

Guitar *Interactive* 81

**PAUL
GILBERT**
TECH SESSION

+ **INTERVIEWS**
STEVE CROPPER
ARIELLE

PAUL GILBERT

TALKS 16TH STUDIO RELEASE 'WEREWOLVES OF PORTLAND,'
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Welcome to **ISSUE**

81

Hello and welcome to issue 80 of Guitar Interactive Magazine!



Editor
// Jonathan Graham

Paul Gilbert has carved out a seriously impressive solo career with a slew of acclaimed albums like 'Alligator Farm' (2000), 'Silence Followed by a Deafening Roar' (2008) and 'Vibrato' (2012). With his latest (and 16th) solo release, 'Werewolves of Portland,' Paul once again continues to raise the bar on what he can achieve creatively with the guitar...and a handful of other instruments too. Jonathan Graham caught up with the one and only Pablo Gilberto himself for this exclusive Gi cover feature.

Continuing our exclusive features on this issue's cover artist Paul Gilbert, 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 Steve Cropper; the man who's done just about it all. Involved in virtu-

ally every record issued by Stax from the fall of 1961 through year-end 1970, Cropper is bound to have a hit guitar line playing on a radio near you—no matter where you are. We also talk with Arielle as she discusses her new album 'Analog Girl In A Digital World,' her unique approach to writing and her impressive new signature model from Brian May Guitars.

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, Nick Jennison & Giorgio Serici.

See you next time.

Guitar Interactive

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Back with a new collection of songs in the form of her ninth studio release 'Analog Girl In A Digital World,' Arielle chats about the new album, her unique approach to writing and her impressive new signature model from Brian May Guitars.

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Paul Gilbert has carved out a seriously impressive solo career with a slew of acclaimed albums like 'Alligator Farm' (2000), 'Silence Followed by a Deafening Roar' (2008) and 'Vibrato' (2012). With his latest (and 16th) solo release, 'Werewolves of Portland,' Paul once again continues to raise the bar on what he can achieve creatively with the guitar...and a handful of other instruments too. **Jonathan Graham** caught up with the one and only Pablo Gilberto himself for this exclusive Gi cover feature.

Steve Cropper has just about done it all. Involved in virtually every record issued by Stax from the fall of 1961 through year-end 1970, Cropper is bound to have a hit guitar line playing on a radio near you—no matter where you are. Back to add another classic to his catalogue, Steve Cropper returns with his first album of new Soul/R&B material in 10 years in the form of 'Fire it Up.' We talk with Steve about the new record and more, while the album's co-producer **Jon Tiven** offers some unique insight into working on this superb new release.

There is something undeniably magical that surrounds **Arielle's** presence, whether in the flesh or as captured on the compositions she's created throughout her already impressive career. Back with a new collection of songs in the form of her ninth studio release 'Analog Girl In A Digital World,' **Arielle** talks about the new album, her unique approach to writing and her impressive new signature model from Brian May Guitars.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH
GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES



Original Photo ©Jason Quigley



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PAUL GILBERT AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LOCKDOWN

PAUL GILBERT An *American Werewolf* in Lockdown

Arguably best known as the virtuosic axeman and co-founder of Mr. Big, as well as a member of Los Angeles-based metal outfit Racer X—Paul Gilbert has carved out a seriously impressive solo career with a slew of acclaimed albums like ‘Alligator Farm’ (2000), ‘Silence Followed by a Deafening Roar’ (2008) and ‘Vibrato’ (2012). With his latest (and 16th) solo release, ‘Werewolves of Portland,’ Paul once again continues to raise the bar on what he can achieve creatively with the guitar...and a handful of other instruments too. **Jonathan Graham** caught up with the one and only Pablo Gilberto himself for this exclusive Gi cover feature. »

“It **took me about six months** to think of it, but it finally occurred to me that I could play all the instruments myself. I’ve always loved playing drums, and I can play bass and keyboards well enough to get the job done.”

Paul Gilbert is an artist. A consummate craftsman. While there are so many virtuoso guitarists around who rely on technique over creativity, this man is not one of these. Of course, he has superb technical insight, but this used to develop engaging, insightful music that stands impressively as an expression of the soul and spirit.

It’s always been this way with Gilbert. People first heard him in full flow with the much-respected Racer X. Their 1986 debut album ‘Street Lethal’ was well received, as was the follow up ‘Second Heat’ a year later.



In 1988, he left the band helped to form Mr. Big, one of the most acclaimed bands of the era. Gilbert's talents were perfect for what was regarded as a stellar line-up. Across four studio albums, the foursome gained commercial success. They also had a chart-topping US single in 1992 with 'To Be With You'.

Gilbert reformed Racer X in 1999 after leaving Mr. Big, releasing three albums between '99 and '02. He also launched what's become a distinguished solo career, putting out 15 acclaimed records to date. And such is his stature that he has been asked to guest on albums from such diverse names as Todd Rundgren, Bowling For Soup, Glenn Hughes and MC Lars. He also toured with Joe Satriani and John Petrucci in 2007 (G3) and two years later with Richie Kotzen and George Lynch (Guitar Generation). »





Oh, and let's not ignore the fact that Gilbert has had a lengthy tenure as a much-in-demand teacher and instructor. This began when he was still a teenager, being hired as such in 1985 by the prestigious Guitar Institute Of Technology (GIT) in Los Angeles.

Now he has his 16th solo studio album ready to prove to everyone that, astonishingly, this master continues to raise the bar on what he can achieve. And work on this was supposed to start in 2020, as Gilbert himself explains.

"I was planning to record in the spring of

2020. I had the studio booked and the musicians ready to rehearse. But suddenly, the world locked down, and I had to put everything on hold. It was hard to let go of my passion for recording 'live' in the studio, but as the lockdown dragged on, I began to think about other ways that I could make the record and still be inspired by the recording process."

Gilbert's solution was simple yet effective and also allowed him to express his wide instrumental dexterity. »



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“Overall, I didn’t become a musician in order to shout my ideas, complaints, or philosophies at anyone. **I love music because of the music...**”

“It took me about six months to think of it, but it finally occurred to me that I could play all the instruments myself. I’ve always loved playing drums, and I can play bass and keyboards well enough to get the job done. I hadn’t played the drums in years, so I didn’t know if I’d be physically in shape. So I contacted Kevin Hahn (my co-producer and engineer) and said, ‘I’m going to try to play everything. If we find a part that I can’t play, then we’ll look for other musicians who can step in and help’.



Paul Gilbert - Argument About Pie (Official Music Video)



“It turned out that there was only one thing that I couldn’t play. The snare buzz roll at the end of the track ‘Hello! North Dakota!’. That required some tricky drum technique that I have never practised before. So we hired a guy to come in and do an excellent snare buzz roll. Everything else is me!”

Gilbert understandably enthuses about the guitars he used on this album. “I mostly used my Ibanez Fireman guitars. I’ve been collecting vintage Ibanez guitars lately, too. I brought in some models from the ‘70s, ‘80s, and ‘90s like the Ibanez Artist, Roadstar II and Ghost rider. I also brought and modi-

fied a ‘60s Epiphone Olympic. I used to play those in the early days of Racer X, so it was fun to have a guitar that reminded me of my early shredder style.”

As mentioned earlier, Kevin Hahn was a crucial collaborator for Gilbert in the studio. And the latter believes he brought important skills to the project.

“Kevin works fast and has a great ear! He did an amazing job with tempo maps in Pro-Tools, as most of the songs had tempo changes all over the place. You have to get those just right, at the very beginning, »

“I need to be able to visualize the look and sound of my fretboard well enough to play accurately in my mind. It’s almost like real air guitar!”

before you record anything. It’s amazing to me how smoothly the tempo changes worked when all the instruments were laid over them. “We recorded at Opal Studio in Portland. It’s a small studio in Kevin’s basement. But his recording room is big enough to record live drums, and he had a great five-piece Ludwig kit that he let me use. I just brought my sticks!” The recording process took two months. However, it wasn’t continuous due to other circumstances. “Kevin and I could only work a few days a week, as we both had other things going on (him with other sessions, and me with my online school and family.) So, it didn’t take that much time. It was just spread out. That meant I had plenty of opportunities to chew on the melodies and chords mentally. It was nice to have that luxury. Still, as usual, much of my inspiration came from the last minute panic of knowing that I’ve got to be at the studio in an hour, and I’d better get my arrangement finished!”

When it comes to writing, Gilbert reveals that surprisingly it isn’t the guitar that provides the impetus.

“Mostly, I write by singing, even though the end result is guitar. I use the lyrics to give myself a structure where I can hang the notes. Once the melody is long enough to have some life in it, my musical instincts can take over. I can often finish the song without needing more words. But if I get stuck, lyrics will always get me going again.

“Teaching at my online rock guitar school is also a huge help and influence. I teach by inventing musical phrases that contain whatever technique or musical element I’m trying to help the student with. I’ve recorded thousands of these phrases, and I keep my favourite ones on file. So any time that I need an extra riff or solo idea, I just shop through this collection until I find what I need.”

However, despite the importance of vocals when it comes to composing, Gilbert has chosen to make this a fully instrumental album.

“My guitar can hit the high notes! It’s amazing to have the physical limitations of my voice... gone! The challenge is to be as » expressive, with all the slides, vibrato, dy-



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namics, and tone. That has been my for the last few years learning vocal melody. I get used to playing an expression that is probably surprising a lot; they'll come to a shred assignment. 'Let's play Tom Jones.' "What's New Pussycat?" you learn a lot from work!"

The inspiration for comes partially from lives, and also from

"Initially, I was just the Warren Zevon. 'Of London'. I lived thought it would constitute the name of a known city. My original 'Werewolves' was a band and me. Well, it is our version of a moon. Unfortunately, it became more 'known' year, for events with

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just the guys in my
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hich are pretty sad

to watch. And 'Werewolves' could
take on other meanings that I cer-
tainly hadn't anticipated. But the
title, to me, still has a musical mean-
ing. The song 'Werewolves Of Port-
land' features my guitar doing lots of
'howling'. I wish that everyone in the
world could enjoy the same emotion-
al release of 'howling' on a musical
instrument."

The song titles are rather quirky and
certainly catch the imagination.

"Most of my titles come from the
lyrics that I write in order to get a
melody going. I've even printed the
lyrics in the liner notes of the album,
so you can 'read along as you listen
to the music.

