

EXCLUSIVE LESSONS FROM NICK JENNISON » SAM BELL » GIORGIO SERCI

# Guitar <sup>Interactive</sup> 77

MOTLEY  
**CRUE**  
TECH SESSION

## George Benson

THE AMERICAN **MUSIC ICON** TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO  
GUITAR INTERACTIVE

### + INTERVIEWS

TRAVIS  
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Welcome to **ISSUE**

**77**

## Music icons, million sellers & so much more...



Editor  
// Jonathan Graham

Welcome to another jam-packed edition of Guitar Interactive Magazine. Our cover interview features an all-time icon and Grammy-winning giant of jazz, George Benson. During a six-decade career marked by awards, acclaim and

Billboard-topping output, the Pittsburgh, Hill District-born veteran has earned his place in both the history books and the biggest venues around the world. Gi talks with the music icon about his latest album 'Weekend In London,' his long-time love affair with the guitar and much more.

Also in the edition, Travis frontman Fran Healy talks exclusively to Gi about his unique approach to songwriting. John Rzeznik chats about the Goo Goo Dolls' very first Christmas album 'It's Christmas All Over.' Plus, Zach Myers speaks on teaming up with his

bandmate Brent Smith (Shinedown), as the duo showcase a different yet just as intriguing musical side in the form of two brand new projects: Smith & Myers.

This issue's Tech Session focuses on one of the biggest Los Angeles bands to emerge from the '80s. With their excessive Rock n' Roll lifestyle depicted in a recent movie, Jamie Humphries felt it was about time Gi looked at the riff genius of Mick Mars and Motley Crue.

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 Nick Jennison, Sam Bell & Giorgio Serci.

Happy holidays to you all, and all the best for 2021.

**Guitar** Interactive

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# Guitar Interactive

Welcome to Guitar Interactive Issue 77

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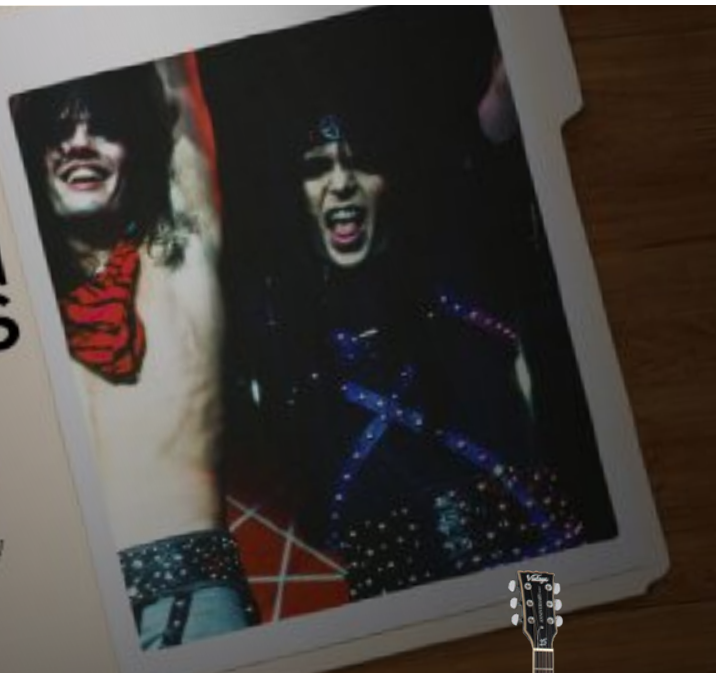
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In this issue's interview line up, **Jonathan Graham** talks with music icon George Benson about his latest album 'Weekend In London,' his long-time love affair with the guitar and much more. Travis frontman **Fran Healy** talks exclusively to Gi about his unique approach to songwriting. **John Rzeznik** chats about the Goo Goo Dolls' very first Christmas album 'It's Christmas All Over.' Plus, **Zach Myers** speaks on teaming up with his bandmate **Brent Smith** (Shinedown), as the duo showcase a different yet just as intriguing musical side in the form of two brand new project: Smith & Myers.

# IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES





Th

Original Photo ©Carl Hyde

As an all-time icon and Grammy-winning giant of jazz, we have grown used to seeing George Benson celebrated by awards, acclaim and Billboard-topping output, the Pittsburgh, Hill District-born veteran musician. Guitar Interactive's Jonathan Graham talks with the music icon about his latest album 'Wee



# e Gentleman of Jazz

GEORGE BENSON



George Benson on the stages that befit his sky-high status. During a six-decade career marked by his earned place in both the history books and the biggest venues around the world. 'Weekend In London,' his long-time love affair with the guitar and much more. »



**LAST** month, jazz icon George Benson released 'Weekend In London,' an electrifying new live album capturing his 2019 performance at London's (intimate 250-seat) Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. To find this megastar going nose-to-nose with the breathless capacity crowd at one of London's most prestigious venues is a real treat, not only for a handful of lucky fans were present as the lights went down that magical night in 2019, but also for George himself. "I like that kind of intimacy," says Benson of his flying visit to the Jazz Club, captured on the electrifying new live album. "I can feel the love when it's up close and personal." Fast forward a year, and Kevin Shirley's dynamic production is your invitation to slide onto Ronnie Scott's red velvet banquette, call

for a scotch on the rocks and catch the sparks as Benson's honeyed vocal and fluid guitar licks drive the finest live outfit in modern jazz.

"We captured a lot of the atmosphere on Weekend In London," he says. "It was very crowded like it always is at Ronnie Scott's, no matter who's there. We were almost touching as we were playing, people all up on the bandstand. But I'm always happy to be in those surroundings. A lot of big Benson fans were there – and some of the screaming ladies. It was a fantastic night."

'Weekend In London' brings Benson full circle. This seasoned performer estimates that almost a half-century has passed since he first played at





the fabled Soho club, touching down in London as the hottest property on the US jazz scene of the early-'70s. «That week, we had everybody come see us,» he remembers. «People we never heard of, and some we did hear of. The great John Williams, who at the time was the number-one classical player in the world. John McLaughlin was the up-and-coming master of jazz guitar, and he came almost every night to hear me play. Ronnie Scott introduced us every night, and he wouldn't put up with any shenanigans. He'd tell the audience: 'If you go outside, you can talk as much as you want. But in here – be quiet!'

“I still love the club,” Benson continues, “for what it represents and its longevity, the clientele

and the atmosphere. It's an incredible place, to be and to play. I've been there for big bands. I've seen Buddy Rich there. I've heard some masterful music in that joint over the years.”

The 2019 show that became the new album was another fabled night to go down in the club's folklore. This hard-bitten jazzman might prefer spontaneity to setlists, but this latest live album nods to many of his countless career peaks, whether he's opening with the deathless groove of 1980's US #4 smash “Give Me The Night,” revisiting fan favourites like “Love X Love” and “In Your Eyes,” or breathing fresh mojo into classic covers like Dave Bartholomew's “I Hear You Knocking” and Donny Hathaway's “The Ghetto.” “We don't plan the show out in »

advance,” explains Benson. “But we know there’s things we gotta play, and if you leave too many out, you’re in for a troubled night. We know what people have come to hear. So I’ve got half the battle won.”

For jthere ares, of course, part of the appeal lies in the improvisation – and ‘Weekend In London’ furthers Benson’s reputation as the best in the business. “Basically, the whole show is improvised except the melody itself and the ensemble playing,” he explains. “We play the arrangements, to remind the audience what song they’re listening to, but then we can go crazy and do all the improvisation.”

If Benson sounds utterly at home on Ronnie Scott’s cramped stage, that’s because it’s how he started out, all those years ago, before fame came calling. From the age of seven, the kid with the golden voice known as ‘Little Georgie Benson’ was a regular fixture at the street corners, drug stores, jazz joints and R&B houses of his native Pittsburgh. “I played every nook and cranny that was available to me,” he recalls. “Most of my joints were the ‘B’ and ‘C’ houses, in terms of quality. But that’s how I got my beginnings, and it allowed me to experiment, let me know what I could get away with. If I’d played a major nightclub in those days, I would have failed that test, badly.”

»







# EXCEPTIONAL TONE ANYWHERE

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“But **everything** changed when Benson released 1976’s chart-topping Breezin’ as his first album for Warner Brothers...”







Yet the young man swiftly rose up the rankings, from taking requests from punters (“Little Georgie, come over here, man, take this quarter and sing this song for us”) to cutting his first sides with RCA, still aged just ten. An early tutelage with jazz-organ great ‘Brother’ Jack McDuff tightened his chops and immersed him in the genre, before he spread his own wings on 1964’s solo debut, *The New Boss Guitar*. “I took chances, stretched out and put out what I do,” he remembers. “By the time I got to New York at the age of 26. I was the number-one jazz guitar player – and I couldn’t believe it.”

By the late-’60s, as an instrumentalist, Benson’s name was already mentioned in a reverential whisper amongst the jazz genre’s connoisseurs. He was even one of the few musicians capable of keeping up with the brilliant but prickly trumpeter Miles Davis. “He was everything I expected him to be,” says Benson of guesting on the track ‘Paraphernalia’, from 1968’s *Miles in The Sky* album. «In the studio, he always did things his own way, and when he got tired of getting people to understand him, he just put his horn back in the case and walked out. But there was a lot about him to admire.»

But everything changed when Benson released 1976’s chart-topping *Breezin’* as his first album for Warner Brothers, its tracklisting home to a glorious reading of Leon Russell’s ‘This Masquerade’. «Until then, I’d only played guitar on my records,» he says. «They didn’t even know that I sang. So my producer, Tommy LiPuma, he only allowed me one chance at singing on ‘This Masquerade’. So that one take is the only take that exists. And it went to #1. It became Record Of The Year at the Grammys. It changed my whole life. It changed the lives of many people.” »



George Benson - Give Me The Night  
(Official Visualizer)



Benson had a golden touch in that late-'70s period, whether recording the original 1977 take of 'The Greatest Love Of All' (later covered by Whitney Houston) or delivering an all-time-great live album with the following year's 'Weekend In L.A.' («That had the song 'On Broadway',» he reminds us, «which became a big hit»). But these flirtations with the mainstream were all leading to 1980's all-conquering 'Give Me The Night': a scat-singing, disco-flavoured smash, written by the late-great Rod Temperton, whose global sales swept up a fresh generation of Benson fans. "This Masquerade' was a very mature song," he considers. "But 'Give Me The Night' was a powerhouse dance tune, and it gave me some longevity." »



 **YouTube**

George Benson - The Ghetto  
(Weekend In London)

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The momentum has never left him. As Benson's ageless career has crossed over the decades, he's walked a perfect tightrope, still commanding a fierce respect amongst the most discerning jazz audiences, while firing off hit singles that are loved the world over, from 'Turn Your Love Around' to 'Nothing's Gonna Change My Love For You'. Never losing his early taste for collaboration, he's worked with everyone from Rod Stewart (on 2005's *The Great American Songbook, Volume IV*) to Damon Albarn's Gorillaz (on 2018's "Humility" single). All the while, the

Ibanez GB signature guitar he co-designed and first used for 1978's 'Weekend In L.A.' continues to fly off the shelves – but nobody plays it like the man himself.

Even in the past decade, at a time when most living legends would step back, slow down and bask in their royalties, there's a creative curiosity about Benson that has kept the veteran jazzman active and forging ahead. In 2013, he reinvigorated the covers-album format with the fresh takes of *Inspiration: A Tribute To Nat*

## GEORGE BENSON WEEKEND IN LONDON

### 'Weekend In London'

Is available worldwide via Mascot Label Group.

#### Weekend In London' by George Benson Tracklist

GIVE ME THE NIGHT

FEEL LIKE MAKIN' LOVE

TURN YOUR LOVE AROUND

DON'T LET ME BE LONELY

LOVE X LOVE

THE GHETTO

IN YOUR EYES

MOODY'S MOOD

I HEAR YOU KNOCKING

LOVE BALLAD

NOTHING'S GONNA CHANGE MY LOVE FOR  
YOU

NEVER GIVE UP ON A GOOD

AFFIRMATION



King Cole («I knew that stuff ever since I was a baby»). Next, having signed to the Mascot label in 2018, he opened his account in style on last year's *Walking To New Orleans*, masterfully reinterpreting the hits of Chuck Berry and Fats Domino – and sounding better than ever in the hands of producer Kevin Shirley, famed for his work with Joe Bonamassa, Iron Maiden and The Black Crowes. “The record company supplied me with a great band from Nashville,” remembers Benson. “I wanted to give those songs everything they deserved, without overdoing it.”

It's been a long and winding road from the juke-joints of Pittsburgh to the beating heart of the London jazz scene, and George Benson has been great company every step of the way. Now, with ‘Weekend In London,’ the same club that hosted that young hotshot back in the early-'70s welcomes back the older, wiser legend to burn down the house. Perhaps the compère says it best: “You don't get stars this big in rooms this small very often, ladies and gentlemen. Please be prepared to be dazzled – Mr George Benson...!”

END«

### George Benson's **Upcoming 2021 UK Tour** Dates are as follows:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Thu June 17 2021 -</b> | LEEDS first direct Arena    |
| <b>Mon June 21 2021 -</b> | MANCHESTER Bridgewater Hall |
| <b>Tue June 22 2021 -</b> | BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall    |
| <b>Thu June 24 2021 -</b> | GLASGOW Royal Concert Hall  |
| <b>Sat June 26 2021 -</b> | CARDIFF St Davids Hall      |
| <b>Sun June 27 2021 -</b> | BOURNEMOUTH BIC             |
| <b>Tue June 29 2021 -</b> | SOUTHEND Cliffs Pavilion    |
| <b>Wed June 30 2021 -</b> | LONDON Royal Albert Hall    |

For tickets and more information on George Benson, please visit: **[georgebenson.com](http://georgebenson.com)**



# The Element

FRAN HEALY:

Incredibly, it's now been over twenty-five years since the four members of Travis met in a Scottish rehearsal room together. At various points along the trajectory between obscurity and global stardom, the band has toured across the globe and even been the subject of the award-winning feature-length documentary *Travis: The Great Escape*. The band's extraordinarily prolific and unflappable career is their latest album '10 Seconds' and their new songwriting exports. Guitar Interactive Magazine editor **Jonathan Graham**



# Elements of Song

Travis (Fran Healy, Andy Dunlop, Dougie Payne, Neil Primrose) first set foot in a Glasgow pub in 1990 and now, the band has sold millions of albums, played sold-out shows and released a new album. The band's new documentary 'Almost Fashionable.' Marking another new chapter in the band's 'Songs.' Yet another body of work that showcases Travis as one of the UK's finest bands. **GI** speaks with the band's frontman Fran Healy in this exclusive interview. »



**Jonathan:** So, Fran, how have you been during this mad year?

**Fran:** Not bad. I have actually been really busy with the band, doing all the videos and the artwork for the album. Literally, all of the visual stuff and everything is just taking up all the time and concentration; it has kept me away from reading the news all the time.

**Jonathan:** Congratulations on '10 songs.' What a fantastic record. It is always a pleasure to hear new music from you guys.

**Fran:** This is a good one. I think you get a really good one every ten years if you stick at it that long. For the past 14 years, I have just been a dad, but about a year and a half ago, Clay, my son came up when I was doodling about on the piano, and he said 'Papa, I think you should do the band again, like, I'm good, you can go and do that now.' So, I was sort of able to concentrate back on the band again, and it shows, it really does.

**Jonathan:** Did it all come together quite quickly on this one?

**Fran:** No, it took four years just to write it all, and during that time, I was making the documentary about the band. We came off the last record and tour for 'Everything at Once,' and I went straight into editing the documentary, which took about two years. It took forever! I thought it would only take about eight months at most, but it went on and on and started eating into my writing time, and I can't really do two things at once. I was writing tiny bits and

pieces along the way. The good thing about writing like that or having that amount of time is that you will come up with something and then come back to it six months later and listen to it again and think, oh, no that was rubbish, or if it's okay, what was maybe a little pulse is now a heartbeat with a life of its own. So, by four years you could have a lot of those. After that time, we still had ten songs that were all still good. The only song that I wasn't sure about because we didn't have enough time was "A Ghost," but that was so immediate when it popped out that I was like, well, let's just do that. It sounds great; let's take a punt with it.

**Jonathan:** It clearly paid off. In terms of your process of putting the records together, from the writing to the recording, has that changed over the years?

**Fran:** No, it is exactly the same. Each time I do it, I tend to sit down and often think, how am I doing this? I try and analyze the process a little bit and refine my thoughts about song-writing every time we do a new record, so this time around, I realized that everybody is able to do this. Everyone has a song or a really great melody in them. Everyone can do it. I think we all lose touch with it because when we are wee, that is when we are always singing and dancing and that sort of thing, but then that gets taught out of us. Looking at my process, it is not that creative, so you don't have to be arty to write a song. Most of it is just chipping away. You are digging and doodling, and eventually, with one of those wee doodles, you are like, oh, that is good. That's the bit of gold you are looking for,



and getting that is about 95% of the process. You are just chipping and chipping away. Then for the last 5%, a producer can come in and help you with that.

**Jonathan:** So, the hard work really pays off?

**Fran:** Anyone can do it, and I would encourage everyone to try. Especially now because some people are going to have a lot of free time. Pick up a guitar, buy a keyboard or something or just try and write a tune. If you get any good ones, send them to me.

**Jonathan:** When was the first time you realized you had struck on to something great when writing a song?

**Fran:** I started writing songs when I was about 14. I remember writing this one song around that time and my pal going, oh, you wrote that? I said, yeah. I mean, it wasn't that good, but then when I turned 20, I wrote a song called 20, and that was the first major one. When I played that to another friend, he didn't believe that I'd written it. He was like, there is no way you wrote that. I kind of liked the song, and we used it as a B-side on «All I Want to Do is Rock.» It actually became a sort of a constant in the set for a long time. I still play it from time to time. Although, it is pretty ironic now, playing a song about turning 20 when I'm 47. I should write one called 50.

**Jonathan:** You should! If you're looking at a four-year turnaround on the records though, you best be getting started on that now. A big part of the band's career are the fantastic live

shows. I've had the pleasure of seeing you guys many times over the years, including the celebration of 'The Man Who' a couple of years back. It's been a little while since the last tour; you must be itching to get back playing live with this new material?

**Fran:** When we were on the last tour, at the end of it, I thought, I don't know if I can do this much more. Doing the live thing, the best part of the whole process for me and I think for everyone maybe? Maybe not everyone, but definitely for me, is being in the studio and recording, because that's your own little moment to make things as good as you can get them. Going on the road, especially this last 14 years, it has been tricky because I have to leave my son, and I really don't like going away from home. So much so, that on this trip to London where we are doing some promo and whatnot, it ends up quite long because you have to quarantine for 14 days on the way in and 14 days on the way out, so I brought my son with me, so I don't have to be away from him for so many weeks. We are having a bit of a boys trip. Going away and leaving him, that is hard, plus, I've never really enjoyed all the pressures that go with it, because everyone has a great time, everyone is getting pissed and muggsy here can't drink because I've got to sing the next day. It is just a pain in the butt. So, at the end of 'The Man Who' tour, I was like, oh, I'm sick of this, I don't know how much longer I can do this, but obviously, I get a few years off and then make this record, and of course, I've had a really nice break and was actually really looking forward to taking all these »

new songs out on the road and incorporating them in with all the old ones, and now this, so I'm like, oh, be careful what you wish for, Franny.

**Jonathan:** It feels like this record has a fair amount of intimacy that you bring to the songs that really brought me in. That's not unusual for your music, but I felt like I was particularly leaning into the speaker more this time around. Was that a deliberate plan to go almost slightly understated? I'd imagine these tracks translate so well to just you and an acoustic guitar; I'm guessing they started there?

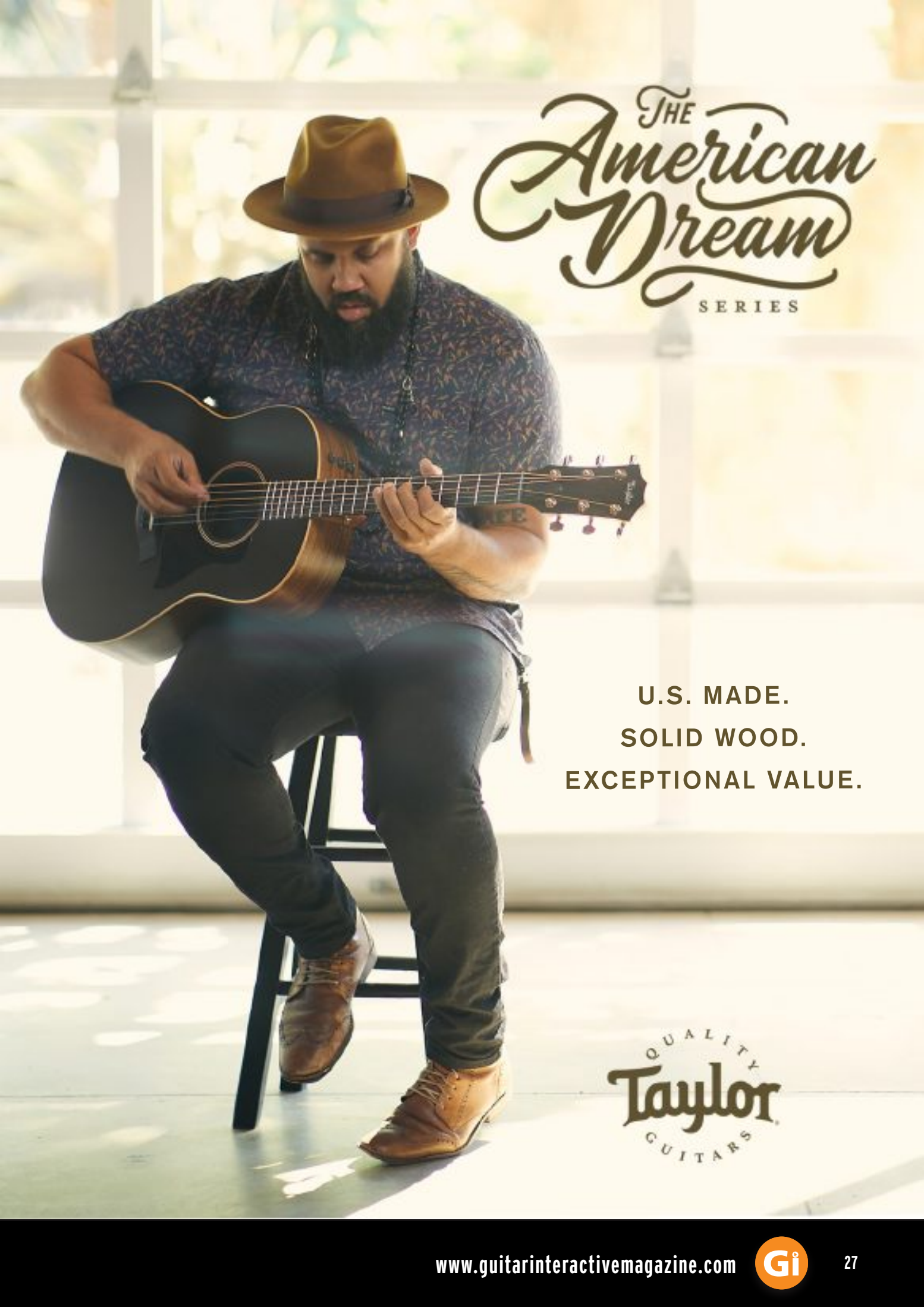
**Fran:** Yeah, they all begin on just an acoustic guitar or a piano. I started writing a bit more on piano on this album. I still can't play it very well, but if you record it, you can edit it together enough to where it makes sense. It is a personal record. It's songs about me, songs about life, and where I'm at, and where we're all at. I believe life throws things at us, and I don't think we are all different from each other. Generally, we're moved by the same things. An important thing to focus on when you are trying to find a song or a melody is this feeling that you have just heard something that is super honest, and without sounding too pretentious, a universal truth that you can totally relate to. There's a song on the album called "Nina's song," and that was written for a TV show. It was going to be a musical, and I was asked 'can you write some songs for this show?' And I said, sure. The show was based on this woman called Nina Stibbe; and her book called 'Man at the helm.' The story is about two wee girls

looking for a new dad and a new husband for their mum, but funnily enough, when I was writing the song, you know, you sort of drill down into your own thing. When I was seven years old, I remember asking my mum, why don't you go to the dad shop to get a dad? Now, in the song, the first line is 'how come all the best dads are gone? This feeling that I had when I was wee, but never got a chance to speak out until I'm 47. Forty years it is taken for that to sort of bubble its way up and find a way out, and that's kind of what I am after. This is why it is taken so long to write because I think the older you get, the harder it is to find. When you're young, there is a lot of low hanging fruit because you're just discovering ways to say things, ways to express yourself and everything is kind of new. Maybe the older you get, you need to reach up a bit higher, look harder for things or dig deeper, I do not know. It has never come easy to me; it takes ages.

