EXCLUSIVE LESSONS FROM NICK **JENNISON** » ASH **GRAY** » SAM **BELL** » GIORGIO **SERCI**

Guitar Interactive 76

+ **INTERVIEWS**
KIRK FLETCHER
CLINT LOWERY
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Black Stone Cherry

CHRIS ROBERTSON DISCUSSES NEW ALBUM **'THE HUMAN CONDITION'** AND MORE.



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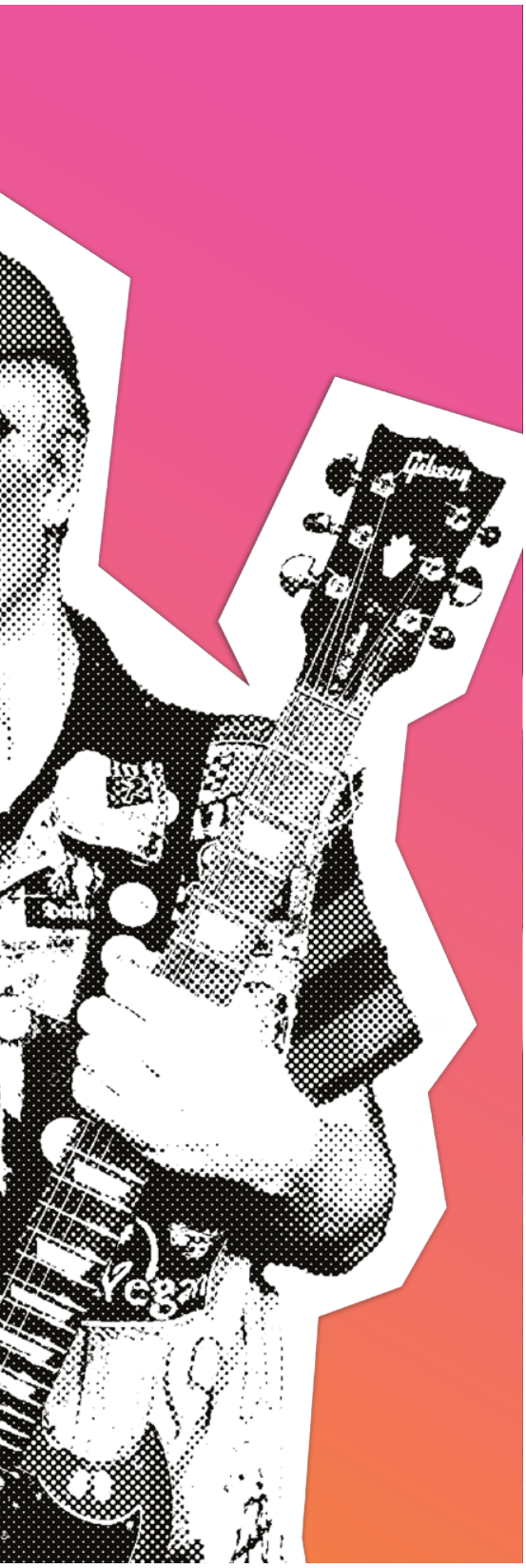
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Welcome to ISSUE 76

BSC, EVH, 7D, Kirk Fletcher & so much more



In the entire history of rock guitar, there have only been two players to revolutionise the way we play the guitar overnight. The first was Hendrix. The other was the now sadly departed Edward Van Halen. Ed was a one of a kind, a master of his art, but more than that he was an innovator. In this Guitar interactive special feature on the history and legacy of EVH, Jonathan Graham talks with the man, who over the course of three decades spent dozens of hours interviewing Eddie Van Halen; former editor-in-chief of Guitar World Magazine, Brad Tolinski. Meanwhile, Nick Jennison explores the incredible intricacies of Van Halen's elusive and in many ways incomparable guitar style.

Black Stone Cherry returns with their unique blend of southern rock and blues in the form of an incredible new album, 'The Human Condition' — out now via Mascot Label Group. Guitar Interactive Magazine editor Jonathan Graham chats with BSC's lead vocalist and guitarist Chris Robertson about the band's latest release and much more in this exclusive interview.

Also in this issue, Sevendust's Clint Lowery talks with Gi editor Jonathan Graham about the band's latest release 'Blood & Stone' and Nick Jennison speaks with the and award-winning American blues extraordinaire Kirk Fletcher.

As usual, with every issue, we have a whole host of the latest and best gear reviews from around the world of guitar, with our team of world-class gear reviewers offering their unique insight, expertise, and personality which as always, I hope you will enjoy. However, if that's not enough, don't forget all of our exclusive lessons from Sam Bell, Nick Jennison, Giorgio Serci and Venom Prison's Ash Gray.

Guitar Interactive

Editor
Jonathan Graham
jonathan@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Contributors
Jonathan Graham, Nick Jennison, Jamie Humphries

Review crew
Nick Jennison, Tom Quayle, Sam Bell & Dan Veall

Columns
Nick Jennison, Sam Bell, Ash Gray & Giorgio Serci

Advertising Manager
Helen Bavester
helen@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

USA Advertising Sales
Lisa Spiteri
LisaSpiteri@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Design and layout
Simon Gibbs
simon@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Video Editors
James Masterton & Dave Kidd
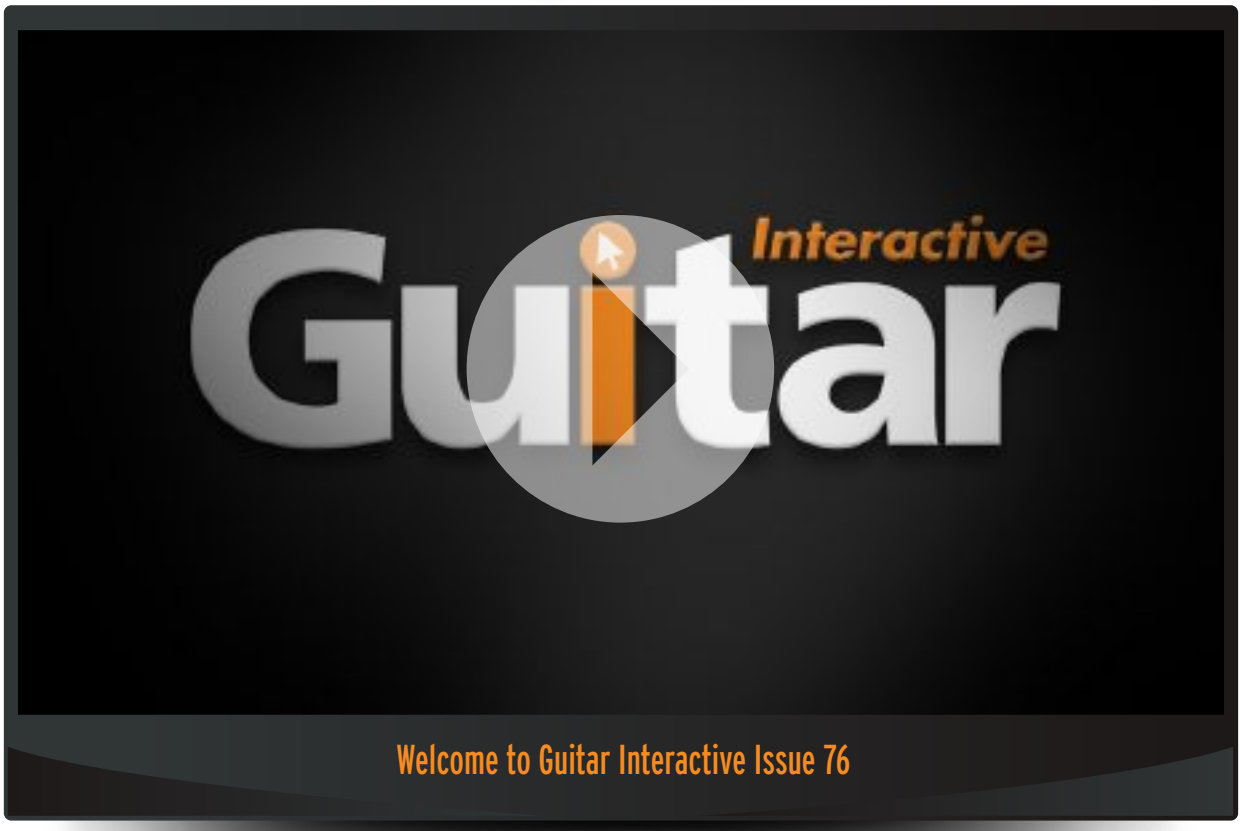
Sound E
Dave Kid

Camera
James M

Publish
Guitar In

Publish
Kim Wal

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Engineering
Ed & James Masterton
s
Masterton & Dave Kidd
ers
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Contact
Sales and Information line:
+ 44 (0)1708 757 337
Fax Line: +44 (0)1708 757 528
Address: Unit A, Chesham Close, Romford, Essex, RM7 7PJ, UK

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GI76

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS









Original Photo ©Mike Rodway

Black Stone Cherry returns with their unique blend of southern rock and blues in the form
Guitar Interactive Magazine editor Jonathan Graham chats with BSC's lead vocalist and gui
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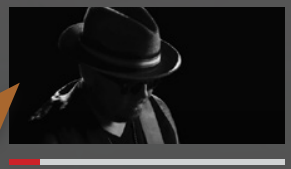


AS the world plummeted into the COVID-19 pandemic, the four members of Black Stone Cherry were nestled deep in the woods of Kentucky, scrambling to complete their 7th album. There, they could feel the disease closing in as they watched the news daily, and it became apparent the album they were finishing featured lyrics that were eerily prescient. The resulting 13-track record is broadly emotive and anthemic. It was finished just before the global lockdown was imposed, and it's aptly titled 'The Human Condition.'

In the past two decades, Black Stone Cherry has set a new standard for southern rock, revitalizing the tradition with burly riffs and stirring rock hooks. Since their formation in 2001, the four-piece brotherhood has remained Chris Robertson, vocals/guitar; Ben Wells, guitar/vocals; Jon Lawhon, bass/vocals; and John Fred Young, drums. Though not blood relatives, the guys grew up together, immersed in the culture of shit-kicking rock n' roll. Young's dad Richard, and his Uncle Fred, are two founding members of the iconic country-fried rock n' roots band The Kentucky HeadHunters, and the high school-aged boys came up bashing away on their instruments in the group's notorious Practice House, a 1940s bungalow.

The four-piece band have blazed their own way in establishing a legacy. In the US, BSC's last album, 2017's 'Family Tree,' debuted at #8 in the Current Rock Albums, #4 at Current Hard Music, and #21 Top Current Album. The band's 3 previous studio albums have cracked the Top 10 in the UK. 'Family Tree' hit number 11 in Germany's album charts, the highest position ever for the group in the country. Onstage, Black Stone Cherry has both headlined and rocked 12,000-cap arena shows and shared the stage with a diverse roster of superstars, including Alter Bridge, Theory of a Deadman, Def Leppard, Gov't Mule, Nickelback, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bad Company, Mötorhead, and ZZ Top. In 2018, BSC performed in front of 100,000 people at Download Festival as main support to Guns N' Roses.

Their latest achievement, 'The Human Condition,' was self-produced and tracked in bassist Jon Lawhon's recording facility, Monocle Studios, in March 2020. The guys went in with four songs, wrote new songs, and recorded some beloved unreleased favourites. The production and performances on the album are some of BSC's fiercest and finest. For the first time, the band opted to not record basics live and instead meticulously multitracked. Each member endured gruelling sessions to ensure the collective studio »



YouTube

Black Stone Cherry - Again (Official Music Video)



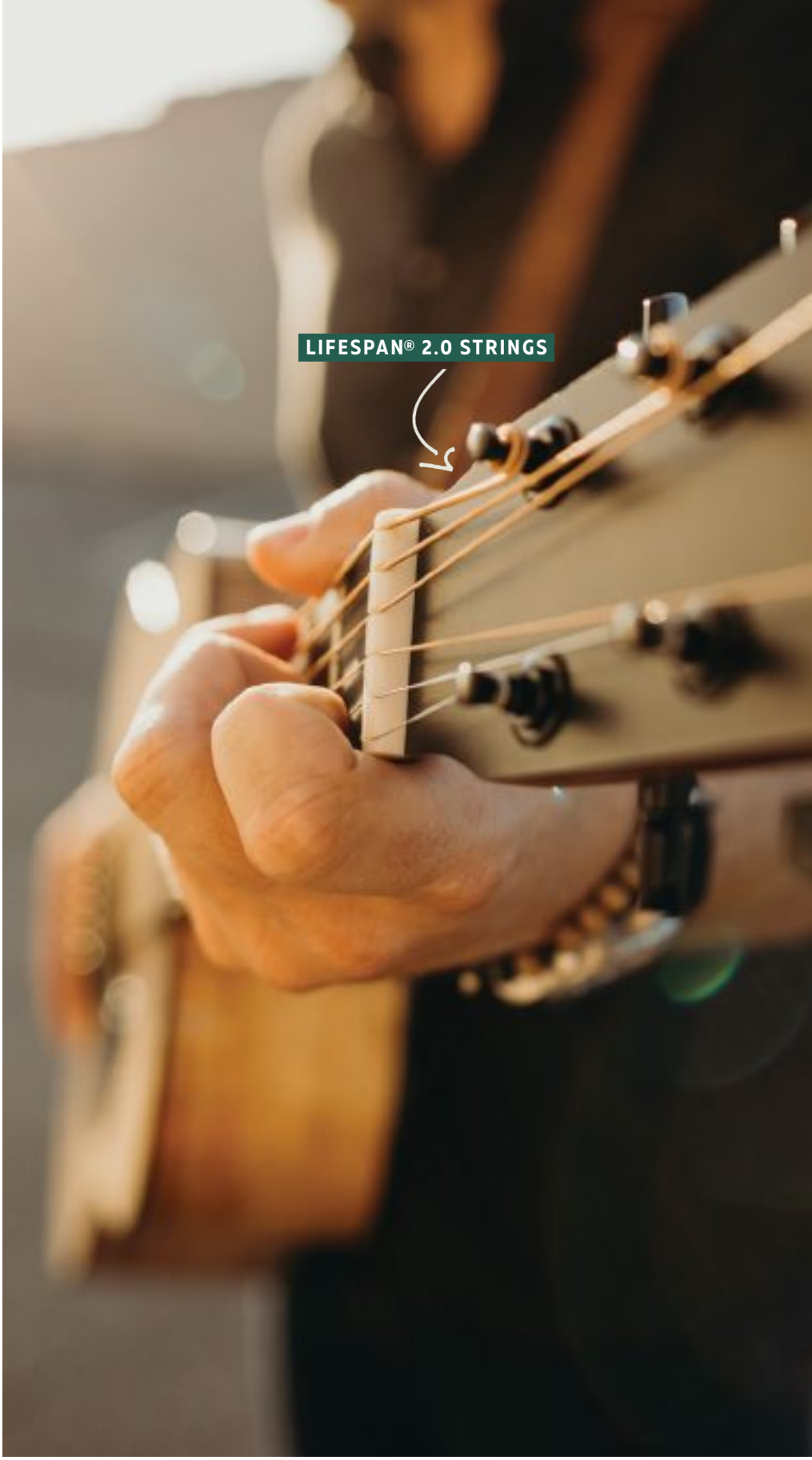
mindset of achieving "epic performances." The results are stunning—the grooves feel organic, the riffs are mountainous, the performances are urgent, and the hooks shine through gloriously.

The album's opening lyrics are: "People, people your attention please, I need to tell you about a new disease." These words come via the muscularly melodic "Ringin' In My Head." The song was written four years ago, but it powerfully captures the hysteria around the COVID-19 outbreak. Heightening the drama here is a dexterously explosive fleet-fingered guitar solo. On "Push Down & Turn," BSC masterfully use space to achieve crushing swamp-metal dynamics. The stirring song is »



Chris Robertson Interview

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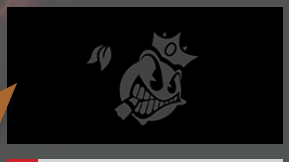
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truly a human condition track as it talks about mental health, boldly advocating for getting treatment if you're struggling. "I suffer from manic depression, and I have severe anxiety. I want to convey it's okay to go to a doctor and talk about these issues. There is no shame or stigma there," Chris Robertson shares.

'The Human Condition' is rounded out by a pair of goose-bump inducing, southern-fried ballads. "In Love With The Pain" conjures the late-night longing balladry of 38 Special. "If My Heart Had Wings" vibes the grandeur of late 1980s/early 1990s Aerosmith. One other Human Condition highpoint is the guys' raucously rocking rendition of ELO's "Don't Bring Me Down." Here, the song's hooks and strutting groove are perfectly paired with BSC's inimitable Southern rock swagger. The album concludes with the anthemic "Keep On Keepin' On," a song that's every bit as uplifting as its title promises. »



YouTube

Black Stone Cherry - In Love With The Pain (Official Music Video)



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"When I listen back to this record, I feel all these different emotions," Chris explains. "We started way back when we were teens, and life has taken its course, especially now. Through it all, your heart and your perspectives change, but one thing that hasn't changed is our connection as friends." Chris affirms: "This is a brotherhood. It's been amazing to stick around with all four original members and still be inspired. Here's to 7 more albums and another 19 years!"

Black Stone Cherry - 'The Human Condition' is out now via Mascot Label Group

END«

Black Stone Cherry

'The Human Condition' Tracklist:



Ringin' In My Head
Again
Push Down & Turn
When Angels Learn To Fly
Live This Way
In Love With The Pain
The Chain
Ride
If My Heart Had Wings
Don't Bring Me Down
Some Stories
The Devil In Your Eyes
Keep On Keepin' On

Black Stone Cherry

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Stone Cherry has postponed their UK tour until 2021. The run of shows was due to kick off on October 9 in Southampton and climax later that month in Nottingham. It also included a performance in London's iconic Royal Albert Hall.

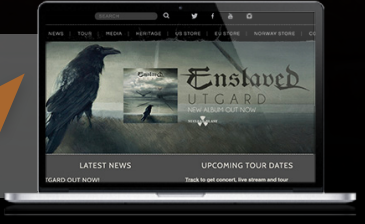
"We've been closely monitoring the unprecedented global situation and it has become clear that it's just not possible to go ahead with the shows as planned," said the band. "We have looked at many options, but ultimately the health of our fans, crew and family is paramount."

The band are pleased to have been able to reschedule the tour in the same venues, so do hang on to your ticket – it will be valid for the new date.

2021 UK TOUR

- SEP 09: Bristol O2 Academy
- SEP 10: Birmingham O2 Academy
- SEP 11: Lincoln Engine Shed
- SEP 13: Nottingham Rock City
- SEP 14: Leeds O2 Academy
- SEP 16: Manchester O2 Apollo
- SEP 17: Glasgow Barrowland
- SEP 18: Edinburgh Usher Hall
- SEP 20: Newcastle O2 Academy
- SEP 21: Liverpool O2 Academy
- SEP 23: Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall
- SEP 24: Cardiff St Davids Hall
- SEP 25: Exeter Great Hall
- SEP 27: Southampton O2 Guildhall
- SEP 28: Cambridge Corn Exchange
- SEP 29: London Royal Albert Hall

For tickets and more information on Black Stone Cherry, please visit: **blackstonecherry.com**







Original Photo ©Rick Gould



KIRK FLETCHER: Blues Excellence

Widely considered to be one of the best blues guitarists in the world today, Kirk Fletcher's unique approach to rhythm & blues guitar playing is equal parts refreshingly modern and completely authentic. With the release of his sixth album 'My Blues Pathway,' (out now via Cleopatra Records) Nick Jennison speaks with the and award-winning American blues extraordinaire. »

'MY Blues Pathway' is exactly what the title implies. It's a reflection on a 30+ year love affair with the blues from one of the best blues guitar players in the game - Kirk Fletcher. Recounting the story of how the album came to be, Fletcher muses: "…Man, what's the most important thing to me and, all of this - my musical history and everything - what does it mean? What does it mean to me at this point? I'm like: man, it's time to do a blues record!"

"So I came LA [and I] I recorded with a bunch of friends of mine. We recorded this record, and it was really like my journey since my first record 'I'm here, and I'm gone' til now, and my pathway lead me to playing more traditional blues and soul music."

"Everything was done [live] with the band at my friend Josh Smith's studio in LA." Kirk and Josh's beautiful bromance is well documented, so Smith's studio was an obvious choice. "We're just buddies! I went to his studio, and I just did whatever I want - it's like home!… We will from time to time give suggestions to each other. It's like your brother, y'know? I just feel really comfortable [recording with Josh]. I'm really in my comfort zone playing this type of music, so he just lets me do what I want!"

While his groove, phrasing and taste are unquestionably sublime, a huge part of what makes Fletcher so mesmerising as a player is his glorious tone and touch. "When I was young I didn't think about that. My older brother played guitar and he had a beautiful touch. He would play pretty light and just have a big, fat, warm *clean* tone in church…" But what really solidified Kirk's touch was seeing Robben Ford up close and personal at a Blue Line rehearsal. "Robben was there with his guitar [and his] Dumble barely turned on… no effects, no nothing, and it was the most ginormous tone I ever heard!… and I go 'woah, I have some work to do'… and then I saw him play a Stratocaster through a Deluxe Reverb and it sounded exactly the same - huge." "Robben Ford and guys like that are musicians, not just guitar players… it's so much more about Downbeat magazine than it is Guitar World magazine in their mind."

"I think that when you play one guitar starting out… you have to draw out all these different sounds and make it sound like different things, so you kinda adjust your pick attack and everything to your ears and what you wanna hear. So when I play a Strat a lot of people say 'you have a fatter sound than a lot of other players', and I think it might just be that my pick attack is a little softer. » I



YouTube

Kirk Fletcher - Ain't No Cure for the Downhearted (Official Video)


"I'm really in my
comfort zone
playing this
type of music,
so he just lets
me do what I
want..!"



would watch guys like Robben Ford and Larry Carlton… their pick attack for the most part would be kinda soft, and they would get this big gigantic tone. I don't really think Stevie [Ray Vaughan] played with his right hand *that* hard…"

In the thirty years that have passed since his days cutting his teeth on the club circuit, Fletcher has seen the way the blues has changed. "In some ways - not to be negative - but I feel like not all of the change has been good… The thing is, with a lot of blues and a lot of [the] music we all idolise… there was songwriting! […] Muddy waters saying like 'I just wanna make love to you' and just being direct… and the instruments »



Kirk Fletcher Interview


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playing together, and this whole *thing* is just so amazing, and that's the reason why it's lasted all of this time. So I feel that sometimes maybe songwriting [and] arrangements and people playing together in this cohesive *thing* are maybe put on the back burner for more guitar and things that we all love so much."