"Argument About Pie' is one of my
favourites. This lyric came from my
pre-lockdown experiences of stop-
ping by my local pie shop for a slice
of strawberry rhubarb. Amidst all
the brewing angst in Portland, the
pie shop was a place where every-
one was happy and at peace. Eating
pie seemed to be something that

everyone could agree on. Since my
mind has the habit of searching for
contrasts, I started to wonder what
people might be against eating pie.

"I also wrote not one, but TWO
songs about the Russian composer
Dimitri Shostakovich. One is 'A
Thunderous Ovation Shook the
Columns', which is a line that I saw
when I was reading about the audi-
ence's reaction to the debut perfor-
mance of Shostakovich's 5th Sym-
phony. They liked his symphony! So,
fortunately, did Joseph Stalin, who
had made no secret that he did NOT
approve of some of Shostakovich's
earlier music and that he'd better
write something more pro-state or
be sent off to a 'work' camp in Sibe-
ria. In these days of culture battles, I
thought, today's cancel-culture peo-
ple still have nothing on Stalin. 'Off
to Siberia with you!' still packs more
punch than 'Your recent Facebook
post has been deleted. Overall, I like
that Shostakovich rose above it all, »
and wrote some truly astounding,
emotional, and beautiful music. 'Pro-
fessorship At The Leningrad Con-

servatory' is my lyric about that story, and I built the melody from there."

'Werewolves Of Portland' is a remarkable album. It sounds fresh, vital and certainly takes the listener on a glorious journey. For Gilbert, it's the development of a process that began on his previous album.

"The process of writing lyrics, then melody, then guitar, then backing it all up with the other instruments is a wonderful discovery that really started coming together for me on 'Behold Electric Guitar'.

"Werewolves Of Portland' was written in a similar way. It's a much more traditional way of writing, a path that I tried to avoid for most of my career since rock 'n' roll has a spirit of being non-traditional. But songwriting seems to work a lot better when I try to think like Burt Bacharach, as opposed to a teenage shredder. I still enjoy kicking up the energy of music with some athletic guitar playing. I'm sure that I still do enough face-melting playing to get me kicked out of any Black Crowes audition. But that's OK. I'll bet we can still eat some pie together."

What you hear on these compositions is

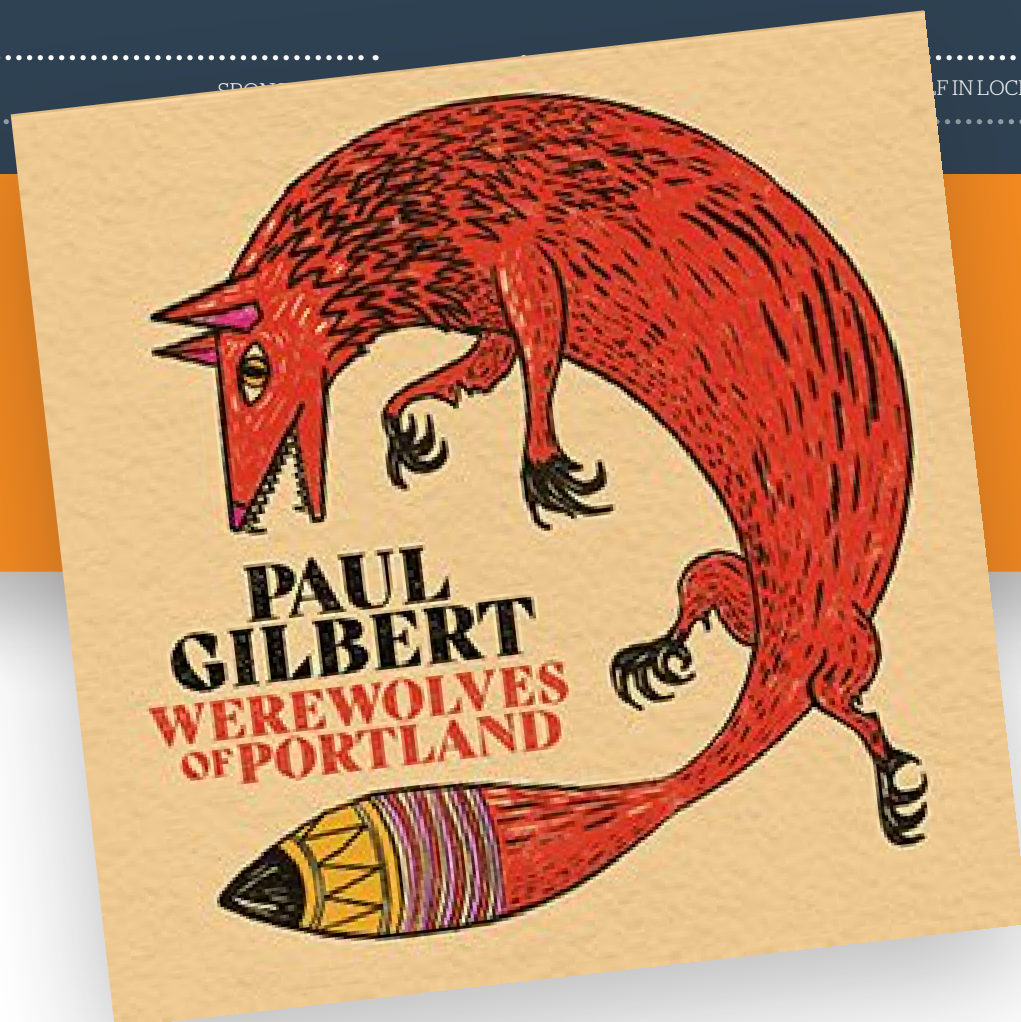
a musician in love with... well, Gilbert explains it perfectly.

"Overall, I didn't become a musician in order to shout my ideas, complaints, or philosophies at anyone. I love music because of the music. So I love my method of using my inner rants as scaffolding to build melodies. This scaffolding can then be pulled away to unveil some pure emotional music. This works perfectly for me, and hopefully for my listeners.

"I need to be able to visualize the look and sound of my fretboard well enough to play accurately in my mind. It's almost like real air guitar! Then when I actually go to play the music, I've got a good chance of having my melodic intentions come true. And that's about the best feeling in the world."

Paul Gilbert's brand-new album 'Werewolves of Portland' is out now via The Players Club (Steve Lukather, Robby Krieger, Michael Landau, Tommy Emmanuel).

END «



Paul Gilbert – Werewolves Of Portland Tracklist

1. Hello North Dakota!
2. My Goodness
3. Werewolves Of Portland
4. Professorship At The Leningrad Conservatory
5. Argument About Pie
6. Meaningful
7. I Wanna Cry (Even Though I Ain't Sad)
8. A Thunderous Ovation Shook The Columns
9. Problem-Solving People
10. (You Would Not Be Able To Handle) What I Handle Everyday

For more information on Paul Gilbert, please visit:

paulgilbert.com



S T E V E C

LOCKDOWN



As a guitarist, A&R man, producer, engineer, songwriting partner of Otis Redding, the MG's and The Mar-Keys, Steve Cropper has just about done it all. Involved in Cropper is bound to have a hit guitar line playing on a radio near you—no matter what—with his first album of new Soul/R&B material in 10 years in the form of 'Fire it Up'. The album's co-producer Jon Tiven offers some unique

C R O P P E R

OWN BLUES



g, Eddie Floyd and a dozen others and founding member of both Booker T. and
virtually every record issued by Stax from the fall of 1961 through year-end 1970,
where you are. Back to add another classic to his catalogue, Steve Cropper returns
p,' Jonathan Graham talks with Steve about the new record and more, while the
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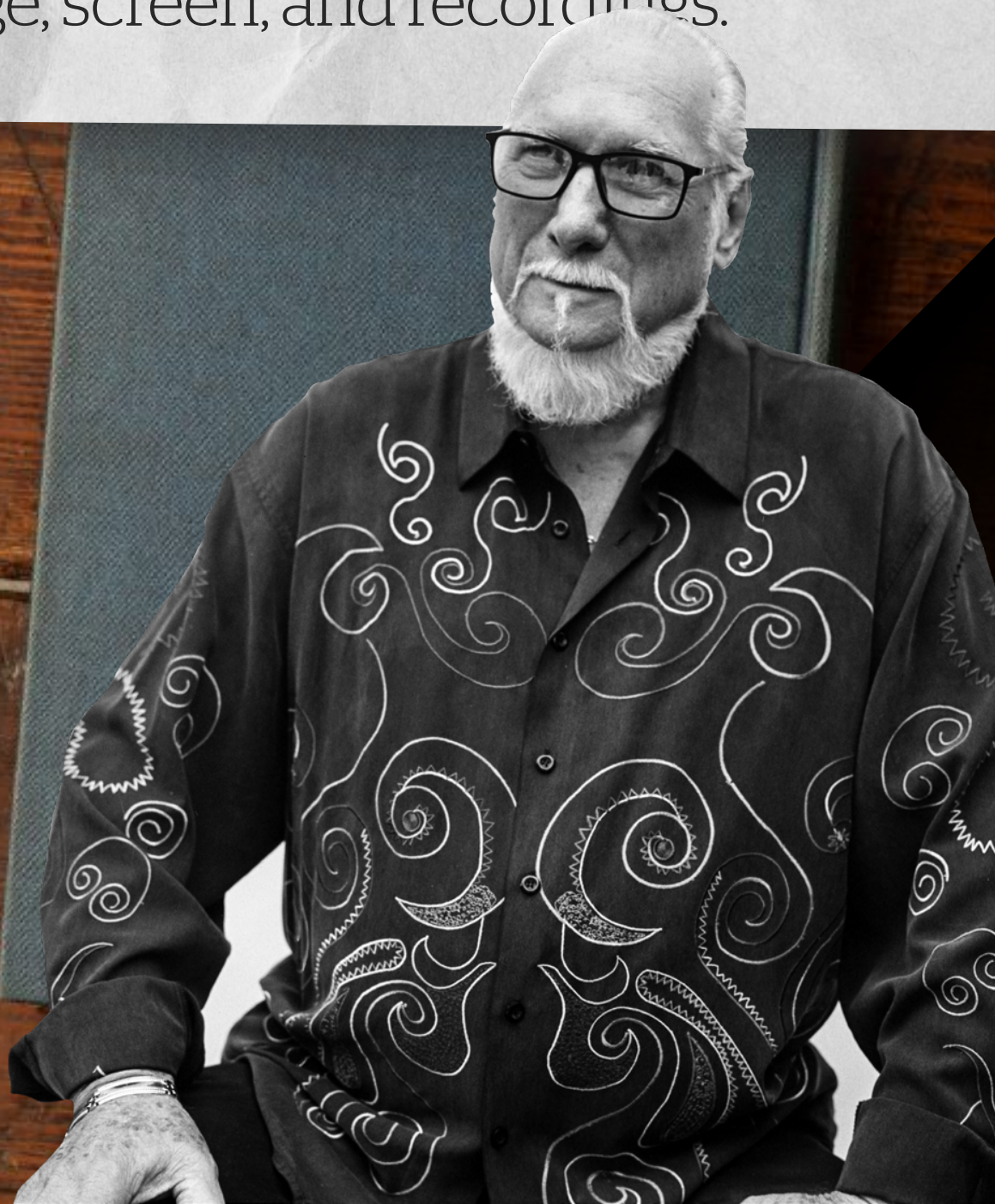
UNLESS you're a one-man-band or you want to take your life in your hands, making a record in a pandemic lockdown presents a unique set of challenges. Steve Cropper and I have made a handful of records, always with a cracking live band and a record company budget to fund the proceedings, but this was not to be had in these circumstances. Our mission was to surmount the obstacles and make a defining piece of music for the moment, and remarkably enough, all the roadblocks to our success came tumbling down as we proceeded. But let me backtrack a bit.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have Mr Cropper living within ten minutes driving distance from my home. The songs he's written are far too many to list, but if it was only "Midnight Hour," "Dock of the Bay," and "Mr. Pitiful" that would be enough to impress and intimidate me. I got over my feelings of inadequacy only because he's such a great and unassuming fellow, and although we were friendly before I moved to Nashville, proximity has deepened that relationship. Steve and I enjoy writing together, and for the past eight years or so, we've gotten together to collaborate whenever Steve was off the road (not too frequently). »



