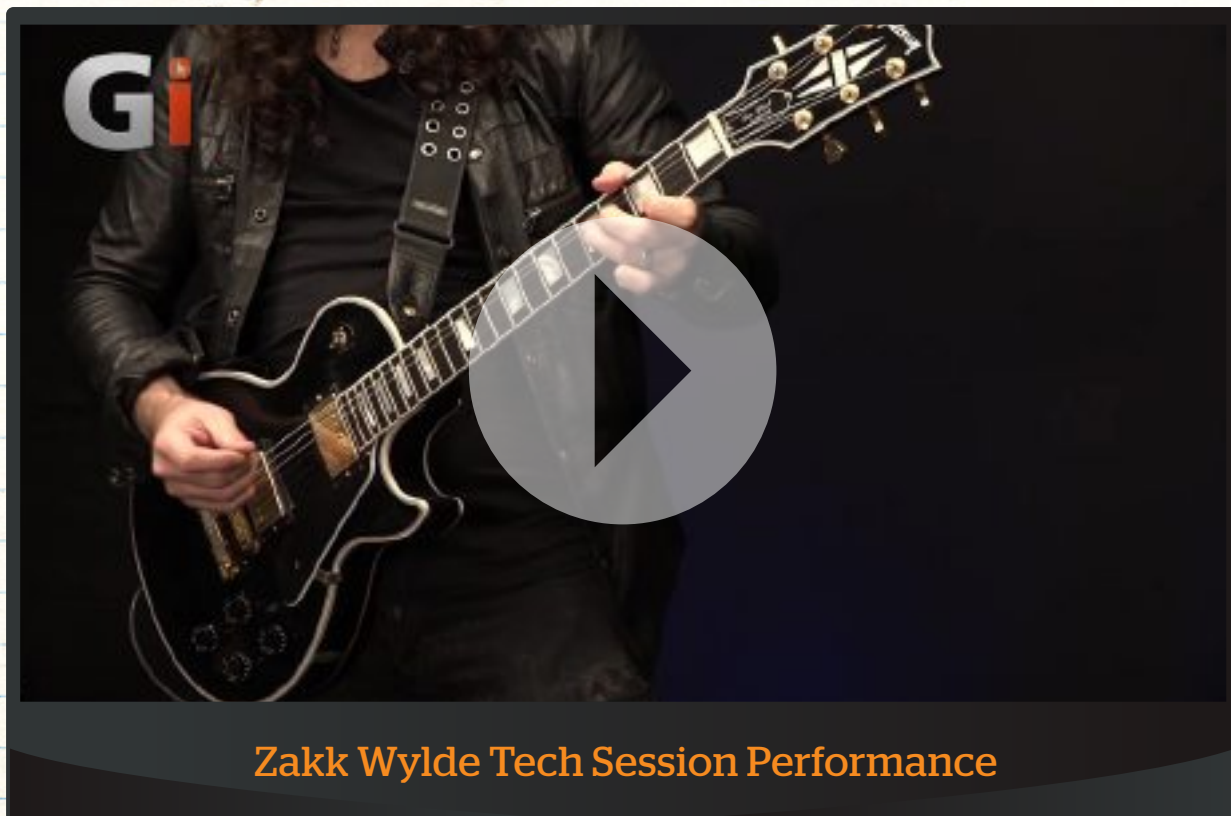
TECH SESSION

Tech Session, **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at the style of our metal icon. Most exciting and intense guitar player of a generation, Zakk Wylde is part of a lineage of Les Paul-toting rock players dating back to the birth of heavy metal. Rising in 1988 as the sideman for Ozzy Osbourne, Zakk's ferocious pentatonic-based sound is in stark contrast to the neo-classical shredders of the age. Like John Sykes and others, Zakk fused a blues-rock inspired vocabulary with next-level chops and ferocity to create a sound that drips with reckless abandon but is in fact tightly calculated. It might sound like the product of sheer brute force, but Zakk knows precisely what he's doing, and his playing is remarkably well organised.

GENERAL PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE

While Zakk's vocabulary is undoubtedly distinctive, his style is less about what's being played and more about how it's being played. Keep the following in mind as you go forward.

- » Perhaps the most immediately recognisable aspect of Zakk's playing is that monstrous vibrato. Moderate in speed, the intensity comes from the sheer width. A tone in width at the very least, Zakk's vibrato is often a tone and a half wide (that's three frets). Be careful with your muting, and unless you're also a man-mountain with hands to match, consider light strings!



[...>]

- » Zakk's right-hand touch is often a lot lighter than you might imagine. Picked runs are certainly aggressive, but those howling sustained notes require a more deft approach. The best way to achieve this is by relaxing the right-hand index-finger-and-thumb assembly to allow the pick to "brush" the strings.
- » On the subject of brushing the strings, the flesh of Zakk's right-hand index finger and thumb will usually slightly graze the strings as he picks. This is critical for creating that signature "meow-ing" tone, but it also helps with gauging the depth of the pick on the strings - especially useful with using the larger, elbow-driven picking movements Zakk is known for.
- » tically reproducing his style, you'll have to get on board with it.
- » Zakk's faster picking lines are usually elbow-driven (rather than wrist-based). Contrary to what some would have you believe, there's absolutely nothing wrong with picking from the elbow - it's actually one of the fastest ways you can move the pick!
- » Zakk is a pretty strict downward pickslanter (see the video for a more detailed explanation). This is most likely a product of the way he wears his guitar, which is low enough to make Jimmy Page blush. The upshot of this is that upstrokes are free to move from string to string, but downstrokes require some special attention.

PICKING

It probably hasn't escaped your attention that Zakk is a phenomenal picker. His accuracy, tone and intensity are pretty remarkable. His technique is actually quite unusual, and if you're interested in authen-

- » "Swiping" is a big part of Zakk's string change strategy when moving to a new string after a downstroke. See the video for a more detailed breakdown, but be aware that a relaxed pick grip is what makes this work.

With all that that in mind, let's stuck in!

BARS 1-4:

We begin with a rather nasty sounding semitone figure. This sort of line is one of the few times you'll see Zakk performing some subtle vibrato, as you shake the B string note to create a clashing texture against the static E string note. Kick on a Uni-Vibe type effect (Zakk uses a Dunlop Rotovibe) for extra eeriness!

BARS 5-11:

We launch into a crushing drop D riff (inspired by 2000s Ozzy) with a big slide, which you can use to mask turning off your Vibe. The pinched harmonics on the low string need to scream and not "ping" - a lighter attack will really help with this.

BAR 12:

A Hendrix-inspired exchange bend - use your second finger to

grab the g string as the b string goes up. Huge vibrato on the last note of this phrase is a necessity!

BARS 13-19:

There are a few quirks that make this BLS-inspired riff tick. First are the semi-harmonics on the low string. These aren't fully-fledged pinches, but the execution is similar. Start with the pick close to the bridge and move it gradually towards the neck. Big vibrato on the D7#9 chords will keep things nice and aggressive. Lock your fingers in place and move the whole left forearm to get the desired effect. Lastly, the rakes behind the bridge can be replicated on a guitar without a tune-o-matic by holding a 2nd fret natural harmonic and raking across the E to D strings.

BAR 20:

A classic downward pickslanting pentatonic lick to kick off the first solo, which is inspired by Zakk's work with Ozzy Osbourne. Bury your pick in the strings on

the downstrokes, and let it rise up on the upstrokes. It's an efficient way to play this kind of line with the kind of rock-solid timing that characterises Zakk's pentatonic work.

BARS 21-24:

Starting out with some sweeping unison bends, this passage quickly moves into a descending version of the lick in bar 20. The same principles apply here. Use a sneaky pull-off on the D string to give yourself time to get into position for the "chicken-pickin'" idea that closes out this phrase.

BARS 25-26:

This four-note figure is very common in Zakk's faster playing, and once you have the mechanics down, it's surprisingly easy to carry off. Use your second finger to fret the G string notes, and concentrate on getting the upstroke on the B string in time with your left hand - the rest should take care of itself.

BAR 27:

Another downward pickslanting pentatonic lick. Don't worry about sticking rigidly to the quintuplet rhythm - as long as you get all the notes in before the next bar; everything will be fine

BARS 28:

A fun little trick for creating Whammy-type effects on a stoptail guitar. Slide down the g string with your right hand, while hammering and pulling off with your left hand. Try to stay about 2 frets above the right hand with the left, but don't worry too much about being entirely accurate with this one.

BARS 29-36:

Switch your overdrive pedal off and your chorus on for some sombre BLS-inspired balladry. The chord changes can be a little tricky and require some tidy left-hand fingering. Get right up on the tips of your fingers to make sure everything rings out as it should.

BARS 37-41:

Soaring melodic leads are a big part of Zakk's repertoire, and that's the vibe we're going for in the second solo. Be sure not to overcook the right hand with this one - a gentler touch will let the notes bloom and sing. These slower passages also give plenty of time to use the right-hand thumb and fingers to mute adjacent strings when using super wide vibrato.

BARS 42-44:

Ramping up the drama with some Schenker/Moore inspired blues lines. You can pick the faster notes pretty hard, but ease up on the sustained notes to let the vibrato sing. The faster passage in bars 43-44 can actually benefit from being a little scrappy - too tidy, and there's no sense of danger. Be aggressive, and consider the lick in the transcription a "guideline" rather than an absolute instruction.





second solo. The bend at the end should be short and fast so that you can get back into the riff as quickly as possible.

BARS 53-59:

The same riff that we opened with get those legs spread wide, and if you've got the hair for it, bang that head! Or use this time to catch your breath - things are about to get a bit shreddy!

BAR 60:

The third solo is inspired by Zakk's more recent work with BLS. When he's not behaving himself with Ozzy, Zakk's playing can be downright vulgar! Stomp on your wah to really set things off.

This is also where we start to see Zakk's swiping mechanic in action. This section is still downward pick-slanting all the way, but the outside string changes on the a-to-d strings and d-to-g strings are accomplished by simply battering through the muted higher string on the downstroke. If you keep your pick grip relaxed but apply plenty of force from the elbow, it should sound completely clean! These changes are marked with an (x) on the tab.

BAR 61:

More swiping here, including some tricky two-string swipes. Make the upstrokes on the higher strings your focus, and keep the grip loose. Although this is an example of Zakk's Al Di Meola in-fluence, Al would

“The **fundamental take home** is that you can play as simply or as complex as you like in rock, as long as you make it exciting...”

achieve this same line very differently. If you can't make the swiping work for you, you can still carry this lick off using two-way pickslanting like Al would.

BARS 62-64:

A monstrous flurry of alternate picked notes, don't worry if things get a little garbled at times - it only

adds to the excitement. Some notes are doubled up to facilitate the picking more easily, and there are swipes galore! We're not trying to be John Petrucci here - keep it intense, and consider the tab a "guideline".

BARS 65-66:

Some intense "chicken-pickin'" around a nasty sounding flat 5 note.



Don't sweat the exact timing here - just go as fast as you can manage, and make sure you get that double stop idea in on beat 2 of bar 66 to bring the whole thing back into step. Use the ring and middle fingers on your right hand and roll your left-hand pinky finger to execute the country style pedal steel lick, pre-bending the g string note as you do.

BARS 67-68:

Just when you thought things had gone completely off the deep end, we bring everything back home with something bluesy! Zakk has a tenacity to finish his solos with more "tasteful" ideas like this, and that's something we can all learn from. Grab the b string as you re-pick the last bend, and over-bend like crazy!

BARS 69-75:

Home stretch now, and I'm not ashamed to say that this fourth solo was inspired by Zakk's work on the Rock Star soundtrack! Give the lower string on the unison bends and some heavy vibra-

to, but don't worry about going as far as a tone - just enough to make them "crackle". The lick in bar 74 is best thought of as "trilling and tremolo picking at the same time", and is a John Sykes main-stay. Move both hands as fast as you can and concentrate on the downbeats - things have a habit of syncing up nicely if you do.

BARS 76-84:

We couldn't look at Zakk's playing without exploring his country and southern rock influences, and this final solo is inspired by some of his best-loved playing with Pride & Glory, with nods to Ozzy mega-ballad Mama I'm Comin' Home. Keep things strictly in time, and back the intensity down just a little.

The pedal steel bend that kicks things off is the same as the one found in bar 66, but slower and more stately, and in a major key. The remainder of the solo blurs the line between major and minor pentatonic scales that hints



at Zakk's Skynyrd influence. Tasty stuff, and a nice way to end this intense tech session!

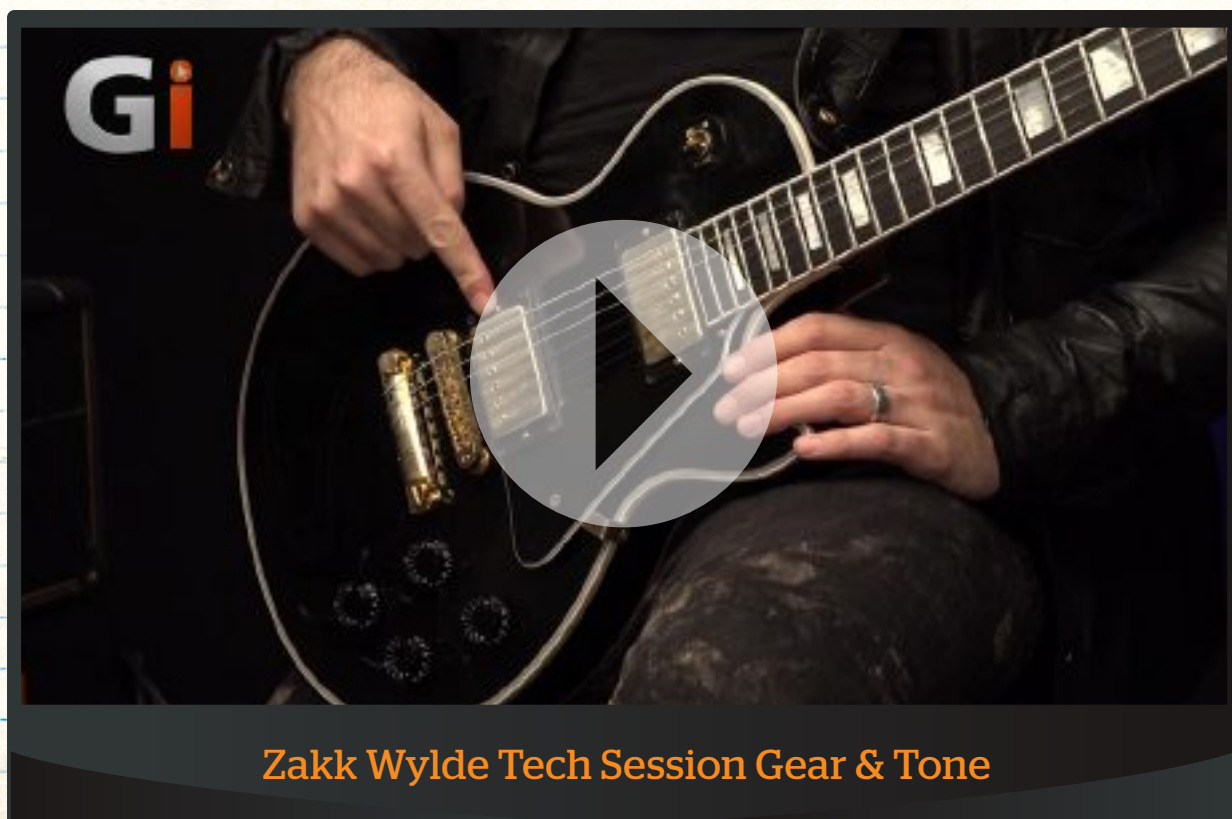
THE TAKE-HOME:

As rock players, there's a lot we can learn from Zakk. Yes, the vocabulary might not always be the most original - it's largely pentatonic based, and very rooted in traditional blues and rock phrase-ology - but it's not what you say, rather how you say it. Zakk's supremely authoritative delivery is something we could all do

with a little more of from time to time, and his tightly organised and structured playing is something that even non-guitarists can appreciate and understand. It also provides a stark contrast to the more chaotic aspects of his style, and makes the crazy stuff feel even more dangerous!

I think more than anything though, the fundamental take home is that you can play as simply or as complex as you like in rock, as long as you make it exciting.

END «



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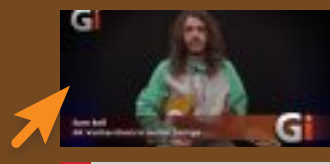
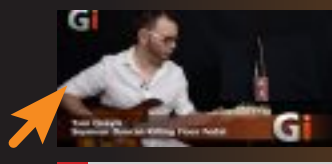
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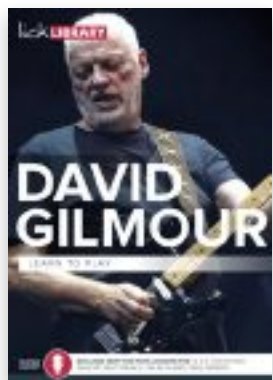
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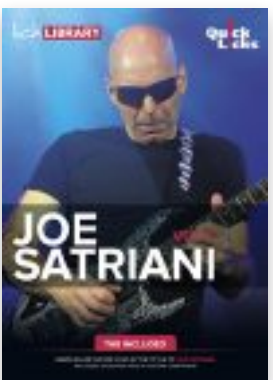
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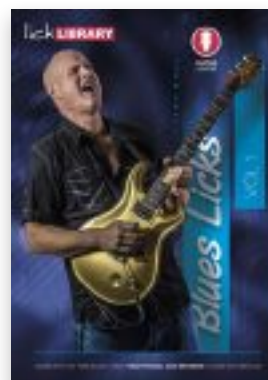
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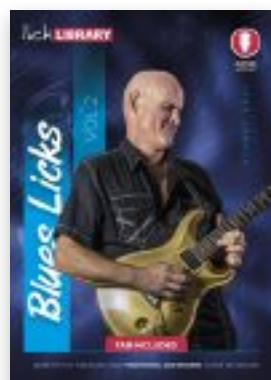
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2019



THE REVIEWS

BEST OF THE YEAR

BEST OF 2019

Jonathan Graham presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2019

IT has once again been an incredible year for new product releases in the world of guitar. Long gone are the days when any of the world's top brands actually released anything in their range that is genuinely substandard, and it's why it is getting harder and harder to really give a bad review. Of that being said, of course, there will always be a handful of products that rise above the rest and our top reviewers and myself have compiled our Best of 2019 lists for that very reason. Please let it be known that between Tom, Nick, Sam, Phil and myself we have deliberately not duplicated any of one another's choices in an attempt to showcase as many of these great pieces of gear as possible. I hope you enjoy looking back at Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2019 and be sure to let us know if you agree with our choices, or if you feel we missed something out. So, without further ado, here are mine, followed by a full review for each.



Laney Black Country Customs LA30BL

A continuation of Laney's 50-year anniversary reissue LA100BL amplifier head, this new model is the lower-powered 30-watt version, allowing you to achieve cranked true vintage power amp tones at manageable volume levels for stage and recording use.



Marshall Studio Vintage SV20C Combo

A compact but powerful combo designed to replicate the classic Marshall 'Plexi' sound of the Super Lead 1959 yet versatile enough to allow you to recreate the sound of guitar heroes in the studio and at home.



PRS M2 Tremonti Signature Electric Guitar

Alter Bridge's main man Mike Tremonti has long been a passionate evangelist for PRS guitars and 2019 saw the release of his new signature guitar released as part of an impressive SE range of

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Seymour Duncan Dark Sun Digital Delay & Reverb Pedal

Designed based on Periphery guitarist Mark Holcomb's favourite sounds from the Andromeda Dynamic Delay and the Silver Lake Dynamic Reverb. The Seymour Duncan Dark Sun combines a warm and clean digital delay algorithm with a lush Hall reverb, and the ability to route the two in just about any configuration you could want.



Sterling by Music Man STV60 St Vincent

Featuring a perfectly balanced African mahogany body, a rock-maple neck, as well as many of the features of the Ernie Ball Music Man model. The Sterling by Music Man St. Vincent STV60 could very well be the perfect combination of style, balance, versatility and playability but at a much more affordable price point.



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beginning



Mooer Ocean Machine

Developed in
collaboration with musical prog
guitarist Devin Townsend—
Mooer Audio's Ocean
pedal has been
praised for its ability
to reproduce his vast
range of massive delays and
reverb. It's the first pedal
he has used since the
beginning of his career.



Laney Black Country Customs LA30

Nick Jennison reviews the Laney Black Country Customs LA30BL Head. A continuation of the classic Supergroup amplifier head, this new model is the lower-powered 30-watt version, allowing you to achieve manageable volume levels for stage and recording use.

Since they were established to celebrate Laney's long-standing relationship with the godfather of metal Tony Iommi, Black Country Customs have delivered the goods with some seriously good bits of kit. Initially released in 2017, the TI-BOOST and LA100BL captured the ominous roar of the Iron Man's early work, along with the crushing, stadium-filling volume that you can only get from a cranked 100-watt British stack.

Unfortunately, not all of us get to play at the kind of sky-splitting volumes that were the norm for early metal pioneers. Laney listened and responded with the LA30BL. Cut from the same cloth as previous Supergroup amps, the LA30BL has all the juice and grind of its bigger siblings, but in a package that's more usable for the majority of players. Interestingly, this is the first time in Laney's long history that a Supergroup amp has been released at this power rating - a sign of the times, perhaps?



OBL

tion of Laney's 50-year anniversary reissue LA100BL achieve cranked true vintage power amp tones at

The LA30BL is a very simple beast, with a four-input configuration that will be familiar to most guitar players. For the uninitiated, inputs 1 and 2 refer to the high and low treble channels respectively, with the top jacks offering a higher input sensitivity (which translates as more gain) and the lower jacks producing a cleaner sound. "Jumping" the inputs with a patch cable enables the player to blend the two channels, although the single volume control does limit this somewhat. Beyond that, it's the time-honoured layout of treble, middle, bass and presence.

Those of you who are used to Plexi style amps might be shocked at how potent the tone controls are - there's a ton of range on each control, which becomes especially useful when you start to crank things up. Speaking of which, the LA30BL actually has a fair amount of clean headroom before things really start to break up. Perhaps not enough to stay whistle-clean in a loud band mix, but certainly enough to clean up for more sensitive moments. Once the amp starts to break up, things get very rowdy very quickly, with a beautifully splatty old-school bark that sags hard on heavier pick strokes. Drive it further with a boost and the LA30BL opens up with searing harmonics, especially if you shelve out some of the low end. »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Laney Supergroup tones at more reasonable volumes.
- » Surprisingly good as a pedal platform.

CONS

- » Clean headroom might run out before your drummer does, but that's sort of the point.

Check THE SPEC

Laney Black Country Customs LA30BL**MSRP (UK) £767 (US) \$TBC //**

Dual Channel // 3-band EQ & presence controls // 4, 8 or 16 OHM outputs

For more information, please visit: laney.co.uk

Aside from cranking out the vintage gainy goodies, this amp serves as a very tasty pedal platform. It's warmer and deeper than it's Milton Keynes rivals, and the high and low treble channels are more sonically similar, making it easier to find the right blend for your stomp-box of choice. Fittingly, it sounds absolutely killer with Laney's new Monolith pedal (keep your eyes peeled for a review of this in a future issue of GI).

All in all, the Laney LA30BL is a great sounding amp that honours Laney's rich heritage at a volume that won't have the War Pigs knocking your door down. It simple, it sounds great cranked up and it loves pedals.

END «



The Laney LA30BL is a **great sounding** amp..."



Laney Black Country Customs LA30BL

Sterling by Music Man STV60 St Vincent

Featuring a perfectly balanced African mahogany body, a rock-maple neck, as well as a Ball Music Man model. The Sterling by Music Man St. Vincent STV60 could very well be a style, balance, versatility and playability but at a much more affordable price point. **Ni**

Designing a new guitar shape is fraught with danger. Stray too far from the status quo, and fledgeling instruments can go the way of the Gibson Moderne. Yet somehow, Music Man is seen to keep coming up with shapes that are original and eye-catching, but also deeply desirable. Not least of which is the impossibly chic St Vincent.

Designed in close collaboration with Annie Clark, (the guitar's namesake) the St Vincent is a light-weight, sleek and elegant instrument that straddles a line between 80s futurism and haute couture. But like so many of Music Man's more unconventional designs (like the Albert Lee, Majesty and Armada), it's also remarkably comfortable and balanced.

The introduction of the St Vincent into the affordable Sterling line puts this unique instrument within reach of most players, while still retaining the majority of what makes it's more expensive sibling so great. The maple neck isn't roasted like the EBMM model, but this guitar still retains the mahogany body

and rosewood fretboard of the original. It also retains the custom pickup selections of bridge, middle, neck, all pickups in parallel and bridge and neck in parallel. This takes some getting used to, as I'd have expected to have seen the two combined voices in positions 2 and 4. That said, part of me is glad that Sterling is giving us a signature guitar of the same spec as the artists' own instrument.

Speaking of pickups, the three mini humbuckers are pretty ferocious in terms of output. There's a very forward midrange character present in every position, but I can't help feeling they lack a little sparkle and articulation, especially when compared to the DiMarzio models found in the EBMM version. There's punch aplenty though, with enough authority to penetrate dense mixes and long effects chains.

In terms of playability, the Sterling St Vincent is wonderfully ergonomic, with a slim and comfortable neck and great balance both sitting and standing. It's a little awkward if (like me) you tend to sit in the » classical position with the guitar on your left leg, but

If you're **cool enough** to carry it off, check it

St Vincent

many of the features of the Ernie
be the perfect combination of
Jack Jennison tells us more.



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Runway model good looks.
- » Very comfortable body shape.
- » Unique tonal options.

CONS

- » Pickups are a little lacking compared with the original.

Check THE SPEC

Sterling by Music Man STV60 St Vincent

MSRP (UK) £699 (US) \$857 //

African Mahogany Body // Maple Neck // Rosewood Fretboard 22 Frets //

For more information, please visit:
sterlingbymusicman.com

t out...

for the majority of players, this won't be an issue. The action out of the box was a little stiff for my liking, but it does allow for a more aggressive right-hand style like Annie Clark's without any buzzing or rattling. Interestingly, while this guitar is clearly made for players of a somewhat smaller stature, it didn't feel fiddly or uncomfortable for a large chap like myself.

Available in Vincent Blue or Stealth Black,

the Sterling St Vincent is a very attractive, functional and uniquely toneful guitar from an innovative company and an innovative artist. If you're cool enough to carry it off, check it out. If you don't, don't sweat it - check it out anyway!

END <<



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PRS Mark Tremonti SE Signature G

Alter Bridge's main man Mark Tremonti has long been a passionate evangelist for PRS models have also proved popular across the board. **Sam Bell** looks at the latest incarnation, the Mark Tremonti Signature SE.

Creed and Alter Bridge Guitarist Mark Tremonti has flown the PRS Artist flag for many years, 2019 sees the release of his new signature guitar released as part of PRS's SE range of guitars. Mark Tremonti's style which spans hard rock and metal with technical lead playing calls for an instrument that can handle those areas with ease. His signature guitar covers these areas with no problems at all and all at an affordable price point.

Featuring the classic PRS headstock with Mark's signature on the truss rod, the maple neck has a wide thin profile which makes technical lead playing comfortable. However it's not too flat or thin, it's just enough to be able to get around the neck for some aggressive bending. The neck features the PRS birds inlay spanning over the 22 frets of the rosewood fingerboard. The scale length of

this guitar is half an inch shorter than most S style guitars and half an inch longer than most Les Pauls (its 25 Inch!) which gives a nice balance between playability and resonance for the lower riffing. The body is single cut Mahogany featuring two Tremonti 'S' humbuckers, 3-way pickup switch and independent tone/volume controls. The bridge pickup is fairly high output with a unique middle frequency snarl which sounds great in high gain situations, the neck pickup is much warmer and woodier making long lead lines sustain and bloom. The final touch is the up routed trem (meaning you can pull back on the trem without the bridge hitting the body) the bridge has a smooth saddle design found on many PRS guitars which doesn't cut into the picking hand when palm muting.

“This guitar **is perfect for** the Rock/Metal Guitarist looking for something a little more understated and classy...”

Guitar 2019

guitars and his signature
ation in the form of the PRS



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Quality PRS SE Build.
- » Great with High Gain for Metal/Hard Rock.
- » Great price point.

CONS

- » None.

Check **THE SPEC**

PRS Mark Tremonti SE Signature Guitar

MSRP (UK) £545 (US) \$TBC //

Mahogany Body // Maple Neck //
Rosewood Fretboard // Colour:
Black // Style: Single Cut //

For more information, please visit:
www.PRSguitars.com

This guitar felt fantastic to play in driven/high gain settings, it definitely inspired me to play a certain way in the video section of this review. Having said this, when rolling the volume back and using different pickup combinations it's possible to get a nice smooth clean tone from this beast. The overall guitar feels very controlled and clean without losing any character and charm tonally.

In Summary, this Guitar is perfect for the Rock/Metal Guitarist looking for something a little more understated and classy. Having said this, it's pretty versatile and feels great to play at an affordable price point. Even if you're not an avid Mark Tremonti Follower, it's well worth checking out!

END «



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Marshall Studio Vintage SV20C Combo

Nick Jennison takes a closer look at the Marshall Studio Vintage SV20C Guitar Combo, designed to replicate the classic Marshall 'Plexi' sound of the Super Lead 1959 yet versatile enough for heroes in the studio and at home.

Let's play a game of word association. If I say "Marshall," which word immediately springs to mind? For many of you, that word will be "Plexi". Rightly so - the image of a 1959 Super Lead atop a pair of 4x12s is enough to set any guitarist's heart a-flutter.

Not that practicality should get in the way of a roaring good time, but players that have spent any time with a real Super Lead can attest to the limitations of such a setup. For one thing, they only really deliver "that"

sound when they're 'REALLY' loud. For context, I once played a gig where another guitarist had his plexi so loud I could barely hear the monitors. If that doesn't sound so unusual, perhaps I should add that he was in a different venue, downstairs from the one we were playing in.