A theme that runs throughout the album is Fletcher's deep love and respect for the lineage of blues music. Kirk is a true student of the art form with an encyclopaedic knowledge of blues history. But on the subject of his own legacy, he's characteristically modest. "I didn't get into music thinking about anything other than just trying to make music and have fun: have fun with the guitar, and play, and enjoy it, and make people happy… At the end of the day if somebody was like 'man that guy was one soulful guy', that's all I could ever ask for! Just having that integrity and having like a blues excellence."

"Muddy Waters, BB King, Bobby Bland, Howlin' Wolf - the list goes on and on!… Trying to keep with that level of greatness and leaving a legacy like they left… Some blues artists, they passed away with very little money and things like that, but their legacy is so huge."

'My Blues Pathway' is available worldwide via Cleopatra Records.

END«





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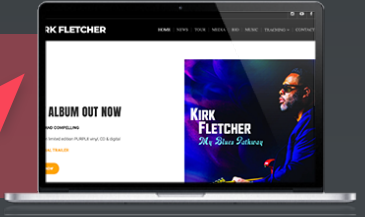

KIRK
FLETCHER
My Blues Pathway

'My Blues Pathway'

by Kirk Fletcher Tracklist:

1. No Cure For The Downhearted
2. No Place To Go
3. Love Is More Than A Word
4. Struggle For Grace
5. Rather Fight Than Switch
6. Heart So Heavy
7. Fattening Frogs For Snakes
8. Place In This World Somewhere
9. D Is For Denny
10. Life Gave Me A Dirty Deal

For more information on Kirk Fletcher, please visit:
kirkfletcherband.com



CLINT LOWERY: BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS

Just when you had decided that absolutely nothing good could come out of 2020, Sevendust comes to our rescue with their superb, and hotly anticipated new release 'Blood & Stone' – out now via Rise Records. Sevendust's lead guitarist Clint Lowery talks with Gi editor Jonathan Graham about the band's latest release, hardships and inspirations throughout this troubling year and much more. »




Ecc. 4:12

'SEVENDUST has built its legacy from records and live stages left soaked in the band's blood, sweat, and tears. Since their formation in 1994, the Atlanta, Georgia, based hard rock act has delivered 13 (counting 2020's 'Blood & Stone') studio releases, including the three gold-certified albums — 'Sevendust' (1997), 'Home' (1999), and 'Animosity' (2001) — selling over three million records worldwide in the process. 'Seasons' (2003), 'Cold Day Memory' (2010), and 'Kill The Flaw' (2015) each broke in the Top 15 of the Billboard Top 200, with the latter's lead single "Thank You" receiving a nomination in the category of "Best Metal Performance" at the 2016 Grammy Awards; a career first for the band. For over two decades, 7D has sold out countless shows across the globe and lit up iconic festivals such as Sonic Temple, Ozzfest, Shiprocked and Woodstock!

2018's 'All I See Is War' earned some of the best reviews of the group's stellar career to date. Energized by this particularly prolific and positive period, Sevendust reconvened at Studio Barbarosa with Michael "Elvis" Baskette (Alter Bridge, Trivium, Slash) during late 2019. Fresh from 'All I See Is War' and respective solo outings, with Clint and Co firing on all cylinders. The hard work that followed produced the explosive 'Blood & Stone.'

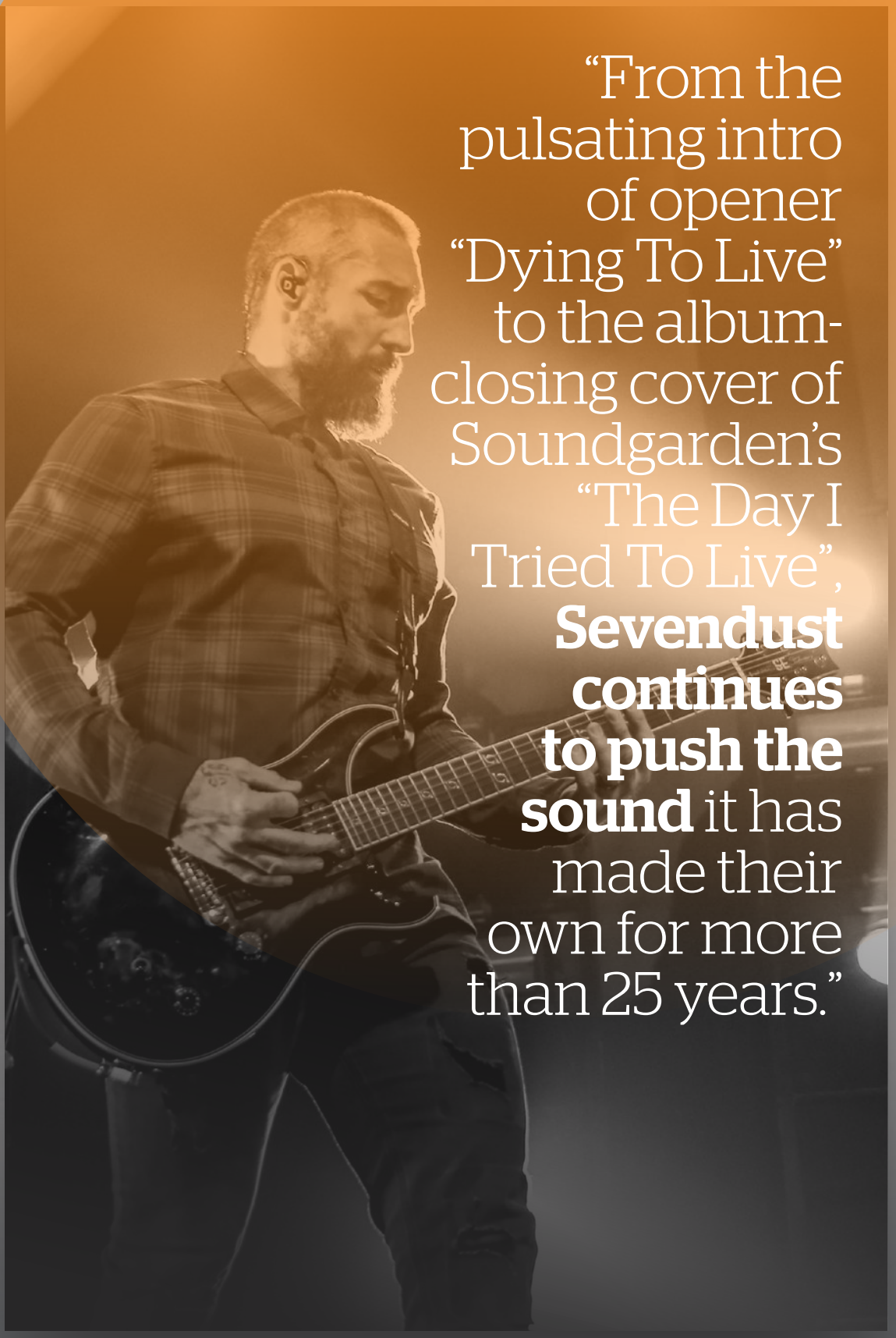
From the pulsating intro of the album-opener "Dying To Live" to the closing cover of Soundgarden's "The Day I Tried To Live," Sevendust continues to push the sound it has made their own for more than 25 years. Tracks like "Love," "Blood From A Stone," "Kill Me," and "Against The World," showcase why the band has been adored by fans and critics alike. Lajon Witherspoon, Clint Lowery, John Connolly, Vince Hornsby and Morgan Rose have once again raised the bar with 'Blood & Stone.' The new music fits perfectly alongside the band's most seminal tracks and are sure to become the cornerstone of the band's live performances once normality resumes in the live music scene.

"I think this is one of our strongest records in a while," Lowery states about the new Sevendust release. "I'm proud of all the music we do. Every band likes to say, 'Oh, yeah, the new record is the best one we've ever done.' I think it's a very reflective record for where we're at musically, where we're at as a band. So that's always a goal. I think we just wanna be »



YouTube

Sevendust's "Dying To Live" comes from their new album 'Blood & Stone'



"From the pulsating intro of opener "Dying To Live" to the album-closing cover of Soundgarden's "The Day I Tried To Live", **Sevendust continues to push the sound** it has made their own for more than 25 years."

genuine. We don't want to put out a dud record. Not everyone's gonna like it; we understand that. We just try to do what we do best. We're not the heaviest band in the world; we're not a pop-rock band at all either. We're just this aggressive band that has our own thing, and we stay true to that."

Not only do 7D stand strong together, but they continue to come out swinging as a raw, real, and relevant force ... and that statement applies to each member's side projects. When the band aren't recording, or on tour, they are usually keeping busy writing or recording music. In 2012, Clint Lowery released a CD with Morgan Rose on drums called 'Last Parade' under the side project Call Me No One.

He also released four EP's under his self-titled Hello Demons Meet Skeletons from 2008 to 2013. Clint has produced albums for Revolve and Three Years Hollow, among others, and even spent part of the summer and fall of 2017 playing guitar with Seether on their tour.

Lead vocalist Lajon Witherspoon quietly released his solo track "Love Song" in 2017 shortly after a tragic shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada. He is reportedly working on material for his first-ever solo album.

Drummer Morgan Rose has also produced albums for Candlelight Red, Neverset, the Infinite Staircase and other bands. »



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Morgan has played drums on albums by Eye Empire, the Infinite Staircase. Ghost Embrace and the side project Le Projet. In 2009, he notably filled in for Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee and Korn drummer Ray Luzier for several shows. Rose recently announced his debut solo EP alongside the new track "The Answer."

John Connolly (Guitar) and Vince Hornsby (bass guitar) are half of the side project Projected. Combined with Tremonti guitarist Eric Friedman and Alter Bridge drummer Scott "Flip" Phillips, the quartet has released two albums: 'Human' in 2012 and the double-disc album 'Ignite My Insanity' in 2017.

It's hard to look at each band member's various musical side projects and not believe that these experiences have had a significant positive impact on Sevendust's continued development over the years. If anything, the band's latest album, 'Blood & Stone,' could be the perfect culmination of these all of these elements. As a celebration of both the past and the present, 'Blood & Stone' combines the influences of the band's early musical efforts such as 'Animosity' with the band's finest releases of the last decade. The result is a collection of songs of experience that could only be crafted by a road-chiselled act, making for a truly complete experience for all Sevendust fans. »



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SEVENDUST



Blood & Stone› Tracklist:

01. Dying To Live

02. Love

03. Blood From A Stone

04. Feel Like Going On

05. What You've Become

06. Kill Me

07. Nothing Left To See Here Anymore

08. Desperation

09. Criminal

10. Against The World

11. Alone

12. Wish You Well

13. The Day I Tried To Live

Last month, Sevendust played its first-ever show via livestream "Sevendust: Live In Your Living Room" — their only show of 2020. The event took place on October 23 to tie in with the release of the band's 13th studio album, 'Blood & Stone.'

To follow up on the success of October's show, the band has just revealed they'll be playing their 2001 record 'Animosity' in its entirety on January 8, 2021, in the form of another livestream set. Featuring the classic tracks "Angel's Son," "Praise" and "Shine," the nearly 56-minute third effort from the five-piece is packed with 7D fan-favourites.



As the veteran hard rock outfit prepares to play the remaining ten tracks off the RIAA gold-certified record, the band also revealed that they'd dish out all of 'Animosity' "and then some," leaving the opportunity for some additional surprises.

Tickets for the show, which will be broadcast by OPAV in Orlando, Florida, are available now.

END«

For more tickets or more information on Sevendust, please visit: **sevendust.com**



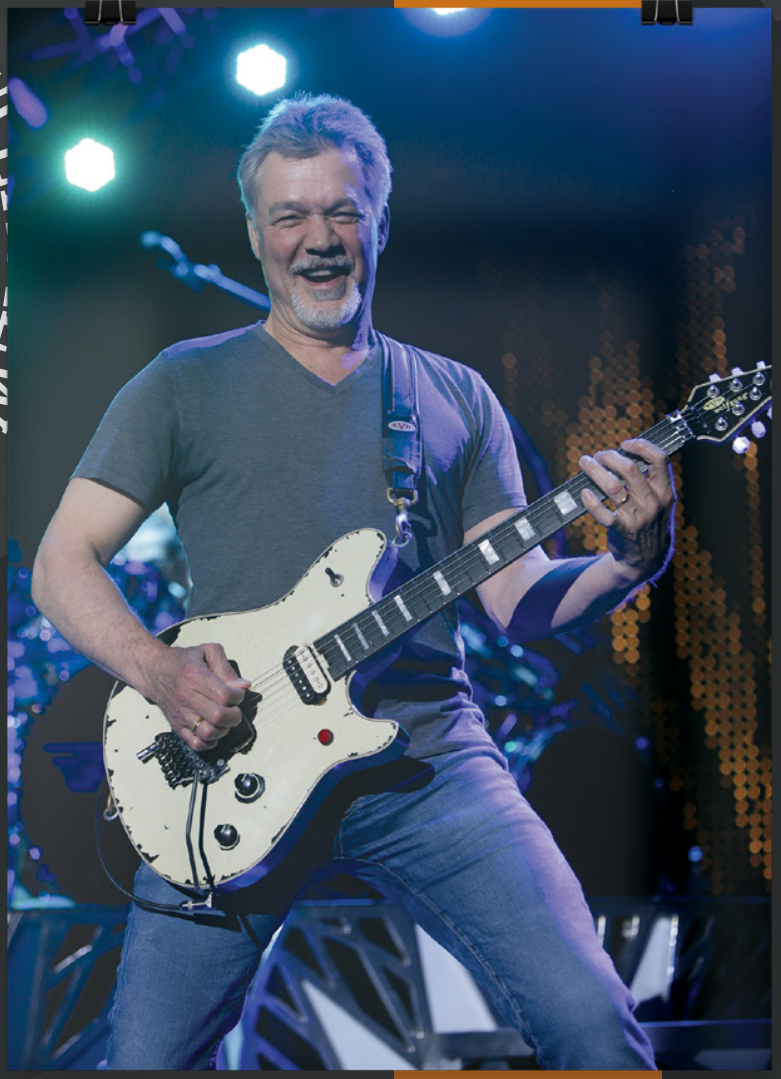
THE Features

In the entire history of rock guitar, there have only been two players to revolutionise the way we play the guitar overnight. The first was Hendrix. The other was the now sadly departed Edward Van Halen. Ed was a one of a kind, a master of his art, but more than that he was an innovator.

In this Guitar interactive special feature on the history and legacy of EVH, **Jonathan Graham** talks with the man, who over the course of three decades spent dozens of hours interviewing Eddie Van Halen; former editor-in-chief of Guitar World Magazine, **Brad Tolinski**. Meanwhile, **Nick Jennison** explores the incredible intricacies of Van Halen's elusive and in many ways incomparable guitar style.

HIGHLIGHTING THE BEST FROM THE WORLD OF GUITAR

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS



KING EDWARD

It's cliché, but where do you begin to start writing a tribute to Eddie Van Halen? The most impactful electric guitar player of the past 40 years—arguably filling even more column inches than even Hendrix. Ed was a one of a kind, a master of his art, but more than that he was an innovator. In this Guitar interactive special feature on the history and legacy of EVH, Jonathan Graham talks with the man, who over the course of three decades spent dozens of hours interviewing Eddie Van Halen; former editor-in-chief of Guitar World Magazine, Brad Tolinski. Meanwhile, Nick Jennison explores the incredible intricacies of Van Halen's elusive and in many ways incomparable guitar style. »



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IN the entire history of rock guitar, there have only been two players to revolutionise the way we play the guitar overnight. The first was Hendrix. The other was the now sadly departed Edward Van Halen. Van Halen's eponymous 1978's debut was an absolute tour de force of tone, groove and next-level technical innovation that remains unsurpassed in terms of sheer impact on the guitar community. It's also (in our opinion) probably the strongest start-to-finish debut album a rock band has ever produced, perhaps rivalled only by ***GNR's*** 'Appetite For Destruction.'

When guitar players first heard "Eruption", it's swirling cascade of tapped arpeggios boggled minds. We take this kind of technique for granted these days, but at the time it was utterly groundbreaking - so much so that many refused to believe that such a sound could come from a guitar. Of course, it's easy for the uninitiated to pigeonhole EVH as "the tapping guy", but there's so much more that we have to thank Ed for. Here's a short - but by no means exhaustive - list.



Brad Tolinski Talks Eddie Van Halen



- Humbuckers in strat-shaped guitars.
- Locking tremolo systems.
- High gain amplifiers.
- Reverb and delay as “must-have” effects for solos.
- Heavy guitar in pop music.
- Pop hooks in heavy guitar music.
- The bulk of “shred” vocabulary



… and about a thousand other things, but you get the picture. Without Eddie, the landscape of rock guitar would look VERY different. In this lesson, we're going to try to capture some of his magic. Let's get stuck in!

TONE:

Ok, let's clear up a few misconceptions here. Yes, the classic EVH tone is a 100w Marshall run at some mythical reduced voltage using a variac, but still at deafening, stadium-melting levels. But here's the thing - Eddie sounded like Eddie through just about anything. Take the solo from "Beat It" - recorded in 20 minutes through borrowed gear (allegedly a solid-state Hartley Thompson amp on loan from Allan Holdsworth). If Ed didn't need his legendary Plexi to produce the magic, neither should you, but here are some pointers:

Use a British-sounding amp with a fair bit of gain from both the preamp and power amp tubes. If the amp has a low power mode, consider using this since it'll likely lower the plate voltages for more of that classic VH sag. A 4x12 with Celestion Greenbacks is ideal.

Guitar-wise, any guitar with a reliable tremolo system and a bridge humbucker will do the trick. If the guitar is a bolt-on and the humbucker is medium output with a bit of midrange growl, even better. Light strings will sound more authentic, and help with that swinging vibrato.

For effects, you'll want a phaser and a tape-style delay. Run them into the front of the amp and be conservative with the settings - especially on the delay! Lastly, add a plate reverb to taste - either in the amp's effects loop or after the speaker cab if you're using a modeller.



TOUCH:

Here's where the tone really comes from. You'll want to be assertive but not aggressive with your picking hand, with a fair amount of right-hand fingertip grazing the string as you play for the squawk and growl that characterises EVH's touch. Keep a light grip on the pick (or use a thin pick) and use the angle and depth of your pick attack to control how much harmonic there is in each note. The same goes for your left-hand touch - you want to be deft with chords, bends and hammer ons, but aggressive pull-offs (especially on tapping licks) will give you the "meowing" sound that you're looking for here.

TIMING:

Paul Gilbert famously said of EVH: "I learned a bunch of his solos, but I learned ALL of his rhythms." Nobody, and I mean NOBODY swings the way Eddie did. His timing was taught and muscular, but at the same time laid back and swaggering - its very hard to describe, and the only way to nail it is to listen to a LOT of Van Halen. He was also a master of note duration, so be sure to make those staccato passages really snap!

By contrast, many of his faster lead lines weren't rhythmically rigid in the slightest (which is why the notation above the tab for these looks so bizarre!). I've heard some very anal discussion regarding Eddie's groupings of 5, 7, 9 etc., but its best to think of these passages as more of a "blur of notes". Start and finish in the right part of the bar, and let the chips fall as they may.



Eddie Van Halen Tech Session - Performance



"Ed was not afraid. His playing was virtuosic but it was also joyful, dangerous, and **most importantly, human**..."

PERFECTIONISM:

If you take ONE thing away from this study of EVH, let it be this: Do not be afraid to take chances and make mistakes. I've heard Eddie's playing described as "scrappy" or even "sloppy". I prefer the term "human". All of us make little scuffs and fluff notes occasionally, and in the modern era of guitar playing where everything exists online to be scrutinised at half speed, instagram "improvisation" can be the result of a thousand takes and jawdropping technical feats are stitched together note-by-note in Pro Tools and Final Cut, it's easy to feel the pressure to be perfect. In fact, this exclusionary "arms race" mentality is what killed shred guitar in the 90s.

Ed was not afraid. His playing was virtuosic, but it was also joyful, dangerous, and most importantly, human. He was never ashamed of his mistakes, and neither should you be. In a world of unattainable guitar perfection, we should all strive to be more like Ed.



Eddie Van Halen Tech Session - Lesson

BARS 1–9:

Inspired by both the stabs in "Eruption" and the opening gambit from "Somebody Get Me A Doctor", these brash open chords are followed by a series of natural harmonics with a hint of bar vibrato (move the bar down only for maximum authenticity, since Ed set up his tremolos so they were flush to the guitar's body). The chromatic/blues scale lick that follows starts with a screaming semi harmonic and some of that signature slow Van Halen vibrato - medium/wide and a little asymmetrical top-to-bottom. Don't feel like you have to observe any rigid time feel for this lick, but you should keep the notes short and staccato.

BARS 10–111:

A classic early Van Halen-style riff inspired by "Feel Your Love Tonight" and "Janie's Crying". There are a number of "non-notes" here, such as the slide up from the A string 3rd fret and the open A string that punctuates the 5th position chord stabs. These should be more of a muted "noise" than an actual note, and serve more as rhythmic devices than anything else. We're going to keep the first part of this riff the same and explore some of Eddie's favourite "guitar fills" as this section progresses.

BARS 12–13:

Our first fill is a classic "tap and bend" line, first heard on "You Really Got Me". To make this work, execute the bend (4th fret on the G string) and hold it while you tap with your right hand on the same string. The vibrato should come from your LEFT hand here, with the right hand holding the tapped note in place.

BARS 14–15:

An open-string pull-off line inspired by "I'm The One", this sort of swirling blur of notes was something that littered Ed's playing throughout his career. Probably the best way to think of this is as a three-note unit of "index/pull off/pinky (or ring)" that moves from string to string. Pick the index finger note and let the pinky finger hammer on to the new string without picking it.