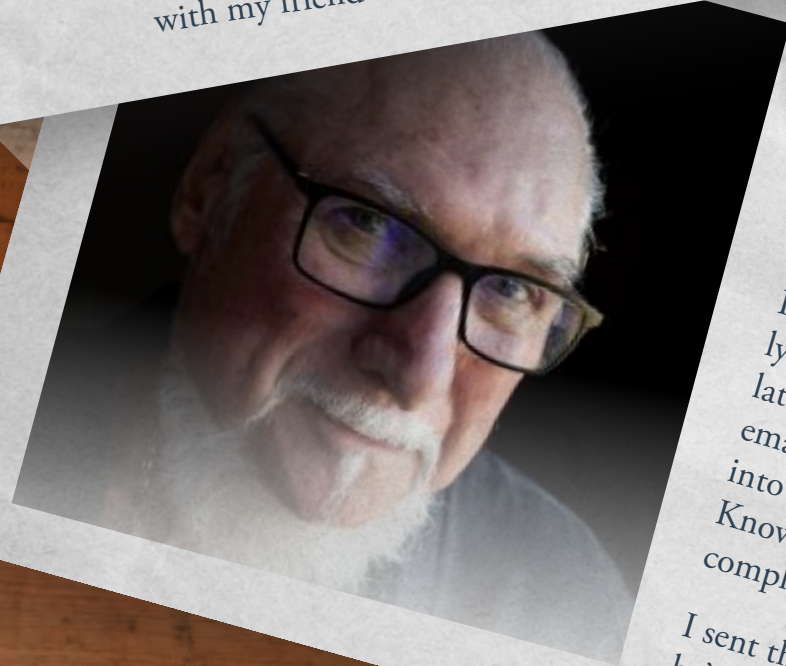
Steve Cropper - Fire It Up (Official Lyric Video)

“A **founding member** of the Blues Brothers, Steve reintroduced classic soul to unsuspecting audiences—stage, screen, and recordings.”



Sometimes we had a drummer, sometimes just a loop, and rarely any lyrics. Over time we accumulated two handfuls of songs that needed a third party to complete, and we assumed that he/she would appear. I replaced the drum loops with Nioshi Jackson, a fine player from here in town who was able to catch the groove from Steve's guitar and my bass. I added Hammond organ, piano, saxophones and harmonica to the tracks to make them sound a little more finished, and that added vibrancy to the power trio. We farmed one out to our friend Paul Rodgers to finish, and he turned it into "She's So Fine."

And then came the lockdown. Steve's live gigs were postponed, and I was quarantined at home working on new material in my studio. I had just re-ignited a songwriting partnership with my friend of 40+ years, Roger C. Reale, with whom I'd written songs



not only for his album but which were recorded by no less than BB. King ("Yes Man"), Johnny Winter ("Last Night"), and the duo of Buddy Guy and Jonny Lang ("Midnight Train"). I played Steve a couple of things Roger and I had done together and asked him if I could give Rog one or two of the Cropper/Tiven tracks to lyricize/sing, and he agreed. About two weeks later, Roger had sung them into his iPhone, emailed me his vocal tracks. I popped them into the multi-tracks, and voila, "Say You Don't Know Me" and "Heartbreak Street" were now complete.

I sent them to Colonel Cropper, hoping that he'd approve of the results. »

"Songs are not easy to write because **you have to say what you think is on peoples' minds** or figure out what an audience will get off on."

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His response was immediate. "Would Roger be interested in finishing the rest of the songs, and we'll make it my next album?" I couldn't believe it and asked Roger---of course, he said YES!---and we were off to the races. Roger lives up North, so he couldn't come to Music City to sing, so I asked Steve what we should do about that. He LOVED the quality of Roger's voice singing through the phone and was confident that his ace engineer, Eddie Gore, would be able to make the most of it when it came time to mix.

This became our process: I'd send the tracks to Roger a few at a time and he'd email me his vocal, I'd upload his vocal to my 24 track, and send it to Steve and Eddie. »

We had lead guitars on some but not all of these tracks, and Steve wanted to embellish what he'd done, so he and Eddie would mask up and spend the time laying down some licks for the ages and then mix.

Soon we had more than a dozen finished, and I knew Stu Fine (who had a&r'd Steve's last album, Dedicated) was very interested in a new Steve Cropper record. The last piece of the puzzle had come together without anybody perishing in the process. It sounds like a band that's been together for years, thanks to the magic of the recording process and us all being on the same wavelength. Stu's enthusiasm for what was in the Cropper Hopper was undeniable, it surpassed all his expectations, and he brought us into Mascot Records straightaway.

I hope we get to do another with all of us in the same room, but this one---isolation be damned---will be tough to beat. »





IT'S hard to have surprises when you're seven decades into a career of soul, blues and rock and roll stardom, but consider this: in a way, 'Fire It Up' is the first album since 1969 to have Steve Cropper's solo name on it. That's how Steve thinks of it.

Steve Cropper is that guitar on "Green Onions," the first of many hits with Booker T & the MGs. The MGs became the house band at Stax Records and Cropper one of Stax's main producers, songwriters and guitarists. "Midnight Hour" by Wilson Pickett, "(Sit-tin' On) The Dock of the Bay" by Otis Redding, "Knock on Wood" by Eddie Floyd, "Soul Man" and "Hold On I'm Coming"—you can't discuss soul music without Steve Cropper.

Bob Dylan hired Booker T. & the MG's as house band at his 30th-anniversary concert. Eric Clapton did the same thing; Neil Young kept them on the road and in the studio. Steve's first time in London, the Beatles sent a Bentley for him. He plays on John Lennon's Rock N Roll album, Frank Black's Honeycomb and Fast Man Raider Man albums, and on several albums by Ringo Starr. He's also produced for John Prine, Jeff Beck, and John Cougar Mellencamp. »





A founding member of the Blues Brothers, Steve reintroduced classic soul to unsuspecting audiences—stage, screen, and recordings. Rolling Stone magazine ranked him in the top 40 of its 100 all-time greatest guitarists.

But Steve sees this record as different: “This is the first Steve Cropper album since 1969,” he says. Technically, there were two solo albums in the 1980s, one of which he forgot and the other of which I forgot. He considers his 2011 *Dedicated*, which is a collection of 5 Royales songs, as a collaboration with that R&B group that shaped his style, and the two albums in the years just prior were collaborations with Felix Cavaliere from the Rascals. Even if it takes caveats, the point remains that Steve Cropper hears himself on ‘Fire It Up’ in a way he hasn’t since the 1960s.

“This album is different from everything out there now,” he says. “It’s made from old grooves because during a lockdown, you work on stuff that’s been in your head for years.” He doesn’t keep a file of song lyrics and doesn’t file guitar riff ideas to find a home later, “but all that stuff is floating in my head all the time,” he says. “I can reach in there and get it out.”

‘Fire It Up’ has its roots in the sessions with Felix Cavaliere. They made some basic tracks that wound up not fitting on their two releases but captured good grooves. Those tracks did get filed away—by album producer Jon Tiven.

“Jon would pull out those tracks, and he’d call me and say, ‘You know, this stuff is pretty good.’” Tiven and Cropper live near each other in Nashville, and for nearly 20 years, they’ve been meeting weekly to write songs. One day during the pandemic, Cropper answered his phone, and the idea for ‘Fire It Up’ was on the other end.

“Jon and I reworked the tracks, came up with some song ideas,” Steve says. “I’ve always been a title guy. I try to come up with a title that tells a story even if you don’t read the lyrics. Songs are not easy to write because you have to say what you think is on peoples’ minds or figure out what an audience will get off on. »
It’s not about the

**“Fire It Up”
delivers on its
title, a song that
revs with energy.”**

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writer so much as who he's writing for. Lots of people write poetry about their own stories. For me, songwriting isn't about the writer as much as the audience and the artist who will deliver it."

"Bush Hog" is the album's sole instrumental, the milieu in which the MG's made their name. "A bush hog is a big mower to cut a big swath behind a tractor. My dad used one on our farm in Missouri." The full song closes the album, but an excerpt opens it, and from the first funky string of notes—visualize a big whacker trailing an unstoppable John Deere over bumpy ground—the tone and style hearken back to Cropper's first 1969 solo album, *With a Little Help From My Friends*. The artist may have aged, but the art has not. Steve laughs and, referring to his childhood and lifelong bandmate, the late Donald "Duck" Dunn, says, "Duck and I have always played the same way we played in high school. We always sounded like we were in the Mar-Keys!" The reference is to their high school band, which helped establish Stax Records by cutting the evergreen soul classic "Last Night."

"Fire It Up" delivers on its title, a song that revs with energy. The classic R&B rhythm is played like fierce rock and roll, and vocalist Roger C. Reale sings with a gritty excitement from deep in his gut. "Fire it up," he insists each chorus, and whether he means the energy for a big night out, that blunt behind your ear, or the backyard grill, he's got you moving to do it. "I wished I'd known Roger back in the day," says Steve. "Eddie Floyd and Otis Redding and Rufus Thomas, they were singers who had real energy. Roger is in that group. He sings like it's the last song he'll ever get to sing."