So what's a guitarist to do, burdened as we are with noise limiters and fitting our gear into the back of the family hatchback? Well, Marshall might have the answer with their Studio series of amps. Loving recreations of



Combo

o Amplifier. A compact but powerful combo de-
le enough to allow you to recreate the sound of guitar

three of Marshall's most beloved designs, but re-imagined as 20-watt heads and combos. The team at Marshall have resisted the urge to load these amps up with new features and modes - they're as near as makes no difference the original amps, only smaller and quieter.

The Studio Vintage is, in essence, a 20w version of the 1959 SLP, and its voice is as "Plexi" as it gets. The searing bite of channel 1 and the muted thump of channel two are presented in all their original glory, and jumping the channels yields all the subtle blends you'd expect to find. With the right guitar and a little bit of fiddling, you'll find shades of Hendrix, Page, Clapton, Kossor, and Angus. Throw the right pedals, and you've got Yngwie, Gary and countless others.

As you'd predict, the tone controls don't do a whole lot to sculpt the sound, but that's exactly how the originals are. However, plugging into channel 2 and running the volume lower does provide a fantastic warm voice for pedals. For the best results, you'll want to wind things up though. The onset of overdrive is fast, reaching full output at between 10 and 11 o'clock on the volume's travel (depending on your guitar), and while this level is nowhere near the paint-peeling volume of the original amps, it's definitely not "quiet". There's easily enough volume to clear the loudest of drummers, but not so much as to completely drown to the whole band. It's a very stage-friendly level, but » if you're expecting to crank the SV20C in your apart-

STAR RATING



PROS

- » It's a plexi, only quieter!
- » Plenty of volume for gigging.
- » Ideal for recording.

CONS

- » Would benefit from a 12" speaker.

Check THE SPEC

Marshall Studio Vintage SV20C Combo

MSRP (UK) £999 (US) \$1499 //

1 x 10-inch Celestion V-Type speaker // 2 channels with High and Low inputs // Series FX Loop

For more information, please visit: marshall.com

ment, I'd recommend the 5w power mode. Even then, it might be a bit too loud for your neighbours, but it's far less likely to get you arrested!

The combo model we're looking at today comes loaded with a single 10 inch Celestion V-Type, and while this is an excellent speaker with a distinctly "vintage" flavour, I found myself pining for the roundness of a 12" speaker. 10" drivers have a certain "character" that's fabulous with some amps, but for me a Plexi isn't one of them. Fortunately, it's a simple task to run the SV20C through a larger cabinet, where the amp really shines.

The only other nods to modernity are an FX

loop and a DI output. The FX loop is a very clean and quiet design, it won't do much to keep your effects clean if you're cranking the power amp valves - and if you're not, you'd be as well running all your pedals into the front of the amp.

All things considered, Marshall has done an absolutely sterling job with the Studio series - they've given players exactly what they want and nothing they don't, in a package that's manageable, fairly affordable and suitable for most musical occasions. Highly recommended.

END <<



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NEW FOR 2020

Mooer Ocean Machine

Developed in conjunction with musical prog master Devin Townsend Mooer Audio's produce his vast array of massive delays and reverbs he has used since the beginning of h

THE astounding Devin Townsend is known for his epic progressive metal compositions and ethereal spreads of sound. Devin has worked with Mooer pedals on making it possible for us mortal Guitarists to attain similar levels of epic ambience in our Guitar Rigs with the 'Ocean Machine' This pedal has tons of options for sounds and varying different levels of sound-scaping potential, however fundamentally it's basically a Double Delay Pedal with Reverb Options.

You can use this pedal in two ways, with the pre-set function, by setting your own patches, or you can use it manually as 3 stomposable effects for live use.

The Pedal is fairly small and inexpensive considering how many awesome options you get, the Reverbs are high quality, and go from our standard Hall, Plate, Spring, Room Reverbs, all the way up to Low Fi, Flange, Galaxy Reverbs which give us tons of tonal shaping op-



Ocean Machine pedal has been designed to re-pro-
his career. **Sam Bell** tells us more.

“The amount of combinations we can get from tweaking through the settings here **is inspiring...**”

tions, especially when put in combination with other effects. Each Third of the Unit gives us 4 controls to change the parameters of each effect, for reverb we can control the shimmer, time, tone and volume of the selected reverb. Moving along to the right of the reverb we have Delay B and A, both of these delays feature similar Tape, Echo, Analog, Stereo Delays that can be used in tandem with each other. For example you may wish to set Delay A to a quicker 200ms delay and Delay B to a longer 500ms delay, which when mixed together can create some really interesting ambient results. Delay A and B also have some unique types of Delay that give us all kinds of options from Modulated Delay to Lo-Fi Delay (as demonstrated in the video portion of this review!) »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Great Sounds/Tons of Options
- » Compact and Quality
- » Great value for Money

CONS

- » None! Plus, it's got Devin Townsends Name on It!

Check **THE SPEC**

Mooer Ocean Machine

MSRP (UK) £269 (US) \$299//

Reverb/Delay/Looper //
Dimensions (L x W x H): 112 x 215 x
55 mm // Weight 1120 g

For more information, please visit:
mooeraudio.co.uk

The amount of combinations we can get from tweaking through the settings here is inspiring and fortunately you can save them as a patch to recall if you come up with something specific that you want to tap into for a song. The unit already comes with a whole host of presets that you can tweak yourself or just play with to get inspired. It's worth bearing in mind that some of these sounds are quite extreme and may not suit a band mix in a live situation, a backing of the level of the effects for live situations will help you cut through a little bit depending on your set up. But the point of this pedal is to

get inspired and create some awesome ambient sounds.

In Summary, I strongly feel this pedal is great value for what you get, it's a sturdy unit, with a good footprint, uses only 9 volts to power it, and it has a plethora of sounds that are easily programmable plus it has a great selection of mono/stereo outs and midi capability. Well worth checking out if you're into your ambient sounds or if you're looking for a one-stop shop for all your Reverb and Delay needs!

END◀



Mooer Ocean Machine



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BREAKTHROUGHS
HAPPEN IN STUDIOS.
SOME IN GARAGES.
And some in forests.

ON A DUSTY ROAD OUTSIDE YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON, YOU CAN PEER INTO THE AFRICAN FOREST
AND SEE SOMETHING TOTALLY OUT OF PLACE: VILLAGERS PLANTING EBONY SAPLINGS.
ALL SUPPORTED BY A GUITAR MANUFACTURER FROM EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA.
DESPITE THE FACT THAT EBONY HAS BEEN USED IN GUITAR AND VIOLIN
FINGERBOARDS FOR CENTURIES, THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAD DONE VERY
LITTLE TO REPLANT IT. SINCE WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO EVER MAKE
GUITARS WITHOUT EBONY, WE TEAMED UP WITH SOME OF THE
WORLD'S BEST RESEARCHERS AND FORESTERS TO STUDY HOW
TO REPLANT IT ON A LARGE SCALE. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN HISTORY, WE'RE PLANTING, GROWING, AND HARVESTING
EBONY SUSTAINABLY. ONE LOOK INTO THAT FOREST IN
CAMEROON REVEALS SOMETHING ELSE SPROUTING:
HOPE. NOT JUST FOR EBONY, BUT FOR THE FUTURE OF
TONEWOODS WORLDWIDE. WATCH THE WHOLE STORY
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Step forward. MUSIC IS WAITING.™

Seymour Duncan Dark Sun Digital

Designed based on Periphery guitarist Mark Holcomb's favourite sounds from the Andromeda Reverb. The Seymour Duncan Dark Sun combines a warm and clean digital delay and reverb in just about any configuration you could want. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

Beyond the ubiquitous overdrive, can there be a more important pair of effects than reverb and delay? I'll resist the urge to ask you to "name a more iconic duo", but these two effects - often spoken in the same breath - are responsible for giving life and space to your tone. For many rock and metal players, they're the only overt "effects" they'll use, either for clean parts or adding a drama to a solo.

Designed in collaboration with Periphery guitarist Mark Holcomb, the Dark Sun takes Mark's favourite algorithms from Seymour Duncan's Andromeda delay and Silverlake reverb and combines them in a single pedal. Seymour Duncan has also simplified the user interface in the



Seymour Duncan Dark Sun Digital Delay & Reverb Pedal

Delay & Reverb Pedal

from the Dynamic Delay and the Silver Lake Dynamic Delay algorithm with a lush Hall reverb, and the ability to more.



process. Their “Dynamic Expression” control is still present, but in the Dark Sun, it’s limited to controlling the reverb and delay mix, creating a subtle ducking effect while you play.

The “Tweak” control allows for greater tonal sculpting of the delay sound, with high and low pass filters, modulation and saturation controls. There’s also a rotary selector that controls delay sub-divisions, with the usual 1/4 note, dotted 8th, 8th note and 8th note triplets settings, along with “Pattern” for the classic “The Edge” 1/4 note and dotted 8th sound, reverse delays, ping pong and reverse ping pong. »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » All your ambience needs in a single pedal.
- » Outstanding reverb and delay, for solos and ambient parts.
- » Dynamic expression keeps complex lines clean.
- » Best-in-class construction.

CONS

- » “Modern” reverb only - fans of splashy spring reverbs should look elsewhere.

Check THE SPEC

Seymour Duncan Dark Sun Digital Delay & Reverb Pedal

MSRP (UK) £399 (US) \$369 //

High pass and low pass filter // Stereo output // Bypass and tap tempo/preset footswitches // MIDI controllable

For more information, please visit: seymourduncan.com

More interestingly, the routing control allows you to switch the order of the effects on the fly, or route the delay and reverb to two separate outputs. This has interesting implications for wet/dry rigs, but it also means you could place the reverb and delay in two separate slots in a loop switcher for greater

on the fly control. You can also control the routing (and every other parameter on the pedal) via MIDI, with 128 presets available. It'll also sync to an external clock source, whether that's a sequencer or another pedal.

Sonically, the reverb and delay are abso-



lutely superb. The reverb is a dark and rich hall, with the option to add modulation via the “Tweak” control. There’s limited tonal sculpting here, with only size and mix knobs, but the tone is so ‘bang on’ out of the box that you’re unlikely to want for more. It won’t provide you with splashy springs or bright plate sounds, but for modern, immersive reverb it’s excellent.

The delay, by contrast, is capable of a lot of tonal diversity. At its heart, it’s a clean digital sound, but by manipulating the filters, modulation and saturation controls it’s possible to cop the sound of tape delays, saturated analogue delays and even shoegaze-inspired sounds. If total authenticity is what you’re looking for, the Dark Sun won’t give you a perfect rendition of the subtly degrading repeats of a tape or analogue type delay - but then, many would argue that no digital pedal will! It’s certainly close enough, and the sheer flexibility and ease of use the Dark Sun offers more than makes up for it.

It’s also worth noting how supremely well constructed the Dark Sun is. Having had a number of high-end digital pedals start to exhibit ‘issues’ on the road due to flimsy jack sockets, the Dark Sun’s chunky, all-metal connections fill me with confidence. Even the MIDI in and out are tough, metal, screwed-in sockets.

The Dark Sun is a one-stop shop for modern reverb and delay sounds. It offers huge flexibility but doesn’t overwhelm you with options. It sounds killer, and it’s built like a bomb shelter. If you’re a rock or metal guitarist with channel switching, there’s a high likelihood that this could be the only pedal you’ll ever need.

END «



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BEST OF 2019

Tom Quayle presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2019.

FOR the high-end tech enthusiast in me, 2019 has been a bumper year to be a guitarist and gear reviewer. There have been some truly stunning products come through our hands here at Interactive, and the guys upstairs have asked me to come up with my top three – a task that should be tricky, but there are three absolute standouts for me from this great year.

Fractal Audio Axe FX III

The first is Fractal Audio's Axe FX. Although this flagship product came out in 2018, we reviewed it this year and I was so away by it that I just had to buy one for my studio. The unit represents such a significant improvement on the Axe FX II in terms of preset and modelling that it's easy for many users to justify the upgrade cost. Without doubt this unit represents a pinnacle of guitar processing in terms of amp modelling and effects for under \$3k.

Fractal updated the unit with a full colour, high-resolution screen that thoroughly modernised the user interface. The I/O has been greatly expanded, along with better audio interface functions and improved modelling quality, especially for the power amp, thanks to Fractal's 'Aeres' technology. More DSP power allows users to create more complex and better sounding patches and combined with the FC6 and FC12 floor controllers, the Axe FX III can become an incredibly powerful live tool as well as a studio powerhouse. This is now THE standard that all other companies are trying to match.



Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander

My second choice is Boss' Waza Tube Amp Expander. I was lucky enough to do the official launch video with Boss for this amazing product and as a lover of great tube amps, as well as a modelling units, the TAE represents the fantastic collision of these two worlds. Giving you 16 different variable reactive load boxes, effects processing, audio interface functionality and IR speaker modelling in a single unit, the TAE can cover pretty much any

live or recording scenario you can throw at it. The tones available are incredible and the flexibility and power on board really do expand the possibilities of the humble tube amp beyond anything else on the market.



Eventide Rose

My final choice for 2019 is Eventide's Rose delay pedal. I say delay, but this pedal really took me by surprise in that it is really a highly powerful tone sculpting tool unlike anything else on the market. It has stunning good looks to boot too and sounds incredible, thanks to its combination old and new technology for the ultimate in analogue tone and digital control. Combining delays with any of the five modulation sources, delay multiplier and phase inverter offers up sounds ranging from classic delays to uncontrolled soundscapes, with an intuitive control setup, MIDI, TRS expression pedal input and preset storage for a thoroughly modern classic in the delay pedal market.

I hope you all had a great 2019 and here's to more tech and tonal madness to satisfy the inevitable G.A.S. that 2020 will bring!



TOM QUAYLE'S CHOICE:

BEST OF 2019



Fractal Axe FX III

With more than 260 amps, 2,200 cabinets and 220 effects, the Axe-FX III from Fractal Audio Systems is what you can imagine or come very close to it. Could this be the most powerful amp and effects processor? Fractal has the answers.

LET'S get the spoilers out of the way first – Fractal Audio's Axe FX III is without doubt, the most powerful guitar processor ever created. Harnessing two 1.0GHz 'Keystone' DSPs, this latest flagship modeller provides more than twice the power of the Axe FX II whilst upgrading almost every possible hardware and software element that made the original so revolutionary upon its release.

The design of the Axe FX III has undergone some significant changes from its predecessor. It now sports a large, high resolution, colour screen, powered by a dedicated graphics processor to ensure that none of your precious CPU power is taken from your tonal creations. Utilising the tiny, monochrome screen of the original was somewhat

problematic for many users and this high contrast, easy to read from any angle screen, is a massive upgrade that makes editing the plethora of menus and options on board a much easier, more intuitive and informative process. Of course, Axe Edit is still available and is superb for easily making amazing tones, but now you absolutely can cope without it and feel like everything you need is easily at your fingertips. Five push-encoders make for easy, amp like adjustments, whilst the front panel has been de-cluttered and simplified for more intuitive operation with less key presses required to achieve fast results. The display also now includes a fantastic metering page showing not only all your analogue I/O, but all USB audio connections too. Even individual effects blocks can now display their own metering levels for easily



Audio can provide the exact sound of almost any rig effects modelling product available today? **Tom Quayle**

“The **FX are unparalleled** in terms of quality and sheer quantity...”

setting gain structure and diagnosing connection or clipping problems.

The 3u rack design allows the massively expanded I/O to be reflected on the front panel, with four dedicated output level controls and an expanded hardware LED metering setup. Despite the dramatic size increase (the AXE FX III now resembles a small amp head in size), the Axe FX III is surprisingly light weight and portable, whilst being supremely well built. The expanded I/O provides an unprecedented level of flexibility thanks to two auto-switching instrument inputs, one on the front, the other on the back, plus a further six balanced analogue ins and four independent, analogue stereo pairs for the output section. Input 2 features combi XLR and ¼” jack sockets, whilst outputs 1 and 2 provide balanced XLR outs for front of house, monitors or »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Most powerful modelling and FX on the market
- » Highly flexible I/O section
- » Greatly enhanced colour screen and interface
- » Superb build quality
- » Fractal's legendary product support
- » Amazing value compared to buying separate amps and FX

CONS

- » Still very expensive for the average guitarist

Check **THE SPEC**

Fractal Axe FX III

MSRP (UK) £1799 (US) \$2449 //

DIMENSIONS: 482.6 x 131.1 x 292.9mm // WEIGHT: 15.24lbs/6.87kg

For more information, please visit: **fractalaudio.com**

any other line level equipment. Outputs 3 and 4 are designed for unity gain scenarios such as 'four-cable' method or for running external FX pedals into the FX loop section of your signal chain. AES and SPDIF are provided for digital applications and the USB connection converts all of this into a high-end 8x8 audio interface with USB procedures all handled by a fourth dedicated DSP chip for rock solid stability. Finally, a pair of expression pedal ins, full midi capability and a dedicated FASLINK II port are provided, the latter allowing a single cable connection to the new FC-6 and FC-12 foot controllers.

To match all this impressive I/O capability, Fractal have ensured that the Axe FX III has the highest quality signal path of any product they've created thus far. Every component is of audiophile quality, providing the lowest signal to noise ratio and best sound quality, ensuring that your tones are pristine whether on stage or in the studio.

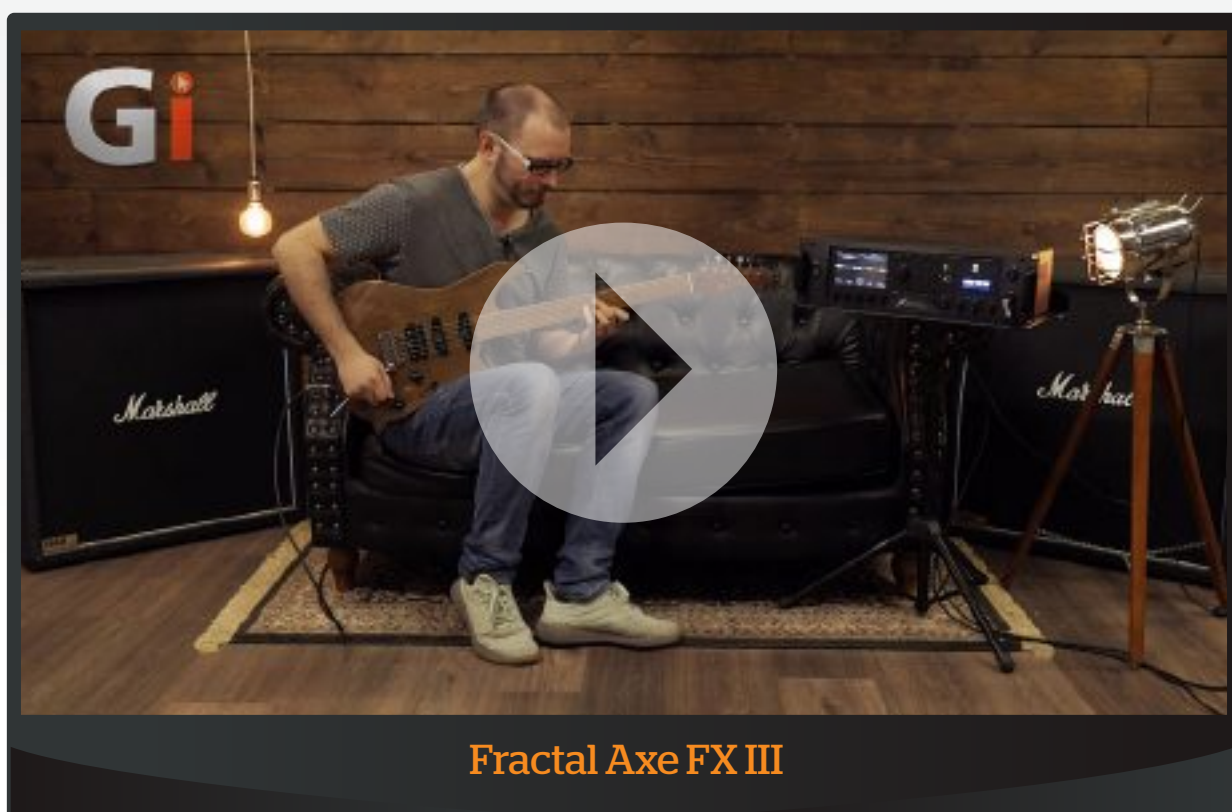
Of course, none of this would matter if the amp modelling and FX weren't up to scratch and there are a lot of products in the market now that give the Axe FX III much stiffer competition than when the Axe FX II was launched. Fortunately, Fractal Audio have incredible form in this area and the Axe FX III takes the already superb 'Quantum' amp modelling from the II and builds upon it further with a brand new modelling engine,

where almost every effect and amp model was rebuilt from the ground up to take advantage of the vastly more powerful DSP for this generation. The most impressive upgrade is just how touch sensitive and realistic the feel of this new modelling engine is under the fingers. Tonally we reached a point several years ago where modellers were hard to distinguish from the real deal, but the touch and feel remained elusive for many players. The Axe FX III improves a great deal in this area, especially for clean tones and edge of break up sounds where the touch and feel are so important to expression and being 'in the zone' with your playing.

The FX are unparalleled in terms of quality and sheer quantity, with a new 6x14 grid allowing for unprecedented levels of signal complexity and routing, no longer limited by CPU power, but only by your imagination. Even complex signal paths with two amps, cabs and multiple FX only see the CPU usage rise to around 50%, so processing headroom is no longer the issue it could be on the Axe FX II and AX8. This flexibility is further enhanced with movable input and output blocks that can be placed anywhere in the signal chain and the ability to place up to four instances of some effects into a given preset.

Each block within any of the 512 onboard presets can now have up to four channels, with each channel being a completely unique

“The FX are **unparalleled** in terms of quality and sheer quantity...”



Fractal Axe FX III

version of that block with its own parameters and settings. A single amp block could contain four different amp channels for a range of clean to dirty sounds for example, each with a different amp model and adjustment to any of the vast array of settings within that single block. A delay block might contain a tape delay on »



channel A, analogue delay on B, Shimmer on channel C and a 2290 style modulated delay on channel D. Multiply that by the 6x14 grid, over 212 fx sub-types, hundreds of amps, 2048 factory cabs, 189 legacy cabs and 2048 user cabs and you start to see that you could never even start to exhaust the creative possibilities.

The new speaker cab block allows you to mix up to four IR's together, based on Fractal's popular Cab-Lab software for even more tonal flexibility. The 2048 included cabs include all the usual suspects, but you'll now find room mics, rear cab mics and cabs from famous artists such as John Petrucci and Chris Broderick included.

Of course, you still get all the modifiers and scenes functionality that made the Axe FX II so powerful, allowing you to control almost any parameter with onboard LFO's, ADSR curves and even Step Sequencers plus the in-

credible level of product support that Fractal have become known for. The Axe FX II had over 29 firmware updates in its life cycle and the Axe FX III has already received several major updates since launch with new features and amp models regularly added for free.

Considering the incredible level of power, flexibility, ease of use and built quality here, the fact that the AXE FX III costs around the same as a single boutique amp head is staggering and whilst it's a considerable investment for any guitarist, the value proposition here is quite remarkable. This is the most powerful modeller out there and, if you can afford one, it will give you incredible results for years - your imagination will run out of ideas long before it struggles to keep up with you.

END ◀



A BOUQUET OF SOUND

Rose is a modulated delay like no other. From reverse delays, slapback, chorus and everything in between, it's the perfect hybrid of analog and digital. Features five modulation sources, analog dry path, delay multiplier, phase invert/reverse, 25 customizable presets, MIDI, and AUX/Expression via TRS.

Eventide®

Learn more at eventideaudio.com/Rose

Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander

The BOSS Waza Tube Amp Expander endows your cherished vintage tube amps with Speaker-free reactive loading plus attenuation? Onboard cab sims AND the ability to load the Waza Tube Amp Expander. **Tom Quayle** tells us more.

BOSS have been knocking it out of the park over the last few years with some amazing product releases that have really shaken up various sectors of the guitar market. The Katana amp range, ES pedal switchers and 500 effects series have all been highly successful, setting new benchmarks for price to performance and innovative features. Boss' latest product, designed to shake up the tube amp sector, is the Waza Tube Amp Expander – a highly featured, pro-level tone utility device, designed to take the versatility and practicality of your tube amp to another level entirely.

The Tube Amp Expander (TAE) is a complex product that covers a lot of different bases

but, essentially it is a very high quality variable reactive load box and attenuator with a built in effects section, cab/mic simulation, active analogue power amp, IR loader and recording interface all in a single device, built like a tank. This is the first time a product like this has been released with all these features together, making this a device very much worthy of the 'high-end' Boss 'Waza' label.

Everyone knows that tube amps sound best when they're cooking, with the volume cranked for that much sought-after power tube saturation and dynamic response. This comes with the downside of ear-splitting volume levels that are becoming less and less appropriate for live and studio environments,



all the benefits of a modern digital setup. FX loop? Load your own impulse responses? It's all available in

“The TAE is a totally unique product given its combination of **so many different** tonal tools into a single device...”

especially in the age of amp modelling. The TAE's all analogue variable reactive load allows you to run any tube amp (up to 150w) at that perfect, cranked level, whilst attenuating the actual volume back down to a sensible level without losing any of the tone, feel and response that you love about that cranked sound. Attenuators have been on the market for years now and they often do a great job of the reducing the volume of your amp but introduce all sorts of artefacts and tonal compromises into the equation. By utilising a reactive load, the TAE ensures that your amp thinks it's seeing a real speaker at all times, sounding and feeling exactly as you'd expect, allowing you to experience the awesome tone of your cranked amp at any volume level you desire.

There are a whole swathe of reactive load boxes on the market, but the TAE takes things a step (or 16 steps) further thanks to the inclusion of »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Superb quality variable reactive load box and power amp.
- » First of its kind, tuneable reactive load.
- » High-quality cab/mic simulations.
- » Free, easy to use software editor.
- » Well priced, considering all the features.

CONS

- » No ribbon mic...yet

Check **THE SPEC**

Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander
MSRP (UK) £1143 (US) \$1899 //

Power Handling: 150W //
Impedance: 4/8/16 ohms //
Attenuation: Variable

For more information, please visit:
boss.info

it's 'Resonance-Z' and 'Presence-Z' controls. These two dials control the impedance interaction between the amps output transformer and the TAE, allowing you to tune the reactive load to match your amp - selecting between 16 different settings - making your amp feel and sound just as though it were connected to your favourite cab. Boss provide some suggested settings to get you started, allowing you to tune the load for several different 4x12, 4x10, 2x12 or 1x12 type cabs. Unlike other reactive load boxes, where the impedance characteristics are fixed, the TAE allows you to tailor its reactive load to perfectly match any amp, from a vintage combo, to a modern high gain head.

Boss have taken this concept one stage further though, with the inclusion of a built-in 100w Class AB power amplifier. This allows you to reverse the attenuator concept and make a low wattage amplifier louder. Let's say you have a 5w combo that you adore the sound of, but it just isn't loud enough for gigs. Plug it into the TAE and the power amp allows you to amplify it to gig volume whilst retaining all the tonal and response characteristics that you love so much. Two speaker outputs allow you to run a pair of cabs in parallel or a single cab as required.

The reactive load and power amp are just a single element of this tonal cornucopia » however, as Boss have also included an



Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander



THE
CLEAR CHOICE

714-MK2 FULLERTON

Aria

WWW.ARIAGUITARS.COM

external series/parallel effects loop and amp control jack, allowing you to switch amp channels from the TAE and add any effects after the power stage of your amplifier. The TAE also includes a studio quality, 32-bit, 96kHz DSP effects section with compression, four parametric/graphic EQs, delays and reverbs built-in that can be routed to the speaker outs and line-outs at the same time or individually, meaning you could conceivably leave your pedal board at home and gig/record with just the TAE and your amp. The effects are of superb quality with all the usual suspects such as plates, halls, rooms, digital, analogue and modulated delays plus studio-quality compression for that super produced guitar tone straight out of the box. All the effects run in stereo through the line outs, although the speaker outputs are mono, so no wet/dry rigs here unfortunately.

The icing on the cake is a fully integrated cabinet and mic emulation suite for the line-out section, with 22 cabinet simulations, five close-mics and three room-mics to choose from. The usual suspects are there, with 4x12, 4x10, 2x12, 1x12 in all the usual speaker flavours with a good selection of dynamic and condenser mics that all sound fantastic and highly realistic, especially when combined with the tune-able reactive load to really dial in the feel and response of your particular amp. One glaring omission is the lack of any ribbon mics, something that Boss will hopefully fix with a future firmware update. However, you can load up to four of your own impulse responses, so that problem can be mitigated somewhat, but in using an

IR you lose access to the superb sounding room mics.

Any of the effects, cab sims, FX loop and amp switching features can be stored to one of ten 'RIG' preset locations, accessible via the front panel or the downloadable editor software, allowing you full control over any of the on-board parameters. The editor allows you to store an unlimited number of RIGS on your computer for future use. High quality front panel controls allow you to switch on or off the FX Loop, internal effects, EQ/Solo Boost and Amp Control and there is a dedicated dial for the onboard reverb. Finally, a Line Out and Headphone Level control complete the front panel section, offering a decent amount of control without using the software editor, something live performers will welcome a great deal. Using a Boss GA-FC foot controller (purchased separately) allows for even more realtime live control. Tap-tempo, switching rigs, bypassing effects, solo boost/EQ and the FX Loop can all be controlled from the floor. There is even an expression pedal input allowing you to control the volume of the entire rig and full midi-integration for control via your favourite midi controller.

