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Guitar

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STEVE
LUKATHER
TECH SESSION

LUKE

STEVE LUKATHER RETURNS WITH THE NEW ALBUM
I FOUND THE SUN AGAIN

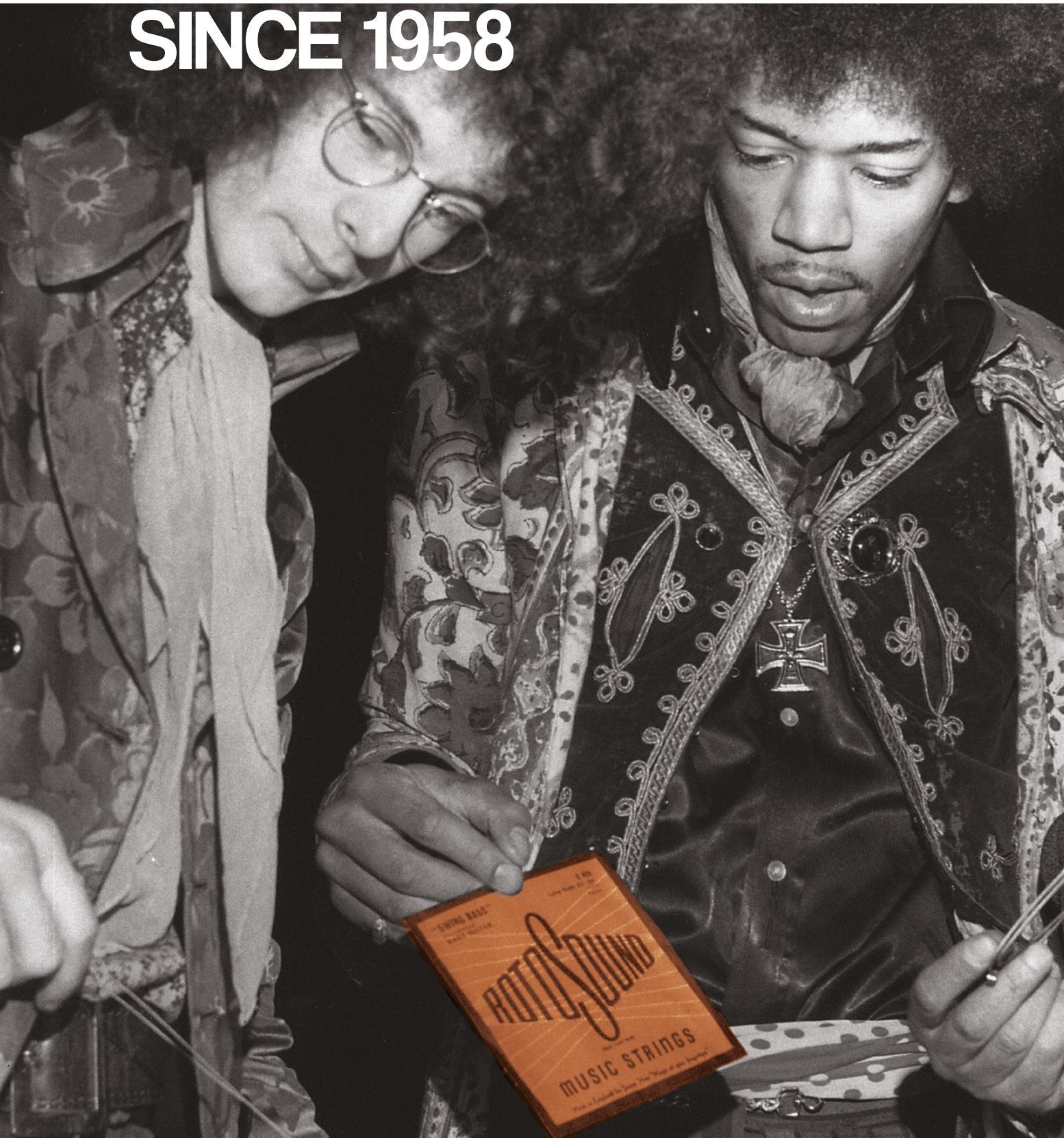
+ INTERVIEWS

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Welcome to **ISSUE**

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Hello and welcome to issue 80 of Guitar Interactive Magazine!



Editor
// Jonathan Graham

Over the course of five decades, Steve Lukather has placed an indelible stamp on pop culture. Alongside his tenure as the only member of Toto to never take a hiatus from the band, he has performed on

thousands of albums as a session musician. Amongst these musical contributions are some of the most successful, influential and enduring records of all time. Back with a brand new album entitled 'I Found The Sun Again,' Luke chats with Guitar interactive's Jonathan Graham about the new album, noisy neighbours, his relationship with Music Man guitars, the passing of Eddie Van Halen and more.

Continuing our exclusive features on this issue's cover artist Steve Lukather, Sam Bell breaks down the unmistakable phrasing and killer technique of the man himself in this issue's Guitar Interactive Tech session.

If that's not enough, we chat with Jerry Horton of multi-platinum rock giants Papa Roach as the band return with their second greatest hits compilation, 'Greatest Hits Vol.2: The Better Noise Years.' Chicago-based slide guitar virtuoso and singer-songwriter Joanna Connor, best known as one of the reigning Queens of blues-rock guitar, also features in this issue as she returns with her incredible new album '4801 South Indiana Avenue.' Out now on Joe Bonamassa's new independent blues record label KTBA Records.

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 still not enough, don't forget all of our exclusive lessons from Tom Quayle, Sam Bell & Giorgio Serci.

See you next time.

Guitar Interactive

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We also chat with **Jerry Horton** of multi-platinum rock giants **Papa Roach** as the band return with their second greatest hits compilation, 'Greatest Hits Vol.2: The Better Noise Years.' Chicago-based slide guitar virtuoso and singer-songwriter **Joanna Connor**, best known as one of the reigning Queens of blues-rock guitar, also features in this issue as she returns with her incredible new album '4801 South Indiana Avenue.' Out now on Joe Bonamassa's new independent blues record label KTBA Records.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH
GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES

INTERVIEWS **STEVE LUKATHER**



S

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Stop, Luke & Listen

Over the course of five decades, Steve Lukather has placed an indelible stamp on pop culture. Alongside his tenure as the only member of Toto to never take a hiatus from the band, he has performed on thousands of albums as a session musician. Amongst these musical contributions are some of the most successful, influential and enduring records of all time, including Michael Jackson's 'Thriller.' Additionally, he released a memoir titled 'The Gospel According To Luke,' which was a global best-seller. He is Toto's bandleader, a member of Ringo Star's All-Starr Band, and a solo artist performing with multiple ensembles, including Nerve Bundle and Toxic Monkey. Back with a brand new album entitled 'I Found The Sun Again,' Luke chats with Guitar interactive's **Jonathan Graham** about the new album, noisy neighbours, his relationship with Music Man guitars, the passing of Eddie Van Halen and more. »

Jonathan Graham: Great to see you, Luke. How are you?

Steve Lukather: I'm hanging in there, man. A year off has been tough with all the crazy stuff going on, but I've got a new record out, so that's exciting.

JG: It really is, and 'I've Found The Sun Again' is really fantastic. It made me feel like I'd found a bit of much-needed sunshine myself, inspiration wise. Especially since we're all stuck in the house these days. Did the pandemic have an impact on the making of the record?

SL: We actually did it way before lockdown—before we knew how bad this thing was gonna be. So I was able to be in the room with the guys, and we did the whole thing live. We cut a song a day. All the live solos everything. Overdubbed the vocals at night, and then it was done and ready to mix, then on to the next song. It was really fun to do it that way, unrehearsed. I just hired the right guys that brought it and made me look good. So it was really the most fun I've ever had, as I had to really do it. You can try to programme this stuff, but it's just not the same.

JG: Considering how important the live element is to this record, could you have done this under the remote type conditions like some other bands have been forced to?

SL: Well, it's all about looking at each other and interplay, so online, I don't know. I'd have needed to do it with a mask on probably, which would have been weird. When your half covered up, it's hard to get that. You solo! Hey!! Now you solo! You get what I mean?

JG: Ha! You'd need to get some signs to hold up. You've had a really busy last five years since 'Transition' was released, with the huge Toto world tour and working with Ringo etc.

SL: I've been real busy, but then it ran into a brick wall at a thousand miles an hour, so it's been kinda strange. As it turns out, I hate retirement.

JG: Is that what it feels like?

SL: Well yeah, I can only do so much. I can't really play with anybody. I mean, you've gotta practise every day, but after about 15-20 mins, I'm like errgh. So I just go out in the garden and hang out with my girlfriend and my dog, and just be a regular guy.

JG: We saw you take your amp out to the garden too last year in that amazing Instagram video. What was the story behind that?

SL: Ha! My girlfriend dared me to do it. Next door to me, this guy had seven leaf-blowers going at like seven in the morning, and it felt like they were right next to my head. In the Hollywood Hills, these houses

are real nice, but they're a little closer together, and man, this guy just did me in. He did me in a couple of years back too, by calling the cops on my autistic son who was up on the roof—the guy's cold-hearted. I was like, dude, he didn't know any better; he's just wired a little different. He's very brilliant, actually. So me and this guy had a bit of feud that got a little out of control, so I just buried the guy, and things chilled out.

2G: Well, by the sounds of that video, you did nothing but treat that guy to some great tones. You should be billing him for a solo performance.

SL: Yeah, he heard me alright!

2G: Speaking of great tones. What was your go-to gear on 'I've Found The Sun Again'?

SL: Just my Music Man Luke III with the new Music Man pickups in it that they built for me. Plus a Bogner Helios amp and a couple of stompboxes, and that was it. Basically, my live rig. I used a Yamaha acoustic for a quick overdub, but I kept it simple. One guitar, one amp, the whole deal.

2G: And we know you have plenty of options guitar-wise. Why was the Luke III the one for this record? »



Steve Lukather - I Found The Sun Again (Official Music Video)

“I’ve been real busy, but then **it ran into a brick wall** at a thousand miles an hour, so it’s been kinda strange. As it turns out, I hate retirement...”



SL: It just gave me all I needed. Sometimes you can go over the top with each song having different sounds or being so overproduced that it doesn’t even sound like it’s from the same album, and that’s what Toto was kinda famous for.

29 So when it’s your solo material, is it vital for you to approach the albums differently compared with a Toto record?

SL Toto is a very arranged and thought out thing, you know what I mean? It’s

a bigger production with wilder sounds and stuff, and with this, I just wanted to take in the spirit like it was 1972, and we were jamming in the studio like Traffic or Hendrix or something like that. Get those spontaneous moments like “hey, did you keep that? That was great” type of vibe. It’s raw. It’s real. What else have I got to bring to the party in 2021? I’m not in the guitar wars; I’m a little old for that. So, I just did something I wanted to do for myself, the way I wanted to do it and hoped that it would click with everybody else. »





Steve Lukather - *Run To Me (Official Music Video)*

JG You mentioned the Music Man Luke giving you all you need for this record, and beyond, of course. What turned you on to Music Man guitars in the first place?

SL Well, my relationship with Eddie Van Halen, who was then working with my new friend Sterling Ball at Music Man, and they were building the first Eddie guitar. I was getting out of my deal with Valley Arts because I wanted to do something new, and it turned out one of the head luthiers from Valley Arts was heading to Music Man. He had built the very guitar that I loved, and they put it on a computer and reconfigured it to my specs, and that was it. I've been using their guitars for over 25 years now, and

I really play them. These guitars give me everything I want.

JG There's always your Les Paul 'Burst,' though. What do you think makes those Gibson's from that era so special?

SL You know, I really don't know; they just have a different vibe altogether. I think it's just the way they built them back then, but man, they are worth a lot, especially if they're like mine and have a lot of history. I just got mine appraised and was like, «Wow, oh really?» It is just nice to have it. It's so special that I can't really take it anywhere because it's a nightmare with insurance and all that crap.

2G: What inspired you to pick one of those up back in the 70s?

SL: I was playing a 58 Goldtop, and one of our drum techs said, “you gotta get a ‘burst’ man. There’s one for sale in Tucson.” So we made our way down there, and I got it. It was \$4000 at the time, which was a lot of money in 1979, but I just said to myself I’ve gotta have it, and it’s been a really good investment as it turns out. I’ve used it on a lot of big records.

2G: You mentioned Eddie Van Halen earlier; I know you were great friends. Losing him last year must have had a tremendous impact on you?

SL: Unfortunately, I’ve lost too many friends in the last few years, you know? Best friends. This one hurt real bad. We’ve been friends for over forty years. Real

friends, not just guitar acquaintances or something, although we did have some fun playing together over the years—but mostly, we just connected on a friendship level. We lived close to one another and would just swing by when the kids were little. Hanging in the studio, you know? I sang a couple of background vocals on a few of the Sammy era tracks, and Ed worked with me on a couple of my things, but it was all just for fun. It was a great relationship. I was there when they opened Cabo Wabo and played with him in some small places with not too many people. I’m proud of that, but mainly proud that he was my friend. All of them still are. I’m still in touch with Alex a lot. Especially during these times.

2G: Have you had a chance to hear Wolfgang’s music? »



SL I'm So Happy for Wolf's success. I never knew he sang like that; it's absolutely brilliant! I know Ed had heard it before he passed, and he was really proud of his kid. He's looking down from heaven with a smile.

TG From very early on in your career, you had developed incredible technique. When did you feel that it was really starting to come together for you as a player?

SL In high school, when I was studying. I was really focused on Al DiMeola and John McLaughlin and those wonderful Prog guys. Their playing just touched me, and I just wanted to copy it. I was listening to their music all the time, so you can't help but take it in. It just rubs off on you. I'm a product of everything I ever loved and copied, you know.

TG What was the first session you ever worked on?

SL It was a guy named Terence Boylan, who was the famous producer John Boylan's brother. I was like 18, maybe 19 at the time, and I got invited to work on it.

TG Did you find it easy to break into that world of studio work?

SL I wanted to be in that world so bad. And I was made aware of it through Jeff Porcaro and David Paich. I'd meet the studio guys and befriend them, and they started throwing me work, and I got

really lucky. I was real fortunate to get through the door, and I parlayed that into a real career. I had a lot of help from friends, but I had to really bring it too.

TG Last time I got to see you live was during the Toto 40th anniversary show at the London Albert Hall a couple of years back. What a show, and what a tour for the fans worldwide, but I understand not everything was ideal behind the scenes?

SL It was great, but then it went south. The shows were going well, but before we knew it, we were in the middle of a lawsuit and people weren't getting along. Some guys didn't want to be on the road; some didn't want to talk to certain people. It just got to be really brutal. All the pressure was on me, and it just blew up. I had to get away from it and start over. You know, redesign it. It's been redesigned fifteen times to various different degrees, but always the greatest players.

TG When will we be able to hear some tracks from 'I Found The Sun Again' in a live setting, Luke?

SL When? When? When is the big question? I want to be able to do it for real, so I really don't know. I don't want to just have a small show that's socially distanced and it feels like a soundcheck or something. Plus, we have a big machine that puts these show together, so it wouldn't be viable to do that. Plus, if I head over to Europe, I want to play »

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“I just did something I wanted to do for myself, the **way I wanted to do it** and hoped that it would click with everybody else...”

everywhere, and you can't do that right now with the rules and regulations. Hopefully, sooner rather than later, we can do this live.