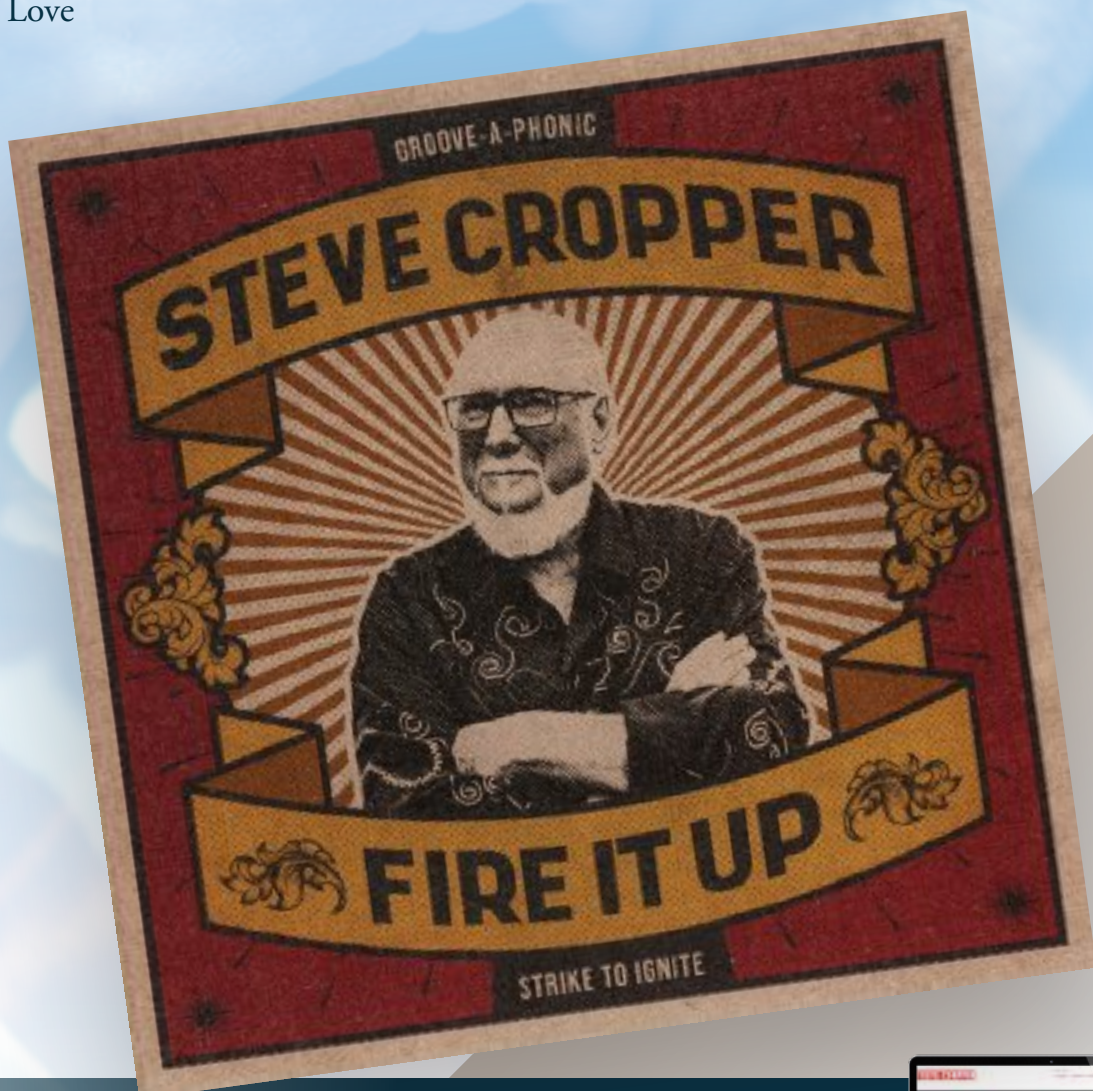
This song features classic Cropper guitar, a tingle of high notes, a coy hesitation, and a shimmering slide. The solo evokes his classic riff that opens Sam and Dave's "Soul Man", but Steve shrugs off the comparisons. "Hammer licks is my style," he says. "Jon calls them hammer tones. When people hear those licks up high, they think about 'Soul Man' and those songs. It's just style; that's all it is." Maybe—or that's easy for a guitar God to say.

Steve Cropper's 'Fire It Up' is out now via Mascot Label Group/Provogue.

END ◀

STEVE CROPPER — 'FIRE IT UP' TRACKLIST:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Bush Hog Part 1 | 6. Far Away | 10. Heartbreak Street |
| 2. Fire It Up | 7. Say You Don't Know Me | 11. The Go-Getter Is Gone |
| 3. One Good Turn | 8. She's So Fine | 12. Bush Hog Part 2 |
| 4. I'm Not Havin' It | 9. Two Wrongs | 13. Bush Hog |
| 5. Out of Love | | |



For more information on Steve Cropper, please visit:

playitsteve.com



Arielle

There is something undeniably magical that surrounds Arielle's presence, whether in the flesh or as captured on the compositions she's created throughout her already impressive career. In many ways, she is from a past era, drawing inspiration from her love of the 1960s and '70s, connected to the discovery, exploration and dreams that were omnipresent in the lives of those from previous generations. Back with a new collection of songs in the form of her ninth studio release 'Analog Girl In A Digital World,' Arielle talks with **Jonathan Graham** about the new album, her unique approach to writing and her impressive new signature model from Brian May Guitars. »

Analog Girl In

ARIELLE ANALOG GIRL IN A DIGITAL WORLD

re

in A Digital World



“The new album takes you on a journey through the trials, tribulations, and of an old-school artist in a fast-paced

Born in the United States—but a self-proclaimed wanderer—Arielle began studying music at the age of 5. A child prodigy, she attained a degree from the Musician’s Institute in Los Angeles, and continued her education at London’s Institute of Contemporary Music Performance. Discovered in 2010 by Extreme’s Nuno Bettencourt, she quickly signed with an American indie record label ‘Open E’. In the years that followed, she made a name for herself, touring throughout North America

and the UK, opening and playing with Heart, Joan Jett, Graham Nash, Joe Bonamassa, Guns N’ Roses, members of Deep Purple and many more.

At the age of 18, good fortune ensued when Arielle was handpicked by guitarist Brian May for a key role in the London-based musical “We Will Rock You”—the long-running production based on the songs by Queen. From the cover of Guitar Player Magazine to being recognised by country superstar Vince Gill as one of the ‘Top 5

Best New Guitarists’, Arielle has turned her hand to acting, with a recent appearance in Nashville. She is also featured on the new documentary “C

With her latest album, In A Digital World, she captures the energy of their musicians in Nashville and America. Arielle, guitarist and producer, produced this album on recording ea

hey confusion d world."

rists.' Arielle has even
l to hit TV with an ap-
hville, and was recently
new Joe Bonamassa
Guitar Man."

release 'Analog Girl
world,' Arielle set out to
ergy of each city and
with stops in studios in
ustin, Texas. As a writ-
singer, when Arielle
album, she also insisted
ch song in one take to

achieve the human element so often lost in many modern recordings. Arguably that is no better realised than in her Fleetwood Mac-flavoured cut 'Inside & Outside.'

"When I was recording the new album 'Analog Girl In A Digital World', I thought this was the closest song in sound and production that I got to what my goal was in my head," reflects Arielle. "Fleetwood Mac's 'Rumours' meets something new. The song is about finding the balance between the external, dense physical world we live in, as well as countering it with the spiritual and emotional connection of love."

At times facing depression in being a child of the new millennium versus the boom of musical creativity that emerged decades before, Arielle is a young woman born in the wrong generation—constantly inspired by a time where things were done by hand, with a level of craft that could not be hidden behind technology. »

"I take and protect those principles inside my music," says Arielle. The new album takes you on

a journey through the trials, tribulations, and confusion of an old-school artist in a fast-paced world.

'Analog Girl In A Digital World' features her self-built guitar "Two-Tone," as well as her new signature guitar, "The Arielle," released by Brian May Guitars in March 2021. In true Arielle fashion, she will plant a tone-wood tree in honour of the first 24 guitars sold.

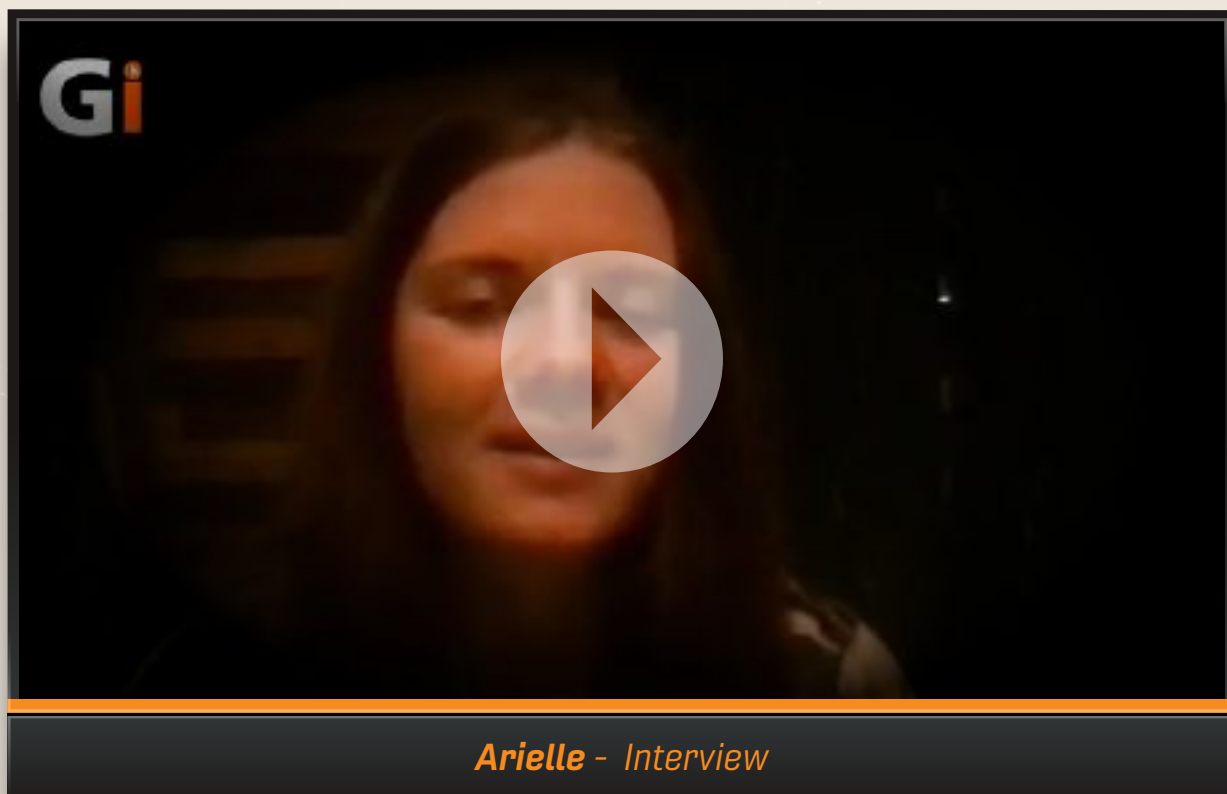
"This is the very first guitar that Brian May guitars has ever offered that is not based on my original Red Special. Designed by and named after Arielle, it's a new dimension," says Brian May. "To understand why this

guitar was irresistible to me, you have to hold her in your hands. The guitar is light, smooth and agile. She sings like a bird."