**Jonathan:** When you look back on some of those earlier records, are you surprised about what you were able to put together? In reflection, would you have done anything differently or even have some advice for your younger self?

**Fran:** No, I wouldn't do anything different. Although, when we came down to London, we were being asked to do four B-sides. In some cases, six. So you're almost putting out a whole new album with every one single and sort of just pissing songs down the drain a bit because a lot of those B-sides are really good songs in my opinion and I could have used »





# THE American Dream

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“Now, I would **never in a million years** have thought I am going to do this on the radio, but the producer came up and said, you are singing that on the radio tomorrow...”



them in an album. We got very lucky meeting Andy MacDonald, meeting our managers Ian McAndrew and Colin Lester and just being in the right place at the right time and having a bit of luck. I wouldn't change anything. If I had any advice to give to myself, it would be not to take my advice because I think it is good not having a map. If you have a map, then you will always go down the roads that are walked by many people. If you don't have a map, you will stumble down alleyways and find things no one else has found, and I think that is what I still do, so I am good.

**Jonathan:** Yeah, makes perfect sense. You have spoken a good bit about your process, but what are some key things that inspire you when you aren't feeling it on those off days? We don't always wake up in the mood to get to work when you feel like that do you just power through and do it until something clicks, or wait for inspiration to strike?

**Fran:** This idea of 'doing it' is an interesting one because people think sitting down with a guitar is doing it. That isn't doing it. Doing it is just waking up. If you're a songwriter, you are constantly thinking about it; you don't have to have a guitar. Everything you experience is a tea leaf in the teabag, plus, there is a lot to be said for inactivity. We're living in this time right now where everyone is like, you got to work all the time, you got to do this you've got to do that. I am totally all for that, but I am also all for not working and letting things just settle and letting the guilt rise up and go, oh right, I need to do this now! It's like, you know, you flush a toilet and the system takes a bit of time to fill up. You can't just keep flushing it because there's nothing in there. That's what a lot of writers do and that is how you can burn yourself out. A lot of them will have a hit and then be like, oh no, »



Travis - The Only Thing (feat. Susanna Hoffs)  
(Official Video)



“Britain is not bloody middle class; **most of Britain** has to work for a living. It spoke to them, it spoke to me, spoke to everybody, and getting close to it was cool...”

nothing is coming, I have got writer's block. Just calm down, take your time, have a nice break, read some books, listen to some music and then it will come. The fallow period is just as important as the active period. Most days, I wake up and don't feel it coming. With me anyway, it is almost like the same feeling that makes you go to the toilet. You think, oh, I need to go for a pee. You just have a feeling, so you go to the bathroom, and you have a pee. So, when you have a song coming, I have this funny feeling, and I go and grab my guitar and I'm ready to write. I just like, why would you go and try to pee when you had nothing to pee, right? So, I don't do that. I know people who do it like that and it's just like dry heaving. For me I really need to compress it, you know, get the experience and then purge.

**Jonathan:** A few years back, you worked with Paul McCartney on your solo record. He's spoken in the past about how “Yesterday” came to him in almost a state of dream. Now, this has happened to great songwriters like yourself over the years, where you're about to fall asleep, and this whole song presents it's self to you and then just about getting out of bed and getting it down before it disappears. It's clearly got to be something connected to the subconscious but what do you think that thing is all about? Where do you think all this is coming from? »

 **YouTube**

Travis - Kissing in the Wind (Isolation Video)



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**Fran:** The place that songs come from is a place with no language. It is just sounds, vowels and emotions. I think everybody was singing before we were speaking, if you go back long enough ago, like 200,000 years ago. We were upright, walking about, making rudimentary tools, but we hadn't quite made the iPhone yet, and the language was all kind of 'Uh' and 'Buh'. I think we were singing then and still making connections with one another. So, when you write a song or when you sing, it's tapping into something that is prehistoric, way back in your monkey mind. I think when you sleep and go into that little subconscious area, it is probably where the base of your emotions lie. All animals have emotions; every animal has them. It's why a dog wags its tail and why a cat will hiss at you or whatever. They say when something happens to you that affects you emotionally. Like, being rejected or someone gives you a fright or gives you love or one of those things. It's happening to your animal because that is where these emotions lie. You then drill down with your guitar or your piano trying to find these sounds that relate to the emotion. There are no words attached to them, just vowels. Where songwriting is creative and where the talent comes in is translating these anomalous sounds that you howl in your process, and translating them into a word that can connect perfectly with the sound. Like saying the word 'door' compared to the word 'more' compared to the word 'floor,' they all have different emotional resonance. So, your job as a songwriter is to

try and match words to this noise that comes out, and the best songwriters can do this. What I've found is if your melody is really good; the words just come almost immediately. It's miraculous, and you think, oh my God. It feels like you have not written it.

**Jonathan:** Because it is coming from a purely emotional place?

**Fran:** It's coming from your animal, where it doesn't have a voice usually.

I've seen a change in songwriting in the world recently. Like, if you are looking at songs in the charts right now, there is very little emotional music going on. There are some people doing great stuff like Phoebe Bridgers. Brilliant songwriting, very emotional and very honest and beautiful, which is what I think is the big part of songs, and the big part of singing, it's an emotional release. A lot of the songs that I'm hearing on the radio right now don't seem to have that; they just seem very surface level on the emotional side. Like the icing on the cake and not the cake and if you pick the icing off, it's just empty, like there's nothing there. Nothing to get your teeth into, emotionally. There are amazing singers out there at the moment who could sing the back of a Cornflakes box and make it sound amazing. So, a singer like that plus a producer can create this music that sounds stunning, but the songwriter is not there. I find it interesting how fashion, technology, all of that shapes what you hear on the radio.





**Jonathan:** It definitely does, and with that in mind, are you ever concerned that music is almost becoming a thing you listen to while you are doing something else for so many people, as opposed to just putting on an album and taking it all in?

**Fran:** I don't think it's a problem. When I was my son's age, I wasn't sitting going, oh, this is so emotional, wow. I wasn't doing that until I was in my 20s when you start to really feel things. Apparently, the physical human brain is less empathetic in your teenagehood, because that part of your brain hasn't developed yet, and is why kids generally just can't think outside of themselves. They are still forming the world around them. It's why I think a lot of the great songs happen just when the dawn of your full consciousness happens, when you see other people, you feel for other people, and that is around

about the age of 24 to 26. So a lot of great, interesting and emotional music comes out then. My son said something the other day. We are talking about music he played me this song that's a really big popular song on TikTok, and to me, it just had no resonance whatsoever, and I was like, what is this? But, you know, when these kids are your age or my age, they will hear this song, and it will remind them of that time. At the base level, that is what songs are. They are like bookmarks in your life. So, it doesn't need to be a big emotional thing. I used to think the 80s were shit, and I guess there was a lot of shit at the time, but when it foreshortens, all you see are the peaks.

**Jonathan:** Every decade there's some shit. There's always shit.

**Fran:** Yeah, right; there is always some shit. »

**Jonathan:** Famously, you lads have a talent for taking popular songs and giving them a whole new lease of life like you did with “... Baby One More Time.” How did you end up covering that Britney Spears track anyway?

**Fran:** That happened by pure accident when we went to do the Mark and Lard show when all of Radio One was in Ibiza and Mark and Lard, as a protest, went to Robin Hood's Bay. It was just as «Why Does It Always Rain on Me?» was beginning to kick in on the radio. We met Mark and Lard the night before and then went to the pub with them. I brought a guitar and everybody was having a jam and having a sing-song and then I started playing the chords to that because I'd just learned them. I was going, guess what this is? And they were saying, is it “Hotel California,” is it blah blah blah? And I said no, then started singing it, and in the end, the whole pub was singing it along with us. Now, I would never in a million years have thought I am going to do this on the radio, but the producer came up and said, you are singing that on the radio tomorrow. I said oh no, I don't want to do that, but they made us do it—nothing to do with us.

**Jonathan:** It was a good idea, though.

**Fran:** It was a good idea.

Jonathan: I know you'll have talked about this period at great length, but I just have to touch on it slightly, because my first time seeing you live was back in '97 supporting Oasis. It was a fantastic show, during a fantastic

tour and I have always been fascinated by the idea of yourself and Noel Gallagher having some time together during that tour. Two of the best British songwriters of a generation spending time together on the road.

**Fran:** Those guys are amazing.

**Jonathan:** What were some highlights from those run of shows for you?

**Fran:** Well, that was a big tour to get. I mean, I remember punching the air and being like, ya beauty! It was amazing, but we hardly spent any time with them. I remember seeing Noel eating; he would have beans on toast for his dinner every day. It felt like that. I would see him in the canteen and say, alright? He would be like, Yeah, mate. When they came off stage, they walked backstage, got into their chauffeured Mercedes and just sped off. They were super rock and rollers, and I was super shy, we were all really shy, and they were like our heroes in a way. We didn't want to go near them. The next year, they asked us to come on tour in America, and that was a bit more like we got to know them. The brothers were very mercurial towards each other as certain brothers are, it is no surprise that they had the big, giant, massive blowout. That was the mother of all fallouts. I had a lot in common with them. I think that is the thing about Oasis that for me, two things showed me that if you are working class, you can still make it, and they were Oasis and Billy Connolly. I've got to hang out with both at different times in my



life, and you see how with Oasis, how badly they were treated when they were kids by their dad especially, and that spoke to me. They managed to somehow get out of that. It's hard to break out of, you know? I look at music and media and culture, and there aren't many working-class people in it. It's quite a middle-class or middle-upper class environment. So, when we were on tour with Oasis, I think that was one of the things I realized, is that the image that you get from the media is almost like some WWF wrestling guys, but actually they were like me. That's why they were so popular because most of Britain is not bloody middle class; most of Britain has to work for a living. It spoke to them, it spoke to me, spoke to everybody, and getting close to it was cool. On the American tour, there was this funny moment. I was in Liam's room, and he would sit you down and he is like, right, I am going to play you a song now, and just get the guitar out and be singing right into your face! He'd finish, and say to me, what do you think of that then? And I'm like, it was great! It WAS great. It was Liam and me alone in a room, and he was just being so enthusiastic. He is a really special character. Anyway, we went downstairs, and we were all sitting. It was all jokey still and fun, but then Andy or Dougie were sitting, and they said, Franny does a really good impersonation of you, and I was like, no!! Liam goes, yeah? I am still saying, no, but he takes his hat off and puts it on my head and says... do me! I said, can I borrow

your glasses? He takes them off, and I put them on and did the walk, I did my Liam, and he just sat there staring back.

**Jonathan:** Oh, no.

**Fran:** There was silence, and my enthusiasm for this thing drained out of me like a burst co-op bag. He just said, that's not me, and I quickly said alright, here is your hat. Take it back.

**Jonathan:** You've written some absolutely tremendous songs over the years, however, are there ever any songs that you hear from other artists that you wish that had been one of yours?

**Fran:** Oh my God, loads. One of the most inspiring things as a songwriter is hearing something that stays with you. Most of the time I hear things, and it's very much an off-the-shelf melody. You have heard it before somehow, but when you hear a new melody, then you get inspired. It used to happen to me a lot more, and it still happens today. There's a girl in France. Her name is Claire Pomme, and her artist name is Pomme. I don't know what she is singing about because I can't speak French, but her melodies are terrific. I stumbled upon her on YouTube one night and it was like hearing something brand new. Hearing a completely new melody is like discovering a new element on the periodic table for me. There are only so many notes and only so many ways to arrange them, but if you hear something »

done differently, it is like, holy shit! She does this loads. I was very inspired by that, and obviously, listening to all the old masters when there were still acres in the melody department, like, the Beatles and Bowie, Ray Davis and Kinks. Britain really has a good history of writing great melodies.

**Jonathan:** Brilliant, Fran. Final thing before I let you go, is the tour still going ahead for April?

**Fran:** That is what they say. We are still, sort of, in the live music business. Personally, I was thinking about it the other day, a game-changer will be instant tests where you walk into a



## TRAVIS '10 SONGS' - TRACK LIST

WAVING AT THE WINDOW

A GHOST

THE ONLY THING (FEAT. SUSANNA HOFFS)

ALL FALL DOWN

VALENTINE

KISSING IN THE WIND

BUTTERFLIES

NINA'S SONG

A MILLION HEARTS

NO LOVE LOST



venue, and there is an area where you stand on a mark on the floor and look at this camera and apparently, a laser, three or four meters away takes your temperature. If they can develop or devise a way to test people for this quickly, then we will be able to get the industry back on its feet. I cannot wait to play. Oh, my God.

**Jonathan:** Well, I can't wait to see you guys. I'll be there, that's for sure.

Thanks again for taking the time to chat today, Fran. Keep yourself safe.

**Fran:** Cheers, Jonathan. See you later.

END «

2021 will also welcome the band back on the road with an extensive UK headline tour including a big London show at The Roundhouse.

### Travis 2021 UK HEADLINE TOUR DATES

April 30th –  
O2 Academy, Bournemouth

May 1st –  
The Forum, Bath

2nd –  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

4th –  
Albert Hall, Manchester

5th –  
Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow

7th –  
O2 Academy, Leeds

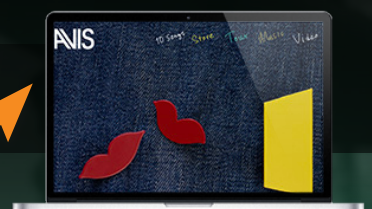
8th –  
City Hall, Newcastle

9th –  
Victoria Hall, Stoke-On-Trent

11th –  
Roundhouse, London

12th –  
Corn Exchange, Cambridge

For more information on Travis,  
please visit [travisonline.com](https://travisonline.com)



# JOHN RZEZNIK: HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

With a career spanning almost thirty-five years (and counting), the Goo Goo Dolls has, without a doubt, become one of the most definitive and successful bands in the American Alternative-Rock genre. That long in the game leaves very little opportunity for new “firsts” to present themselves, which makes the band’s latest release (their first-ever holiday record) ‘It’s Christmas All Over’ even more special. **Jonathan Graham** chats with the Goo Goo Dolls’ frontman John Rzeznik about the new album and much more for this exclusive Guitar Interactive Magazine feature. »





**FORMED** in 1986 in Buffalo, New York, the band has since achieved monumental success with over 12 million album sales and 19 top ten singles worldwide. The group (originally named Sex Maggot) first began as a product of the 80's era wave of 'hard and fast' underground punk rock before transitioning into their more recognisable melodic alternative sound. Their first self-titled release was released under Mercenary Records in 1987 but was picked up the following year by the larger Celluloid Records.

The first few years consisted of relatively moderate success for the 3-piece punk trio, with significant activity on various underground music circuits and independent radio. However, the band's 1995 release, *A Boy Named Goo*, was sonically a stark contrast from the band's prior releases. Trading in ripping guitar riffs and shouty vocals for a sound more infectiously melodic, the band achieved commercial success with their acoustic ballad-esque single, "Name" in 1995.

This shift toward a more mainstream sound undoubtedly angered many of the band's early followers. Frontman John Rzeznik once recalled receiving a rather hostile letter from a frustrated fan in response to this shift.

"It began," "You suck," Rzeznik said. "Name" sucks. You sold out, big-time. I used to like you, but now I hate you, and I'm getting rid of all your records. Signed, Indie Punk Rock Guy."

Despite the initial opposition from prior fans, it was this newfound sound and success that ultimately paved the way for beloved hits to come such as, "Iris," "Slide," "Sympathy," and more.

"I've always played the acoustic guitar, but I finally got to a point where I felt the material I wrote on acoustic was good enough to bring to the band," Rzeznik explained in a 1998 interview with *Guitar World Acoustic*. "I'm not as afraid of bringing new styles of music to them anymore, and I'm not trying so hard to be punk, or whatever we were... I'm not afraid of being criticised anymore," he said. »

"Today, Rzeznik still clings to his blue-collar past. In the band's early years, he admitted that he 'was **always one step away** from going back to the plumbing job he held in his teens..."





This shift is perhaps indicative of Rzeznik's and the band's prolific growth in both musicianship and songwriting. Consider the lyrics of "Messed Up" – 1987 compared with "Name" – 1995, for example.

Messed up, yeah,

Messed up, yeah,

Messed up, yeah,

Messed - up - messed, (x4)

- *"Messed Up" (1987)*

Compared with:

And scars are souvenirs you never lose,

The past is never far,

Did you lose yourself somewhere out there?

Did you get to be a star?

And don't it make you sad to know that life,

Is more than who we are,

- *"Name" (1995)* »





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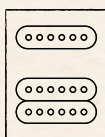
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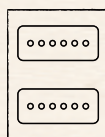
Candy Apple Red



Black



JET1



JET2

Switchable Dual Pickups

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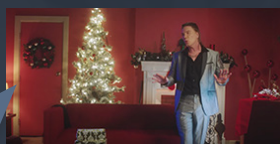
“A lot of punk bands paint themselves into a corner with a set of hard-and-fast rules that they can’t stray away from,” Rzeznik said. “Only the Ramones can get away with making the same record seventeen times.”

According to Rzeznik, this change carried with it the resolve to create more meaningful art from which he often drew from his past experiences when writing.

Rzeznik’s formative years were not void of strife by any means. He was born in 1965 as

a product of working-class America, a strict Catholic upbringing and a blue-collar polish migrant family. Raised in Buffalo’s East Side Polish neighbourhood, his writing often reflects on the struggle he both experienced and witnessed growing up. Notably, “Broadway” from ‘Dizzy Up the Girl’ is a pretty good example of this. Furthermore, Rzeznik attributed a great deal of his motivation for success to his experiences during his blue-collar upbringing.

“When I was young, my dad used to take me down to the local bar, prop me up on the barstool, order a drink for himself and a soda and chips for me,” he said in a 1998 interview. “He’d give me a quarter for the pinball machine and sit there and drink. »



 **YouTube**

Goo Goo Dolls - Let It Snow  
[Official Music Video]





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“This album **we dedicate to everyone,** everywhere who still believes in hope.”

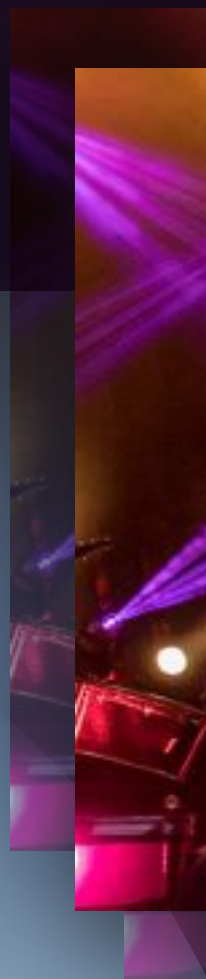
I’d look around and see all these kids who just turned 18, and they were hanging out there, sitting in the same chairs as their fathers. When they were old enough to drink with their dads, they took his place at the bar, carrying on the tradition.”

Rzeznik’s father passed away in 1981, and his mother passed away soon after the following year, leaving him to be raised by his four older sisters before moving to uptown.

“That got me away from the environ-

ment that killed my father,” he said. “He could never rise above it, never see beyond it. He got drunk every day.”

Today, Rzeznik still clings to his blue-collar past. In the band’s early years, he admitted that he ‘was always one step away from going back to the plumbing job he held in his teens.’ Now though, with no threat of returning to the working class, Rzeznik reflects on it creatively with the intent to inspire others with a very genuine sense of hope and encouragement.





Following a sold-out 2018 twentieth anniversary tour in celebration of ‘Dizzy Up The Girl,’ Goo Goo Dolls wrote and recorded their twelfth full-length album, ‘Miracle Pill’ (Warner Records)—igniting a bold and bright new era in the process. Hot on the heels of the deluxe edition release of ‘Miracle Pill,’ the band’s latest release sees them celebrating Christmas early with their first-ever holiday record ‘It’s Christmas All Over.’ Out now via Warner Records, the album is filled

with cover renditions and reimaginings of iconic holiday songs such as “Let It Snow” and “Hark The Herald Angels Sing”, as well as two new originals that capture the warmth and nostalgia of classic Christmas favourites.