Steve Lukather's solo album titled 'I Found The Sun Again' was co-produced by Ken Freeman, who also both engineered and mixed the new collection of repertoire. The players feature many dignitaries that have been in Luke's life for decades. Amongst those are drummer Greg Bissonette, keyboardist Jeff Babko, and bassists Jorgen Carlsson and John Pierce. Life-long friend and Toto band-mate David Paich performs piano and organ across the album, while Joseph Williams sang on multiple tracks alongside writing string and horn arrangements and tracking keys on the aforementioned "Run To Me." Both Paich and Williams co-wrote that specific composition, while friend and bandleader of the All-Starrs, Ringo Starr makes a special appearance on the recording and in the video. Other co-writers include Stan Lynch, Jeff Babko, and Joseph Williams.

Luke shares, "Never had so much fun recording in my life. Painless, fun and easy - and it just flowed." The repertoire features five new original compositions and three covers personally selected by Luke. Those are Traffic's "Low Spark of High Heeled Boys," Joe Walsh's "Welcome To The Club," and Robin Trower's "Bridge of Sighs." Lukather offers in the liner notes, "ALL these tracks were cut LIVE - no clx - no fix - No rehearsal - one run thru - and record and the whole record was take 2. I did double a few guitar parts and 'produced up' a few tunes that are obvious but in the same time frame. I recorded the lead vocal right after we got the take same day. One song a day. Joe took it home and did some BG vocals, but that's it. I wanted to make as honest a record as I could in 2020 with 1970's inspiration, and recording values, and techniques with a modern sound. Ken did that!" A portion of the proceeds from this album will be directed to The Ed Asner Family Center for Autism. For more information please visit <https://www.edasnerfamilycenter.org/>.

END «

Steve Lukather's 'I Found The Sun Again' is out now
via Mascot Label Group.

Steve Lukather - 'I Found The Sun Again' Tracklist:

Along For The Ride

Serpent Soul

The Low Spark Of High
Heeled Boys

Journey Through

Welcome To The Club

I Found The Sun Again

Run To Me

Bridge Of Sighs



For more tickets or more information on Steve Lukather,
please visit: stevelukather.com



JERRY HORTON

NOISEC

Multi-platinum rock band Papa Roach return with their second greatest hits compilation of 21 tracks featuring 12 of the band's Top 10 singles released over the last decade, recorded Live at the YouTube Studios in NYC, as well as a guest appearance from guitarist Jerry Horton talks with Guitar Interactive about the band's latest releases over the decades »

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JERRY HORTON OF PAPA ROACH

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CONTROL

Compilation, 'Greatest Hits Vol.2: The Better Noise Years'—out now on Better Noise Music. Comprised of the new record features three unreleased remixes; and two unreleased acoustic recordings from Asking Alexandria vocalist Danny Worsnop on the single "Broken As Me." Papa Roach's lead guitarist and more, plus some insight into the recording and touring gear that's been essential to him

YOU know you have a deep catalogue of tracks when a second greatest hit is in order—and that's certainly the case when it comes to hard rock giants Papa Roach. The band has put the years in, however, forming back in 1993 and self-releasing their first EP titled 'Potatoes for Christmas' the following year.

By February 1997, the band had produced their first full-length album, entitled 'Old Friends from Young Years.' Already live show veterans by this point, the band would support major acts such as Incubus, Powerman 5000, Hed PE, Snot, Far, Earth, Wind & Fire and Static-X.

In 1998 and 1999, Papa Roach produced two more independent EPs, respectively, which would grab the attention of Warner Music Group, who as part of a development deal provided a small amount of money to produce a five-track promo-demo CD. The band decided they wanted influential rock producer Jay Baumgardner on board to produce the record. In an interview with HitQuarters, Baumgardner said, "At first I wasn't really convinced it would work out, but then I saw a video of them performing at a club—I saw all these kids going wild, knowing the songs by heart - and that's when I realized that they definitely had potential."

The demo featuring "Last Resort", "Broken Home", "Dead Cell," (all of which would later feature on the 'Infest' album) did not convince Warner Brothers; however, soon after, DreamWorks Records offered the band a recording contract, and they immediately entered the studio to record their major-label debut release.

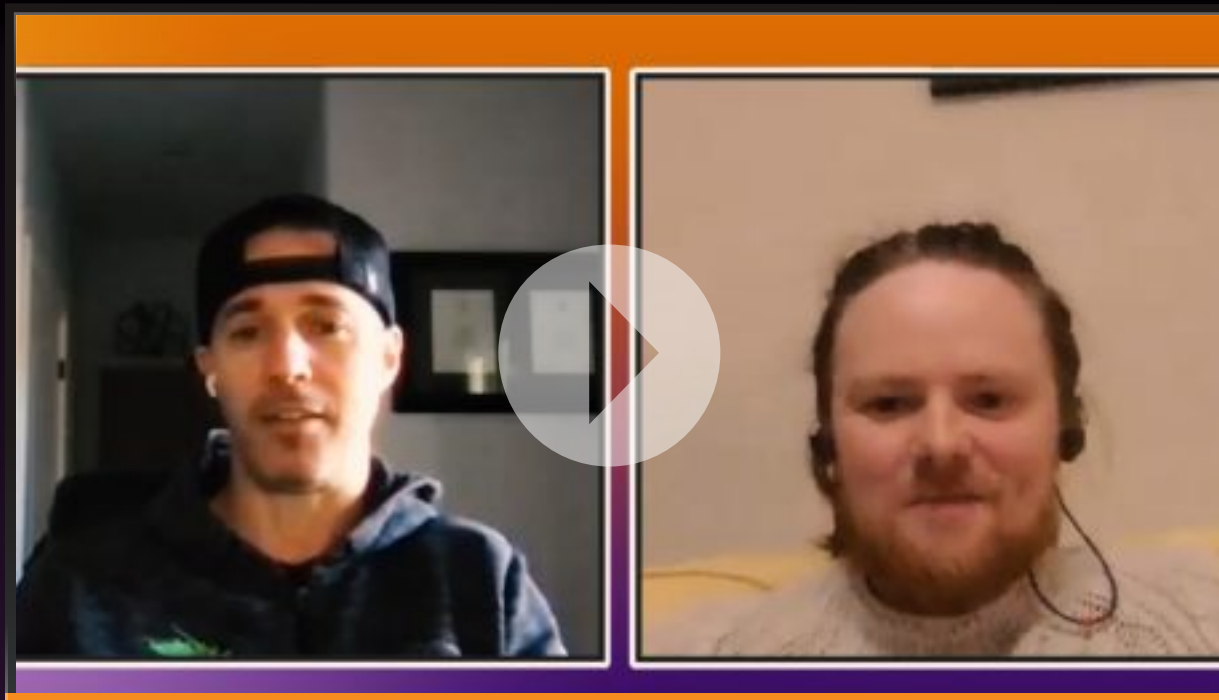
Released on April 25, 2000, 'Infest' sold 30,000 copies in its first week, and combined with their iconic music video for "Last Resort" shot the band into the mainstream. By late 2000, they toured the United Kingdom, highlighting how quickly their popularity had spread worldwide. »



“We **don’t usually like taking a look back**, but we’re so glad to be able to take this journey into the past alongside our fans...”



Papa Roach - Broken As Me feat. Danny Worsnop of Asking Alexandria (Official Lyric Video)

***Jerry Horton - Interview***

The following year the band toured Ozzfest, where they performed on the prestigious main stage, on both the United States and United Kingdom tours, as well as countless worldwide shows.

Twenty plus years, ten studio albums and thousands of sold-out shows later, the band continues to lead the path for contemporary rock artists in the digital streaming era with over 2 billion streams globally and 9 million monthly listeners on Spotify. This continued success can be attributed to how Papa Roach has continued to stretch their boundaries throughout the years, including collaborations with artists outside their genre—such

as their 2017 track “Periscope” with pop artist Skylar Grey (which is included on the new release) and most recently collaborating with TikTok star/up-and-coming artist Jeris Johnson on a new version of their iconic hit “Last Resort.

The band celebrates their legacy as one of the leading hard rock acts of the 21st century with their second greatest hits compilation, ‘Greatest Hits Vol.2: The Better Noise Years.’ The compilation commemorates their continued success as a top-selling recording and touring act during their 2010-2020 tenure signed to Better Noise Music, Billboard’s #1 rock label of 2020. »



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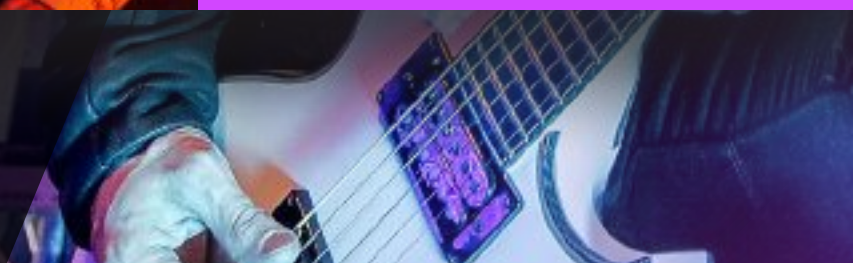
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INTERVIEWS **JERRY HORTON**

Most recently, the group vaulted to the #1 spot on Mainstream Rock radio charts with “The Ending (Remastered 2020)” marking their eighth #1 single to date. Papa Roach was also rewarded with an RIAA Gold Certification for the track “Born For Greatness” earlier this year, which follows in the gold-certified footsteps of “Help.” Both songs, originally released on 2017’s critically-acclaimed ‘Crooked Teeth,’ are featured on this new compilation album.

“We wanted to commemorate the last ten years of our journey with a sampling of the music that got us here,” shares guitarist Jerry Horton. “None of it could have been possible without the support of all of our families, our friends, or team and most of all, you—our fans.” »



“Their approach, **born mainly out of keeping themselves inspired**, has continuously opened new doors to unexplored musical directions..”



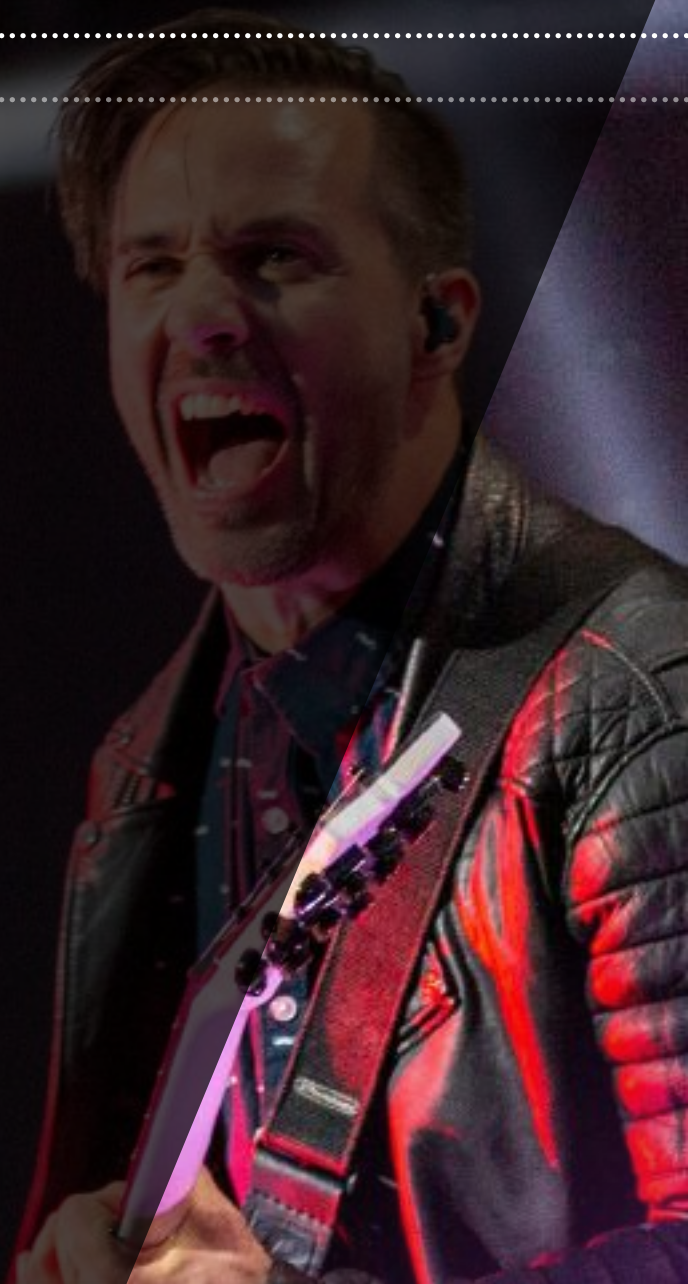
Papa Roach x Jeris Johnson - Last Resort Reloaded (Official Music Video)

INTERVIEWS **JERRY HORTON**

By taking risks and placing diligent focus on songwriting, Papa Roach has not only maintained but strengthened their position in comparison to many of their contemporaries. Their approach, born mainly out of keeping themselves inspired, has continuously opened new doors to unexplored musical directions that not only satisfies the expectations of long-time fans, but also welcomes a new generation of listeners with open arms.

“We don’t usually like taking a look back, but we’re so glad to be able to take this journey into the past alongside our fans,” Jerry Horton said of the new compilation. “We’ve had so much fun rediscovering all the moments of the past ten years that have made us the band we are today. We look forward to the upcoming year and to a new chapter of music.”

Papa Roach ‘Greatest Hits Vol.2: The Better Noise Years’ is out now via Better Noise Music. »



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PAPA ROACH - 'GREATEST HITS VOL. 2: THE BETTER NOISE YEARS' TRACKLIST:

- 1.** Born For Greatness (Remastered 2020)
- 2.** Help (Remastered 2020)
- 3.** Elevate (Remastered 2020)
- 4.** Come Around (Remastered 2020)
- 5.** Broken As Me (feat. Danny Worsnop of Asking Alexandria)
- 6.** Falling Apart (Remastered 2020)
- 7.** Who Do You Trust? (Remastered 2020)
- 8.** Gravity (feat. Maria Brink) (Remastered 2020)
- 9.** American Dreams (Remastered 2020)
- 10.** Face Everything and Rise (Remastered 2020)
- 11.** Periscope (feat. Skylar Grey) (Remastered 2020)
- 12.** Still Swingin' (Remastered 2020)
- 13.** The Ending (Remastered 2020)
- 14.** Burn (Remastered 2020)
- 15.** Kick In The Teeth (Remastered 2020)
- 16.** Elevate (Aelonia Remix)
- 17.** Help (Aelonia Remix)
- 18.** Born for Greatness (Cymek Remix)
- 19.** Top of the World (Aelonia Remix)
- 20.** Face Everything and Rise (Live Acoustic)
- 21.** Leader of the Broken Hearts (Live Acoustic)

END <<

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JERRY HORTON OF PAPA ROACH



For more tickets or more information on Papa Roach, please visit:

paparoach.com



CHICAGO

Chicago-based slide guitar virtuoso and singer-songwriter Joanna Connor, best known for her album '4801 South Indiana Avenue.' Out now on Joe Bonamassa's new independent blues record, 'Chicago,' featuring Connor, Bonamassa and Josh Smith and hit #1 on Billboard's Official Blues Chart upon its release. Read more about her unique approach to playing the blues. »



JOANNA CONNOR CHICAGO BLUES

JOANNA CONNOR:

CHICAGO BLUES

As one of the reigning Queens of blues-rock guitar, returns with her incredible new album on record label KTBA Records, the new record (Joanna's 14th studio release) was produced by [Name]. Joanna talks with **Guitar Interactive Magazine** about the new album, its inspiration and

NUMEROUS

artists have been influenced by or had love affairs with the iconic art form called the Blues. However, not many sought after it by diving headfirst into its epicentre, the “Windy City” Chicago. Joanna made that very pilgrimage at the age of 19 and quickly set her mind to move there just three years later.