Continues Brian, "Arielle is an awesome musician. She is a truly phenomenal player, with an ability to produce the most beautiful tones as well as technical mastery. Of course, it is in the fingers, but I was keen to discover how she had fashioned her own instrument to achieve her sound.

We collaborated in making the Arielle a new mission to guitarists everywhere - to open up a new door to excellence!" »

The BMG Arielle guitar takes its cue from





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“This is the very first guitar that Brian May guitars has ever offered that is not based on my original Red Special. Designed by and named after Arielle, it's a new dimension.” - Brian May

Arielle's affection for classic 20th-century guitar design, rocking a sleek, retro-futuristic look, striking orange and blue livery, distinctive raised centre-strip, vintage two-piece pickguard, chrome hardware and contrasting switch plate, alongside choice elements from Dr May's storied home-spun creation - the distinctive 3-a-side headstock, familiar 24" scale, a trio of series wound, Tri-Sonic style pickups, and his famous phase switching system.

The result is an instant modern classic - “the Red Special in a parallel universe”, as the maestro proudly proclaims, takes Arielle's novel design to a whole new level and, of course, infused with a liberal

dose of RS DNA, delivers everything one should rightfully expect from a Brian May Guitar... impeccable design, superior quality, pro-spec construction, exceptional playability, and devastating tonal dexterity.

Striking Body Design

The dazzling, asymmetric angles of the BMG Arielle Guitar's lightweight body, at once timeless and forward-thinking, clearly pay homage to radical American automotive and electric guitar designs of the 1950s and '60s, with a distinctive raised centre strip increasing the body mass for enhanced sustain and resonance and a split, 3-ply parchment pickguard and eye-catching, two-tone di-

agonal finish completing the cool, vintage look.

The solid body is constructed from Limba (aka 'Korina' by which it is more commonly known within the US luthier community). In keeping with Arielle and Dr May's keen interest in utilising sustainable sources, the use of this attractive African tonewood recognises the importance and success of worldwide conservation programs; although considered severely threatened by over-exploitation in the first half of the last century, concerted efforts to preserve »

the species have seen Limba flourish well beyond its natural rainforest habitat, making its way into savannah areas



and even penetrating regional evergreen forests.

24" Scale Mahogany Neck

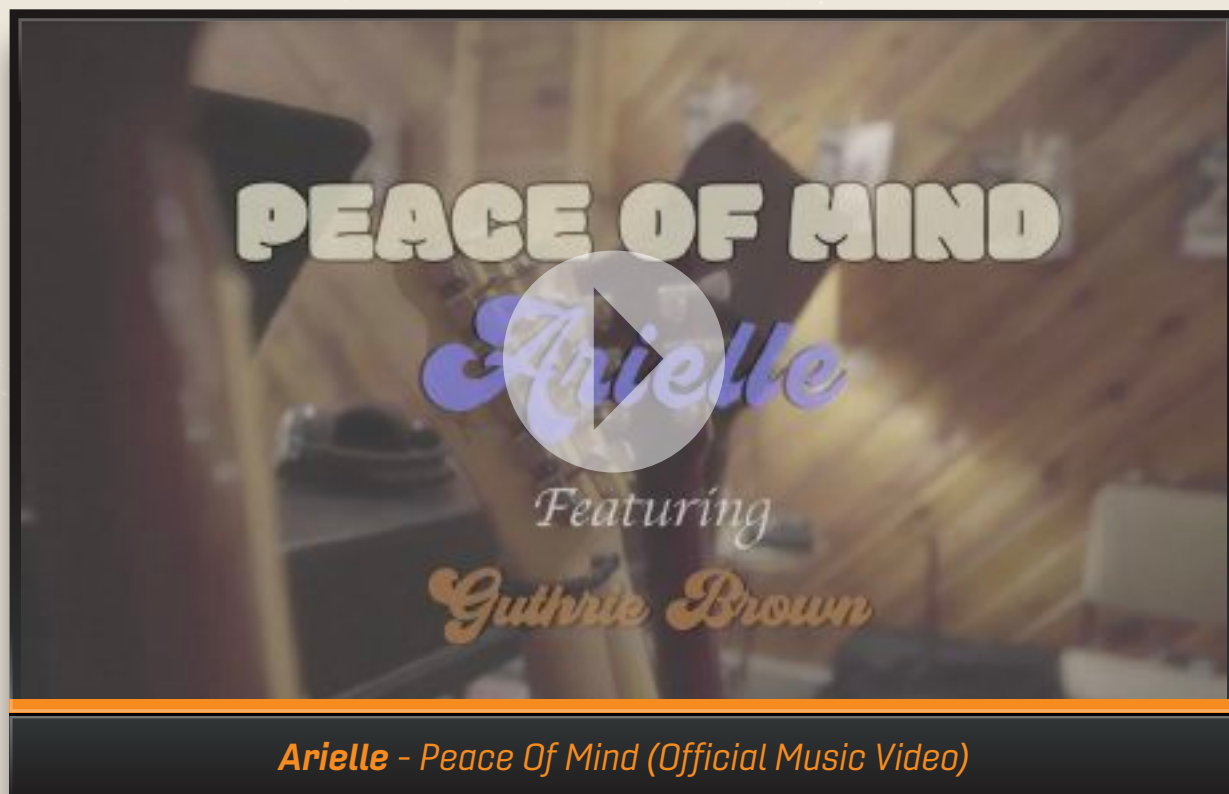
Employing the short 24" scale favoured by Brian on the original Red Special, the one-piece mahogany neck, in perfect balance with the lightweight body, has been engineered with a decidedly contemporary feel, featuring a generous 45mm nut width, comfortably spacious profile, and wonderfully smooth 24 fret ebony fingerboard with Arielle's choice of abalone diamond snowflake inlays in the traditional BM pattern.

BMG Tri-Sonic Style Pickups

Like the best-selling BMG Special, the Arielle features three BM branded Tri-Sonic style single-coil pickups. These modern replicas of the vintage '60s Burns units so fundamental to the Red Special's powerful and distinctive sonic character feature the same series wiring, retro-styling and magnet alignment as the originals. »

BM Switching System

Following Arielle's exacting specifications, the unique Brian May design switch



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system is provided by industry-leading electronics specialists Shin Chin. The six black DPDT switches, featuring high quality, silver-plated brass contacts and mounted on a 3-ply black control plate, engage each pickup individually as well as providing dedicated phase reversal, a familiar configuration that gives the Arielle Signature model the same astonishing tonal dexterity as the original Red Special itself.

Volume and tone are controlled by 250k pots with a Sprague 0.033 μ F 'Orange Drop' film capacitor delivering exceptional sonic purity, a nuanced

tonal roll-off sweep and - with either individual pickups or selected pairings - a pleasingly warm response without getting too muddy or bright.

Grover Tuners

The distinctive BM headstock sports chrome Grover 406 Series Mini Locking Rotomatic tuners. With an 18:1 gear ratio for exceptional accuracy plus an innovative internal "Locking Cam", these superb machine heads automatically secure the strings as they are brought to pitch, allowing for

super-fast changes and solid tuning stability without tremolo use.

Wilkinson Bridge

Continuing BM's tradition with veteran Brian Wilkinson, the bridge is fitted with his award-winning tremolo, a vintage design of the unit used on the original Red Special. With a modern, refined feel, offering one of the best of any fulcrum

able coupled with a sleek, low-profile surround to eliminate lateral saddle movement, the VWP offers superior comfort, stability, and performance.

Playability & Sounds

Versatile and bold, the heart of the sound is round, wide, warm, and rich, with clean, clear highs and crisp note articulation. Eminently capable of authentically delivering the hardest of rock or the most intimate dream-pop shimmer, the Arielle has clearly been engineered to be a brilliant, one-stop stage and studio workhorse.

There is a pleasing presence for blues and roots styles and a tight, focused bass response, whilst jazz players and country pickers will love the chiming clarity and twang, especially on out-of-phase settings, and the smooth, hollow tone of the neck pickup. Cranking up the gain, combining two or more pickups in phase, the broad TriSonic response and resonant Limba body give crunch chords ample room to breathe and allow lead licks and solos to project clearly and powerfully.

With a fast, modern radius neck, inviting 24" scale, a comfortable and balanced body shape, whether sitting or standing and a responsive, diverse tonal palette, this is an instrument designed to an endlessly rewarding joy to perform with.

"Arielle's playing reaches places I never knew existed," says Brian. "I believe this guitar will do the same."