“This album we dedicate to everyone, everywhere who still believes in hope,” said Rzeznik. “God knows we need a lot of hope this year. From the deepest part of our hearts, happy holidays from all of us to all of you.” »





Goo Goo Dolls' "It's Christmas"

## GOO GOO DOLLS "IT'S CHRISTMAS"

1. *Christmas All Over Again*
2. *Shake Hands With Santa Claus*
3. *This Is Christmas*
4. *Christmas Be Late*
5. *Better Days*
6. *You Ain't Getting No Love From Me*

In 2021, the expansive No. 1 album was released on Red Rocks in

"Thank you for the chance to keep performing (and making stuff). We're excited to be back until we can't stop. And looking forward to this. And looking forward to this."

END «



s All Over” is out now via Warner Records.

## “IT’S CHRISTMAS ALL OVER” TRACK LIST

- |              |                                                          |                                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| s Don't<br>? | <b>7. Let It Snow</b>                                    | <b>10. The Christmas<br/>Party</b>    |
| ays          | <b>8. Have Yourself A<br/>Merry<br/>Little Christmas</b> | <b>(Feat. The Union<br/>Square 5)</b> |
| n't<br>thin' | <b>9. Hark! The<br/>Herald Angels Sing</b>               |                                       |



Goo Goo Dolls will be back in the studio crafting a new album and are slated to hit the road for an North American tour in the summer. Kicking off on July 22, 2021, in Boise, ID at Ford Idaho Center, the nation-wide tour will visit numerous amphitheatres throughout the US and Canada such as in Colorado and The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles.

so much for all your understanding during this challenging time,” John Rzeznik states. “We prom-  
cutting up as much material (videos, b-sides, acoustic songs, some, just plain talking, and some new  
digging through our archives for live material. We need to stay in touch with you as much as possible  
see you all again in person. Please message us with any requests you might have. We’ll get through  
ok forward to great times again, together!!”

For tickets or more information on the Goo Goo Dolls,  
please visit [googoodolls.com](http://googoodolls.com)





ZACH MYERS

# TURN UP THE VOLUME





As the guitarist of the multiplatinum band Shinedown, Zach Myers is no stranger when it comes to topping the rock charts, earning mainstream recognition and playing to sold-out arenas around the globe—with 10 million albums and 10 million singles sold worldwide. Teaming up with his bandmate Brent Smith (Shinedown frontman), the duo showcases a different yet just as intriguing musical side in the form of two brand new full-length releases, Smith & Myers' Volume 1' & 'Volume 2.' With the albums out now via Atlantic Records, **Jonathan Graham** chats exclusively with Zach Myers about this incredible new project, how it evolved over time, social media and his love of Oasis and much more. »



**'VOLUME** 1' & 'Volume 2' is the culmination of a six-year journey that has brought both Zach Myers and Brent Smith to this hugely significant point in their careers to date. In 2014, the two musicians fell upon what Zach calls, "the biggest happy accident of our musical career." Audiences worldwide know them as one-half of chart-topping multiplatinum rock band Shinedown. During a marathon tour cycle, fans chose ten tunes for Brent and Zach to cover acoustically. They knocked out ten covers in about 20 hours, posted videos of each on YouTube, and dropped 'Acoustic Sessions, Part 1' and 'Acoustic Sessions, Part 2' as EPs. Audiences instantly fell in love with these takes on classics by Otis Redding, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, The Black Crowes, Adele, Phil Collins, The Clash, and more. Subsequent Smith & Myers tours sold out rapidly.

While on stage in front of a packed house at Starland Ballroom in New Jersey, Brent broke the news of the forthcoming album to everyone—Zach included.

"We're on stage, and I'm playing," recalls Zach. "Brent gets on the mic and says, 'I know people want a new Smith & Myers record. So, we're going in now to make an album!' I was like, 'Wait, what? Where did this come from?'" he laughs. "That's how we work. It was like putting something out into the atmosphere. It's Brent's way of

maintaining accountability. He never says something without finding a way to kick and fight to make it happen. We knew we were going to make another record, but I found out when that night!"

The hard work and determination that followed evolved into two records comprised of ten originals and ten covers from the likes of Neil Young, Post Malone, INXS, Mark Ronson and Amy Winehouse, The Righteous Brothers, Billie Eilish, Peter Gabriel, Billy Idol, R.E.M. and Oasis. In the lead-up to hitting the studio, fans had submitted their suggestions for what classic songs they'd like to hear Smith & Myers record, and the duo whittled down the covers from that list to what eventually made it onto the albums.

February 2020 would see them retreat to Malibu to record with frequent collaborator and Grammy Award-winning producer and songwriter Dave Bassett. Over the course of ten days, they typically started at 11am with a blank sheet of paper and finished a song by the evening. As the global COVID-19 pandemic set in, Dave's five-day trip to Hawaii turned into a near twelve-week quarantine. Brent quarantined in Los Angeles as Zach returned home, and they intermittently finished recording remotely.

"It was also the most I had ever collaborated with Brent on lyrics," observes Zach. "In Shinedown, we've never had a 'Jack »





SMITH & MYERS - PANIC!  
(OFFICIAL VIDEO)

& Diane'. We never made up a story. It's all personal to us. With this music, it was okay to be personal, but to also create stories and characters. Of course, every song has a piece of us. Overall, it's an entirely different direction, though. We're touching on social issues, which we haven't really commented on. We hope you get to know us on a more personal level. There's intimacy, anger, and happiness."

On 'Volume 1,' Smith & Myers make a statement with the original single "Not Mad Enough." Accompanied by solo acoustic guitar, Brent rails against injustice in the wake of George Floyd's tragic death. His voice quakes on blunt lyrics such as "Face

down, I can taste the blood. It's hard to breathe, someone let me up," before a rallying cry, "Stop telling me I gotta calm down. You're not mad enough. How many heads are gonna have to hit the ground before you wake up."

On the reimagining of "Rockin' In The Free World," the lyrics take centre-stage uplifted by robust vocal delivery over a lone piano.

"It's so poignant Neil Young could've written 'Rockin In The Free World' in 2020," states Zach. "The lyrics are what we're going through now. It's still relevant, but it's time to discuss things and fix them." »

A video player interface for a guitar interview. The background image shows Zach Myers, a man with blonde hair and a beard, wearing a leather vest and playing a red electric guitar. The video player has a large play button in the center. The text 'Guitar Interactive' is in the top left corner, and 'ZACH MYERS INTERVIEW' is in large white letters on the left side. The title 'Zach Myers Interview' is at the bottom in orange text.

Guitar Interactive

## ZACH MYERS INTERVIEW

Zach Myers Interview



**SE**<sup>®</sup>

# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

The PRS SE Hollowbody II Piezo provide musicians with the versatility of wielding both acoustic and electric tones in one instrument. It's designed with two discrete volume controls (magnetics and piezo) that can be run to the same amp with one cable – players can use the volume controls to blend the pickups. Or, you can run two cables and have the magnetic pickups go to your favorite amp while running the piezo signal straight to the board for a huge sound. To find out more and to hear how versatile this guitar is, go to [www.prsguitars.com](http://www.prsguitars.com).



**PRS**  
PAUL  
REED  
SMITH  
GUITARS

25<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

© 2020 PRS Guitars / Photos by Marc Quigley



Smith & Myers translate Post Malone's "Circles" into an upbeat acoustic anthem. "We do it our way," smiles Brent.

Together, they also add a gorgeous cover of Ronson and Amy Winehouse's "Valerie" as the standout take on "Unchained Melody" by The Brothers. Brent's voice soars with a raw, unadorned soul. Among the other originals, "Panic" along on propulsive piano toward the end. On "Panic," paranoid acoustic guitar, a staccato verse from Brent before a chorus with a catchy hook.

"I'm very active on social media. I see all the news on social media, this world we live in, you could ever be. This is a social media thing's wrong. Everyone wants to offer up any solutions. They don't know they do know how to bitch about it."

Elsewhere, the sombre piano of "Circles" scores its palpable rage.

"As far as the lyrics go, we're talking about being ripped away from their parents, and we're right. We're putting it right in front of us, asking the wrong questions and making the wrong lines." »



 **YouTube**  
SMITH & MYERS  
featured on



Malone's "Better Now" into an  
lid it because Post Malone is

ous grit to the swinging Mark  
tiple "Valerie." Then, there's  
ed Melody" by The Righteous  
th a fluttering run and spir-  
iginals, "Coast to Coast" glides  
ards a slick and soaring refrain.  
guitar slips under a theatrical  
e converging on a schizophren-

a," Zach states. "If you get your  
d seems like the worst place  
ial commentary song. Every-  
to complain, but no one wants  
don't know how to fix it, but  
out it. It's a parody of itself."

f "The Weight of It All" under-

inking of those kids who were  
," Zach goes on. "It's just not  
front of you because we're ask-  
plementing the wrong guide-

## uTube

MYERS new single "NOT MAD ENOUGH"  
n Volume 1 is out now!





Kicking off ‘Volume 2’ (which is a surprise follow-up for fans), the album snaps on the opener and first single as the timbre takes hold.

In between covers of Billie Eilish’s “Don’t Look Back in Anger,” Shinedown’s Americana on “GBL GBD,” Taylor Swift’s “Shawshank Redemption” “Get Back,” it marks another emotional high.

“Ultimately, Smith & Myers illuminates the depth of Brent & Zach—and showcases **a very different** musical side of these two dynamic artists..”

The albums ultimately reflect another facet of two of music’s most quietly influential talents. As a testament to their staying power, Shinedown’s growing legacy encompasses sales of 10 million albums and 10 million singles worldwide, 14 platinum and gold singles, five platinum and gold albums, 16 number one Active Rock hits, and over 2.5 billion streams.

Ultimately, Smith & Myers illuminates the depth of Brent & Zach—and showcases

a very different musical side of these two dynamic artists.

“When it comes to the covers, I hope listeners really hear what those songs are about,” Zach leaves off. “We broke them down to where the words mattered. As far as the originals go, I hope the relatability comes across. It’s a weird time for everyone. No one truly knows what’s going on. For me, I hope it brings some light and happiness.”

“We want to build confidence. We want to be around you and encourage your eyes to see the painting.”

Smith & Myers are out now

**END** <<



was initially released as a  
an guitar coils around finger-  
angle "Bad At Love" as a soulful

h's "Bad Guy" and Oasis's  
smith & Myers channel dusty  
taken from a critical line in The  
busy living or get busy dying,"  
hpoint.

## Depth of Brent sical side of

his record to give you con-  
want these songs to wrap  
and offer comfort, inspiration,  
agement. Maybe they open  
the big picture." Zach states,  
out the painter; it's about the

Myers' 'Volume 1' & 'Volume 2'  
via Atlantic Records.





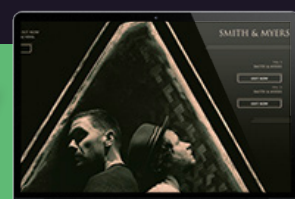
### Smith & Myers' 'Volume 1' Track List:

1. Not Mad Enough
2. Rockin' In The Free World
3. The Weight of It All
4. Better Now
5. Panic
6. Never Tear Us Apart
7. Coast To Coast
8. Valerie
9. Since You Were Mine
10. Unchained Melody

### Smith & Myers' 'Volume 2' Track List:

- |                      |                        |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Bad At Love       | 5. GBL GBD             | 9. One More Time             |
| 2. Bad Guy           | 6. Rebel Yell          | 10. Don't Look Back In Anger |
| 3. New School Shiver | 7. Like You Never Left |                              |
| 4. Sledgehammer      | 8. Losing My Religion  |                              |

For further information on Smith & Myers, please visit:  
**[smithandmyersmusic.com](http://smithandmyersmusic.com)**





# GOOD TO GO

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# THE Tech Session

In each issue, the Guitar Interactive Tech Session shines the spotlight on 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.

All Gi TECH SESSION are accompanied with full tablature and a backing track — to help you learn, practice and utilise these new techniques in no time.



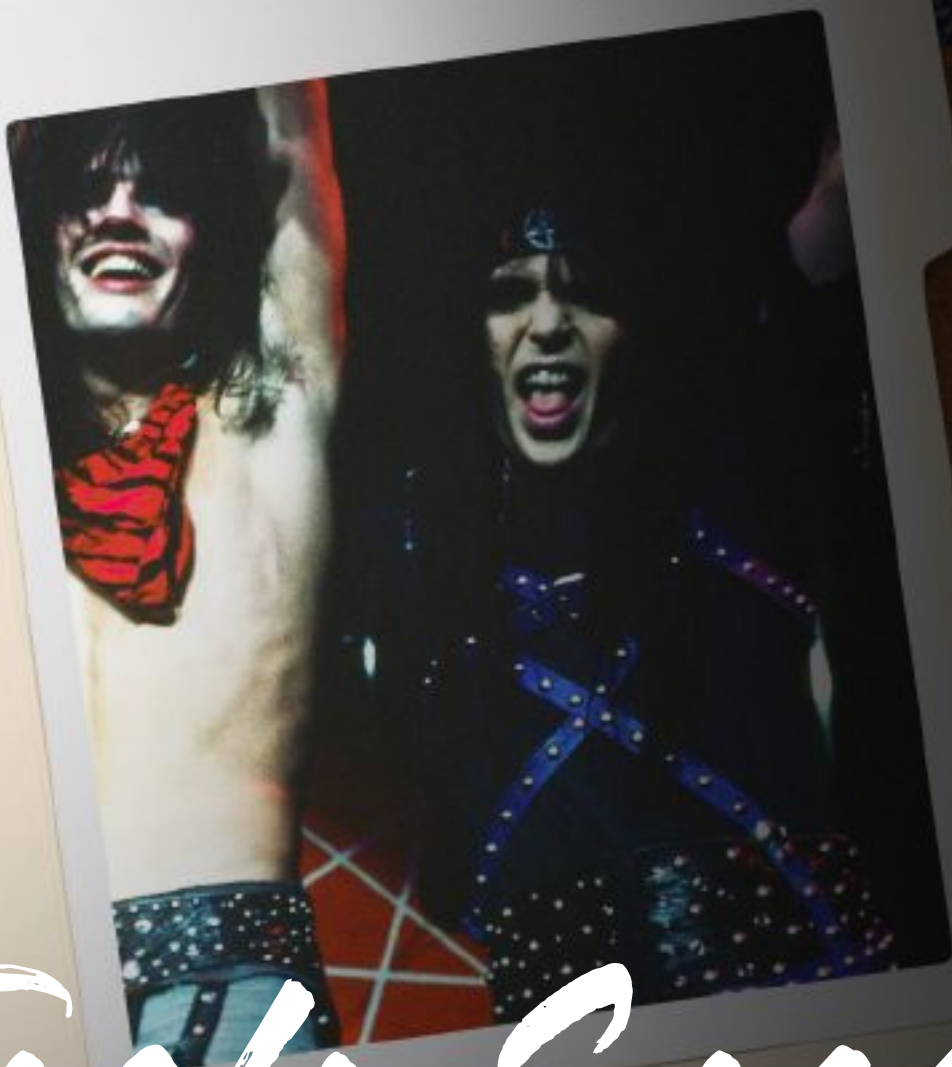
UNDERSTANDING WHAT  
MAKES THE GREATS GREAT

TECH SESSION MOTLEY CRUE

THE  
TECH  
SESSION  
FILES

Motley  
Crue





# Tech Session

Having sold over 100 million albums, the Motley Crue is one of the biggest Los Angeles bands to emerge from the '80s. With their excessive Rock n' Roll lifestyle depicted in a recent movie, **Jamie Humphries** felt it was about time Guitar Interactive Magazine looked at the riff genius of Mick Mars in this exclusive Tech Session.

»

**THE** Motley Crue is up there with the likes of the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin for their rawkus on and off-stage antics, however, asided from the constant partying, alcohol, reported substance abuse, punch-ups, car crashes and near-death experiences—the Crue has written some of the most memorable songs from the hair band era. Often imitated, the Motley Crue have had a career that has spanned nearly 40 years, but unlike many bands from that era that are long gone, the Crue’s popularity has continued to grow, and their sound has evolved. 2020 sees them reforming to

embark of a huge sell-out stadium tour with Def Leppard and Poison. 2019 saw the release of the Netflix biographic movie “The Dirt”, as well as it being the 30th anniversary of the album “Dr Feelgood”.

The band was formed in Los Angeles in the early ‘80s by bassist Nikki Sixx, drummer Tommy Lee, guitarist Mick Mars and singer Vince Neil. They released their debut album “Too Fast For Love” in 1981, although it was re-released the following year when they signed to a major label.. The original material had a faster aggressive sound, with stand out tracks such as “Live Wire”.



Motley Crue Tech Session Performance



They found success with their second album "Shout at the Devil", which saw them playing to larger audiences support metal icon Ozzy Osbourne. Standout albums that followed included "Theatre of Pain", Girls, Girls, Girls and "Dr Feelgood"; the band having adopted a more "glam metal" style and sound were a huge success on the radio and MTV. They scored success with songs such as "Home Sweet Home", Girls, Girls, Girls, "Kick start My Heart" and Dr Feelgood.

After enjoying huge success for more than a decade Neil quit the band in the early '90s, being replaced by John Corabi for their 94 self-titled release. A shift in style and sound plus the departure of Neil effected recorded and tour sales, although to many this album was musically superior and should have been released under a new name. Ultimately Neil returned to the band in the late '90s. Although internal tensions saw the band retiring for an extended hiatus. 2020 will see the band touring again!

Much of the bands sound comes from the unsung hero that is Mick Mars. Mars is a powerhouse when it comes to composing great riffs, and has a very tight/focused right hand down stroke technique, which has played a big part in their sound. Other techniques he favours include pinched and natural harmonics; rhythmic whammy bar dips, two handed tapping and fast alternate three note per string picking lines. For our Tech Session track I have used such stand-out songs as "Live Wire", "Kick Start My

Heart" and "Dr Feelgood" for my inspiration, trying to include as many of his typical techniques, approaches and licks.

**Bars 1-17** features our main verse riff and includes as fast sixteenth note driven riff that showcases Mick Mars; rapid down stroke technique. This riff features a driving 5th string riff with accented power chords. Try to keep the A string root very tight and palm-muted in contrast to the accented chords. This riff also includes an accented rhythm figure using the G5 power chord, as well as a fast descending A blues scale figure midway through the progression. Try to keep your left hand relaxed throughout.

**Bars 18-25** includes our chorus riff and is based around the chords of A5, C5 and D5, with the D5 embellished with a Dsus4 to D major chord. Again this riff includes a tight palm muted driving rhythm, with a recurring pull off figure between the 3rd fret 5th string and the open 5th string. The riff concludes with the F5 chord. Again staying relaxed will help this riff sound tight, so be sure to start at a slower tempo and build up the speed.

Bars 26-29 illustrates a linking riff that completes the first section of the track and is based around the E5 chord. This section is quite tricky as it includes our driving sixteenth note rhythm, as well as some sliding power chords, so once again study this section at a slower tempo and gradually build up the speed. »

*Bars 30-37* is our middle drop-down section, and features a sparse guitar part using the two-note chords based around G major, D major, A major and Esus4 pulling off to E minor. I would suggest backing down the volume of the guitar and using pick and fingers for this section.

*Bars 37-41* introduces a new section and feel to the track, with a familiar-sounding chugging groove based around the E5 chord. Here the rhythm of the chord part is very important, with each riff cycle starting on the push of the end of the previous bar, tying over to the start of the new bar.



22

22A

23

*Bar 42-45* includes one of Mick's signature licks, where he plays natural harmonics, but adds a rhythmic figure to them by bouncing his hand on the whammy bar in an eighth note rhythm. Having a floating trem will help with the performance of this section.

*Bars 46-53* introduce another new riff, based around the E blues scale. This riff features a sixteenth note alternating picking pattern that works in contrast to the driving drum groove. This riff features an accented two-note chord that implies Em7, giving a pseudo Jimi Hendrix sound to the riff.



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Horns, Drums, Keyboards,  
you name it.

### TECH 21

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Originally introduced in 1993, the SansAmp PSA rackmount quickly became a studio staple. It's been used on thousands of major releases, worldwide tours and film soundtracks for multiple stage and studio applications and instruments.

We thought it was time to change things up a bit and streamline its architecture into a compact, easily portable pedal. The SansAmp PSA 2.0 offers the same 100% analog circuitry for punchy, responsive, organic sounds that brings out the best in any instrument. Only the programming and memory sections are digital. It also offers the same operational simplicity, essential functionality and dizzying versatility of its predecessor.

With 128 memory locations, storing and recalling programs is simple. You turn the knobs and hit Save. Being all-analog, there is zero latency when you switch between programs.

The SansAmp PSA 2.0 provides the flexibility to find almost any conceivable personality within the vintage and modern guitar and bass amplifier sound spectrums, as well as an assortment of revered stompboxes.

#### SansAmp PSA 2.0 Features:

- 100% analog signal path; digital programmability
- Performance Mode to instantly access 3 most often used presets
- Buzz, Punch, Crunch and Drive for tons of tonal options
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- Dual band active EQ, cut or boost  $\pm 18$ dB
- Global Trim control to adjust the level of all presets
- MIDI capability
- 1/4-inch 1 megOhm input
- 1/4-inch low impedance output
- Speaker simulation defeat switch
- Rugged, all-metal housing
- Measures 7.75"l x 2.5"w x 1.25"h
- Weighs just 12 oz.
- Utilizes included 9V DC Universal Power Supply, Model #DC9. Includes interchangeable international prong assemblies for EU, UK, Australia/New Zealand for use anywhere in the world.



*Bars 53-61* is our guitar solo, and here I have included several classic Mick Mars licks and techniques. We kick off with some blues unison bends based around E minor pentatonic, with the bouncing whammy bar technique. This is followed by a classic Mick Mars three note per string pattern. Mick would pick this, but I've chosen to use a mixture of left-hand legato and picking to keep the lick smooth and clean. This figure concludes with a fast slide on the 6th string executed with tremolo picking. Following a bending figure with pinched harmonics, we have another tremolo picking figure based around an ascending diminished figure, concluding the solo with a descending open string tapping lick.

*Bars 62-69* conclude our demo track with the reintroduction of the final riff, concluded with a syncopated E5 chord.

Gear wise, Mick Mars has used a lot of guitars including Kramer, BC Rich, Gibson and Music Man, but is most well known for his beaten up Strats, often with a humbucker in the bridge. Mick has a huge live rig, favouring either Marshall or Soldano amps. For this session I used my Music Man Axis Super Sport into my Boogie JP2-C head. This was run into a Two Notes Torpedo Studio using Celestion IR's. Mick has a very thick and crunchy tone, adding weight to his riffs. He also adds extra gain for the solos, but retains his thick EQ.