An abridged version of her years spent during the 1980s prolific blues explosion would include years spent playing with Dion Payton and the 43rd St Blues Band at Buddy Guy’s Checkerboard Lounge, Theresa’s and the Cuddle Inn on the Southside of the blues capital. Joanna absorbed musical and life lessons playing guitar with the likes of Buddy Guy, Jr Wells, Otis Rush, Phil Guy, James Cotton, Lefty Dizz, Sugar Blue, Billy Branch, Son Seals, Lonnie Brooks, Johnny Littlejohn, Magic Slim, Eddie Shaw and many other artists of the decade.

Those years spent in the trenches at the late-night institution the

Kingston Mines, led to further musical adventures, including a late-night set with Jimmy Page and various solo headline show’s of her own that subsequently caught the ear of Blind Pig Records who would release her first album ‘Believe It’ in 1990. The music world was piqued with this brash in your face guitarist in the guise of an unassuming 28- year-old.

Fast forward to 2019, and a few viral videos of Joanna’s stand-out playing caught the attention of Joe Bonamassa. Within a year, Joe’s passionate and articulate vision to bring Joanna’s unique, blazing, gritty and electrifying blues guitar prowess to the world came to life. His expertise as a musician, vocalist and producer cut to the core of Joanna’s tremendous and uncompromising musical life story, and brought to fruition her best and most representative work to date.

Joanna, Joe and the rest of the world-class musicians on the album dug deep, and in the process, conjured up an authentic, alive and kicking non-derivative





set of Chicago Blues. “We chose the album title “4801 South Indiana Avenue” because it was the actual street address of the hallowed funky blues sanctuary Theresa’s Lounge,” states Joanna. “We want the listener to open that door, walk in and feel to their core some of the magic that a place like that brought night after night. It was an honour to bring this to you, the listener.”

The new album reflects an entirely new experience from the way Joanna has recorded music in the past. “This album is a homage to the blues school that I attended in Chicago,” says Joanna. “We attempted to capture the spirit of tradition and inject it with raw energy and passion.”

When Joanna was asked how Joe came to produce her album, she explains. “Joe retweeted one of my videos last May, and it went viral on his site. I thanked him in a message, gave him my contact info, and he immediately responded. Joe opened for me years ago at the House of Blues Backporch Stage in Chicago, where I played weekly for years! He wanted to make an album for me that he felt I needed to make and had never really made. He said flat out he would work me hard, push me to the limits, bug me to bring out my best and capture the lighting in a bottle as he put it.”

All the songs on ‘4801 South Indiana Avenue’ are obscure covers from various blues »

greats, and in turn, Joe knew the right people for the gig. “I’m going to put a band together for you, and we’re going to record in Nashville,” Bonamassa explained to Joanna, and that’s exactly what they did, with Joe forming an all-star studio line-up featuring the likes of Josh Smith on guitar and Reese Wynans on keyboards.

“I’ve known Josh since he was a kid,” recalls Joanna. “He used to come sit in with me when I played down in Florida. He’s just a great guy and, of course, an amazing guitar player. Having Reese Wynans on keyboards had me in tears because the only show I ever went to see of Stevie Ray Vaughan’s was his last show. Then look at what happens. I’m sitting in the studio right next to Reese.”

Joanna recalls how she felt like a kid in a guitar candy store with Joe’s gear selection. On the second day, Joe starts to pull out guitars and amps of his, which, oh my goodness, you know what that’s like. Joe can tell you every string and every pick-up, and I don’t even know what I was playing.”

On the new album, Joe pushed Joanna, which enabled her to deliver a more powerful vocal on every track. “It was the hardest I’ve ever pushed my voice ever,” says Joanna. “The good thing was that I had a couple of weeks off before, so my voice was pretty fresh. Usually, I was singing every week – hours and hours in the clubs. I thought I would be more inhibited. I was in the room with everybody, and usually you’re just in a booth.” »



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“4801 South Indiana Avenue is **probably the most** bluesy record I’ve ever recorded...”

“4801 South Indiana Avenue is probably the most bluesy record I’ve ever recorded, explains Joanna. “On every song, there’s a little twist in the chord changes and special effects on the slide or the vocal. I don’t know if it’s the vibe of the room or what. The studio is not a place I usually feel so comfortable in.”

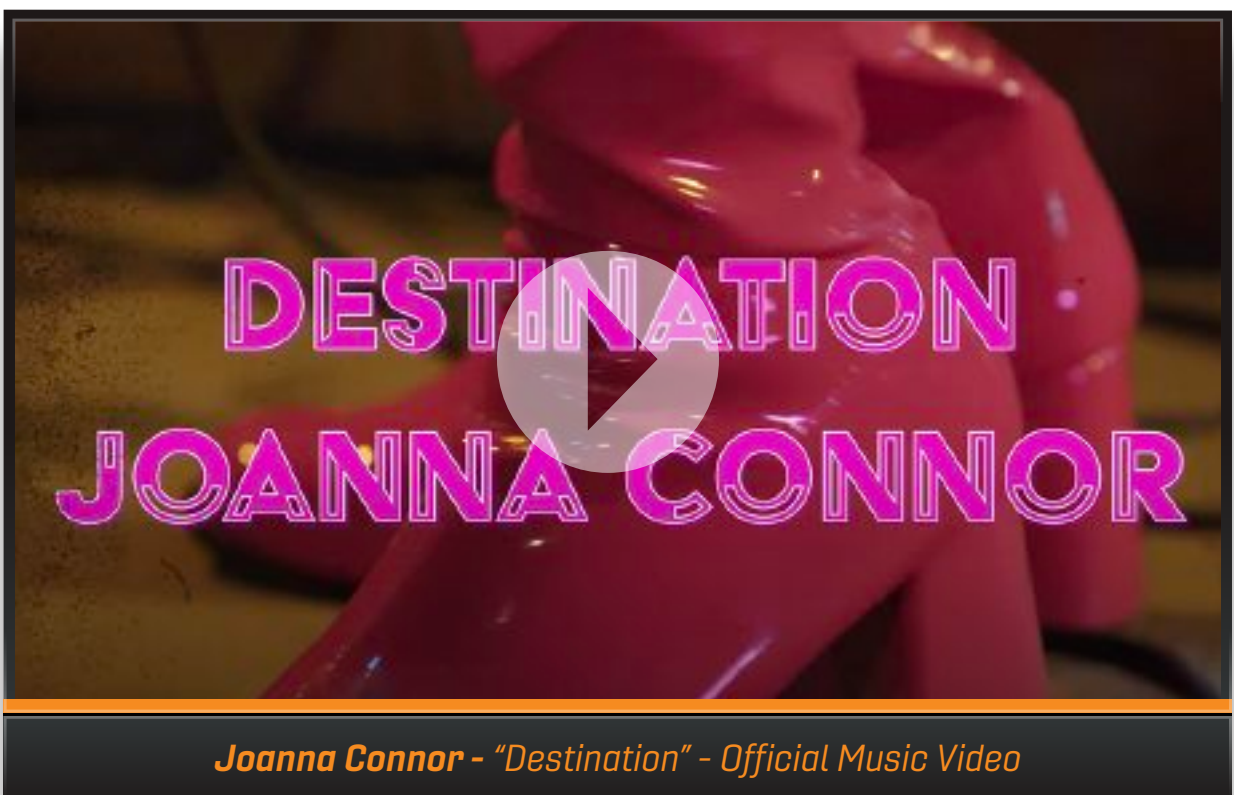
Overall, recording the new album was an incredibly moving, if not, significant experience for Joanna. “Recording the new album

was one of the three major highlights of my life,” reminisces Joanna. “I got to jam with Jimmy Page many years ago in Chicago in the 80s, so that’s definitely a highlight. I jammed with Buddy Guy and now, making this new album with Joe, it’s like a dream come true. I was proud, but I was also really nervous about it because I was surrounded by musicians who were at the top of their game. I know I’m a good player, but those guys are on another level.”

Joanna recalls, “I remember asking Joe point-blank, ‘Out of all the guitar player in the world, why me?’ He said, “Because you have an intensity about your playing that most people don’t have. As a matter of fact, I wish I had some of that myself, where you just let it go, and you don’t even think about it.” The new album features the crème de la crème of musicians, and for Joanna, working with them was clearly an unforgettable experience.

“Playing with Reese Wynans was an honour and a privilege and brought me to tears. Having Josh and Joe play-

ing guitar on every cut and arranging everything was a gift to me. Bassist Calvin Turner was incredibly groovy and solid and was responsible for the horn arrangements. Lemar Carter is one of the hottest drummers on the music scene, plays with Frank Ocean and so many others. He’s a master of time and taste and groove. We recorded every song in a max of three takes. We were all in the same room together, except for Joe, who was in the control room playing and producing. Making this album felt like such a sweet gig.” »

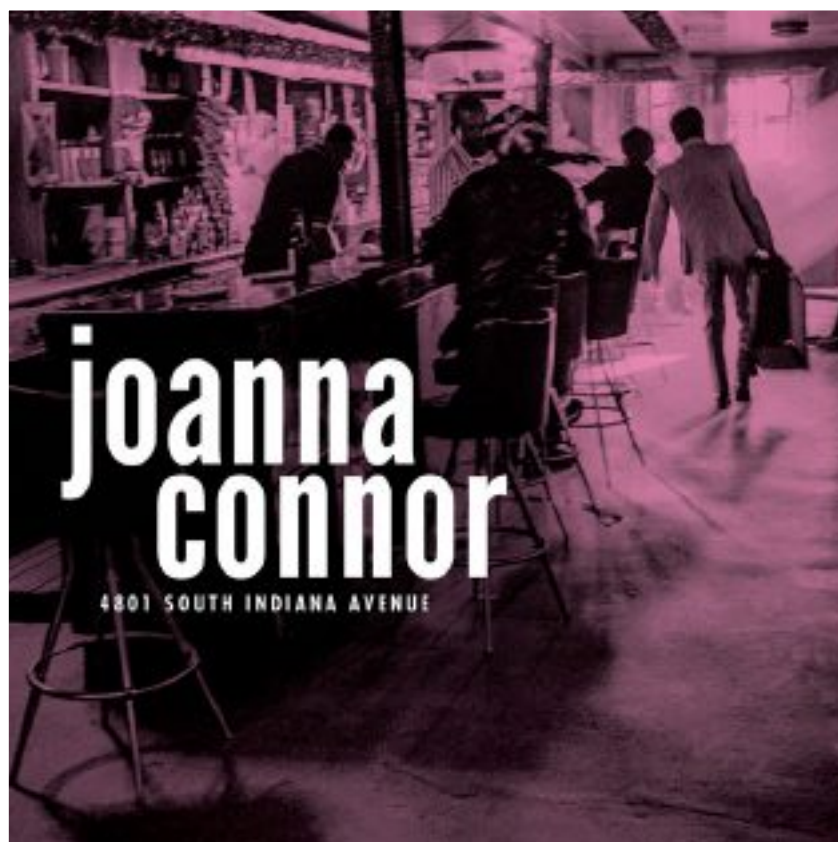


Joanna Connor's 14th full-length studio album, '4801 South Indiana Avenue', is out now on KTBA Records.

Joanna Connor – '4801 South Indiana Avenue' Tracklist:

1. Destination
2. Come Back Home
3. Bad News
4. I Feel So Good
5. For The Love Of A Man
6. Trouble Trouble
7. Please Help
8. Cut You Loose
9. Part Time Love
10. It's My Time

END«



For more tickets or more information on Joanna Connor, please visit:

joannacconnor.com



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SansAmp Classic (1989)

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EXCITEMENT
NEVER GETS
OLD



SansAmp Bass Driver DI (1994)

Often unseen, it's hardly a secret that the SansAmp Bass Driver is the secret weapon behind mammoth rigs on arena stages around the globe. It is also widely recognized as a studio staple for virtually every genre, and will make any FOH engineer smile.

DOES SOMETHING HAVE TO BE "NEW" TO BE EXCITING?

In a world of planned obsolescence and constant upgrades, it's rare an electronic music-related product can survive a lengthy lifespan. Yet these 3, in particular, have done just that. (We have more, such as the MIDI Mouse since 1995, but let's stay focused on SansAmp.)

For over 30 years, SansAmps have been used for every kind of music style from hardcore metal to commercial jingles and with all kinds of instruments, not just guitar and bass. Engineered for both recording and live applications, all SansAmps are 100% analog, multi-dimensional, user-friendly devices that deliver the warm, rich, organic tones of the most desirable mic'd up tube amplifiers on the planet. Is it any wonder SansAmp is regarded as the standard of the industry? Now go check out which one is right for you.

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THE Features

'Octet' weaves a sonic tapestry of strident electric rhythm guitars, delicate acoustic sections and full-on shredding, with each artist getting to stretch their creative wings. From 5-string bass to 8-string fan-fret guitar—the piece is a celebration of the instrument, its versatility and diversity! Guitar Interactive Magazine talks with **Chris Woods** about the project's creation and much more in this exclusive feature.

HIGHLIGHTING THE BEST FROM THE WORLD OF GUITAR



OCTET

A VIRTUAL GUITAR ENSEMBLE

Ever wondered what happens when you mix a prog-hop artist from Los Angeles, an extreme shredder in Vienna, fingerstyle acoustic award winners from UK and Canada and more? Well, that's exactly what guitarist/composer Chris Woods set out to discover when he started writing 'Octet.' Featuring Elixir Strings artists, 'Octet' weaves a sonic tapestry of strident electric rhythm guitars, delicate acoustic sections and full-on shredding, with each artist getting to stretch their creative wings. From 5-string bass to 8-string fan-fret guitar—the piece is a celebration of the instrument, its versatility and diversity! **Guitar Interactive Magazine** talks with Chris Woods about the project's creation and much more in this exclusive feature. »



SPONSORED BY



‘OCTET’ is a commissioned piece for Elixir Strings, written by The Chris Woods Groove Orchestra, and performed by eight of the company’s artists from around the world. Composed late last year in the midst of the global pandemic, the project saw each of the artists film themselves during the recording process, the result being a virtual video collaboration celebrating a diverse array of guitar styles and international talent.

The incredible piece features acoustic, electric and bass artists and was explicitly written with each player in mind. Chris Woods explains, “I started writing the piece by quickly creating a bank of different ideas—I think I created about ten different motifs for the ‘bank’. I tried to make each one as different in style as possible and wanted to work as quickly as possible at this stage before getting too attached to specific ideas.”

As well as being an impressive track in its own right, the composition lets each artist involved stretch their creative wings. From 5-string bass to 8-string fan-fret guitar, the piece is a celebration of the instrument, its versatility and diversity!

“I listened to what each of the artists does, spoke with them about writing for them and then wrote as minimally as possible in order to allow them room for their own interpretation. The whole concept of the piece was to reflect their musical personalities, so this was really important. I wanted to create a space to give them room to do something that played to their strengths and characters.”



SPONSORED BY



FEATURES OCTET: A VIRTUAL GUITAR ENSEMBLE

“I’m extremely happy with the way it turned out. **I think everyone’s unique sound cuts through**, but without detracting from the overall togetherness of the piece...”



A Virtual Guitar Ensemble by The Chris Woods Groove Orchestra | ELIXIR Strings

Of the challenges in tackling such a task involved, Chris says, “Creating something that can be learned in a very short period of time, with room for interpretation, then recorded and returned for the final mix without the need for edits was definitely a challenge! But each of the artists performed incredibly, so the process of actually capturing performances went really smoothly.

“I’m extremely happy with the way it turned out. I think everyone’s unique sound cuts through, but without detracting from the overall togetherness of the piece.”