Arielle's 'Analog Girl In A Digital World' is out now on all formats worldwide. »

ges, and ensuring rock-
ability, even with heavy

VWP Tremolo

IG's long association
itish engineer Trevor
BMG Arielle Guitar is
claimed VWP 2-point
ge-flavoured variant
on the BMG Special.
friction-free design
the smoothest actions
vibrato currently avail-

INTERVIEWS **ARIELLE**



Arielle – 'Analog Girl In A Digital World' Tracklist:

1. Dialup
2. Digital World
3. Peace of Mind
4. This Is Our Intervention
5. You're Still A Man
6. Inside & Outside
7. I'd Rather Be In England
8. Living In A Fortress
9. Reimagine Redefine



For more information on Arielle, please visit:
imarielle.com



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 PAUL GILBERT

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Paul
Gilbert



Tech Session

In this issue's Guitar Interactive Tech Session, **Sam Bell** deep dives into the sometimes intense, sometimes blues-filled, but always technically difficult guitar stylings of Mr Paul Gilbert. »

THOSE Those of you who have been following my work here at LickLibrary and Guitar Interactive Magazine will know that I am a massive fan of Paul Gilbert's playing. Paul is the eternal student of guitar playing and music in general. So even now, after three decades in the music business, he continues to develop his unique style of playing each year. When Jonathan (editor of Gi) approached me to put together a Tech Session in the style of Paul Gilbert, I jumped at the chance, and I wanted to find some of the fundamental ideas that

we can hear in Paul's music in the last 10 years. He has gone in a totally new direction of Blues/Fusion from his original hair metal/stadium rock days with Racer X and Mr Big. However, his technique and the way he visualises the fretboard hasn't changed, he has a method, and it works no matter what style he is playing.

For this Tech Session, I wanted to base the example on his material from his solo albums 'Silence Followed by a Deafening Roar' and 'Fuzz Universe'. I strongly feel these albums capture the widest angle



Paul Gilbert - Tech Session Performance

picture of Paul's influences and style. There are Classic Hard Rock inspired riffs, Funky Rhythms, Bluesy Phrasing and of course the Mind Melting Fast Passages that Paul started his long career with! As this is a Tech Session and Paul has some amazing technique, I am going to concentrate on 16th note and 16th note Triplet based examples. There is a melody/harmony section; however, please don't confuse this tech session as an example of how to write instrumental guitar music! Melody is important. Having said this, Paul's world-class playing is always melodic and interesting, no matter how fast or slow. His use of Rhythm within his faster phrases really sets him apart from all the other "Shedders" of his time.

Classical Music and Paul Gilbert's Guitar Phrasing:

Before I get into this tech sessions examples, it's important to bear in mind Paul's wide range of influences and how it affects his phrasing. One of the most notable Influences on Pablo's playing is Bach or classical music in general. Bach would often compose suits that were long strung out melodies using 16th note subdivisions, often basing the lines around chord movements and highlighting interesting notes in various subdivisions of the bar. These initial melodic contours would 'move' through the pieces

chord progression. This translates very well for Guitar Players, we can often take a sequence within one modular section of the fretboard and move it into other areas for new harmonic ideas. In this Tech Session I hope to demonstrate some basic examples of this concept in action. Let's dive in!

Tone:

Paul has been using Ibanez for over 30 years now, and I have also been using Ibanez! Just not as long. For this tech session I used the Bridge Humbucker on my AZ2204, I dialled in a fairly saggy high gain tone with the Laney IRT 30, the IRT features a pre-boost which works a bit like having a clean boost in front of your amp, this really helps with picking articulation, it speeds up the attack slightly. I used a 60mm Jim Dunlop Tortex Pick. I strongly feel in order to Play Pauls lines, thin picks work the best, it might take getting used to if you're a Jazz III person, but the tone, snap and articulation of a thin Tortex pick for me is the only way to go! Paul is also really into his modulation effects, perhaps most favourably the Phaser sound (probably inspired by his hero Van Halen!) it really helps the sound 'move around' it's not set to an aggressive level, it's just enough for the notes to bloom. Paul uses the MXR Phase 90. I don't own a Phaser but luckily I found a Moore » Mod Factory on a shelf somewhere in the

depths of Guitar Interactive HQ, it had a very useable Phaser function on it, so I used it!

Section A: String Skipping Arpeggios:

The intro to the tech session features a String Skipping Arpeggio motif, the motif moves through a couple of different arpeggios how-

ever, the layout of the patterns on the fret-board and picking do not change very much. This is an example of the Bach influence within Pauls Playing. If you're an avid fan of Paul Gilbert, you probably recognise the initial Arpeggio pattern in Bar 1. However, what I wanted to showcase here is that you can alter this basic pattern once »

you know where the intervals are (see video





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explanation) this way you can really get more out of a simple idea. Something Paul is an expert at!

Section B: Picking Triads/Sus Chords and a Classic 6's Run:

Something I've always loved about Paul's instrumental Guitar Playing is that he's not afraid just to riff out on single note lines for whole sections. This kind of part reminds me of something you'd hear the band Rush play. This section is built up of triad picking arpeggios with ornamentations that follow the Bm, A and G chord sequence of this section. In bar 10 we see our first fast picking run, I say picking but if we look closely we can see that out of each 6 note fragment the first 3 are hammer on's followed by 3 picked notes. I go into the details of this in the video. This style of run can be traced back to early Van Halen, it's safe to say that Paul has done his



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own thing with it and these runs are super simple and effective, they sound super awesome!

Section C: Bendy Melody:

This section is the only real ‘melody’ section in this tech session, and it is harmonised on the backing track. Ensure that your bends are intonated and even. Paul has a very precise and percussive way of phrasing his melodies. Paul is a child of the 70s, and it can often be heard influencing his melodies, this one reminds me of the band Boston.

Section D: More String Skipping, Octave Arpeggios and Fast Picking!!

Bars 15 through to 17 feature some more string skipping arpeggios, however this time we have a simpler ‘down and up’ pattern that follows the underlying Bm – A – G chord progression. In bar 18 we have another really common device that Paul uses to extend his arpeggios and phrases across the fretboard in a similar manner to how Piano Players move their arpeggios through the octaves. This is simply a D Major Triad, the first 3 notes of the run



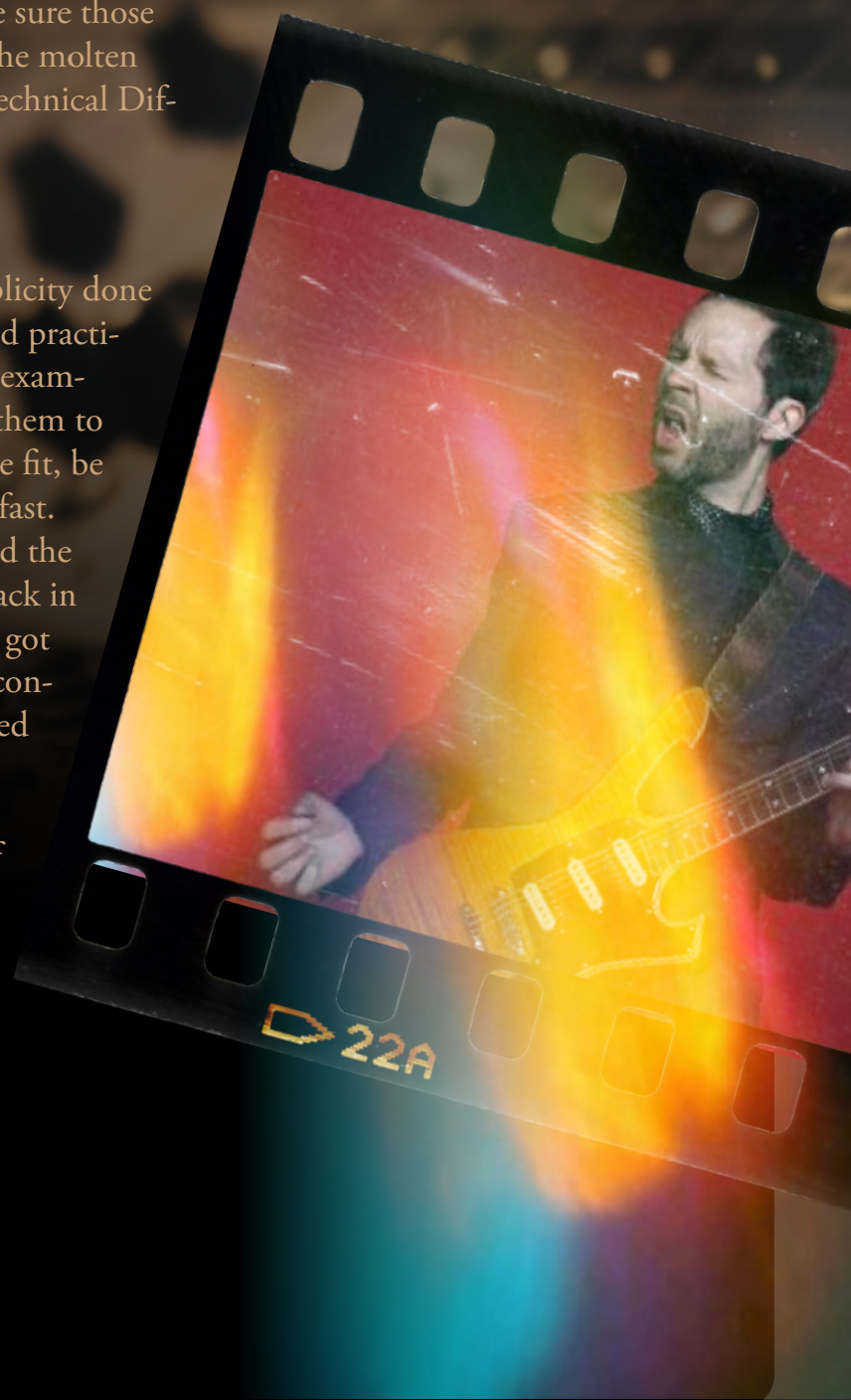
Paul Gilbert - Tech Session Part 2

are repeated two strings and two frets up each time before hitting the high D note on the 22nd fret (this was pretty tough to record!) The piece ends of course with another classic descending 6's line using 3 note per string fingering. This time we're picking every note, aim to keep it light and even. Make sure those 6's pop. This run is inspired by some of the molten hot lines you hear in his Racer X tune 'Technical Difficulties'

Summary:

So there we have it! Paul's playing is simplicity done sublimely, everything is solid, in time, and practical for live and recording use. Take these examples slowly, and most importantly apply them to your own playing in the ways that you see fit, be creative, you don't have to play this stuff fast. Focus on articulation and dynamics. I had the pleasure of Jamming with Paul Gilbert back in 2017, and one of the biggest takeaways I got from it was his articulation, and relaxed confidence on stage. His playing is a well-oiled machine that can be modified no matter what the musical situation. Paul is and always will be one of the great Masters of Rock Guitar!

END◀



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 an Aria Pro II DM-206

GI81

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About the **Aria Pro II DM-206**

Aria's highly regarded DM series initially launched back in the 1960s and has remained an offset legend thanks to a few choice appearances within popular culture. Continuing that great legacy sees the birth of the DM-206, which fully inherits the heritage and tradition of the original Aria DM; however, with some updated specs that features a combo of two mini-humbucker pickups and a wrap-around bridge, to name a couple.