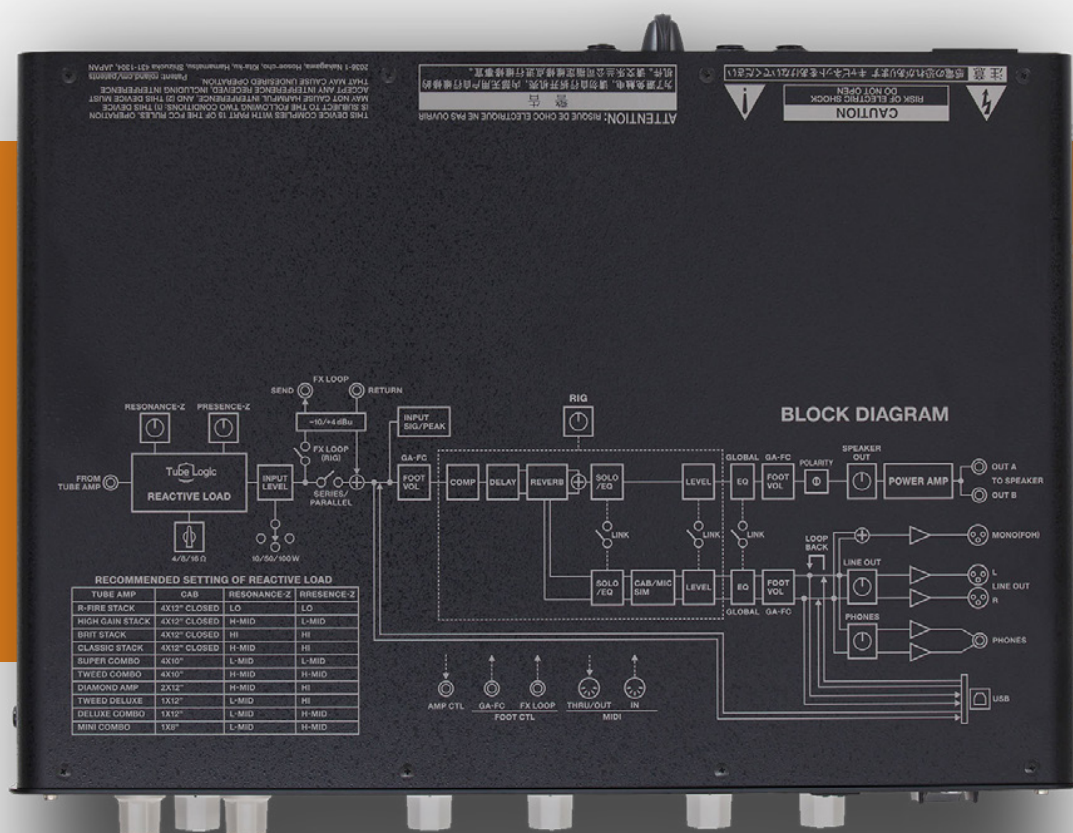
The editor software is of the usual Boss, functional variety. It does the job well and is easy to use but won't win any awards for graphical quality or good looks. Mouse operation can also be a little twitchy and imprecise at points too, but you always have the option to type in specific parameters if you need more detailed settings.

I/O is of a professional standard too thanks to balanced XLR line outs, a dedicated 'Front of House' mono output (both with ground lift switches), headphones out and a USB port that turns the TAE into a fully fledged audio interface for your tube amp with dedicated ASIO drivers for low-latency operation.

The TAE is a totally unique product given its combination of so many different tonal tools into a single device. There are other products on the market that do similar jobs, but nothing that covers this many bases as

a utility tool for Tube Amp performance on stage and in the studio. Boss have once again shaken up the market with a product that offers exceptional performance and features, professional, road ready construction and real innovation. For tube amp lovers, this might just be the most useful product out there right now for getting the most out of your beloved tone machines. Highly recommended!

END «



Eventide Rose

Eventide's Rose is rare and vibrant, unleashing a palette of sounds and textures unattainable with a standard delay. It features a delay multiplier button, phase invert/reverse playback button and a shape button of oscillating waveforms that spires petals of creativity to bloom. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

Eventide has been at the top of the digital effects world for decades now. Their H3000 was a "must have" unit for every rack-toting 80s guitar god and their immensely popular "-Factor" pedals (Time Factor, Pitch Factor, Mod Factor etc) carved out a niche in the pedal market that would later be filled by the likes of Strymon, Boss, Seymour Duncan and so many others. And of course, their outstanding H9 is a mainstay on countless professional pedalboards.



What these devices have in common is their pioneering use of DSP to offer guitarists huge versatility in a single unit. So when Eventide announced they were releasing a delay pedal with an analogue signal path, it came as something of a surprise.

Of course, The Rose isn't your common or garden delay pedal - it's absolutely dripping with features, and capable of so much sonic diversity it's positively mind-bog-

ainable by solely digital means. With six tactile knobs, offering five different modulation sources, Rose in-

“The more traditional algorithms sound great, and **will definitely** get the job done...”

gling! Featuring an all-important analogue dry path (something notably absent from their H9, Time Factor and Space pedals), along with an analogue feedback and filter control, the Rose has more than a touch of that classic analogue delay sound. Higher feedback settings will subtly degrade, and the low-pass filter sounds organic and natural. I would've liked to have seen a high pass filter to prevent low-end build up, but that's just my personal preference.

The delay time control allows for coarse and fine control of the delay time, from a huge 10 seconds (up to 50 seconds using the delay multiplier!) down to delays so short that they fall into the realm typically occupied by “modulation” effects. It's easy to forget that chorus and flanger pedals are essentially very short delays that create a comb filtering effect, and that's precisely the effect the Rose produces at the lowest range of it's travel. Hit the small button next to the

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Probably the most versatile “analog” delay pedal on the market.
- » Massively deep tonal possibilities.
- » Instant recall and MIDI control.

CONS

- » The manual could be a little clearer!

Check **THE SPEC**

Eventide Rose

MSRP (UK) £359 (US) \$349 //

Digital Delay with Analog Circuitry // Based on Classic 1745 DDL // 5 Types of Modulation // 5 Factory Presets

For more information, please visit: **eventideaudio.com**

delay knob and it flips the phase of the delayed signal for an even more dramatic effect. The same button will turn longer delays into a reverse delay.

The Rose also sports a very powerful modulation section. The usual rate and depth knobs control the speed and severity of the undulations, but the pitch can be modulated using a variety of “shapes”, including sine wave, square wave, envelope and random. You can also use tap tempo to control both the speed of the delay repeats and the modulation.

The Hotswitch is a very powerful inclusion that allows for real-time control of many of the Rose’s parameters. It can be set to operate either the phase/reverse control or delay multiplier buttons, or it can function as a tap tempo, and infinite sustain switch, a hold or

reset switch for the modulation, or an A/B switch to flip between a two settings of any/all of the Rose’s controls. Throw in the capability to store and recall up to five presets (each with A and B settings) and MIDI control and you’ve got some serious flexibility at your fingertips.

The Eventide Rose is a modulated delay pedal that’s capable of everything from soaring lead delays and colourful slapbacks through to faux chorus/rotary tones and oddball ambiences - and you can instantly recall any of these sounds with the tap of a switch. But most importantly, it’s a fun and inspiring pedal that can lead your playing in a thousand new directions.

END◀



Eventide Rose

BEST OF 2010

Nick Jennison presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2010

WHAT a year for gear! We've had superb guitars, pedals and amps across the entire spectrum - from vintage to modern, affordable to expensive, practical to bizarre! There's no dull day reviewing gear for GI, but I've picked out three of this year's highlights. Well, four, but that's the idea...



Martin OM28 Modern Deluxe

This guitar ticks all the boxes for me. The OM body shape is my favourite Martin body style - it's small enough to be comfy and intimate, but large enough to sound full and powerful without veering into Dreadnought/Jumbo "boomy" territory. The Modern Deluxe OM28 takes all of these qualities up sever notches. The asymmetrical neck, lightweight titanium truss rod and "Gold

Evo" frets make for a very pleasurable playing experience, and the exceptionally balance and dynamic sound is endlessly inspiring. This is a guitar you can get lost in.



Victory VX100 Super Kraken

This amp was love at first strum for me.

After playing it at this year's NAMM show, I had to have one, and it's since become my main amp. Despite being positioned as Victory's "metal amp", it's ludicrously versatile

and capable of some truly excellent "classic" tones. The clean channel loves pedals, and the two gain sounds in their boosted states run the gamut of classic and hard rock tones, while the preamp focus button gives you Texas blues, singing screaming leads and super focussed modern prog. It's MIDI switchable, there are only 7 knobs to worry about, and two of those are master volumes (so there's no need for a separate solo boost). Every time I plug it in I'm blown away.

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NICK JENNISON'S CHOICE:

BEST OF 2019



Line 6 HX Stomp

This little pedal is a total game-changer, packing all of the power of Line 6's flagship HX Stomp and repackages it in a format that fits into the most modest of pedalboards. It can be a standalone unit, add channels to your tube amp, work as a standalone unit, or integrate with a larger pedalboard. It's also the only way to get pro-level amp modelling without resorting to expensive rigs. Hats off Line 6, you've nailed it with this





HONOURABLE MENTION: BOSS Waza Tube Amp Expander.

While I didn't review this myself (I'm very jealous, Tom!), I've had the pleasure of playing through it a bunch of times now and my word! This thing is nothing short of mind-blowing. I swear my amp sounds better through the tuneable load, and the ways it makes life easier for a working player like myself are practically endless. I think I'll have to get myself one for Christmas...

I can't stress enough what a privilege it is to get to play all of this wonderful gear. Thank you for your continued support - see you in 2020!



Martin OM-28 Modern Deluxe

Nick Jennison takes a closer look at the OM-28 Modern Deluxe from Martin Guitars. Packed with custom features and modern technology, it's the brand's new take on Martin classic.

LAUNCHED at this year's NAMM show, Martin's Modern Deluxe line of guitars represents a serious shift from the Vintage line it replaces. The Modern Deluxe guitars bring a wealth of appointments previously only available on custom shop instruments to production guitars. The four guitars in the range (D18, D28, OM20 and the 00028) all sport titanium truss rods, open-gear gold tuners and matching "evo" frets, carbon fibre bridge plates and asymmetrical slim necks. There's still a very strong nod to the old school though, with the Modern Deluxe guitars retaining the VTS-treated sitka spruce tops, protein glues and dovetail neck joints found on their previous models.

If you're unfamiliar with Martin's body shapes, the OM28 is a mid-sized, fairly shallow body with a pronounced "waist". From my tastes, it's about perfect, sitting between thunderous-but-bulky dreadnoughts and dainty parlour shapes. It's super comfortable in both regular and classical playing positions, and it looks timelessly elegant.

Playing comfort is the name of the game with the Modern Deluxe series, and if you can get past the fairly hefty action height (we measured just over 3mm on the bass side

at the 12th fret, and a hairless on the treble side) the OM28 feels superb. The chunky V-profile neck found on the Vintage series guitars has been replaced with a slim asymmetrical neck based on a 1930s OM45 (complete with the thinner fretboard found on guitars of that era). The profile still has a pronounced shoulder slope, but it's more "slim boat-back" than a sharp V, with the apex offset slightly towards the treble side. It also feels very light in hand thanks to both the slim profile and the lightweight titanium truss rod.

Visually, the OM20 Modern Deluxe is stunning. The top is clean, and light without any "vintage" tint, and the rosewood back and sides are beautifully offset by the flamed maple binding. The headstock sports a classic 1930s style mother of pearl inlaid logo and six very handsome open-gear gold tuners.

Sonically, the OM28 is rich and complex, with detailed highs and a slightly "tucked" midrange. The slightly stiffer bracing offers lots of sustain: perhaps at the cost of absolute projection, but there's still plenty of volume available, especially if you really dig in with a firm pick. Interestingly, the entire dynamic range of the guitar is very tonally consistent.

»



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Gorgeous looks and sound.
- » Very comfortable neck.
- » Lots of clever modern updates.

CONS

- » Pricey

Check **THE SPEC**

Martin OM-28 Modern Deluxe
MSRP (UK) £4295 (US) \$5199 //

Scale Length 25.4" // Nut Width 1.75"
// Ebony fingerboard // Mahogany neck

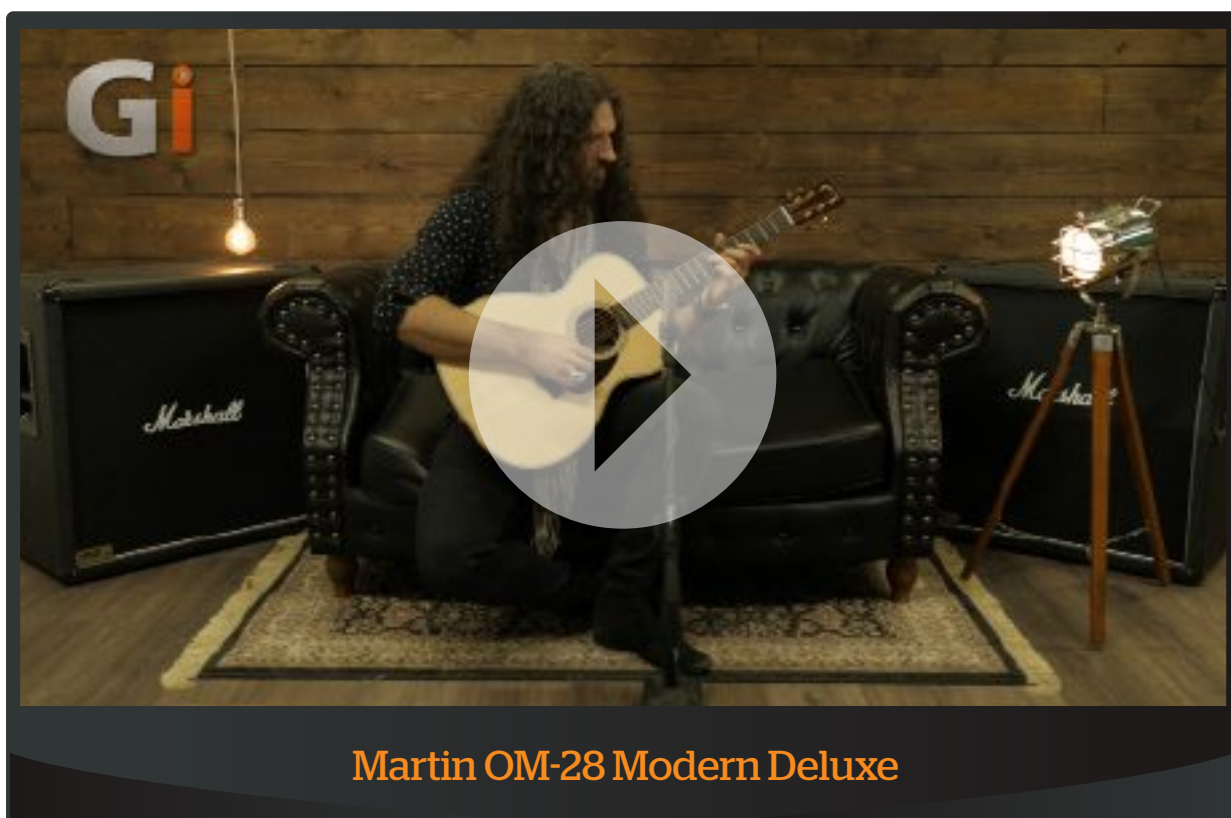
For more information, please visit:
martinguitar.com



There are no barky or boomy tones when you start to wind up the intensity, and there's no loss of definition or warmth during more delicate passages. I think the best way to describe the tone is "silky".

The Martin OM28 Modern Deluxe is a superb update to their production guitars. It looks stunning, feels plays very comfortably and handles any playing style with grace. It even smells good! While the hefty list price represents a serious investment, it's much easier to justify the cost given how good this guitar is.

END «



Line 6 Helix HX Stomp

The brains and brawn of the award-winning Helix family comes to a board-friendly 3-s takes a closer look at the Line 6 HX Stomp, the ultimate standalone travel rig, a fully loa front-load an amp, and a capable audio interface with re-amping capabilities.

Released in 2015, the Helix represented a triumphant return to form for amp modelling OGs Line 6. Thanks to a combination of a highly intuitive user interface and tones that easily rivalled its more expensive competitors, the Helix became hugely popular with pros and hobbyists alike. Despite already offering the most cost-effective way to get into next-gen

modelling, Line 6 followed up with the even more affordable Helix LT and HX Effects - each offering the killer sounds that made the original unit so popular, but in a stripped back package.

The newest member of the family is the HX Stomp, and it just happens to be the smallest and most affordable of the bunch. Contained within its diminutive shell are all 300 sounds



switch stomp. **Nick Jennison**
 added modelling and FX engine to

found in its bigger siblings - including the amps, preamps and cabs, setting it aside from the similarly-priced HX Effects. You get all the clout of a full-sized Helix, but in a package the size of a three-button Strymon pedal. The tones are as killer as ever, with the drive and modulation pedals being particularly impressive.

This format makes the HX Stomp perfect for integrating with your existing pedals, offering you near limitless sonic possibilities. Hooked using the 4 cable method, you can expand your amp's tonal palate by swapping out your preamp for the HX Stomp's amp models. It's all a great direct-to-desk solution, either as a backup, a recording device (via the USB out), a practise tool, or even your entire rig!

The trade-off for all this power is in the user interface - it's a lot more "cramped" than the bigger models in the Helix range, and navigating the HS Stomp is less intuitive than the original. The design team have done a great job optimising the UI for this smaller format, but it's still a compromise. Using MIDI to control the HX Stomp is definitely the way to go in my opinion. Combine it with a pedalboard switching system like a Boss ES-8 or a GigRig G2 and any tap-dancing woes evaporate.

The HX Stomp is also a little more restricted in terms of the sheer number of effects you can run at one time - six at a time being the maximum. If that seems a little restrictive, you might be better off with one of the bigger models, but for most players that's more than enough - especially when it's part of a larger pedalboard. As a "utility" pedal, six effects at once is five more »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Limitless sonic possibilities in a small package.
- » Comprehensive I/O.
- » Integrates with your gear in a variety of useful ways.

CONS

- » UI not as friendly as the bigger models.
- » The power supply is bulky, with a non-standard barrel.

Check THE SPEC

Line 6 Helix HX Stomp
MSRP (UK) £503 (US) \$839 //

300+ effects and models from Helix, M-Series, and legacy Line 6 products // MIDI compatible // USB Connectivity //

For more information, please visit:
line6.com

than most “all in one” stompers offer, and with the comprehensive I/O, you can place these effects at two different points in your signal chain on a per-preset basis.

The HX Stomp is a flexible, powerful and great sounding pedal, offering superb Helix

sound quality in a very convenient package. I’m certain we’ll see a lot of these cropping up on pro-pedal-boards in the not too distant future.

END «



Line 6 Helix HX Stomp

One cable to rule them all

from backline to pedalboard

Guitar signal and low voltage power down one configurable cable

A choice of four, six or seven channel cables

Mono jacks, dual jacks, stereo jacks,

A comprehensive range of power plug adaptors

"Pedalsnake has taken 10 cables and 10lbs off my pedalboard, and shaved 10 minutes off my setup time.

For a travelling guitarist, it's a lifesaver."

Nick Jennison
Guitarist and iGuitar contributor



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Victory VX100 Super Kraken

As soon as Victory Amps announced the VX100 The Super Kraken, our regular contributor as soon as possible...and with good reason. The new 100-watt, dual-channel, three-mode, company's Compact Series VX The Kraken and it may be one of the best amps on the market today.

As soon as Victory Amps announced the VX100 The Super Kraken, our regular contributor, Nick Jen-nison demanded we have a look at one as soon as possible...and with good reason. The new 100-watt, dual-channel, three-mode, 4 AX7/4 6L6-loaded head expands on the company's Compact Series VX The Kraken and it may be one of the best amps on the market today.

Let me declare my interest up-front: I'm a Victory Amps artist, so feel free to filter

everything in this review through that lens. I should also state, however, that the VX100 Super Kraken is the amp that made me consider retiring my beloved Mesa Mark IV after so many years.

The VX100 is the bigger, more feature-rich sibling to the VX "The Kraken" - part of Victory's ac-claimed Compact series of lunch-box-format heads. Designed in collaboration with Rabea Mas-saad, The Kraken eschewed a clean channel in favour of two flavours of high gain: JCM-inspired



but, **Nick Jennison** demanded we have a look at -mode, 4 AX7/4 6L6-loaded head expands on the market today.

British grind on channel 1, 5150-esque American grind on channel 2 - although the VX is smoother, darker and fuller sounding than either of the amps that inspired it.

In keeping with the other amps that bear the “Super-” prefix (The Super Countess, and the new Super Duchess), the Super Kraken is a larger format, 100-watt head with a number of extra features that set it apart from the lunchbox version. The Super Kraken retains the two high gain voices from the VX, but introduces a new “clean” mode, as well as a switchable “preamp focus”. The preamp focus is an FET-based mid boost that’s akin to engaging a tubescreamer. It rolls off some lows and highs, adds a little saturation and focusses the mids for a more vocal delivery.

The clean mode is a very warm, British-voiced clean with some breakup creeping in even with the gain set as low as 12-o’clock. There’s a slight mid scoop, but the highs are rounded and fat rather than sparking. If you’re into Fender or Mesa cleans, this mode might feel a little shrouded, but it really excels as a pedal platform. The front-end compression and warm voice absorbs fuzzes, boosts and overdrives with grace, and none of the shrillness or scratchiness that can plague brighter clean amps. Pushing this mode with the pre-amp focus yields a throaty, Texas-approved blues tone,

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Killer rock and metal tones.
- » Preamp focus and MIDI switching are invaluable additions.
- » Clean, simple control layout.

CONS

- » Clean channel might not be sparkly enough for some.

Check **THE SPEC**

Victory VX100 Super Kraken

MSRP (UK) £1599 (US) \$1899 //

2 Channels // 100 W/30 W //

Preamp tubes: 4x 12AX7 // Power tubes: 4x 6L6 // Series Effects Loop

For more information, please visit: **victoryamps.com**

“The Victory VX100 Super Kraken is a **tonal powerhouse**...”

especially with single coils. It's also a great way to help mid-scooped muff-style fuzzes punch through a mix.

Switching to Gain 1 offers up loads of classic British gain, but to my ear it's more akin to the bass input on a plexi than a JCM800/900. The voice is very fat and

thick with a huge low end and relaxed highs. There's still plenty of midrange growl and purr, but there's none of the harshness that these classic Marshall designs can sometimes exhibit. The preamp focus pushes things into more of that “modded Marshall” territory, with a sweet vocal sustain that's ideal for classic rock soloing.



Gain 2 is a different animal, with tighter lows, more searing highs and an upper mid grind that's perfectly refined for modern rock and metal styles - it's gritty enough to be aggressive, but not loose or abrasive. The tighter lows help baritone guitars and extended range instruments stay tight and percussive, and there's a killer "haze" on sustained power chords. While this channel is inherently slightly scooped (especially compared to the thick voice of Gain 1), engaging the pre-amp focus brings out the midrange vowel and smoothness that's immensely gratifying for soloing, and further

helps articulation on complex single-note riffs.

In addition to the crazy level of tonal versatility on tap, the VX100 has a few other tricks up its sleeve, including MIDI switching. It took no less than a year to implement this from the Super Kra-ken's "soft launch" at NAMM 2018, and it was definitely worth the wait. Using any MIDI switcher, the player can switch between all three channels, both master volumes and turn the preamp focus and FX loop on and off - all on a per-preset basis. This is a



Victory VX100 Super Kraken

dream come true if, like me and legions of guitarists out there, you use a MIDI-enabled pedalboard switcher like a Boss ES-8 or a GigRig G2.

The VX100 also carries over three key features from the VX - switchable master volumes, a low power mode and a poweramp “bass focus” switch. Lead designer Martin Kidd popularised footswitchable master volumes with his Cornford masterpiece the MK50, and it’s an incredibly useful feature for the gigging player. The three channels are very well matched in terms of level, so the second master can be used as a volume boost for poking your head over the mix. Speaking of volume, there’s lots of it! Even at 30 watts, you’ll struggle to get the Super Kraken up beyond half volume at most gigs. What the low power setting does provide is a different feel, with more purr and grit in the midrange, while the high

power setting is smooth and punchy even at crushing volumes.

Lastly, the poweramp focus cuts a significant amount of low-end fatness across all three channels. With it disengaged, the amp sounds massive with huge amounts of bass on tap. Engage it, and the sound is tight, muscular and articulate. As a rule, I prefer it engaged for recording and playing in bands with two guitars, but disengaging it is super gratifying on for playing alone, in a power trio, or at lower volumes.

The Victory VX100 Super Kraken is a tonal powerhouse with a wealth of superb rock and metal tones, and a bunch of clever features for the modern player - and it does it all with a beautifully simple 7-knob control layout. Highly recommended.

END◀

COMPANY OF GREATNESS

 **STEVE HARRIS**
SIGNATURE SH1

"ANDREW BARTA IS A REAL BOFFIN. WHATEVER HE'S DONE, HE'S MADE THIS THING SOUND LIKE MY SOUND. SO, WELL DONE, MATE." – STEVE HARRIS
[BOFFIN = TECHNICAL EXPERT]



 **GEDDY LEE**
SIGNATURE YYZ



"THIS AWESOME PEDAL TAKES THE MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FROM MY GED-2112 RACKMOUNT AND POPS THEM INTO A REALLY PORTABLE, SMALLER PACKAGE." – GEDDY LEE

 **DUG PINNICK**
SIGNATURE DP-3X

"THE PEDAL WENT WAY BEYOND MY EXPECTATIONS. WHAT I LOVE MOST IS THAT YOU CAN GET JUST ABOUT ANY TONE OUT OF IT. IT'S NOT JUST A ONE TRICK PONY." – dUg PINNICK



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BEST OF 2019

Sam Bell presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2019.

I am fortunate to be able to review some incredible gear for this Magazine. And now and then, some of the gear just has that extra Mojo that you can't quite put your finger on. When Jonathan asked me to put up my top 3 bits of gear from this year, I didn't have to think too hard! In this top 3, there are two electric guitars and one combo amp that stood out to me. I know when I've found something great when I get lost in the playing. Each of these pieces of gear are linked by that very factor, they brought something out in me. Its subjective of course, but I highly recommend checking out the following. I will not take any responsibility for your financial situation after checking out this gear.

Cort G Series G290 FAT



This is a stunning Super Strat style Guitar, quality features, sleek look & design, ripping playability and versatility in a class package. The fact that they make these so affordable is brilliant, a must for any player looking for a versatile modern sounding super strat style guitar with solid features. A guitar can do it all.

that packs a tonal punch to the gut. It would make a brilliant recording amp and great for the weekend warrior who needs to get around effectively between those 3 gigs on a Sunday afternoon.

ESP LTD MH-1000HS QM



Straight out the box this guitar looks stunning, the finish was mesmerising, like a Caribbean

shoreline and Rum, super smooth. The build quality is outstanding, the way the guitar responded and sat was addictive in nature. I noticed Jonathan and the rest of the G.I team had all fallen in love with this Guitar, I wouldn't be surprised if it ended up on their top 3 lists as well! It Definity has that Hard Rock/Shred Character, and that's something I personally love. I dislike being so simple here, but it just felt 'cool' to play, don't believe me? Try one out!

Supro Blues King 12



This combo amp was chock full of boutique character. Featuring a lush reverb to get lost in, great tones, and most importantly, a nice fat sustaining clean tone, all in a small package. More could you ask for? Its most definitely a look if your looking for something small



And that's my
came very close
Cort KX500S
String and the
looking forward

SAM BELL'S CHOICE:

BEST OF 2019

Top 3 for 2019; there was a lot of gear that e, some honourable mentions would be the (7 String), Santos Martinez Allegro Nylon Danelectro Breakdown Overdrive. I'm d to what 2020 has in store!



ESP LTD MH-1000HS - Violet Shadow

Guitars in ESP's LTD 1000 Series are designed to offer the tone, feel, looks and quality that professional musicians require in an instrument. The MH-1001HS is a new humbucker/single pickup combination for the MH Series, which combines design elements of our M and H Series guitars. In a Shadow Fade and Black Cherry Fade finish, **Nick Jennison** takes the former for a test

ESP & LTD are both well known for making some exceptional production model guitars, with high-quality features, unique looks, excellent playability and versatility for most contemporary styles. On my recent visit to Guitar Interactive I had the pleasure of reviewing this awesome MH1000 series in Violet Shadow Fade.

Perhaps the first thing that stands out about this guitar is its look. The shades of blue over the flame maple top really make this guitar look incredibly appealing. Around the back of the Guitar we can see the Mahogany body showing through the lacquer. The Body and Neck-through construction is slick, giving the player excellent access to the 24 frets. »



ESP LTD MH-1000HS - Violet Shadow Fade

BEST OF 2019

THE REVIEWS ESP LTD MH-1000HS - VIOLET SHADOW FADE

ow Fade

that working pro-
ngle-coil configura-
Available in Violet
run.



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Awesome Looks
- » Smooth as butter
- » Great Tones

CONS

- » Floyd may be an issue for some

Check **THE SPEC**

ESP LTD MH-1000HS - Violet Shadow Fade

MSRP (UK) £1149 (US) \$1498 //

Body: Mahogany// Top: Quilted maple// Neck-thru-body: Maple// Makassar ebony fretboard

For more information, please visit: espguitars.com

“I was incredibly impressed by this Guitar, it’s a **very versatile** instrument...”

The lacquered Thin ‘U’ shape neck is of course Mahogany with a smooth Macassar Ebony Fretboard and Jumbo Frets. Fretting hand work feels effortless and smooth. Notes sustain and bloom outwards in their articulation, the guitar resonates well when playing dynamically. Grover tuners keep tuning stable and a Floyd Rose system with locking nut is installed. This can be controversial having a Floyd Rose, it would be great to see this Guitar with a Modern Vintage Trem system and locking tuners. However, the Floyd Rose that this Guitar comes with is high quality, and if you are familiar with setting them up, it should be a breeze!