END «



Motley Crue Tech Session Lesson





## SDC-1 MINI Guitar

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The new SDC-1 mini-guitar from VOX has the real feel and tonal quality of an electric guitar but on a smaller scale, making it the ideal "grab 'n' play" instrument, wherever you are.

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# THE Competition

With each new edition of **Guitar Interactive Magazine** comes the chance of winning a fantastic prize in our free to enter competition.

In this issue, enter for a chance to win a Vintage 25th Anniversary Series V100 - Silver Burst



GI77

YOUR CHANCES  
TO WIN



# WIN!

a **Vintage 25th Anniversary Series** in our free entry competition.

In this issue's competition, we are giving 1 lucky winner a chance to Be one of only 100 guitarists worldwide to own one of these limited edition Vintage V100 celebratory masterpieces.

The Vintage 25th Anniversary Series limited edition V100SVB celebrates a milestone in the company's history and is in honour of their 25th anniversary of guitar craftsmanship. Based on the Vintage® V100™, the V100SVB is built on a solid foundation of classic Vintage craftsmanship and aesthetics, time-tested Wilkinson and Grover hardware and hand-picked tonewoods.

A guitar's pickups are of course the other half of the sonic equation, and what better way to bring out the tonal characteristic of this exceptional 25th Anniversary Series guitar, than with a pair of Wilkinson WOCHB hot ceramic dual coil pickups for a focused, detailed open response that remains clear with the guitar backed off, and right there in your face at full tilt, for big punchy tones.



### How do you win? It's easy.

There are loads of ways to enter! Click enter to gain more entries and have a better chance of winning this incredible prize.

**ENTER**



# Series V100 - Silver Burst

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

Product Colour: Silver Burst

Body: Mahogany

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!*

For more information on Vintage products, please visit: [jhs.co.uk](http://jhs.co.uk)



# 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

# PRS 2020 PRS SE Hollowbody II Piezo

**Tom Quayle** Review the 2020 SE Hollowbody II Piezo from Paul Reed Smith Guitars. Billed as combining the power and stability of a solid-body electric guitar with the captivating resonance of a hollowbody instrument—the 58/15 “S” loaded hollowbody is designed to look as good as it sounds, with a figured maple top, back and sides as well as a mahogany neck (set-neck construction) with PRS trademark bird inlays. Tom tells us more.

**PRS** is well known for pushing the boundaries of performance and value with the SE range; retaining a surprising amount of the look, feel and quality from their high-end Core range of guitars into an affordable package that has become better and better over the years. One of the latest additions to the lineup is the SE Hollowbody II Piezo. Combining the tonal qualities of a Hollowbody with (as PRS say) ‘the power and stability of a solid body electric guitar’ and, for the first time on an SE, a newly designed piezo stoptail bridge for authentic acoustic tones.

The original PRS Hollowbody I featured a maple top with mahogany back and sides whilst the Hollowbody II sports both a carved maple top and back - the II in the name refer-

ring to the use of two pieces of maple. The SE equivalent utilises a five-piece laminate maple top and back in combination with mahogany sides and neck to closely match the Core version at a much more affordable price point. Flame maple veneers give this SE guitar a stunning, high-end look without the associated costs of the original and this effect is further enhanced with the use of flame maple binding on the body, neck and headstock.

The Hollowbody II is an entirely hollow construction except for a block of mahogany under the bridge to connect the top and back. This provides the woody, airy tone that hollow guitars are known for but without the stability and feedback issues that can be associated with such instruments. Featuring the traditional ‘f-holes’ you’d expect for a hollow »

“These are some of **the best pickups** in the more ‘affordable’ guitar world right now...”



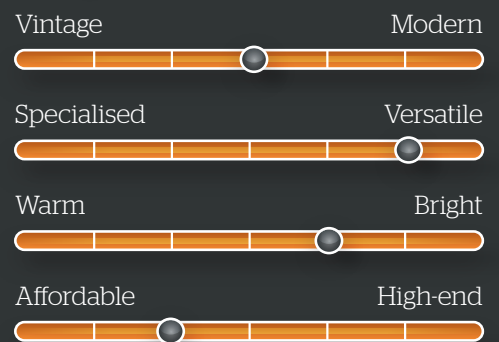
PIEZO



## PRS 2020 PRS SE Hollowbody II Piezo

**MSRP:** (UK) £1349 / (US) \$1549

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Jazz, rockabilly, blues

Exceptional value for money

Versatility

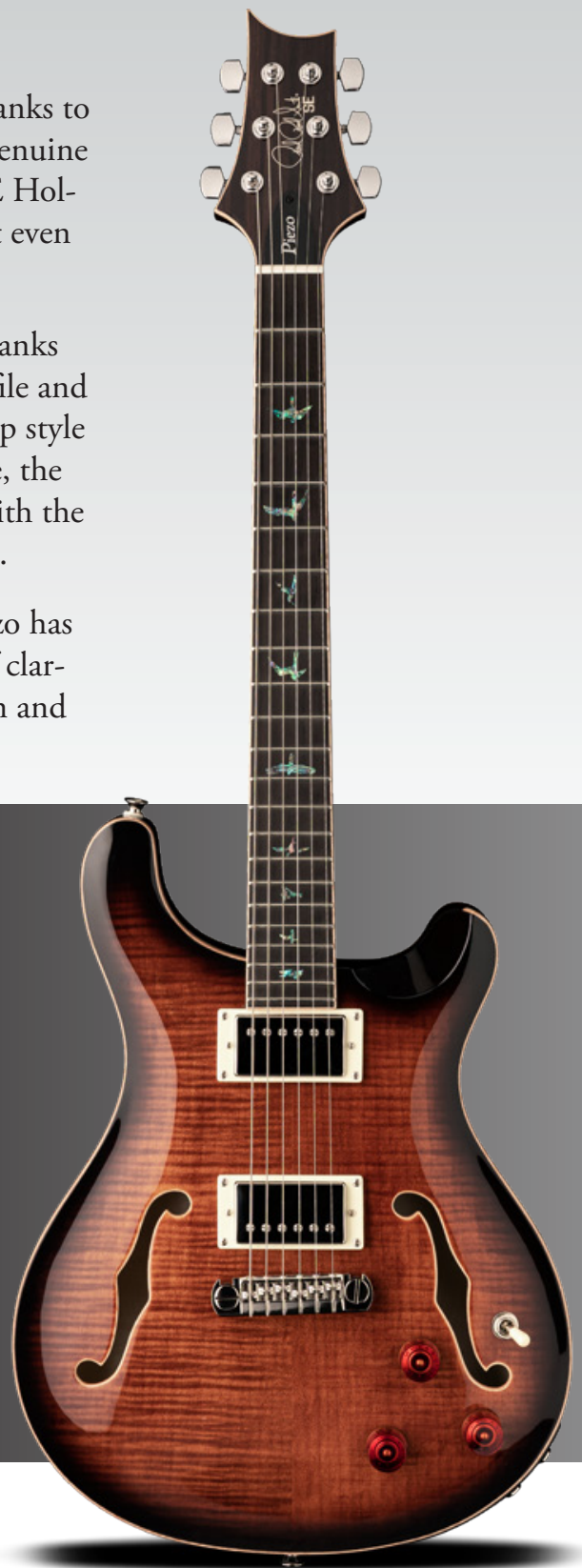
For more information, please visit:  
[prsguitars.com](http://prsguitars.com)



guitar; this SE variant is aesthetically stunning thanks to the black gold burst finish, rosewood fretboard, genuine abalone bird inlays and chrome hardware. The SE Hollowbody II looks like a very expensive instrument even up close, with build quality to match.

It's also a supremely comfortable guitar to play thanks to the 25" scale length, PRS 'Wide Fat' neck profile and beautiful fretwork. For anyone wanting an archtop style experience and tone without the large body shape, the smaller Hollowbody range is perfect, especially with the added versatility that a piezo bridge provides here.

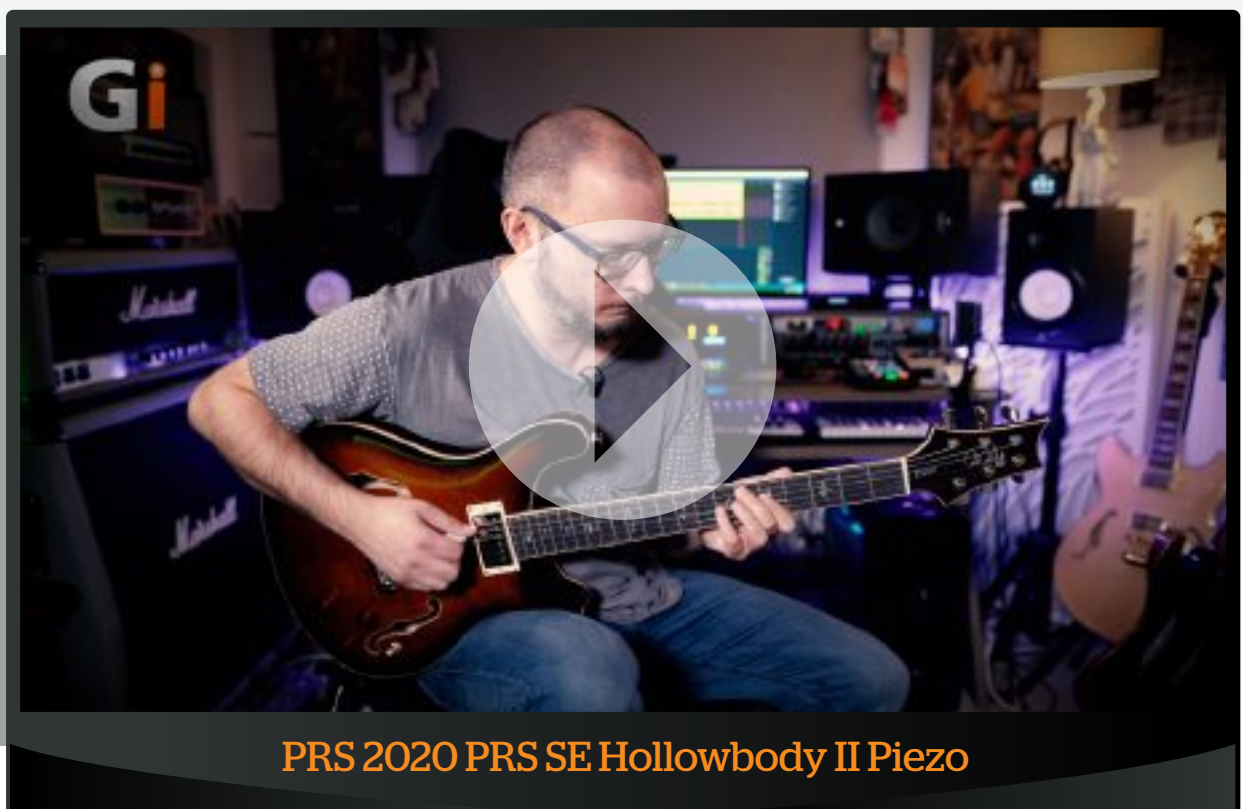
Speaking of hardware, the SE Hollowbody II Piezo has a pair of 58/15 'S' humbuckers delivering bags of clarity and dynamic range to the guitar for both clean and





“It’s also a **supremely comfortable** guitar to play thanks to the 25” scale length, PRS ‘Wide Fat’ neck profile and beautiful fretwork...”

dirty tones. These are some of the best pickups in the more ‘affordable’ guitar world right now and deliver well above perceptions often associated with the price range of the SE lineup, rivalling the tones from the Core range at times. »





Piezo tones are provided via a newly-designed LR Baggs/PRS adjustable stoptail bridge with discrete volume controls for the magnetic and piezo pickups. For the SE version, PRS has cleverly supplied a dedicated output for the magnetic pickups plus a 'Mix' output that combines both together or just the piezo signal if the magnetic output is used too. This allows players to send the piezo and magnetic signals to separate outputs or combine them as required and also ensures that you'll always have magnetic pickup tones even if the piezo preamp battery runs out.

Combined with the 3-way pickup toggle switch and magnetic tone and volume controls, this piezo guitar is supremely versatile with the ability to blend in as much of the piezo signal as required for all manner of musical scenarios using the dedicated piezo volume control.

PRS also include a lovely hard case with the SE Hollowbody II Piezo, adding further value to an already exceptional package. If you're after a Hollowbody guitar, this SE is well worth checking out regardless of your price point—it's superb value of course, but it's also a superb instrument in its own right that wouldn't be out of place at a significantly higher cost. It seems PRS can do no wrong with their SE line up!

**END** «



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- Individual arpeggiator for each tone.

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# Cort X300 Ltd Edition Mosaic

Boasting a stunning mosaic design that features four different tonewoods, the Cort X300 Ltd Edition is far more than just a pretty picture. Featuring a Canadian hard maple neck, sleek ebony fretboard and a mahogany body fitted with two EMG RetroActive Hot 70 pickups that are ready to make your riffs and lead lines erupt with crunch and definition. **Sam Bell** tells us more.

**CORT** has delivered again in making aesthetically unique, quality guitars at an affordable price range. In this issue, I have the pleasure of looking at the Cort X300 Mosaic. A Super Strat style guitar with incredible features and a truly eye-popping finish. Let's dive in!

Let's start with the Body: The body is made from Mahogany and the top's Mosaic design is made from 4 different woods: Maple, Rosewood, Panga Panga and Purpleheart. According to Cort's website, each of these Mosaic X300LE's has a subtle & unique variation of the Mosaic top which is a nice touch!

The body comes loaded with a pair of Active Pickups made by EMG, the 'Retroactive Hot 70' set is featured in the Bridge and Neck Position, controlled by a 3-way pickup selector. These pick up's are voiced with quite a

thick mid-range and are fairly high output. The active nature of them makes notes sound very smooth, specifically when transitioning between the two pickups or ranges of the neck. The 9V battery is easily loaded into the back of the guitar via small hatch. The guitar's sound is controlled via a simple Volume and Tone knob in a strat style configuration.

In Classic Super Strat Style the guitar is also loaded with a Floyd Rose 'Special' Tremolo. This is one of the go-to trem systems for subtle vibrato effect or extreme dive bombs. The X300LE Mosaic also features a locking nut to compliment the Floyd Rose and help with tuning stability. Floyd Rose systems can 'thin' out the tone of a guitar a little bit; however the weighty combination of the Mahogany body and high output EMG's compensates for this well. »

“It's a very **well rounded** package for this kind of guitar at this price point...”





## Cort X300 Ltd Edition Mosaic

**MSRP:** (UK) £699 / (US) \$825

### The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



### For fans of

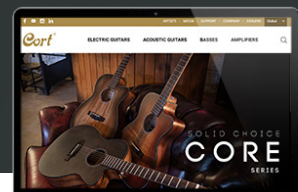
Standout looks

Superb playability

A Fast neck

For more information, please visit:

[cortguitars.com](http://cortguitars.com)



The neck and fingerboard are flat and fast. 24 frets, 25'5 inch scale length and 15-inch radius means playability for days! The ebony fingerboard looks great and the maple neck itself has enough size to it to make bending/chording feel natural whilst not getting in the way with more 'thumb behind neck' style technical playing. Great all-rounder.





“Out of the box it was **very easy to play**, sounded great for a modern rock style...”

This guitar comes in at the more pricy end of affordable at around £699 (gear4music) considering the hardware, pickups, unique finish and quality. It's a very well rounded package for this kind of guitar at this price point. Out of the box it was very easy to play, sounded great for a modern rock style. Well worth a look!

END «



# Vintage 25th Anniversary V6H SVB

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 V6H

**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 guitarist's 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 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 an Alder body, Indian Rosewood fretboard, Lace Sensor Pickups, Grover Tuners and a Wilkinson VS10 bridge, all of that changed. To this day the company are 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 V6HSVB is based on Vintage's highly successful V6, a classic s-type, 3 single coil design, customised for this anniversary edition with a humbucker in the bridge and a beautiful two-tone silver burst finish. Vintage have selected classic wood combinations for the V6HSB with a two piece Alder body, Hard Rock Maple neck and a 22-fret Rosewood fretboard all finished in gloss, with the exception of the fretboard of course. Cream coloured single coils and controls are matched with a zebra cream/black humbucker and a three-ply black scratch plate for a classy monochrome look, offset only by the amber tan maple headstock. Chrome hardware and the anniversary headstock decal complete the design for a visually striking guitar that would be at home on stage in almost any genre. »

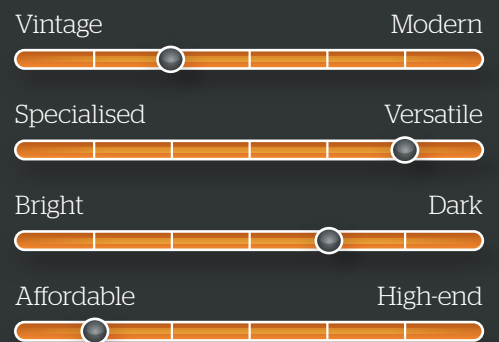




## Vintage 25th Anniversary V6H SVB

**MSRP:** (UK) £429 / (US) \$TBC

### *The Breakdown*



### *For fans of*

Classic s-type guitars

Versatile do it all guitars

A bargain

For more information, please visit:  
[vintageguitarsrus.com](http://vintageguitarsrus.com)



As is standard for Vintage, the guitar is fitted with some outstanding hardware, not just at this price, but even for a guitar costing three or four times as much. Vintage have a long standing association with the legend that is Trev Wilkinson, offering access to some of the best guitar hardware in the business. The V6H gets a pair of excellent WOVaS single coils and a WOHZBb humbucker in the bridge position matched with a 5-way switch and coil tap for authentic bridge single coil tones when required. The three knobs offer master volume, neck and middle/bridge tone controls - the latter doubling as the push/pull coil tap.

Wilkinson hardware continues through the WJ55 EZ-Lok machine heads for quick string changes and great tuning stability. The WVC 6-screw bridge offers consistent intonation throughout the guitar's range and, set to float or clamped down, returns to pitch precisely even after the most aggressive dive bomb.

As with the other guitars in this anniversary series the V6HSVB is extremely well built beyond anything its price would suggest. Everything is finished extremely well including the frets and paint work. This results in a very comfortable playing experience matching perfectly to the tonal excellence from the Wilkinson pickups. HSS is one of the most versatile setups for a guitar and the V6H is no exception with a vast array of possible tones from the 5-way switch and 3 controls. A nice addition is the small extra carve on the neck joint allowing just that little bit more comfort for upper fret access, another feature generally associated with much more expensive guitars.

The V6HSVB also comes with a high quality embroidered canvas gig bag and numbered certificate of authenticity, so if you want a piece of guitar history at a totally affordable price we can highly recommend one of these excellent guitars - if you can find one!

**END**◀



‘If you want a piece of guitar history at a **totally affordable price** we can highly recommend one..’



# Kustom Defender 5H MOD

To celebrate and honour their 25th anniversary, Vintage has launched three (very special) popular Vintage V6, V75 and V100) electric guitars. This year, Kustom Engineers took the virtual hood to tweak its 5 Watt motor. The results were the Defender 5H MOD, a tone that is harmonically rich, with a better sounding distortion that even delivers like a vintage amp. mark this milestone in the company's history and success within guitar crafts. 25th Anniversary V100 Silver Burst.

**THE** Kustom Defender 5 Hod Mod is a 5 Watt Valve head featuring 1x I-EL84 power tube and 1x12AX7 pre-amp stage. The controls are super simple: a 4 stage bass response control and a volume control. The volume controls the overall volume, and saturation/drive of the head whilst the bass response control tailors the lower end response of the amp. The amp has no FX Loop, but we do have various speaker outs for standard cabinet situations (16 and 8ohm outputs). »





cial and limited editions based on the very  
k the historically great-sounding Defender 5H  
MOD (Hot Mod). The 5H MOD has a livelier  
older tweed and British style amps. Sam Bell  
smanship. **Tom Quayle** reviews the Vintage

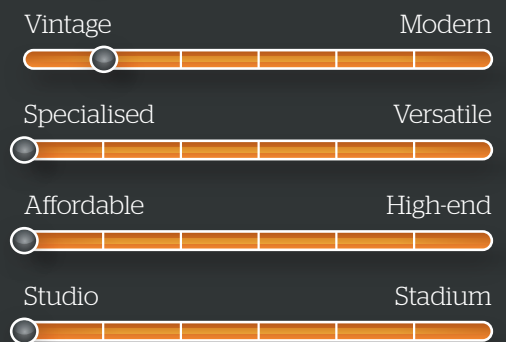
“Definitely **worth a look** if you’re looking for a vintage vibe that isn’t going to break the bank..!”