BARS 16–17:

Some sweep picked/raked natural harmonics - barre your finger across the appropriate fret (7 or 5) with a light touch and strum through the strings slowly to create an arpeggio-type effect. No need to stress about the precise rhythm, as long as you land each sweep/strum in time.



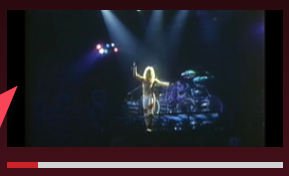
BARS 18–19:

We're rocketing up the fretboard here for an "Eruption" inspired stretchy legato lick. This is a little tricky because the index finger note on the high E string (an F#) is a semitone lower than the pinky finger note on the B string (a G), and this can throw



your ear off. Take your time and perfect the (relatively simple) left-hand sequence, then shut your eyes and go for it.

Be super aggressive with the open string pull-off at the end of this lick so that the dive bomb really "meows".



YouTube

Van Halen - Unchained (Official Music Video)

BARS 20–21:

One of my favourite Van Halen shred licks, a symmetrical "non-scale" taken from "I'm The One". This is a simple case of putting one finger in front of the other in a 1-2-4 sequence, but then letting finger 4 stay on the D string wile the other two fingers advance up to the G string - super simple once you get the hang of it, but it's still really cool. For the last note, once again it's a really aggressive pull-off followed by more of that swaggering vibrato.

BARS 22–25:

A Staccato chromatic blues phrase, much like the one from the intro, but this time in the 5th position. Use the edge of the pick to cut these notes short for a characteristic "squeak" at the end of each note!

For the end of this section, slide up the low E before aggressively pulling off into a hammy bar dive, then slowly release the bar and strike a staccato A chord as soon as it returns to pitch.

BARS 26–31:

Some staccato fingerstyle plucks here, reminiscent of "Little Guitars". You're free to use either your right-hand thumb and index finger or (like me) your middle and ring fingers to pluck the strings, as long as you can find somewhere to stash your pick while you do so. I tend to keep mine tucked away in the crook of my index finger, hence my choice of plucking fingers. Whatever feels good for you is fine!

BARS 32–33:

A quick time signature change for some arpeggiated chord lines, again in the vein of "Little Guitars". Roll your volume control back for a cleaner sound, and try to palm mute the A string notes a little while allowing the D and G string notes to ring out - not easy, but well worth the effort!

BARS 34–39:

Some tapped harmonics inspired by "Dance The Night Away". Keep your volume rolled back for a cleaner (but not totally clean) sound here. These harmonics are sounded by fretting notes (chords in this case) with the left hand and then quickly and forcefully "tapping" the wire of the fret 12 frets above the note your left hand is fretting (NB: you can produce these 7, 5 and even 4 or 3 frets higher than the fretted note too, but we'll stick with 12 frets higher for this example).

The technique is a little tricky, because you have to be on and off the string in the blink of an eye to let the harmonic ring out, but also forceful enough to sound the note in the first place. You might think of the sting as being like a hot stovetop that you can "tap", but not "touch". Please do not try this with an actual stovetop.

BARS 40–41:

Inverted triads inspired by the verse riff from "Unchained". These arpeggios spell out Bb and C chords in the first inversion, and are a classic Van Halen riff-writing device. Once you know how to spot them, you'll see just how many songs they feature in!

BARS 42–49:

The synths swell in, and we're into Hagar-era Van Halen with this "Dreams" inspired pedal tone riff. The guitar pedals away on an open D note while the synth and bass guitar move between D, F#, B, G and A underneath it for an uplifting vibe that'll have you dreaming of piloting your very own fighter jet.

BARS 50–57:

With the dizzying array of flashy licks he's known for, it's far too easy to overlook EVH's melodic solos. This deceptively simple line revolves almost entirely around a Dadd9 arpeggio, with the chords changing underneath it for that anthemic flavour. Look out for the whammy bar antics in bars 52 and 56 - they're an example of Eddie's tendency to momentarily "bail out" on a melody for some noisy flash, only to get right back into the melodic stuff.

BARS 58–59:

We're into the "solo" section proper here, with a blues lick taken straight from "Panama". It's the sort of line that everyone from Clapton to Page to Schenker to Bonamassa has used, but this particular version is Ed's characteristic spin on it. It also feels really, really good under the fingers.

BARS 60–61:

The legendary Van Halen tremolo lick! Found in "Beat It" and all over Eddie's improvised solos, we're outlining a hexatonic minor scale (or a minor pentatonic with an added 2nd degree) up a single string while tremolo picking furiously for that fluttery effect. Eddie had a very unique way of executing this, with his right hand completely floating and using a rotational movement, but that's totally to sound authentic. Once you hit the apex of the bend at the conclusion of this lick, keep picking until it's time to slide downwards out of the lick with the left hand and/or your pick.

BARS 62–63:

A descending tapping flurry from both "Jump" and "Hot For Teacher", this lick uses a symmetrical fingering (the same frets on each string) and an asymmetrical sequence. It's best to think of it as "pinky-TAP-pinky-ring-index", with the pinky leading the transition to each new string.

BARS 64–65:

An ascending lick that's equal parts "Jump" and "On Fire", this shows how much mileage you can get from a symmetrical 1-2-4 fingering. It starts with the same "tripping over itself" pattern from bar 21, but this time we're palm muting just a touch for a percussive effect. From there, we'll move into a classic Van Halen trick of hammering one string and alternate picking the next. This produces a really interesting contrast between the smooth legato notes and the percussive attack of the picking.

BARS: 66–69:

More tremolo, this time in the vein of "Eruption". Set your right hand away like an outboard motor and let your left hand handle the timing. We're playing "free time" from here on out, so feel free to be as loose with the timing as you like - as long as it feels good to you!

BARS 70–71:

A two-string variant of "that" tapping lick, which cropped up regularly in Ed's live versions of "Eruption" as well as in the "Beat It" solo. Think if this as "TAP-index-pinky", with the tapping finger leading the string changes.

Once this lick is done, we›re going back to a «bend and tap» idea with a held bend on the 15th fret of the B string and a series of taps on top of it, followed by a tapped slide right up onto the pickups and a whammy bar dive for a noisy, chaotic exit.

BARS 72–77:

The lick you've all been waiting for - the "Eruption" tapping sequence! This "TAP-index-pinky" sequence is so ubiquitous that I've had students within their first month of playing the guitar turn up having learned it with no idea where it came from - just that it looks and sounds cool and it's surprisingly easy!





The devil is in the detail here, however. Something I'm convinced Ed did that I haven't heard anyone else talk about is "modulating" his fretting pressure to create an effect similar to a wah or a phaser. Yes, there was a Phase 90 on the original recording of "Eruption", but there are a bunch of live versions where Ed doesn't kick the phaser on and that "swirl" is still there. Try it for yourself!

BARS 78–83:

The final cadenza of our study is one of my all-time favourite EVH licks - an ascending two-string run that moves between the Dorian and Aeolian modes based (presumably) on which fingering feels nicer at any given part of the run! The trick to making this sound authentic is to hammer the notes on the B string and alternate pick the notes on the E string, creating a stark contrast between the smooth notes on the bottom and the aggressive and articulate notes on the top. You can be pretty forceful with your picking here too.

Once we get to the top, repeat the last sequence as many times as you see fit before sliding up into a high tremolo picked bend. Slide-out of this bend and strike a staccato open E power chord and we're done!

One of the highlights of my job is that I get to examine the playing of my heroes, and share the observations I've made over years and years of study with you, our readers. With the tragic passing of Eddie shortly prior to writing this piece, it's an unbelievable honour to pay tribute to his legacy with this tech session. Hopefully, you've had as much fun learning it as I've had putting it together.

I've said it already in this piece, but it bears repeating: play with joy, play dangerously and don't be afraid of making the occasional mistake. Strive to be better each day, but don't be ashamed of your imperfections. In short, "be more Ed".

THE Tech Session

In each issue, the Guitar Interactive Tech Session shines the spotlight o
one of guitar's biggest icons. These in-depth lessons look to break down
style, techniques and individual nuances that make these great players
stand out from the crowd in the form of a tailor-made composition.

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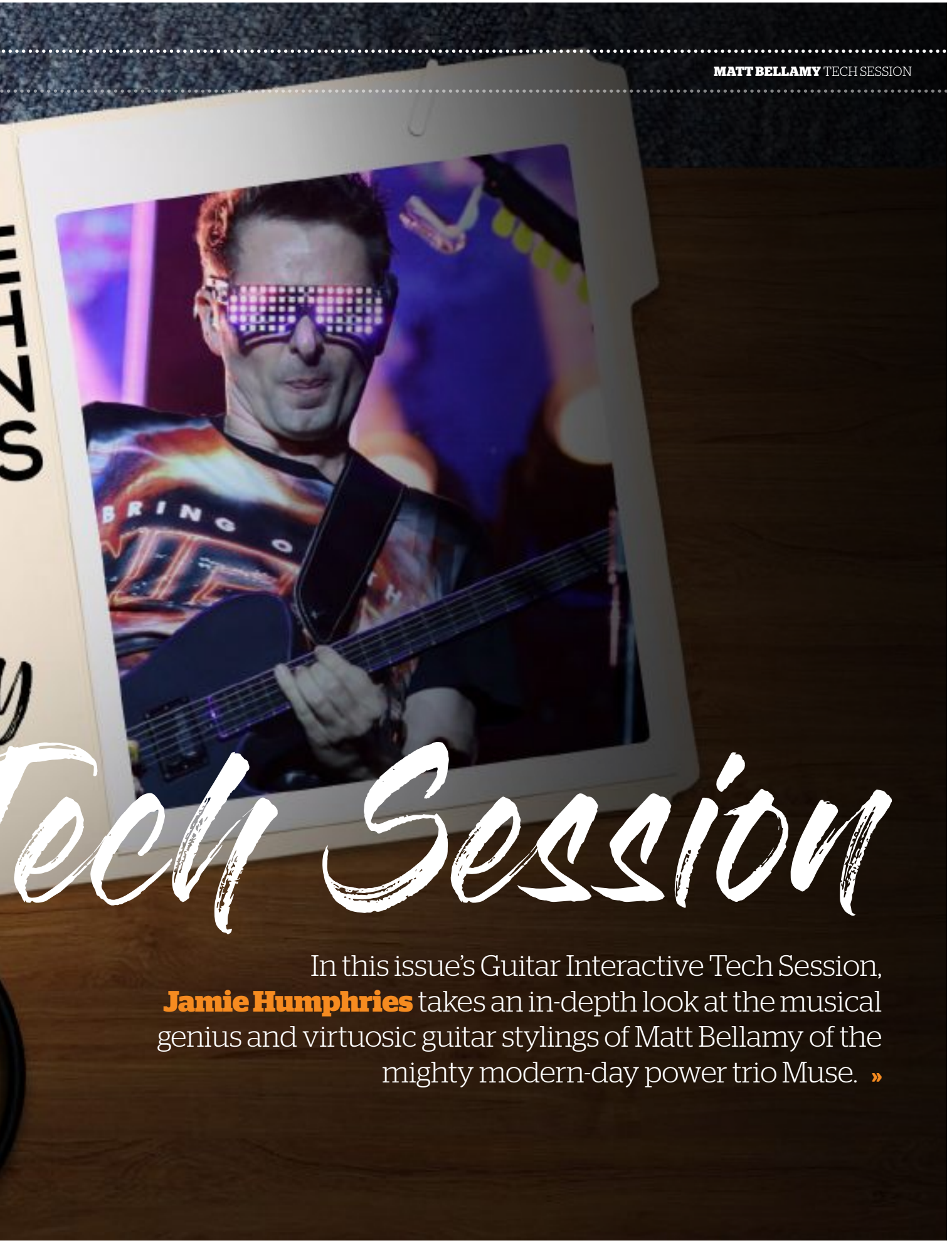
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Tech Session

In this issue's Guitar Interactive Tech Session, **Jamie Humphries** takes an in-depth look at the musical genius and virtuosic guitar stylings of Matt Bellamy of the mighty modern-day power trio Muse. »

MUSE is, without a doubt, one of the biggest and most successful bands to emerge from the late 90's British alternative rock scene. With their blend of angst-ridden melancholic rock, fused with electronic and classical influence, that showcase guitarist/frontman Mathew Bellamy's guitar, piano and vocal virtuosity, Muse pack arenas and stadiums around the globe, and continue to evolve and push musical boundaries with every new release.

Hailing from Teignmouth, Devon, Muse was formed in the mid '90s by Matt Bellamy, guitars, vocals and keyboards, Chris Wolstenholm, bass and backing vocals, and Dominic Howard, drums. Following the release of their 1999 debut "Showbiz", Muse have achieved global recognition with stand out albums such as "Origins of Symmetry", the hugely successful "Absolution", "Black Holes and Revelations" and "Drones". Their blend of alternative/hard rock, progressive rock, electronic and classical music has produced such revered tracks as "Muscle Museum". "New Born", "Plug In Baby", "Time is Running Out", "Hysteria", "Butterflies and Hurricanes", "Stockholm Syndrome", and "Supermassive Black Hole".



Matt BELLAMY Tech Session Performance

Although a band, much of their sound and style is courtesy of Matt Bellamy, who is a powerhouse of musical talent, and a virtuoso at his craft. His Jeff Buckley inspired vocal style makes use of falsetto melodies, while his guitar style borrows from the likes of Van Halen, Tom Morello and Jimi Hendrix. Matt is also an accomplished pianist, boasting impressive classical chops!

Muse' writing style is very broad. Although leaning towards alternative rock, their progressions are often inspired by classical music, utilising harmony from the Harmonic minor scale. Matt's guitar style is very unique; from crushing drop tuned fuzz soaked pedal tone riffs, to elegant arpeggio figures. Matt also has a very unorthodox approach to tone, using his signature Manson "Super Tele" loaded with either, plus a mixture of Humbucker, single coil, P90's or Sustainer pickups. His guitars also include an onboard fuzz circuit, as well as a touch screen "Chaos Pad" controller for controlling such effects as tremolo, and filter, manipulating the parameters by rubbing his fingers across the pad. Matt also is a dedicated user of the kill switch, and also the whammy pedal.

For our Tech Session, I was slightly biased, borrow ideas from my favourite Muse tracks; it has to be said I am a fan of their aggressive/euphoric production. I used the tracks "New Born", "Plug In Baby", "Hysteria" and "Stockholm Syndrome" as inspiration, trying to blend the classical-inspired progressions, with heavy drop-tuned riffage, plus my own attempt at the Muse euphoria, in my production.

Bars 1-16 is the intro progression, and features a chord arpeggio progression using the chords of D minor, A minor, Bb, G minor and C#dim7th, with the latter chord shifting up a minor third resulting in an inversion. I would suggest using alternate picking throughout this section, which also makes for a great study, focusing in on both inside and outside picking. For this section I used a clean tone, but added a whammy effect pitched up by two octaves. Bars 15 -16 include a build up to the main riff, which should be performed with distortion and fuzz.

Bars 17-28 introduce the main riff, which is based around a figure performed in drop D tuning on the 6th string. This riff features ascending and descending melodies that pedal off of the drop D. For this riff I blended both amp distortion with a DI'd fuzz tone, as Matt will often record totally DI'd guitar for an abrasive/aggressive sound. If you use a multi effects unit, try routing a fuzz that doesn't pass through any amp emulation. Bars 25-28 feature the drop D5 chord stabs, as the drum groove shifts in feel for the verse progression.

Bars 29-44 features our verse, and includes the same chords s the intro, but performed with a tight staccato feel. I used the neck P90 pickup of my guitar for this »

section, with a slight overdrive for a "woody" natural tone. I also dialled in some room ambience with the guitar panned slightly to one side, adding space to the tone. Once again the distortion is kicked in for the pre-chorus build.

Bars 45-56 shows the chorus section, and hear I really tried to capture the dark yet euphoric sound of Muse, blending strings and "Moog" arpeggios as in contrast to the heavy distortion/fuzz mixture. This section sees us using a climbing octave progression performed in harmony with an eighth note rhythm. The chord progression uses the chord of G minor, Em7b5, and D minor.

Bar 57-60 reintroduce the main riff for four bars, linking us to the solo section.



Bars 61-68 is a melodic arpeggio solo section. Here the feel of the track changes, with the drums pulling back with a tom based groove, and the heavy guitars dropping out, giving space for the Mellotron choir. This featured an eighth note alternate picked arpeggio figure that outlines the chord progression heard in both the intro and verse. Here I have used an octave fuzz pedal.

Bars 68-76 illustrates the second half of our arpeggio section, with the figure shifting up a diatonic third to perform a harmony against the original figure. »


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Bars 77-92 conclude our track with a scale sequence line based around D Harmonic minor. This section also includes both the minor 7b5 arpeggio and the diminished 7th arpeggio performed in sequences. The final diminished 7th arpeggio ascends the neck in minor thirds. The feel of the track changes here with the drums ramping up to a heavy double time groove. This is probably the most interesting tone of the track. Once again I used my fuzz pedal, but with the octave off. In the post-stage I added a Sound Toy's doubler, similar to a vintage Eventide effect, plus I used a step filter, that was moving through different frequencies giving a sweeping effect. To really add to the sound, I used a Neve preamp plugin and drove it hard so that it clipped heavily.

Matt uses a huge rig live, using a mixture of Marshall and Diezel amps. He also uses Kemper Profilers. He uses a plethora of effects from stomp boxes to rack equipment. He is also a huge fan of the fuzz effect. Although Matt uses a lot of guitars, he's best known for his Manson signature guitar, which he uses in many configurations including both 6 and 7 string versions.



Matt BELLAMY Tech Session Lesson



This guitar is now available at a slightly more affordable cost manufactured by Cort. More recently Matt has acquired Manson guitars.

For this session, I used my custom built Music Man Axis Super Sport with a DiMarzio DLX Plus in the bridge, and a P90 in the neck. I used my Boogie JP2'C into my Two Notes Studio rack. The fuzz was courtesy of the Wampler Fuzzstration octave fuzz pedal. I also used Line 6 Helix Native plugin as well as a variety of UAD and Steinberg plugins.

END«

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About the **Vintage 25th Anniversary Series V100 - Silver Burst**

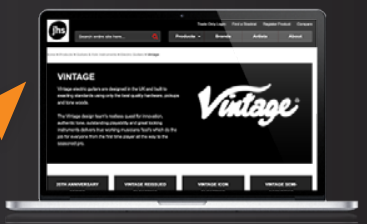
Product Colour: Silver Burst
Body: Mahagony
Top: Maple
Neck: Mahogany
Scale: 628 mm
Number of frets: 22
Nut Width: 43 mm
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Pickup Configuration: H-H
Pickup model: 2x Wilkinson WOCHB

Controls: 2x Volume, 2x Tone
Pickup switch: 3-Way
Bridge: Fixed
Tuning machines: Grover 102C
Hardware: Chrome

Good Luck!



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Learn how The Edge uses multiple dynamic parts and effects to create the classic hits from U2's fifth studio album



CA LED ZEPPELIN II
Learn Jimmy Page's legendary guitar riffs from the track, "Whole Lotta Love" and "Heartbreaker," to the iconic solo sections throughout this classic album



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CA VAN HALEN Learn many of VH's signature tracks including, "Runnin' with the Devil," "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love" and Eddie Van Halen's solo guitar masterpiece, "Eruption"



CA BACK IN BLACK Danny Gill takes you through the highlights of Angus Young's scorching riffs and killer solos from AC/DC's seventh album



CA LED ZEPPELIN IV Learn the tracks that cemented the band's reputation as rock giants such as, "Black Dog," "Rock and Roll" and the epic, "Stairway to heaven



CA APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION Learn the highlights of each track from Guns N' Roses explosive debut album with LickLibrary veteran Danny Gill



CA DARK SIDE OF THE MOON Jamie Humphries walks you through Gilmour's classic riffs, searing solos, masterful bends and ambient sounds from this psychedelic rock masterpiece



CA PARANOID A must-have for Sabbath fans. For the first time ever, you can learn each song from this absolute all-time metal classic



CA NUMBER OF THE BEAST A heavy metal masterpiece including, "Children of the Damned," "The Prisoner," "Run to the Hills" and the album's legendary title track



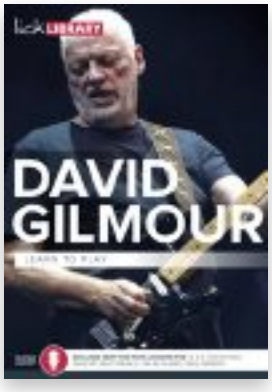
CA HOTEL CALIFORNIA Danny Gill walks you through the many highlights of each song from the rock music giants one phrase at a time



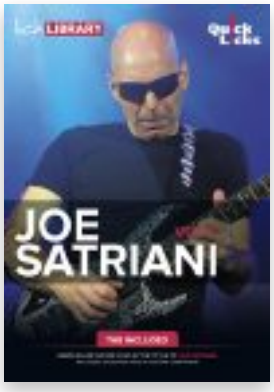
LTP BB KING Learn to play 5 classic tracks - Everyday I Have The Blues, Rock Me Baby, Sweet Sixteen, Three O'Clock Blues, The Thrill Is Gone



JW RAMMSTEIN Learn the best from the heavy metal heavyweights



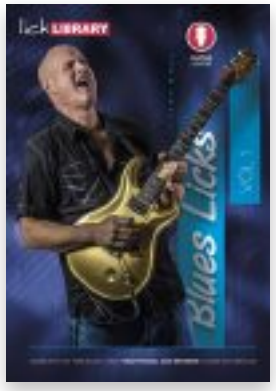
LTP DAVID GILMOUR Learn 5 Dave Gilmour songs including Mihalis, On an Island, 5 am, Raise my rent, Take a breath, Marooned



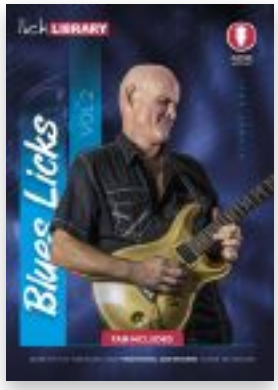
QL JOE SATRIANI VOL 2 More from one of the masters of the electric guitar



TOM QUAYLE SIGNATURE SESSION A brand new advanced course from Tom Quayle



STUART BULL BLUES LICKS VOL 1 Learn to play the blues using traditional and modern guitar techniques



STUART BULL BLUES LICKS VOL 2 Part two in this exploration of blues guitar

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THE Reviews

At **Guitar Interactive**, we pride ourselves on bringing you in-depth reviews and demonstrations for only the best products the world of guitar and audio electronics has to offer.