Body: Basswood

Neck: Maple

Fingerboard: Rosewood

Number of Frets: 21

Scale Length: 628 mm (24-3/4")

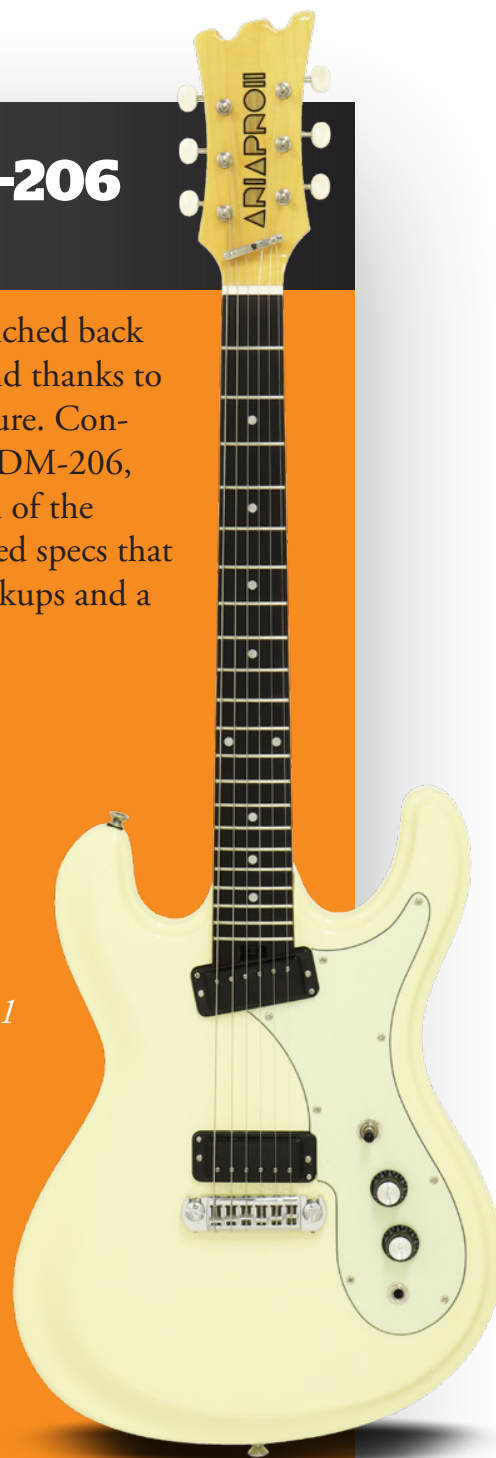
Pickups: AMH-1 (Mini Humbucker) x 2

Controls: Volume x 1, Tone x 1, PU Selector x 1

Tailpiece: Wilkinson

Hardware: Chrome

more information on Aria products,
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THE Reviews

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

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

GUITARS, AMPS
AND EFFECTS

PRS SE Zach Myers

Zach Myers, the guitarist for Shinedown, is a PRS player through and through. When he was given a chance to redesign his signature model, he jumped at the opportunity. The newly updated SE Zach Myers Semi-hollow-body electric guitar now features a maple neck, a matching flame maple headstock overlay, and his signature “Myers Blue” finish. **Nick Jennison** Tells us more.

THERE’S really something for everyone in the PRS catalogue right now. There are fire-breathing Floyd-loaded monsters for the shred brigade, all flavours of vintage from Kalamazoo to California and just about everything in between - at price points that range from mouth-watering to eye-watering. But is there a guitar for *everyone*? One instrument that will fit just about every player - and one that most players can afford?

Enter the SE Zack Myers. Since its initial release in 2011, this shorter scale, semi-hollow single cut has been immensely popular thanks to its classy looks, killer tones, but perhaps most importantly for being probably the best bang-for-buck guitar in the whole PRS range, earning it the nickname “the Private Stock SE”.

The updated 2021 model sticks largely with the same recipe as its predecessor, with a 24.5” scale length, semi-hollow mahogany-and-maple construction (with a gorgeous flamed

“Suffice to say; this guitar **is not just** a pretty face...”

maple veneer on the top) and a pair of SE 245 pickups. There are a few key differences, though, and the most obvious is the colour. “Myers Blue” looks absolutely stunning, with shades of the “Blue Matteo” and “Faded Blue Jean” finishes that set hearts ablaze back in the day. Set against the natural mahogany back and neck, it’s a look that reminds me of the guitars I’d lust over in guitar magazines in my teens.

Suffice to say; this guitar is not just a pretty face. As the signature guitar for Shinedown axeman Zach Myers, it’s a given that this guitar can deliver when it comes to the heavy stuff. But it’s actually a much more versatile instrument than you might expect. »



PRS SE Zach Myers

MSRP: (UK) £799 / (US) \$829

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The SE 245 pickups are fairly moderate in output and offer a lively and bouncy mid-range that's ideal for soulful lead lines and rich mid-gain crunch tones while still retaining enough air and clarity for soul comping and howling modern blues. It even does a great job with jazz lines (which is more than I can say for myself!). Perhaps it's my memory playing tricks on me, but I remember being lukewarm on the older SE 245 pickups (especially since the USA-made 245 is one of my favourite PRS pickups), but the ones in this guitar sound killer. Given Paul Reed Smith's current obsession with pickups, I wouldn't be surprised if there have been some tweaks

to the recipe, although it could just be down to the ever-increasing quality of east-Asian guitar manufacturing.

Another update is the bridge, which is PRS's updated adjustable stop tail. Sporting the same massive brass saddles found on the 594 bridge, this simple and solid design will allow you to use pretty much any string gauge you like and still intonate perfectly - something that can't be said for PRS's one-piece compensated stoptail, which performs perfectly with standard string gauges but can struggle with unusual or very heavy string sets. If you're a modern rock or metal player who »



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“In terms of playability, this guitar is as flawless as any of the SE models I’ve played.”

tunes down by more than a half step since you’ll need to retune the slinky 24.5” scale strings. Never mind in drop D or E.

In terms of playability, this guitar is as flawless as any of the SE models I’ve played. The Telecasters are a little off in that their immaculate finish creates a very low action. As I said, with a swift adjustment, I was able to coax a

ability, **this**
less as any
 s I've tried..."



re than a half step, this is invaluable
 d some pretty hefty strings to offset
 ale length even in standard tuning,
 o C.

lity, this guitar is as flawless as any
 ve tried. PRS do tend to set their
 n the stiff side, especially consider-
 aculate fretwork will usually toler-
 n with zero buzz or chokes. That
 djustment of the two bridge studs,
 a criminally forgiving setup out

of this guitar with no loss in tone or expressiveness. The wide fat neck shape is a favourite of mine, with enough meat for aggressive bends and thumb-bass chord work while still feeling fast and comfortable enough for even the most transgressive shred licks.

The PRS Zack Myers really pushes at the absolute limit of how much PRS you can get for your money. It's a beautifully made, versatile instrument that will look and sound at home in any musical setting.

END «

Ibanez ATZ 10

Andy Timmons Signature

Legendary guitarists like Andy Timmons need access to lots of tones, and that's precisely what his signature Ibanez ATZ100 provides. Benefiting from extreme stability and playability, courtesy of an S-Tech Wood roasted maple neck and fingerboard, the ATZ's back shape ensures maximum playing comfort.

Nick Jennison takes a closer look at the ATZ100's top-shelf feature set.

THERE'S a running joke here at Gi HQ that you could put Andy Timmons's name on pretty much anything, and we'd buy it. Such is the reverence we have for Mr Timmons that we've already agreed to own a signature bath mat, a signature extractor fan and a signature set of hair tongs. So it's probably good for our wallets, feng shui and collective sanity that Andy only puts his name on the absolute finest of guitar gear.

The ATZ100 is the latest iteration of Andy's long-standing signature guitar line from Japanese juggernauts Ibanez and celebrates the 20th anniversary of their relationship. While there are some clear visual references to the classic AT models of old, this guitar is actually a re-skin of the hugely popular AZ series - with a few tweaks to fit Timmons's preferences.

Perhaps most notably, it features three Di-Marzio Cruiser pickups, with the angled bridge pickup taking the place of the AT-1

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

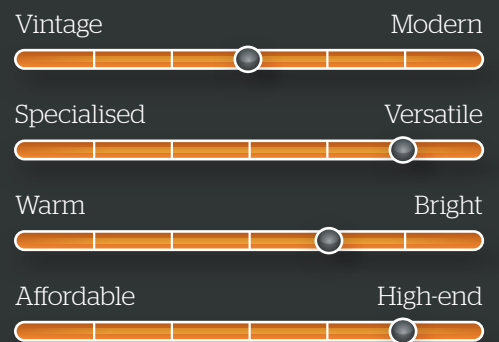
humbucker found in Andy's other signature models. You'd be forgiven for looking at these twin-bladed pickups and thinking "Hot Rails", but they're actually very far removed from that kind of sound. They're smooth, fat and even with a dash of 'stratty' character without being excessively "single-coily". »



Ibanez ATZ100 Andy Timmons Signature

MSRP: (UK) £2299 / (US) \$2799

The Breakdown



For fans of

"Strat-but-fat" tones.

Modern playability.

Not having to deal with hum.

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.ibanez.com/eu/>



Unsurprisingly, single notes sound huge and authoritative, while clean chord work is positively piano-like with a rich and extended low-end fullness that you won't find in vintage single coils.

You may be thinking, "hold on, what about that really 'stratty' Timmons clean tone?". Well, dear reader, that tone is present in

spades if you know where to find it. The secret to this tone is in the volume pot and the fairly aggressive treble bleed capacitor wired to it. The tone actually gets quite markedly brighter as you roll the volume control down, and if you run this setup into a full-range overdrive like the Blues Driver that Timmons is known for using,

"If you'd prefer a **slinkier play** feel, then that would be very easy to achieve..."



you'll be in single-coil heaven but with none of the drawbacks.

On to playability then, and as you'd expect from an Ibanez AZ, this guitar plays beautifully. The roasted maple neck is satin perfection, with beautifully rolled edges and 22 immaculate stainless steel frets. I personally prefer a taller fret profile, and these are right up my street, with plenty of room to get under the string for maximum

expressive control. That said, there's quite a bit of fight in the factory setup, and it's definitely not a "shred machine" right out of the box. The same is true of the trem, which comes set up flush to the body and with five springs providing a ton of tension. Of course, this is Andy's preferred setup, and he's known for being a very "physical" player. If you'd prefer a slinkier play feel, then that would be very easy to achieve. »





The ATZ100 represents a modern update to the AT line, while also being the most “vintage” AZ to date. If you’re looking for an instrument with cutting edge modern playability and build quality, but with more of a vintage vibe and aesthetic than is typical of “modern” guitars, the ATZ100 is the perfect choice. Oh, and it nails that Andy Timmons tone, and that alone makes it worth the asking price!