## Kustom Defender 5H MOD

**MSRP:** (UK) £145 / (US) \$TBC

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

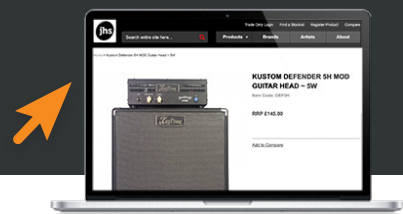
Good tone at low volume

Lightweight gear

Great value for money

For more information, please visit:

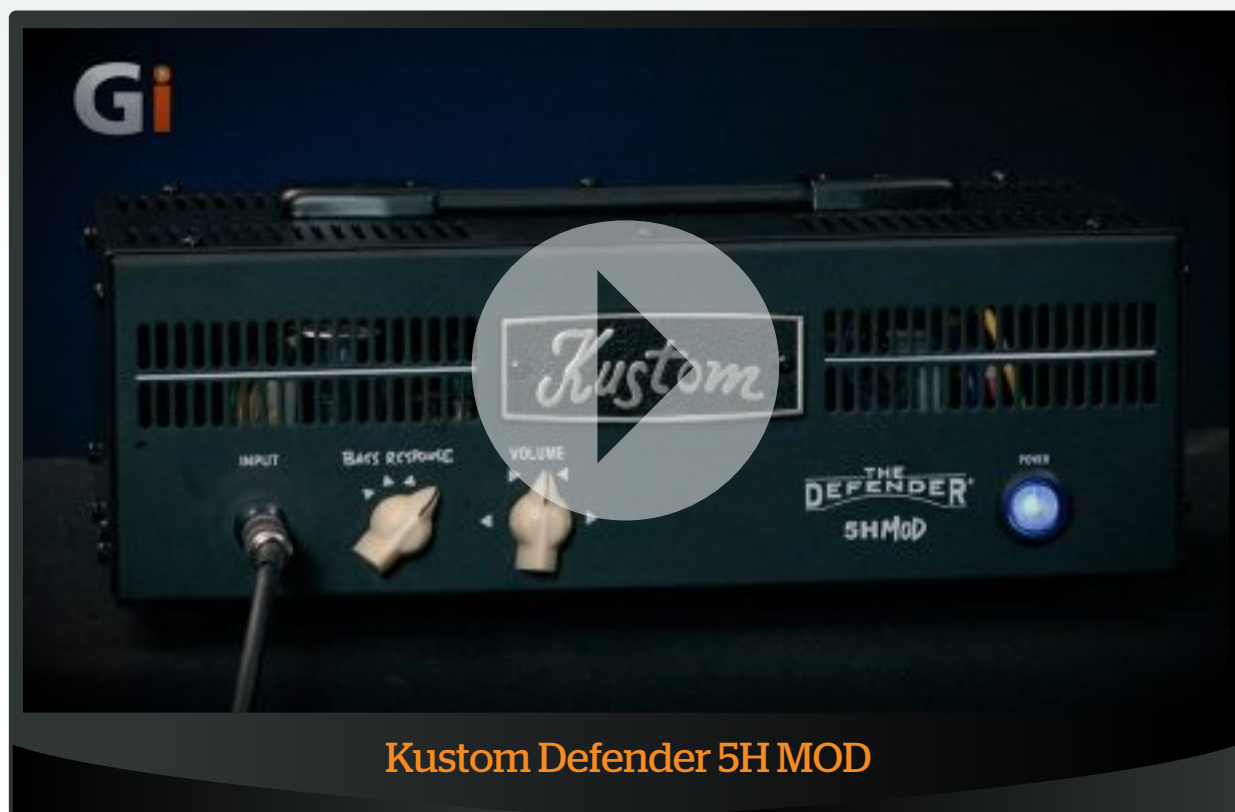
<https://www.jhs.co.uk/kustom-defender-5h-mod-guitar-head-5w>



At lower volumes, the 5H Mod has a nice tweed-like clean bloom sound, when set at higher volumes the amp breaks up giving lots of sustain, with an aggressive upper mid-range/treble detail. It is definitely in the more vintage ballpark of sound. And at only 5 watts, this mid-range will help cut through the mix. This would be a great studio amp if you want to get pushed tones at low vol-

ume, it would also make a good pedal platform for those looking for something a bit different. Its highly affordable coming in at around £150 per unit, not to mention its small size! Definitely worth a look if you're looking for a vintage vibe that isn't going to break the bank!

END «



Kustom Defender 5H MOD



# BLUE STEEL

THERE'S FIRE  
IN THIS ICE

CRYOGENICALLY FROZEN

BRILLIANT TONE

LONG LASTING

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*Sound Sation*  
*Shadow series*

Character, the real one.

✓ 12 models

✓ Stunning Satin Black finish

✓ Hi quality craftsmanship & hardware



# Orange Pedal Baby

If you're a player who derives the majority of your tone from pedals and modellers, the hundred-watt Orange Pedal Baby 100 could be just the sort of unit you'll want to reach for to move some air. Featuring a Class AB push-pull of a classic Orange guitar amp and at just 7 lbs., this little powerhouse makes a sweet little fly rig. **Nick Jennison** Tells us more

**THERE** was a time when cranking up a valve amp was the only way to achieve a great tone. Unfortunately, the practicalities of relying on a big, heavy, fragile amplifier don't jive with the realities of being a working guitarist in the modern era. With touring budgets shrinking, more and more players are getting fantastic results using modellers and pedals as the foundation for their tone and leaving their amps at home.

Travelling light may be a necessity, but it's not without its issues. Pedals don't exist in a vacuum, and if you're playing through a Twin one night and an 800 the next your pedals will sound wildly different. Modellers come with their own share of problems too: if you're lucky enough to be playing in a venue with great monitoring (and lucky enough to get enough of a soundcheck to dial in your monitor mix) then it's all gravy, but we all know those gigs are rare.

Orange have a solution in their Pedal Baby. It's a clean, loud power amp that's light, compact and built for the rigours of the road. Equally well suited for modellers and pedals, this little powerhouse will provide all the volume you need without unduly colouring your core tone.





“Because of the linear nature of the Pedal Baby’s response, it’s a **great choice** for a “second amp” in a stereo or wet/dry rig...”



Where the Pedal Baby differs from similar “pedalboard amplifiers” is in its power amp architecture. Instead of the Class D amplifiers commonly found in this corner of the market, the Pedal Baby is a solid state Class A/B design, which offers punch and dynamic response that’s much more like a traditional guitar amplifier.

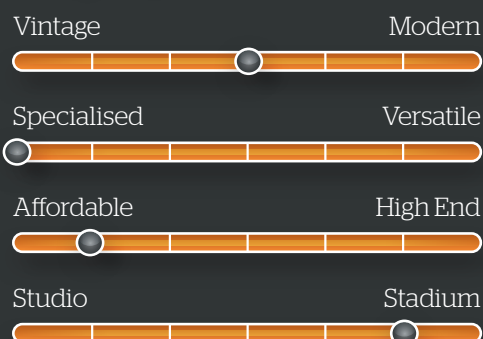
The controls layout is very simple, with just three knobs for treble, bass and volume. Like most Orange amps, the EQ is very powerful, but remains musical across its entire range. Leaving the EQ flat produces a linear response that’s perfect for modellers, and »



### Orange Pedal Baby

**MSRP:** (UK) £299 / (US) \$549

## The Breakdown



## For fans of

Modellers

Getting your tone from pedals

Playing loud!

For more information, please visit:  
[orangeamps.com](http://orangeamps.com)



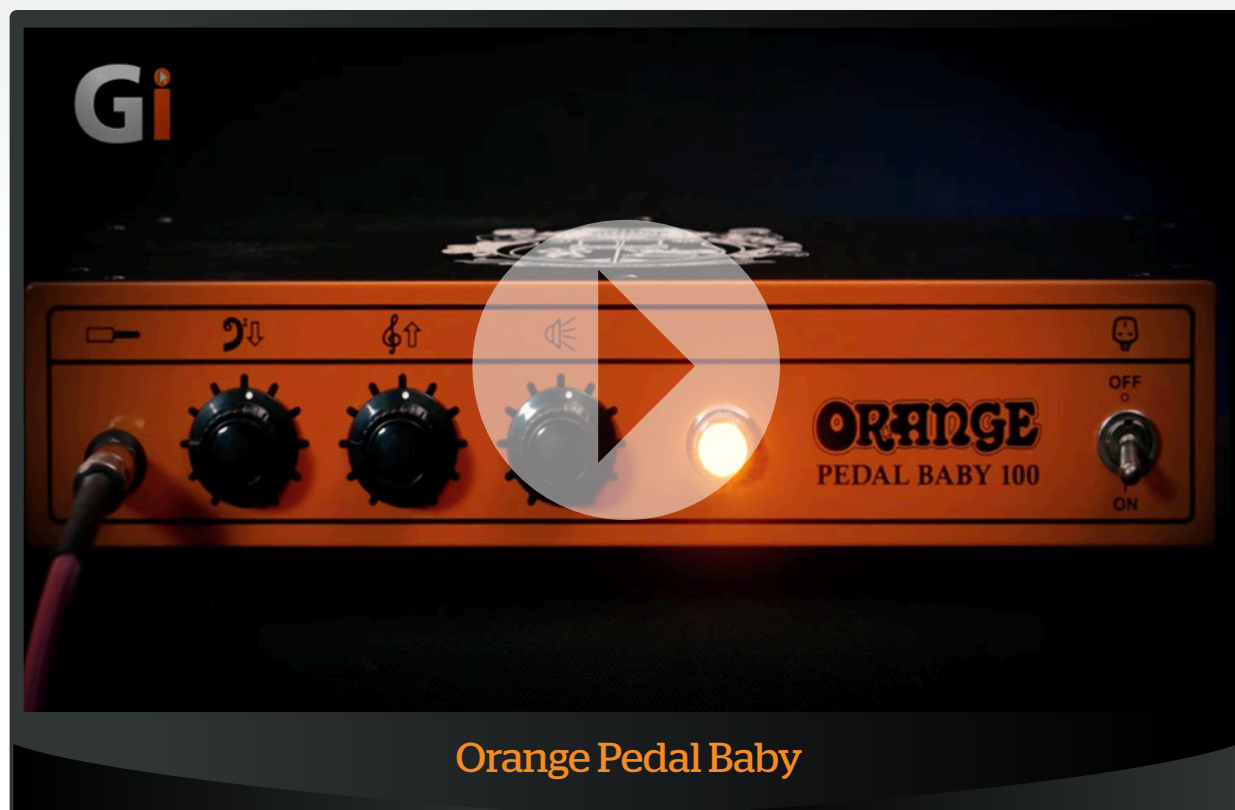
turning the treble and bass up replicates the midrange scoop inherent in most valve amp designs - making it perfect for drive pedals.

Because of the linear nature of the Pedal Baby's response, it's a great choice for a "second amp" in a stereo or wet/dry rig. It works great running pedals into the front of both amplifiers, but in a more complex 5-cable-method setup the Pedal

Baby shines, with enough tweakability to match up with the "master" amp's tone and more than enough volume to keep up with even the loudest of valve amplifiers.

If you're the kind of player that centres their rig around either pedals or a modeller, the Orange Pedal Baby is a great choice. It's loud, light, robust and incredibly easy to use.

END <<



Orange Pedal Baby





Eric Stet's Gibson ES335 with Stop-Tail Stetsbar

# STETSBAR

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market by miles!"

Nick Jennison  
Guitar Interactive



visit [madisonandfifth.co.uk](http://madisonandfifth.co.uk)

# Seymour Duncan Powerstage 200

Engineered to attain the best tone and performance from your pedal-based electric guitar rig, Seymour Duncan's PowerStage 200 is a miniature power amplifier that is small enough to fit right on your pedalboard. Complete with built-in speaker cabinet emulation so you can record directly into your DAW, the Seymour Duncan PowerStage 200 is a powerful solution both on stage and in the studio. **Nick Jennison** reviews.

**GUITAR** players are famously conservative when it comes to gear. Keyboard players long ago abandoned dragging B3s with Leslie cabinets around in favour of sleek red Nords and a laptop. But in spite of how great modelling technology is these days, guitarists just won't let go of their expensive, heavy, fragile valve amplifiers.





“Speaking of cabs, it’s **worth noting** that 200w of output is a LOT of power...”

The reason? The guitar and amplifier are not separate entities, but rather a system. The air being pushed by the amplifier interacts with the guitar in a way that stage monitors just can’t recreate. If you’ve ever heard the familiar refrain that “modellers sound great but don’t \*feel\* right”, this is what it means.

Enter Seymour Duncan and the Powerstage 200, (Sitting squarely in the middle of their Powerstage line) this compact and brutally powerful unit is small enough to mount directly to your pedalboard, and pumps out 200w of power to the speaker cabinet of your choice. It shares a similar form factor with the Powerstage 170, but with a few clever features that its little sibling lacks.

There are a single master volume knob and a four-band EQ (bass, mid, treble and presence) for sculpting your tone. If you’re using a modeller, you can leave this flat and tweak from there, but if you’re using the Powerstage 200 as a clean platform for your drive pedals then a slight midrange scoop puts the Powerstage well in the ballpark of a traditional valve amplifier. The EQ is extremely powerful, so you’ll have no trouble matching your tone to whatever cab you plug into.

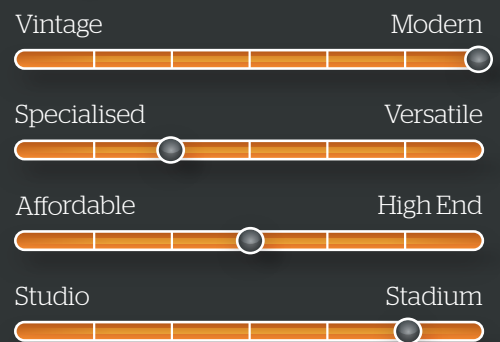
Speaking of cabs, it’s worth noting that 200w of output is a LOT of power. If you’re intending on pushing this »



## Seymour Duncan Powerstage 200

**MSRP:** (UK) £449 / (US) \$712

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

“Loud amp” feel with your modeller

Shrinking your pedalboard rig

Travelling light

For more information, please visit:  
[seymourduncan.com](http://seymourduncan.com)



thing up to its limit, you're probably going to need a 4x12, or if you're going to use a smaller cab then you'll want some seriously powerful speakers (like a Celestion Copperback). That said, you're highly unlikely to push the Powerstage 200 anywhere near its limit without incurring the wrath of even the most tolerant sound engineer - this thing is barbarically powerful!

Speaking of sound engineers, the Powerstage 200 also features a balanced XLR output, complete with a cab sim. You can defeat the internal cab sim at the press of a button if you'd rather use your favourite IR pedal instead (or if you're running IRs in your modeller and powering an FRFR

cab), but the built-in sim sounds excellent. There's also a headphone output with its own level for silent practice, or for running IEMs on stage. There's also a switch that defeats the EQ on the DI and headphone amps, which leaves you free to tweak away and get your stage sound just right without affecting the signal you're sending to FOH.

Whether you're a modeller user who wants to claw back that elusive "amp feel", or a pedal aficionado who wants to ditch your bulky amp head, the Seymour Duncan Powerstage 200 has got you covered. It's insanely powerful, versatile and offers a ton of tweakability.

END <<



Seymour Duncan Powerstage 200





*Sound Station*  
**DELTA CROSSROAD**

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Italian concept,  
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# Boss GT-1000 Core

**Tom Quayle** reviews the amazingly powerful and ultra-versatile, GT-1000CORE. Billed as the most complete guitar and bass processing experience available in a single stompbox; the full DSP muscle of the flagship GT-1000 lives inside this mini juggernaut, providing class-leading sound quality, advanced AIRD technology, 24 simultaneous effects blocks, and over 140 unique amp/effect types for unlimited creative expression.

**AS** Boss' flagship amp modelling and multi-fx unit, the GT-1000 has been a great success since its launch a couple of years ago, finding its way onto many guitarist's live and studio rigs. Boss takes a slightly different approach to the 'every amp model under sun' strategy used by much of their competition, instead utilising their AIRD. Technology to provide a smaller number of amp models, but with a focus on nailing the feel and response as accurately as possible. Much like their superb Katana and Blues Cube amps, the result is a modelling floor unit that





feels fantastic under the fingers and has an incredible amount of power under the hood thanks to 32-bit floating-point processing, 32-bit A/D D/A conversion and 96kHz sampling rates.

It's a common trend in the industry for companies to release compact versions of their modelling hardware, often cut down versions of the flagship hardware with compromises in power to accommodate the smaller footprint. You'll generally find fewer effects can be used at once, only one amp/cab block per preset, less signal path flexibility and of course fewer switches and I/O. Once again though, Boss is taking a different path with their GT-1000 Core, a compact version of the GT-1000 with surprisingly few compromises compared to its bigger sibling.

Putting aside the obviously cut down I/O and footswitch setup, the GT-1000 Core is essentially offering users the 'full-fat' GT-1000 experience with almost nothing taken out to accommodate the smaller form factor. The processing power is 100% intact from the bigger unit, offering up 24 simultaneous blocks of effects and amp models with the same incredibly flexible serial/parallel signal routing, dual amp models/cabs, hundreds of effects and 16 custom IR slots. Boss have included many of their vintage stompers, MDP effects and algorithms from the DD, MD and RV-500 pedals. You even get two external send and return loops for incorporating your own stand-alone effects which can also be run as a pair in stereo, be used in 4-cable method or switched up to be used as Sub Outs on stage or in the studio.

The GT-1000 Core's design will be familiar to anyone who's used any of Boss' 500-series pedals »



### Boss GT1000 core

**MSRP:** (UK) £599 / (US) \$699.99

## The Breakdown

Straightforward Feature-rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Studio Stage



## For fans of

Compact yet powerful setups

Expandability in their rig

Modelling that doesn't compromise feel

For more information, please visit:

[boss.info/uk/](http://boss.info/uk/)



before since it's the same chassis but with a larger, monochrome screen and a series of intuitive buttons and continuous dials. The screen is easy to read, but may feel a little dated for any fans of the latest Line 6 or Fractal products, but editing patches is really easy either on the front panel or via the Boss Tone Studio software connected to a computer via USB. You do lose the Bluetooth editing functionality of the GT-1000, but most users won't miss this too much considering the obvious benefits of such a small unit.

The three onboard footswitches can be run in Memory or Manual mode. In Memory mode, foot switches one and two switch

between patches whilst the third can be assigned to control a swathe of different parameters as required. Manual mode allows the three switches to be assigned to switch chosen effect blocks on or off, functioning more like a traditional pedalboard.

The compact, yet super powerful design of the GT-1000 Core allows you to utilise it in simple and portable or highly complex, expandable setups as your needs change. It works superbly on its own, but can be combined with external fx pedals, controllers, midi switchers, multiple outputs and can even channel switch your amp if required.

A pair of expression pedals or four external



**Boss GT-1000 Core**





footswitch controllers can be connected for even more control with, quite frankly, an astonishing amount of control available if you want to dive into the menus and explore all the options. TRS midi jacks allow for even further possibilities when combined with other midi enabled gear or switching systems where the GT-1000 Core can be the switcher or be switched externally. Needless to say, the level of signal flow control, integration with external gear and creative controller assignments are mind-blowing for those that want to deep dive.

The amp models and effects sound, and just as importantly, feel fantastic to play

through. You might not get quite as many amp models as some of the competition but you can craft pretty much any tone you can think of and many that you might never have dreamed up before if you're prepared to explore what's on offer here. Stompbox mode is a nice addition, allowing you to save a customised version of any effect block as a 'Stompbox' that can be saved, edited and recalled across multiple patches with ease.

The AIRD. Modelling technology's feel and EQ can be tailored to whatever situation you find yourself in - plugging into studio monitors, an audio interface, the front of an amp or the power amp return of a tube amp for »







example. This optimises the signal path for your chosen setup and ensures you always get the optimum feel, response and tone for your setup. There is even a dedicated Bass mode with specific bass amp models, cabs and effects for those that double up on the bass or are looking for a powerful stand-alone bass processor.

Finally, the GT-1000 Core also operates as an incredibly high sound quality audio interface for both Mac and Windows with Core Audio and ASIO drivers respectively offering low latency operation in your chosen DAW.

Boss has once again knocked it out of the park with the GT-1000 Core, managing to produce a tiny modelling unit that retains the vast majority of features and power of its larger sibling. Those looking for a compact modeller and multi-fx unit without the compromises in processing power usually associated with the form factor should absolutely put this product at the top of their shortlist. If you've always stayed away from modelling due to the lack of tube-like feel, the GT-1000 Core may surprise you - definitely worth checking out.

END «

# VOX Mystic Edge & Silk Drive Valve

In addition to producing traditional tube amps that use conventional vacuum tubes, the good people at VOX have also been developing revolutionary amplifiers that use Nutube. Taking advantage of the technology obtained through the research of these amps, VOX has now developed a line of pedals: the VOX Valvenergy series. **Sam Bell** reviews the VOX Silk Drive and Mystic Edge Overdrive Pedals.

**VOX** are perhaps most well known for their brilliant valve amps, the AC15 and AC30 have been a mainstay for guitarists for decades. It's great to see VOX moving in new directions as well, and their new Valve Energy series of Overdrive pedals brings a new twist to the Overdrive Market.

In this review I'm taking a look at two of the four available new Valve Energy pedals, the Mystic Edge – A classic drive based on the classic AC tone and the Silk Drive – A smooth, warm crunch style drive which really blooms. Before I discuss the attributes of each pedal, I'd like to discuss what makes the Valve Energy series of pedals unique. Each pedal is equipped with a 'link' feature, a ¼ inch headphone jack can connect any of the 4 valve energy pedals together which means you can switch between them like channels on an amp (rather than turning one on and the other off, you can momentarily switch between the two) If this wasn't enough, each pedal has its own switchable Speaker Cab Emulation if you want to send the signal out to a DAW or Mixer at Line Level. OR if you're into using your own Impulse Responses or CAB Emulations, you can switch the pedal to 'Pre' mode which

gives you just the pre-amp of the drive sound so you can run it into whichever speaker simulation situation you desire. Super useful for those home recording or wanting to make a direct rig (or what I like to call the 'analogue multi-fx/amp modeller' pedalboard)

Let's take a look at the attributes of each pedal, for those interested in the other two pedals from the Valve Energy series; Nick Jennison has taken a look at the Copperhead Drive and the Cutting Edge – Copperhead being a more Marshal style drive and the Cutting Edge being a more modern high gain option. It's important to point out that these pedals are using Vox's 'NutTube' technology which gives a valve like response, here's what Vox say on their website about NuTube;

«Nutube is a new vacuum tube that was developed by KORG Corporation in conjunction with Noritake Itron Corporation as an application of vacuum fluorescent display technology. Like a conventional vacuum tube, a Nutube has an anode grid filament structure and operates as a complete triode tube. It provides the same rich overtones and responses that are distinctive of conventional vacuum tubes. »



# eEnergy

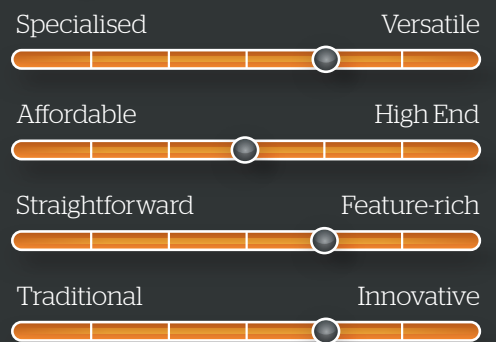
## SILK DRIVE



## VOX Mystic Edge & Silk Drive ValveEnergy

**MSRP:** (UK) £165 / (US) \$249

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

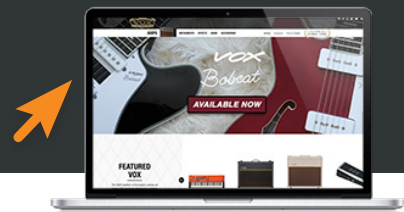
Superb tones

Well built gear

Great value for money

For more information, please visit:

[voxamps.com/en-gb/](http://voxamps.com/en-gb/)



### The Silk Drive:

The Silk Drive is a very 'clean' style overdrive, not too harsh, however with the bright switch set to ON you can add upper range harmonic tones to your drive signal, great for crunchy 'clean' sounds that bloom from the speaker and really respond to pick dynamic, getting more driven the louder you play. At extreme settings the Silk Drive gives a nice broken amp kind of response, almost fuzz like in its nature, notes are given size and sustain without losing too much definition.