If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

GUITARS, AMPS AND EFFECTS



Manson META Series MBM-1 Matth Bellamy Signature Guitar

Nick Jennison reviews the 2020 META Series MBM-1 Signature Guitar, Manson Guitar Works' new and lower-priced model (produced under licence with Cort) that has been extensively modified and developed to reflect the guitars that Matthew Bellamy plays on stage with rock giants Muse without breaking the bank. Let's find out more.

THE body shape is 100% MB signature and available in the ever-popular Satin Black or a new Starlight Silver finish. A new humbucking neck pickup offers a fuller neck voicing to more closely match the raw and powerful sounding bridge humbucker pickup. A kill-button allows stutter style effects.

When you hear the name Manson, it's very likely you immediately think of Matt Bellamy. The association between the Exeter guitar brand and the Muse luminary had produced some truly unique instruments, with features like built-in Fuzz Factories and Kaoss Pads, sustainer pickups and MIDI functionality. These instruments are very desirable, rare and pretty pricey too.

Enter the Cort/Manson META Series MBM-1. Built by east-Asian guitar manufacturing giants Cort under license from Manson, it's the most affordable Matt Bellamy guitar ever made. While it lacks some of the more outlandish features of its UK-made counterpart, it shares the same offset T-type silhouette, neck profile and matte black finish (also available in "Starlight Silver").

Straight out of the box, the MBM-1 exhibits the build quality I've come to expect from Cort. If you've ever laid hands on an Indonesian or Chinese-made Ibanez or PRS SE you'll know what I'm talking about - flawless finish, tidy fretwork, tight neck join, sturdy hardware and electronics. There are so many excellent yet affordable Cort-made guitars out there »

"It's **easy to forget** how impressive it is for a guitar at this price point to be built so well..."

ew



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Manson META Series MBM-1 Matthew Bellamy Signature Guitar

MSRP: (UK) £569 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Bright — Dark

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Thick fuzz sounds
- Noisy killswitch antics
- Muse

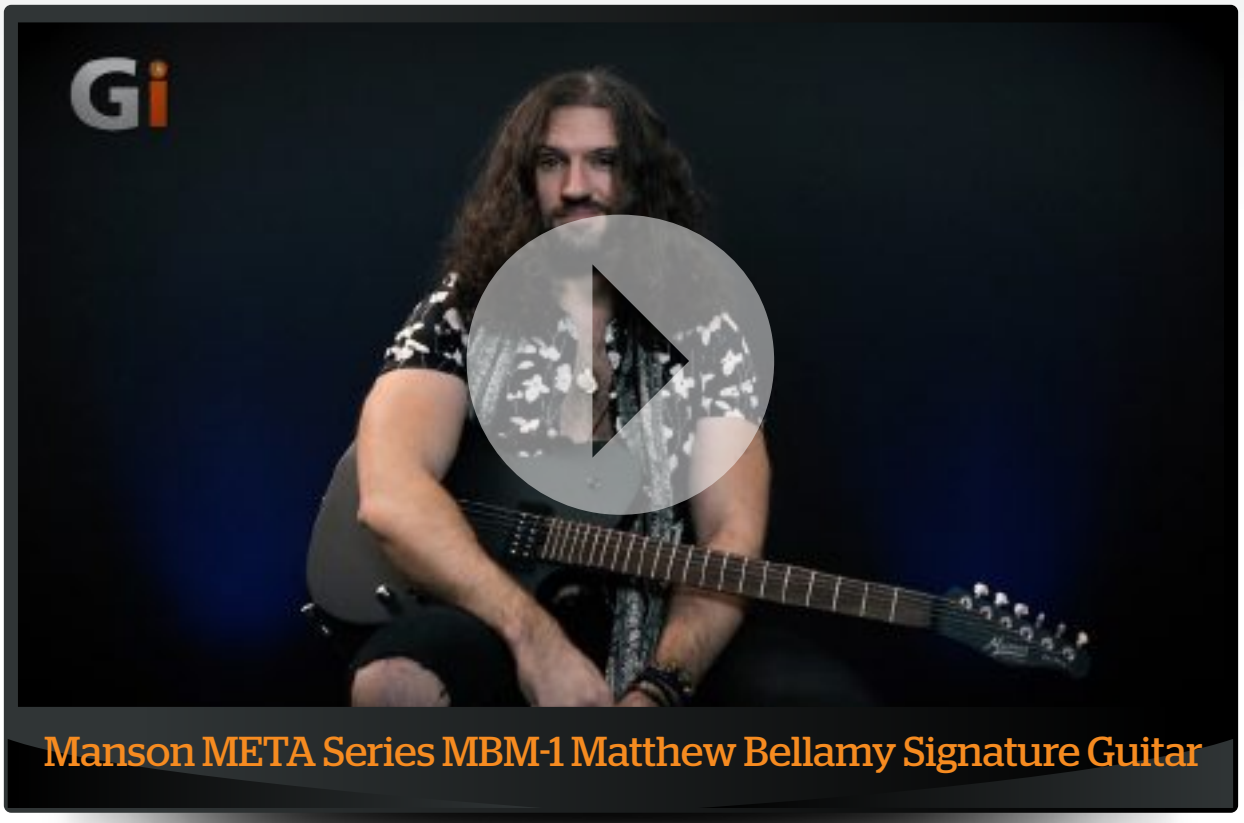
For more information, please visit:
mansonguitarworks.com



that it's easy to forget how impressive it is for a guitar at this price point to be built so well.

Despite the factory action being a little high, it only took a quick adjustment to have the MBM-1 playing beautifully. The 10-14" compound radius fretboard means the action can be set very low without fear of high bends choking out, while chord playing at the lower end of the neck is still very comfortable thanks to the tighter curve. It's more labour intensive to carve and fit frets to a compound radius board than one with a single radius across the entire neck, so it's inclusion on a guitar at this price is laudable.

The electronics are relatively straightforward compared to the custom-shop instruments Bellamy uses on stage and in the studio, with a pair of humbuckers and a simple volume, tone and three-way toggle control layout. I'm surprised that there isn't an option to split the humbuckers for a single-coil voice, but that's not something you'll find on the high-end versions of this guitar either. Another feature the MBM-1 shares »



Manson META Series MBM-1 Matthew Bellamy Signature Guitar


N.R.S
MOOER Non-linear Response Sampling
MNRS technology was developed by MOOER engineers using their years of tone modeling experience. Users can sample any tone from their real-life amps, cabs, and overdrive pedals using the MNRS Engine 2.0 and export them to their GE Series multi-effects pedals!
MOOER Studio
www.mooerstudio.com
An online community specially designed for MOOER users to download and share samples and preset files for their GE Series products. Exclusive amp samples and files created by the MOOER sampling team are also frequently added to provide high-quality tone options for all MOOER Studio users.
MOOER Cloud
The MOOER cloud is designed to connect the GE Labs community with MOOER hardware. MNRS files can be sampled by using the GE Labs APP and uploaded to MOOER Cloud and shared with both GE Labs and GE Series pedal users.
*MNRS can currently only be used with GE200, GE250, GE300 LITE, and GE300 multi-effects pedals.
MOOER
EFFECTS AND AMPLIFICATION
mooeraudio.com
Download "GE Labs" on the App Store

"The Cort/Manson META Series MBM-1 is **a lot of guitar** for the money..."

with it's bigger brothers is the kill button mounted on the upper shoulder. This highly entertaining feature greatly expands the sonic possibilities of the instrument, giving access to stuttering textures that are distinctly un-guitar-like, and the use of a button instead of a toggle switch makes using this feature more tactile and immediate.

Sonically, the MBM-1 is super-massively (see what I did there?) fat and chewy, and is clearly designed to punch through walls of fuzz and distortion. The bridge humbucker has a throaty midrange honk that's reminiscent of a JB, and is perfectly voiced for gained-out sounds. Using just your pick attack, angle and the amount of fingernail/skin you strike the string with, it's easy to control the harmonic content of a screaming high gain amp or raging fuzz pedal. By contrast, the neck pickup is thick and plummy, sounding almost synth-like under heavy saturation. It's also a pretty satisfying clean voice, with a jazzy warmth and smoothness and just a hint of sparkle. Played clean, the bridge pickup alone is a little too nasal for my liking - not that I'd change it, since this is the very quality that makes it so good when played distorted - but the middle position blend is very pleasant, with plenty of clarity and snap.

The Cort/Manson META Series MBM-1 is a lot of guitar for the money, and while it lacks some of the crazier features of its big brothers, it still retains the essence of what makes those guitars so great. If you're a Muse fan or even just a fan of thick fuzzy walls of sound, you need to check one of these out.

END«


Manson
META SERIES

Vox SDC Mini Guitar

Designed for those who want to be able to play guitar where you wouldn't usually take a guitar, the Vox SDC-1 mini electric is miniature in size but gives you plenty of full-size benefits in a travel-friendly instrument. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

TO some, miniature guitars aren't something worth serious consideration. In the minds of these players, such instruments are toys at best and unplayable GSOs ("guitar-shaped objects") at worst. Sadly, this bias seems to extend to some less reputable brands too. But if you've ever spent time teaching young players, you'll know how important the right mini guitar can be. A guitar that stays in tune; one with an easy action and no sharp fret ends; one with quality electronics that sound good and don't buzz. For a young player starting out, a quality mini guitar can be the difference between a lifetime of enjoyment and giving up after a month.

Vox's SDC-1 is just such a guitar. It's being marketed as a "travel guitar", but to my mind, it's also an absolutely ideal instrument for a very young student player. It's made of solid woods with no MDF in sight and comes loaded with a miniature-sized humbucker that's powerful and toneful enough for both clean and distorted sounds. The tuners and bridge are solid, and the fretwork is very good. These might sound like things you'd take for granted in a regular size instrument, but so many mini guitars fail all of these tests. The humbucker is particularly impressive, in a class of guitar where weak, noisy single coils are the norm.

So if you have a young player in your life, the SDC-1 Mini is perfect. But what about you? You're a serious player with a serious collection - what good is this tiny guitar to you? Well, I'll be buying one, that's for sure. I'm lucky enough to travel fairly regularly with GI, and often it's impractical to take a guitar. I can easily fit an SDC-1 in my suitcase though, so I can still get some playing in while I'm overseas. The same goes for holidays, road trips, or any other occasion when I'm likely to be without a guitar.

The SDC-1's small size is it's strength when it comes to travel, but also when it comes to tuning possibilities. In the same way that a longer-than-standard scale length allows for low tunings, a small guitar like this one is perfect for tuning higher than standard. A personal favourite of mine is "High Nashville Tuning". Nashville tuning is essentially a 12-string guitar, but with only the highest string from each pair, and it turns »



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Vox SDC Mini Guitar

MSRP: (UK) £165 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

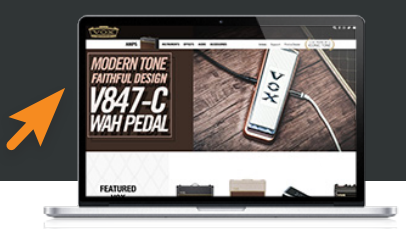
Bright — Dark

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Travelling with your guitar
- Pseudo-mandolin sounds
- Excellent holiday gifts

For more information, please visit:
voxamps.com




vox

"It's a **fine travel guitar** for any player..."

mundane open chord strums into things of sparkling beauty. The SDC-1 Mini is small enough that I was able to string it up for Nashville tuning but tuned up a minor 3rd (G-G) for a stunning pseudo-mandolin effect. That's just one example of the creative possibilities that a good mini guitar opens up.

The Vox SDC-1 is a proper guitar in a class of instrument that's full of GSOs. It plays in tune, it's made of solid woods, and the electronics are both functional as well as sounding good. It's a fine travel guitar for any player, and the perfect choice for a young player beginning their journey.

END«



Vintage 25th Anniversary V100 Silver Burst

To celebrate and honour their 25th anniversary, Vintage has launched three (very special and limited editions based on the very popular Vintage V6, V75 and V100) electric guitars to mark this milestone in the company's history and success within guitar craftsmanship. **Tom Quayle** reviews the Vintage 25th Anniversary V100 Silver Burst.

WE live in a golden age for guitar players. Never before has so much fantastic gear been available at such affordable prices across the entire spectrum of guitarists tonal needs. Here at Gi Magazine, it's incredibly rare for us to find a product in the 'budget' bracket that doesn't excel at its intended purpose. However, this hasn't always been the case. 25 years ago (when this reviewer started playing) it was very rare to find more affordable products for guitarists that didn't have significant flaws or compromises and a gulf »



Vintage 25th Anniversary V100 Silver Burst



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Vintage 25th Anniversary V100 Silver Burst

MSRP: (UK) £449 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

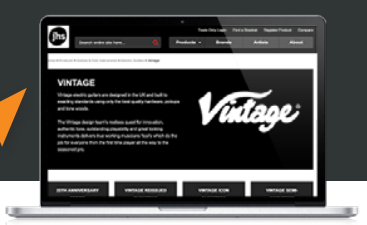
Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- A bargain
- Classic rock and metal
- Collecting historic guitars

For more information, please visit:
jhs.co.uk/vintage



between 'pro' and 'budget' priced guitars in terms of quality and features

Back in 1995 buying a guitar for £199 that could rival one costing three to four times as much was practically unheard of, but when Vintage released their Encore Vintage VC1, sporting and Alder body, Indian Rosewood fretboard, Lace Sensor Pickups, Grover Tuners and a Wilkinson VS10 bridge all of that changed. To this day the company is producing some of the best price to performance guitars on the market and this year celebrate their 25th anniversary with a limited edition run of three custom versions of their most successful models, the V100, V6 and V75. With only 100 pieces of each model available to buy, they represent a great piece of history whilst staying true to Vintage's core ethos of affordable guitars with pro-level features and playability.

The V100SVB is based on the Vintage V100 model, a classic, single cut, dual humbucker design in a custom two-tone Silver Burst finish. Following the tradition for this style of guitar Vintage have chosen hand-selected Mahogany for the body and neck with a carved Maple top and Rosewood fingerboard. Having genuine classic woods at this price point is a fantastic plus point for the V100SVB and shows how much value Vintage are aiming for in this limited edition run of guitars.

The finish is beautifully executed with a subtle sparkle and the addition of cream binding running all the way around the body, neck and headstock for a striking monotone look that wouldn't be out of place at a jazz or rock/metal gig. The design is completed with an Anniversary headstock decal and '25' truss rod cover logo, Trapezoid inlays, black control knobs and pickguard and chrome hardware.

Speaking of hardware, the V100SVB excels in this department too thanks to Vintage's long-running association with hardware legends Trev Wilkinson and Grover. A pair of Wilkinson WOCHB ceramic humbuckers offer up some superb tones at any price point, let alone a budget one and a Wilkinson Tune-o-matic bridge provides rock-solid intonation with individual string adjustments. Grover 102C Rotomatic tuners are included, providing a 14:1 ratio for accurate and consistent tuning whilst the GraphTech NuBone nut ensures friction-free bends and vibrato. This level of hardware is normally reserved for the most expensive guitars in a manufacturers range, but Vintage is offering all of this at a price point that pretty much any guitarist can afford.

None of this would matter if the playability and build quality was compromised to satisfy spec sheets, but the V100SVB excels here too thanks to excellent craftsmanship and a playing experience normally the preserve of much more expensive instruments. Fretwork is expertly finished, and the neck is comfortable with a nicely carved neck joint for upper fret access. This is a heavy guitar, especially compared to the other two guitars in this limited edition range, but for Mahogany single cut guitars, weight is often seen as a bonus from

a tonal perspective, and this is a fantastic sounding guitar.

The Wilkinson WOCHB pickups are pretty high output thanks to their ceramic design, but maintain lots of air and clarity even with buckets of gain applied. They clean up nicely with the volume rolled off and have great dynamic range considering the output strength.

Vintage has really knocked it out of the park with this 25th anniversary celebration line up. Each guitar comes with an embroidered canvas gig bag and individually numbered certificate of authentication. Many companies would charge a premium for their limited run guitars, but Vintage have stuck to their guns and produced some truly professional level and historically significant instruments at a fantastic price point. Highly recommended if you can get your hands on one.

END «



Marshall Silver Jubilee 2555X Amp

With 2020 being such a dire year for musicians and the gear industry all over the world, release schedules have been disrupted for new gear left, right and centre. Here at Gi, we're never inclined to rest on our laurels so, while we wait for more new releases, we thought we'd check out some modern and not so modern classics that have become staples of the guitar world for good reason – starting with the Marshall 100w 2555x Silver Jubilee Reissue head. **Tom Quayle** elaborates on this fantastic piece of Marshall history below.

I'VE wanted a Silver Jubilee for years now, having had a zen-like moment hearing Wayne Krantz blasting through one at the 55-bar in New York back in 2004, but I could never really justify the price of an original one. Over lockdown I bit the bullet and stumped up for the 100w 2555x reissue head and matching 4x12 cab (my poor neighbours) at a frankly amazing price here in the UK. The wonderful and hugely missed Mike Casswell originally reviewed the reissue Silver Jubilee in issue 36 way back in 2015 and loved it, so it made sense that I would find great pleasure in this fantastic Amplifier too, given how great Mike sounded through it.



lifier

The original SJ was released in 1987 to celebrate 25 years of Marshall amplifiers and 50 years of Jim Marshall in the music business. Heavily based on the JCM800's output section but with a new preamp and EQ design, the 100w 2555 model quickly became a classic, used by Slash, John Frusciante and Alex Lifeson for its archetypal high gain 80's rock tones. Only produced in its silver livery for that anniversary year, the 2555X was released as a reissued version in 2015 featuring the same circuitry and design but with a slight redesign of the back panel and fixed voltage wiring for each country.

Sporting the same quartet of EL34 100w power amp valves as the original with a half power 50w mode switch on the front panel, the 2555X reissue amp is a genuine all-tube 100w monster with enough volume to fill the biggest of venues, especially paired with the matching 4x12 cab. A trio of ECC83 preamp valves provide a ton of preamp gain that can be dialled in across two channels with a shared 3 band EQ and presence control. The EQ on the Silver Jubilee is interesting as it differs greatly from the JCM800 amplifier that inspired the output stage design. There is a lot more EQ power on tap here with a much wider sweep on each of the three bands, allowing for far more variety in the tones that the SJ can produce from both channels.

The preamp features an overall input gain control that dials in the amount of dirt across each channel and can be pulled out to engage a clipping diode circuit (Rhythm Clip) for an extra boost on either the clean or dirt channel. This clipping circuit has always been a love it or hate it feature for most people, but it's a »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Marshall Silver Jubilee 2555X Amplifier

MSRP: (UK) £999 / (US) $2580

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High End

Studio — Stadium

For fans of

- Classic Rock tones
- Historic Marshall Amps
- 80's Rock/Metal

For more information, please visit:
marshall.com





great addition to the amp's array of tones and works superbly on the clean channel for edge of breakup and crunchy tones, especially with single coils.

Further versatility is achieved using the separate Output and Lead Master controls, allowing you to really shape the tonal characteristic of the drive channel. With the Output cranked and Lead Master pulled back, you gain more clarity and dynamic response from dirty tones. Crank both, and you achieve more gain and thickness and of course more overall volume. The Rhythm Clip mode allows you to achieve similar high gain tones at lower volumes, especially using the 50w half-power option.

As with many higher gain Marshalls, the 2555X can get a little woolly in the lower end at the highest gain settings, but the powerful EQ fixes the situation easily, and the amp sounds incredible at lower gain settings with a boost pedal pushing the front end hard. With high output pickups or kicked with a pedal, there is enough gain on tap to satisfy the »

"With high output pickups or kicked with a pedal, **there is enough gain** on tap to satisfy the most gain hungry of you out there..."



Marshall Silver Jubilee 2555X Amplifier

most gain hungry of you out there, and it responds beautifully to backing the volume off on your guitar or a lighter pick attack. The clean channel works great as a pedal platform and is more dynamically responsive than you might imagine for a higher gain Marshall head, but of course most people buy this head for those killer crunch and lead tones.

It's amazing just how versatile this 100w beast is though, a fact that's borne out in how beloved it is across such a wide variety of players from Slash, to Bonamassa to Wayne Krantz and many more. These guys all sound so different from one another but have pulled incredible and unique tones out of this amp in hugely different musical settings. A quality series FX loop, DI Out and five speaker outs ensure you're good to go in any gigging situation and for those that want an amp like this at home or in the studio, the prevalence of fantastic sounding attenuators and speaker simulators (such as the OX and Torpedo Captor X) on the market make 100w and 50w amps perfectly plausible in these environments again.

Here in the UK, this reissue amp represents incredible value too – perhaps less so in the US and elsewhere given the inevitable import tax applied to the cost, but considering that these are built in the UK and sound so good with such a versatile tonal palette, it's no wonder they've become such a classic. Now if only I could find an original to go with my reissue at a bargain price!

END«


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AMBIANCE
AND
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DIMENSION OF SOUND
FOR ALL TO HEAR
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The innovative Tap body sensor literally adds a new dimension to the sounds captured and emanating from the pickup system. Layers of touch, depth, ambience, and of course percussion, are all right there... without the concerns of feedback and other unwanted artifacts that have plagued earlier-type systems.
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Boss BD-2 Blues Driver

Since 1995, the Boss BD-2 Blues Driver has delivered that creamy yet crunchy sound you've heard on countless great albums and live shows -and at a great value! **Sam Bell** explains just why this pedal has been such mainstay on so many pedalboards over the years.

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the classic Blues Driver from BOSS Pedals. The BD 2 is a standard pedal for many guitarists, offering a clean, crisp vintage amp-like break up all the way to speaker ripping blues sustain and everything in between. Many Guitarists have had this on their boards for everything from Crunchy Clean Sounds, Fiery Solos or even boosting other Overdrives/Distortions with its unique style of sustain and tone. »



Boss BD-2 Blues Driver

"The **features are simple**; we have Level, Tone and Gain..."