THE FEATURED MUSICIANS FROM ‘OCTET’ AND WHY THEY CHOOSE ELIXIR STRINGS FOR THIS PERFORMANCE AND BEYOND:

CHRIS WOODS

A guitar explorer and innovative collaborator, Chris Woods - recording as ‘The Chris Woods Groove Orchestra’ - uses every inch of the guitar to create an inspirational sound in a diverse mix of lineups. Chris’s compositions have been included in the prestigious London College of Music grade books. He was invited to create two new publications for Hal Leonard to be released in 2021, cementing his work in the education world.

“Whenever inspiration strikes, I can pick up my guitar knowing my strings are going to be working with me, not against me.”

**CHRIS WOODS PLAYS
ACOUSTIC PHOSPHOR BRONZE WITH NANOWEB® COATING**



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FEATURES OCTET: A VIRTUAL GUITAR ENSEMBLE

CHRIS WOODS



MANELI JAMAL

Award-winning guitarist Maneli Jamal has wowed audiences around the world with his visual style of acoustic guitar playing. He incorporates many musical textures in his performances while keeping rhythm - you'll swear he has a trio with him. With over 45 million Spotify plays, 5 million video views and 130,000+ followers, Maneli has also been named one of the world's top 30 guitarists under 30 by Acoustic Guitar Magazine.

"Elixir Strings inspire me to pick up my guitar more because of that rich tone that we all want out of our acoustic guitars.»

MANELI JAMAL PLAYS

ACOUSTIC PHOSPHOR BRONZE WITH NANOWEB® COATING.

MANELI JAMAL



**MICHAEL WATTS****MICHAEL WATTS**

Michael Watts is a guitarist, writer, journalist and film-maker based in Surrey, UK. A previous recipient of the Acoustic Guitarist of the Year award, Michael has shared a bill with some of the greatest instrumentalists in the world and is known for his depth of feel and nuance in his playing and composition. Michael is a vocal champion of the art of modern steel string guitar luthiery and presents the YouTube series Luthier Stories - an undertaking that has seen him travelling around the world to interview many of the world's finest guitar makers. Michael's critically acclaimed album *Vetiver* was released in 2017.

"I am very lucky to play instruments made by the world's finest guitar builders, and I insist on Elixir Strings every time."

MICHAEL WATTS PLAYS

ACOUSTIC PHOSPHOR BRONZE WITH NANOWEB® COATING.

ANDOSAN

Based in Los Angeles, Ando-San is a fast-rising young guitarist combining innovative techniques into his pieces to create striking contemporary sounds, which he titles “prog-hop”. With influences including Misha Mansoor, Tosin Abasi and Mikael Akerfeldt, Ando San’s blend of percussive slap techniques and use of extended range guitars combine to create a truly distinctive, forward-looking guitar style.

“Elixir Strings brighten my technique, brighten my tone and give my fingers a break.»

ANDO SAN PLAY

ELECTRIC NICKEL PLATED STEEL WITH OPTIWEB® COATING.

ANDOSAN





TIFFANY LLOYD



TIFFANY LLOYD

Tiffany “Tiffs Bass” Lloyd began her musical journey on piano at the age of 7, started formal musical training at 11 years old and picked up bass guitar, her primary instrument, shortly after. On stage, Tiff has been privileged to work with the likes of Gladys Knight, Yolanda Adams, Kenny Lattimore, Lisa Raye, Todd Dulaney, Maysa Leak, and more. She is also a bass clinician, bass instructor, and speaker for music conferences and schools for students wanting to pursue careers in music.

“I love playing Elixir Bass Strings because the feel is completely unmatched...and the tone is impeccable!»

TIFFANY LLOYD PLAYS

ELECTRIC BASS NICKEL PLATED STEEL WITH NANOWEB® COATING.

SUS VASQUEZ

Sus Vasquez is a professional female guitarist based in NYC, where she's most known for her ability to deliver in different settings and styles of music, both live and in the studio. Sus is currently the guitarist for Grammy-winner and top-selling Latina artist Karol G, with whom she performed at the 2020 Latin GRAMMY Awards, and she has also performed with Latin Grammy Award Winner Luis Fonsi, whose smash hit Despacito spent 16 weeks atop the Billboard Hot 100.

"The feel and durability of Elixir Strings make them my go-to every time. The soft feel under my fingertips allows me to play for countless hours."

SUS VASQUEZ PLAYS

ELECTRIC NICKEL PLATED STEEL WITH OPTIWEB® COATING

SUS VASQUEZ





BERNTH BRODTRÄGER



BERNTH BRODTRÄGER

Based in Austria, Bernth Brodträger's wide-ranging guitar style has seen him tour with extreme metal band Belphegor and study at the Vienna Music Institute, where he pursued jazz guitar and instrumental pedagogics, graduating with honours. Currently, Bernth tours with top-selling Austrian band Seiler und Speer and has received awards for composing and performing the soundtrack for the successful series 'Horvathslos'. His first online guitar course, '10 Steps to Modern Shredding,' was released in 2018.

"I play Elixir Strings exclusively for years now simply because they beat their competitors in a direct comparison whenever I played them live or in a studio."

BERNTH BRODTRÄGER PLAYS

ELECTRIC NICKEL PLATED STEEL WITH OPTIWEB® COATING.

QUENTIN GODET

Something of a child prodigy, Quentin Godet joined French metal band Kadinja at the tender age of 16 in 2013. Since then, he has continued to develop as a guitar player, collaborating with the likes of Zuuk FX and TANK and pop artists, including Axel Bauer. Having studied at the American School music facility in Paris, he is also well-placed to deliver educational content, which he regularly does for Guitar Xtreme magazine and as an occasional teacher at the International Music Academy in Nancy.

“The sound and feel of these Optiweb strings are of unmatched quality, and they last for a very long time.”

QUENTIN GODET PLAYS

ELECTRIC NICKEL PLATED STEEL WITH OPTIWEB COATING.

QUENTIN GODET





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<https://www.elixirstrings.com/elixir-strings-artists>



For more information on Elixir Strings,
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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.

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UNDERSTANDING WHAT
MAKES THE GREATS GREAT

TECH SESSION STEVE LUKATHER

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Steve Lukather - Tech Session Performance

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STEVE LUKATHER TECH SESSION



Tech Session

Continuing our exclusive features on this issue's cover artist, Steve Lukather, **Sam Bell** breaks down the unmistakable phrasing and killer technique of the man himself in this issue's Guitar Interactive Tech session. »

STEVE Lukather is a household name in the guitar/session world, and for good reason. Known for his multitude of musical abilities across many projects—including his work with the legendary Toto—Luke has appeared on hundreds of albums with a mix of fiery blues phrasing, huge bends, fast pentatonic and chromatic lines with bucket loads of tone and attitude.

The solo i've created for this issue's Tech Session is based on some ideas I've picked up from various performances of Luke's;

however, I've focused the general vibe of this tech session on the solo section to Toto's "Girl Goodbye" track.

The main riff is based around A Natural Minor, focusing on the b7 and Root of Am, then climbing up the scale Root, 2nd, then Minor 3rd. The solo is transcribed from the 2nd round of the riff, and I'll refer to the bar numbers by the tab. So grab your guitar, load up the tab and video and let's dig in.



Steve Lukather - Tech Session Part 1

Bars 1 - 2

This intro phrase is in position 1 Am pentatonic, starting with a quick flurry of 16th notes and going directly into a minor 3rd bend on the D string 7th fret. Be sure to really grab that vibrato on the final note of this phrase.

Bars 3 - 5

This phrase basically mirrors the first phrase, except on the next set of strings, grabbing a bend on the 7th fret G string and adding some additional tapped notes to further the range of the bend. The bending comes from the fretting hand, and the notes are sustained by firm tapping on the same string. See the video for details of what this actually looks like.

Bars 6 - 7

This phrase is a classic blues lick, focusing on some slurs between the 4th and b5 of the Blues Scale going down linearly through the Octaves. Landing on the root note on the low E string, we're also going to grab a lower version of that Minor 3rd bend from the opening lick. This adds continuity to the phrasing and more pyrotechnics for the listener!

Bars 8 - 9

This is a classic Lukather 16th note line for the time. We're ascending an Em triad over the Am chord progression, grabbing a descending 3rds sequence in position and then grabbing another classic ascending 3rds sequence on a single string to rise up to the 17th fret, which leads us into the next section of this solo.

Bars 10 - 11

Here's another variation on the bending theme from the start of this solo; however, it's happening on the High E string between positions 5 & 1 of the minor pentatonic scale.

Bars 12 - 13

This phrase features a cascade of Pentatonic Minor 3rd bends moving down the neck through positions 1, 5 and 4 of the Minor pentatonic scale. The transcription's rhythm has been oversimplified to show the 'chunks' of the line. See video for further details on this classic Lukather style phrase.

Bars 14 - 15

This phrase is similar to the classic line we hear in Toto's track 'Rosanna'; however, I love playing it in a more Minor context. This line takes place around the 10th fret, position 3 A Minor Pentatonic. It uses hammer on's, slides and chromatics to create a liquid sounding 16th note line.

Bars 16 - 17

Here's another classic Lukather phrase with plenty of slides, chromatics and all taking place around the 12th to 15 frets. The line ends with some ascending pentatonic string pairs.



22

22A

23

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**SO EASY
TO USE,
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Summary:

Plenty of classic lines to get into here. If you want to take your Lukather exploration further, please check out the late Michael Casswell's 'Quick Licks Steve Lukather', which I had the pleasure of transcribing Guitar TAB for at LickLibrary. Lukather is a remarkable example of a well-rounded musician, a rock-blues player with a jazz influence. We can learn a lot from him. Long live Luke!

END «





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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 an amazing set of four VOX Valvenergy guitar pedals in this issue's free giveaway!

GI80

YOUR CHANCES
TO WIN

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
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WIN! a Fishman ToneDEQ Guitar Effects and EQ Pedal

In this issue's competition, we are giving 1 lucky winner a chance to get their hands on a **Fishman ToneDEQ Guitar Preamp**.

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

Good luck and thanks for taking part.



tar Preamp,

in our free entry competition!



About the **Fishman ToneDEQ**

The Fishman ToneDEQ Preamp EQ is a complete performance solution for the acoustic musician. With a high-quality preamp, dual effects section, tone controls, a compressor, level booster and a balanced D.I. — it's got everything you need in one box.

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With Fishman, you get quality discrete class-A signal conditioning created by the leader in instrument preamp design. The high-impedance input is a must when using a passive instrument pickup.

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Legendary 4-band equalizer design provides superior tone control for any acoustic instrument. The variable low-cut filter controls sub-bass effects produced by some passive pickups.

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

Aria Pro II JET-B'tone

In a previous edition of Guitar Interactive, **Nick Jennison** had the pleasure of reviewing Aria's Jet-II guitar—a sleek looking offset with an outline that's both familiar and yet totally unique. In the spirit of that same premise comes the Aria Pro II JET-B'tone. Featuring 21 frets over a 30" scale neck, the JET-B'tone can seriously meet all of your low-end needs and more. Here's Nick with the review.

IF you've followed this magazine for a while, you'll know that I just love baritone guitars. Sitting squarely between a regular 6-string and a bass in both size and tuning, these instruments have a deep and sonorous tone that's perfect for slide, surf, fuzzy riffs and huge chords. Unlike 7 and 8-string guitars, Baritones are familiar enough to play because the string-to-string relationships are the same as on a conventional 6-string, but the low tuning and sheer size of these instruments coaxes ideas out of you that you'd never think to play on a regular guitar, while also making your worn-out licks and chord voicings sound fresh and exciting. I don't know if you've picked up on this yet, but I love baritone guitars.

I was immediately enamoured by the look of the Jet, but when I laid eyes on the Jet B'Tone... oh man, it all makes sense now. The offset body combined with the longer neck looks superb, with a sense of "forward motion" that you'll frequently find in automotive design. But we're getting ahead of ourselves here...

"I happen to think that this guitar **looks absolutely gorgeous...**"

The Aria Jet B'Tone is a baritone guitar with a number of very interesting features. Firstly, it's a whopping 30" scale, which means that with the right strings, you could tune it E-E like a bass VI. It also means that the string feel is tight and positive, and the tone is brighter and more piano-like than you'd expect from a typical 27"-28" baritone (in the same way that a 25.5" scale guitar will generally sound snappier than a 24.75" scale guitar).

The pickup configuration is the same H/S layout as the regular Jet guitar, with an alnico V single-coil in the neck and a moderate output alnico V humbucker in the bridge. »



Aria Pro II JET-B'tone

MSRP: (UK) £299 / (US) \$399

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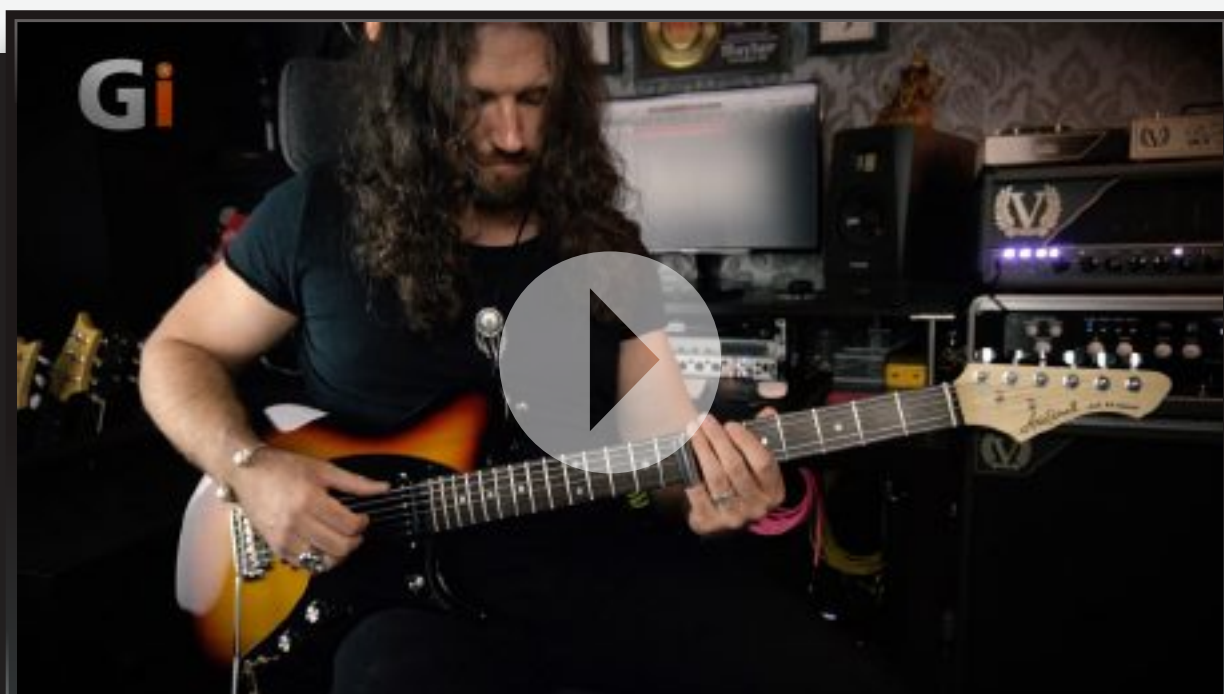


This config actually works really well on a baritone guitar since the bridge humbucker offers tons of meaty punch for more aggressive styles, while the neck single coil is clear and chiming with plenty of articulation. Often, neck pickups can sound muddy to the point of being unusable on a baritone, but that's definitely not the case here. Set clean, the neck and middle pickup selections sound positively piano-like, with a huge low end and gorgeous shimmering highs. It's a sound that you can easily lose hours playing.