### The Mystic Edge:

This pedal is based on VOX's classic AC30 style drive, a sound as Guitarist's we have all heard on many classic rock records! This drive has tones of bite and sus-







tain; it's a pleasure to play through. Instead of a mid-range control like the Silk Drive, this features a 'Tone Cut' control much like the VOX amps, this changes the upper mid-range character of the sound, helping you really dial in a lush sustaining classic overdrive sound.

I'm very impressed with these two pedals, the emulation and link features are also a nice addition alongside the cool OLED display showing your signal and how the drive interacts with the signal. As a Speaker Emulator user, I love the 'pre' feature, the Silk Drive would make an AWESOME pre-amp style drive on people who want a pedal platform direct rig. And the Mystic Edge is just hair raising to play through, both are highly desirable pedals. Check them out!

END◀

# Studio to Sta

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.



GI76

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IT - PERFORM IT

PRODUCT RECOMMENDED  
**Gi**  
PRODUCT



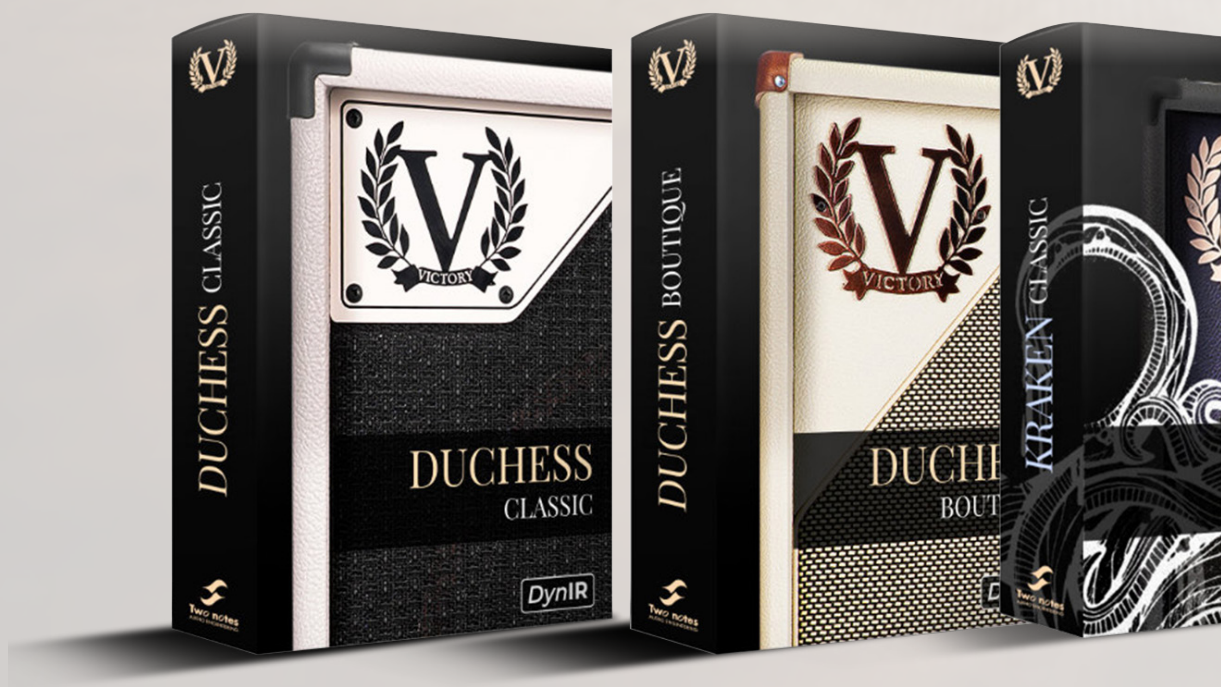
# Two notes Victory DynIR V

Following on from the hugely successful Sheriff and Copper collections, Victory speaker captures, available individually or within six-packs (of 5 cabinets in the net range - the legendary «Duchess» and highly respected «Kraken.» **Nick J** laboration from Two notes and Victory.

**I'VE** had this discussion with a bunch of guitarists recently, and I don't think this is a controversial statement any more: I'd be happy if I never mic a speaker cab ever again.

It hasn't always been this way though I don't want to play my old man/hipster card, I've been

dabbling with «speaker substitutes» for over a decade now, from the original (and frankly, terrible) analogue filter designs, to early «IRs» when we were still calling them «convolutions». There's always been a trade-off between convenience and tone, with mics on a speaker long being con-





# Virtual Cabinets

Victory and Two notes have released 20 more (each), capturing two more of Victory's cabinet-  
**Pennington** breaks down this impressive col-

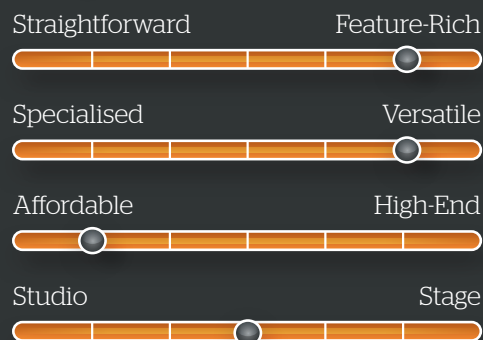
a  
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 ered the only "pro" option. That is most definitely  
 no longer the case, with innumerable top-level  
 players adopting a "hybrid" approach - a tube amp  
 into a load box with IRs in lieu of the speaker and  
 mics.



## Two notes Victory DynIR Virtual Cabinets

**MSRP:** (One DynIR) €10 / (Pack) €59

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Killer sounding IRs

Hybrid recording setups

Having a ton of options

For more information, please visit:  
[victoryamps.com/virtual-cabinets](http://victoryamps.com/virtual-cabinets)



Two Notes were the original innovators of this hybrid setup, with their Torpedo line of digital load boxes being the first products on the market to combine a speaker load with IRs. Since then, their collection of cabs has absolutely exploded, with dozens of third party studios producing their own captures and collaborations with legendary manufacturers like Celestion, Mesa/Boogie, Vox, Suhr and many others. This is where Victory come in.

My clear bias towards Victory amps aside, I was very excited when the new Two Notes/Victory cabs were announced. Victory make (in my opinion) the best sounding 2x12s on the market, and Two Notes (again, in my opinion) are the masters of capturing the nuances of not just speakers, but the cab as a whole.



What I wasn't quite prepared for was the dizzying array of cabs on offer. There are four "families" of cabinet, each loaded with a different Celestion speaker - Duchess (a mix of 65w and 75w Creambacks), Copper (Alnico Golds), Sheriff (G12H Anniversary) and Kraken (Vintage 30s). Each family is further divided into an array of 1x12, 2x12 and 4x12 cabs, in both regular and wide-body form, open and closed back. As if that wasn't enough, every cab comes in both "Classic" and "Boutique" varieties, with "Classic" offering all of the industry-standard guitar microphones and "Boutique" being a collection of expensive high-end condenser microphones.

While it's impossible to cover every combination of mics and cabs in this review, but what I can comment on is how impressive these virtual cabinets sound. Starting out with the Kraken vertical 2x12, it has all of the tightness, punch and midrange focus of the actual cabinet that's sitting next to me as I write this. Similarly, the V30-loaded Kraken 4x12 is more open and sizzly in the top with a bigger bottom end, just like the Victory 4x12 I have in my rehearsal space. In terms of accuracy to the hardware equivalents, these cabs are bang on.

The mic selection is as you'd expect from Two Notes, with eight fully movable mics per cabinet. In all honesty, I can't imagine a situation where I'd choose the



“Boutique” cabs over the “Classic” ones, since all my favourite industry-standard microphones are included in the latter: Shure SM57, Royer R121, Beyer 160 and Sennheiser 421. What IS interesting is that the Victory cabs come with an angled SM57 option, and to my knowledge these are the only Two Notes cabinets with this option. This might seem like a small point, but this is by far my favourite mic in this pack - on its own, blended with a 121 or using the VariPhi feature with a straight 57 for a pseudo-

Fredman configuration. This mic option alone makes these cabs worth the price.

The Victory/Two Notes Virtual Cabinets are some of the best IRs I’ve ever played. There are so many options that it’s easy to get lost, but even with a single pack, you get more than enough options. If you’re a Two Notes user, you need at least a few of these cabs in your collection.

END «



Two notes Victory DynIR Virtual Cabinets

# Mooer AP10 Wireless System

**Nick Jennison** reviews the Mooer Air Plug wireless system. Allowing you to use your guitar and your pedalboard/amp, the Mooer AP10 is based on the air plug concept. It is an equally dependable, portable solution, providing a 5-hour battery life. You don't have to worry about tripping over your cable while performing ever again.

**ONE** of the difficulties of reviewing wireless systems is that the good ones don't actually DO anything. What I mean by that is, they transfer your guitar tone unmolested from your guitar to its destination - free of excessive latency, compression, noise or tone loss. It's quite hard to make an excellent wireless system sound exciting because you don't WANT a wireless system to be exciting. You want it to work. Imagine an "exciting" wireless system, that occasionally went rogue and uploaded your playing to TikTok...

Mooer's AP10 is everything you could want in a wireless system and nothing you don't. Taking the form of two "bug"-style units with rotating jacks, you plug the transmitter into your guitar, the receiver into your pedals/amp/interface and you're off to the races. My name's Nick Jennison for Guitar Interactive: I'll see you next t...

Ok—there's a little more to it than that, but you get the picture. For example, unlike sys-

tems of old that shared a similar form factor, the AP10 is a 2.4GHz digital system, meaning it's immune to interference from passing taxis and free to use worldwide without a license. It has an integrated lithium-ion battery that offers 5 hours of playtime per charge, and means you won't have to constantly feed it AA batteries - a practice that's as bad for the environment as it is for your wallet.

Sonically, it uses 24/48 A/D conversion with a >103db dynamic range, so your signal will arrive at its destination with all of its dynamics and harmonics intact. It also has awe-inspiring latency performance at under 5ms. In a direct test against a system costing more than five times as much, the AP10 held up really very well indeed!

The units themselves are made of a robust ABS plastic, with the inner workings visible through the smoked finish. Maybe I'm showing my age, but this evoked some serious nostalgia for certain electronic toys from the 1990s - I was almost tempted to try and »



em

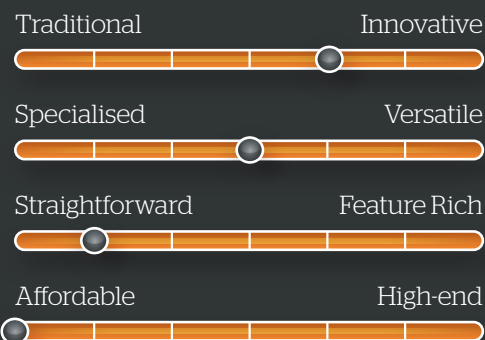
u to maintain a consistent signal between  
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h!



## Mooer AP10 Wireless System

**MSRP:** (UK) £119 / (US) \$TBC

### The Breakdown



For fans of

Simplicity

Not having to buy batteries

1990's "Virtual Pets"

For more information, please visit:

[mooeraudio.co.uk](http://mooeraudio.co.uk)



feed it. Build quality wise, however, it's less 1990s toy and more 1990s mobile phone: you won't be breaking this any time soon.

The rotating jack accommodates even the most fiddly guitar sockets, sitting flush on my Silver Sky and in the Tele-style bowl socket of a Godin SG Summit Classic. Off-camera I tried it on a P-bass, a PRS McCarty and a Taylor acoustic, and the AP10 was quite happy to oblige in all cases.

Which leads us to the most appealing feature of this unit: the price. For a wireless system, this reliable and simple to use to cost less than three figures is superb value for money - especially when you have a built-in battery (and therefore no battery doors to break) and >5ms latency performance. Maybe it is a bit exciting after all...

END◀



Mooer AP10 Wireless System





e 965

## Live Sound on the highest level.

The flagship of the evolution series is a true condenser, large diaphragm microphone that has been developed for professional stage use. Its balanced sound is marked by clarity and sophistication. Depending on the stage setting, the pick-up pattern can be switched between gentle cardioid and more direct super-cardioid. **Built to impress.**

[www.sennheiser.com](http://www.sennheiser.com)

SENNHEISER

# Peavey LN 1263 PA

Billed as offering the best-in-class feature-to-value and performance, the LN 1263 PA boasts a room-filling 1,200 watts and a great-sounding array of custom state-of-the-art 6-channel mixer and enough I/O for home use or small gigs. **Sam Bell** tells

**IN** all of my reviews for Guitar Interactive Magazine over the years, this is actually the first time I've taken a look at PA system. I have, however, had lots of experience using portable setups for smaller gigs such as function gigs or weddings/presentations or guitar clinics! I had the pleasure of taking a look at the 1200 Watt Peavy LN1263 Portable Column Array PA system at GI HQ, suffice to say I was very impressed with how easy it was to set up and how light it was.

The LN1263 features a 12-inch sub box and two satellite speakers which are loaded onto a column that fits right into the top of the sub, no extra cables are needed, it's an independent unit. It can be run alongside another unit using speakon cables. The units are well built, very sturdy and super easy to assemble and use.

The PA features 4 XLR/Jack channels which feature Level and Reverb controls; you can also change between mic, line and guitar input levels. Channels 5/6 are jack input only and channels 7/8 are assigned for Bluetooth or AUX cable connectivity. There is also an overall power/master level, and an XLR Mix out.

Above the latter channels there is a DSP screen which is controlled by a single twist/pushpull knob, this enables us to change some of the reverb/eq parameters for all the channels, we can also change the SUB level, if the unit is in Mono or Stereo and the FX level of the EQ for each channel. This can also be controlled via an app which can remotely change these settings via Bluetooth.



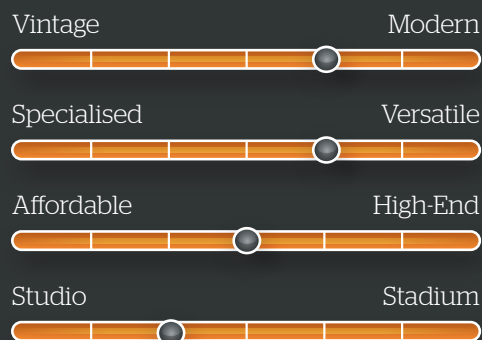
Peavey LN1263 powered column loudspeaker  
state-of-the-art drivers. The LN1263 includes a  
as us more.



## Peavey LN1263 PA

**MSRP:** (UK) £1440 / (US) \$2499

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Superb tones

Lightweight gear

Great value for money

For more information, please visit:  
<https://peavey.com>







Just one unit sounds full, and this is a difficult thing to demonstrate on camera, we don't hear PA systems' miced up' like Guitar Amps etc. However, considering the size and weight of this unit, it moved a lot of air! The sub sounds full, and the satellite tweeters have a nice amount of spread and definition. The price range I'd say is mid-range for a speaker column array of this wattage, its versatile and very easy to use. Check one out in a Music store near you!

END «



Peavey LN1263 PA

# THE Quietroom

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.



WHEN ONLY  
ACOUSTIC WILL DO

# Faith Legacy Dark Roast

Focusing solely on Patrick James Eggle's historic acoustic body shapes, Faith Guitars' new Legacy Series looks to set a new bar for professional excellence. The Faith PJE Legacy FG5 features Patrick James Eggle's sought after 'Earth' body shape, with the OM Cutaway design built from Solid African Mahogany all over, and the top having gone thru a laborious roasting or 'torrefaction' process. The Legacy Dark Roast's physical colouration is reflected in its tonal palette too with a luxuriously smooth low-end, pronounced, well-balanced mids, and a treble range with remarkable headroom. **Nick Jennison** reviews.

**MY** coffee habit has provoked more than a few concerned whispers here at GI towers, so the prospect of a reviewing a "dark roast" got my blood pumping. When I found out that the Dark Roast in question was a guitar, I was a little disappointed. Not for long, though.

Faith's new Legacy Dark Roast Earth is part of the PJE Legacy series, which exclusively uses the designs of British master luthier Patrick James Eggle. It's only the second guitar to be allowed access to Eggle's unique and sought-after "Earth" body shape - an OM-sized body with a sizeable venetian-style cutaway.

The "Dark Roast" refers to the body woods. It might look like this guitar has been stained in a rich violin brown, but the finish is in fact a clear lacquer over solid torrefied mahogany. By painstakingly roasting and air drying the wood in an atmospherically

controlled kiln, the wood takes on not just a dark and rich colour, but also the kind of dryness and stability that is typically only found in old guitars that have dried out naturally over decades of playing. It's common to see torrefied maple necks and torrefied spruce tops, but this is the first time I've seen a guitar made entirely of torrefied mahogany, and my word does it look good!

Beauty may be skin deep, but tone is not. Fortunately, the Dark Roast Earth really delivers here too. It has a very rich and seasoned quality that puts me in mind of older J45s - it's smoky, dark and chocolatey, with a top end that's more silky than snappy. It's even across the guitar's entire dynamic range, from aggressive strumming to delicate finger-style and everything in between.

As good as the tone is, and as beautiful as this guitar looks, what stands out to me the most is the playability. »

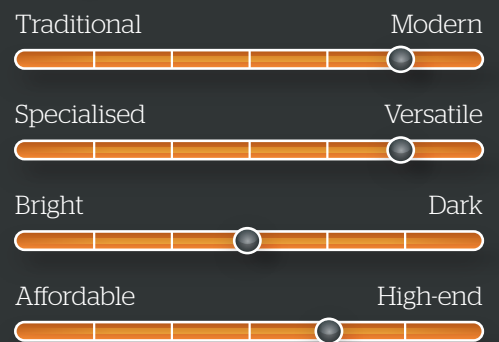




## Faith Legacy Dark Roast

**MSRP:** (UK) £1469 / (US) \$1789

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Supreme playability

Non-traditional aesthetics

Dark, silky tones

For more information, please visit:  
[faithguitars.com](http://faithguitars.com)



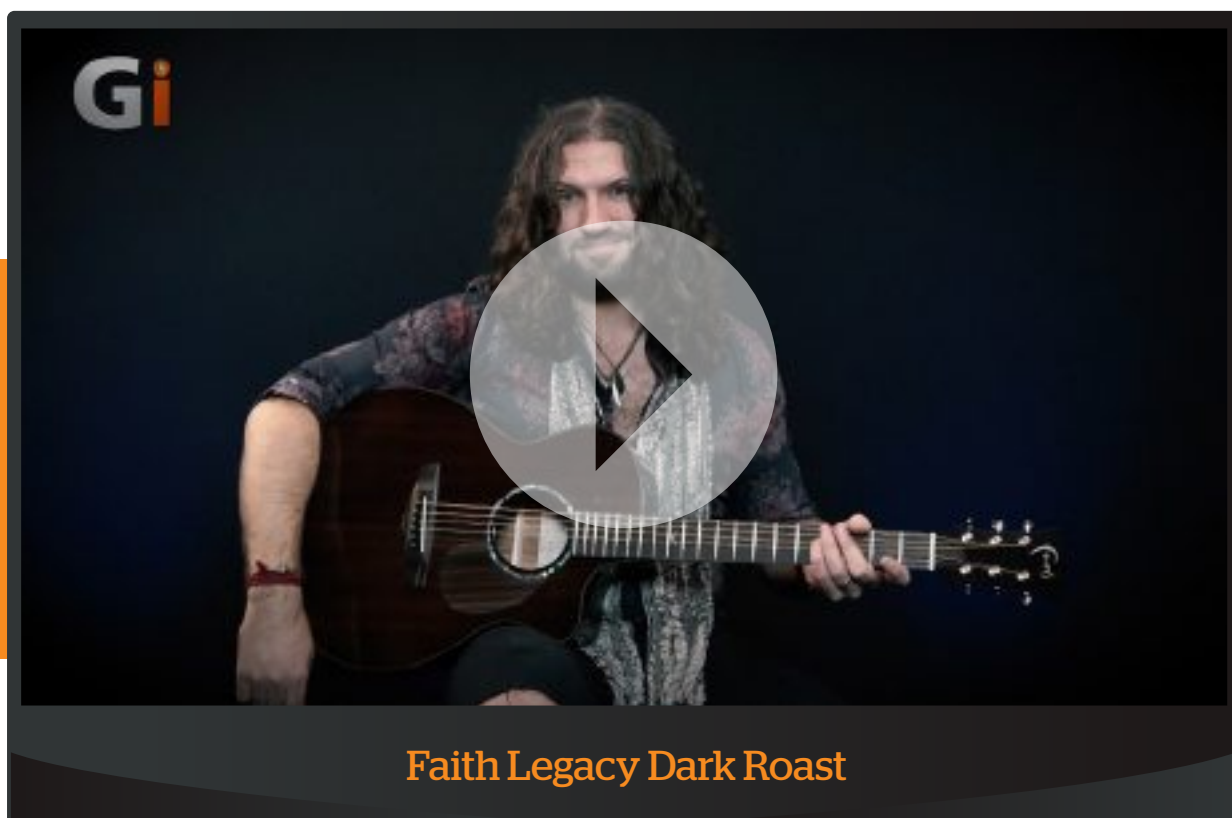
There seems to be an unwritten rule that for acoustic guitars to sound good, they have to be set up with an action that is somewhere between uncomfortable and unplayable. The Dark Roast Earth bucks that trend, with the kind of playability that would shame most electric guitars. The result is a guitar that works with you instead of against you, and it's super inspiring to play.

Electronics come courtesy of Fishman's Flex-T pickup system, which combines an undersaddle piezo pickup with an internal condenser mic, all controlled with a simple and discrete soundhole-mounted preamp.

I've made my disdain for large, shoulder-mounted systems well known in the past, but I'm especially happy to see that Faith have resisted the urge to cut a gaping hole in a gorgeous piece of roasted mahogany. It certainly hasn't done the plugged-in tone any harm, with the Flex-T system yielding a sound that's airy, full bodied and smooth.

The Faith Legacy Dark Roast Earth is a gorgeous looking instrument that delivers where it matters - tone and playability. It's a breath of fresh air in a world full of spruce-topped Dreads with stiff actions, and you owe it to yourself to check it out.

END «





# PURE AND EASY RARE EARTH SOUNDHOLE PICKUPS



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Inspired Performance Technology™

# Udo Roesner Da Capo 75

Udo Roesner, who has been designing acoustic instruments for over 30 years (and also known as the founder of AER Amps), has launched a new brand. The first model to introduce Udo Roesner Amps is Da Capo 75; a 2-channel acoustic combo equipped with custom-made 8-inch twin cone type speakers. Boasting 75W output power in a compact housing and six types of built-in effects, the Da Capo is billed as the ideal amplifier for acoustic instruments. Here is **Nick Jennison** to tell us more.