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Boss BD-2 Blues Driver

MSRP: (UK) £75 / (US) $149

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

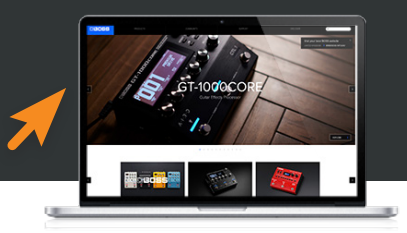
Straightforward — Feature-rich

Affordable — High End

For fans of

- Classic amp sound in a Box
- Boss Quality!
- Timeless design

For more information, please visit:
boss.info



The BD-2 Blues Driver simulates the sound of a vintage tube amplifier, giving you instant access to timeless tones. It also responds to your playing dynamics, so you can pull out a range of tones to give each note the perfect flavour and feel. All in all, you'll love the warm overdrive and emotive distortion the Boss BD-2 Blues Driver adds to your rig.

The features are simple; we have Level, Tone and Gain. Level control's the pedal's output, the tone helps us shape the upper mid/treble range of the pedal, and the Gain gives us everything from a subtle breakup through to facemelting bluesy sustain. Using this pedal at any setting never compromises its ability to clean up with the guitars volume knob, it has an unparalleled response to pick attack dynamic, and it can really wake up any clean amp platform.

So what more can you say, the BD-2 is a much loved classic drive pedal, instantly recognisable and still going strong 25 years since release. The allure of the Blue stompbox with its golden control knobs are enough to make me smile. Boss has always paved the way for high-quality effects pedals which are consistent around the world, if you can get the tones from a specific boss pedal, you'll find you're able to get it from any boss pedal of the same model. Their build quality, simplicity and classic design continue to be a feature of many pedalboards from weekend warriors to fully touring professional's. The BOSS BD 2 is worthy of any setup, get one now! I know I am.

END«



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Hard-Tail
Telecaster
Stratocaster
Luthier/OEM
Wrapover

"Amazing tremolos.
The best retrofit on the
market by miles!"
Nick Jennison
Guitar Interactive

visit madisonandfifth.co.uk

Eric Stet's Gibson ES335 with Stop-Tail Stetsbar

Lunastone Distortion 1 & Red Fuzz 1

Danish pedal builders Lunastone have quite the reputation for making awesome overdrive pedals. Their True Overdrive 1 and 2 are some of the chewiest, most amp-like drive pedals you'll ever play, finding their way onto the boards of touring pros and session aces around the world. So when their Distortion 1 and Red Fuzz 1 dropped, **Nick Jennison** was very excited to take a closer look at them.

WHILE both pedals share the same beautiful minimalist enclosure, huge LED and angled knob layout with the True Overdrive 1 & 2, these two pedals are very much in the "pedal gain" camp. The Distortion 1 is essentially an updated take on the classic orange-coloured distortion pedal the late 70s, while the Red Fuzz 1 is a thick and classy sounding vinage-style fuzz pedal. But unlike the vintage pedals that inspired them, the Distortion 1 and Red Fuzz 1 don't need an overdriving amp to help them along. »



Lunastone Distortion 1 & Red Fuzz 1

1

DISTORTION 1



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Lunastone Distortion 1 & Red Fuzz 1

MSRP: MSRP:(Distortion 1) $199 / (Red Fuzz 1) $199

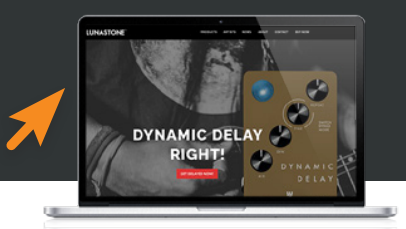
The Breakdown

Traditional	Innovative
Specialised	Versatile
Straightforward	Feature-rich
Affordable	High-end

For fans of

- Classic pedal gain tones
- Clean amps
- Scandinavian chic design

For more information, please visit:
lunastonepedals.com



DISTORTION 1:

Resplendent in 70s orange, the Distortion 1 is a classic hard clipping distortion pedal at its heart, but there's a little sponginess at the back end that feels like a high gain distortion pedal running into a cranked-up amp. Compared to the pedals that inspired it, it has a little more sag and smoothness in the highs - even running into a clean amp. This is important, because traditionally this type of pedal can be a little raspy without a "bed" of amp gain to soften those edges. If you've ever tried to cop Steve Vai's classic "distortion



RED FUZZ 1

pedal" tone using a clean amp, you'll know what I mean.

The Distortion 1 has none of that harshness, but there's still plenty of searing bite at the upper reaches of the tone control if you want it. There's a very healthy amount of gain on tap too, but it's not the compressed, US-style gain you'll hear in many high gain pedals - this is very much a late 70s/early 80s sounding pedal. Think Randy Rhoads, early George Lynch, or even Satch.

RED FUZZ 1:

Much like the Distortion 1, the Red Fuzz 1 is a classic 60s/70s inspired fuzz with a little added back-end compression and saturation to help it "sit" with a clean amp. If you've ever run a Fuzz Face or a Tone Bender into a bright sounding clean amp, you'll be familiar with how thin and buzzy they can sound - and how important the right amp is when it comes to recreating those classic fuzz tones of yesteryear. The Red Fuzz 1 is nowhere near as picky as those classic pedals, and will get you into Hendrix territory without having to annihilate your audience with volume. It also has a very usable range of gain, unlike classic 60s fuzzes that have to be run flat out. This means you can get just a hint of fuzz-inspired overdrive or full-on raging grind. The low cut becomes especially useful at higher gain ranges, either for helping cut through a mix or creating full-on blown-out chaos.

Both the Distortion 1 and Red Fuzz 1 are great sounding takes on classic gain pedals, re-imagined to play nicely with modern rigs. They represent a way to get some of the best-loved tones of the 60s, 70s and early 80s through just about any clean amp. They also benefit from Lunastone's superb build quality, and (unlike the classic pedals that inspired them) they're both true bypass and run on a standard 9v power supply. If you like classic tones but don't fancy winding your plexi up to 11, you need to check these out!

END «

JHS 3 Series Pedals

JHS Pedals is renowned for tonal excellence. The US brand's premium stomp-boxes are packed full of gizmos galore and options aplenty - but they've taken a very different approach with the 3 Series Fuzz. These affordable effects have been stripped back for pure, unadulterated JHS tone suited to both beginners and pros alike. **Tom Quayle** reviews

SINCE the heady days of 80's/90's fridge-sized gear racks, the last two decades have brought guitarists full circle back to the humble pedal board thanks to a small army of boutique pedal manufacturers producing all manner of incredible tone machines to satisfy any and all sonic needs. Putting a versatile and great sounding board together has always been expensive and, whilst there has always been an affordable end of the pedal market, this tends to mean compromises that many guitarists are not willing to put up with in terms of components, sound and build quality. Thus, the boutique pedal builders are more popular »





RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

JHS 3 Series Pedals

MSRP: (UK) £99 / (US) $99

The Breakdown

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High End

Straightforward — Feature-rich

Traditional — Innovative

For fans of

- Boutique pedals
- Value for money
- Classic tones

For more information, please visit:
jhspedals.info




VERB
EQ
PRE DELAY
OUTPUT
INPUT
JHS
3 SERIES
FUZZ
VOLUME
BIAS
FUZZ
TAP



than ever. But the best quality comes at too steep a price for a lot of guitarists, especially given the financial climate of 2020, leaving the best brands off the shopping lists of many budding and professional musicians.

JHS is traditionally one such brand, producing some of the best and most desirable pedals on the market with a fantastic roster of artists, wonderful marketing campaigns and a modern social media presence. They are a true success of the current pedal board age yet are anything but budget or affordable for most guitarists – especially if you want a few of their pedals on your board.

JHS have a solution to this financial dilemma in the form of their new '3-series' pedal range, a collection of seven new pedals designed to be highly affordable and cover many of your sonic needs. Unlike many budget lines that are built in the far-east using third party factories to keep costs low, the 3-series pedals are built in the JHS factory in Kansas City, USA, using high-quality components, quality control and attention to detail. To keep costs down, the pedals feature plain designs and a unified control set with three knobs and a single toggle switch, customised for each effect type. JHS have produced seven variants to cover the most common effect types – Compressor, Fuzz, Overdrive, Distortion, Chorus, Delay and Reverb. At $99 apiece, kitting out an entire JHS pedal board becomes a much more affordable reality and the sounds on board are just as sweet and 'boutique' sounding as you'd expect from a company with this tonal reputation.

All the pedals feature a Volume or Mix control (Delay and Reverb) and your standard mono in and out, plus a centre negative 9v DC input. Batteries are not an option here to further reduce costs, but each pedal has a small current draw and seems to play very nicely with a simple daisy

chained power supply if required. The other two controls and toggle switch are specific to each pedal, offering just the right amount of sonic variety given the price point.

The Compressor has Attack and Sustain plus a bright toggle switch that is highly effective and pairs wonderfully with the overdrive and distortion pedals. It can operate transparently as a boost or give you highly squashed compression effects without adding excess noise or drive into the signal. The Distortion and Overdrive pedals offer basic Filter/Body and Distortion/Drive controls respectively with both sporting a gain toggle that gives either a louder, less compressed tone or a quieter, more compressed and driven one. A wide range of excellent tones are available from either, ranging from bluesy overdrives to 80's hard rock and saturated lead tones and both work superbly to push the front end of your amp. The Fuzz is also superb and great fun thanks to the unpredictable nature of its Bias control, giving you a gated, spitty tone that responds wonderfully to pick attack. This can be backed off for a more predictable, classic fuzz tone and the fat switch give you a bass boost if required.

The Chorus offers up Rate and Depth controls for the modulation and a Vibe switch that removes the dry signal for a classic Vibrato effect. You can go from subtle chorusing all the way up to rotary style sounds for your best John Scofield impression and anything in between. The tone is beautifully boutique in its nature with a thick lushness in either mode. The Delay pedal offers two modes, pristine digital delays or darker, analogue-voiced repeats with up to 800ms of delay and infinite self-oscillating repeats for special effects or ambient washes. Finally, the Reverb provides a surprisingly versatile palette of ambient sounds with EQ and Decay controls for shaping the simulated space. The toggle switches in a short pre-delay to separate your core tone and reverb if desired. This is a very high-quality reverb pedal with beautiful and dense tails that sound very boutique given the price point here.

Each of the 3-series pedals sounds and feels just like a regular JHS pedal – in use you're certainly not aware that you're playing the budget line other than the very plain look and slightly stripped-down feature set. We did notice a general volume boost as each pedal was engaged in series even when we set each pedal to unity gain individually, but this can be compensated for using the Volume controls on board. At the price it's extremely hard to complain though.

If you've always wanted to get on board the boutique pedal train but found the price of entry too hard to stomach, the 3-series should be quite an exciting proposition. Genuine JHS tones at this price, made in the USA with high quality components – yes please! Highly recommended.

END«


SoundSation
Shadow series
Character, the real one.
12 models
Stunning Satin Black finish
Hi quality craftmanship & hardware
100%
CONCEIVED
IN ITALY
MJB
Distribution


SoundSation
DELTA CROSSROAD
Slide that blues away
Italian concept,
American feeling
Distribuzione esclusiva
FRENEXPORT
www.frenexport.it
YouTube

Eventide Black Hole Reverb

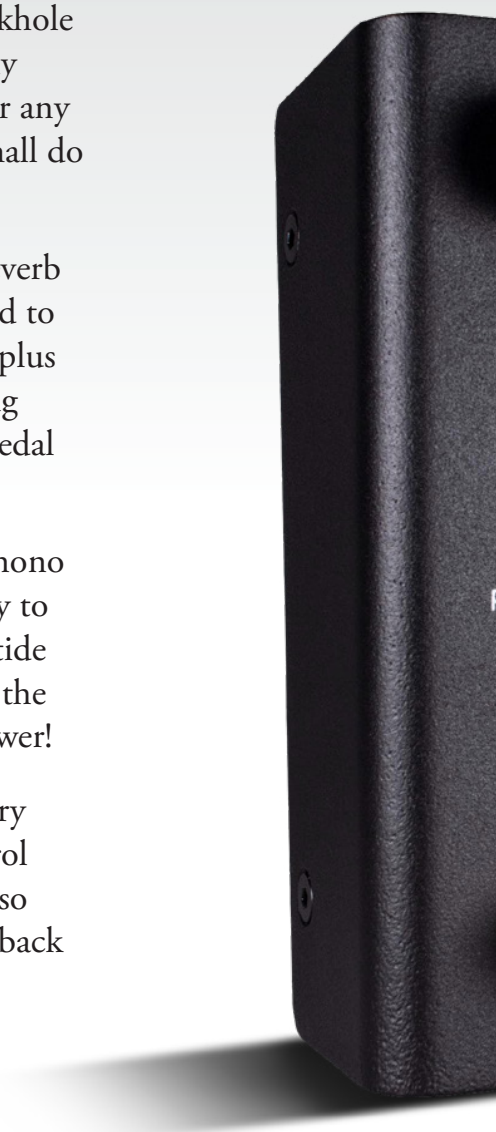
Transcend typical reverb sounds and explore unique soundscapes with the Eventide Blackhole reverb pedal. Create massive drones with two different types of infinite reverb, allowing you to layer sounds over a suspended reverb tail–dial-in modulation for multi-voice, chorus-like animation. **Tom Quayle** gives us the full breakdown.

EVENTIDE is well known for its innovation in guitar effects technology. The Blackhole reverb is no exception to their outstanding output; this pedal is truly out of this word. Packed with tons of features, it would be tricky for any reviewer to cover everything about this amazing unit. However, I shall do my best!

First off let's discuss what the pedal actually does, the Blackhole Reverb is a very expressive and diverse ambient effects pedal. Whilst referred to as a Reverb Pedal; this also has options for Delay and Modulation (plus more!) From adding a slight bit of ambience to your tone to creating huge ethereal pad-like sounds, the aptly named Blackhole Reverb pedal really does take you beyond.

The pedal has a stereo out (can be used Mono or used stereo with mono switch on depending on how you want to run it) USB Connectivity to further get into your sounds and how the pedal works via the Eventide App. There's also an expression pedal input for further control over the parameters of the pedal in real-time. All this with a 9v input for power!

The control knobs feature a Mix knob (to move between wet and dry effect, this works well in stereo for wet/dry setups) the gravity control changes between a reverse/forward reverb/delay sound, this knob also doubles as the Delay control knob to control the Delay effect. Feedback affects the feedback of the Delay and Reverb; this can be Frozen »





RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Eventide Black Hole Reverb

MSRP: (UK) £279 / (US) $279

The Breakdown

Specialised	Versatile
Affordable	High End
Straightforward	Feature-rich
Traditional	Innovative

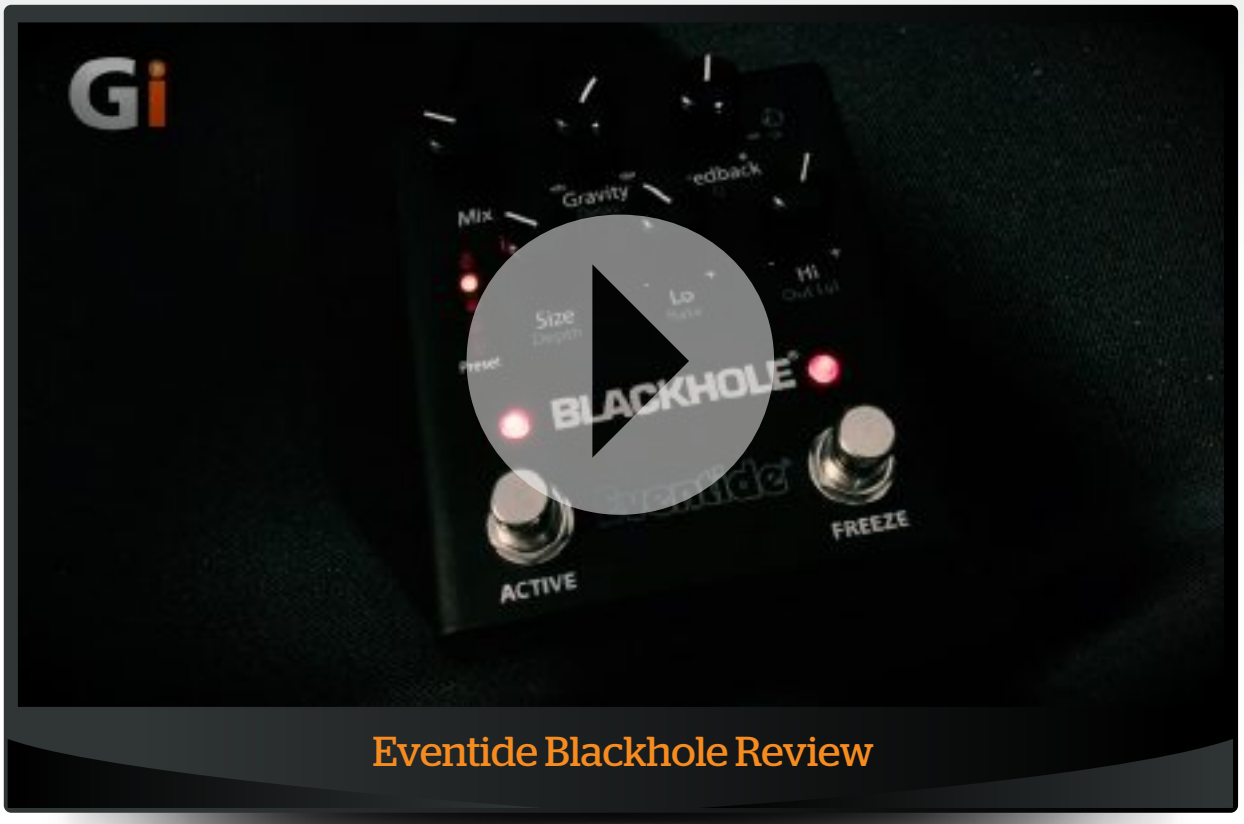
For fans of

- Incredible reverb options
- Tremendous customisation
- Great looking gear

For more information, please visit:
eventideaudio.com



using the 'Freeze' foot control. This knob also doubles as a Q control for the Low and High EQ knobs. The Size knob controls the size of the reverb (how big the imagined room is, this can go extreme!) This also doubles as a Depth control for the modulation on the Verb/Delay sounds. The Lo knob focuses on the Low end of the ambient effect; this also doubles as a Rate control on the modulation. The Hi knob controls the high end of the ambient effect but also doubles as the overall effect output level vs the dry level. We're also able to save pre-set sounds on this pedal, up to 5 on the unit itself and up to 127 if you're using midi. These controls all can be further tweaked when coupled with the Eventide Device Manager.



Eventide Blackhole Review



In the short time I had with the pedal, it was easy enough to get around and start making inspiring tones. I'm sure with more time I could start to use this pedal like an extension of the instrument itself, and there is where I think the beauty of this pedal lies, you can create incredibly surreal ambient spaces with this unit. I found the quality of the pedal in a 'basic' reverb setting enough to inspire new chord progressions and soundscapes. I'd love to have one on my board for sure! Definitely worth checking out for the Tone Physicists out there!

END «

Studio to Sta

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If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

ge

PLAY IT - RECORD IT - PERFORM IT

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT





Two Notes Torpedo C.A.B. M Simulator Pedal

The Torpedo C.A.B. M+ takes Two Notes' acclaimed cabinet emulation tec friendly enclosure. Thanks to this speaker cabinet emulator pedal, you ca net while preserving every ounce of your tone and spatial dimension. He

TWO Notes Audio is well known for their speaker emulation unit 'Torpedo' which could be found rack-mounted in studios around the world. They have pushed the boundaries of Speaker Emulation and now we're able to have all this technology within a pedal sized unit which can fit onto your pedalboard or on top of your amp. Before I commence this review, I must state that this is not a load box or attenuator (They have the Captor X for this exact thing with the same technology) however you can plug this in between an amp and speaker. Let us begin.

The CAB M in its simplest form is a way of putting your signal (either from your pedals, amp, DI) through an authentic mic'ed up speaker cabinet situation and then direct to a DAW or Desk. The CAB M comes loaded with 32 cabinets, however you can buy more on the Two Notes Website. You can also load in your own Impulse responses as well. Each cabinet has an array of moveable microphones, you can have up to two mics on any one cab. The cab emulation and the mic's are fantastic, there's a lot you can do tonally with just this element of the CAB M. However, Two Notes have taken it a step further, you're also able to select a Power Amp feature (great if you're running a pre-amp style pedal or unit into the CAB M), you can select many different kinds of Power Amp valves and tweak the dampening, volume/saturation etc. There's also a pre-amp option built in based on a 74 Fender Bassman. You can further enhance your tone by using different room/reverbs, from a super clean/dry studio, to a basement all the way to a cathedral—tons of options for adding ambience to your tone. Then you can further tweak the EQ by using the EQ options or the Enhanser to get more out of your sound. Also, I almost forgot to mention; it has a built-in noise gate and tuner! So tons of features! All of these can be controlled by Bluetooth or USB using the Two Notes app on your Android, IoS, PC or Mac.

Many guitarists are finding that they are spending time gigging with just their pedalboards, often with no idea of what backline will be at the venue, or in situations where »

M+ Speaker

chnology and packs it into a pedalboard-
an bypass your guitar or bass amplifier's cabi-
re's **Sam Bell** with the full review.



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Two Notes Torpedo C.A.B. M+ Speaker Simulator Pedal

MSRP: (UK) £239 / (US) $319

The Breakdown

Specialised	Versatile
Affordable	High-End
Straightforward	Feature Rich
Traditional	Innovative

For fans of

- Superb speaker emulation
- Great value for money
- Limitless customisation

For more information, please visit:
two-notes.com





you'll be asked to go Direct. In the past it wasn't too desirable to go direct from your pedalboard, but the CAB M and its many features now make that option painless and inspiring to playthrough. I personally use the CAB M at the end of my pedalboard chain, I use a nice Plexi Style pedal as my pre-amp core tone and the Power amp feature on the CAB M. A little bit of room reverb and I'm set!