With baritones, playability can be a barrier to entry for many players, but that's

absolutely not going to be the case with the Jet B'Tone. The neck, while very long, is a slim and comfortable C-shape that's reminiscent of a J-bass, but with a very pronounced fingerboard radius and immaculate fretwork that makes for a super comfortable play feel. The body is surprisingly light, and balances perfectly on either leg or on a strap without a hint of neck dive.

Another unique feature of the B'Tone is the synchronised tremolo system, something rarely seen on baritone guitars. It's a little on the stiff side - it has to be to balance the massive string tension - but it works very well »



Aria Pro II JET-B'tone

Main Feature

- Programmable loop switcher with up to 6 loops.
- Pre-position and post-position buffers to minimize signal attenuation for no to minimal tone loss of the guitar signal.
- PLAY mode and LIVE mode provides flexibility for different situations.
- Dedicated mute footswitch.
- Choose between built-in or external tuner.



L6 MKII
PEDAL CONTROLLER

MOOER
EFFECTS AND AMPLIFICATION

   
moeraudio.com



“The Aria Jet B’T
plays and sounds
million bucks..”

for chord shimmer.
might not be able to
(and on a baritone,
adding a little color

This brings us to the
Jet B'Tone: the price
but I couldn't find
than the Jet B'Tone
since it's such a great
instrument. If you're
what it actually is,

one looks,
ds like a



s and more subtle touches. You
to go full Brad Gillis with this trem
(why would you want to?), but for
ur, it's a very welcome addition.

ne most impressive feature of the
ce. You can look this up yourself,
a single baritone for less money
e. This is frankly mind-boggling,
at sounding and well-constructed
d told me the price was three times
I wouldn't have batted an eyelid.

I'm genuinely staggered at how much guitar Aria is giving you for the money here, and I'm struggling to think of an excuse not to buy one myself.

The Aria Jet B'Tone looks, plays and sounds like a million bucks but cost about a million Ugandan Shillings. If you don't have a baritone guitar in your life, you need this guitar. If you already have one, buy this one anyway and string it up as a bass VI. Consider this instrument highly recommended.

END «

Manson META Series MBM-1 Matthew Bellamy Signature Guitar

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

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

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

Enter the Cort/Manson META Series MBM-1. Built by east-Asian guitar manufacturing giants Cort under license from Manson, it's the most affordable Matt Bellamy guitar ever made. While it lacks some of the more out-

"The electronics are **relatively straightforward** compared to the custom-shop instruments Bellamy uses on stage and in the studio..."

landish features of its UK-made counterpart, it shares the same offset T-type silhouette, neck profile and matte black finish (also available in "Starlight Silver").

Straight out of the box, the MBM-1 exhibits the build quality I've come to expect from Cort. If you've ever laid hands on an Indo-

ew



Manson META Series MBM-1 Matthew Bellamy Signature Guitar

MSRP: (UK) £569 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Bright Dark



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Thick fuzz sounds

Noisy killswitch antics

Muse

For more information, please visit:

mansonguitarworks.com



nesian or Chinese-made Ibanez or PRS SE you'll know what I'm talking about - flawless finish, tidy fretwork, tight neck join, sturdy hardware and electronics. There are so many excellent yet affordable Cort-made guitars out there that it's easy to forget how impressive it is for a guitar at this price point to be built so well.

Despite the factory action being a little high, it only took a quick adjustment to have the MBM-1 playing beautifully. The 10-14" compound radius fretboard means the action can

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



be set very low without fear of high bends choking out, while chord playing at the lower end of the neck is still very comfortable thanks to the tighter curve. It's more labour intensive to carve and fit frets to a compound radius board than one with a single radius across the entire neck, so its inclusion on a guitar at this price is laudable.

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



Another feature the MBM-1 shares with its bigger brothers is the kill button mounted on the upper shoulder. This highly entertaining feature greatly expands the sonic possibilities of the instrument, giving access to stuttering textures that are distinctly un-guitar-like, and the use of a button instead of a toggle switch makes using this feature more tactile and immediate.

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

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

END «

PURE AND EASY RARE EARTH SOUNDHOLE PICKUPS



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FISHMAN[®]
Inspired Performance Technology™

Soundsation Rider Pro

Soundsation introducing is brand new series of electric guitars with the Rider Pro. Conceived for players demanding much more than an entry-level guitar, **Nick Jennison** tells us more about this impressive new model.

IT'S genuinely frightening just how many guitars you can get for your money these days. As much as I don't want to play the "old man" card, I remember the dreadful quality entry-level instruments of my youth with gritted teeth. Unplayable action, lifeless pickups, fret ends that would cause actual flesh wounds and body wood so cheap that I once saw a tremolo rip out of the body because the guitar's owner had the audacity to actually use the whammy bar.

I spent most of my 20s teaching guitar, and I saw a LOT of student guitars. While I was always happy to see a Yamaha Pacifica or a Squier Strat, there was still an uncomfortable number of "guitar-shaped-objects" that made their owners' lives unnecessarily hard.

It's been a while since I looked at a bonafide entry-level instrument from a new company, and my word is it impressive. At first glance, Soundsation's Rider Pro is a "Strat-alike" guitar in the vein of the majority of entry-level guitars, but in terms of quality, its many, many levels above what I've come to expect from this kind of instrument. It sports an ash body, a satin finished maple neck and a genu-

"Fit and finish **is very good** across the board here, with no paint defects or rough edges..."

ine rosewood fretboard - appointments that we take for granted in higher price brackets, but are pretty rare at this price point.

It's also bedecked in very high-quality Wilkinson parts, boasting two single coils and a bridge humbucker, along with one of Wilkinson's superb tremolo units. The control layout is the time-tested five-way blade and volume/tone/tone configuration, but with a push-pull switch on the bridge tone control to split the bridge humbucker - another feature that's common on more expensive guitars but very rare on entry-level guitars.

Fit and finish is very good across the board here, with no paint defects or rough edges. The neck pocket is a good tight fit, and the frets are even and smooth with no jagged »



SoundSation Rider Pro

MSRP: (UK) £275 / (US) \$TBA

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High End



For fans of

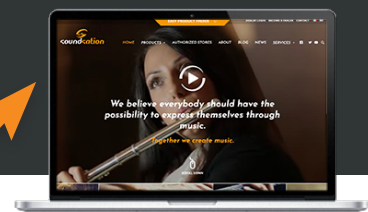
Warm, transparent sound

Ease of use

Gear that inspires

For more information, please visit:

soundsationmusic.com





edges. The action is very good from the factory, but I was able to get it as low as 1.5mm without any buzzing or choking. The body has a little weight to it but isn't heavy by any stretch of the imagination. It's really very hard to pick fault with this guitar!

Sonically, the pickups are very good indeed. The single coils are pretty powerful without sacrificing sparkle, and the bridge humbucker is warm and thick with plenty of authority for distorted tones. There's enough tonal variety

here to hang in just about any style - very important for newbies who are still figuring out what sort of tones they enjoy.

The Soundstation Rider Pro is guitar that punches far above its price tag. The fit and finish are excellent, and the Wilkinson pickups sound great. Whether it's a first guitar, a backup for a working player or another flavour in your collection, this guitar is definitely worth checking out.

END <<

SE

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.



PRS
PAUL
REED
SMITH
GUITARS

25TH
ANNIVERSARY

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...”

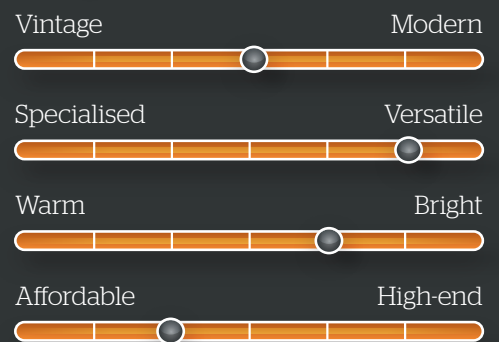
PIEZO



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



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. »



PRS 2020 PRS SE Hollowbody II Piezo



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 «

INTRODUCING THE NEW
META SERIES

MBM-1

Manson x Cort®

Guitar
EDITOR'S
CHOICE

cortguitars.com/mbm-1

mansonguitarworks.com

440distribution.com

BOSS Nextone Special 80W Combo

Billed as a modern boutique experience for serious players—with the BOSS Nextone Special guitar amplifier, that features authentic tube sound, feel and response. Thanks to the inclusion of a 12-inch speaker, the Nextone Special produces the kind of tones and versatility that regular

Billy Campbell tells us more.

APPEALING to the vintage amp enthusiasts and pure tube tone aficionados, BOSS release the Nextone Special guitar amplifier. Featuring a loud 80-watts of power with authentic tube amp sound and feel thanks to BOSS's continually evolving Tube Logic Technology and Enhanced reactive drive power amp circuitry. There is a rich and robust low end and low mid-range delivered by the Custom Waza B12W 12-inch speaker that packs the classic “bluebell” tone, with rich lows, mellow mids, and clear highs.



Amp

Special you get a professional 80-watt stage amp version of BOSS's critically-acclaimed Tube Logic stage performers dream of.

For each of the two independent clean or lead channels, you can choose between Four analogue Class AB power amp circuits: 6V6, 6L6, EL84, and EL34. The independent Clean and Lead channels have a selectable American and British EQ option, built-in effects, and advanced power amp voicing controls.

Each channel has a huge amount of control over everything from tone settings, effect settings (including on/off, rate, mix, etc.) level, power tube model, and voicing. On top of all this, there is a Five-way power control for getting authentic cranked-up amp sound and dynamic response at any volume. There is also the option of engaging the Extra Headroom switch for added punch when the power control is wide open. A switchable Solo function with level control gives you the ability to make your solos jump out of the mix by adding clean decibels to any of your tones.

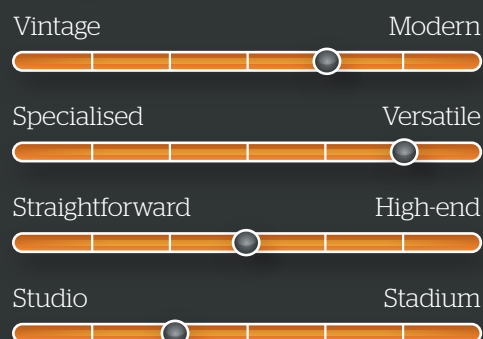
The onboard effects include boost, a highly customizable delay, and reverb effect, plus an FX loop on the back panel for using your favourite external effects as well. Once you've got your preferred settings dialled up, you can easily save them to any »



BOSS Nextone Special 80W Combo Amp

MSRP: (UK) £805 / (US) \$899

The Breakdown



For fans of

Vintage tones with a modern twist

Onboard versatile effects

Exceptional build quality

For more information, please visit:

boss.info



one of the three Tone Setting memories for storing and recalling customized amp and effect settings by simply holding the corresponding button down.

External control can be achieved via the GA-FC foot controller, any of the standard BOSS footswitches, and MIDI. There are convenient XLR and 1/4-inch line outputs for sending a direct line to a PA or console, complete with three selectable mic'd cab IR voicings featuring

Boss's Air Feel. A headphones/recording output is also available for silent practice or tracking sessions. Also on board is a USB port for direct recording and communication with BOSS's Nextone Editor software, Which allows for deeper editing and extensive control of the Nextone Special. External speaker jacks are included as well, letting you connect up to two 16-ohm 4x12 cabs for even bigger tones.



BOSS Nextone Special 80W Combo Amp



This feature-heavy amplifier combines classic tube tone, BOSS's industry-leading construction and quality, with all of the modern features that make this an excellent choice for anyone wanting to jam at home, on stage, or at your next recording session.

The Boss Nextone Special retails for \$899 in the US and £805 in the UK. Plug one in at your local retailer and check it out!

END «



Eventide MicroPitch Delay

By utilising subtle pitch shifts to create a rich stereo spread, Eventide's MicroPitch Delay is a game-changer. This pedal is the key ingredient to help serve up some full-fat flavorful tones. **Sam** in this exclusive review.

EVENTIDE has been pushing the boat out recently with the release of some of their most ground-breaking effects in pedal format. The Blackhole Reverb pedal arrived in late 2020, allowing guitarists to access some truly gravity-defying Reverb sounds. Eventide has followed up with a few more of their mind-bending effects with the MicroPitch Delay and UltraTap Delay release.

In this review, I had the pleasure of checking out the Micro Pitch. This pedal is basically a Stereo Delay with some unique and fantastic features. The Micro Pitch allows you 'tune' each delay. Delay A anywhere from 0 to +50 cents. Delay B anywhere from 0 to -50 cents. This effect can be used to create awesome stereo 'still chorus' effects. Great for creating faux double-track sounds all the way up to mind-bending modulation sounds when mixed with the mod and rate controls on the unit. In many ways, this pedal is more than just a delay pedal, as we can already see.

If we are to use it for more typical delay sounds, we can get detailed with the different lengths, feedback rates, EQ of each delay. One of the presets is a great example of mixing a fast feedback delay which creates a faux reverb sound and a regular 8th note delay. Great for creating ambient textures in a track or for adding size to single-note lines. The delays are easily controlled via the TAP function switch (which also doubles as a preset, select switch). For further controllability, we can connect an expression control to the pedal, which can be assigned via the Eventide Device Manager Editor software to different parameters of the pedal.

I personally really loved the faux stereo effect you can get from this pedal. Eddie Van Halen has been known for "stereoising" his mono guitar sound using similar effects. To have this in one unit is awesome. I also find being able to mix two delay types very useful for ambient work. »



ay makes anything you cook up sonically delecta-
l Bell savours the MicroPitch Delay's secret sauce



Eventide MicroPitch Delay

MSRP: (UK) £279 / (US) \$279

The Breakdown

Straightforward Feature-rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Studio Stage



For fans of

Lush fat tones

Rich detuned delays

H910 and H949 Harmonizers

For more information, please visit:

eventideaudio.com



The pedal itself has a very small footprint. It does require a bit of time to get used to how controls interact with each other. But once you get the gist, it's easy to navigate, and there are tons of sounds to be found. You can store presets on it; you can switch between five of them on the pedal itself. It also has full MIDI capability if you want to grab some more preset places. And not to forget, you can also plug this pedal into your computer and use the Eventide Device Manager Editor software to further get into the mechanics of the pedal and the sounds.

This is definitely a high-end pedal, a fairly specialised yet versatile, high-quality unit. If you're looking to get the most of your stereo rig, then definitely check out the Micro Pitch. You get a lot of bang for your buck. To get even more out of this unit, a stereo rig or some way of sending out each signal to a separate amp or monitor (depending on how you want to use this) would be ideal. You can switch the outputs to line level if you wish to use this in a studio set up; this also means we can use this effect with other instruments. Great news for those multi-instrumentalists among us!

END «



Eventide MicroPitch Delay

Carry-on

CARRY-ON TRAVEL GUITAR

The premium take-anywhere travel guitar



CarryOn guitars represent the new benchmark in quality, portable travel-sized guitars that play and feel like their full-sized counterparts. Featuring a coil-splittable mini humbucker and constructed using a single piece of Okoume, these guitars are not just a gimmick - these are travel guitars with true tone and feel beyond their size.

Blackstar
AMPLIFICATION

Laney/Black Country Customs Spiral

The Spiral Array is a chorus pedal with a difference—it's actually three distinctly different choruses, ranging from the classic chorus era of the mid-70s to the mid-80s. Featuring chorus sounds inspired by the classic analog chorus of the 1979 Roland Dimension D, and the renowned uber-rich-sounding 80s JHS Precision Custom Spiral Array could be all the chorus you'll ever need at your feet. **Tom Quayle**

BLACK Country Customs has been in the pedal business for a few years now as the custom/boutique wing of Laney Amplification. These great-sounding, feature-rich and affordable pedals are all made here in the UK and sport the same form factor and basic control layout for a unified design approach that has consistently impressed us here at Gi.