**IF** you're an acoustic guitar player and you don't have an amp, you're missing out. Too often, acoustic players place themselves at the mercy of the sound engineer - not a problem if you're lucky enough to have a great engineer, but that's not an everyday occurrence. Even then, the best sounding stage monitor mix can't compete with the feel and control of a great acoustic amp. Even if you're playing in settings that would traditionally be unamplified, a great amp can improve your playing experience immeasurably.

The Udo Roesner Da Capo 75 is a high-end two-channel combo from the mind of the man behind the original AER acoustic amps. It sports a class A/B design with 75 watts of power, a large output transformer and a carefully tuned enclosure for exceptional low-end punch and dynamic response.

There are two input channels that can be used simultaneously to amplify two instruments or one instrument and a vocal via the combined XLR/jack inputs on each channel, which also makes it a great choice for upright bass, electric violin/cello and a variety of acoustic instruments. Each channel has a gain (read: volume) control and a three-band centre-notched EQ. The EQ is quite powerful, but not so powerful that it's problematic - often times extremely potent EQ on acoustic guitar is an invitation for players to cause trouble for themselves. Channel 1 has a "tone" button that engages a pre-set EQ curve that is very flattering for acoustic guitars, while channel 2 has a high-pass filter in its place.

The master section has a selection of three reverbs and three different pre-set delay times, with an overall level control and a (slightly confusing) pan control that allows you to bias the effect blend »





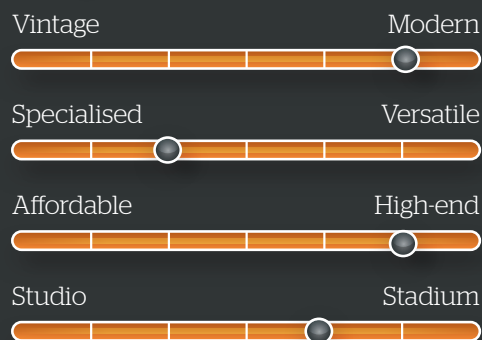
“If **you're serious** about your acoustic playing, you should absolutely check out the Udo Roesner Da Capo 75...”



## Udo Roesner Da Capo 75

**MSRP:** (UK) £949 / (US) \$TBC

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Superb plugged-in acoustic tones

Punchy lows

Controlling your stage sound

For more information, please visit:

[udo-amps.com](http://udo-amps.com)





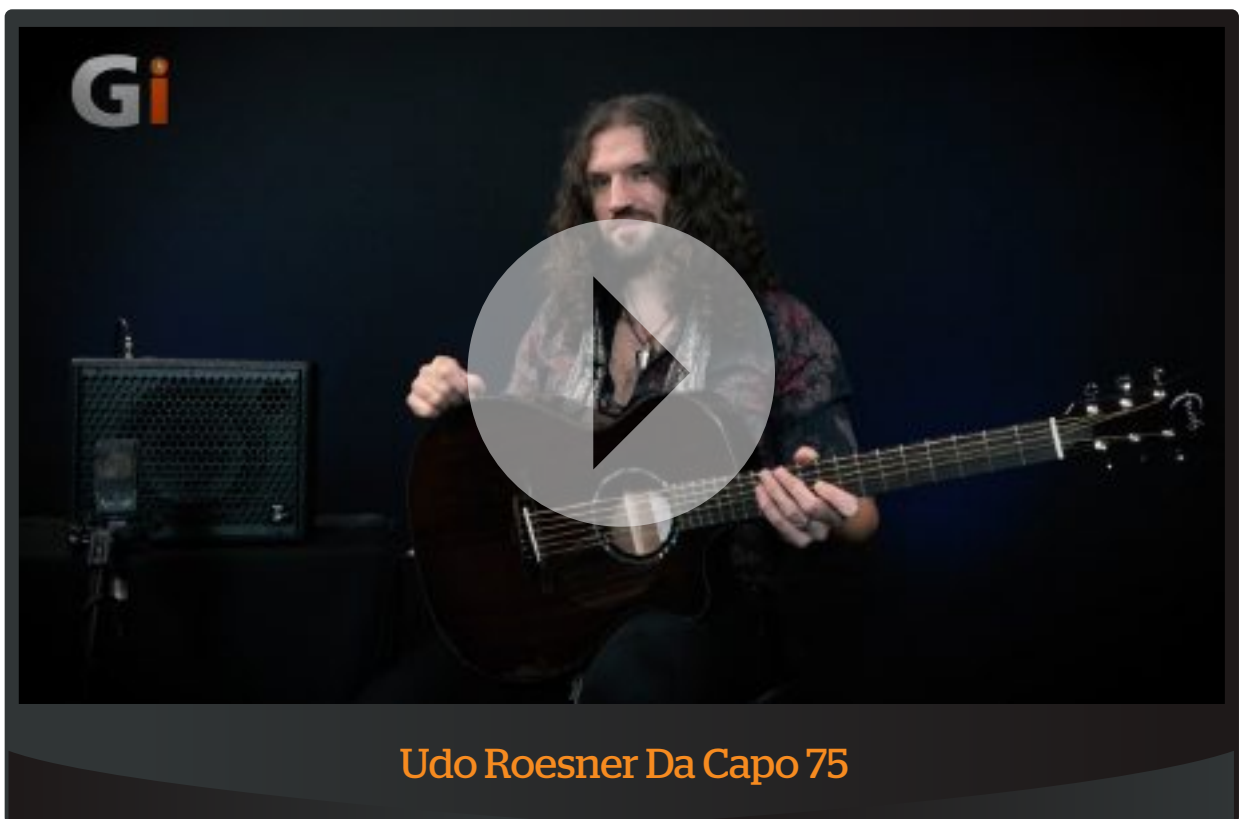
between the two channels. It works well once you figure it out, but why there's a global effects level and a pan instead of just having a level for each channel, I don't know. The quality of the reverbs are the first rate though, and they're great for adding everything from a touch of ambience and smoothness to a rich, symphonic depth.

Sonically, the Da Capo 75 is fabulous. Instead of PA-style flat response, the Da Capo is tuned and textured in a way that flatters acoustic guitars really nicely. There's a relaxed midrange that isn't honky or pokey, and the lows are rich and punchy without being un-

controllable. The dynamic response is excellent too, communicating the nuances of your playing precisely without being punishingly over-dynamic (in that way that plugging into a PA can often be). It's equally well equipped to handle acoustic bass (thanks to the low-end power) and even jazz guitar.

If you're serious about your acoustic playing, you should absolutely check out the Udo Roesner Da Capo 75. It's not cheap, and it's a little heavier than many of its competitors, but the sound is second to none.

END <<



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**Smaller size.  
Bigger sound.  
Serious fun.**



QUALITY  
**Taylor**  
GUITARS

# Taylor American Dream AD17

Utilising Taylor's beloved Grand Pacific body shape, the American Dream series is a modern take on the classic round-shoulder dreadnought that retains the powerful yet warm sound of a dreadnought but with more clarity and note-definition, particularly in the low-end. The American Dream series is Taylor's entry-point for those looking for an American-made, all-solid wood acoustic guitar. **Nick Jennison** reviews the Taylor American Dream AD17.

**I'VE** had the pleasure of looking at a number of Taylor's V-Class guitars since they were introduced in 2018, and I'm yet to play one that I haven't been impressed by. This innovative bracing pattern improves sustain, projection and even intonation, and it seems to enhance every guitar Taylor use it on - regardless of body style or wood selection. This labour intensive process is reserved for Taylor's more expensive solid wood American-made guitars found in the 300 series and up.

Named after the guitar shop where Taylor was founded in the '70s, the American Dream line of guitars puts solid woods, USA construction and V-Class bracing within reach for players that want a bonafide pro-level instrument, but perhaps can't quite stretch their budget to a 314ce.

Right out of the box, the blacktop-finished AD17 had my heart racing. It's elegant, simple and very chic, with more than a little

"The playability is **as good** as I've ever felt on a Taylor guitar..."

Johnny Cash cool. While I'm normally not a fan of finishes on acoustic guitar (being of the opinion that more paint tends to dampen the resonance of the timbers), the matte finish here is thin enough to get a pass from me - which is good news, since I'm so taken by how it looks.

The construction here is all solid woods, with no layered or laminate timbers in sight. The AD17 sports a Sitka spruce and a mahogany neck. Taylor has selected ovangkol for the back and sides and eucalyptus for the fingerboard - two kinds of wood that are very similar in tone to rosewood, but more »

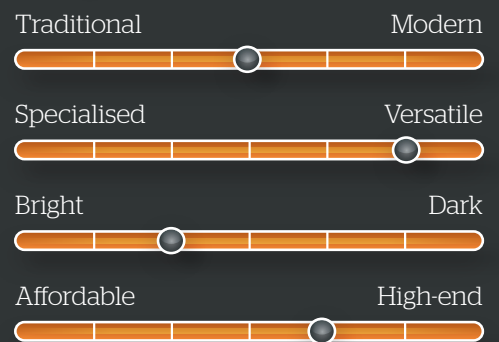




## Taylor American Dream AD17

**MSRP:** (UK) £1429 / (US) \$1499

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Warm, balanced acoustic tones

Effortless playability

Not breaking the bank

For more information, please visit:  
[taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)



ecologically friendly and cost-effective. These bright and crisp wood choices are offset by what has become my favourite Taylor body shape: the Grand Pacific. This round-shouldered dreadnought design has a warm, seasoned tone and balances beautifully on either leg.

Tonally, the AD17 is warm and authoritative, with a lot of volume and a top end that's more silky than snappy. The lows are deep and three dimensional, but without the bloat that larger dreads sometimes exhibit. If you

lay in with aggressive strumming, it's right there with you. By contrast, more delicate fingerstyle work has enough oomph and projection to carry without sacrificing sustain, detail or harmonic complexity. It's just a really well-balanced instrument.

The playability is as good as I've ever felt on a Taylor guitar. The action is low right up to the 14th fret neck join, and the neck is extremely comfortable with both thumb-around and thumb-behind playing positions. Most notably, however, the superb balance »







and chamfered body edges made sitting with this guitar very comfortable. Often with acoustics, I'm faced with either "supporting" the guitar with my left hand (which impedes dexterity) or "holding" the body with my right arm (which dampens the tone). With this guitar, I didn't have to do either, which meant I could play a lot more freely than I usually can on larger-bodied acoustics.

Out of all the Taylor guitars I've played, I like the AD17 the best. It looks fantastic, plays effortlessly and the tone is superb, but it's also relatively affordable. If I were to buy a Taylor guitar, this would be the one - you should check it out too!

END«





# Martin X Series D-X1E & 00-X2E

Billed as affordable, eco-conscious instruments without compromising on legendary tone, the newly reimagined X Series utilizes high-pressure laminate (HPL) coupled with select hardwood to make these models some of the sturdiest, scratch and weather-resistant models in Martin's lineup. **Nick Jennison** reviews the Martin X Series D-X1E & 00-X2E.

**AS** much as I love looking at Martin's exceptional high-end guitars, they're not exactly within reach for the majority of guitar players. Fortunately, Martin's X Series instruments offer a very affordable way to get your hands on a guitar made with almost 200 years of innovation and expertise.

The X Series lineup is like a Martin "greatest hits", with D, 0, 00, 000/OM and GPC body styles offered in a variety of woods including all mahogany, mahogany/spruce and koa. Prospective buyers are spoiled for choice, but the options can be a little overwhelming unless you're already familiar with both Martin's model history and acoustic guitar construction in general. With this in mind, we decided to take two of the most iconic styles in the range and compare them - the all mahogany D-X1E dreadnought and the smaller-bodied spruce/mahogany 00-X2E. »

**D-1XE:** With a larger dreadnought body and all mahogany construction, I'd expect loud projection and a warm, thick tone from the D-1XE, and it certainly doesn't disappoint. Laying in with a heavy pick produces a full and rich voice with lots of authority. There's

still plenty of detail in the highs though, especially for softer moments with both flat-picking and fingerstyle playing styles. There's a strong midrange presence, but it's more of a low mid warmth than the upper mid sparkle the 00-X2E has.



2E

tone,  
ect



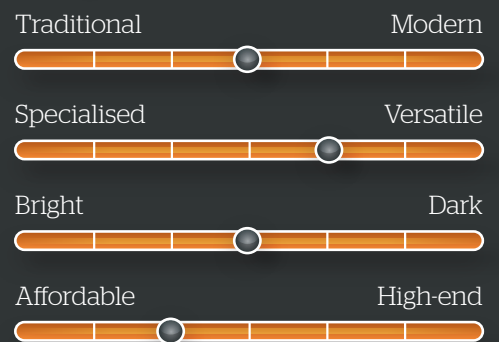
D-1XE



## Martin X Series D-1XE & OO-X2E

**MSRP:** (D-1XE) \$649 / (OO-X2E) \$799

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Signature Martin tones

Appealing price tags

Fishman pickups

For more information, please visit:  
[martinguitar.com](http://martinguitar.com)





### OO-X2E:

With its smaller body and sitka spruce top, the OO-X2E has a lighter and brighter tone than the D-X1E, and while it might sound a little less immediately impressive in head to head comparisons with its dreadnought-bodied sibling, the OO-X2E has the kind of upper mid detail and clarity that's ideal for more intricate playing styles. It's also great for sitting in a mix, where the low end of a dreadnought can be a little overwhelming. It's also a little easier in terms of playability thanks to the smaller body style and shorter scale length.

OO-X2E



Both guitars sport Fishman's excellent MX pickup system. It's a very simple system, with volume and tone controls tucked away in the soundhole along with a bright and accurate tuner that's easy for the player to see while being hidden from your audience. This is a very useful addition even when mic'd up in the studio, and saves having a clip-on tuner or a large preamp cut into the side of the guitar's body. The pickup itself is very natural sounding, with an even dynamic range that allows you plenty of room for expression without loud notes taking the listener's head off.

Either of these guitars would be a fine choice for any guitarist, whether you're a beginner looking for your first proper acoustic, a gigging musician looking for a great sounding guitar that you won't be afraid to play live, or even an experienced player looking to add another flavour to your acoustic arsenal.

END «



# THE Basement

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.

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GI77

# THE PLACE FOR BASS



# Dingwall SPJ4

Sheldon Dingwall has brought the design first showcased in Leo Fender's Precision bass to the 21st century with his Dingwall line of Bass Guitars. Utilising the benefits of fan fret technology to achieve a more balanced tone and reduces dead spots, his instruments are arguably the finest take on an American classic.

**Dan Veall** reviews the Dingwall SPJ4.

**IT'S** super! It's a PJ, and it has weaved its way from Saskatoon, Canada having passed through the skilled hands of the staff at Dingwall Guitars to us via Bass Direct here in the UK.

Heading up the specification here is a premium Alder body mated with a Maple neck featuring dual carbon fibre spars. Alder and Maple is a classic tone combination, and the wood choices here have a lovely resonant sound acoustically. Expertly finished, a Wenge fingerboard (a wood choice I love in neck-through laminates) with a very even grain throughout is contrasted with pearl white block markers. Both eye-catching and useful for placing yourself whilst playing. The scale length of the instrument runs from 34.25" on the E to 32" on the G. I will, of course, point you towards my past reviews of Dingwall basses as we

have covered the Fan Fret system in much detail in those and why Dingwall basses feature it: Issues 8, 39 45 and 56, all of which you can access via the Guitar Interactive website!

This SPJ4 example isn't a shy little thing, and it wants to be noticed; the satin finish is called Ferrari Green, and much like its supercar namesake, the SPJ4 here has similar sporty appointments in the shape of a 'carbon pick-guard'.

Dingwall is a company that I love, who constantly strive to push new ideas and have created their own identity in the marketplace right down to the smallest details like even manufacturing their own design knobs in house.

Once again, Dingwall brings their eye for tasteful design to the bridge assembly. It has a 19mm spacing - It's made to high tolerances for

accuracy and best tone to boot. It looks the part too!

Electronics on the SPJ4 are again designed and made in Canada - in this example; we have a wall FDV vintage-voiced humbucker in the bridge and a Neoclassic P style pickup in the neck position. Onboard, a four-way pickup selector offers the usual settings but the additional series pickup configuration adds more mids and output. Great for fingerstyle and rock tones. The pickups mix 50/50 beautifully. I love the slightly brighter midrange that makes noise with zing without the need for active electronics on board. The pickups are encapsulated in Dingwall shells, again, all made in their workshops in Canada. Those curved edges, no callus dig into your thumb after a long gigging! »



straight into the 21st  
which gives a more  
old-school classic.

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## Dingwall SPJ4

**MSRP:** (UK) £3250 / (US) \$TBC

### The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



### For fans of

High-end instruments

Superb playability

Fan fret technology

For more information, please visit:

[https://www.bassdirect.co.uk/  
bass-guitar-specialists/Dingwall-  
Combustion.html](https://www.bassdirect.co.uk/bass-guitar-specialists/Dingwall-Combustion.html)



“It’s a **versatile machine** even without a m switches with a naturally brighter and mic



**Dingwall SPJ4**

Sponsored by Rotosound



million knobs and  
d-present sound...”

Speaking of which, If you are a fan of long exciting gigs like I, then you’ll be pleased to hear that this example isn’t going to leave you with shoulder pains - the lightweight tuning keys installed mean that there isn’t any unnecessary additional weight bearing down and this instrument in total measures up at 3.7Kg - perfectly reasonable I feel!

For your hard-earned “reddies”, not only do you get a decent set of tools with your bass but they and instrument arrive snugged up in a professional and deluxe gig bag—a great addition to protect your investment.

The Dingwall SPJ4 is of course based on the vintage P bass, but dragged right up to the present day with modern-day tech’. It’s a versatile machine even without a million knobs and switches with a naturally brighter and mid-present sound. Yes, this is a high-end offering, there are no two ways about it, but it is a lovely instrument without a doubt.

END <<



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# Ampeg SVT 2 Pro Amplifier

Although many other brands have tried to capture the classic all-tube bass sound of the 1960s, few can arguably hold a candle to the SVT. That harmonically rich sound and legendary performance is what the SVT-2PRO, delivering 300 watts RMS of unsurpassed quality, reliability and tonal flexibility, is all about. **Dan Veall** tells us more about the Ampeg SVT 2 Pro Amplifier.

**I CAN'T** think of a “big rig” that I saw more times on stage growing up than the iconic Ampeg SVT and 810 cabinet combination. Some of my favourite bassists used these and have endorsed the brand for many years.

No longer in manufacture, but surely this combination can be considered a modern classic. So, here's the SVT 2 Pro in for a closer look.

This absolute beast of an amplifier features no less than 14 Valves in its signal path. Six big 6550 valves help to deliver 300W RMS of power in to a 4 or 2 ohm load. But, oh beware! In this modern age of D Class heads developing 1200W of output - the numbers dwarf merely numerically. I had actually forgotten how deep and loud the SVT 2 Pro can be when it's turned up. We've paired it with a modern, clear sounding 'neo' cabinet for the 4x10" experience and the results in the studio were pretty epic if I am honest with you.





1960s and '70s Ampeg bass heads, not many of the Ampeg SVT was redefined in portability, and features a vast array of contemporary

The preamplifier of the Ampeg SVT 2 Pro is laid out somewhat deceptively. Having the graphic equaliser set away from the rest of the controls splits the head up in to "feature areas" and to my mind looks less complicated than some other heads with lots of icons and busy looking lay out. Tidy, sleek and oozing authority with its mixture of 'Hammerite' paintwork and brushed metal panels. It doesn't need the bright gaudy lights to get noticed, it has done its tenure on stages the world throughout and is respected.

Across the front panel, we have controls for gain and drive. Both of these work interactively taking the valve preamplifier from a deep clean tone with lots of girth to a gritty and angry mid-present valve distortion.

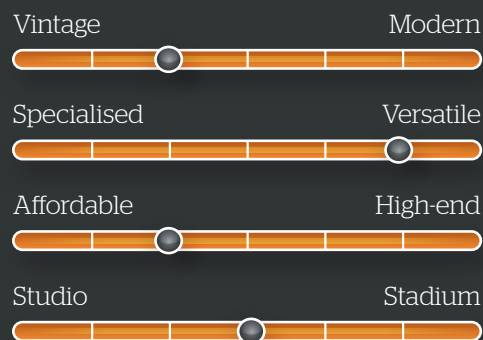
The 'tone controls' onboard even without the extensive graphic equaliser engaged forms a large part of the SVT sound, especially as the midrange frequency can be switched in 5 frequency steps depending on where you need your adjustments to take place. I preferred the 220hz position as there's a lot of important 4 string bass frequencies available around the 100-400hz region. Watch that bass control though as it reaches low! Treble adjustment and a pair of top-end boost switches are super useful for shaping bite, clarity and harmonics of your instrument, or pull them back for an old-school rumble. The Ultra Low as it happens, is almost



## Ampeg SVT 2 Pro Amplifier

**MSRP:** (UK) £1699 / (US) \$N/A

### The Breakdown



### For fans of

Classic Ampeg tones

Fantastic performance

A heavy rig

For more information, please visit:

[ampeg.com](http://ampeg.com)



“Of course, check out my video for some close-ups of those **glorious valves** - it almost seems a shame to hide them away...”



Ampeg SVT2 Pro Amplifier





a go-to if you want a deep, “subby” bass sound, as it scoops out mid-range too thus boosting low end perception.

The graphic equaliser, which features nine bands of cut and boost is, to me well thought out. The 90, 180, 300 and 500hz bands are often the ones I mostly need for shaping. You could, of course, set up the equaliser like a second channel as it can be switched in, like the mute function via externally connected footswitch.

Incidentally, for the purists out there, according to the schematic diagram I have, it seems that although the graphic equaliser is solid-state and has no valves in it’s signal path, when it is switched out, it is truly bypassed, removed from the path entirely.

Round the back, there’s all the useful connections we need to hook up to cabinets or front of house for performance. This version of the SVT 2 Pro has the added Speakon style connector, whereas my earlier “black face” SVT 2 Pro I owned many years ago only had the 1/4” jack sockets for speakers. I much prefer the inclusion of Speakons for many reasons. (Do not use instrument cables for speaker outputs and vice versa!)

Effects loop and the ability to daisy chain SVT amplifiers using the “Preamplifier output / Power amplifier” input jacks can be useful for the odd stadium gig!!!!