The Guitar comes equipped with two Seymour Duncan Pickups, a Hot Rails in the Neck Position (Single Coil Size Humbucker) and a Pegasus Humbucker in the Bridge. These are both fairly high output and are controlled by a 3 way pickup switch and coil tap function which can be activated by pulling up the Tone Knob. I was very impressed with the coil tap on this guitar, due to the solid build of the instrument, the split sounds sounded convincing and musical with and without any drive from an amp or pedal. I could play funky rhythms and crunchy leads with single coil flare and I didn’t feel like I was missing anything. When the pickups are used as Humbuckers,

the Hot Rails in the neck responds with a warm and fat tone. And in the Bridge Position, the Pegasus has a tight bottom end response which is ideal for Modern Rock and Metal styles.

I was incredibly impressed by this Guitar, it’s a very versatile instrument, looks stunning and is very well put together. It even comes with an ESP Hardcase with tools and cloths to help maintain the beast! The price point is above average, however you do get a lot with this guitar. If you’re looking for a modern contemporary guitar for versatile situations and you’re happy with using a Floyd Rose, this is definitely worth a look!

END «

Annual Holiday Sale!

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Includes 20' FASLINK™ Cable and 1-year warranty!

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~~\$2,969.97~~ **\$2599⁹⁹**

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Supro Blues King 12

Sam Bell reviews the Supro Blues King 12. A combo amplifier that captures the vintage electric Rock & Roll and the British Invasion of the 1960s. The “single-ended” Class-A tonal characteristics and remarkable touch sensitivity of these mid-century combos, v

SUPRO is a big name in the amp world, this amp may be very small and light, but it sure packs tons of punch, tone and quality. The Supro Blues King 12 is a 1x12 class A 15-watt combo featuring a classic design in a small package. The amp really hits the nail on the

head for the classic British blues tone, and despite its small combo design the amp really does fill the space sound wise. It's a very simple layout, with volume, 3 band EQ, reverb (which is amazing, we'll come to that!) and master control.



The Supro amp tone that helped sculpt the sound of early tube power amp found in the Blues King provides the raw while delivering a full 15 watts of 6L6 tube power.

“I can see this amp being **very popular** with blues and rock players...”

On a clean sound we get a very warm, mid-range almost AC30 style tone from the single 6L6 power amp valve with a slight bit of break up when pushed with dynamic picking. The amp features a Boost and Gain switch. The Boost works as a middle-range fattener whilst the gain adds some more pre amp woosh from the 12AX7 valve.

There are a whole host of fuzzy/crunchy/bluesy/warm/sharp tones we can coax from this small package of an amp. But one of the things that I personally love the most is the incredible analogue spring reverb. It has a long tail on it, but the control effects the level of the reverb. Going from subtle ambience all the way to surf rock wash! I love it. (I used this amp for a few more guitar reviews on the day of filming)

Around the back of the amp we have a dedicated FX Loop for any time-based effects that we might want to use. A footswitch jack and line out. The Line out can be used for direct recording from the Pre-amp when »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Light and Compact
- » Amazing tone/reverb
- » Versatile for Blues/Roots Rock

CONS

- » None

Check **THE SPEC**

Supro Blues King 12

MSRP (UK) £599 (US) \$900 //

15-watt 1×12" tube combo //
Footswitchable boost and gain //
Analog spring reverb

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.jhs.co.uk/supro-blues-king-12-1-x-12-15w-tube-amplifier>

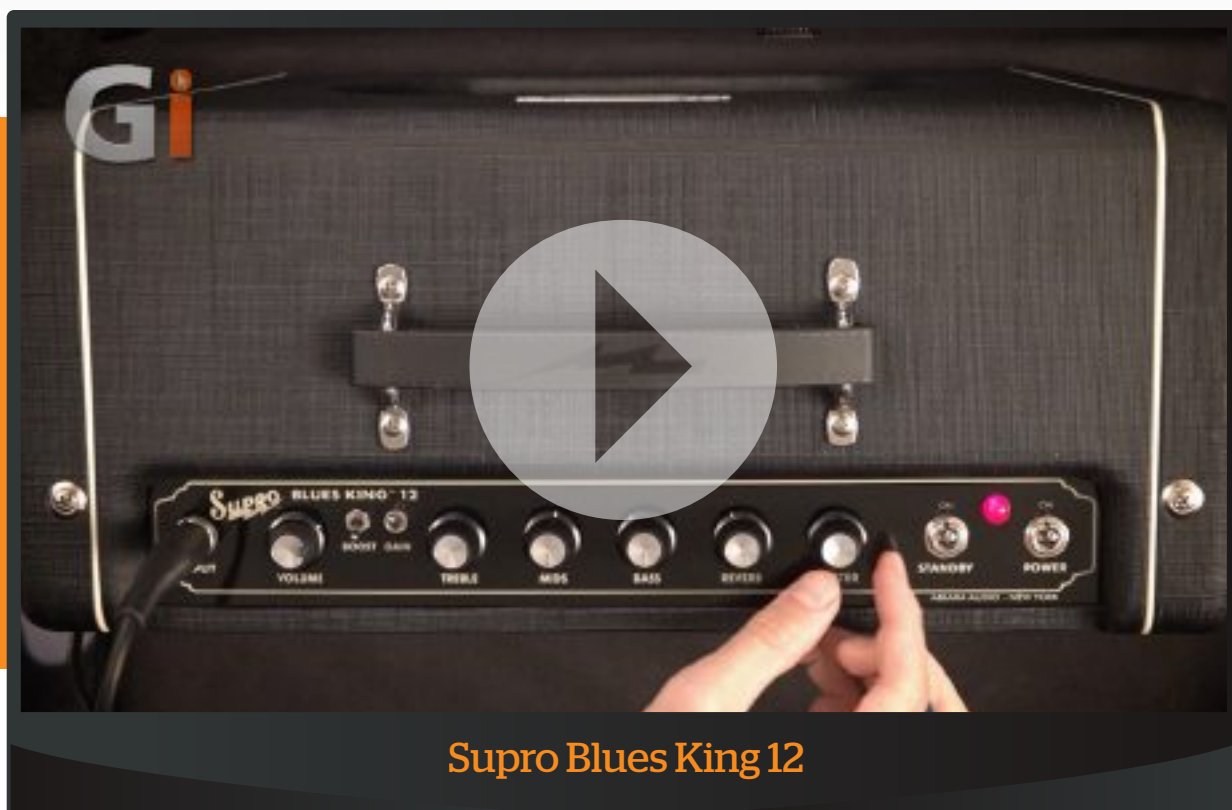
used with a DAW, you can then put the pre amp signal through any kind of rack gear or Impulse Response plugins you want for quiet home recording.

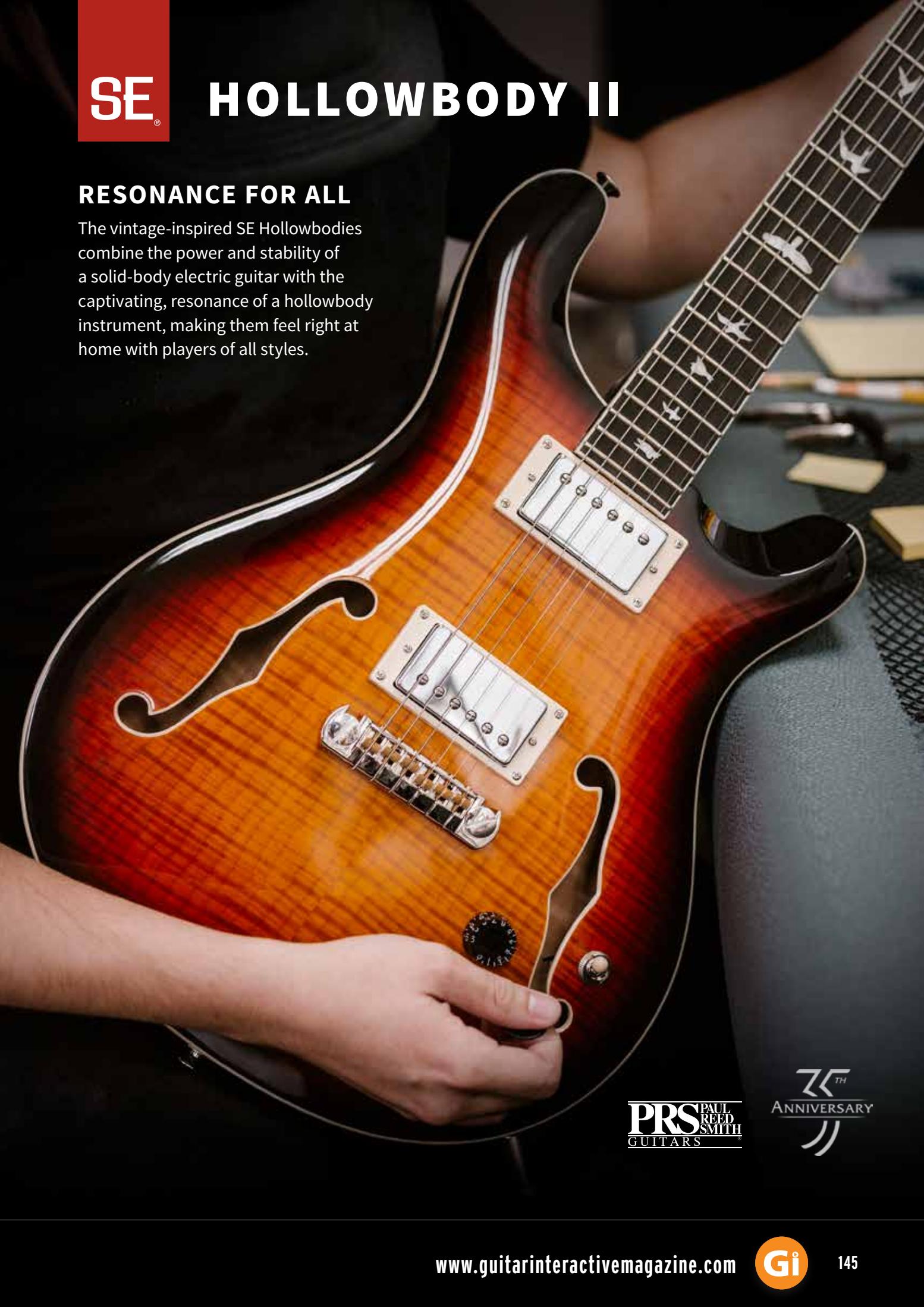
This amp's character is perfect for use with pedals, I wish we had a tubescreamer handy as I could just tell by its warm responsiveness to my playing that it would take these kinds of pedals fantastically.

I can see this amp being very popular

with blues and rock players. But also musicians on the gigging scene looking for a light, compact amp that packs tons of tone would get a lot of enjoyment from trying the Blues King 12 out!

END ◀



**SE**

HOLLOWBODY II

RESONANCE FOR ALL

The vintage-inspired SE Hollowbodies combine the power and stability of a solid-body electric guitar with the captivating, resonance of a hollowbody instrument, making them feel right at home with players of all styles.

PRS PAUL
REED
SMITH
GUITARS

25TH
ANNIVERSARY

Cort G290 FAT

Offering excellent playability mixed with superb tones and versatility in one six-string is no easy feat. However, Cort looks to achieve this at a reasonable price with the release of the G290 FAT. Here is **Sam Bell** with the full breakdown.

THE Cort G290 FAT is a super strat style instrument with stunning looks, great build quality, playability and affordability. I could keep throwing 'ility' on the end of more words, but let's take a look at some of the specs of this fine Guitar! Before I dive in its safe to say that this guitar is very

versatile. Perfect for the modern player looking to cover a lot of stylistic ground.

Neck:

Birdseye Maple Neck and Fretboard which gives the tone of the guitar a much brighter mid-range, it looks stunning and feels great »



package
se of the



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Quality Features/Versatile
- » Great Looks
- » Affordability

CONS

- » None

Check **THE SPEC**

Cort G290 FAT

MSRP (UK) £549 (US) \$849 //

Swamp Ash Body // Flamed maple Top // Birdseye maple Neck // Cort Voiced Tone VTH-77 humbuckers

For more information, please visit:
cortguitars.com

“I think this is a **fantastic option** for the modern guitar player...”

to play. On the Cort website, they specify the neck has a new design shape called the ‘Ergo V Neck Profile’ which does make it sound like it’s going to be a very pointy ‘V’ profile. Which it isn’t quite. What we do get however, is a nicely rounded almost C style neck that keeps you on your fingertips across the compound radius neck. The Compound radius makes the neck feel very comfortable

across the fingerboard from a radius of 12 to 15.75 inches, this helps with chordal, thumb over the neck playing in the first quarter of the neck and then it starts to flatten out significantly around the 12th fret for bending with ease and fast passages. This is a very common and modern neck profile, great for all kinds of playing styles. The scale length is 25.5 (standard Strat

Style Scale Length) and there are 22 medium/tall frets. Which feel great to play on, the intonation is much more precise than with super fat frets. The neck also has an easy access Spoke Nut Hotrod Trussrod making neck bow adjustments easy to do!

Body:

This instrument has a wonderful Flamed Maple »





Top which looks stunning in the Antique finish. The body is made from Swamp Ash, its lightweight, looks great and delivers a punchy mid-range tonality. It works really well along with the neck wood. Within the double cut away design we have two Humbucker pickups 'Voiced Tone VTH-77's' which are Cort Designed pickups that cover a wide range of styles and needs. These are controlled via a single Volume, Tone and 5 way switch which gives us the classic 5-way pickup choices of neck, neck single, neck and bridge, bridge single and bridge. A whole host of tones can be achieved via this pickup configuration. The Pick Up covers look great as well!

Hardware:

Cort made Staggered Locking Tremolo system combined with Bar Action without losing tuning during stringing sessions. The Whammy is routed into the tremolo unit on the guitar so the tremolo can be routed out so the tremolo can be used for all kinds of whammy bar action.

"This instrument has a **wonderful Flan** in the Antique finish..."

g Machine Heads and CFA-III
ake a great duo for Whammy
ing stability and quick re-
my Bar can simply be pushed
go. The body has been slightly
be pulled back as well as dived
action.

Summary:

Be sure to check out the video review for all the sounds and my personal thoughts on this instrument, in summary, I think this is a fantastic option for the modern guitar player looking for an affordable workhorse guitar which looks and sounds great!

END «

ed Maple Top which looks stunning



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BEST OF 2019

Phil Short presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's Best of 2019.

WELL, what a 2019 it's been! With a Christmas election on the horizon and the world seemingly going mad, it's still been an amazing time within the music community and with our company's providing us with awesome creative tools to escape the chaos of the world! I've been so happy to highlight my top picks of the year we've seen at G.I.



Victory V140 Super Duchess

My first top pick has to be without a

be awarded to the guys at Victory Amps for the V140 Super Duchess. Being an endorsee, I think I'm inclined to be a little biased. But if there is anything, it is (in my humblest of opinions) completely justified by the track record that Victory have earned for themselves as the go to amplifier brand in the UK. Having played venues of the size of your mum's living room all the way up to arenas and Stadiums, the V140 has proven itself to be a reliable,

powerful workhorse, providing tonal goodness and dependability in the most demanding professional environments.

Sheptone Heartbreaker PAF



My top pick number two is going to go to the guys at Sheptone pickups and their heartbreaker PAFs. These

are quite possibly, the most exquisite sounding pickups I've ever played in my entire career. Extremely rewarding, they are wonderfully responsive to touch, pick attack and they clean up beautifully. They also handle me-

dium gain tones at high volume very well, and give a full, open vintage tone reminiscent of the 1970s rock scene. Players looking for that elusive PAF tone, the right amount of bass, the hollow mids and the chimney top end, need look no further. With a huge range of PAF flavours to choose from, they are well worth checking out!



PRS A265E and A270E

Finally, but by no means least are the PRS A265E and A270E electro-acoustics. From time to time, an acoustic is a joyous



PRS SE A265



PRS SE A270



PRS really
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PHIL SHORT'S CHOICE:

BEST OF 2019

thing to behold, whether playing for our own pleasure at home or for a stripped-back live setting or studio session. These acoustics from [unintelligible] blew me away with how good [unintelligible] and how pleasing they were to [unintelligible] the price point they're at. Featuring [unintelligible] newoods and beautiful styling and [unintelligible] to detail, they did not disappoint in [unintelligible] or playability department. Boasting [unintelligible] quality Fishman acoustic pre-amps, [unintelligible] and fantastic plugged in direct to the [unintelligible] house PA. Mic'd up, they sounded [unintelligible]quisite and would sit perfectly on [unintelligible]ade of recordings. In summary, it's [unintelligible]very good year for guitar gear indeed! [unintelligible]many others in the guitar commu-[unintelligible]up for NAMM 2020, I'm excited to [unintelligible]the turn of the decade holds for us [unintelligible]y and creatively. I wish you all a very [unintelligible]christmas, and happy new year!



Sheptone Heartbreaker Humbucker

Phil Short reviews the latest release from Sheptone pickups in the form of the Heartbreaker Humbucker, a pickup that delivers the classic Jimmy Page tones we all know and love.

PICKUPS! Arguably the most crucial ingredient amongst the many factors that shape our sound as guitarists. Many of us will have experienced the significant changes to our sound simply by changing the pickups in our guitars, whether it's to breathe fresh life into a guitar that otherwise left us uninspired, or whether we have a specific genre we play that requires a specific pickup type to achieve the tone we're looking for.

However, with such a large number of pickup companies offering a vast range to choose from, it can at times feel a little overwhelming!

Well, hopefully, you can stop your search at this review of the Heart Breaker Pickups by Sheptone. Founded in 2007, chief designer Jeff Shepherd went on the ultimate quest to find the perfect PAF style pickup.

What even is PAF anyway? It stands for Patented Applied For and is the original humbucker design by Seth Lover. Back in the early days, pickups were all hand-wound, resulting in fluctuating tonal qualities of each individual » pick-



“These pickups sound and feel like some of the **highest quality pickups** we've heard in a long time...”

er Set

reaker Humbucker set. Designed to emulate the elu-



STAR RATING



PROS

» Organic, responsive tones

CONS

» Not a thing.

Check **THE SPEC**

Sheptone Heartbreaker Humbucker Set

MSRP (UK) £TBC (US) \$350 //

Alnico 5 Magnet // Available In Covered & Non Covered Option.

For more information, please visit: **sheptone.com**



up. Some would be a dud, but others would be simply awe-inspiring. Pickup builders have spent many years researching the secret ingredients that made these pickups so special, and Jeff Shepherd may have just struck gold with his take.

The heartbreaker pickups were inspired by Jimmy Page's legendary tone. They're not a copy of a particular pickup, but rather the fruits of long labour to reproduce a pickup that would produce that same awe inspiring sound from those records.

They are without a doubt some of the most refreshing and musical sounding pickups we've heard here at GI in a while. Beautifully organic sounding, they are full, clear and open. They respond extremely well to pick attack and to the pots on the guitar, making them very tweak-able and versatile. You can really hear the natural resonance of the guitar shine through them, and even though they are vintage voiced pickups, they sound magical blues and classic rock. Lots of beautiful harmonic overtones and sweet musical feed-

back happens even at relatively low gain. For players who love low to medium gain tones and love to dig in to their guitars these pickups are extremely rewarding, really allowing your personality to shine through.

Rolling down the volume control in split coil mode yielded some wonderfully authentic funk tones as well as beautifully clear and rich blues and classic rock sounds, very versatile indeed!

These pickups sound and feel like some of the highest quality pickups we've heard in a long time. Even better, they're not at a silly price point, well within the same price bracket as many of the leading pickup brands.

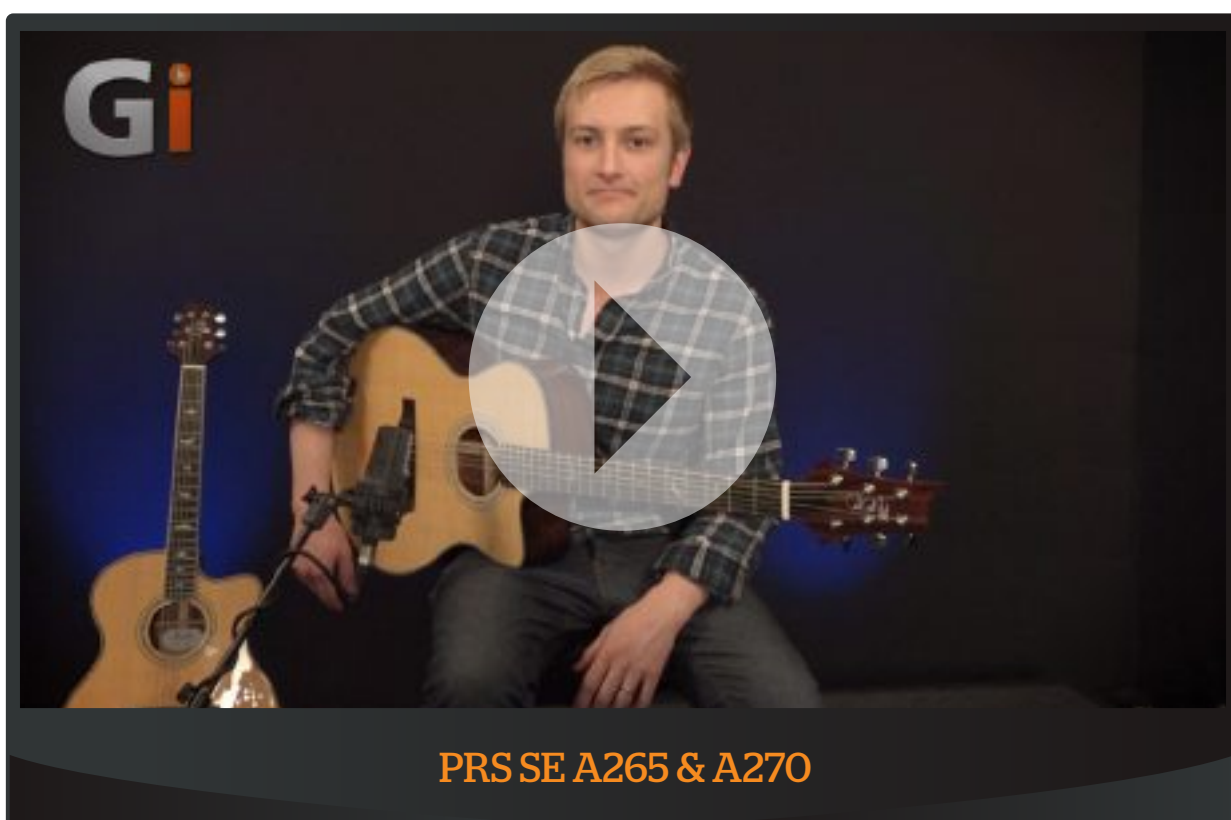
If you feel tired of the status quo and want a truly refreshing sound, the sheptone heartbreakers may just be what you've been looking for.

END ◀

PRS SE A265 & A270

PRS, known primarily for their high-end electric guitars, have over the last few years brought some excellent, affordable acoustic instruments. In this issue, **Phil Short** checks out two strong new limited edition models, the A265E and the A270E.

Both of these brand new limited edition guitars from PRS boast stunning features. A Fishman GT1 pickup, tucked away tone and volume controls, mahogany necks, ebony fretboards, solid spruce tops and of course, PRS's famous bird inlays. There are a few differences between each guitar, some are aesthetic but there are also some significant tonal differences. »



BEST OF 2019

THE QUIET ROOM PRS SE A265 & A270

een bringing out
wo particularly



PRS SE A265

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Great features.
- » Quality tonewoods.
- » Excellent finishing.
- » Good playability.

CONS

- » It's a shame they're a limited run.

Check **THE SPEC**

PRS SE A265 & A270

MSRP (UK) £799 (US) \$N/A //

Koa or Pau Ferro Back and Sides

// Hybrid 'X' Classical Bracing

// Fishman GT1 Under-Saddle
Pickup

For more information, please visit:
prsguitars.com



Aesthetically, the A265E has Ebony binding, abalone inlays, rosette and an abalone strip down the spine of the guitar. This model's back and sides are made from Pau Ferro, a relation to the rosewood family, giving the guitar a rich tone with plenty of sizzle in the top end. The guitar sounds crisp and clean, and will punch well in the mix of a live band.

It's counterpart, the A270E has an acrylic Ivory binding and a beautiful golden 'Ivory and tiger' inlay around the edges of the spruce top and the rosette. The binding around the body and the neck and the bird inlays are also in the acrylic ivory rather than the ebony finish. This gives the guitar a lovely sense of continuity in its design.

This model boasts beautiful Koa back and sides, giving the guitar a chunkier, warmer tone than it's brother. This guitar would be particularly well suited to solo artists and »



PRS SE A270

FEELING THE CONFIDENCE TO PLAY AT YOUR BEST



Focus on your passion.
Knowing nothing will get in your way.



No endless string changes
No retuning headaches
No rough feel from sweaty hands
No dead sounding strings
...even after hours and hours of playing.

Once you've played them,
there's no looking back.

Elixir 
STRINGS

GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE™

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PRS SE A265

singer/songwriters who self accompany. The tone is thick and chocolatey, very pleasing on the ear!

Both guitars are a joy to play, with the perfect action height that makes chording feel very easy and comfortable right across the neck. The intonation is also set extremely well, no out of tune chords near the dusty end of the fretboard, a huge win in our book!

The Mahogany neck is beautifully finished and feels very comfortable in the hands. Thick enough to be solid and provide plenty of tone to the overall sound, but not so big that it feels cumbersome to play.

The Fishman GT1 pickup is also very well voiced, giving a very true representation of the guitars acoustic tone when plugged in - something all gigging guitarists are looking for in an instrument. The tone control has a wonderfully wide sweep on it, meaning you'll be able to really fine tune your sound depending on your playing style, pick your using and the P.A. system you may be playing through.

Recording the guitars under the microphone reveals just how rich they both sound. Harmonic overtones are present in abundance,

giving a real three-dimensional quality. They'll sound fantastic on any recording session. Sadly they're only a limited run, go and grab yours while you can!

END «

PRS SE A270



Victory V140 Super Duchess

With Victory Amplifiers V140 The Super Duchess, the British amplifier heavyweight p top with enormous headroom reserves and authentic Vintage sounds. Accordingly, th 12AX7 - and two 12AT7 tubes, convinces with a crystal-clear Clean Californian sound th tone control. Here's **Phil Short** with the full breakdown.

WE'RE back again with another fantastic review of the brand new Victory Super Duchess! The third model in the V40 The Duchess line of amps, this model is perhaps their most glorious version to date. It's bigger, louder and more versatile than their previous models boasting a 100 watt power section.

Wait..! 100 watts? Why would we possibly want or need 100 watts? The answer is of course, headroom! The previous versions in the V40 line were deliberately designed to get that edge of break up tone at sensible gigging volume. Chewy clean tones with a touch of hair to the tone are available in abundance.



presents a powerful version of the popular Duchess
the single-channel preamp design, which relies on two
that can be optimally adjusted via the classic 3-Band

“The preamp circuit
has the **ability to drive**
really well and has
more gain than the
previous versions...”

Sometimes though, you just need an amp that will
stay truly clean at much higher volumes, or you just
need more power for bigger stages. Enter the V140
Super Duchess, which picks up where the V40 De-
luxe left off.

The amp features a 100-watt power section with
4 6L6 power tubes for those huge, lush American
style clean tones. The bigger power section affords a
greater sense of depth that beautifully fills the room.
Because of the extra headroom the dynamic range is
vastly increased, so some players may find the use of
a compressor helpful to tame some of their attack.

Whilst based on the V40 Deluxe, the Super Duch-
ess does have noticeably more treble and presence
and feels much more “fendery” than their previous
models. This will please players looking for copious
amounts of sparkle and chime. »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Huge range of tones.
- » Fantastic build quality.
- » Extra treble and top-end than predecessor.

CONS

- » Not much to dislike.

Check **THE SPEC**

Victory V140 Super Duchess
MSRP (UK) £1549 (US) \$TBC //

Valves: 4x 12AX7, 4x 6L6 // Size:
480mm x 295mm x 235mm //
Weight: 12.5kg // Two button
footswitch for reverb and tremolo
included

For more information, please visit:
victoryamps.com

“Let’s not forget the cab either..!”