The latest addition to the BCC pedal range is the Spiral Array - the company's take on the classic chorus sounds of the '70s and '80s in a compact pedal format. As with the Secret Path Reverb, Monolith Distortion and Steel Park Boost pedals, there are three distinct modes on offer here through the central 3-position toggle switch. The upper position provides an analogue, Boss CE-1 style chorus, while the middle and lower positions offer Roland Dimension D and Dytronics Tri Stereo Chorus style tones. These are, of course, ballpark starting points for the chorus sounds in the Spiral Array, but you can get a whole swathe of other sounds using the Depth, Rate, Mix and Tone controls in each mode.

As with the rest of the BCC range, the Spiral Array is a fully buffered design to prevent high-end signal loss but is very transparent in use and can act as a high-quality buffer in an otherwise all true bypass pedal chain to preserve your tone for long cable runs. True stereo operation is provided for wide, lush chorusing thanks to independent left and right outputs. An expression pedal input allows you to control the chorus mix level from an external controller. A tri-colour LED allows you to easily see which mode you're using in dark environments, and all the controls are easy to read and dial in.

Quality components are used throughout, as evidenced by the silent switching and noiseless controls, excellent build quality and good looks. Even the packaging is of a quality that feels well thought out and premium, especially at the generous asking price.

Tonally, the Spiral Array is every bit as good as its build quality and looks, with the three modes offering up a great selection of classic chorus tones from analogue lushness to super thick 80's Landau-Esque studio tones. »

Spiral Array Chorus

ent chorus pedals in one box, painstakingly recre-
ds based on a thick, lush 1976 Boss CE1, the spatial
1985 Dytronics Tri Stereo Chorus; the Black Coun-
ayle tells us more.



Laney/Black Country Customs Spiral Array Chorus

MSRP: (UK) £159 / (US) \$199

The Breakdown

Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Straightforward Feature-rich



Traditional Innovative



For fans of

Classic 70/80s chorus tones

Value for money

Not needing to read the manual!

For more information, please
visit: [www.laney.co.uk/products/
collection/black-country-customs](http://www.laney.co.uk/products/collection/black-country-customs)



The controls interact in very cool and interesting ways, so experimentation can yield some nice and unexpected results, but it's really easy to dial in some classic sounds, and each mode is distinct enough to warrant its inclusion in the package.

If you have the luxury to run this pedal in stereo, it's highly recommended as you can achieve some wonderful width and depth to your tones, especially in the Tri-Chorus mode, but the Spiral Array is very comfortable running in Mono using the left output only and still sounds thick and warm. Pseudo rotary speaker effects are easily achieved,

too, and you can even get doubling and mild flanging effects with the mix at lower levels if required.

The Spiral Array is a worthy addition to the Black Country Customs pedal range and represents the same great value for money that the rest of the range offers. These are extremely well built and designed pedals that provide a ton of tone for not a great deal of financial outlay—highly recommended if you're after a versatile but easy to use chorus pedal.

END «



Laney/Black Country Customs Spiral Array Chorus



Eric Stet's Gibson ES335 with Stop-Tail Stetsbar

STETSBAR

professional tremolo systems

THE RETRO-FIT VIBRATO SYSTEM

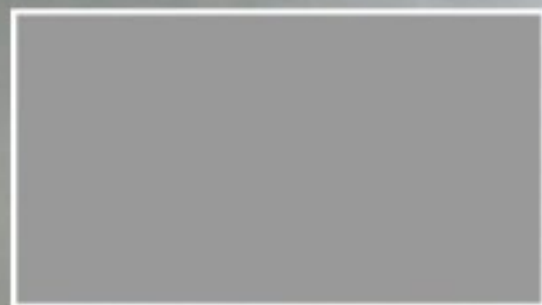
Great Range, Great Feel,
No Mods, No changes

Mounts for

Stop-Tail
Hard-Tail
Telecaster
Stratocaster
Luthier/OEM
Wrapover

"Amazing tremolos.
The best retrofit on the
market by miles!"

Nick Jennison
Guitar Interactive



visit madisonandfifth.co.uk

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.

GI80

WHEN ONLY
ACOUSTIC WILL DO

PRODUCT RECOMMENDED
Gi
PRODUCT



Cort SFX-Myrtlewood

Featuring Cort's own unique slim body shape with comfortable cutaway, modern V-shape neck profile and jumbo frets for enhanced playability, arched back for improved resonance and Fishman electronics—the SFX is truly Cort's vision of the contemporary acoustic-electric guitar. **Tom Quayle** reviews the Cort SFX-Myrtlewood.

CORT'S SFX series represents the company's modern, slim bodied acoustic-electric guitars at a very affordable price point. A range of different wood combinations and finishes are available, with our review model sporting a solid Myrtlewood top and veneered back and sides for a beautiful exotic wood aesthetic.

Like many of their competitors, Cort has used a torrefied or baked top for the SFX Myrtlewood, offering similar tonal properties to a vintage guitar and greater stability without compromising resonance. The smaller body design provides a more comfortable playing experience but can often give a boxy, plasticky tone. Cort has arched the back of the SFX range to compensate for their shallow body depth, providing a bigger and more open sound. The tonal properties are enhanced further with the use of a

lightweight, thinner UV finish that prevents scratches without dulling the vibrations of the top and sides for improved sustain and resonance. The design is completed with a Mahogany, V-shaped neck and Ovangkol fretboard and a generous cutaway that allows easy access to the upper frets and excellent playability.

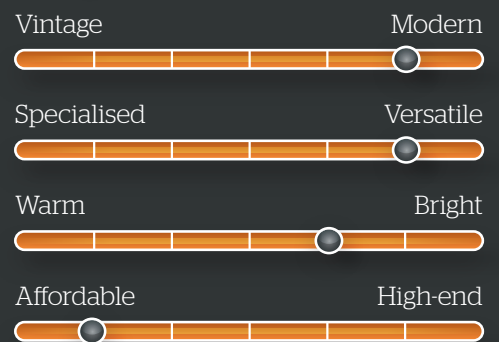
The SFX Myrtlewood is undoubtedly a great looking guitar, with each guitar sporting a unique look thanks to the inherent complexity of Myrtlewood's grain structure. Cort has included pretty yet subtle body binding, and a soundhole rosette that complements the exotic wood look perfectly. The black die-cast tuners are a lovely addition to the overall aesthetic of the guitar, which is available in a natural or brown gloss finish. Even the headstock has a lovely little abalone inlay for a guitar that is pretty without ever feeling over the top. »



Cort SFX-Myrtlewood

MSRP: (UK) £499 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Exotic tonewoods

Amazing value for money

Comfort and playability without sacrificing tone

For more information, please visit:
cortguitars.com



Cort's tonal claims for the SFX series hold up well given the smaller body size. We've reviewed plenty of slim bodied acoustics here at GI, and they tend to suffer from plasticky, boxy tones that make them far better candidates for being plugged in than mic'd up on stage or in the studio. The SFX Myrtlewood certainly bucks this trend with a very pleasing acoustic tone that has a full bottom end and plenty of resonance and sustain. It responds very well to dynamics and suits a range of playing styles, from subtle fingerstyle to aggressive strumming.



Kustom Sienna Pro 35W 1x10



A Colorful Twist on Tradition

Introducing the all-new Matiz Series—a vibrant and colorful array of nylon-string instruments.

Bright, resonant, and bold, these guitars are primed for artistic expression.



#whichhueareyou

Córdoba
cordobaguitars.com/Matiz

The tonal chops are further enhanced by a Fishman Sonitone pickup and Presys II preamp with 2-band EQ, tuner and phase switch built-in. There's a reason that this combination has become so popular with guitars in this price range since it offers a very natural acoustic tone and just enough features to effectively shape your tone and control feedback on stage. Some may prefer a soundhole based solution rather than the relatively ugly preamp box cut into the top of the guitar (especially on such lovely exotic

wood grain), but the Presys II is a great solution that keeps the cost down and offers a good level of control.

As is standard with Cort guitars generally, the build quality and finish are excellent with beautiful fretwork and internal woodwork. You can expect workmanship similar to guitars costing two or three times as much, making the SFX series feel like superb value with excellent tuning stability, hardware and stability.





There is much to recommend with this guitar and the SFX range in general - if you're looking for a slim bodied guitar that plays as good as it looks and doesn't compromise on acoustic tone, the SFX Myrtlewood is a great option that won't break the bank. It doesn't come with a case or gig bag, but it's hard to complain at this price!

END «



Martin X Series GPC-X2E Macassar

Focusing on tone, playability, construction that is built to withstand the rigours of everyday road use or carting around to an outdoor jam—all at a price point that fits comfortably in almost any budget—Martin Guitar revamps the X Series with the Martin GPC-X2E Macassar acoustic guitar. **Billy Campbell** reviews.

THIS is a mid-sized, Grand Performance Model, with a cutaway body that is equally comfortable sitting or standing, with phenomenal access to the upper frets. The edges of the body feature a very nice rounded off feel, which added a noticeable amount of comfort for me, being used to contoured guitars. As far as specs go, the GPC-X2E has a 25.4" Scale length and a 1 3/4" nut width. Twenty perfectly shaped and finished, smaller vintage sized frets. This particular model has a Sapele top, Macassar patterned, high-pressure laminate back and sides, with a Hand-Rubbed finish and Sitka Spruce X-bracing. The neck profile is Martin's High-Performance Taper, which felt like a well-executed bal-

ance between a thinner, modern profile for playing ease during single note lines and full enough to comfortably fit the hand during chordal work.

The rugged construction and attention to detail mean that this guitar does equally well at home, outdoor environments, or on stage. All without the custom shop price tag. Which is very appealing for those not wanting to take a rare or delicate collector's piece out on the road, where it could be exposed to the elements and rough handling.

The GPC-X2E has a two-way adjustable truss rod and has been set up using a Plek machine, which gets the frets dialled in perfectly. »

"In my time at GI, **each Faith I've picked up** has been consistent in its quality, playability, looks and sound..."

Macassar



Martin X Series GPC-X2E Macassar

MSRP: (UK) £739 / (US) \$699

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Bright Dark



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Martin quality at an affordable price

Slimmer neck profiles

Impressive looks

For more information, please visit:

martinguitar.com



This helps to avoid any fret buzz or dead frets. No sharp edges were found on any fret as well, which, again at this price point, is really impressive.

Handling the direct sound is Fishman's MX electronics. These are very balanced pickups that respond well to a variety of picking and

strumming dynamics while retaining a clear but relatively rounded sound. Not too muddy or woolly in the lower frequencies and not shrill in the higher frequencies. The volume and tone knobs allow plenty of variance and nuanced adjustment to cater to any mix or setting you may need.



The GPC-X2E ships with Martin's Acoustic Lifespan 2.0 strings that have an anti-corrosion treatment, and soft gig bag, with the headstock, bridge, and endpin protectors, a water-repellent exterior, and foam padding.

The GPC-X2E retails for \$699 in the US and £739 in the UK, so check one out at your local Martin dealer!

END «



Cordoba Fusion 5 Limited Boc

Cordoba's new, entry-level fusion line could very well be the perfect choice for those keen to transition from a steel string to a nylon-strung guitar. The Cordoba Fusion 5 Limited features exotic bocote back and sides, a full body with cutaway for extended range, side dot fret position markers, and a pearl decal rosette and arches. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

NYLON string guitars are wonderful things. Warm and even sounding with a sweetness that you just don't get from steel-string instruments, and equally rewarding for jazz comping, intricate fingerstyle and single-note lead lines with a pick (just ask Rodrigo Y Gabriela). I firmly believe that every guitarist should spend some time with a nylon string guitar at some point in their life.

There are a few barriers to entry, though. Typically, nylon string guitars have huge and unforgiving D-shaped necks with fingerboards so flat they feel concave. The action is usually ludicrously high, made all the worse by preposterously tiny fret wire. Throw in a wider string spacing and no fret markers (not even side dots), and you have a guitar that can feel positively hostile to your average pampered modern player. Five minutes with one of these traditional instruments will leave you with even greater respect for the classical maestros who make playing these brutal guitars look effortless.

Fortunately for the rest of us, there are guitars like the Cordoba Fusion 5 out there to bridge the gap between steel and nylon string guitars - offering all of the tonal benefits with none of the downsides. To the untrained eye, the Fusion 5 looks like a typical classical guitar (albeit with a cutaway and a spruce top rather than cedar). But what it actually is is a clever "fusion" of the best parts of both steel and nylon guitar designs.

Let's start with the neck. It's a modern C-shape with a 16" radius pau Ferro fingerboard and a 48mm nut spacing. It feels *quite* flat, but since it still has some radius to it, there isn't the slightly alien "concave" feel that most classical guitars exhibit. The string spacing is also the same as you'd find on a steel-string acoustic or most electrics - not perfectly optimised for intricate classical etudes, sure, but it won't mess with your muscle memory if you're used to steel-string guitars. »

cote



Cordoba Fusion 5 Limited Bocote

MSRP: (UK) £359 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Comfort and playability without sacrificing tone

Classy, good looks

Amazing value for money

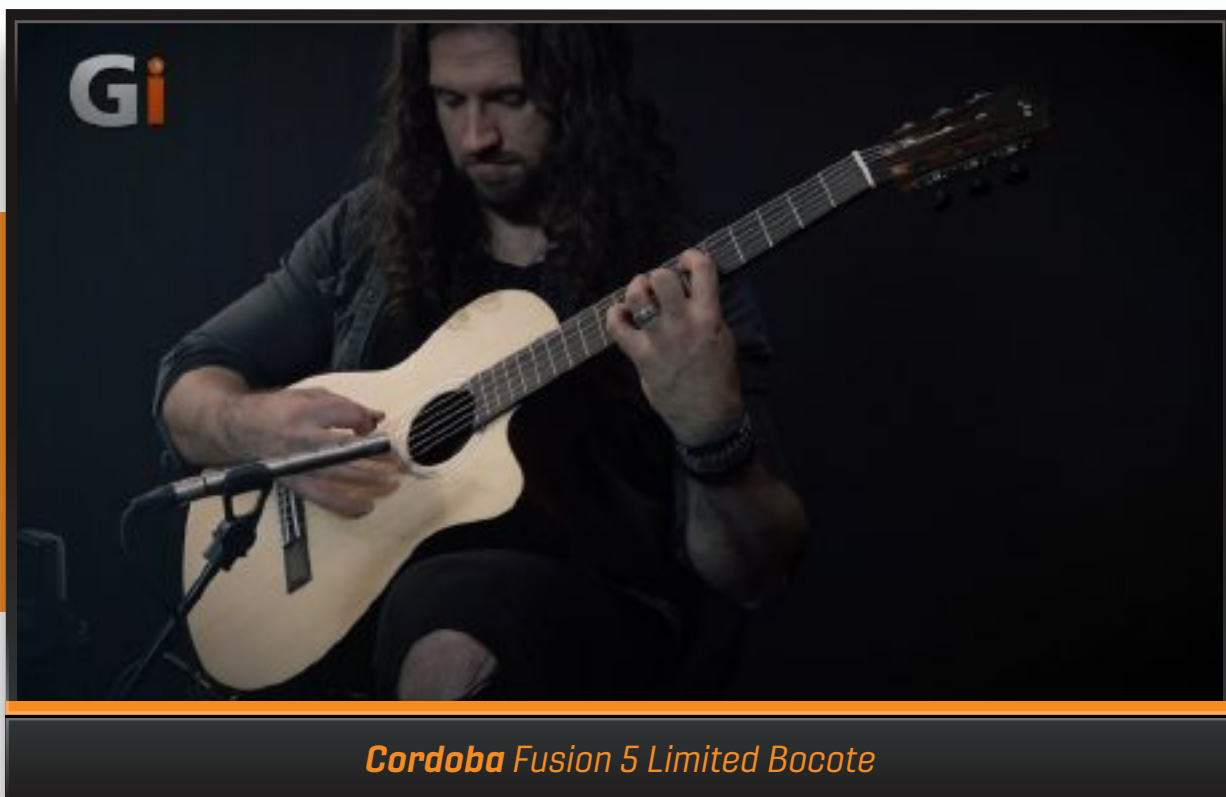
For more information, please visit:

www.cortguitars.com



The body is a little more traditional, with a ladder bracing pattern reinforcing the spruce top and a beautiful-looking bocote back and sides. While it's impossible to isolate the contribution of tonewood to a guitar's sound (since guitars are systems where all of the parts interact with each other in complex ways), the tone this guitar produces is very sweet and warm, with a softness to the attack that's very pleasing to my ear.