I highly recommend this pedal/unit to all guitarists (and bassists, yes it does that too!) it is very quickly becoming a standard on many pedalboards around the world. It's very sturdy and easy to use as well. The price is also very reasonable considering what you get and the quality, it's a worthwhile investment for any serious guitar player!

END«





Two Notes Torpedo C.A.B. M+ Speaker Simulator Pedal

Boss Pocket GT

The Boss Pocket GT could very well be your one-stop-shop when it come
even playing live. Built on the legendary BOSS GT sound engine to give yo
effects models in a pocket-sized portable format. **Tom Quayle** gives us th

SINCE it was launch back in 2005, YouTube has grown to become one of the biggest and most useful teaching and practice resources for guitar players. It's a bit of a minefield trying to find the best material, but with all the songs, backing tracks, lessons and edutainment videos available on the platform, it's incomparable as a free learning and practice resource.

This phenomenon hasn't gone unnoticed by Boss and, with their Pocket GT, they are aiming to integrate YouTube use with a truly pocket-sized amp modeller and multi FX for the ultimate portable practice and learning setup.

At its heart, the diminutive Pocket GT is based on the same core technology as Boss' GT1 floor unit. This GT sound engine offers up over 100 amp models and effects, allowing you to create pretty much any tone you can imagine and save your sounds to 99 user memories. There are three small rotary dials on the front of the unit allowing you to assign and control up six parameters directly from the hardware. By default they're mapped to Gain, Level, Reverb, OD/DS amount, Mod and Delay levels, but can be re-assigned if required to whatever you use the most. A small LED display shows you the current patch number and basic tuning info for the onboard tuner, whilst a larger main dial allows you to browse and select between your presets.

Mobile devices can connect via Bluetooth allowing you to edit the sounds in more detail from the free Pocket GT Tone Studio app (iOS, Android, Mac and PC compatible). Selecting effects and amp models is a breeze and the signal path can be rearranged if you need some effects »

s to recording, jamming, song learning, and
ou more than 100 assignable amp, stomp, and
e full breakdown.



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Boss Pocket GT

MSRP: (UK) £219 / (US) $359

The Breakdown

Straightforward — Feature-Rich

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-End

Studio — Stage

For fans of

- YouTube practice/learning
- Portable practice setups
- Making life easier!

For more information, please visit:
boss.info





before or after your amp block. The Bluetooth connection also streams audio from your mobile device to the Phones/Rec output of the Pocket GT so you can play tracks from your phone or tablet for jamming along with. The integrated USB connection allows for the same functionality from a desktop or laptop computer and even turns the Pocket GT into a fully-fledged, guitar-based audio interface with ASIO and Core Audio compatible, low latency operation in your DAW.

The real power and fun comes from the app's integrated YouTube session view, where videos can be added and then controlled using the hardware transport controls on the unit. Adding videos is a simple case of copying and pasting the relevant URL from your browser or the YT app and multiple videos can be added to create longer practice or learning sessions as required.

Controlling the playback of videos is cool, but Boss has gone a step further by allowing you to add custom markers »





Boss Pocket GT

at any point in a video that will automatically switch the preset on the Pocket GT wherever a marker is placed. This functionality allows the user to set up different sounds for different sections of a video or practice session without ever touching the hardware. Let's say you're learning a Pink Floyd song - paste the relevant video URL into the app and then setup all the sounds you need for the intro, verse, chorus and solo section. Then place markers at the exact spot in the video that you need the sounds to change and then hit play - all the sounds will now change automatically for each section of the song!

The possibilities here are limitless and represent some fantastic opportunities for streamlining your practice sessions and learning without having to change sounds on the fly. Just plug in your guitar, grab your mobile device and press play! No more excuses for not practising. Boss also allow you to setup A/B loops for a particular spot in the track that you might be struggling with. There's no slow down function for now, but hopefully, that will come in a future update.

Once you've set up your markers you can save the video URL and marker information as a file or to the app itself so that you can recall everything for your next practice session or share everything with a friend or student. Tones can be saved or exported for recall or sharing too, so you could send all the sounds you've programmed for a particular YouTube video

"The Pocket GT **really is** a fantastically useful practice and learning tool..."

plus all the marker information for when those sounds should change. A fantastic addition!

Boss has also included an aux input for any devices without a Bluetooth connection and a useful centre cancel function that aims to remove vocals and guitar solos from most tracks. The built-in rechargeable battery gives you around four hours of runtime (slightly more if you're not using the Bluetooth connection) and takes around three hours to fully charge from flat.

The Pocket GT really is a fantastically useful practice and learning tool. Being able to carry such a useful device, with some great tones onboard, around in your pocket is amazing, allowing you to practice in any environment with just a guitar, cable, headphones and your phone! Having the recording functions and superb YouTube integration makes this package pretty irresistible for anyone looking for a portable and powerful practice setup. Another great release from the guys at Boss. Highly recommended!

END«

THE Quietroom

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If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

WHEN ONLY ACOUSTIC WILL DO



Taylor GT Urban Ash

Earlier this year, Taylor Guitars announced the release of its brand-new acoustic body shape – the Grand Theater. Known as the Taylor GT, the company's latest body shape introduces a new category of acoustic guitar in size, feel and sound. The result is a guitar that's incredibly fun and easy to play, with a big sonic personality worthy of any pro player's toolbox. Here's Nick Jennison with the full review.

I'VE said it before, I'll say it again: small acoustic guitars are the best. Don't get me wrong, I love the roar of a dreadnought as much as the next guitarist, but even with my significantly larger-than-average frame I find the sheer size (and squareness) of the body to be off-putting. You can't hold a Jumbo close to you the way you can with a parlour guitar. Smaller guitars are normally sweeter, easier to play and much, much easier to travel with.

Unfortunately, they do tend to lack some of the authority of bigger instruments. So it would seem we're fated to contend with warping our own bodies to fit those of our guitars, and developing a vice-grip playing technique in the process. Unless you have a Taylor GT.

The GT (Grand Theater) is a response to the countless requests for a solid wood GS Mini. It's a whole new body shape that's based on Taylor's Grand Orchestra body shape, but significantly smaller. The width at the lower bout is about the same as a Grand Concert, but the body is shorter and significantly shallower. It's a very comfy size for players of all body types - even big dudes like myself - that isn't so small that it sacrifices punch and projection (more on that in a moment!)

The neck is slimmed down too, sporting a 24.125" scale length - exactly the same as a 25.5" scale neck that has been capo'd off at the 1st fret. This is not by accident, and is intended to give the same slinky play feel of a 25.5" scale guitar tuned to Eb, without having to detune or go down a string gauge. I spend about 95% of my time playing electric guitars, so I have a pretty light left hand touch and find 12s on acoustic guitars to be way too heavy (especially coated strings, where the reduced friction requires more pressure). This was absolutely not the case on the GT, and even shred-inspired lead lines felt effortless. Seriously impressive, when you consider how full-bodied this guitar's tone is. Speaking of which… »



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Taylor GT Urban Ash

MSRP: (UK) £1349 / (US) $1399

The Breakdown

Traditional — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Bright — Dark

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Small bodied guitars
- Easy playability
- Sustainable woods

For more information, please visit:
taylorguitars.com





"It's **supremely comfortable** to play without any sacrifices in power or projection..."

The tone. Clear and articulate with lots of sustain across the fretboard. Standard Taylor stuff. But for a guitar this size the low end weight is utterly remarkable. This thing punches like a much larger guitar, especially on the low strings. This is no doubt thanks to the asymmetrical "C-Class" bracing. Details on this are scant at the moment, but it's another of Andy Powers's creations (much like the V-Class bracing introduced a few years ago to much acclaim), this time inspired by cantilever technology. Your guess is as good as mine, but it would seem that the bass side is braced more loosely for weight and projection while the treble side is more tightly braced for sustain and clarity. Whatever it is, it works a treat!

While we're talking tone, we should also talk about the woods Taylor have chosen for this guitar. The top is solid Sitka spruce and the neck is mahogany - again, standard

stuff. However, the fingerboard is eucalyptus and the back and sides are reclaimed urban ash. Both of these urban woods are sustainable, because these trees are felled in cities and not taken from forests, greatly reducing waste. They also happen to be very pleasant looking and sounding woods, with urban ash offering a brilliant treble and articulate midrange that is no doubt offset by the booming lows from the "C-Class" bracing.

Taylor's GT feels like a guitar made for me. It's supremely comfortable to play without any sacrifices in power or projection. It's small enough to take anywhere, it's made of sustainable timbers and it's available with Taylor's superb ES2 electronics. It's perhaps a little pricey for what some will consider a "travel" guitar, but it's actually much much more than that. Go play one and see for yourself.

END «



Mooer SD50A

After the successful development of the SD modelling guitar combos, Mooer now has a combo amp especially for acoustic guitarists - the SD50A. **Sam Bell** tell us more.

MOOER is well known for its compact and affordable guitar Effects units, recently releasing their own amp modelling/multi F.X. compact pedal-board. And now they are creating affordable gear for the performing acoustic guitarist.



"The Soundsation BA200 Compact is a very **well built guitar** that's a lot of fun to play..."

Equipped with a dual-channel, analog preamp for guitar and microphone, the combo delivers every tiny touch and dynamic of your playing and singing. The SD50A combines a 1" tweeter with an 8" full range, flat response (FRFR) speaker to reproduce every detail of the sound as best as possible. In addition, digital modulation, delay and reverb effects are available so that you don't have to rely on additional, external effects pedals. Thanks to the XLR DI output, the combo can also be used in all conceivable live situations. The SD amps have a unique Jam section that contains a whole suite of tools for solo performers and creative aficionados alike, such as an integrated looper, sync-able drum machine and Bluetooth or 3.5 mm Aux input connection for playback of your favourite audio tracks from an external device. »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Mooer SD50A

MSRP: (UK) £369 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Traditional	Modern
Specialised	Versatile
Affordable	High-end
Studio	Stadium

For fans of

- Great all-rounder
- Easy to use gear
- Built-in effect

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



The SD50A two channels (One Jack, One XLR) feature an independent three band E.Q.'s and feedback busters, with each channel also utilising its own great Reverb, Delay and Chorus effects. The amp itself is super lightweight, and at 50 watts it packs quite a punch for such a small package.

If all this wasn't enough, the SD50A also comes with a built-in drum machine, featuring 16 different loops to get help inspired and keep time with, a tuner and a looper function. The looper function is controlled with a Bluetooth footswitch which comes with the amp and is powered independently by a 9 Volt battery.

This is one lightweight, super affordable and feature-packed acoustic amp. It's definitely something for entry-level acoustic guitarists looking to amplify their acoustic sound at home or at the local open mic.

END«



Mooer SD50A


INTRODUCING THE
NEW MICRO SERIES
E7 SYNTH
• 7 different types of brand new MOOER SYNTH tones.
• Individual arpeggiator for each tone.
D7 DELAY
• 6 different types of customizable delay effects and a 150-second capacity Looper.
• Tap Tempo to control delay timing.
• 'Trail On' function allows the effect to fade out naturally.
A7 AMBIANCE
• 7 ambient and psychedelic reverb effects to experiment with.
• Choose between INFINITE trail function or the more traditional 'Trail On' function.
• Buffer Bypass.
R7 REVERB
• 7 classic reverb effects.
• 'Trail On' function allows the effects to fade out naturally.
• Buffer Bypass.
MOOER
EFFECTS AND AMPLIFICATION
mooeraudio.com

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Sponsored by **Rotosound**

THE PLACE FOR BASS

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT





Strandberg Boden Bass Prog 4

The Strandberg Boden Bass Prog model was developed for bass players who seek a more
sound that can be fine-tuned with the utmost precision. Featuring a lightweight chambere
solid Flame Maple top and roasted Maple neck, the natural acoustic sound is balanced wit
with a bright cutting edge when needed with the bass's onboard preamp equalisation. **Da**

FINALLY! After a rather long time, I get my bass playing hands on what has promised to be a real performer; 'A bass of cutting edge technology, pristine workmanship and tone to die for.'

Slipping this incredibly lightweight machine out of its professional padded case, it was immediately obvious we were looking at a quality instrument … sometimes you just know, after all these years studying and reviewing instruments! (I've quite literally been geeking out for over 30 obsessed years, but that's a story for another day!)

It's an all-star cast when it comes to the components that make up this instrument long before we pop the thing down for a quick spin plugged in. We used the super GR Bass Dual 800 for this review paired with my Bergantino cabinets, mic'd, and DI'd.

Of course, you will notice the body shape and its contours and, for note clarity, string-to-string balance and tone, the fan-fret multi-scale neck.

The Strandberg Boden Prog 4 we have here is crazy light - this is I believe one of the lightest instruments I have ever reviewed. I think the Hofner 500/1 Greenline Bass I reviewed may be in competition for feeling like it is helium-filled!

The Specification of the Boden Prog 4 is impressive; the lightweight Swamp Ash body is carefully chambered for additional weight saving without detriment to tone and deep arm, torso and heel carves aren't just about looking striking, they are ergonomic too. I would already recommend this instrument to those with long term back and shoulder issues even before we plug in and play! So well balanced.

The top is both modest with its semi-gloss polyurethane finish yet

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RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Strandberg Boden Bass Prog 4

MSRP: (UK) £2650 / (US) $2995

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Impressive playability
- High-end features
- Standout looks

For more information, please visit:
bassdirect.co.uk/bass_guitar_specialists



"Interestingly, long after recording the video, I picked up my '76 Precision featured in the review, and it was still **bang on in tune.** Thumbs up..!"



Strandberg Boden Bass Prog 4

stainless steel frets on a 20" radius board is so comfortable! - The neck relief is very close to being flat on this example making slurs of any sort easy; thus legato and fast-playing feel effortless. »

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 AND DI-2112

"THESE AWESOME PEDALS TAKES THE MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FROM MY GED-2112 RACKMOUNT AND POPS THEM INTO REALLY PORTABLE, SMALLER PACKAGES." – 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



TECH 21

Analog Brilliance℠

Designed & Manufactured by Tech 21 USA, Inc.

tech21nyc.com


.strandberg*

"Topping off the instrument, we have **'glow in the dark'** green Luminlay inlay markers to help you on dark stages, a really nice touch..."

The deep contours aren't just about sharp looks, it feels to me that a huge amount of thought has gone into comfort and ease of access where it really is needed. Yes, I had to adjust for a short amount of time to become more familiar with the instrument, but by the time it came to roll the cameras I was starting to feel like I could go out and gig the bass without any issues. I've already owned a few fan-fret instruments, so I have a head start on feeling comfortable with those.

Comfort was a huge thumbs up, but what about tones? Electronics?

Prog 4 comes equipped with a pair of very high-quality pickups from Nordstrand. These are the Big Rig models that have a super clear and open sound to them when paired with my own Bergantino reference rig. Strandberg has opted to install the Darkglass ToneCapsule preamplifier which I rather like due to its eq centres that better match bass guitar. The master volume has an EQ bypass too for passive operation should you wish. I pushed both the bass and mids up just a small amount and kept the treble backed off just a little on the EQ and found that the 50/50 blend on the mix pot was spot on for a big sound from a smaller-bodied bass. Nothing is lacking here!

Strung with D'Addario NYXL strings as standard, the hardware is all Strandberg too. I don't need to say that it operates smoothly and accurately as well as looking super cutting-edge. You may already know that I am a fan of headless basses and see the benefits of the design. Can't wait to try the five-string version!

Topping off the instrument, we have 'glow in the dark' green Luminlay inlay markers to help you on dark stages, a really nice touch.

A very impressive instrument that demonstrates that this brand is thinking about comfort and playability without forgetting tone.

END «

EBS 802 High Dynamics Linear Am

EBS excellence in solid-state technology is well known and runs through the veins back to company started in 1988. The World's stage spotlight landed on EBS when the company in first solid-state hybrid amps in the late 90s'. Fast forward to 2020 and the new EBS 802 is se reference amp to define the 'EBS sound'. **Dan Veall** reviews.

I WAS very pleased indeed to be able to receive one of the very first 802 amplifiers ahead of the rest of the World for a comprehensive overview. The 802 I feel is a little bit special. I don't mind admitting that the EBS TD650 is an amplifier that has been in my top 5 amplifiers for many years. I've been incredibly lucky in this job to have reviewed over 350 items and amongst those the very best in amplification. It's all good, it difficult to find a bad amplifier these days, but sometimes we do receive something a little bit special - and that gets echoed in my review comments each month.

What's interesting is all the things that I wanted to see on the original TD650 (some of those ideas from the EBS Classic preamplifier for example) have finally been included in a major flagship release.

EBS in their own words describes the new 802 as "Engineered to be the new reference amp to define the 'EBS Sound'." Indeed they continue, the cornerstone of the EBS amplifications program.



mplifier

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As with any review, there's always an element as to why a brand has decided on a particular feature set. EBS bill this model as a 'High Dynamics Linear Amplifier' using all solid-state technology. The 802 designer's intention is to deliver that experience the old amps of yesteryear brought to the table. Call it punch, call it heft, whatever - but when you know, you know.

The amplifier may look busy across the front but genuinely, if you take each section and treat them separately it is amazing how quickly you can dial in a wide range of tones, from old school thump to rattle rock, to jazz bass articulate slap.

EBS has split the usual character "pre-shape" into two. Now you can shape the low end or high end (or both at the same time) at the push of one of two switches situated next to the input - which interestingly is a particularly high input impedance entry. Great if you are using passive pickups or even piezo examples.

There's plenty of gain in the preamplifier input too with very little noise to speak of. Great! The whole amplifier is designed and made in Sweden and is manufactured for high performance throughout.

A 'one-knob' compressor deals up everything from a slight limiting to some squishy compressed sounds »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

EBS 802 High Dynamics Linear Amplifier

MSRP: (UK) £2776 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

Studio — Stadium

For fans of

- Powerful sounds
- Ultra-modern design
- EBS Gear

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should you like that sort of flavour. Throughout my review with my bass (that features active pickups), I chose to ride the compressor to give me a balance of volume as I switched between techniques. Pretty useful for the medium we use for recording here at Guitar Interactive.

Now on to my favourite of rants! Amplifier equalisers! For those who have watched my reviews previously will know that I use a lot of different basses and, depending on the review, mix and match cabinets to create a sound that best highlights at least some of the great sounds a piece of kit is capable of dealing up.

It's not a perfect situation though and sometimes we want to shape the sound because a bass 'colour' may be at odds with the sonic spectrum of a speaker cabinet. Enter the EBS 802 equaliser.

It is of the semi-parametric type, which I adore and all of my favourite amplifiers have something similar if you, like me, need flexibility. (Think function gigs as an example).

Both the Bass and Treble controls have switchable EQ centres. The bass control specifically can dial in the centres from several different EBS models which is



EBS 802 High Dynamics Linear Amplifier

great - or maybe you want some slap low-end punch but not drown the stage with too much low-end 'subs' - yup, easily done.

In between those controls is not just one semi-parametric mid-range but two! Yes! Finally! There's an overlap between both their operation, yet they deal with the low mid spectrum and the high-mid spectrum seperately. There are times a bass has been missing some of that woody 300-400hz tone but too much going on at 1Khz. One semi-parametric just can't deal with both of those issues at the same time and thus compromise is required. With two? Done deal.

For extra sheen in the sound, the bright control is a high-pass filter that is off in the zero position but progressively adds top-end zing as it is advanced. A bit like an adjustable bright switch. It's just too handy!

The 802, like the Reidmar 750 is a powerful head. I understand, correct me if I am wrong here, that the 750 was so loud (I reviewed the 750 with an EBS 410CL cabinet and we had the staff above the sound-proofed studio come down to inspect what we were up to) that it was too loud before the amplifier started creating any sort of lovely drive. So, the drive circuit was added in to get that "loud grit" at more manageable levels. Watch my video as I can't resist dialling in a sweet spot for my bass, off bat. There's also an example sound on the EBS website with a passive Precision bass.

Round the back as described in my video area whole host of really industry-useful connections including access to controlling on-board functions via footswitch - a pair of DI outputs to cover all recording and performing eventualities - and even a Speaker Emulation function. You can record silently with the 802 or, use the emulation in conjunction with a clean, dry DI and a mic'd up cabinet!

An effects loop of course, but this one I read can take instrument-level pedals as well as line level.

Finally, two locking speaker connectors wired in parallel for hooking up to your cabinets. This beast of an amplifier can deliver 750W RMS into a 2 Ohm load, that's around 450W RMS when connecting a 4 Ohm load. But, please do not be bogged down with the numbers. There is more than enough volume from this amplifier and will happily drive pairs of big cabinets to guitarist-annoying levels :) (Sorry guitarists I love you really!)

The amplifier is a modern high spec design that is incredibly versatile. Yes, it is also a high-end purchase but I feel that it is well suited to the stadium when you need girth in your sound, but whisper-quiet noise floor for the professional studio. It's capable of some gritty edge rock, hi-fi tapping tones and even a low-end old-school rumble, so it will be loved by fans in all quarters.

END «

Orange Little Bass Thing 500-watt

Get ready for bone-crunching bass power in a tiny package. From Orange Amplification co featherweight bass amp head designed for modern bassists. **Dan Veall** tells us more abou

IT'S little! And its a thing for bass! - I can't be the first person to make this truly outstanding and witty (cough) remark regarding the bundle of joy I pulled out of the box ready to review here.

Happily sitting on the palm of my (rather large) hand, this chap with it's contrasting and easy to read graphics might not seem like it's going to go head to head against its big-rack brethren, but you'd be mistaken.

Layout is simple but also very effective as we shall find out. The instrument input is located on the right-hand side, and there's a pad to pull back the level should you have an instrument with a high output - like my bass have I used for the review, but it could have easily been a passive four stringer with super hot, over-wound pickups.

So, moving in a left direction, the Little Bass Thing has a three-band equaliser with a semi-parametric mid-range control. This is great for dialling in (or out) those mids that us bassists find most useful. The bass control is interesting actually; Orange advertise that the 'centre' for the bass is across the whole 40-400hz region - so, I guess this is a wide band control as it is impacting what I would



t Bass Head

omes the Little Bass Thing, a fearless,
t this fearsome 500-watt.

say were all of the most important frequencies for bass guitar, even five string. Certainly, in the review, I felt there were more low mids being added as I dialled up the bass.