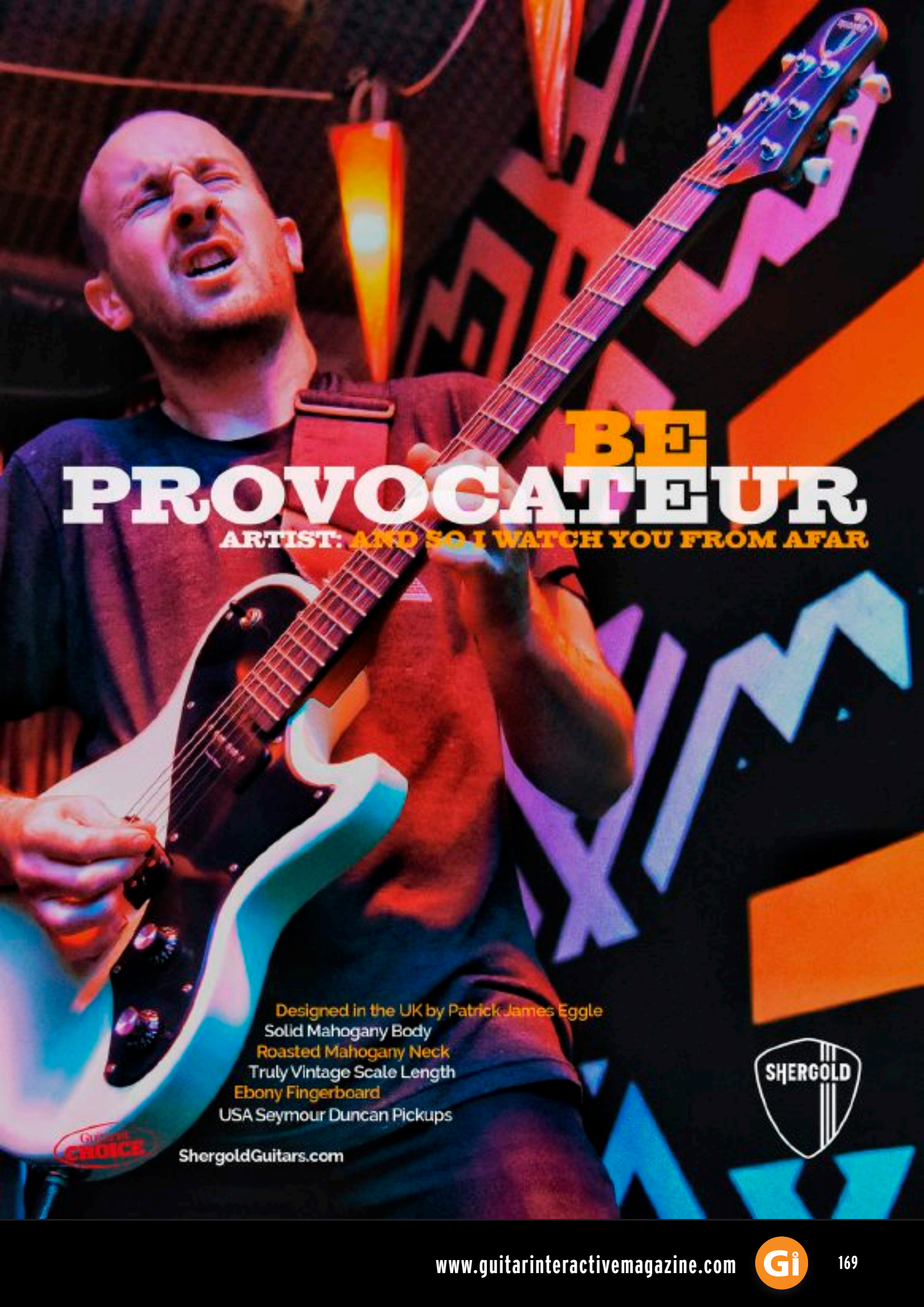
The extra headroom also allows a little more breathing space for “amp in a box” style pedals to have a little extra breathing room, and helps them not to “flub” at higher volumes. There’s also ample sonic space for boost pedals for volume jumps for solos.

The preamp circuit has the ability to drive really well and has more gain than the previous versions. Wound all the way up, huge,

fat sounding early Marshall esq tones were available, and the extra headroom kept that low end thump we’d associate with a 4x12.

Let’s not forget the cab either! Vertical construction, housing two 12inch Celestion creamback 65 speakers, the cab sounds just as big as any 4x12 we’ve heard at a fraction of the size and weight. The open back design helps to really fill the room too. »





BE PROVOCATEUR

ARTIST: **AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR**

Designed in the UK by Patrick James Eggle
Solid Mahogany Body
Roasted Mahogany Neck
Truly Vintage Scale Length
Ebony Fingerboard
USA Seymour Duncan Pickups



ShergoldGuitars.com



The money is worth spending to really allow the amp to sing at its best.

There are a couple of added features that we greatly enjoyed. The voice switch has an extra setting on it, giving three variations to the mid-range response of the amp so you can really fine-tune your tone for different guitars and pedals.

We're still treated to the same lush built-in tremolo circuit, but we're afforded a bigger reverb tank with a much longer reverb tail. This is definitely a highlight, with beautiful lush reverb tones available in abundance.

If 100 watts is too powerful, you can drop the power to 30 watts. Low power mode does still have plenty of kick to it! But the reduced headroom helps tame the bottom end, definitely useful for smaller stages or large bands where the bottom end could get in the way. The low power mode feels very similar to the deluxe, but has a slightly different voice to it, with more presence and upper mids.

All in all, a stunning workhorse that is extremely tweak-able and flexible, yet simple to use.

END◀

BEST OF 2019

THE REVIEWS VICTORY V140 SUPER DUCHESS



2019



STUDIO TO STAGE

BEST OF THE YEAR

Tascam DR-05X Handheld

With dual internal condenser microphones that can handle anything from voice to instruments, the Tascam DR-05X Handheld Digital Recorder allows high-quality recording while ut powerful, but with a price that just about anyone can handle. Here's **Tom C**

FOR the guitarist on the go, the concept of a portable recording device that can capture your ideas and thoughts in high quality for an affordable price used to be but a pipe dream. These days there are all manner of smaller audio recorders and interfaces on the market that can give you levels of quality that you'd have needed a pro studio to achieve two decades ago. One such unit is Tascam's DR-05X – a compact stereo audio recorder with a pair of excellent sounding condenser mics built-in and up to 96kHz, 24-bit recording for fantastic sound quality.

The DR-05X model sports some significant upgrades from the previous DR-05, the most useful of which is the ability to hook the unit up to a computer, iOS or android device and use it as a high-quality audio interface via USB. High quality ASIO drivers are included for Windows users and the device is Core Audio compliant for those on a Mac. Since the DR-05X is bus-powered, you get a highly compact,

self-contained and great sounding 2in/2out interface with a stereo pair of excellent sounding omnidirectional microphones built in that sound superb for anything from voice over work to guitars or video foley work. For those wanting to record using an external source such as a lapel mic or another stereo device, the mic/ext input has you covered and can power any mic utilizing a 3.5mm jack.

For the guitarist producing their own videos, this combination of portability, sound quality and ease of workflow is a fantastic prospect, and there are many useful software features built in to enhance and streamline the recording process further still.

Another huge upgrade is the addition of a microSDXC card reader, allowing users to utilize up to 128GB cards for masses of recording time, even at the highest sound quality. For those on a smaller space budget, mp3 files can be recorded at several industry-standard bitrates. At the highest

BEST OF 2019

STUDIO TO STAGE TASCAM DR-05X HANDHELD DIGITAL RECORDER

Digital Recorder

From subtle to loud to even 125dB SPL—Tascam's
utilizing an easy-to-use interface. Portable and
Quayle with the full review.



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Highly affordable
- » Great sounding in-built mics
- » Powerful recording options
- » SDCX card reader for masses of recording time
- » Built-in reverb and EQ

CONS

- » No XLR inputs for more 'PRO' expansion and recording.

Check **THE SPEC**

Tascam DR-05X Handheld Digital Recorder

MSRP (UK) £93 (US) \$119 //

118 g // 2.6 cm x 6 cm x 14 cm // 2 AA batteries required

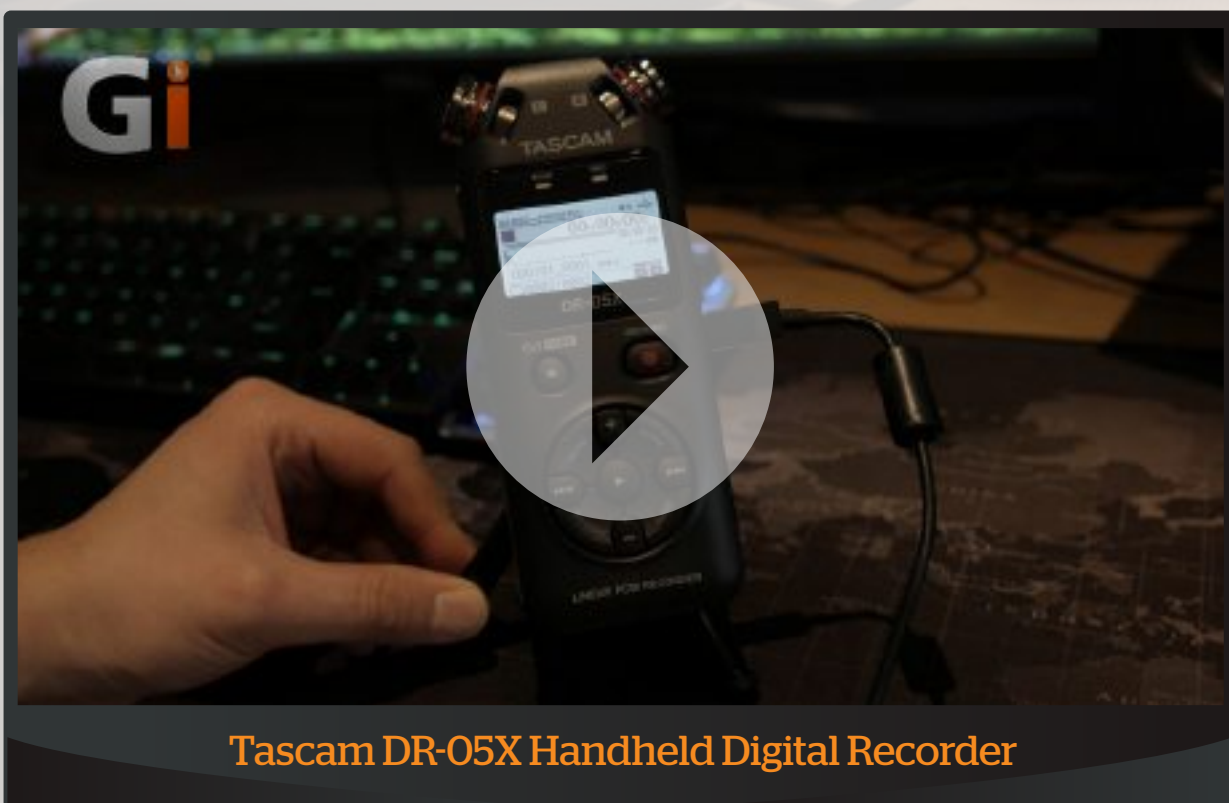
For more information, please visit:
www.tascam.eu

320kbps bitrate, a 128GB card will hold up to 896 hours of audio, so you'll likely never need to upgrade your storage again. Battery life is also excellent, offering 17.5 hours of recording time at 44.1kHz/16-bit with alkaline batteries.

The DR-05X is very intuitive in use thanks to a simple but powerful control panel and a highly legible screen offering all the information you need right on the unit. Setting levels is easy, using either manual or auto mode, whilst the in-built limiter and Peak Reduction combine with accurate visual metering so you can always

be sure you're getting the best sound quality. Useful additions like the 'hold' switch, small rubber feet and tripod mount screw are all very much appreciated and add to the feeling that this is a very well thought out product.

For musicians, vocalists and especially guitarists the DR-05X is a particularly useful tool thanks to some very cool recording features – this is certainly not just aimed at those recording in the board room! The built-in chromatic tuner ensures you sound great before your performance and the display can even rotate so that



it's easy to read with the mics pointed at you. Performers can monitor and even record through several great sounding reverb effects, and there is even a low-cut filter built in to remove rumbles and mud during the tracking stage. Tascam have included an auto-record mode too that starts recording as soon as it ears an input signal.

Once you've laid down your first track, non-destructive overdubbing and punch-in modes allow you to layer up your creations and you can listen back using the in-built mono speaker or stereo headphone/line output. A pre-record buffer ensures that you'll never miss the start of a great take and, once you're happy with your performances, you can transfer all the files to your computer for further mixing and editing via the USB cable.

As you can hear in our video review, the in-built mics do a superb job of capturing both voice and guitars and the recording quality on offer is as good as any consumer-level dedicated audio interface on the market. Tascam have specifically designed the condenser mics to handle very loud sources such as guitar cabs or gigs with excellent control over input levels and a level align feature to prevent uneven recordings from sources of different volume levels.

The DR-05X isn't the smallest audio recorder on the market, but it is significantly smaller than the vast majority of audio interfaces out there and will eas-

ily fit in your pocket or gig-bag without weighing you down at all. The lack of any external XLR mic support will turn some off, but that would add bulk, weight and cost to a product designed to be affordable and compact. Tascam do offer the DR40X with a pair of XLR inputs, but it is a lot bigger and a whisker under twice the price of the DR-05X.

This is a fantastic little audio recorder with a lot more power under the hood than its price and size might suggest. Those looking for a highly portable, great-sounding recorder that is both easy to use and can function as an audio interface need look no further than the Tascam DR-05X—highly recommended!



Audient Sono

Audient's Sono is tailor-made for the recording guitarist, marrying a 12AX7 and cabinet simulation from Two Notes, along with a 3-band EQ and power guitarists, however—it's also a feature-packed USB audio interface. Here's **M**

When it comes to recording, there's never been a better time to be a guitarist than now. We live in a world where there are a whole plethora of great amp software amp sims and modellers so we can go without our loud valve amps, and if we just can't bear

to be without them there's also a wealth of load boxes to bring our amps to heel.

There's still one part of the chain that has remained somewhat dispassionate to the needs of the guitar player, however - the audio interface. Let's be clear: the majority



7-fueled preamp with a top-shelf power amp
 erful re-amping capabilities. Sono isn't just for
Nick Jennison to tell us more.

of interfaces out there certainly aren't "guitarist-unfriendly" - indeed, almost any modern interface with a Hi-Z input will get the job done. But until now, there haven't been any pro level interfaces designed with guitarist's needs in mind.

Enter the Audient Sono - a collaboration between highly respected UK audio company Audient and French cab modelling masters Two Notes. On the surface, it's a two input (expandable to ten) USB2 interface with a dedicated low-impedance input for guitars. Pretty ordinary, right? Not in the slightest. It also features a high-voltage 12AX7 preamp, along with a three-band tone

stack - basically, the front end of a valve amp. As for the poweramp and speakers, that's handled by Two Notes' incredible Torpedo software. This has a number of important implications for guitarists.

First of all, if you're a pedal user, you can plug your board directly into the Sono and use it just like you'd use a clean amp. The 12AX7 can be used to gently warm up your signal, or you can push it in a gentle, crispy breakup. It's not going to give you burning metal tones, but it'll take your high gain pedals beautifully. You can also print the EQ, poweramp and cab modelling direct to your DAW - just like you would with a

STAR RATING



PROS

- » 12AX7 preamp and Torpedo modelling.
- » Record using your pedals straight into the interface.
- » Very low latency with the onboard DSP.
- » Dedicated re-amp output.

CONS

- » Not bus powered - but what did you expect with a valve preamp?

Check **THE SPEC**

Audient Sono

MSRP (UK) £419 (US) \$449 //

Phantom Power // 24-bit/96kHz
 // Mac: OS X 10.11 or later // PC:
 Windows 7 SP1 64-bit or later

For more information, please visit:
audient.com

traditional mic'd amp. If you want to use your own amp, that's also very easy. You can bypass the valve preamp entirely, and run from a preamp pedal or your amp's FX send straight into the Two Notes poweramp and cab modelling, or use a product like a Torpedo Captor to load your amp down and use just the cab models.

Now, you may be asking "why would I bother using the cab models on the amp when I can just use the software version in my DAW?". Well, there are two reasons. First of all, the latency - or lack thereof. Guitarists are hyper-sensitive to latency

when tracking, and the onboard DSP has a latency so low as to be imperceptible - under 3ms roundtrip running at 96kHz with the Torpedo processing, 0.3ms without it. Second, tracking with the onboard modelling takes the strain of running the (rather CPU-intensive) cab and poweramp modelling away from your computer. In a modern project with dozens and dozens of guitar layers, this is invaluable.

The Sono also features a dedicated amp out. This has two functions: monitoring through your favourite valve amp, but also for re-amping. You could easily »



Audient Sono

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plug into the Sono's guitar input and record a clean DI track, while running through the "amp out" to your favourite valve amp, mic'd using the XLR input on the Sono's second channel. If you hate the mic'd tone, it's trivially easy to send the clean DI back out to your amp and re-record the same performance with a different mic position, or different settings on the amp. If you love it, you still have a clean DI track that makes editing so much easier.

The cab and poweramp sims are edited using the bundled Torpedo Remote software, allowing you to experiment with cabs, mics and mic positions, power valve types and different virtual recording spaces. You can also buy new cabs from the Two Notes store directly in the app. You can save three presets directly to the Sono, and you don't even need a computer connected to the Sono to use them. You could take the Sono out to your gig and use it to go directly to the front of the house, for example.

As well as the remarkable feature set for guitarists, it's important not to overlook the power of having a valve mic preamp direct in your interface. Input 1's XLR in can be routed via the 12AX7 to warm up any source, but it's particularly good on vocals where a bit on an "edge" is required. Of course, if you want a clean and uncoloured mic preamp, it's as simple as taking the valve out of the signal path with a press of a button, or using input 2 - either will give you results as clean as a whistle.

The Audient Sono is a well thought out, feature-rich interface that's perfect for the recording guitarist. Factor in the superb Torpedo modelling and low latency and you have an interface that's genuinely very exciting.

END ◀

TC Electronic 8210 DT Classic

Jamie Humphries reviews the 8210 DT Classic Reverb from TC Electronic, another impressive hybrid plugin/hardware DAW based effects unit, incorporating modern technology for the modern studio.

TC Electronic have long been the leaders in high quality, natural-sounding reverbs for either live or studio application. From their early “Powercore” systems, to the flagship “Reverb 6000” system, a producers favourite, which can be heard on countless albums and movie soundtracks. And lets not forget their acclaimed “Hall of Fame” stomp boxes. TC Reverb’s are pristine, with very natural diffusion and tails and realistic room impressions that are ideal for many applications.

The 8210 DT is a newly designed reverb system based on many of TC’s tried and tests reverb philosophy aiming to give you a vast selection of reverb environments, as well as retaining the natural quality of your sound source. The 8210 DT is part of TC’s new hybrid range of effects that fuses plugin technology with a hardware control surface giving you hands on interaction with the parameters of the reverb for a very tactile experience. As the effect is plugin

based you can open as many instances as your CPU will allow, all operational off of the single hardware controller. The 8210 DT supports VST 2, VST 3, AAX-native and AU 32/64 bit plugin formats, making it compatible with Cubase, Nuendo, Logic, Pro Tools and more. The 8210 DT can be run in both mono and stereo configurations, either on an insert or on an auxiliary send.

The primary hardware controller, is a sleek metal desktop unit that connects to your Mac or PC using a micro USB cable. On the top of the unit, in keeping with the 2290 DT and the 1210 DT, we have the input and output meters. I should mention that all of the controls in this range are the same depth, so they group together nicely as a control surface, although they can’t be linked, which is a slight shame; Once USB in would be much more appealing than four if you run all of the DT units in your studio. We have two sections on

BEST OF 2019

STUDIO TO STAGE TC ELECTRONIC 8210 DT CLASSIC REVERB

Classic Reverb

ics. The Danish brand once again deliver an-
operating their award winning reverb technol-



STAR RATING



PROS

- » TC Electronic classic sounds in a modern platform.
- » Plenty of reverb types to choose from.
- » Realistic organic effects

CONS

- » Would have been nice to see some reverse and gated reverb options.

Check **THE SPEC**

TC Electronic 8210 DT Classic Reverb

MSRP (UK) £90 (US) \$149 //

Compatibility: VST, AU, AAX // USB bus powered

For more information, please visit: tcelectronic.com

the front of the controller, “sound” and “main”. The “sound” section has six up and down arrow buttons to control “low colour” effecting the low frequencies; increasing the value will result in a thicker/darker reverb, best for producing a more natural reverb. The “colour” arrows adjust the higher frequencies in the reverb, creating a brighter less organic sound. The “mod” arrows adds some modulation to the reverb and is a good way of adding some animation to the reverb decay. The “select” button is used to call up the desired type of reverb, which are as follows;

- TC Hall
- Box
- Ambient
- Room
- Club
- Live
- Plate
- Spring

»



TC Electronic 8210 DT Classic Reverb

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since 1976



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your complete pro audio and MI solution**



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info@carlsbro.com

All of the reverb types include TC's classic reverb algorithms.

The main section included up and down arrow controls for decay, which controls the length of the reverb and how long the reverb takes to defuse. We have a "select button" that allows us to choose four operations, which are controlled by the "value" arrows. These include "pre delay", the starting point of the reverb's reflections and decay tail, "dry/wet" which is a mix control when using the 8210 DT as an insert. We also have control over the "early/rev" function, which is a flexible parameter that enables use to mix the



“In use the **reverb delivers** as you would expect TC reverb deliver..”

amount of early reflections and the diffused reverb. There is also a “preset” function to scroll through the factory, user and signature preset library.

The secondary plugin controller also has access to the “input”, “dry/wet” and “output” level controls. There is also a secondary “sound” section. Here we have “early colour” which sets the brightness of the reverb. “Mod rate” sets the speed of the reverb modulation, controlled by the hardware unit. “Diffuse” parameter adjusts the overall reverb diffusion. As well as these additional parameters, we can recall presets, see the state of the plugin via the “chain” icon, plus name the

plugin to match what track/source the reverb is being applied to.

In use the reverb delivers as you would expect TC reverb deliver. The reverbs are rich and natural, and with so many different types of reverb to choose from there are plenty of applications to employ it to. It's a shame that there is no reverse or gated reverb options, but that's not to say that this plugin falls short at any stretch. I've been using this as my main reverb for a while, and love the depth and natural sounding ambience I can add to snare drums or guitars. From just small amount of “air” to add some dimension to guitar sound, or sumptuous ethereal

halls, great for those ambient moments.

The 8210 DT is a fantastic multi purpose reverb, and the hands on element added with the hardware controller makes mixing with this unit very inspiring. As I mentioned a couple of extra reverbs, gated and reverse would have really made this the all in one solutions, but for realistic rooms this really is hard to beat. Again the option of linking other DT units would have been great, to save on using multiple USB cables and connections. But to sum up this is a fantastic addition to any studio.

END «

Sennheiser XSW-D Wireless Pedalboard Set

The Sennheiser XSW-D Pedalboard Set looks to make going wireless child's play, while 2.4GHz digital transmission provides worldwide, license-free, robust enough for everyday use, delivering a 250-foot operating range and quick charge. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

THERE'S a real misconception that wireless packs are only for stadium gigs - or at least, for pretentious Van Halen wannabes with fantasies of "rocking the garden". The reality of the matter is that a wireless system is a tool for making your guitar playing life easier and more pleasant, in the same way your Bluetooth headphones and similar devices. On small stages, wireless can minimise setup, save you from tripping over (and potentially breaking) your cable, allow you to walk out front during soundcheck to make sure your tone is right... it's honestly a bit of a no brainer.

One of the most respected names in the wireless game, Sennheiser's XS Digital Wireless systems are discreet, robust and rock solid. Available in two instrument formats, we took a look at the "pedalboard set" - consisting of a bug style transmitter and a pedal format receiver that doubles as

a bright, accurate tuner. If you think you can't make space on your board for a wireless, you can bump your tuner pedal off to male way, but if that's still too much space you could always go for the "instrument base set" with its bug style receiver.

The bug is nothing like the fragile plastic designs of the 2000s. It's a robust metal design with a rotating jack to accommodate almost any style of jack socket, and its internal battery provides 5 hours of playtime. The unit charges via an included USB-C cable, and can even draw power from the USB-C socket on the pedal receiver. There's a single button for powering the transmitter on/off and for muting the signal - which will also activate the tuner,

The pedalboard receiver is a hefty, solid feeling made of solid metal with a single footswitch and a large, bright display. There are no menus to scroll through, » no settings to get wrong, no advanced tuning modes. It's simple, reliable and easy to

BEST OF 2019

STUDIO TO STAGE SENNHEISER XSW-D WIRELESS DIGITAL PEDALBOARD SET

Best Digital

...d's play. One-touch functionality ensures ease
... compatibility. This system's transmitter is
...d up to five hours of battery life on a single



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Road-worthy build.
- » Simple to set up.
- » Flawless performance.

CONS

- » Cable points up instead of down when using the belt clip.

Check **THE SPEC**

Sennheiser XSW-D Wireless Digital Pedalboard Set

MSRP (UK) £TBC (US) \$499 //

Transmitter: Battery Life: Up to 5 hours // Transmitter: Dimensions: 4.8" x 0.9" x 1.1" // Receiver: Dimensions: 5.1" x 3.2" x 2"

For more information, please visit: <https://en-uk.sennheiser.com>

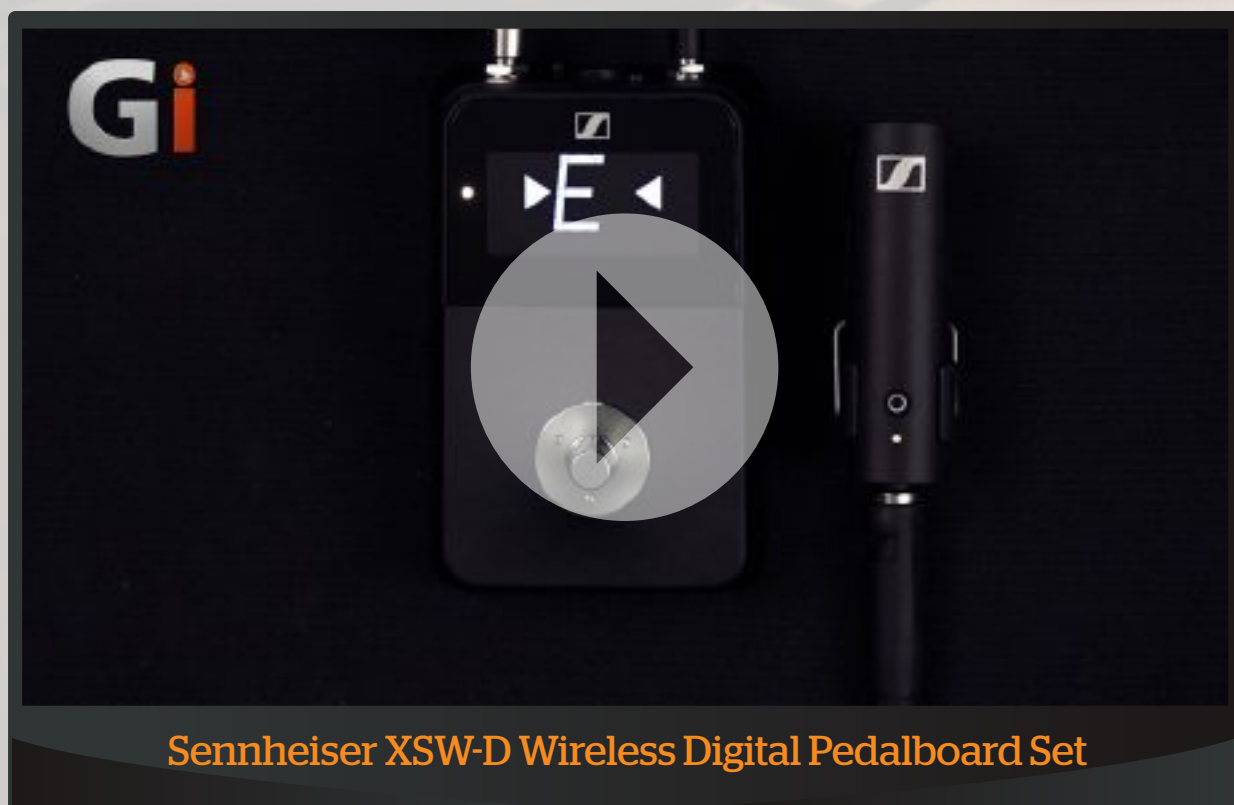
use. Power comes from a standard centre negative supply, drawing 500ma at and accepting anywhere between 9 and 15V. There's a standard 1/4 jack output, as well as an XLR out for DI applications (including acoustic guitar).

Performance-wise, the XS wireless is flawless. It sounds just like plugging in with a short, high-quality cable, and preserves your guitar's dynamics in a way any inferior units don't. The 2.4ghz range means

you can use it license free worldwide, and there are no danger of any Spinal Tap "Air Force base" incidents.

Sennheiser's XS Wireless systems are simple, sturdy, reliable, and offer performance that's beyond reproach. If you haven't cut the cord yet, it's time to ask yourself why not?

END◀





XS Wireless Digital

An instant connection.

A good connection doesn't require being tied down. Wireless means no obstacles, no distractions, just effortless audio, every time. With the all new XS Wireless Digital Pedalboard Set, players can keep the tone they've crafted without being tethered to the pedalboard itself. Lose the cables but keep the connection.

An all new way to perform wirelessly. An instant connection.
www.sennheiser.com/xsw-d

SENNHEISER

Studiomaster Sense 12A Act

Based nowadays in Milton Keynes, Studiomaster have been hugely successful in live sound loudspeakers and stage monitors. The new Sense stage monitor variants - is a case in point. Here is **Bob Thomas** with the full review.

DESIGNED to fit the requirements of both gigging musicians and hire companies, the Sense 12A packs a lot of practical functionality into its compact, low-profile enclosure. Protected by a sturdy steel grille, its 12" ferrite magnet woofer and 44mm neodymium magnet tweeter are set up in a coaxial configuration that ensures a tight, even 80°x80° dispersion pattern. This means that there's a good-sized sweet spot in front of the 12A, and that your bandmates won't be disturbed by hearing your monitor as well as their own.

The Sense 12A carries 300W RMS of amplification - 260W Class D on the woofer and 40W Class AB on the tweeter – the combination delivering 600W of program power and a 1200W peak output.

“Overall, the Sense 12A turns out to be a low-profile, compact, low-profile, **great-sounding** monitor.

Angled at 43°, the Sense 12A's cabinet is carpet covered to keep the inevitable “back-of-the-van” scratches at bay. The cab is also fitted with a standard top-hat so that you can put the 12A on stands both as side fills or as FOH speakers. If you're a soloist or duo, buying three Sense 12A would give you a neat little stereo PA plus stage

monitor setup capable of covering most pub and restaurant gigs for not a lot of money.

The Sense 12A incorporates a simple 2-input mixer with balanced combination jack/XLR inputs. Each input has its own level control and can handle both line level (0dB) and microphone (-40dB) signals. A stereo minijack enables you

BEST OF 2019

STUDIO TO STAGE STUDIOMASTER SENSE 12A ACTIVE STAGE MONITOR

ive Stage Monitor

Successful in recent years with their growing line of
or series – available in both active and passive



oud,
onitor...”

and connect a mp3 player to replay background mu-
sic or backing tracks – or even to use the Sense
12A as a FRFR (full-range, flat-response) cab for
FX/amplifier modelling software on your iOS/
Android device, A third XLR connector allows
you to daisy-chain from the 12A to another 12A
or other active cabinet

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Fantastic build quality.
- » Excellent price point.
- » Impressive peak output.