Electronics come from Fishman's excellent Sonitone pickup system, with a discreet preamp tucked away inside the soundhole and a battery compartment and jack socket on the lower bout. The placement of the jack socket had me scratching my head slightly since it's in the way if you sit with this guitar in the classical position while using a regular straight jack plug. An angled jack solved this problem, but it's a strange choice for a classical-style guitar. Sonically, however, it's difficult to fault this system.





LIMITED BOCOTE

It's very true to the sound of the guitar in the room, with no "quack" or general transient weirdness of the kind that can plague some under-saddle pickup systems. The controls are simple to operate but offer just enough tone-shaping control to ensure this guitar sounds "right" through whatever you're plugging into a PA, an acoustic amp, or recording directly to your DAW.

The Cordoba Fusion 5 is a great way to get your feet with nylon string playing, offering all of the sonic benefits with none of the discomfort. It's very comfortable to play, sounds lovely, and the bocote back and sides on this particular model look very classy indeed. Well worth checking out!

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.

Sponsored by Rotosound



GI80

THE PLACE FOR BASS



Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI V

Considered by many to be the industry standard bass overdrive and DI: Tech 21's SansAmp to drive power amps, recording desks, PA mixers, or simply enhance your current rig—the direct box. Capable of dialling up big vintage tube tones, bright modern slap sounds, gnarly **McG** tells us more about this versatile unit and compares it with a classic from the SansAmp

TODAY we take a look at a comparison of one legacy and one more recent version of the flagship SansAmp bass units. Both built on the same classic tone engine—but with different available options. The legacy device is the rackmount SansAmp RBI unit. A studio and live fixture for decades. The newer variation is the SansAmp Bass Driver pedal version 2. The most recent version of the same SansAmp Bass Driver classic includes new options for EQ and tonal control.

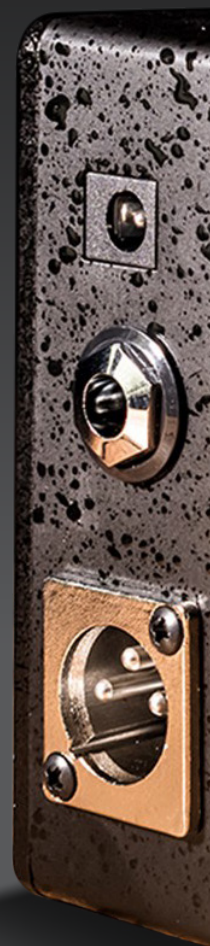
The differences between the units outside of the obvious form factor are that the RBI has much more extensive connection and interface options, while the Bass Driver version 2 has more extensive EQ controls.

They both share the same fundamental control set. Level, drive, mid, mid-frequency, blend, bass, treble.

The RBI also includes a separate level control for the XLR connections.

From there is where our differences begin. While the Bass Driver version 2 has an XLR and quarter-inch out for the affected sound, it also includes a quarter inch out for an unaffected. The RBI rear panel offers quarter-inch and XLR out for both affected and unaffected signal. The RBI has a secondary input with a pad on the rear of the unit as well as a footswitch and an effect loop that can be 100% wet or 50/50 mix with the toggle selection.

The version 2 Bass Driver offers a few variable controls on EQ that aren't shared by the RBI. Both are controlled by front panel pushbuttons. The mid can be switched between 500 Hertz and 1 kilohertz, offering a different boost and cut frequency for the mids where the RBI is locked at 1k. »





2

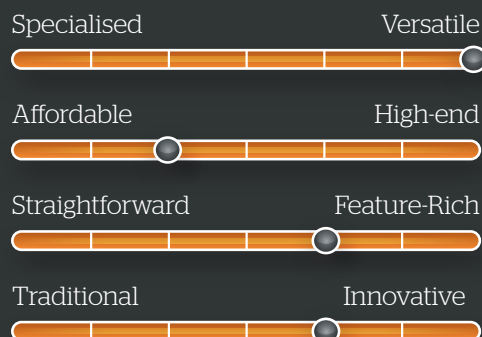
p Bass Driver DI V2 features three different outputs
SansAmp Bass Driver DI is much more than just a
y distortions, and a whole lot in between, **Rodney**
mp line.



Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI V2

MSRP: (UK) £212 / (US) \$300

The Breakdown



For fans of

Superb build quality

Sonic versatility

Huge transparent tones

For more information, please visit:
tech21nyc.com





Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI V2

The other variable is that the low/bass knob can be set to 40 or 80 Hertz, where the RBI bass is locked at 80.

So, let's get into actual sound differences. Are there any? With the push buttons on the SansAmp Bass Driver version 2 set to the same locked settings on the RBI and all dials at a neutral position, the sound will be nearly identical. Very slight variations based on how exact the neutral position of the knob is, and small differences that can affect analogue circuitry like power supply may be noticed (the RBI runs off of a three-prong standard connector for power, where the Bass Driver uses a 9-volt pedal style

connector or battery or phantom power) but the variation is minimal, especially in a mix, or live ensemble.

So, if you're choosing between these two units, the choice comes down to one of two items realistically. Do you want the additional connectivity, interface, and form factor that the RBI offers, and does it fit better with your gear set, or the Bass Driver v2's compact form factor and additional tone controls?

Personally, I look at them both less as competing units but more complementary. The RBI is the studio fixture that has the

expandability I'd want to go out to multiple recording and effect units. The Bass Driver v2 being my portable and easy to carry live unit to replicate that tone, and have larger adjustability to adapt to live environments where I may need to adjust to room acoustics and backline gear. However, given the option of only having one, I could be completely comfortable having either unit in either environment and know that I'll be getting the same core sound of the classic SansAmp bass series.

END «



EMG PX, PCSX, and PAX Pickups

According to the good people at EMG pickups, their more recent X-series gives more head while supposedly also giving a more passive feel to the active pickups. **Rodney McG** puts PX, PCSX, and PAX pickups.

IN our pickup comparison, we pit the original and decades-old classic EMG precision and Jazz combo to the newer X-series offerings. The PJ combination has been a classic and industry standard for decades, defining the sound of many recordings and popular boutique basses.

Our comparison will have all three of the current X-series PJ offerings. The PX, the PCSX, and the PAX. So how did they fare?

The PX definitely proves itself to have the extended range adver-

tised. Deeper sub lows and higher frequency response in the upper triple range. The less compressed feel is also present.

The PJCSX is a different flavour than the standard X. It has a significant bump in the 300-hertz area of the low-mids, and some dialled back upper mids giving it more punch and growl, but it still retains the signature EMG PJ tone.

Finally, we have the PAX. This set gives the most distinctly different flavour by having far more center mids in the 500 Hertz area. »

“Having multiple versions of the pickups for easy swap out and different tones in the same instrument is a **strong consideration** as well...”





room and extended range in the bass and treble
that to the test as he takes a closer look at the EMG

EMG PCSX



EMG PX, PCSX, and PAX Pickups

MSRP: \$104-\$119

The Breakdown

Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Traditional Innovative



For fans of

A wide sonic palette of classic and modern bass sounds

Open and rich tones

Easy installation

For more information, please visit:

emgpickups.com



EMG PX



This gives it a much throatier, and what could even be considered a more vintage style EQ curve that you might find in older passive Fender style split P pickups.

My conclusion was, while many players may pick a favourite, there could be a lot of value in having different variations of the pickup to tailor to the characteristics of your instrument. If you have a particularly scooped bass tone, adding the PAX could



EMG PX, PCSX, and PAX Pickups

EMG PAX



compensate, bringing back many center mids. If you have a particularly trebly or bright bass that you want to add some thickness to, the PJCSX combo may give the low-mids that are missing.

Having four different variations on the classic PJ set up with three X and a non X offering, it's not going to be difficult to be able to find exactly the complementary set to the bass you're looking to outfit. All of the different pickups carry the same quick-connect wiring, making installation and removal easy, and solder-free. Having multiple versions of the pickups for easy swap out and different tones in the same instrument is a strong consideration as well.

END «

Ibanez Artcore AGB200 & AGB260

Designed for players that are used to solid body basses but want the acoustic tone of a hollow body, **Dan Veall** looks to widen the palette of sounds at his disposal as he reviews the Artcore AGB200 and AGB260.

IT'S about time we went retro again - Enter the Ibanez Artcore range; Something a little different from the P's, MM's and the J's of this world. Not that there is anything wrong at all with the "big 3" as they call them, but you know me, I applaud manufacturers giving us a choice and trying out new ideas. Or, more accurately on this occasion, can we use the description 'retro' ideas?

The Artcore products aren't a new range per se, but the AGB200 and AGB260 we have here are certainly new to us at GI Towers! We have recently looked at the superb multi-scale fan-fret models in our last Ibanez review; I guess they are the

"modern" to the Artcore's "vintage" vibes!

Making a nod to iconic single-cut guitar design, the AGB's look great. A well-balanced outline that translates to the bass, but I want to know how the specifications stack up.

If there's one thing that is immediately obvious about both models we are looking at today - and that is, they are light! The hollow bodies acoustically have a particular tone to them, and in the case of the AGB200, a wood known as Linden is used for the top, back and sides of the body. I've had to look this up, and I find that Linden is also known as Lime or Basswood.

The AGB260 has a laminated top of Sapele instead of Linden, and the same body sections.

The same set-in (glued-in) neck on both basses is made from a solid laminate of Nyatoh, a tropical hardwood that seems to do the job with a good tone and stability. 22 frets are seated into a fretboard with complete coverage in the usual spaces. Neck scale measures in at a scale of 30.3" for some short scale players and are they!

The Artcore neck carving is a bit smaller than the webseries models suggest. »

"I have to say that they both sound **completely different** from each other despite their specification similarities..."

low body;
AGB200 & AGB260 from Ibanez.

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AGB200

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Deep & rich tones.
- » Hollow-bodied Vintage vibes.
- » The short-scale will please smaller hands.

CONS

- » Although versatile, a hollow-body has its own sound, and that might not be for everybody.

Check **THE SPEC**

Ibanez Artcore AGB200 & AGB260

**MSRP (AGB200) £TBC
(AGB260) \$TBC //**

AGB200

Maple Body // 3-Piece striped maple/mahogany neck

AGB260

AGB4 Nyatoh Set-in neck // Sapele top, back & sides

For more information, please visit:

ibanez.com

I was leaning towards a more vintage profile in my mind yet the nut width is 42mm. It must be the shorter scale that makes the bass feel that way. Can only be a good thing?

The Artcore basses are resonant yet quiet to play unplugged, but as with any review, it wasn't long before I reached for my Bergantino rig to get an accurate reproduction of the tone of these basses. I have to say that they both sound completely different from each other despite their specification similarities.

AGB260 I'm afraid will have needed a set up to pop the action and neck relief. The good news is that the action was on the low side, which means it will safely come up to a perfect set up. I make a note of this in my video; however, this isn't a negative comment about the model range, just an observation of this particular example.

Hardware on board takes the form of a two-piece bridge that suits the design nicely and the 'Classic Elite' pickups echo the chrome look with matching covers. Do I now need a



bass with a neck pickup like these? There's something sweet sounding in both basses' neck placed pickups that sets them apart from the previously mentioned 'big three' and this is a welcome addition for those wanting that warm pillowy bass tone. The bridge pickup compliments the pairing nicely adding a little bite and upper mid-range quality.

Electronics are all passive and simple is sometimes best: Master Volume, Master Tone and a three-way switch to select your tones.

My videos as always home in on the sounds available through my studio rig. Get some decent cans on and delve into the vintage vibes the Artcore models deal up, or better still, see if you can head out to a store to hook these cool basses up with a sweet flip-top style bass rig for a slice of tone heaven.

END «



AGB260

Rotosound ULTRAMAG Bass strings

Dan Veall deals deep into the latest revolution in bass guitar technology from extraordinary Rotosound, with his review of the Rotosound ULTRAMAG bass strings.

ROTOSOUND'S history starts long before the brand name was registered in around 1969 and the company have one of the most famous names in bass guitar strings. You only have to look at the long, long list of artists, endorsers and players from across the world to see that these strings are reliable from show to show, gig to gig, night after night.

Zooming up to the present day, the company, based in Sevenoaks, Kent, England employ a dedicated staff manufacturing a huge turn-out of strings every week.

One of my favourite points of note is that Jason How, son of James, the brand founder is every bit hands-on in the running of the company, right down to designing and building the high tolerance precision machines that wind each of the different types of string and their specific gauges. That really is impressive.

- And when he's not looking after machines, or running the company, you'll definitely find him on the stands at the many trade shows connecting with artists and casual players alike.

It's the feedback that he receives from the many players from around the world and keeping an eye on a shift in musician demand that allows for new products to be tested and brought to market - we have said bass goodies in today to look at and try out! »





gs

ary minds at



Rotosound ULTRAMAG Bass strings

MSRP: (4 String) £30 / (5 String) £40

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

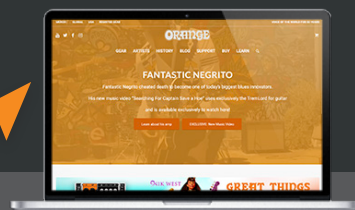
Longlasting and reliable strings!

Inspiring tones

Great value for money

For more information, please visit:

rotosound.com



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



***Rotosound** ULTRAMAG Bass strings*

Rotosound’s Ultramag strings: Advertised in two different gauges of the four-string set and one set for a five-string bass, they come in airtight sealed bags ready to be installed fresh and corrosion-free.



For my review today, I thought, what better way to try out some brand new strings, but to show you one method to install your strings correctly and for them to maintain tuning ready for performance. Watch the video review to see the string install in detail and finish up with listening to the Ultramag Standard Gauge four-string set.

One of the things I wanted to mention in my video is that it is also wise to lay the bass down and apply downward pressure to the strings over the saddles and also either side of the nut too. This can help the strings bend nicely at the correct angle over the hardware. Then, last little string stretches to ensure everything is settled ready for that final tune-up.

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

So, what do I think of the Ultramag strings now that I've had a good time to play them?

The strings definitely do sound different to the type I had on the bass before restring. That's understandable as the strings that came off were a different brand and made from different materials. What I can tell you though, is that in comparison, I noticed some extra midrange detail in the sound

(as well as that 'new string zing' that I love) - and in some ways the instrument even seemed to be more responsive - which is usually the case when mid-range frequencies are accentuated. The feel of the strings is really nice too. If you can imagine the difference between Stainless Steel strings and their textured finish verses Nickel coated strings that seem smoother - well, you like these for the latter with less friction on softer fingers.

I like what they do for the tone of my bass - well, it is a precision bass after all and the detail is in the mid-range in my opinion - so anything that helps to lift the richness of that tonal area is of interest to me. The low end is nice and beefy without being woolly- which in tandem with the midrange could feel a little like the top end was less bright than say "ultra bright" style strings on the market. The top end is there though and a tweak of your tone control will give you what you need.