The treble I would say is more in the "pick bite" region rather than that of the airy 10khz region. I think if you are using a cabinet without a tweeter, you'll get your impact from this dial via 10" speakers.

Orange has included a really interesting compressor: The company describe it as a "painstakingly developed Class A Optical Compression circuit. With its unique sidechain and a response optimised for bass guitar, this single-dial provides excellent dynamic control and a warm, classic feel, at subtle or extreme settings" It seems lazy just pasting from their own marketing blurb, but, indeed, there's something rather cool about the effect as you start to advance the single dial. The make-up gain does seem to wind up faster than the compression threshold with my own bass, but then so does "something" else. It's a bit like adding more life and energy into your bass sound. Not just louder, but more full - and, on higher settings, it will start to drive. The sweet spot I aimed for was almost tube-like. My notes became more touched sensitive, making legato playing even easier. »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Orange Little Bass Thing 500-watt Bass Head

MSRP: (UK) £529 / (US) $999

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

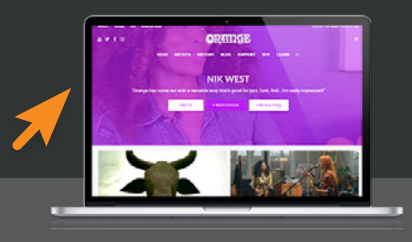
Affordable — High-end

Studio — Stadium

For fans of

- Superb tones
- Lightweight gear
- Great value for money

For more information, please visit:
orangeamps.com



"Another **great amp** from Orange, you won't go wrong if you want a plug and play rock vibe...."



Orange Little Bass Thing 500-watt Bass Head

The compressor, should you wish, can be engaged by footswitch, though there isn't one included - the usual standard push-button type will work.

'LBT' has a studio-quality DI output and buffered effects loop for external processing.

I guess you will want to know how loud this thing is? I get the feeling that the preamplifier has been tailored to make the best use of the power amplifier's capabilities and thus, super-sub frequencies aren't going to be wasting energy. This to my ear translates to a unit that, focussing its energies on the useful four string frequencies means that it goes loud and then louder and ... well, you get the idea, in the studio, it did appear to have lots of low-mid frequency balls, basically.

Also round the back, along with the standard power input we have a power switch and a voltage selector for 'round the world' usage. Orange offer two locking Speakon connectors for your speaker cabinets to complete the compliment of connectors to get you heard.

My usual wrap up then? It's a little chap with lots of 'poke', like a little pocket rocket ha!

There's a leaning towards Orange's rock heritage in my mind as the compressor is dialled in offering vintage flavours in a modern D Class amplifier design. I think it sits right in the middle of being specialised vs versatile, because I feel it does bring a certain flavour to the table, yet it's affordable price means that you're going to have no problem taking it to stage, gig or even recording session without too many worries.

Another great amp from Orange, you won't go wrong if you want a plug and play rock vibe.

END «

GR Bass Pure Drive

Dan Veall reviews the GR Bass Pure Drive. A decidedly versatile Preamp designed for the everyone thanks to its ease of use that allows you to always have all the characteristics of t

MADE in Italy by a bass player, for bass players, using carefully selected components, the GR Bass Pure Drive is a well-thought bass preamplifier pedal for us low-enders. Yes, it is billed as a drive pedal, yet I want to say immediately that it is capable of some superb 'clean' tone crafting.

We should get on with the feature set then!

Firstly, the Pure Drive is enclosed in a metal shell ready to face the rigours of the road. All connections are side-mounted including inputs and outputs for bass and amplifier respectively, as well as a balanced line output via XLR socket. Handy for running to recording devices, IEM use and for performances, the front-of-house PA system.

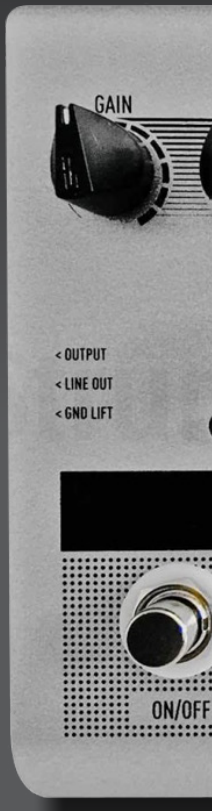
The top panel features two rows split up into three sections. Top left controls for your overall input and output levels to balance between engaged and disengaged volumes.

The bottom row of knobs is a well thought out four band equaliser. The two mid-frequency bands have the option to select a different centre frequency; you'll know that I am a fan of semi-parametric equalisers, so the option to change the centres is a wise choice. For extra low end boost a 'deep' switch and for additional top-end sparkle, at the other end of the controls, a 'bright' switch. I like the deep selection as it adds weight without overpowering the rest of the tonal balance in my set up.

Each of the EQ knobs responds well, and there's plenty fo boost and cut available for some crazy settings - though as usual, I advise making small adjustments initially when sculpting your sound.

The On/Off button on one side of the case engages the Pure Drive, over at the opposite end a Mute/Tuner button operates the single display tuner. On testing, it is super accurate and handy for silent tuning when enabled in between performances stood at your pedalboard.

"Overa
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dial in



most demanding bass players but suitable for the GR sound in an ultra-compact size.

all, the saturated sound the Pure Drive is **well ed** and also very easy to n grit..."



RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

GR Bass Pure Drive

MSRP: (UK) £250 / (US) $319

The Breakdown

Vintage	Modern
Affordable	High-end
Straightfoward	Feature-rich
Traditional	Innovative

For fans of

- Versatile Preamps
- Massive distortion
- Ultra-compact gear

For more information, please visit: **bassdirect.co.uk/bass_guitar_specialists/GR_Bass_Amplification.html**





GR Bass Pure Drive

It wouldn't be a drive pedal if the option to saturate your bass sound wasn't offered - stepping on that middle button brings in the drive circuit that runs in parallel to the clean path. This is no ordinary 'thrown on' circuit though! The Drive knob controls your amount of saturation, and there is a master to control level. The final three controls clinch the deal for me is really helping to deliver a good driven bass sound. The Blend means that I can raise or lower the level of the driven sound in comparison to the clean sound. This is important when creating a really solid foundation bass sound. Pure Drive offers two gain structures with the inclusion of a Drive Mod push switch. Fast access to dialling the type of distortion you want.

Now, I don't like overloading the input of a drive pedal with excessive low-end frequencies. Its sounds stodgy, it sounds incoherent at higher gain levels. Well, turns out GR Bass are thinking the same by installing a Low Filter 'pre-EQ' before the drive circuit. Punch the button and low end being fed into the drive circuit is attenuated. This tightens up the drive sound that only helps to serve the bass punch we need too. Carefully blending in that clean bass signal again and you'll have a really rich drive sound that can still hit hard.

Overall, the saturated sound from the Pure Drive is well crafted and also very easy to dial in grit. Aggressive edged top-end saturation still sounds controlled, I found rolling back the top end for a more mid present grind worked well too with my set up.

If you are looking for an all in one amplifier with a drive circuit on board, check out GR Bass' amplifier range, especially the Dual 800 that boasts some clever dual signal path features.

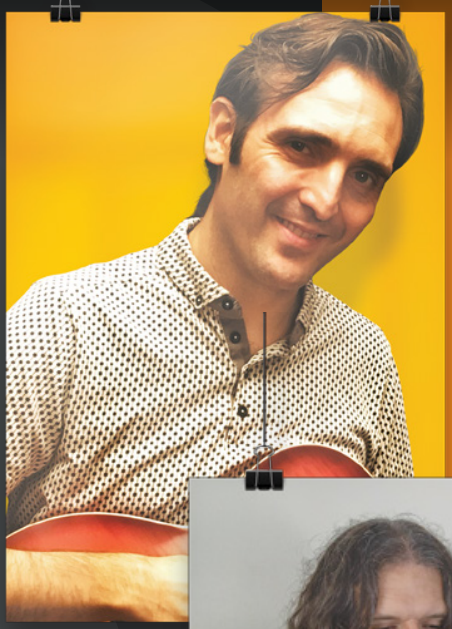
The pedal is very versatile as both a clean and driven preamplifier that although feature-rich, is dead easy to navigate. It's good to once again see thought going into creating a pedal that really works for the bassist.

THE Columns

Inside each and every issue, we have a host of exclusive lessons – with our team of **world-class contributors** offering their unique insight, knowledge and expertise to help you get the most out of your own playing.

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EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS








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THINGS I WISH I'D KNOWN EARLIER

- PART 2

In this new series of columns, **Nick Jennison** shares some of the things he wished someone had told him long before he had to figure it out the hard way. Hopefully it'll stop you from making the same mistakes, and help you become a better player, faster!



THE road to mastery of the electric guitar has more twists and turns than I care to mention. If there's a wrong turn to be taken, I assure you I've taken it. I've made just about every mistake you can think of when it comes to guitar playing, and I've learned from them - and accrued a fair amount of wisdom in the process that might help you on your journey. Of course, the road to mastery is one nobody ever reaches the end of, because there's always more to learn, but it helps to have a bit of guidance on your way.

PILLARS OF GREAT TECHNIQUE-

We all know that developing great technique is important, but what does that even mean? Is it being able to play really really fast? Being able to play complicated passages with ease? Masteing sweep picking, tapping, legato, alternate picking etc?

Not really. These are all by-products of great technique, but great technique is deeper than that. It's how you fret a note, how you strike »

string, how you hold the guitar, how you position your arms, your hands, your back… Great technique is all-encompassing and goes way beyond just being able to play "difficult" licks.

Go and watch some videos of BB King (I'll wait). While BB was never a chops monster like Malmsteen et al, there's no denying that he had outstanding technique. His hands never got in the way of what he was trying to "say" with the guitar, and he always played with accuracy and authority. *That's* what great technique is.



like? Well, contrary to what some teachers will tell you, there are a huge variety of ways you can play effectively on the guitar. Steve Morse, Michael Angelo Batio and Marty Friedman all have phenomenal right-hand technique, but their hands look radically different to "the norm". Andy James is one of the most frightening shredders you'll ever hear, but to say his left hand technique is "unique" is putting it mildly.



i Great technique is not about fitting a particular mould. It's about finding a way of playing that works for you. That said, there are some criteria that your playing technique should meet, regardless of how it looks. I call these the four pillars of great technique: "effectiveness", "efficiency", "repeatability" and "sustainability". Let's break them down.

EFFECTIVENESS·

The most obvious one of the four - your technique should allow you to produce the sounds you want to produce. This means that you shouldn't struggle to produce notes that are clean, in tune, in time, and with whatever dynamic or expressive quality you're looking for. »



Pillars Of Great Technique

If your technique doesn't produce the sounds you're looking for, it's not "effective", and you should work on that. Take string bends for example. We should strive to be relaxed while we're playing, but if this means your bends aren't reaching the target pitch then you need to re-assess what you're doing.

EFFICIENCY·

Economy of motion is something guitar teachers talk about a great deal, and it's a noble goal for sure. In theory, moving as little as possible while playing the guitar will let you play faster and more accurately. However, I've seen many players knot up with tension in an effort to stop their fingers moving any more than the bare minimum, and this is counterproductive. Instead of thinking of economy of movement, try focussing instead on economy of EFFORT. Some techniques (string bending, vibrato, funk strumming) require more movement of the hands and arms than others, and that's ok! As long as you aren't using more force than you have to, you're good to go.

REPEATABILITY·

This is a big one! In order for your technique to be reliable, it needs to be repeatable. This means fretting with the same part of the finger, using the same pressure *every time*. It means sitting in the same position every time you practice. If your technique starts to become unpredictable, your body will look for ways to compensate - usually with unnecessary effort and tension.

SUSTAINABILITY·

Last, but perhaps most important. Whatever your technique looks like, you should be able to sustain it - both for long bouts of playing, and over your entire playing lifetime. If your left wrist is angled in such a way that you get shooting pains, that's not going to be sustainable. If your right hand touch is so aggressive that you tire out after 10 minutes, that's not sustainable. If your guitar is set up like Stevie Ray Vaughan's, that's definitely not sustainable (even SRV lightened up his setup towards the end of his life). You want to continue playing and improving for your entire life, and injuries from unsustainable technique are a great way to cut your playing career short. Keep that in mind.

So there you have it - the four pillars of great technique. If you can tick all of these boxes, you're on the right track. Let these pillars be a guide for you as you keep improving.

END«

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WANG BAR ABUSE!

5 Tips For Better Divebombs

A warning: If you've come to this colu musicality, turn back now. There's a lo that will fulfil your (admirable) thirst t this column is NOT about that. We're t have with a guitar that doesn't involve persuasion you prefer. We're talking a

YOU might think that there's not a whole lot to these transgressive, chaotic noises, but perfecting the art of divebombing takes practice. It also takes a willing guitar - you'll need a tremolo that stays in tune at the very minimum, but a Floyd Rose is the gold standard. These double-locking systems allow for the most pitch travel for the least movement of the bar, and their tuning stability is as legendary as their laborious string changing procedure. So grab your most 80s guitar, consider donning spandex before thinking better of it, and let's begin! »

umn looking for taste, melody or
t of great Guitar Interactive content
o become a more musical player. But
alking about the most fun you can
e scantily-clad humans of whichever
bout divebombs! »

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Dean Guitars

1 - DON'T PICK

The most obvious way to produce a divebomb is to pick the string and press the bar in towards the guitar's body. We're going to address the second part of that in a minute, but let's start with the picking part.

Picking the string is, at best, a waste of time. You'll either need to have the bar already in your hand when you pick (which feels clumsy) or you'll have to reach for the bar after the pickstroke, with takes long enough to spoil the "flow" of the divebomb. The answer? Pull-offs. An aggressive pull-off not only frees up your right hand to grab the bar, but it also produces a great "meowing" sound that adds to the effect.

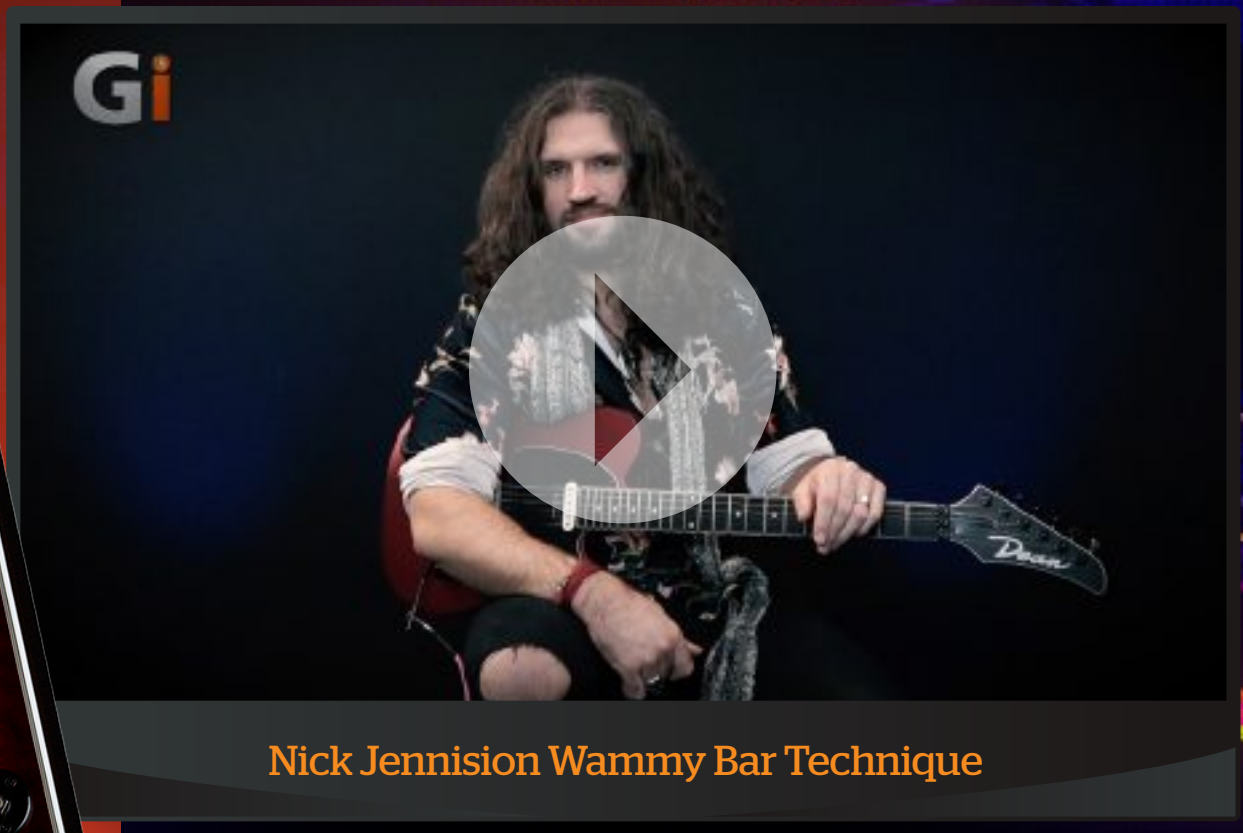
This tip becomes even more useful when it comes to dive-bombs on natural harmonics - the screaming sounds that players like Edward Van Halen, Dimebag Darell, Steve Vai and Joe Satriani have all employed to great effect. Instead of picking the harmonic, dive the bar and aggressively pull-off with your left hand, before touching the string with your left hand to sound the harmonic. It's a little hard to describe, but take a look at the video, and you'll see what I mean.

2 - KNOW YOUR HARMONICS

Speaking of harmonics, it pays to know which pitches you can produce and where to get them. Here's a shortlist of which intervals you can find and where along the string you can locate them. I've also included the pitches these harmonics produce on the G string. »







Nick Jennision Wammy Bar Technique

Directly over the 12th fret = 1 octave up (G)

Directly over the 7th fret = Perfect 5th, 1 octave up (D)

Directly over the 5th fret = 2 octaves up (G)

Just behind the 4th fret = Major 3rd, 2 octaves up (B)

Just ahead of the 3rd fret = Perfect 5th, 2 octaves up (D)

…It gets harder to produce clean harmonics from here on, but they're in there if you're accurate enough…

Just behind the 3rd fret = Flat 7th, 2 octaves up (F)

Between the 3rd and 2nd frets = 3 octaves up (G)

Just ahead of the 2nd fret = Major 2nd, 3 octaves up (A)

Directly over the 2nd fret = Major 3rd, 3 octaves up (B)

3 - GETTING HARMONICS TO POP

Ok, so you know where to find a bunch of harmonics, but how do you make them really scream. Well, it helps if you start with an aggressive pull-off on slack strings like we described in tip 1. But as far as sounding the actual harmonic goes, it's all about the lightest of touches. You're not trying to fret the note, just touch it as lightly as possible. Consider using the soft, un-callused pad of your finger (or your tongue if your name is Steve Vai).





4 - TURN THE BAR BACKWARDS

There's no rule that says your bar has to point towards the guitar's neck. By turning it 180 degrees to point away from the neck (but still following the line of the strings), you take away the biggest obstacle in the bar's path as you slack the strings - the guitar's body! This affords you extra range, and it also looks more dramatic too! If it was good enough for Dime, you should at least give it a try.

5 - THE "SATCH REACH-OVER"

Speaking of looking dramatic, here's a technique that violates all the conventional rules of guitar playing, and at least two of the previous four tips! This outrageous looking and sounding technique is one of Joe Satriani's trademarks, and it involves playing a pinched harmonic on an open string, while grabbing the bar with your fretting hand. As well as looking the part, it's also just about the only way to change which harmonic you're sounding mid-dive. Give it a try!

So there we have it! 5 tips to help make your most tasteless musical moments even more transgressive. While I'm certain these techniques are guaranteed to be a big hit at the jazz club, I'd hate for the other guitarists to feel embarrassed that they didn't buy a Floyd-equipped shred machine. With that in mind, probably best that you save this stuff for rock and metal gigs. That way no feelings will be hurt - only a few ears. Happy shredding!

END «

VENOM PRISON

ASH GRAY

Venom Prison has set the world of heavy music alight over the past few years. Following the release of their stunning debut 'Animus' in 2016 and last year's 'Samsara,' the Welsh death-metal collective are back with 'Primeval' – out now worldwide via Prosthetic Records. To celebrate the new release, Venom Prison guitarist and founder Ash Gray breaks down three immense riffs from the new track "Slayer Of Holofernes" in this exclusive **Guitar Interactive** column.