CONS

- » None I can see.

Check **THE SPEC**

Studiomaster Sense 12A Active Stage Monitor

MSRP (UK) £249 (US) \$TBC //

Voltage selector: 100V-240V //

Dimensions: 400x436x323mm //

Weight: 15kg

For more information, please visit:
studiomaster.com



Studiomaster Sense 12A Active Stage Monitor

Active live sound loudspeakers are increasingly being fitted with DSP-based EQ and configuration facilities, and the Sense 12A follows that trend, with a 24-bit/48kHz DSP module and small LCD screen that gives you access to the monitor's 3-band EQ, high-pass filter, limiter and signal delay functions. In addition you have two sets of configuration – Monitor or Full-range frequency bandwidths plus Normal (standmount) or Monitor positions. These two functions allow you to tailor the Sense 12A's response to its intended use and to then compensate for its positioning on the floor if it's being used as a stage monitor.

Overall, the Sense 12A turns out to be a loud, compact, low-profile, great-sounding monitor that delivers an impressive performance at a pretty attractive retail price point.

Unless you need mind-bending monitor levels on stage, the Studiomaster Sense 12A active stage monitor is a loudspeaker that you really need to have a listen to. I think that you'll be impressed - I certainly am.

END«

2019



THE QUIET ROOM

BEST OF THE YEAR

Martin GPC-13E Road Series Grand Performance Acoustic

Nick Jennison reviews the Martin GPC-13E Road Series Grand Performance Acoustic. Designed with Fans of the Martin Road Series in mind, who are looking for a little extra in terms of looks and performance—the GPC-13E features a solid spruce-on-mutenye shell, eye-catching multi-stripe rosette border, and white top and back binding to really bring the whole production together.

IT'S easy to fixate on Martin's super high-end guitars. Their Authentic Series, signature models and new Modern Deluxe models, are breathtaking works of art, with equally hair-raising price tags. Equally though, their affordable X Series guitars are the instruments of choice for students and aspiring singer-songwriters - certainly those I've had the pleasure of teaching. But there is a difficult middle ground: guitars that are a step or two above entry-level in quality and features, but affordable enough that working players won't be always on edge taking them out of the house.

Martin's answer to this conundrum is the Road Series. These rugged, aesthetically simple guitars combine solid woods, premium electronics and Martin's signature tone at a very reasonable price point. The GPC-13E is a perfect example. An updated version of the GPCRSR, it boasts a solid Sitka spruce top and a hand-rubbed mahogany neck, but makes use of alternative materials for the fretboard, back and sides.

The back and sides are made of solid mutenye - a wood that's very similar to ovangkol, both genetically and sonically. In practical terms, it's not hugely dissimilar to rosewood. There's a gentle midrange dip and a silky high end, but the lows are a little less symphonic and the treble is a little more snappy - exactly the kind of qualities that you'd want from a great "plugged-in" acoustic, especially for strumming styles.

In fact, everything about this guitar seems tailored towards plugged-in live playing. There's an abundance of sustain, but the top is not excessively resonant (and therefore less feedback prone), and the excellent Fishman MX-T electronics sound wonderfully natural and well balanced. The soundhole mounted tuner is discreet and accurate, and automatically mutes the output - this is invaluable for live players, and it saves you bringing a pedal to the gig, or messing with your output volume while tuning with a clip-on tuner. »

BEST OF 2019

THE QUIET ROOM MARTIN GPC-13E ROAD SERIES GRAND PERFORMANCE ACOUSTIC

rand



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Superb electronics
- » Solid top, back and sides
- » Classy looks and tones

CONS

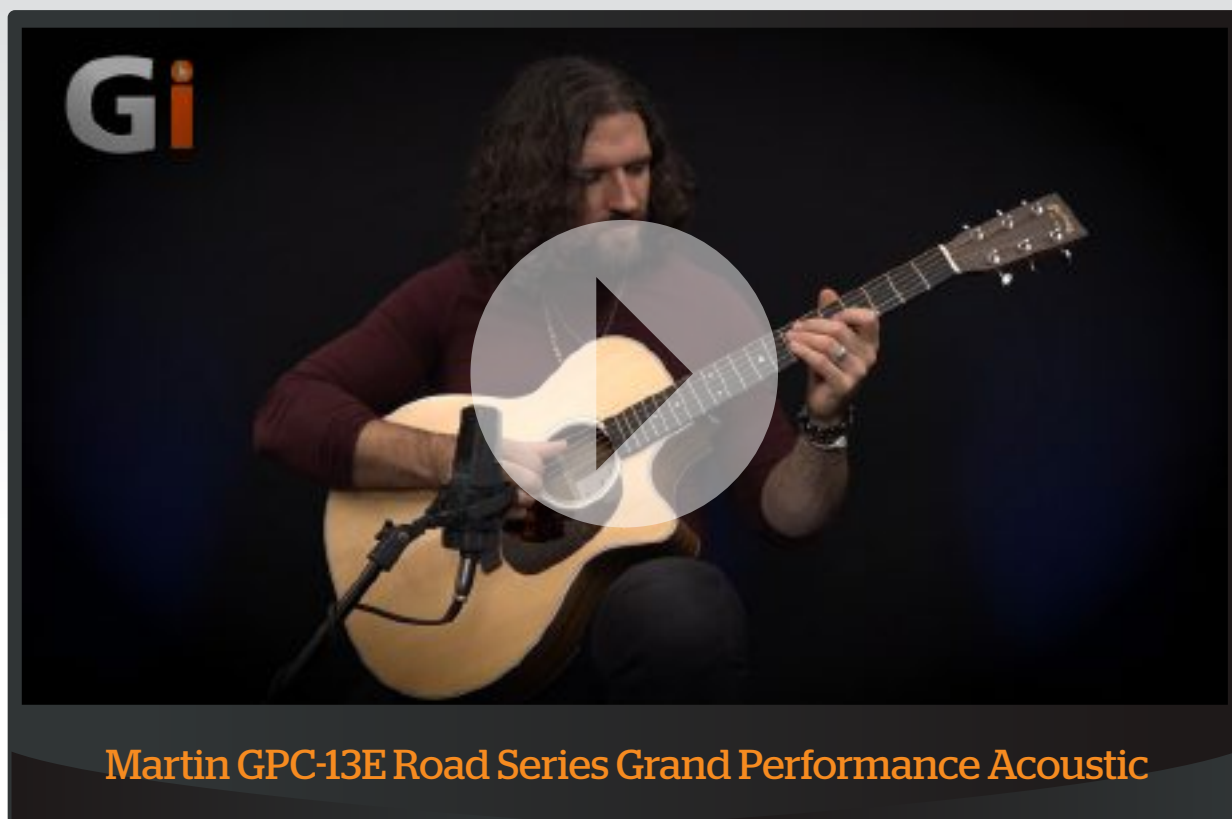
- » If you want an overly "blingy" guitar, look elsewhere

Check **THE SPEC**

**Martin GPC-13E Road Series
Grand Performance Acoustic**
MSRP (UK) £1571 (US) \$1699 //

Sitka Spruce Top // Mutenye
Back & Sides // Fishman MX-T
Electronics

For more information, please visit:
martinguitar.com



That's not to say that the GPC-13E only sounds good amplified. Played unplugged, it has a balanced and punchy delivery that's responsive to a variety of playing styles, and because of the solid top back and sides, it'll only get better the more you play it.

The Martin GPC-13E is an ideal guitar for any gigging musician, or anyone looking to take a step up from entry-level acoustics. Solid woods, superb electronics and Martin's signature look, sound and quality mean you're getting a lot of guitar for your money. Highly recommended instrument.

END «



Yamaha Transacoustic

Using the latest in sonic technology, Yamaha's CG-TA TransAcoustic classical nylon-string guitar takes you to new creative spaces with immersive reverb and lush chorus effects, but without the need for other external gear. Here's **Giorgio Serci** with more information.

Yamaha has been producing musical instruments since 1887 and guitars since 1940. This iconic brand has been synonymous of excellence in the design and craftsmanship, with incredible attention to detail, reliability, as well as being at the forefront of technological innovation. These attributes are all evident in this guitar, the CG TA (Classical Guitar - TransAcoustic model).

It is well known that Yamaha's range includes a wide variety of classical, flamenco, steel string acoustic and electric guitars, as well as pretty much any musical instrument from any instrument family with prices and specifications ranging as widely.

One of the objectives with the TA was to enhance the natural tonal and dynamic qualities of an inexpensive standard sized classical guitar with the most unique and innovative device of this kind, in the market: the 'Trans-Acoustic' system.

This consists of an actuator, which is installed on the inner surface of the guitar and vibrates in response to the vibrations of the strings. The vibrations of the actuator are then conveyed to the body of the guitar, and

to the air in and around the guitar body, generating authentic reverb and chorus sounds from inside the body.

Three small knobs minimize the area of the holes in the body material, reducing acoustic sound loss.

(A) Chorus Control

(B) Reverb Control (Room / Hall)

(C) TA Switch / Line Out Volume Control

* Pressing the TA Switch for more than 0.3 seconds activates the TA function.

* The reverb type switches from Room to Hall around the 12 noon position.

This inexpensive guitar is still a beautiful instrument to play. More resonant and refined in its finish than what you would expect for a guitar in this price range, Yamaha never fails to maintain the bar high when it comes to consistency and excellence, as always combining traditional and contemporary methods with winning characteristics including consistency in the finish, tone, playability and attention to detail all around. These qualities make this one of the most famous classical guitar brands in the market. »

ring guitars can transport
at the need of an amp or



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Excellent playability.
- » Beautiful tones.
- » Reverb and chorus effects built in.
- » Reasonably priced..

CONS

- » None

Check **THE SPEC**

Yamaha Transacoustic
MSRP (UK) £634 (US) \$TBC //

Classical body shape // Solid spruce top // Ovangkol back and sides // On-board reverb and chorus effects

For more information, please visit:
uk.yamaha.com

“I **strongly recommend** finding a Yamaha dealer near you...”

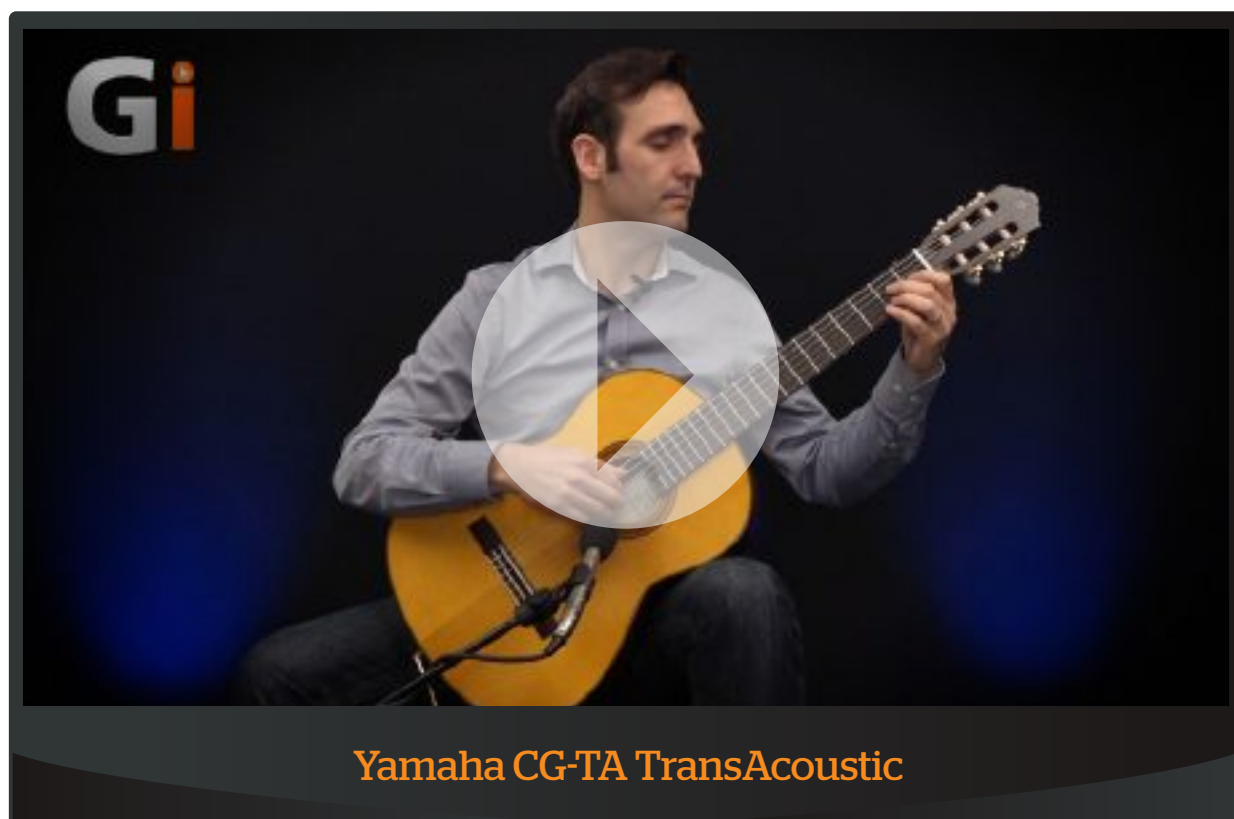
Straight from its case, this standard size classical guitar has a lovely natural look, with contrasting wood colours including a solid spruce top, ovankol back and sides, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, with bone 52mm nut and saddle.

It features a natural inlaid wood mosaic rosette, while its neck meets the upper bout in a fluid and ergonomic manner, and beauti-

fully contrasting its back and sides.

Both the 52mm nut and the saddle are made of cow bone for an improved sustain. The neck is very comfortable to play with an optimum action, straight from the factory.

The rosewood fingerboard helps to give this a very resonant guitar mid-range, and even



with its thin body, this guitar has a generous and well-balanced response all across its range.

This guitar features a passive six elements piezo pick-up (as used on their SRT system), which gives a very clear and precise signal as you can hear from my demo is a really good system, particularly as it ensures, a consistent internal dynamics from all the six strings. Many piezo pick-ups in the market fail to reproduce the sound of each string with consistency, whereas this is really outstanding.

The amazing additional treat, built-in in the guitar is the reverb and chorus effect. This can be used unplugged, to enhance the acoustic sound of the guitar with the TA system, as well as through a PA or an acoustic amp.

The former is a wonderfully conducive bonus, which will inspire any player, particularly the beginner and intermediate ones, as the sound is so lush and makes you want to play more. It reminds me of when I have found myself playing guitar in a church, or a staircase with a wonderful natural reverb, whereby every note has more sustain and volume.

Although Yamaha mentions that the main aim for this guitar was to enhance the experience of playing time in a domestic use, I straight away thought of those situation where I had to use an acoustic guitar amp just to enhance the guitar of 5%-10% (more

would have been too loud) to rehearse or even to perform acoustically with a singer or a double-bass player or strings or similar instruments louder than the guitar.

The TA guitar will enable us to play with the above instruments without an amp. And if more volume is needed, then the six elements Piezo pick-up will enable us to do so with incredible clarity and precision.

As a result of the above-characteristics, this guitar is extremely versatile, as it can be used to play and record a variety of genres, including Folk, Brazilian music such as Bossa Nova, Samba, and fingerstyle in general.

It took me no time to tune it and to feel at ease with its action, with a very good setup straight from the factory.

In conclusion, an incredibly innovative instrument from Yamaha, this guitar is designed to enhance playability, and enjoyment with its sophisticated TA system which makes an inexpensive, although still well made classical guitar, sound like a very expensive one, played in a wonderfully resonant room.

I strongly recommend finding a Yamaha dealer near you and trying the CG TA; I am sure you will be blown away with these instruments!

END «

Fishman Loudbox Mini Bluetooth

Fishman's lightest and most portable amp now with the addition of Bluetooth wireless more could you ask for? **Sam Bell** reviews Fishman's Loudbox Mini Bluetooth Acoustic.

There are seemingly endless options for portable acoustic rigs, the lighter and more compact, the better! The Fishman Loudbox Mini meets those markers, while not compromising on power, features and most importantly, tone!

The Loudbox Mini is a 60 watt, two-channel amplifier with Fishman's sought after Preamp and Tone

control designs. Digital Reverb, Two Stage Chorus effects and a Feedback busting Phase switch are included. And with this particular model, we have Bluetooth 4.0 connectivity, which is super useful for beaming any backing tracks/music wirelessly to the unit. Something I demonstrated in the next section of this review with some questionable loops of mine!



Bluetooth Acoustic Combo

s connectivity! What
ic Combo.

chorus
re also
also
er use-
relessly
e video
e drum

The amplifier features two channels: Instrument and Microphone. The Instrument channel features a 1/4 inch input jack for active or passive pickups, Reverb, Chorus, 3 Band EQ and Phase switch. The Microphone channel features an XLR input for Dynamic Mic's, two-band EQ and a Reverb. Around the back of the unit we are able to plug in 1/4 and 1/8 inch Aux inputs and a balanced XLR D.I Output.

The Microphone channel can be used with the Instrument Channel in different ways, it could be used for a Vocal Mic, or Micing up another instrument. Or you could send a miced up acoustic sound to blend with the instrument input for more size and atmosphere.

The unit is super light and small, featuring a tilt-back design so the speaker can project upward rather than along and out. It's hard to believe the size of the sound coming out of such a small 6.5 inch woofer and 1-inch soft dome tweeter. The Reverb and Chorus effects are lush, and they aren't cheesy in any 2019 way. They offer genuine expanse to the sound without getting in the way of the fundamental rich tone of your instrument.

The layout looks super sleek, simple yet sophisticated with the Brown and Cream finish. It looks and feels »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Sounds Great.
- » Quality Features.
- » Lightweight and portable.
- » Bluetooth Connectivity.

CONS

- » None

Check **THE SPEC**

**Fishman Loudbox Mini
Bluetooth Acoustic Combo**
MSRP (UK) £309 (US) \$339 //

60-Watts with Master Volume
// Two channels // Bluetooth
Connectivity // Digital Reverb &
Chorus

For more information, please visit:
fishman.com

“**All the features** are there, its super portable and sounds great..!”



very sturdy and quality. Perfect for moving between venues on foot, or if you're in a small studio environment, not taking up too much room! Fishman offers a Cover or Deluxe Carry Bag for this unit, but these are not included with the unit by itself.

My verdict is that this is a quality acoustic amp set up for any level of Acoustic Player, Singer/Acoustic Guitarist. All the features are there, its super portable and sounds great!

END «



Fishman Loudbox Mini Bluetooth Acoustic Combo

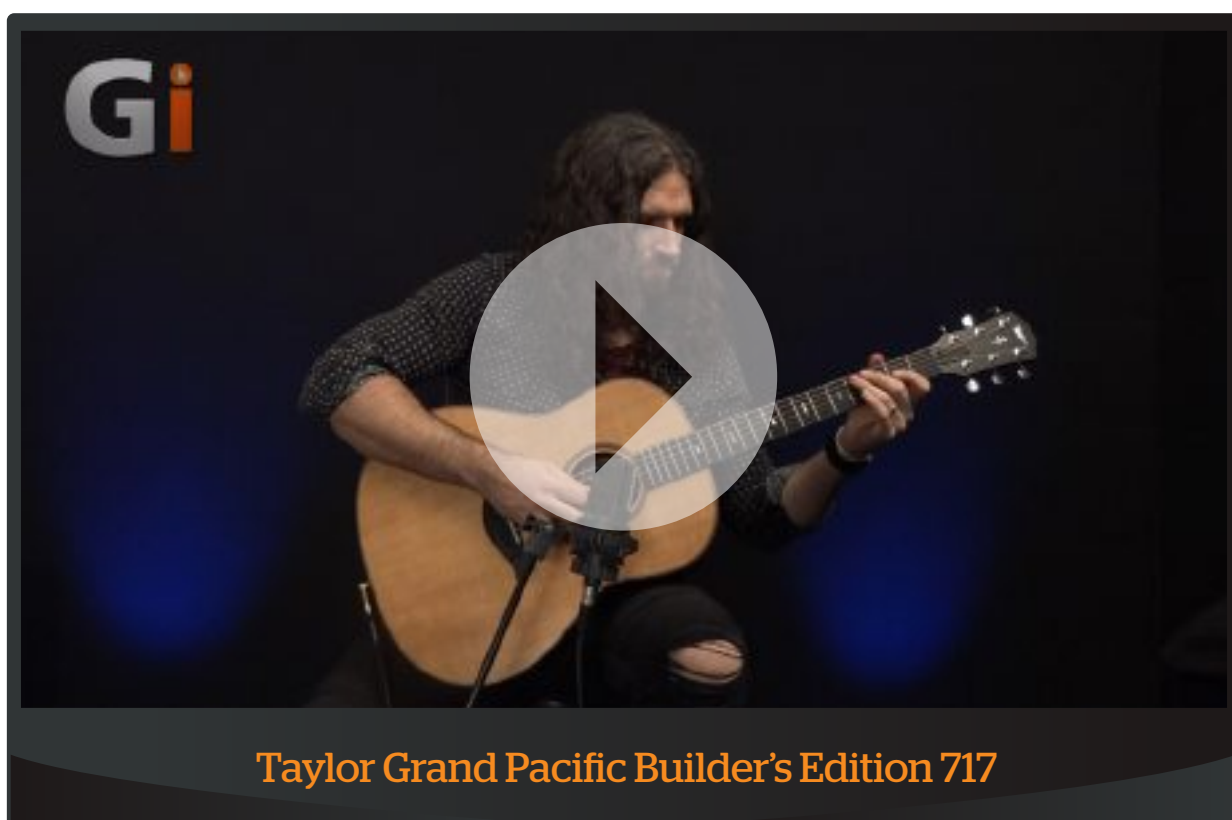
Taylor Grand Pacific Builder's Edition

Nick Jennison reviews the latest part of Taylor's inaugural class of Grand Pacific guitar Edition 717. Building on a long tradition of rosewood/spruce dreadnoughts but breaks entirely new Taylor sound.

Anounced in 2018, Taylor's V- Class bracing represented a paradigm shift in the way they build their guitars. Bracing the centre of the top (from the bridge to the neck join) very stiffly offers huge sustain, while the loosely braced outer section provides projection and volume - all with the happy side effect of improved intonation across the neck. It was undoubtedly a bold move for a manufacturer of Taylor's

standing to so radically change the design of their most popular model, the Grand Auditorium, but that was only the beginning: every American-made guitar was to get the V-Class bracing.

Enter the new Builder's Edition 717. Dubbed the Grand Pacific, this elegant, round-shouldered dreadnought is an entirely new body shape, with a tone that's »



BEST OF 2019

THE QUIET ROOM TAYLOR GRAND PACIFIC BUILDER'S EDITION 717

dition 717

ars, the Builder's
new ground with an



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Taylor quality and articulation, but with a much warmer and deeper tone. Elegant body shape.
- » Superb playability.

CONS

- » A little pricey, but well worth it.

Check **THE SPEC**

Taylor Grand Pacific Builder's Edition 717

MSRP (UK) £3378 (US) \$2899 //

Grand Pacific Body // V-Class
Bracing // Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Top // Rosewood Back and Sides

For more information, please visit:
taylorguitars.com

unlike anything else in the Taylor range. As you'd expect from a dreadnought style guitar, there's a wealth of low-end power and warmth, and the front of the note is a lot rounder and not as crisp as you might expect from more typical Taylors. That's not to say the guitar is in any way muddy though - far from it. While some woofer dreadnoughts are best reserved for strumming duties, the 717 boasts an articulate clarity that's perfect for flatpicking and fingerstyle. It's hard to say if this is because of the V-Class bracing or the torrefied spruce top, but there's some magic going on here.

As a Builder's Edition, the 717 has a number of premium appointments that make for a

really pleasurable playing experience. The chamfered body edges and compound neck curve greatly improve player comfort, and "silent satin" finish is beautifully tactile. It feels like an old guitar right out of the box, which is very fitting given it's rich and warm tone.

The 717 Grand Pacific is a wonderfully rich and luxurious sounding guitar. It marries Taylor's superb playability and build quality with a warmer tone than most guitars in the Taylor line. If you want the authority and depth of a dreadnought guitar, but with greatly increased articulation and clarity, look no further.

END◀



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Aged Natural Burst On Koa
Model: C2078AXP2-KOAB

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And stand out in a crowd. Unique looks aside, playing the original round back design with optimized electronics delivers time-tested performance at every show.

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FIN

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YAMAHA

*Giorgio Serci*

CREATIVE FINGERSTYLE



Giorgio Serci, award winning guitarist, composer, arranger and long-time guitar tutor at The Academy of Contemporary Music, continues his acoustic column in this issue of Guitar Interactive Magazine.

HELLO there and welcome to Guitar Interactive's Quite Room.

In this column, I would like to share a new composition of mine written for the Guitar Interactive community, called 'Paco' dedicated to the late Paco DeLucia, one of the greatest guitarist of all times. This piece is in standard tuning and utilized a simple type of rasgueado (fingerstyle strum) to add rhythmic propulsion to this piece, which is in 3/4. The harmonic content of this piece is prevalent and still popular in most music styles, and it is illustrated in the table below:

Bm	A11	Gm/D	D	Bm	A11	A/C#	D
Bm	A11	Gm/D	D	Bm	A11	A/C#	D6/9 D7
G	C#m7b5 A#O7	Bm A11	Gmaj7 D/F#	Em	A13b9		
Dmaj7	Em13 Bbmaj7	Bm	A11	Gm/D	D	Bm	A11
A/C#	D	Bm	A11	Gm/D	D	Bm	A11
A/C#	D6/9 D7	G	C#m7b5 A#O7	Bm A11	Gmaj7	D/F#	Em
A13b9	Dmaj7	A13b9	Dmaj7	A13b9	Dmaj7	A13b9	Dmaj13

(*) All the Bm are should be voiced like an Em9/B

NB. Gm/D = Gm chord over D bass.

This piece provides an opportunity to improve interpretation skills and presenting the melody in a singing-like manner (Cantabile), while complementing it with countermelodies happening in various registers.

For example, inversions have been utilized to create melodic bass lines, which act as countermelodies in the lower register. This is evident throughout. The term inversion refers to the way a harmonic structure (a chord) is voiced or organized).

Triads can be voiced in three different positions/inversions:

a): Root position: root is lowest note in the chord

b): 1st inversion: 3rd is the lowest note in the chord – (b)

c): 2nd inversion: 5th is the lowest note in the chord – (c)

Seventh chords could also be voiced as a 3rd inversion (7th in the bass) For example D/C = D7 3rd inversion, described by (d)

One of the technical hurdles of this piece is the need to keep the melody at the fore of the arrangement. To do this, it may help singing and playing it at the same time, to be sure we are emphasising it as needed.



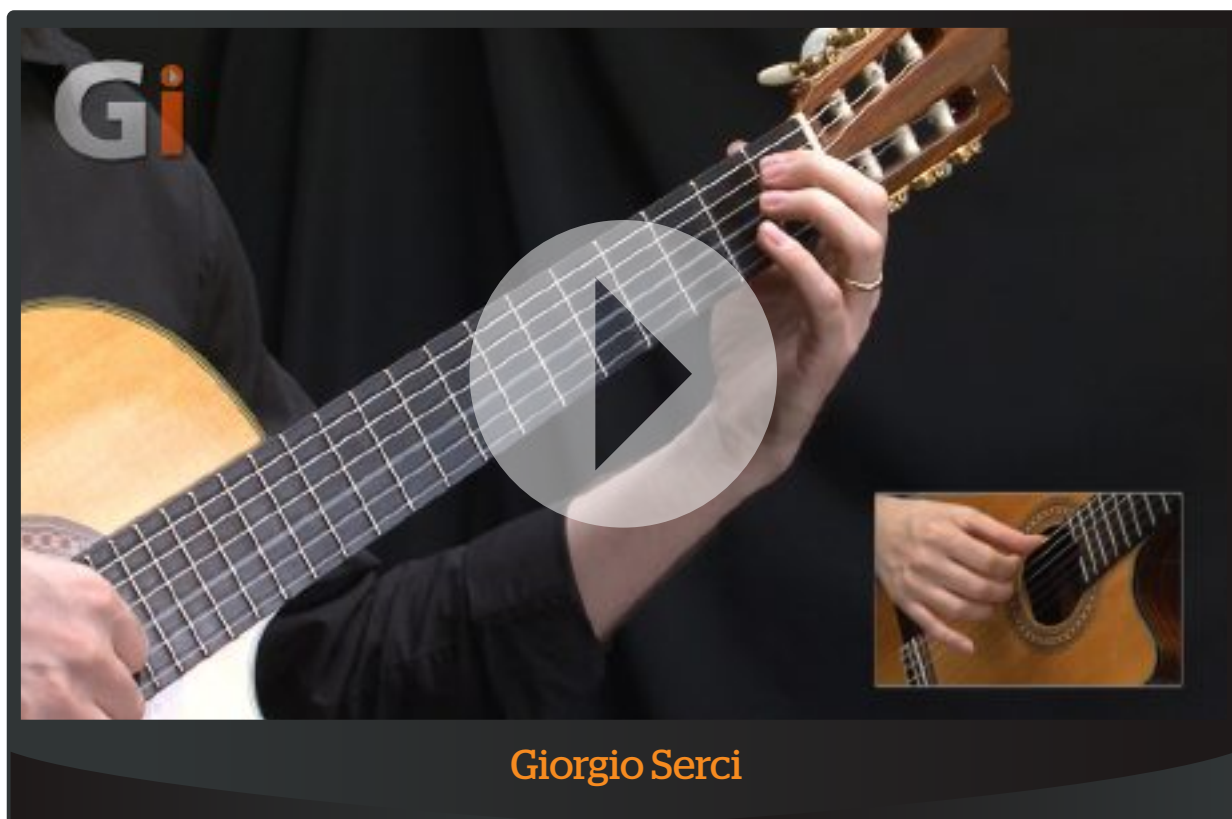
As always, I would like to recommend researching the techniques mentioned above to be able to use these to compose your own pieces. We have to allow ourselves to make mistakes and reflect on the reasons why we like, or not a particular sound, a chord progression or modulation. Eventually, these sounds will become part of your musical lexicon, and we should be able to use these effectively and creatively.