The Rotosound Ultramag strings feature 'Type 52 Alloy' that I understand refers to a 52% Nickel mix in the string wire. Either way, numbers aside, the result is a pleasing warmth in the sound.

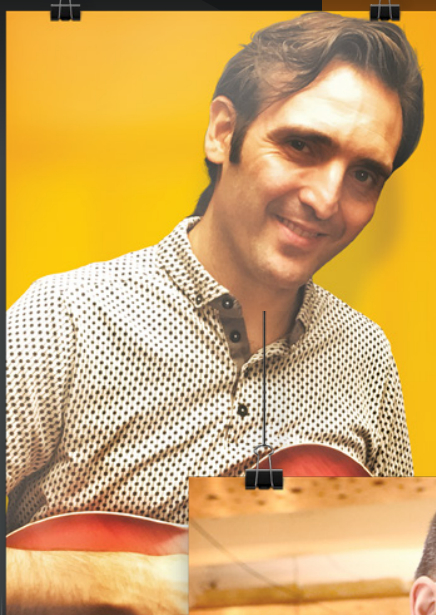
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THE Columns

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
IN SESSION

EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS
Gi
EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS





DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL TECHNIQUE: **PART 1**

Class is in session. **Tom Quayle** brings you a brand new and exclusive lesson for Guitar Interactive Magazine.

TOM Quayle took up the guitar at the age of 15 after being inspired by his Dad's incredible fingerstyle guitar playing and quickly developed a love for the instrument. Being addicted to players such as Steve Vai, John Petrucci and Brett Garsed, Tom initially focused on rock technique before developing a huge interest in Jazz and Fusion.

At this point Tom changed to his renowned 4th's tuning and studied Jazz, graduating with a Jazz Performance degree in 2002 from Leeds College of Music. Since graduating Tom has developed to become one of the foremost fusion legato players in the world with a strong reputation for both the teaching and playing, having produced a large number of highly acclaimed tuition products for his own website »

and Lick Library that have helped thousands of guitar players from every corner of the planet literally.

He has conducted masterclasses and played all over the world giving him acclaim that means he can count Dweezil Zappa, John Petrucci, Brett Garsed, Greg Howe, Andy Timmons and Tim Miller amongst his many

fans. Tom currently plays with and on the albums of some of the best fusion musicians in the world, releasing the highly acclaimed 'Elba Triangle' album in early 2017 with Virgil Donati, Alex Argento, Marco Sfogli and Allesandro Benvenuti.

Tom has many projects in the works including lots of studio and live work with his



Developing Professional Technique: Part 1

partner in crime, Martin Miller. His highly anticipated debut album is in the works, and he has produced a considerable catalogue of some of the most successful tuition material for the modern fusion genre.

Tom is incredibly proud to play his signature TQM1 guitar exclusively.

For more information, and exclusive courses from Tom Quayle, head over to http://bit.ly/Tom_Quayle

END <<



T O M Q U A Y L E

Signature SESSION



GUITAR
LESSONS

Tom Quayle's Signature Session is here!

In this brand new course designed for players of all levels, Danny Gill debuts his track “Per”, a 5 part rock extravaganza in which he talks in depth about his approach to melodic soloing, improvisation, chordal arrangement and modal playing. Each section of “Per” is performed with the supplied backing track and then broken down for you.

In addition to teaching the rhythm and the melodies, Danny talks about some of the scale choices available to you so that you can

easily play through each section regardless of your current playing level. There is even a section of ‘cool licks’ to add to your collection as well as a scales section showing you each of the scale patterns Danny refers to in the lessons.

“Per” features a bit of everything, starting off slow and dynamic and finishing with a heavy double time feel giving you plenty of opportunities to be creative and expressive over this rock instrumental.

lick **LIBRARY**



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.

Welcome to the 4th instalment of my rhythm column, so far we have looked deep into ways of practicing our timing and sub-division awareness with 8th and 16th notes. In this issue's lesson, I am going to take a more in-depth look at the decisions we can make to improve our chord choice.

I am going to be using a "Motown Skank" to demonstrate some of these concepts. The Motown Skank is the famous back beat guitar 'chop' style heard on many early Motown recordings, the style is comprised of a few fundamental elements: A guitar playing on the 2 and 4 tight with the snare drum while also playing higher 2 or 3 note inversions of chords. Often these chord voicings would be chosen strategically in order to create different harmonic spaces, for example, a high up voicing with a very staccato upstroke with the pick might cut more in the mix because the upper strings would be struck first with the pick. This would create a high energy urgency to the sound. Or maybe something more subtle is needed and lower slightly muted voicings might be more appropriate for the song. I want to get into how I like to think when it comes to choosing chord voicings for basic chord sequences, I am going to keep it stuck to the basic major/minor triads, and we're going to focus on how the voicing we choose effects the tone of our playing and the sound of the band. »

How many ways can you play a C chord?

First off I think its fundamental knowledge that every guitarist should know their CAGED system, even if they aren't using all the shapes, a basic awareness and fretboard visualisation is key to finding other voicings of chords and breaking open the fretboard. I like to be able to split each CAGED shape up into adjacent string 2 or 3 note voicings, each of these 3 note voicings, in particular, will give you various triad inversions. Being aware of what inversion you are using can be key to creating different harmonic spaces with your bass player. If you choose a root inversion with the bass player you will have a stable sound, and depending on where you play this voicing on the neck you can get a very punchy sound. However if you want to really move some air, try using the 5th in the bass and keeping it either near the top of the chord or out of the chord entirely!

If you are looking for a warmer approach, the 3rd in the bass note of the guitar voicing against the root note on the bass guitar can create a very melodic heartfelt sound. Now I am talking in terms of my own perception. However you can make your own parallels in how these inversions feel and sound against the bass note, but I think it's important to understand how they sound to you. Of course, you may want to change these inver-

sions through a chord sequence to keep the voicings close together or to complement a top melody. Also if the bass player is playing, for example, the 3rd of a chord, you may wish to stick to a root inversion or play that 3rd rooted inversion somewhere higher up the neck to compliment the basses tone, so things don't get muddy. It's all about keeping out of the way from each other, but subjectively not too far away! Being aware of any bass register in the band or the arrangement is key to finding voicings that either support, expand or pop out of the texture of the tune you are playing. This will help expand your tool bag for live and recording sessions, sometimes you may want your chord voicings to support and not stick out, or maybe you want to build a section by moving between inversions for the same chord on the 2nd repeat of a verse. How about working with another guitarist? It can be very fun to play different inversions of a chord to the other player; this can really widen the sound and depending on the style of music you are playing, you can go crazy with superimpositions and polychords between guitars heading in an almost piano player direction...but maybe I will save that for another column! How you strum or pick your chosen inversion is also important, sometimes you may want to strum near to the neck joint to help the notes bloom out more and sink into the mix, or you may want to dig in around the bridge whilst doing some ringing out arpeg-



gios of a chord, the choice is yours and a lot of what I am saying here may seem obvious... It's what sets the pro session players apart from the rest of the world. They have been doing for years on records, and it sets their 'basic chordal' to a super high standard.

Next time you are listening to a piece of music with basic chord patterns, there is a lot of production going on in terms of how exactly the part is delivered from the guitarist's hands. So please keep in mind some of the things I have said here, keep your ears open and enjoy opening up a whole world of fun with your chordal playing.

END «

THE QUIETROOM_ **GIORGIO SERCI**

FIN



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

In this column I would like to share a composition of mine called 'Dancing in The Ocean', written many years ago, while playing on a cruise ship.

It is amazing how the surroundings can influence one's musical decisions. I vividly remember this gig, which mainly consisted of me playing any thing I fancied so long as it had a perky mood, next to the swimming pool, overlooking the

ocean. As I was playing with a bass player and percussion, I had a lot of freedom to make up on the spot a lot of simple major sounding tunes, over simple harmonic structures, which would decide and call on the spot.

The rhythm is essentially a Bossa Nova, appropriate, as we were en route to Brazilian. Piña Colada (virgin of course) in the proximity helped providing just the right 'je ne sais quoi' ... I have to say, I have had worse times in my life...

THE INTRO:

To set what felt at the time as the right mood of the piece and to add a contrasting section, I opted for a descending melody in E major, harmonized, with mostly diatonic and sustained chord, utilizing some of my favourite voicings.

HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

The harmonic content is fairly simple, including mainly chords diatonic to E major. A recurrent device this piece features is the presence of inversions used to enhance the melodic qualities of the bass lines in the lower register. Here are the chords utilized and described in roman numerals: »

I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	IV	IV
I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	IV	IV
I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	IV	IV
I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	IV	IV
iii		iii		IV		IV	
iii		iii		IV		IV	
I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	IV	IV
I7	I(b)	IV	V	vi	V	I	I

NB. Please note that (b) next to I, means chord I first inversion, namely with the 3rd 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 Brazilian inspired piece, based on a Bossa Nova rhythm, syncopations and pushed chords are quite recurrent.

MELODIC INGREDIENTS:

The melodic content is entirely in E major and has a singing-like quality throughout.

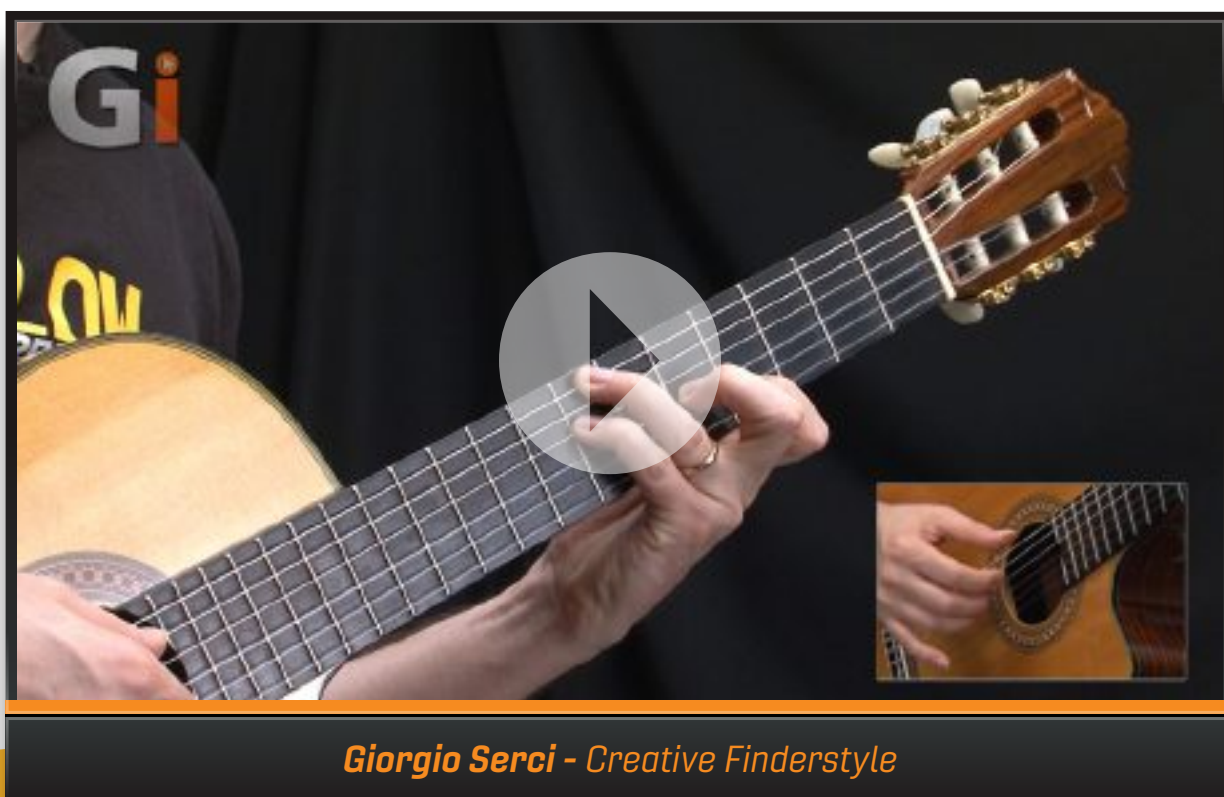
ARTICULATIONS:

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 the $\frac{1}{4}$ note bend in section A and hammer-

on in section B, 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:



Giorgio Serci - Creative Fingerstyle

(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):

INTRO: Play an E natural harmonic on the 12th fret of E. Then play the first chord including middle f on fret 9 of G, index on fret 7 of B and little f on fret 11 of e.

2ND CHORD: ring f on fret 6 of G, index on fret 4 of B and little f on fret 7 of e.

3RD CHORD: index on fret 2 of G, open B and little f on fret 4 of e.

4TH CHORD: bar on fret 1 to play fret 1 of D and B. Middle f on fret 2 of G and little f on fret 4 of e.

Tap 7th fret of E with picking hand's index and slide down until release an open E.

Repeat the first 3 chords and then play an A/B as follows: ring f on fret 7 of E, little f on fret 7 of D, middle f on fret 6 of G and index on fret 5 of B. Finally, keeping the same shape, shift down one fret the index and middle f in order to play a B7b9.

BAR 9: Open E, index on fret 4 of e with open B followed by little f on fret 7 of e, with open B and index on fret 4 of E. »

BAR 10: Play as a pick up from the previous bar A and B with little f on fret 5 of e and open B, then play open A on the 1st beat.

Next, play fret 4 and 2 of e with ring and index f and open e.

BAR 11: Ring f on fret 4 of A, open B then index on fret 2 of A with little f on fret 4 of B (with a ¼ note bend) and open e.

BAR 12 AND 13: Play an Amaj7 (A shape) with an open A, middle f on fret 2 of D, index on fret 1 of G and ring f on fret 2 of B.

BAR 14: As bar 9

BAR 15: As bar 10

BAR 16: As bar 11



BAR 17-18: Index on fret 7 of G, open B and little f on fret 12 of e. Next, middle f on fret 11 of G, open B and ring f on fret 11 of e, followed by middle f on fret 9 of G, open B and ring f on fret 9. Finally, middle f on fret 8 of G, open B and index on fret 7 of e.

Congratulations, you have completed section A. This part should be played twice.

Bar 19: Middle f on fret 4 of E, ring f on fret 4 of D, little f on fret 4 of G and open B, replaced by index on fret 2 of B and little f on fret 4 of B followed by open e.

Bar 20: Play an Amaj7 (A shape) with an open A, middle f on fret 2 of D, index on fret 1 of G and ring f on fret 2 of B.

Bar 21: Middle f on fret 4 of E, ring f on fret 4 of D, little f on fret 4 of G and open B, replaced by index on fret 2 of B and little f on fret 4 of B followed by open e, hammer-on on fret 2 of e and then little f on fret 4 of e.



Bar 22: Play an Amaj7 (A shape) with an open A, index on fret 2 of D and B, ring f on fret 4 of G and little on fret 4 of e.

Now repeat from bar 14 to 18 and then play the final bar

BAR 23: Arpeggiate an Eadd9, with an open E, middle f on fret 2 of A, ring f on fret 2 of D, little f on fret 4 of D, index on fret 1 of G, open B, e then index on fret 2 of e, little f on fret 4 of e and sliding on to fret 7 of e, followed by an 'E' natural harmonic of fret 12 of e.

Congratulations, you have completed 'Dancing In The Ocean!'

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 finger-style lesson.



I hope you will enjoy playing this study piece and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions. If you would like to listen any more of my compositions, please check the previous issues of Guitar Interactive Magazine as well as any of my CDs, available from my website:

Check me out here at
www.giorgioserci.com



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

*Until the next time -
Good-bye.*

NICK
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