»



YouTube

Venom Prison - Slayer of Holofernes (Official Music Video)

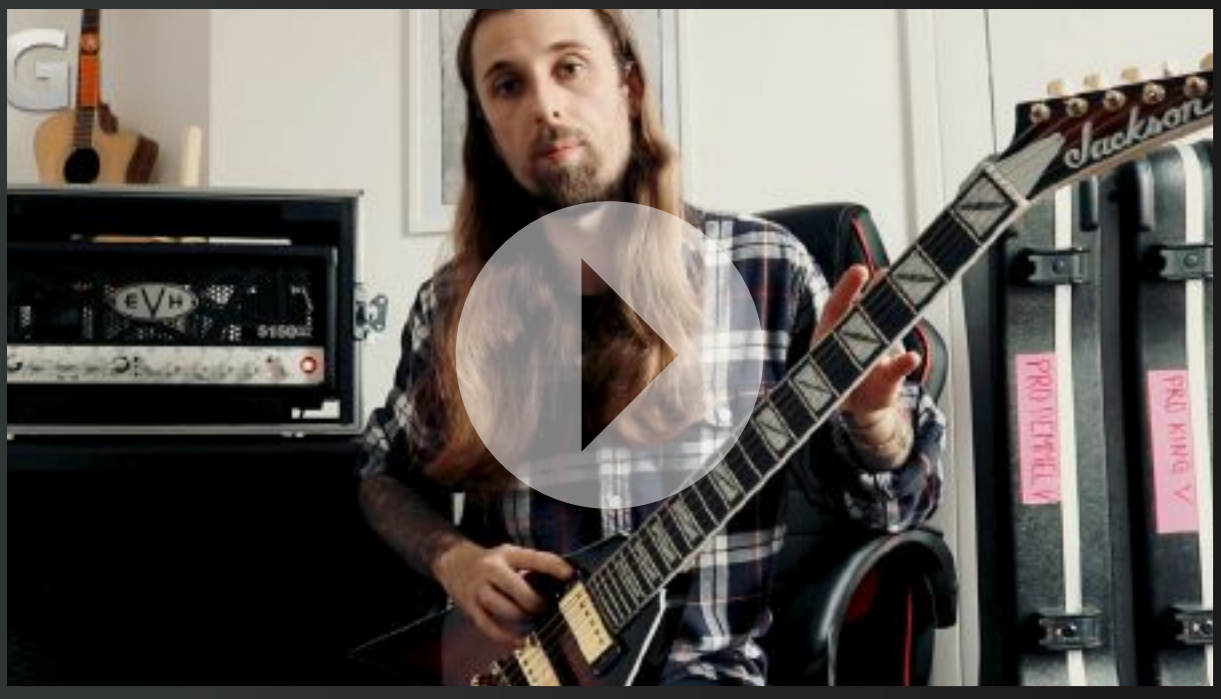


SINCE 2016, Venom Prison have gone from strength to strength; debut full length 'Animus' catapulted them into the consciousness and record collections of discerning death metal fans the world over. Their follow up release, ‹Samsara,' solidified them as a serious force to be reckoned with in the world of metal, paving the way for a string of high profile shows and festival slots around the globe. On 'Primeval,' the band revisits it's earliest days, capturing the same intensity and visceral energy they possessed from day one and adding an additional layer of sophistication to their sound by re-recording, re-mixing and re-mastering those old favourites with producer Tom Dring in late 2019. The artwork is once again handled masterfully by Eliran Kantor.

Of their decision to revisit their earliest tracks, the band say:

"Primeval is a snapshot of the earlier days of VENOM PRISON, simpler times where we locked ourselves in a room for days on end to create the early incarnation of what would be our first collection of songs. Our first release/demo 'Defy The Tyrant› was subsequently born, and we never thought this would lead onto being picked up by Prosthetic Records or touring the world. This became a starting gun for touring and festivals in between the studio to write, including what would become 'The Primal Chaos.' Given the current climate and the global pandemic situation we felt it was appropriate to package together our early material so that it is presented in a form of how it was always intended. »





Ash Gray Lesson

"This is what you hear now. Our previous EP's plus two new tracks to give you an idea of what is to come in future. Our new chapter awaits, the grind must continue."

END«

PRIMEVAL **is out now worldwide vi Prosthetic Records.**

'Primeval' by Venom Prison Tracklist



1. Usurper Of The Throne
2. Life Suffer
3. Mortal Abomination
4. Path Of Exile
5. Defy The Tyrant
6. Babylon The Whore
7. Daemon Vulgaris
8. Narcotic
9. The Primal Chaos
10. Defiant To The Will Of God
11. Slayer Of Holofernes

Due to Covid-19, Venom Prison has revised their European touring plans for early 2021 and moved the shows to October. Safety continues to be of the utmost importance. Special guests remain Creeping Death and Leeched. Original tickets remain valid for the new dates.

PRIMEVAL PRISON
2021 Tour Dates:

04.10.21 Germany Karlsruhe @ Stadtmitte

05.10.21 Germany Hannover @ Faust

06.10.21 Germany Hamburg @ Hafenklang

07.10.21 Germany Kassel @ Goldgrube

08.10.21 Germany Leipzig @ Naumanns

09.10.21 Czech Rep Ostrava @ Barrak Music Club

10.10.21 Germany Berlin @ Cassiopeia

11.10.21 Poland Warsaw @ Pogłos

12.10.21 Austria Vienna @ Viper Room

13.10.21 Germany München @ Backstage

14.10.21 Switzerland Aarau @ Kiff

15.10.21 Netherlands Tilburg @ Little Devil

16.10.21 Germany Essen @ Cafe Nova

17.10.21 Belgium Hasselt @ Muziekodroom

19.10.21 UK Birmingham @ Mama Roux

20.10.21 UK Leeds @ Key Club

21.10.21 UK Bristol @ The Fleece

22.10.21 UK Glasgow @ G2

23.10.21 UK Manchester @ Rebellion

24.10.21 UK Nottingham @ Rescue Rooms

25.10.21 UK London @ Underworld

26.10.21 UK Southampton @ Joiners

For tickets and more information on Venom Prison, please visit: **venomprison.com**





FIN

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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 Quiet Room.

In this column I would like to share my arrangement for solo guitar of 'The Lonely Man', which is the soundtrack for the 'The Incredible Hulk', written by Joe Harnell.

I had completely forgotten about this beautiful theme until recently as I was on a round the World tour with the wonderful singer Basia. While warming up before a concert at the Blue Note Jazz Club of Beijing, my friend and esteemed colleague saxophonist Ian Kirkham, also known for his prominent role as a saxophonist and musical director with the band 'Simply Red', started playing this wonderful theme on a piano backstage. That night after the concert, I searched and listened in awe and a little nostalgia to the original and couldn't help but create this arrangement for solo guitar.

As expected, I have had to adapt a few passages and I took the artistic liberty to slightly vary some of the harmonic content, but I tried to keep the part very similar to the original piano arrangement.

To accommodate the lovely contrapuntal question and answer present in the first part, I have dropped the 6th string down to D and have changed the register of the 'answering line' to allow some bass notes to be held. This is evident in bar 2, where the 1st 'A' on the '+' of 1, has been transposed 8va, to allow the C# to ring for 4 beats.

Bar 4 is a little challenging, as it requires a finger-yoga stretch. In the video I am recommending an easier alternative for you to consider.

Bar 6 shows how I personally favour using open string when possible, as these sound particularly resonant and give our fretting hand a short but still useful breather.

HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

The piece features many harmonic devices I enjoy using, for example drop voicings, diminished and extended harmony as well as inversions as evident in the chart below:

Here are the chords utilized and described in a concise manner, omitting the passing notes.

Dm	DmM7/C#	Dm/C	BbM7
Am7b5	Dsus4 D7Alt	Gmadd9	GmM7
Gm7	C7	F Am/E	Bb/D
Em7b5	A7b9	Am7b5	D7Alt
Gmadd9	A7	Dm	/ / / /

One of my favourite passages is the D7#9 (aka 'Jimi Hendrix chord) followed by a D7b9 found in bar 6, both from the D 'Altered' scale (Eb melodic minor).

Bar 8, features a very effective melodic minor passage, which in my opinion works really well on guitar and it is reminiscent of the French Impressionists composers, Ravel, Satie and Debussy. The harmonic content there consists of a GmMaj7, followed by a Gm6

Another important harmonic ingredient is the frequent use of open strings to complement the main melody, like in bar 6 for example. This is a very effective way of enhancing the melody in a relatively easy way, as the open strings' sustain will add 'legato' qualities to the piece.

RHYTHMIC INGREDIENTS:

The piece is a ballad and features a recurrent use of 8th notes.

MELODIC INGREDIENTS:

The melodic content navigates different registers and although gravitates around the key of Dm, it explores a few neighboring tonalities, like for example G Melodic minor, Eb Melodic Minor, Bb Melodic Minor and their deriving harmonic structures, such as altered chords present.



Giorgio Serci - 'The Lonely Man'

As always, I would like to recommend exploring the above-mentioned techniques in order 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 you'll be able to use these with fluidity and effectiveness.

The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

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

'p' focuses predominantly on the bass lines, while 'i, m, a' play the melody and countermelody or harmony part. The melody is predominantly played with the 'a' finger, so it is important to use the appropriate velocity for the note to cut through.

Play this 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 'a' finger, so more attack is needed to outline the melody.

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

BAR 1: Features a pick-up phrase consisting of frets 2 of G, fret 1 of e and open e. Next, open 'e' and D, open A, ring f on fret 3 of D, middle f on fret 2 of D and ring f n fret 3 of D, followed by fret 2 of G, 1st fret and open e.

BAR 2: As bar 1 but with little f on fret 4 instead of the open D, and fret 2 of G, instead of open A.

BAR 3: As bar 2 but with middle f on fret 3 of A.

BAR 4: Index on fret 1 of A, little f on fret 5 of e. Ring f on fret 3 of B, followed by fret 1 of B and back fret 3 of B. Next, middle f on fret 3 of G and little f on fret 5 of e, then fret 8 of B and 11 and 10 of e.

BAR 5: Open A with little f on fret 10 of e, followed by fret 7 of D and fret 8, 7 and 8 of G and 11 and 10 of e.

BAR 6: Open D and fret 8 of e, open A, D and G. Next, fret 5 of A, 4 of D, 5 of G and 6 of B, followed by fret 4 of B.

Bar 7: Fret 5 of E with 6 of e, open D and G, fret 2 and 3 of G, 3 of B, open and fret 3 of e.

BAR 8: Fret 5 of E with 7 of B, 5 of A, 8 of D, 7 of G, 5 of B and fret 7 of G, followed by 6 and 5 of e.

Bar 9: Fret 5 of E with 6 of e, open D and G, followed by 2 and 3 of G, 6 and 5 of e.

BAR 10: Fret 3 of A and G, with 5 of B and 6 of e, followed by 8 of e. Next, 7 of A, 5 of G and e followed by 8 of B.

BAR 11: Barre' on 5, with little f on fret 8 of A. 5 of G, 6 and 8 of B. Next, 7 of A with 5 of e, 5 of G, of e and 8 of B.

BAR 12: Open D with 3 of B and 5 of e, followed by 3 of G, 6 of e and 3 of B. Next, open D with 3 of G, 3 of G and fret 1 of e.

BAR 13: Fret 2 of D with fret 3 of 3, open, 3 and 2 of G. Fret 2 of D with 3 of G, B and e, with 1 of e.

BAR 14: Open A, fret 3 of G and e, whilst fret 2 of B. Next fret 2 of D, 3 of G and e. Next, fret 3,4 ,5 of G, B and e followed by 6, 5, 6 on the same strings.

BAR 15: Open A with fret 8 of e, next fret 7 of D, 8 and 7 of G. Next, fret 4 of B and 7, 8, 8 on D, G and B strings.

BAR 16: Open D with fret 10 of e and fret 2 of G. Next, 8, 7 and 8 of G, b and e, then fret 10 of e and finally, fret 5, 4 and 5 of the 1st 3 strings.

BAR 17: As bar 9.

BAR 18: Open A, with fret 3, 2 and 3 of G, B and e, then 4 and 5 of B and G, followed by 6 and 5 of G and B. Open A and fret 1 of e.

BAR 19 AND 20: Open D with fret 3 of B, open A, fret 3, 2 and 3 of D and open A.

Congratulations, you have completed 'The Lonely Man'!

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 in terms of 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 ponti-cello', (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 delivering 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 study piece and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions. If you would like to listen any more of my compositions, please check the previous issues of Guitar Interactive Magazine as well as any of my CDs, available from my website:



Check me out here at
www.giorgioserci.com



You can also find me on instagram on giorgio_serci or twitter @giorgioserci as well as on facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic

Until the next time - Good-bye.


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"GETTING MORE FROM YOUR OPEN CHORDS"

In another new and exclusive Gi column, **Nick Jennison** looks to expand your open chord knowledge with an exploration of some ADD9 shapes and voicings that you'll be happy to add to your arsenal.

Once we develop a certain level of skill on the instrument, we start looking for ways to expand our vocabulary - especially when it comes to chords. It's very tempting to start looking for new shapes high up the neck, dripping with jazzy extensions and names that would make an Ibanez catalogue manager blush ("BbminMaj7b13", "Does it come in transparent blue?").

There's nothing wrong with that, but it's worth taking a moment to appreciate why open chords are so great. After all, there are a nearly infinite number of ways we can play a G chord on the guitar, and yet we've settled on the shape forever ensconced in 90s pop culture as "bear claw". As a wise guitarist once said, "nothing ever became a cliche because it was bad". Since both of is his initials are G, so I'm assuming he knows a thing or two about the subject. »



"There are lots of the video, but it's **experimenting** a can find some..."

Open chords are so ubiquitous because about the ringing of open strings that's closed-shape chords can't hope to match in itself. But because we've heard them contempt. Fortunately, there's an easy w simply by adding one note - the 9th.

Before you worry too much about w you probably already know at leas standard major chord with an "a or "maj9" chord).

Cadd9 - C chord with the addit B string - is so ubiquitous that t probably played less often than C ier, and it's a direct substitution no matter the context. Wheth F major or any of the relativ chord, you can swap it ou absolutely cannot be said

With that in mind, can we can! The shapes are a video that accompanies that'll get you where you to know where these cho pleasant. »



great shapes in always **worth** nd seeing if you

they sound great. There's something pure and symphonic in a way that n. And they're easy, which has value so many times, familiarity can breed way to add spice to most open chords,

hat this means, let me point out that st one "add9" chord (the name for a dded 9", not to be confused with a "9"

tion of a D note on the 3rd fret of the he standard open position C chord is Cadd9 is. It's easier to play, sounds sex- for any common-or-garden C chord - her you're playing in C major, G major, ve minors that feature a diatonic C t for Cadd9 with impunity. The same l for, say, C7 or Cmaj7.

we do the same for other chords? Sure a little tricker, but not much. In the this column, we'll go over some shapes u need to go. But it's just as important rds come from and why they sound so



Getting More From Your Open Chords

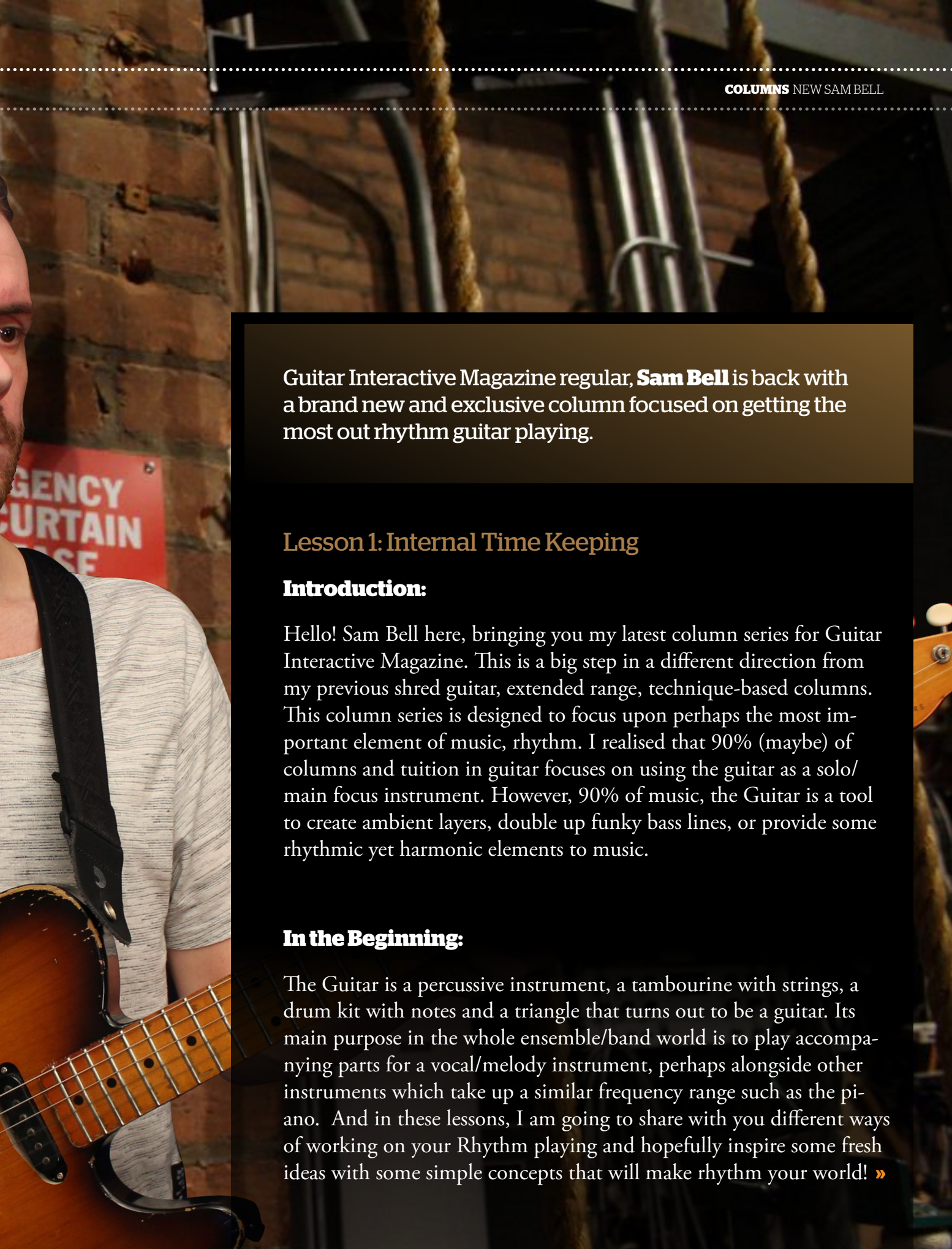
A standard three-note chord (also known as a triad) is made up of the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of its parent scale. A-C is made up of C E and G; an Em is E G and B, and so on. The 9th note we add to our add9 chord is the same as the 2nd note of the scale (a D, in the case of a Cadd9 chord), but it's generally played "up the octave" - IE: not on the lowest strings. The reason for this is that clustering the 1st 2nd and 3rd notes of the scale close together in a low register sounds muddy, but in higher registers the interaction of the notes sounds sweet and chiming.

With this in mind, constructing an add9 chord is as simple as taking any regular major or minor chord and adding in the note that's one above the root (the note that gives the chord it's letter name). This is usually two frets above the root note. For a Gadd9, insert an A note somewhere in the mix. For an Fadd9, insert a G. For an Emadd9, insert an F# (two frets up, remember?). As long as you insert it in a higher register, it's going to sound lovely - generally anywhere on the D G B and high E strings will be fine.

So there we have it - a crash course on expanding your open chord vocabulary with add9 chords! There are lots of great shapes in the video, but it's always worth experimenting and seeing if you can find some of your own. Maybe you'll end up turning those cliche open chords into something genuinely unique!

END «


Rhythm
Guitar
Concepts



Guitar Interactive Magazine regular, **Sam Bell** is back with a brand new and exclusive column focused on getting the most out rhythm guitar playing.

Lesson 1: Internal Time Keeping

Introduction:

Hello! Sam Bell here, bringing you my latest column series for Guitar Interactive Magazine. This is a big step in a different direction from my previous shred guitar, extended range, technique-based columns. This column series is designed to focus upon perhaps the most important element of music, rhythm. I realised that 90% (maybe) of columns and tuition in guitar focuses on using the guitar as a solo/main focus instrument. However, 90% of music, the Guitar is a tool to create ambient layers, double up funky bass lines, or provide some rhythmic yet harmonic elements to music.

In the Beginning:

The Guitar is a percussive instrument, a tambourine with strings, a drum kit with notes and a triangle that turns out to be a guitar. Its main purpose in the whole ensemble/band world is to play accompanying parts for a vocal/melody instrument, perhaps alongside other instruments which take up a similar frequency range such as the piano. And in these lessons, I am going to share with you different ways of working on your Rhythm playing and hopefully inspire some fresh ideas with some simple concepts that will make rhythm your world! »

Timing and you:

Timing is key to everything in music, life, and science. (In this case I am going to be talking about music, however...) The meaning of a note or chord can be changed by the slightest fluctuation in timing, deliberate or not. As Guitarists, it can be very common to rely on other band members (the drummer!) or a click track to keep in time. And this is certainly not a bad thing if you're a listening and reacting to the musical elements outside of your own physical and conscious being. However exercising your internal timing (your ability to keep track of a steady tempo with no click/outside influence) will allow you to gain even more control over how tight you can play with a band, how consistent you are to a click, your ability to comp for someone in a duo setting, and also wholly transform your technique in other areas of your playing.

Internal Time Keeping Exercise 1:

For this example and all following examples in future columns, we will need a metronome, "wait I thought you were talking about not relying on an outside source of time!" I imagine hearing you say in the near future when this column is published. We are going to be using the metronome not for increasing speed or seeing how fast we can play flight of the bumblebee; we are going to be using the metronome at such a slow tempo that we have a nice bit of space between each click. The first thing I would encourage you to try is finding a straightforward riff/chord sequence that you enjoy playing. Now decrease the tempo, you will find it's VERY easy to rush (a very common issue for guitar players), and THIS is the exercise that will help you with controlling your rhythmic steadying. Because the click is so slow, you are forced to really hold back and relax. You can almost see through time itself! While there isn't much music that will be as slow as the tempos required on the metronome to reach the speeds needed for this exercise, you will start to be able to apply the same level of rhythmic control and awareness at higher tempos. You will be in charge of your own internal time while also being aware of others in the band, creating a really tight sounding band that is happy because you're playing in the pocket!

Internal Time Keeping Exercise 2:

This one may require a drum loop of some sort (if you have Garage Band or something similar you can do this) The goal is to create a 4 bar long loop and play a rhythm part over the top of it. Take out the last bar but keep the space left by that omitted bar there, so there is silence for 4 beats. Then see if you can play through this gap and be in time for beat 1 of bar 1. You can change this up by either slowing the tempo down (like Ex1 combined with Ex2) or creating multiple loops that drop out for different amounts of time. If that gets easy, see if you can drop out for the omitted bars and come in on beat 1 after not playing through. This really gets your ear and brain involved in the timing process.



Lesson 1: Internal Time Keeping

In Conclusion:

So there it is, my first instalment of my rhythm column, how am I doing? Hopefully, these two unique rhythmic exercises should get you thinking about your rhythm playing a bit more. It's very common to find out sooner rather than later we all rush a bit too much at slow tempos, but it's so rewarding nailing it, and hopefully, you will see and hear the benefits it brings to your playing and how you get on in band situations. It's not about being perfect, but more in control and aware. I'd like to think of these as one of the ultimate chop workouts, no matter what instrument you play or how long you have played, it's still going to be challenging, you can take it further in many imaginative ways, and it is a very productive thing to practice in your musicianship. That's all for now, I shall see you in the next instalment!

END«

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