The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

(Please note E=low E string, e= high E string)

‘p’ plays all the ‘ostinato’ pedal parts throughout.

Play each part in a relaxed and clear manner, making sure your thumb is a little forward



compared to the 'i, m, a' fingers, in order to prevent it from colliding with the 'i' finger. As always, focus on attack and tonal consistency. The melody and the supporting harmonies will be played with the 'i, m and a' fingers, so attack is needed to outline the melody.

Next, we are going to look at the left-hand part (chord shapes):

Bar 1: Index on fret 2 of A, ring f on fret 4 of D, open G, middle f on fret 3 of B, open e and index on fret 3 of B.

Bar 2: Open A, little f on fret 4 of G, index on fret 3 of B, open e, little f on fret 5 of e and slide back to fret 3.

Bar 3: Open D, middle f on fret 3 of G, ring f on fret 3 of B, little f still on fret 3 of e, fret 3 of B again and middle f on fret 2 of e.

Bar 4: Open D, index on fret 2 of G, ring f on fret 3 of B

Bar 5: As bar 1

Bar 6: Open A, little f on fret 4 of G, index on fret 3 of B, open e, little f on fret 7 of e and slide back to fret 5.

Bar 7: Index on fret 4 of A, open G, ring f on fret 5 of B and little f on fret 5 of e. Repeat the last two notes.

Bar 8: Like bar 4 but voice the last D chord with little f on fret 5 of e.

Repeat from bar 1 to bar 7:

Bar 16 (bar 10 on the transcription): Similar to bar 4 and 8, but with index on fret 4 of G, ring f on fret 5 of B and little f on fret 5 of e. Add middle f on fret 5 of G for the last strummed chord.

Bar 17: Index on fret 3 of E. Open G and B with little f on fret 7 of e. Next, open D, G, and B with little f on fret 5 of e, followed by middle f on fret 3 of e.

Bar 18: Ring f on fret 4 of A, open G, and B with index on fret 2 of e, followed by open e. Next, index on fret 1 of A, open G and middle f on fret 1 of B, followed by ring f on fret 2 of B.

Bar 19: Index on fret 2 of A, open e, ring f on fret 4 of D, open G, middle f on fret 3 of B, followed by open A with the 3rd fret of B.

Bar 20: Index on fret 3 of E, ring f on fret 4 of D, open G, middle f on fret 3 of B, fol-



lowed by index on fret 2 of E with the 3rd fret of B.

Bar 21: Similar to bar 17, but with open E, G and B with little f on fret 7 of e. Next, index on fret 2 of A, open G and B with little f on fret 5 of e followed by index on fret 3 of e.

Bar 22: Open A, middle f on fret 3 of G, index on fret 2 of B and e. Little f on fret 5 of D, middle f on fret 3 of G and open e.

Bar 23: Open D, index on fret 2 of e, then of B, with middle f on fret 3 of G. Middle f on fret 4 of G, index on fret 5 of B, then open G.

Bar 24: Open E, D, G and ring f on fret 2 of B, and open B. Next, index on fret 1 of A, open D and ring f on fret 2 of G and open G.

Now, repeat from the top with repeats: AA B, until bar 22 (15 on the chart), then take the Coda sign.

Bar 25: Open D, middle f on fret 4 of G, ring f on fret 7 of B, index on fret 5 of e. Ring and little f on fret 7 of G and B. Open e, ring f on fret 4 of G and middle f on fret 3

of B, followed by index on fret 2 of G and B.

Bar 26: Open G and B, open A, open e, followed by little f on fret 5 of D middle f on fret 4 of G and index on fret 2 of B.

Repeat bar 25 and 26 3 times (6 bars in total)

Final Bar: Little f on fret 5 of A, ring f on fret 4 of D, index on fret 2 of G, open B, and e.

Congratulations, you have completed 'Paco'!

As always, you will be able to download a transcription by selecting the menu option in this page.

I strongly recommend experimenting with a few picking variations, changing the chords as you wish regarding voicing (higher or lower), as well as trying the same picking pattern on a different chord progression, or using a 'capo' on fret 2 for a brighter outcome.

When repeating any section twice or more, you may want to play 'sul ponticello,' (closer to the bridge) or 'sul tasto' (over the frets) for more contrasting results.

Make sure you highlight the melody (singing

is a great strategy to play the melody in more assertive and singing-like manner)

Focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help to deliver the piece in a more accurate and consistent manner while saving energy.

This will complete this creative fingerstyle lesson.

I hope you will enjoy playing this tune and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions and re-arrangements.

Please continue to get in touch via my interactive website below, for feedback and to suggest areas you'd like me to cover within this column. If you would like to listen any more of my compositions, please check the previous issues of Guitar Magazine as well as any of my CDs, available from my website.

END «

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Until the next time - Good-bye.

2019



THE BASSMENT

BEST OF THE YEAR

BEST OF 2019

Dan Veall presents his choices for Guitar Interactive Magazine's BEST OF 2019

HELLO folks! Well, what a fantastic year we have had in review for 2019. Guitar Interactive has enjoyed some really nice pieces of kit coming in through our doors as both a retailer and their distributors have been keen to feature within the pages of the magazine.

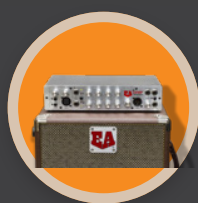
Of course, those who know me and my enthusiasm for bass gear (and I suspect that's the majority of you watching my videos!!) will appreciate that for me it has been like a kiddy in a sweet shop. I genuinely love being able to do these reviews for you, and I still get excited seeing new instruments, effects and amplifiers arriving at our offices.

This does lead me to a bit of a problem though, as it seems everyone has seriously upped their game and thus choosing my favourite reviews from this year has been difficult!

So, here goes, what have I been impressed by this year? Here's just a few examples that I have placed in order that the reviews

came out. I've not been able to feature every one of my favourites, but believe me we have some real corkers and I absolutely invite you to go to our website and read all of the issues and enjoy our videos!

Cue the 2019 chart run of music!



EA iAmp Classic and NL112 cabinet

Issue 64: The EA iAmp Classic and NL112 cabinet brought a smile to my face for its big clean and punchy tone and a sound that not only appeared larger than the cabinet's diminutive size in our studio, but retained that character as the volume went up and up. A very capable, feature rich rig.



Darkglass Hyper Luminal Compressor pedal

Issue 64: Darkglass Hyper Luminal Compressor pedal - This second compressor pedal to be reviewed notably features an all analogue signal path which is cleverly controlled by DSP. Dead easy to use and delivering a wide range of useful compression characteristics. The company even went as far as modelling their original discontinued Summitetry pedal in to the Hyper Luminal too.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE:

BEST OF 2019



EBS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive Ultimate

Issue 65: EBS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive Ultimate: The EBS and Billy Sheehan collaboration return with yet another update to the Signature Drive pedal, in the shape of the “Ultimate”; Version 3 in the range. All 3 pedals are different in their own way and actually all worth owning, but further tweaks and additions to the feature set bring this one out sharing the top of the pile with this year’s pedal reviews. A great distortion pedal.



Bergantino B|Amp

Issue 68: Bergantino B|Amp - The only amplifier to come up more than once in end of year round-ups, another five stars for an amplifier that just keeps giving (and by that I mean the ability to add updates to an already feature rich programmable amplifier.) Bergantino not only ingeniously shoe-horn in a number of features that would usually overwhelm an amplifier front panel but they have created a profile system that better matches speakers to their amplifiers. Great sound, all the way up the dial. Very easy to use and regrading tonally whatever I plugged in to it.





Honourable mention: Line 6 HX Stomp

Ok, so my review was a “second look” as I could not resist swiping the pedal from my awesome guitar section (who reviewed the HX) in the mag’ to see how this pedal deals with bass. Simply put, one of the best “small form factor” pedals on the market today. There’s not enough room here for me to glow enthusiastically about it, suffice to say that it’s expandable design and top-notch sound quality makes this one a winner. It’s a 5* review and I don’t give those out often.

A few other notable mentions in the form of Hofner’s 500/1 Greenline we covered, that features all stainable and recyclable

materials yet retains that classic look and sound that Hofner is known for and also GR Bass who delivered us the Cube 800. A powerful bass combo that thankfully made for easy lifting, but certainly not light on the depth of sound. Finally, Warwick’s double-buck bass demonstrated what can be achieved from great-sounding pickups and a well-made instrument.

What do you want to see in the magazine in 2020? What do you think will be unveiled at the next big trade shows? Exciting times ahead!

Best wishes and see you in the new year,

Dan

Euphonic Audio iAMP Classic

Euphonic Audio, or “EA” as they are also known, return to the depths of the Bassment prom Classic & NL112 Cabinet. **Dan Veall** tells us more as the brand celebrates it’s 35th anniversary.

We featured the very capable iAmp Micro and EA NL210 III 2x10 cabinet, which I recall most favourably back in issue 24 of Gi. I have always been interested in EA’s “angle” when it comes to creating amplification that is all about reproducing an honest version of what is going into it. Using technologies such as “transmission line”, Neodymium Speakers and efficient D Class power amplifiers with correctly designed power supplies.

With that in mind I wasted no time: straight out of cold boxes I stacked up the iAmp Classic, a 1200W (in to 4 ohms) beast on to the NL112 cabinet from your good friends at Bass Direct, UK.

Interestingly, the iAmp classic isn’t just about bass guitar. It’s a tailored front end that is advertised to handle acoustic instruments and keyboards too. That’s already encouraging as we know the breadth of tones that come from modern synthesisers for example. An amp that can faithfully reproduce that frequency spectrum is what I would look for myself when it comes to multi-range bass guitar.

As I mentioned in my reviews the front panel does look busy, to begin with, but, trust me, once you break each bit down, it will become very easy to understand. Allow me to elaborate:

Across the top of the amplifier, there are some buttons. I would say that there was a sort of “access” to tried and tested settings to get you your sound (though I should point out that the buttons disengaged, thus leaving your ins completely uncoloured, this little rig still sounds great!)

EQ IN: this is a neat little bypass switch that you to completely bypass the settings on the EQ if only to compare and contrast, but great for setting up say, a second instrument sound as Deep, Bright and the two Contour switches for tailor the overall equalisation curve of the preamplifier which I appreciated greatly. Some amplifiers have one switch that performs all of these functions in one go, but I really liked that I was able to choose if I wanted bass boost without having the mid-range scooped out. Each button has an LED to let you know when each function is engaged. Flanked by the input gain level and master volume, you’ve actually got a great amplifier there to begin with given the masses of power available too. EA has included an input level meter - you know I am a big fan of LEDs!

e & NL112 Cabinet

...nising more incredible tones, this time it's from the iAMP
...ary with some new releases.

e black
'fast
shaping
even all
trument
nds

allows
equaliser
well.
further

So this, although being a very useful way to see how hard you are driving the input, actually quite pleasing for me to see too ha ha! Equalisation comes courtesy of a 4 band system. The silver knobs as you'd expect operate cut and boost for Low, Low Mid, High Mid and High-frequency bands. You'd dial in as normal, easy job. However. Underneath each silver knob is a slider. You can move the frequency centre point on which the silver dials act upon. This is known as a semi-parametric equaliser. So, maybe I want some really "subby" bass boost for playing dub bass, I might choose to boost closer to the 40Hz region »



STAR RATING



PROS

- » Stunning audio performance.
- » All the benefits of lightweight and efficient technology.

CONS

- » Only the cost will stand in the way of this rig purchase.

Check **THE SPEC**

Euphonic Audio iAMP Classic & NL112 Cabinet
EA iAmp Classic £1199 / NL112 Cab £899 //

iAMP Classic: // 1200W @ 4Ohms
// 600 @ 8 Ohms

NL112 Cabinet: // Size: 17"H x 17"W
x 12.75"D // Weight: 27.5 lbs

For more information, please visit:

bassdirect.co.uk/bass_guitar_specialists/EA_Amps.html

THE BASSMENT AMP & HEAD REVIEW

on the Low knob but cut frequencies at 500hz on the Low Mid knob. Or I want some finger style punch in my sound, so I'd move the slider of the Low or High Mids knobs to accentuate a boost in the frequencies that make that sound ping out. Easy peasy!

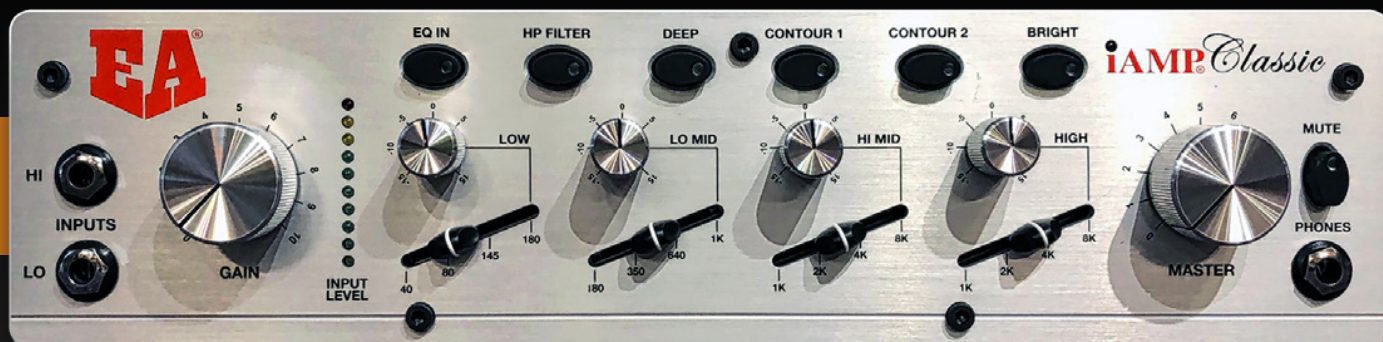
A welcome inclusion is the High-pass filter "HPF" which engages a signal cut below 20hz. This is very useful if you are pushing lots of lows through your signal path into

speakers that can't reproduce those sub frequencies. This is energy that will be just wasted in excessive cone flapping and heat. Engage to offer a bit of protection and you might even notice your sound clear up a bit too.

Inputs for instruments with differing level outputs are available and I also really appreciate a mute switch on the front panel as well as a headphone socket for silent rehearsal.



Euphonic Audio iAMP Classic & NL112 Cabinet



Around the back, it's a clear set up with the usual IEC socket for the auto-power sensing mains supply. Yup, plug it in wherever you are in the world and the iAmp will know what voltage to set itself to. (100-240V) - There are two Speakon speaker sockets - these are not a 'combination' type and won't take 1/4" leads, which is understandable given the power output available from the amplifier. There's an onboard effects loop that includes a return level control and to the right of that the expected DI output XLR socket and related controls for level, in/out and the ability to tap your signal before or after the EQ section in the preamplifier. A Tuner Out is provided for leaving a tuning device attached or you could use this as a dry output feed I suppose.

iAmp classic isn't pretending to be a lunchbox amplifier, but it is packing a huge amount of features into a manageable sized metal shell!

NL112

Now.. given my experience with the NL210 MkIII previously, I was looking forward to good things. Was I surprised with its performance? Well, at first, no I have to say: NL112 was doing exactly what I expected! I hoped that the silk dome tweeter array (There are two drivers vertically aligned slap bang in the middle of the front grill) sounded sweet and not at all harsh, just like my home studio set up. I certainly wasn't let down there either. The cabinet, which is super lightweight felt solid and a "tap test" didn't show off any boxiness or "ringing" making me at least feel like it is well braced inside. The 12" driver was a joy to listen to even out of the box cold. Sometimes, it is immediately obvious that a speaker has a certain amount of tonal colour to it. There are a few combos we have looked at in the past that imparted an inherent »

characteristic to every note put through it. I honestly felt like this wasn't happening with the NL112. Certainly not enough to worry me anyway and I am very fussy!

Weighing in at just 12Kg this ported 500W rated speaker cabinet demonstrates a wonderfully articulate performance with no real signs of letting up as we advanced the master volume. Very impressive considering its size. Sensitivity is very good and the NL112 is available as either a 4 or 8 ohm unit allowing for use as a once cabinet solution or pairing up into a stack (which I can't help feeling would be tremendous!)

Celebrating EA's 35th anniversary at the time of releasing the NL112, the company have been enjoying a shift "back to their roots". Hence the design facelift featuring brown tolex, leather handle and a new name plate, all adds up to a rather prestige package!

One thing I certainly have noticed and I would like to add as an appendix to this review, is that throughout the day, genuinely we noticed the sound of the set up getting better. Now, I don't know if it is because we had a cold studio to start with, or by giving this brand new out-of-the-box rig a chance to break in the speaker a bit, I don't know. However after 8 hours on our studio stage - and then more recording a couple of days later, I have to say that the NL112 really started surprising me as to its capabilities. The lows were reaching down and down. Having switched over to my Dingwall Combustion 4 I noticed real top end sparkle

from the soft dome tweeters too. (Check out my Valeton reviews and GiTV slot where you can hear this set up in a different environment).

Given my closing paragraph, I have to score this mini rig highly. A beautifully clear tone and plenty of volume that fills the room with bass. I'll be sad to send this one back to Bass Direct. It creates a true sound much larger than its physical size.

END «



BEST OF 2019

“...throughout the day, genuinely **we noticed** the sound of the set up getting better...”



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Darkglass Hyper Luminal Compressor

Dan Veall is back once again with another review in Guitar Interactive's Bassment, setting up the Hyper Luminal Compressor Pedal. Let's see what the 'hype' is all about.

We have certainly covered Darkglass as a company in detail in previous reviews in Guitar Interactive. So I apologise if I dip straight into the review here, we have much to cover! You can check out those reviews via the magazine website!

I feel this is a really interesting piece to cover. I am so used to seeing the "analogue versus digital" debate online. Forums and social media pages are overflowing with opinions on what is best and why. "Digital sounds cold and sterile", "Analogue is limited", "the two never work together" and countless other discussions get heated over what should wear the tone crown.

Well, what if, in a parallel universe, those two "polar opposites" were to come together

in a best-of-both-worlds union that actually worked for both parties?

I should pepper this opener with my own opinion: I'm open-minded. I see the benefits of both technologies and all in between. I'm not going to try to change anyone's minds, but I certainly want to get into the details of the Hyper Luminal. It is a hybrid design compressor. It features both analogue and digital circuitry. It is an analogue signal path end-to-end and is known as a VCA (Voltage Controlled Amplifier) compressor. It uses a control signal topology shall we say, for the various effect parameters in which to deliver predictable and repeatable results. I am over-simplifying here, otherwise, it would make for a very long review in explanation alone!

So where does the digital side of this effect come in? Well, a digital processor on board governs the control signals and how they affect each of the parameters that you would usually find on a compressor, for example Attack, Sustain, Compression (Threshold) and Ratio. That's not all! If you can control those functions, then you can not only decide how much say, compression to apply, but start to emulate the way that famous compressors out there behave when doing that too. The very characteristics that make people love a particular studio compressor over another for a specific job.

Darkglass know that too, so they have "modelled" the behaviour of two famous devices into the Hyper Lum

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BEST OF 2019

THE BASSMENT DARKGLASS HYPER LUMINAL COMPRESSOR PEDAL

Compressor Pedal

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STAR RATING



PROS

- » Simple on the outside, advanced on the inside
- » Analogue signal path, modern DSP control

CONS

- » Will knock most other comps' off your board!

Check **THE SPEC**

Darkglass Hyper Luminal Compressor Pedal

MSRP (UK) £227 (US) \$349 //

Solid-state Logic Bus Compressor
// 1176 inspired // 75x111x43 mm

For more information, please visit:
www.darkglass.com

“Lets cut to the chase though. Is the compressor good? **YES...**”

Whilst doing that, a third compressor, their very own Super Symmetry has also been included if the first two weren't already enough!

The inclusion of Digital Signal Processing, that I will refer to as DSP from now on has its advantages. Complicated electronics that would otherwise force this compressor to be much, much bigger can be shrunk down into a central controller. Modern DSP is more advanced, accurate and less 'clunky' than processors of yesteryear. Indeed, just progress itself has »



Darkglass Hyper Luminial Compressor Pedal



Spector EURO SERIES: PUSH FORWARD



For over 40 years, our basses have been the favorite of many players because of the comfortable, curved body design and modern looks. But it's also the famous "Spector growl" that separates ours from other basses. By look, by feel and by sound, Spector basses push you forward.

www.SpectorBass.com

meant that engineers have invested a great deal of time in the design of complex algorithms. Analogy? Well, you only have to compare the first smart-phone you ever owned to the latest offerings to see how much better they are. Guitar effects have enjoyed the same advances.

Speaking of advances, well, like many effects processors out there today, Hyper Luminal has a USB connection. If you aren't completely happy with the parameters factory set by Darkglass, you can download their free "Darkglass Suite" and instantly access extra under-bonnet functionality via a computer. I used my trusty ole laptop in the review.

It's over to my video where I endeavoured to demonstrate some of the features. I am sorry there were some I had to leave out in the

video either because of time or the difficulties with the medium of 'online compressed video' that makes it difficult to hear what is going on.

Lets cut to the chase though. Is the compressor good? YES. Is it reactive to changes in the signal? YES. Did I hear any extraneous noise or artefacts that are picked up in some devices? No, however, it would be physically impossible to make an analogue compressor dead silent (hiss) under high compression where the make-up gain is being pushed. It's just the nature of the beast. Furthermore, my ole P bass is a bit sensitive to ambient electrical noise which heavy compression settings could emphasise, so beware! Not a fault of the pedal though!

In the video, I mention the onboard models that I have listed in the specifications. You

may want to read up about those online, suffice to say, you can definitely tell the difference between each model once you are familiar with the way that compressors work. An excuse to fiddle? You bet!

Hyper Luminal's controls I describe in the video that are very neat and tidy, out of the way of the end of a boot when engaging the effect via the foot switch. Which makes those touch panels for the Ratio and Mode (Model selection) such a good idea! Nothing to kick or bash! I wonder if we can have the 4 knobs mapped to touch sensors too in the future Darkglass? It'd be possible to save your favourite setting by default with no physical knobs?

Darkglass don't "do" batteries for ecological reasons, so this, like the rest of the pedal range is a 'pedal power' effect only. Which

is fine anyway as the DSP and electronics require a decent amount of juice which means you could be replacing batteries more often than you'd like anyway!

Rounding up then (fighting my temptation to want to elaborate more), Hyper Luminal is a very impressive compressor. I am a big fan of 'Parallel Compression', so the blend control is very welcome when it comes to my needs. The pedal is small, light (if you want to keep the overall weight down on your board) and the Gain Reduction LED strip is bright but not impinging, even when the lights were low. Oh, and they are blue. I like blue LEDs!

END «

EBS Billy Sheehan Ultimate Signature Drive

Tailored specifically for bass guitar, **Dan Veall** reviews a brand new overdrive pedal designed by bassist, Billy Sheehan; the EBS Billy Sheehan Signature.

It's crazy to think where the last six odd years have gone since EBS announced the collaboration with bass pioneer Billy Sheehan in the shape of the "original" 'Billy Sheehan Signature Drive' pedal.

We reviewed it in issue 18 back in 2013. I'll hold my hands up. I went out and bought one after the review. I gigged it solidly, but it did come off my pedal board eventually. Well, that would be because issue 42 came along where I had the opportunity to review the then-new 'Signature Drive Deluxe' in 2016. A facelift to a tasteful orange colour and a new set of features as well as a tweaked circuit. The improvements immediately made sense to me and I can reveal: The Deluxe pedal is still very much part of my collection. Fast forward to the now; EBS UK dropped me a line and arranged

to get the brand new 'Signature Drive Ultimate' out to me. Well, I am very pleased they did!

For this review, I will invite you to seek out the previous issues of the magazine (or the videos that Guitar Interactive have very kindly reproduced on YouTube). You will get to hear about each pedal and its features. *I would add at this point that given the time between recording and the different kit used, it would be tough to make a direct comparison of all three. Hmm, maybe that's a video for another day!

Upon the table then: It's shrunk! A smaller enclosure following a rework and also a lick of fresh colour with a certain nod to a particularly well-known signature bass guitar no less?

"Ultimate" as I shall call it for the rest of the review is a distilled

and incredibly complex signal path that Billy Sheehan has created through necessity over the years. Billy takes separate signals from the front, and middle pickups on his bass and these signals are divided into a "super low" clean sound and both top end clean and drive sounds. Yes, I have massively simplified the description as I don't have the copy space to go into great detail. What I will though is that Billy has used a lot of gear to do what the Ultimate does in a small box.

The Sheehan pedals all share the same topology. You plug your instrument in, and your signal is split into two discrete paths.

The first, whose level is controlled via the clean control knob, does exactly that - you get a clean direct instrument sound

»

BEST OF 2019

THE BASSMENT EBS BILLY SHEEHAN ULTIMATE SIGNATURE DRIVE

Signature Drive

ned in collaboration with virtuoso

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STAR RATING



PROS

- » Perfected bass drive in a compact package.
- » Onboard compression.
- » Multiple effects routing options.

CONS

- » Absolutely none. Really.

Check **THE SPEC**

EBS Billy Sheehan Ultimate Signature Drive
SRP (UK) £149 (US) \$199 //

Dimensions 83 x 115 x 48 mm //
Weight 420g (0.93 lb.) // Analog Effect

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.handinhand.uk.net/>

“Blend the two and **BAM** big bass sound..!”

The second path is really interesting. Essentially it is a drive path, but it really isn't the same as just dropping a distortion pedal on to your pedal board. I would say that the drive section is of the “bandpass” type in that there is some pre-EQ shaping before the distortion circuit and some shaping after also. Yes, this is all part of one circuit, and when solo'd you can hear that the drive is all about the midrange and treble frequencies. With this in mind, the drive on its own isn't really useable for shaking the foundations; you could expect to disappear in a wall of guitar cabinets at full tilt. Here's the beauty of the Ultimate though. It's when



EBS Billy Sheehan Ultimate Signature Drive

the clean and drive circuits are mixed are you graced with a great big bass tone. An instrument with a naturally scooped sound will certainly benefit from that mid-range grind I feel.

The drive circuit is made up of a saturation control in the shape of the drive knob and a tone knob. The latter now has a two position switch that shifts the frequency range that the tone sweep effects, The previous pedal's single sweep worked fine, but dividing up the sweep into two modes offers up more tonal breadth. Drive level is governed by the Level knob.

Another nice inclusion is the "phase invert" switch also found on the Deluxe pedal. It switches the phase of the signal in the drive path. Even without any other devices in the chain, I love how this affects the overall bass tone when blending with the clean signal.

Effect Loops: Using an insert "Y" cable (one supplied), external effects can be inserted into the Ultimate's signal paths - yes, plural! Not one, but two effects loops are available! One for the clean circuit and another for the drive circuit (post drive).

The beauty of having two loops is that you could apply a different effect to the clean sound (like an octave) and say a chorus or filter to the drive sound only. Blend the two and BAM big bass sound!

Like the previous iterations, Ultimate has an adjustable compressor on board. As per

Billy's preference, the compressor is the last block in the signal path after the two signal paths have been combined. On the top panel of the pedal a three-way switch offers "off", "mid" and "high" settings. The High setting is preset, but I love that the mid position can be set to taste using a pair of trimmers underneath the back panel should you need to tweak.

The bottom left-hand side of Ultimate is a second footswitch - this engages a boost circuit in the drive path that adds input level and thus when engaged adds saturation. Like the compressor, there is a trimmer should you wish to adjust the amount of boost applied.

If I wasn't running out of space, I'd go into way more detail, but I wanted to include that, like the Deluxe pedal, the Ultimate also has a nifty option that allows you to change one of the Op Amps (chips!) for one of your own choosing. It's a bit like "Tube Rolling" but in the solid state world. - I've not tried changing these integrated circuits myself, but I have definitely seen and heard of other folks out there giving it a go with exciting results. I love the stock chip in the Deluxe, but it's nice to have something else to personalise in the bass rig ey!

One final thing to note is, EBS' spec tells me that the Ultimate will work off DC power supplies up to 18VDC, which is handy!

END «

Bergantino B|Amp (Software v

Bergantino's B|Amp is a smart amplifier. It features a unique signal path which allows for co the bass sound that's perfect for you and ideal for where you're playing. No other bass amp and the overall system quite like the B|Amp, and with the latest software update of 5.15 Dan

BEFORE I get started, I need to direct you towards my original magazine review of the Bergantino B|Amp (Gi Issue 45). I will immediately mention that there is a very good reason that we have covered this amplifier a second time. The physical device itself hasn't changed; however, if you have already read my first review, you'll already know that the amplifier's

whole operation is controlled by digital signal processing architecture. Thus since 2016, the my last review, Bergantino Amplification has fine-tuning the signal path and constantly up features.

This isn't just a sudden update either. I comm for being totally connected with his customer



version 5.15)

complete control over all of the parameters that help you get
 amplifier on the market can manage both the speaker, amplifier,
in Veall takes another look at this exciting product.

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 e time of
 been
 odating

(You'll find him on TalkBass and Facebook groups
 where he absolutely listens to experiences of bassists
 in real-world settings.) Thus, the features that have
 been added have been greatly influenced by the very
 people needing them.

end Jim
 r base.

The B|Amp is quite the chameleon, and a
 demonstration of just a few of the classic tones that
 can be achieved with modern processing opens up my
 own creativity, especially when the amplifier delivers
 the solid foundation of sound that I want behind me.

In my video, I run through the front panel features
 and, well, there's so much to talk about, I ended up
 using the menu system as my guide! Honestly it is
 not as complicated as it looks! Easier than a modern
 smart phone and nearly everyone these days has one
 of those! »

What makes B|Amp so useful
 is the **ability to save** your
 individual settings in three
 memory locations..."