Of course, check out my video for some close-ups of those glorious valves - it almost seems a shame to hide them away inside a massive steel case, then wrapped in a rack case, but this amplifier was always designed to have a bullet-proof shell for the rigours of the road.

The SVT 2 is unfortunately by today’s standards a heavy ole beast. When bassists are throwing 200W amps that fit in their back pocket into their gig bags, before hopping on the bus for an afternoon club gig, the SVT 2 Pro has had to sit it out. Sadly it seems the SVT 2 Pro has been and will continue to be out of production, and this is possibly one reason.

That said, this is an amplifier that, having been away from for so many years and to have an opportunity to really crank up and breathe some fire into speakers - was a very pleasing, exciting, nay, thrilling experience. And you know what? It ended up coming home with me too.

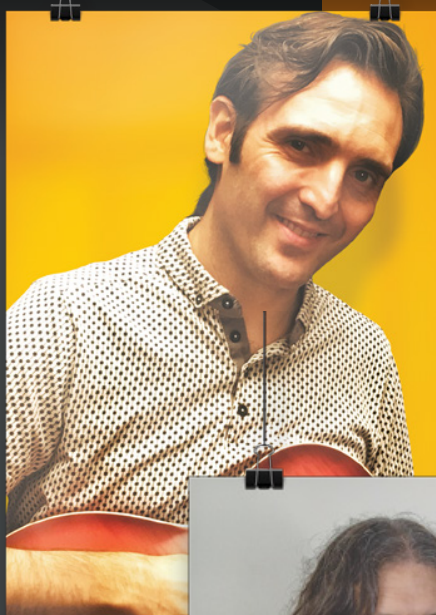
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# THE Columns

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.

CLASS IS BACK  
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EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS  
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EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS





# WANG BAR ABUSE!

A warning: If you've come to this column for musicality, turn back now. There's a lot of other stuff out there that will fulfil your (admirable) thirst for it. This column is NOT about that. We're talking about what you have with a guitar that doesn't involve persuasion you prefer. We're talking about

## *5 Ways To Add Colour With Your Whammy*

**PERHAPS** dear reader, you have been seduced by the all-too-common misapprehension that the whammy bar is just for making what folk from my neck of the woods might charitably call "a racket". You hit an open string/a harmonic and you dump the bar until the strings go slack, right? Well, that's part of it (I even devoted a whole lesson to this noble pursuit in the previous column in this series!), but there's a whole lot more fun to be had with your wang bar once besides dive bombs. Here are five of my favourite ways to use your trem to add colour to your playing. »



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COLUMNS NICK JENNISON WAMMY BAR TECHNIQUE

mn 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 whammy bar tricks.



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## 1 - BAR VIBRATO

Give a child a guitar with a whammy bar and they'll likely start wiggling it back and forward and giggling contentedly at the wobbly sound it makes. Give an inexperienced guitarist the same guitar and they'll probably do the same thing, only with less giggle and more consternation.

Bar vibrato is perhaps the oldest and most basic of whammy bar techniques, exemplified by early Strat players like Hank Marvin (and we'll have no dunking on Hank here - he's a total boss). With a more forgiving system like a Bigsby, bar vibrato is as simple as wagging the bar in and out in a relatively even manner, but on a super-sensitive Floyd Rose trem it requires a little more finesse.

Probably the best place to start is by looking at your grip. Simply loosening up the grip you have on the bar will go a long way to making your vibrato feel smoother. Think about holding it like a baby bird - snugly enough that you don't drop it, but delicately enough not to hurt it. The bird, that is, not the bar.

## 2 - DIPS

To save any confusion among the "gym bro" contingent that might be reading (among whose numbers I count myself), let me clarify what I mean by "bar dips". You strike a note, and then sharply depress and release the whammy bar, usually in a rhythmic manner. Like so many things, Eddie Van Halen was the master of this simple but effective technique. »







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COLUMNS NICK JENNISON WAMMY BAR TECHNIQUE





Nick Jennison Wammy Bar Technique



The trick to making dips work is to make them short and sharp. You're not trying to glide from one pitch to another - it should be the briefest of interruptions in the note. If you get it right, it can actually sound quite soulful, since this is a technique singers will often use to punctuate their phrases (you know - singers? The ones at the front who fill up the space between guitar solos?).

### 3 - INVERTED DIPS

If dips can be soulful, then inverted dips sound positively alien. Which makes sense, considering the master of this technique is the spider-fingered inter-dimensional being we call Steve Vai. Executing it is pretty simple - turn the bar backwards and dip the bar exactly like in example 2. However, because of the position of the bar and the unearthly sound this technique produces, you can afford to be a lot more violent. Try channelling your inner Ric Flair and chopping the bar - you might be pleasantly surprised. "Woo" sounds are optional.

### 4 - GARGLES

You've probably "gargled" your tremolo by accident before - if you pick too hard on a Floyd-equipped guitar, the note can take on a quality that's reminiscent of speaking into an electric fan. This is because Floyd Rose tremolos are balanced on a literal knife-edge, and as such are insanely sensitive systems.

You can use this to your advantage by flicking the very tip of the bar with your thumb/fingers/palm and letting it vibrate violently like a spring - creating a gargling sound that's far too







much fun to be entirely healthy. Mark Tremonti loves this sound so much, he put it in the chorus riff for Metalingus!

## 5 - EMULATING SLIDE GUITAR

Ok, here's where things get tricky. The reason slide guitar sounds so cool is because it turns the guitar into a "portamento" instrument - that is to say, able to glide smoothly between pitches. The most famous portamento instrument is the human voice, and this is why slide players can sound so breathtakingly soulful. And the tremolo system was designed to steal their gigs!

Ok, not slide players per se, but the tremolo system is part of the long heritage of "gig stealing" gear invented by Leo Fender - designed with the intention of taking work from lap steel/pedal steel players in the same way that the electric bass guitar was intended to steal gigs from upright bass players (that's why they usually have four strings!).

It's late 2020, and there are no gigs to steal, but we can definitely steal some licks from the slide crowd! Start by "pre-bending" the bar either up or down into certain notes in your favourite blues phrases and go from there. For more inspiration, you should definitely check out Michael Lee Firkins, although there's another fella who's pretty good too... Jeff Beck, was it?

So there we have it! 5 tips to put some music back into your whammy bar antics. We even touched on something to keep the blues-hounds happy with that last one. Happy shredding!

END «



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# 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 a composition of mine called 'Lullaby', which features a simple singing-like melody and a 'minimum-movement' approach in the harmonic content, as evident in the video and the notated example featured in the column.

Very often, when teaching composition, students tell me that they frequently start a piece but then lose direction or inspiration and don't manage to complete

these. One of the most useful strategies to overcome 'blocks' ensuring we finish a composition or most jobs (in most cases) consists of setting some rules, like a deadline or some guidelines to help us start, structure and finalise the work.

I am not suggesting that these factors are indispensable to complete a work, however, without any of these, we could easily get distracted by many things, procrastinate with the infinite possibilities or simply we may not feel brave enough to commit to an idea, a chord or a rhythmic subdivision in favour of another. »

I remember reading an interview to the legendary pianist and prolific composer Chick Corea, who was claiming that he loves setting his own compositional rules and break them if needed. These serve the purpose of guiding the initial stages of a composition or can help following a cohesive musical trajectory, which makes musical sense.

In this case, I wanted to write this piece within 15 minutes and so I did. I have decided to start with a short intro in free time or 'rubato' and then develop a simple, repetitive melody as we find in most lullabies. In other words, my intention was to send you to sleep J

Ok, put your pajama on and enjoy the piece!

## HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

I chose a resonating key for the guitar (E major) and after an atmospheric intro (rubato) featuring an E pedal under some chord clusters I continued the piece with the following chords: IV iv I (namely, Amaj9 Am6/9 Emaj6).

Then I have used other extended chords, such as D13, F#m11, B13sus4 (or Amaj7/B and Eadd9).

In a few passages I have decided to explore a few harmonic substitutions, for an added ele-

ment of surprise. A recurrent featured is the use of inversions used to enhance the melodic qualities of the bass lines in the lower register.

NB. Please note that (b) next to I, means chord I first inversion, namely with the 3<sup>rd</sup> on the bass.

Another important harmonic ingredient is the frequent use of open strings to complement the main melody. 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:

Being a ballad, the rhythmic content in the arrangement is quite linear.

## MELODIC INGREDIENTS:

The melodic content is mainly in E major (with use of natural and melodic minor ideas) and has a singing-like quality throughout.

## ARTICULATIONS:

The choice of articulations is very important in the construction of any composition, as these can be seen as the 'how we say our





story'. A few articulations were used such as grace notes and 'turns' as notated in the embedded PDF.

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 counter-melody or harmony part.

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:** Natural harmonic on fret 12 of E. Let this ring and play the following chords: middle f on fret 9, index on fret 7 of B and little f on fret 11 of e.

**BAR 2:** Next ring on fret 6 of G, index on fret 4 of B and little f on fret 7 of e. (Optional chord – ring on fret 4 of G, index on fret 2 of B and little f on fret 4 of e)

**BAR 3-4:** Index on fret 7 of E, little f on fret 10 of D, middle f on fret 8 of G, ring f on fret 9 of B and index on fret 7 of e.

**BAR 5:** Little f on fret 7 of e, open A, middle f on fret 6 of D, ring on fret 6 of G, open B.

**BAR 6:** Little f on fret 5 of e, open A, middle f on fret 4 of D, ring on fret 5 of G, open B.

**BAR 7-8:** Little f on fret 4 of e, open E, index on fret 2 of D and B, ring on fret 4 of G.

**BAR 9-12:** The same as bar 5-8

**BAR 13:** Little f on fret 7 of e, open A, middle f on fret 6 of D, ring on fret 6 of G, open B.

**BAR 14:** Middle f on fret 5 of A, index on fret 4 of D ring on fret 6 of G, open B. and little f on fret 5 of e.

**BAR 15:** Barre' on fret 4 of A, G and e. Middle f on fret 5 of B and ring on fret 5 of e.

**BAR 16:** Middle f on fret 3 of A, index on fret 2 of e, open G and ring f on fret 3 of B, followed by open e.

**BAR 17:** Middle f on fret 2 of E, middle f on fret 2 of D ring on fret 3 of G and open G. Next, play a 'turn' with open B, fret 2 and open B followed by fret 3 of G and open B.

**BAR 18:** Barre' on fret 2 of A, D, G, B and e. Little f on fret 4 of e

**BAR 19:** Open E and e, middle f on fret 2 of A, little f on fret 4 of D, index on fret 1 of G and open B.

**BAR 20:** Arpeggiate the last chord Eadd9, as described in the previous bar.

At this point play the intro to end.

Congratulations, you have completed 'Lullaby'!

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 ponticello', (closer to the bridge) or 'sul tasto' (over the frets) for more contrasting results.

Make sure you highlight the melody (singing is a great strategy to play the melody in more assertive and singing-like manner)

Focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help 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](http://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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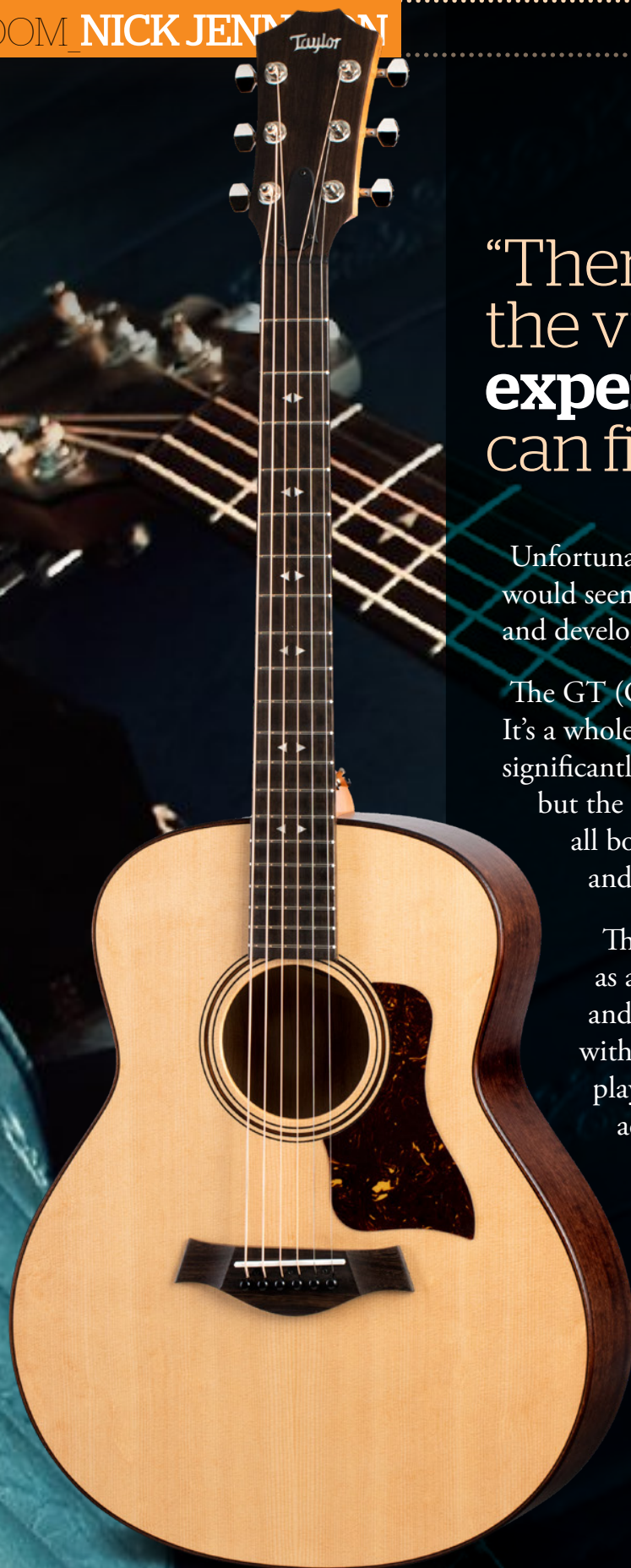


# "OPEN STRINGS LICKS FOR ACOUSTIC GUITAR"

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, while **Sam Bell** brings us another new and exclusive Gi column.

**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. »





“There are lots of the video, but it’s **experimenting** and can find some...”

Unfortunately, they do tend to lack some of the things we would seem we’re fated to contend with and developing a vice-grip playing technique.

The GT (Grand Theater) is a response to this. It’s a whole new body shape that’s based on a significantly smaller. The width at the lower bout is significantly smaller, but the body is shorter and significantly more compact than all body types - even big dudes like the Dreadnought and projection (more on that in a moment).

The neck is slimmed down too, as a 25.5” scale neck that has been designed to give the same feel and is intended to give the same feel without having to detune or go down a fret playing electric guitars, so I have to say acoustic guitars to be way too stiff. Friction requires more pressure and even shred-inspired lead playing you consider how full-bodied.

The tone. Clear and articulate. Standard Taylor stuff. But it’s remarkable. This thing plays like a low string. This is no doubt. Details on this are scant and it’s a creation (much like the V-Class).



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

me of the authority of bigger instruments. So it  
a warping our own bodies to fit those of our guitars,  
unique in the process. Unless you have a Taylor GT.

to the countless requests for a solid wood GS Mini.  
l on Taylor's Grand Orchestra body shape, but  
lower bout is about the same as a Grand Concert,  
ntly shallower. It's a very comfy size for players of  
e myself - that isn't so small that it sacrifices punch  
a moment!)

, sporting a 24.125" scale length - exactly the same  
een capo'd off at the 1st fret. This is not by accident,  
slinky play feel of a 25.5" scale guitar tuned to Eb,  
down a string gauge. I spend about 95% of my time  
e a pretty light left hand touch and find 12s on  
heavy (especially coated strings, where the reduced  
ure). This was absolutely not the case on the GT,  
ad lines felt effortless. Seriously impressive, when  
died this guitar's tone is. Speaking of which...

culate with lots of sustain across the fretboard.  
ut for a guitar this size the low end weight is utterly  
punches like a much larger guitar, especially on the  
oubt thanks to the asymmetrical "C-Class" bracing.  
at the moment, but it's another of Andy Powers's  
-Class bracing introduced a few years » ago to much

THE QUIET ROOM GETTING MORE FROM YOUR OPEN CHORDS





# THE QUIETROOM\_NICK JENNISON







Getting More From Your Open Chords



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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 «





# Rhythm Guitar Concepts





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

## Lesson 2: Feeling 8th Notes

### Introduction:

Welcome to my second instalment on Rhythm Guitar Concepts, in the last issue we took a look at some basic timing exercises to help build our own internal rhythmic awareness. Everything we look at from this point in the series I highly suggest is practiced using some of the concepts from the first instalment as this will really help you hone in on your ability to internalise and control your timing! In this column I am going to take a look at being responsible for 8th notes or as your school music teacher would have called them 'Quavers'. In this series I am going to use the American system of '8th' notes as I feel it makes a lot more sense in common time (4/4) to divide the bar up into these fractions making it much easier to visualise how our note sub-divisions work. If you don't know what 8th notes are, then you are in the right place! If you already know what 8th notes are you may be thinking 'where are you taking this Sam?' and you would be right to ask, however let me put the emphasis here on 'being responsible' for your 8th notes, how well can you feel them if they are displaced and how you can work your whole guitar vocabulary around them in order to create awesome variations and most importantly increase your ability to groove... »



**What is an 8th note?**

Not all but most music can be felt in 4, often audiences clap along in 4, group melodic phrases in 4, and count a song in using 4 etc. 4/4 simply means we have 4 quarter notes in a measure of music. This is the down beat, the solid down beats that define the tempo of the song. We count these quarter notes with 'one, two, three, four', sometimes audiences clap on 1 and 3, good audiences clap on 2 and 4. It's the way of the world. If you are reading this then you most likely already have a strong grasp of these quarter notes, but in this column we are focusing on 8th notes. 8ths are simply dividing the measure of 4 into 8, giving us 8 equal subdivisions of the bar. This gives us two notes per beat giving us a down beat and an up-beat. This is commonly counted like this:

'ONE and TWO and THREE and FOUR and'

Sometimes visually represented without sheet music like this:

'1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + '

The numbered beats are the down beat quarter notes and the 'ands' are the up-beats dividing these downbeats into 8ths. Often musicians say things like 'this song comes in on the 'and' of three' meaning the opening phrase of a song might start on the up-beat of three when counting in the tune. (Ex. AC/DC Highway to Hell'). Another common place to hear a strong emphasis on the

'ands' is in Ska music where high triadic voicings are used on the 'ands' of each beat.

**How does this help me get better at rhythm guitar?**

Good question, being aware of the 8th note sub-division whilst playing is very important, you are probably playing a lot of 8th note strumming patterns or riffs already. But by analysing what you are playing a bit deeper by working out where you are playing your 8th notes in a bar you can really dig into the timing and become a lot more 'locked in' with the groove and much less likely to get lost. Your playing will also sound a lot more confident if you can sense where the 8th notes are through the measures of music you are playing. This should hopefully answer some important questions if you are not familiar with what an 8th note is, however that isn't my main purpose of this conceptual lesson on getting better at rhythm guitar.

**Feeling the 8th notes dude...**

So now we get to the most interesting part of the lesson. Feeling those 8th notes, not just by counting 1 + 2 + etc, but really being able to treat each note in a bar like it has its own post code, its own home or maybe thinking of it in its own entity. In the video example of this lesson I count through a bar and only play on certain 8th notes for only the length of an 8th note. A practice routine could be only playing on the 'and' of beat one, from here you could practice feeling at different tempos, you could phrase licks or chord





## Lesson 2: 8th Notes

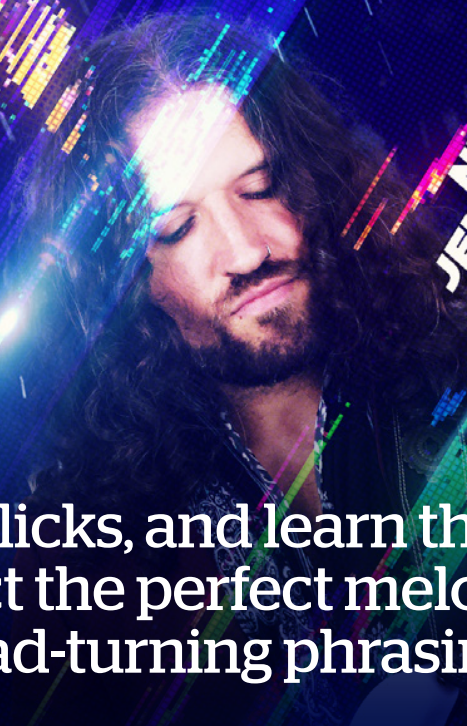
sequences starting on this note and finishing on the same note on the next bar, or you could slowly develop complex single note lines that build on only select 8th note beats of the bar. I really want you to try to get to 'know' these places in the bar as well as you know your open C chord or first position pentatonic. It seems very basic and it kind of is! However today's budding guitarists who are starting out to forget or even miss out on the importance of being super aware of these subtle and important aspects of time feel in music.

### Summary:

Take riffs and chord strumming patterns that you already know, see if you can count through them. Really work out what you are doing. Looking deep into things that come naturally to you can be a great way of really making sense of challenges that come down the line, but also help solidify your rhythm playing. An 8th note isn't just for Christmas, it's for life.

END «





# NICK JENNISON'S THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MELODY & PHRASING

## Go beyond just licks, and learn the secrets of how to construct the perfect melodic guitar solo packed with head-turning phrasing.

Improvisation guru **Nick Jennison** presents the key ingredients that make up modern blues, progressive rock and minor blues guitar phrasing; including note choice, resolution and nuance—combined into study solos to engage your ears as well as your fingers! Want to truly master your craft? Then check out part one of this exclusive Guitar Interactive course.

Ever wondered what goes into writing a truly great melody? What about solos that take you on a journey with them, like a story within a song? In this course, Nick Jennison guides you through the process of creating the kind of evocative, memorable lines that are the hallmark of not just great guitar players, but all great musicians.

The **Ultimate Guide to Melody & Phrasing** includes 50 examples of melodic development exploring everything from note choice, intervals and melodic contour to timing, expression and dynamics, along with and three full-length solo studies in three different styles: “Modern Soul,” “Melodic Prog” and “Minor Blues.” Each of these solo studies is accompanied by note-for-note tuition, as well as a complete masterclass explaining the rationale behind the composition.

If you want to become a more musical player, this is the course you’ve been waiting for.

**Watch this entire course and more incredible lesson content with a **Gi Plus** subscription.**



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