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Pretty much the best of everything in one good looking shell.
- » Professional, Studio quality signal processing.
- » Free future updates.

CONS

- » This amp is absolutely plug and play, but some features will require you to read the manual!

Check **THE SPEC**

Bergantino B|Amp (Software version 5.15)

MSRP (UK) £1229 (US) \$1199 //

Power Section: 350W at 8-Ohms,
 700W at 4-Ohms, 800W at 2.67-
 Ohms and 800W at 2-Ohms //
 Dimensions: 10.5" x 8.375" x 3.75" //
 Weight: 3kg

For more information, please visit:
bergantino.com

THE BASSMENT AMP REVIEW

Down to the nuts and bolts, the B|Amp consists of an efficient D Class power amplifier capable of driving 800W RMS in to a 2 ohm load and uses software sensing to determine optimum operating conditions. Coupled to this powerful module, a DSP preamplifier that in theory can offer endless tonal options.

Here's a brief run-down of the feature set including the 5.15 updates.

A four band parametric equaliser (each band of the equaliser can be individually set for gain and frequency as well as Q (or "Quality", which is the width of the bands being adjusted).

Variable High and Low Pass filters - explained in detail in my video, but in short, allows for a controlled roll off of the low end or treble frequencies. Removing sub frequencies from a bass sound can tighten it up but also help to reduce over excursion in smaller cabinets that can't reproduce lower frequencies. The low pass filter could be treated like an electronic tweeter control or in extreme settings access instant "dub bass" sounds!

B|Amp has an effects loop, variable ratio (parallel) compressor and three types of drive structure. All of these are programmable:



Bergantino B|Amp (Software version 5.15)



What makes B|Amp so useful is the ability to save your individual settings in three memory locations that can be accessed via the uncluttered front panel or via a wireless bluetooth pedal. I used a two button version in my video, but as I write this review, Bergantino have just announced new updated wireless controllers for B|Amp and the other amplifiers in the range! Wireless!! No cables! Brilliant!

The three drive effects are included that in conjunction with the variable high and low pass filters gave me instant access to some amplifier characterises I know and love. It's hard to attempt to go through all possible examples that you will want to hear, but dialling my "SVT-esque" sound was a breeze. I started by setting the High Pass filter to mimic the roll off of an 8x10 cabinet which from memory is around the 55hz mark. I then went on »

to simulate a vintage cabinet without a tweeter by using the low pass filter to gently roll away the top end without having to touch the tweeter on my Bergantino 2x12 in the review. Bergantino's "Smart Drive" functions have been designed to keep the low end too and thus dialling in some grit took the amplifier in to that familiar territory that I was after. The drives are touch sensitive much like our favourite valve amplifiers, but for me the new parallel compression effect on board lifts everything in to life.

If you have read many of my effect reviews, you'll know already that I am a huge fan of parallel compression. - This style of compression mixes in your non-compressed signal with the effect. This may seem counter-intuitive, but it is a great dynamic effect that adds that magic to a drive sound

and punch to everything else :) It has been my secret weapon for well over 20 years!

I should add, if I didn't mention it after my opening play through in my video, I set up the B|Amp to behave like three different amplifiers to demonstrate a rock sound, an 80's (British amp) slap tone and a more finger friendly small combo-amp with accentuated upper mid range. Again, dialled in with ease and saved ready for any gig. I could have just as easily set up sounds for solos or chordal work instead.

Speaker cabinet matching profiles: If you are running a Bergantino cabinet, well, as per my original review, the B|Amp uses a profile system that matches the amplifier to the cabinets in the same way that modern PA DSP pairs amplifiers and speakers together as active units. I had so much to cover in

this review, again I will leave you to see my previous video, but my opinion hasn't changed: Bergantino are really pushing bass gear performance in a very positive direction. PA companies have been doing this for years, and us Bassists are only just getting to enjoy these fruits. We know that bass requires a huge amount of energy to be heard, so why not maximise that transfer with intelligent management? I'm all for it - because it works! Bergantino include a generic profile for non-brand cabinets which works beautifully too and suggest trying their own profiles on similar cabinets (like-for-like 4x10 as an example).

B|Amp can operate without a cabinet so even for gigs where you are on In-Ears only, well, here's a preamp with those

three sounds going straight to front-of-house via the noise-free DI.

Rounding up, the B|Amp is actually very easy to use - and just because it has these extra functions, you needn't have to add them to your core tone. When you do though, you'll discover that you don't just have one amplifier style, but dozens.

Cabinet: Bergantino CN212 2x12 Neodymium

Bass: 1976 Fender Precision

You can follow me on social media via @DanVeallBassist for posts, updates as well as behind the scenes sneak-peaks.

END «

Spector Euro 4 LT

Spector's Euro Series has established itself as a true icon in the world of electric bass. Expert instruments represent the true essence of Spector's legendary design. Now, the Euro Series of instruments; the Euro LT Series. Here's **Dan Veall** with the full breakdown.

YOU'RE in for a real treat here!

Spector, as I have said many times before in these very columns is well regarded amongst the bass fraternity. Stuart Spector has maintained a consistent level of quality manufacture for, well, over 40 years. In the current line up we have prestige instruments built in the USA as well as using quality facilities in Europe to further extend the manufacturing options - which as it happens, could be a nod to the naming of the very models we are looking at today? The Euro series:

I'm going to come right out with it: Surely the example we have here should live in the USA series camp as, after getting to know the bass, I am almost at a loss as to decide how this beautiful instrument differs from that of it's USA brethren in quality.

Let's not mess around here, I'm off up to the headstock, as usual, to break this one down.

Gotoh branded quality tuners; I love these. Two, either side of the angled back headstock, the view is balanced and uncluttered up at the headstock end. Well, we need space for that iconic logo, after all.

I know that you know by now, small and perfectly formed headstocks please me and this one is familiar and uniquely Spector in my mind.

Not unusual to see, Spector stick with a well-trod ground of using Maple for the neck and on the Euro LT 4, it's a three-piece laminate of quality tonewood that continues all the way down straight through the body. Yes! We have a neck-through construction here: Again I am a big fan. Upper fret access is a total breeze as the would-be heel is practically non-existent. We'll come

back to that in a moment to focus on the

Spector has gone ample for the fit tidy 24 fret neck the installation and I found no this bass and given So very comfortable itself is super comfortable even be fooled than it actually able.

Spector top off inlays in the use not one for large these Spector ex

Getting on down some attention: ing figuring on back of the bass can make a bass rich gloss is app



partly handcrafted, these
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a minute as I would like
neck.

he for ebony on this ex-
fingerboard and its a very
k. As I said in my video,
of the frets is exemplary,
issues after grabbing
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table! The neck carve
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was, as it's so comfort-

the ebony board with
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er or block inlays, but
amples look so good.

yn to giving that body
We have an eye-catch-
the Maple round the
s - select woods really
s "ping" visually when a
olied. »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Everything you'd expect from a premium instrument
- » Darkglass Electronics
- » Well-balanced
- » Rich tones

CONS

- » When you are buying at this price point, you know what to expect, and this does not disappoint.

Check **THE SPEC**

Spector Euro 4 LT

MSRP (UK) £2380 (US) \$3399 //

Weight-Relieved European Alder Body // 3-piece Maple Neck; // 24 fret Ebony fingerboard // Custom-Wound Bartolini pickups

For more information, please visit:
www.spectorbass.com

Spector has gone with European Alder wings for the body, that according to the blurb have been “weight relieved.” At the time of writing this review, I am not 100% sure how they have achieved that, Euro LT doesn’t feel at all hefty. Alder, quality Alder, we know is a great balanced sounding tonewood that will help to add warmth to the neck-through tone.

Bringing the “A-game” in the eye candy department is the premium grade highly figured North American Maple for the facing wood dressed on top of a slice of walnut wood. Such a simple touch, but I love seeing a contrasting “pinstripe” around the edge of the bass highlighting both the instrument outline but also framing the top wood.

Spector offers up four finishes for the Euro LT. We have the Tiger Eye Gloss here, and there are three “fade Gloss” options to, namely red, violet and jaw-dropping blue!

Even without plugging the bass in, it is free from buzzes. I applaud whoever did the set up on this bass before it came out to review - and acoustically the bass has a tight, rich and “controlled” tone. You know me though, I want to hear this thing cranked up and no time was wasted making that happen!

In the electronics department, it’s custom all the way. Bartolini P and J style pickups, specifically voiced by Bartolini for these basses, to my ear impart a modern tone vibe. Open and punchy. I mentioned in my video that I



Spector Euro 4 LT



love a reverse P position pickups and at least the idea of it seems to make logical sense to me; I can't say I've ever been able to try a bass where I could A/B both the usual way and this way round to tell for sure if there was much of a difference, but I can tell you that there are good things going on with these pickups. The J is tight in tone when solo'd, but every time I go straight back to the 50/50 blend.

Oh and the active electronics engaged. Woh! What's going on with this preamplifier?? Immediately I engaged it I noticed the difference. I mean the passive pickups were nice to start with, but the (again) custom-designed Darkglass preamplifier is superb. I don't have a great deal of information regarding how the capsule has been customised for Spector, but I can tell you it sounds great. The usual Darkglass Tone Capsule is an interesting beast.

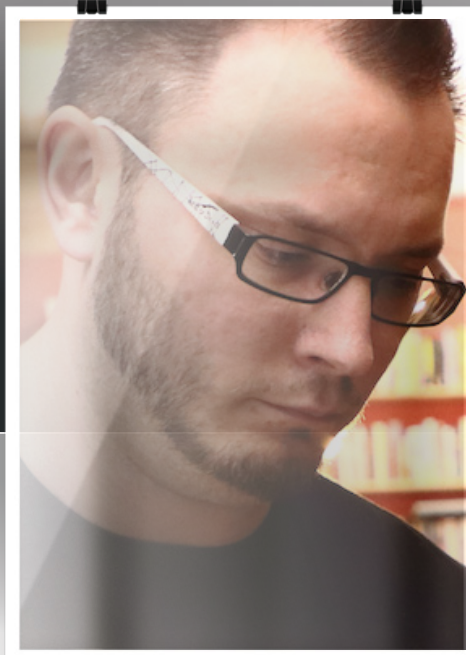
An idea by Sheldon Dingwall was to have an equaliser that offers Bass, Middle, but instead of Treble, another Mid control. "Upper mids" if you will, that really suits bass guitar. Whether or not the module is exactly the same or at least similar, Interestingly you don't get all three EQ controls on the outside of the body. Spector has put the mid-range control inside the electronics cavity. I did wonder if a magnetic door or an easy way to access the control would have been a benefit to help access the function.

All in all, well, check out my HD video for examples of the high-quality tones available from the Euro LT 4. This is a gorgeous instrument that the Spector craftspeople would no doubt be proud of showing off. Personally, I think it is superb and deserves high praise.

END «

GUITAR INTERACTIVE

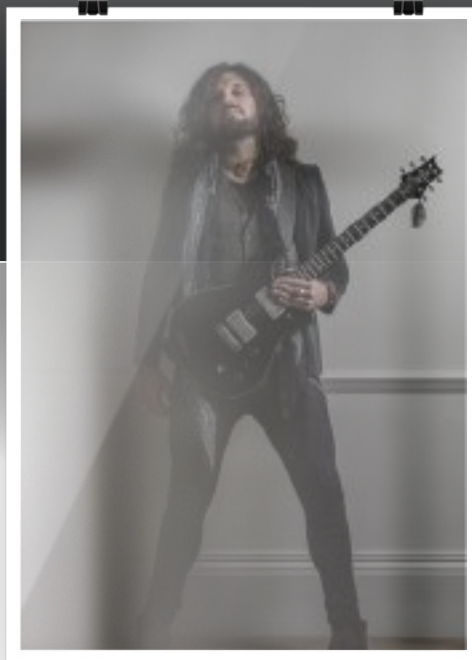
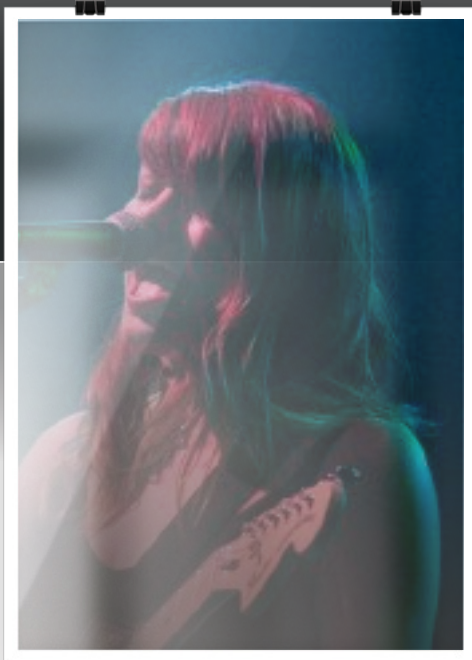
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COLUMNS

OUR FREE GUITAR UNIVERSITY





DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL TECHNIQUE: **PART 5**

Class is in session. **Tom Quayle** brings you a brand new and exclusive lesson for Guitar Interactive Magazine.

TOM Quayle took up the guitar at the age of 15 after being inspired by his Dad's incredible fingerstyle guitar playing and quickly developed a love for the instrument. Being addicted to players such as Steve Vai, John Petrucci and Brett Garsed, Tom initially focused on rock technique before developing a huge interest in Jazz and Fusion.

At this point Tom changed to his renowned 4th's tuning and studied Jazz, graduating with a Jazz Performance degree in 2002 from Leeds College of Music. Since graduating Tom has developed to become one of the foremost fusion legato players in the world with a strong reputation for both the teaching and playing, having produced a large number of highly acclaimed tuition products for his own website »

and Lick Library that have helped thousands of guitar players from every corner of the planet literally.

He has conducted masterclasses and played all over the world giving him acclaim that means he can count Dweezil Zappa, John Petrucci, Brett Garsed, Greg Howe, Andy Timmons and Tim Miller amongst his many

fans. Tom currently plays with and on the albums of some of the best fusion musicians in the world, releasing the highly acclaimed 'Elba Triangle' album in early 2017 with Virgil Donati, Alex Argento, Marco Sfogli and Allesandro Benvenuti.

Tom has many projects in the works including lots of studio and live work with his



Developing Professional Technique:PART 5

partner in crime, Martin Miller. His highly anticipated debut album is in the works, and he has produced a considerable catalogue of some of the most successful tuition material for the modern fusion genre.

Tom is incredibly proud to play his signature TQM1 guitar exclusively.

For more information, and exclusive courses from Tom Quayle, head over to http://bit.ly/Tom_Quayle

END <<



T O M Q U A Y L E

Signature SESSION



GUITAR
LESSONS

Tom Quayle's Signature Session is here!

In this brand new course designed for players of all levels, Danny Gill debuts his track “Per”, a 5 part rock extravaganza in which he talks in depth about his approach to melodic soloing, improvisation, chordal arrangement and modal playing. Each section of “Per” is performed with the supplied backing track and then broken down for you.

In addition to teaching the rhythm and the melodies, Danny talks about some of the scale choices available to you so that you can

easily play through each section regardless of your current playing level. There is even a section of ‘cool licks’ to add to your collection as well as a scales section showing you each of the scale patterns Danny refers to in the lessons.

“Per” features a bit of everything, starting off slow and dynamic and finishing with a heavy double time feel giving you plenty of opportunities to be creative and expressive over this rock instrumental.

lick **LIBRARY**

COLUMNS_SHAUNA TOHILL

HEAD SHOT

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Marshall

COLUMNS SHAUNA TOHILL GUEST COLUMN



In a brand new feature, Guitar Interactive Magazine is proud to introduce an exclusive column from Northern Irish musician, songwriter and REWS frontwoman, **Shauna Tohill**, exploring the world of alternative rock and pop guitar playing »



About REWS

REWS is the high energy alt-rock/pop band and alter-ego of N. Irish songwriter Shauna Tohill. Beginning as a duo in 2014, the band has evolved into a stronger, and even more formidable force in the last year, ready to claim more stage time across the world and creating a genuine buzz on the UK/Irish music scene.

The act's first single, "Miss You In The Dark" was released on 23rd June 2017 to coincide with the band's performance on the John Peel Stage at Glastonbury Festival, with BBC 6 Music and BBC's TV coverage highlighting them as one of the acts of the weekend. »



Shauna Tohill - Exclusive Column 4

Following singles have been featured on BBC Radio 1, BBC 6 Music, Radio X and Planet Rock Radio, with “Your Tears” being BBC Introducing’s ‘Track of the Week’ on BBC Radio 1, along with REWS’ debut album ‘Pyro’ featuring heavily across the UK press.

After a successful album cycle which lead to a supporting slot with Halestorm in September 2018 (as well as various successful headline

tours), Shauna is now working on the highly anticipated album number two.

If you didn’t catch REWS playing a number of selected Festivals around the UK this summer, you can see the band on a string of live dates supporting The Darkness in November and December this year, kicking off in Newcastle on the 14th of Nov.

END «



REWS - Shake Shake OFFICIAL VIDEO

SPONSORED BY

Marshall

COLUMNS SHAUNA TOHILL GUEST COLUMN

The full **list of dates** are as follows:

NOVEMBER 2019

Thu 14th - O2 Academy Newcastle,
Newcastle Upon-Tyne

Mon 25th - Cyprus Avenue, Cork, IE

Tue 26th - Limelight, Belfast

Wed 27th - The Academy, Dublin, IE

Fri 29th - Rock City, Nottingham

DECEMBER 2019

Sun 1st - O2 Academy Birmingham, Bir-
mingham

Mon 2nd - O2 Academy Leicester,
Leicester

Tue 3rd - Cliffs Pavilion, Southend

Thu 5th - UEA LCR, Norwich

Fri 6th - Cambridge Corn Exchange,
Cambridge

Sat 7th - Pavillion, Bath

Tue 10th - Brighton Dome, Brighton

Wed 11th - Colosseum, Watford

Thu 12th - Portsmouth Pyramid,
Portsmouth

Fri 13th - Manchester Academy,
Manchester

Sat 14th - O2 Academy Newcastle,
Newcastle Upon-Tyne

Sun 15th - O2 Academy Glasgow,
Glasgow

Tue 17th - Barbican, York

Wed 18th - O2 Academy Liverpool,
Liverpool

Fri 20th - Roundhouse, London

For more information on Shauna Tohill & REWS,
please visit: rewsmusic.com



WIN



This Manson Guitar Works/Elixir Strings' "Screaming E" Custom Guitar worth over **£2000**.





LICKS & TRICKS

SPONSORED BY ELIXIR STRINGS

Nick Jennison is back with six essential guitar lessons to get your teeth into, plus an incredible one of a kind competition you won't want to miss.

ELIXIR Strings, leading innovator in string coating technology has teamed up with British luthier Manson to create this top-spec custom-built 'Screaming e' guitar, celebrating its the launch of their new OPTIWEB® Coated Electric Guitar Strings.

THE GRAND PRIZE IN THE MAKING

Our Elixir Strings' Screaming e' guitar has been built earlier this year for the lucky Guitar Idol contest winner. A most beautiful custom electric guitar, hand made to highest specifications by our Devon-based guitar maker friends at Manson Guitar Works.

MORE ON "THE MAKERS OF THIS BEAUTY"

Manson Guitar Works is the latest facility from internationally renowned luthier Hugh Manson.

For over four decades Hugh has produced world-class premium quality guitars for some of the most respected guitar greats, combining traditional luthier skills with genuinely

new and exciting technology developments. Manson Guitar Works allows musicians to express themselves like never before. Their MIDI-controlled Matthew Bellamy signature guitars, multi-stringed bass guitars for John Paul Jones and countless one-off creations for musicians who are not afraid to play outside the comfort zone have resulted in a great demand for Manson products. Previously only available as individual commissions, the Manson Guitar Works aims to bridge that difficult area between full-scale production and a genuine hands-on luthier approach, offering a unique instrument, built with attention to detail, pride and individual service.

MANSONGUITARWORKS.COM

GUITAR SPECIFICATIONS:

Body: One piece Spanish Cedrela

Neck: Birdseye Maple with Indian Rosewood Finger board

Mother of Pearl side dots
22 Medium/jumbo frets

Graphtech nut

Pickups: MBK-2 bridge humbucker with coil tap on tone

Custom vintage hot single coil neck pickup

Hardware: Custom' Screaming e' Hardware Volume/Tone knobs

Three-way toggle pickup selector Switch

Kill Button

Gotoh Chrome 510 machine heads

Black anodized custom

'screaming e' hardware pegs

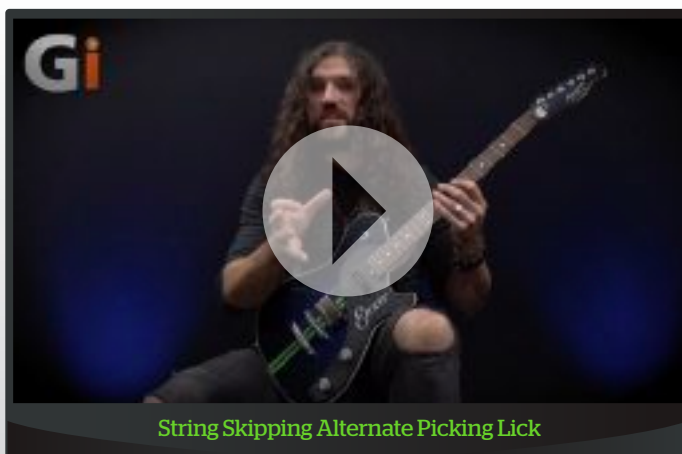
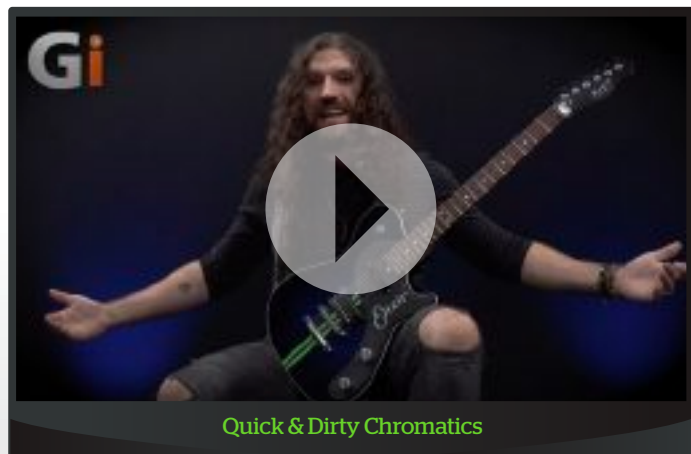
Gotoh Chrome Tailpiece and Adjustable Bridge

Black Anodized aluminum scratch plate

Strings: Elixir Strings - OPTIWEB Coated Electric

Guitar Strings in 10-46 Gauge

Case: Hiscox Hard Case



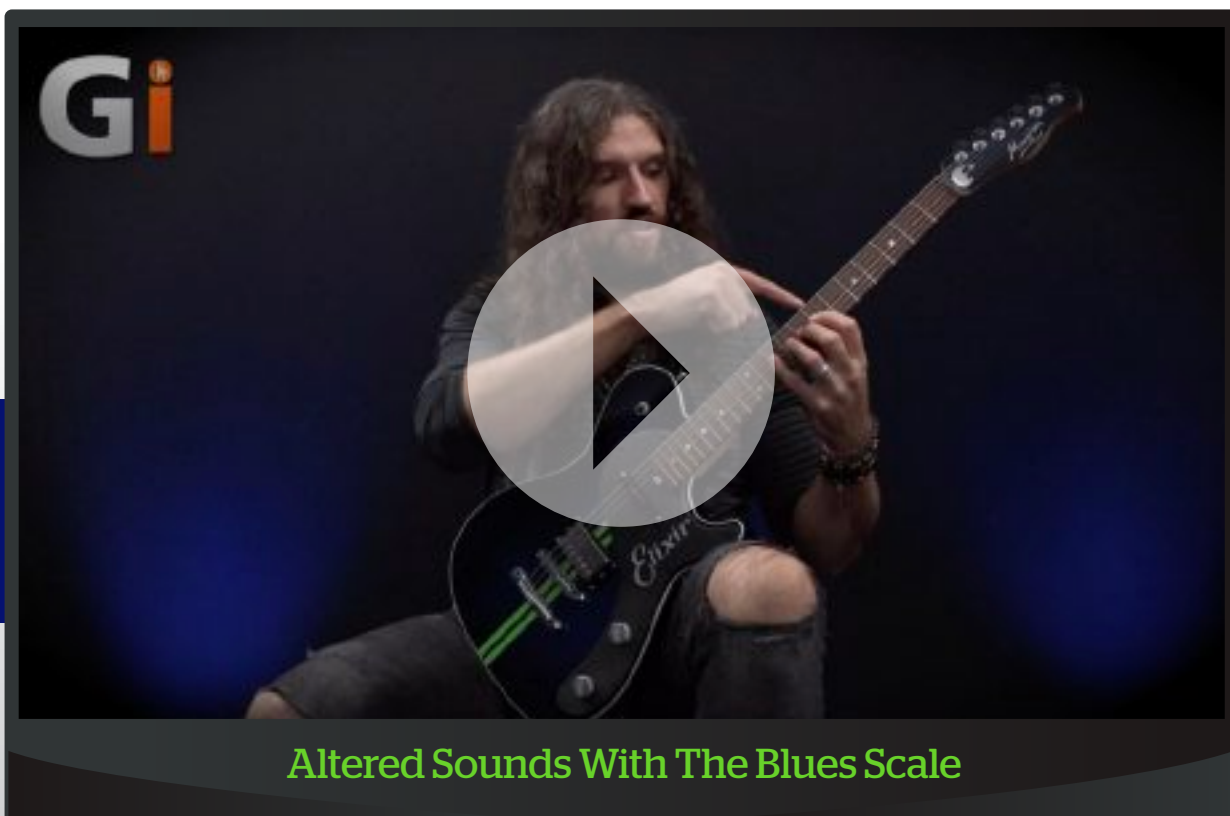
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Combining Slide and Fingers

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EXTENDED RANGE SECRETS

SEVEN STRING APPROACH

Sam Bell continues our series of lessons, stepping into the world of extended range guitars.

Brought you by Cort Guitars.

FOR those of you who have been following Guitar Interactive Magazine for a while, you may remember I did a series on Extended Range Guitar playing for a good 15 issues! Its my pleasure to once again present another instalment of extended range goodness for your ERG senses. This column is in association with Cort Guitars, the model in particular I'm using for this Column is the KX500MS, a highly affordable and quality multi scale 7 string instrument. There is a full review of this particular guitar available here at Guitar Interactive Magazine. »

If you don't own a 7 string, no problem! I hope this column inspires you to perhaps check one out, or at the very least understand just a few ways that a 7 string can be utilised. If you do already own a 7 or an 8 string then this column is me sharing my own approach to riff writing on an extended range guitar. As always, please refer to the TAB and of course the most important aspect of this column, the video explanation and performance!

I wrote this example to demonstrate several concepts, using the 7 string's range both

horizontally and vertically in standard tuning (7 String, Low B, E, A, D, G, B and E) and to also demonstrate using chord progressions as the underlying formula for writing riffs in a progressive metal context.

First of all the basic outline of the chord progression for this example is as follows:

*Bm7, GMaj7, F#m7, Em7.
Bm7, GMaj7, Em7, CMaj7.
Bm7, GMaj7, F#m7, Em7.
Bm7, Gmaj7, Em7, CMaj7, FMaj7 »*



Seven String Approach

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COLUMNS EXTENDED RANGE SECRET - PART 2





These chords underly each part of the riff. Rather than focusing in the lower register of the 7 string for the extra low notes, I am using some notes higher up on the Low B string in order to have access to some extra upper range within a fretting hand position, this makes it easier to find more harmonic options for Progressive Riff writing.

Bars 1-2 (5-6, 9-10, 13-14)

These bars follow the first part of the chord sequence, outlining first of a Bm7 Arpeggio (1,b3,5,b7 – B, D, F#, A) using the open low B string to start the riff off. Then I set about outlining the root, octave and 7th of each chord following (GMaj7, F#m7) I wouldn't be able to comfortably play these particular arpeggios if I started for example on the 3rd fret E string, so here I am using the positional advantages the 7 string can give us. This also makes the riff easier to visualise!

Bars 4-5 (11-12)

Here the chord progression moves to an Em7 arpeggio, here I am using a 2-1-2 arpeggio (2 notes on a string, followed by 1 etc) which moves through two octaves before ascending a GMaj7 arpeggio, I am still thinking of Em however, the GMaj7 is a super imposition over Em to give us Em9. Watch out for the use of Legato and Slides for the position shifts.

Bars 7-8

Here we ascend the notes from a Csus2 arpeggio (C,D,G – 1,2,5) using the full range

of all 7 strings. This run goes up using 5th style shapes. The intervals of the run look like this over 3 octaves, 1,5, 1,5,1,5, 5, 9. Then to round up bar 8, we have a quick ascending 16th note phrase outlining a CMaj7 arpeggio over two octaves.

Bars 15 -16

In the final bars of the example I'm playing a more riff/chordal style approach to CMaj7 and Fmaj7. Playing the root note on the low B string and using a Power Chord 5ths shape to grab the 3rd and Maj7th above each root note. This enables us to get some clarity between these nice interval clusters and also gives us some cool rhythmic/dynamic opportunities.

So there it is! I'd like to thank Guitar Interactive Magazine and Cort Guitars for making this column possible. I hope it inspires you to find some of your own unique ideas, even if you don't own a 7 string!

If you're interested in learning more about 7 string guitars and writing prog metal. I have a lesson course available over at LickLibrary called 'Seven String Secrets'. In the course I break down in more detail my approach to 7 string fretboard visualisation of scales/arpeggios, I showcase 3 of my own compositions (Solo and Mask of Judas) with backing tracks and full breakdown of approach to writing/playing the examples and of course approach to Tone and Slap guitar.

END «



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