END «

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Blue

Shell
Pink

Surf
Green

Vintage
White



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EFFECTS AND AMPLIFICATION



moeraudio.com

Blackstar ID:Core 40 V3 40w Combo

Billy Campbell reviews Blackstar's ID:Core 40 combo—the ultimate practice amp and an essential single-handed session tool. Featuring a sleeker editor, a powerful new cab simulator, and even more immersive stereo FX make the third generation of this Blackstar classic a must-have. Choose from six inspiring amp voices that run the gamut from classic cleans to scorching leads. Here's Billy to tell us more.

THE latest revision in Blackstar's ID:Core line, Today we're looking at the 40 watt (2x20 watt) ID: CORE V3, with all the tone and tech upgrades you could want in a compact, portable amp. Getting a wide range of modern and vintage tones in what Blackstar is calling Super Wide Stereo, achieved by the two 6.5" proprietary speakers, with re-voiced and enhanced FX, and a wide range of connectivity options for recording, editing and even live-streaming.



You can now use your ID:CORE V3 direct into a streaming compatible device, to harness the amp's powerful and expansive tones and effects via the top panel jack and a TRRS 3.5mm cable. Blackstar's free Architect software can also be accessed via USB 2.0 for deeper editing, patch management, and the Cab Rig Lite cabinet simulator (which allows you to control elements like cabinet, microphone, and room environment) as well as online patch sharing. The USB port also allows you to use the amp as a low-latency 4-channel direct recording interface. Also included on the left side of the panel is a very convenient Cab-Rig/Headphones jack, for silent practice with high quality tone.

Top panel controls give you easy access to the ID:CORE V3's six enhanced voices, ranging from pristine cleans with no breakup, pushed British-flavored crunch, to over the top modern metal tones. Adjusting the tonal signature of each voice by using the ISF tone knob (Infinite Shape Feature) is wide-ranging and intuitive. This takes you from an American type character with a tight bottom end, and more aggressive mid-range in the counterclockwise position, to a more British flavoured character with more bloom between notes and slightly more pronounced mid-range in the fully clockwise position.

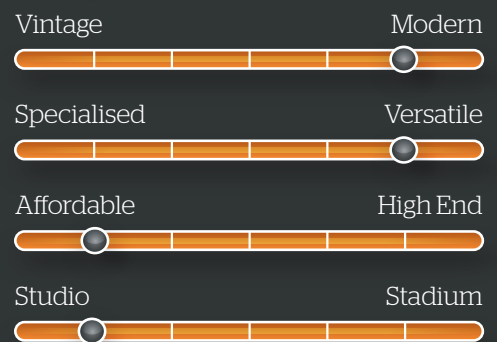
You can also control and program the amp's built-in effects. This includes an array of modulation effects, such as Phaser, Chorus / Flanger, Envelope Filter and Tremolo. Delay options include: Linear, Analog, Tape and Multi. Reverb variations spanning from: Room, Hall, Spring and Plate reverb effects. All adjustable via the top panel Type and Level knobs, as well as an independent Tap Tempo button. You can access the on-board tuner by simply holding down the 'REV' button. »



Blackstar ID:Core 40 V3 40w Combo

MSRP: (UK) £153 / (US) \$199

The Breakdown



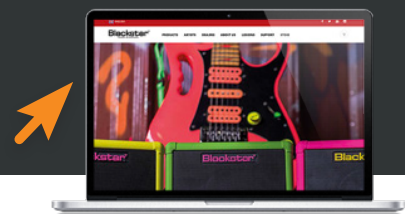
For fans of

Great portable tones

Excellent build quality

Bargain price

For more information, please visit:
blackstaramps.com/uk





Blackstar ID:Core 40 V3 40w Combo

The ID:CORE V3 offers options for expanding control and portability by way of the rear recessed carrying handle, a top panel jack for connecting an external foot switch, or even add the PB-1 Power Bank, so you can use the amplifier anywhere.

With all the tones, effects, volume, and connectivity options you can think of, the 40 watt ID:CORE V3 makes the perfect small-sized combo for any level of musician. Retailing at \$199 USD, Blackstar makes this amplifier extremely accessible. Stop by your local Blackstar dealer and check one 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.



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BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition

What the BluGuitar AMP1 did for classic amp tones, the BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition does for modern metal amp tones. This isn't a tweaked version of the acclaimed AMP1 – it's a new build, designed from scratch for merciless metal guitar tone. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

BRAINCHILD

of amp designer, engineer and guitarist Thomas Bug, the BluGuitar AMP1 was a genuine paradigm shift in the world of guitar amplifiers. It offered players a highly tweakable 4 channel, 100w amp with a full valve preamp section in a pedal format. It was an overnight success with touring professionals and weekend warriors alike, thanks to its unrivalled portability, ease of use and killer tones.



That said, the original “silver” AMP1 had a distinctly “classic” voicing. It certainly wasn’t lacking gain, with tons of saturation on tap, but the tone was perhaps a little “old school” for more aggressive styles. Enter the new Mercury and Iridium editions of the AMP1 - tweaked versions of the original to suit players with different tastes. While the Mercury is tighter and more aggressive than the original “Silver” version, the Iridium is pure balls-to-the-wall metal in a sexy, none-more-black package.

Offering a high-headroom clean channel and three distortion channels with independent tone and volume controls, an on-board boost to further tighten and saturate your tone, two flavours of gate and a lush digital reverb, the AMP1 Iridium is a veritable Swiss army knife of heavy tones. To be honest, it’s hard to imagine needing anything else for a metal gig, except maybe a wah, a tuner and delay - which you can plumb in via the FX loop.

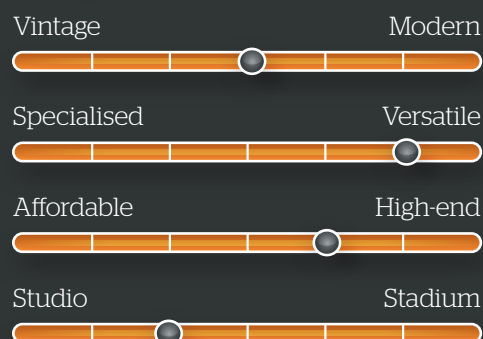
Metal tones are deceptively hard to get right. There needs to be ample low end, but it has to be tight and articulate. The highs need to bite hard, but they can’t be abrasive. The mids need to be focussed, but not pinched and honky. I’m happy to report that the AMP1 Iridium strikes this delicate balance superbly well across all three of its overdrive channels. Each offers a different dynamic feel and compression: “vintage” is perfect for classic 80s metal, while “classic” is open and articulate and “modern” is tight and focussed. The trim pots on the side of the pedal make it very easy to tailor the sound of each mode to your tastes. I found that boosting the highs on one mode for rhythms and rolling off the highs and boosting the volume of another for leads worked very well indeed. You can switch between any of these modes using either MIDI or the optional Remote1 footswitch. »



BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition

MSRP: (UK) £749 / (US) \$849

The Breakdown



For fans of

Vintage tones with a modern twist

100w in a tiny format.

Excellent boost, reverb and gate

For more information, please visit:
bluguitar.com



The clean channel, by contrast, is extremely clean and headroomy, with a distinct mid-range scoop that will help even the most congested of humbuckers to sparkle. It's ideal for arpeggiated clean parts and eerie ambient parts, but you might want to look elsewhere if you need broken-up tweed tones.

The three onboard effects are excellent, and tuned perfectly to work with the sounds on the AMP1 Iridium. The boost is similar to the ubiquitous Tube Screamer, but with a slightly more aggressive upper midrange presence - it's ideal for taking solo tones

over the top, or for further tightening up the already tight tones this amp offers. The reverb is rich and immersive with warm highs and clear lows, and it works equally well to add space to clean and lead tones. It's activated by the onboard reverb footswitch, and this switch also sets the gate to "soft" - this is a super clever feature, allowing you to use the "metal" gate for tight staccato passages and switching straight to the sustain-preserving "soft" mode for reverb-laden leads.

Of course, all of this is no good if you can't be heard, and the AMP1 Iridium delivers



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

here in spades. The poweramp reconfigures to offer a full 100w through either 8 or 16ohm cabs, and it can get brutally loud if you need to. There’s also a recording out for running direct, which offers analogue speaker simulation that can be defeated if you’d prefer to use your own IRs. »



BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition



The BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium offers the kind of tone, attack and versatility you'd expect from a big heavy 4-channel amp head, but in a pedalboard format. If you're a touring musician, the portability is a godsend, but even if you're not, this little amp offers some of the most convincing metal tones I've heard in a long time for a fraction of the cost of most high-gain amps. Very highly recommended!

END◀

IF IT DOESN'T HAVE SANSAMP™ IT'S NOT A FLY RIG®



Fly Rig 5 v2



Richie Kotzen
RK5
Signature
Fly Rig v2



Paul Landers
PL1
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Fly Rig



Acoustic/
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FLY RIG
v2

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AMT Stonehead SH-100-4R

Pushing things to new heights, AMT introduces the StoneHead SH-100-4R Guitar Amp in their words—"the gold standard." But how good is it? **Rodney McG** gives us the full bre

THE AMT Stonehead SH-100-4R is an impressive feat of audio technology, being a 100-watt amplifier with four channels contained completely in a single rack space. Boasting more features than even many full-size 100-watt tube heads, the Stonehead features a clean, crunch, lead one and lead two-channel, each one having distinct options and not sharing an eq, a common drawback on many tube heads.

There are unique features throughout, like the voicing dial available on the Clean and Lead one channel, allowing you to dial in the tonal characteristics of darker amps like a Fender Bassman or Mesa Boogie head, as well as brighter and sharper units like the Marshall heritage of amps. There's also a selection switch for the power section that allows you to move between 6L6 and EL 34 tube emulation. The power section is surprisingly accurate and gives an excellent reproduction of a true tube amp power section.

Another interesting feature of the channels available in the dry and fat switch on the Lead 2 channel. This allows you to get a very sharp and aggressive, tight style tone similar to what you might get from a VHT, or similar amps. Putting it in the Fat setting gives a larger, somewhat



lifier, the company's third approach to –in
akdown.

looser and more saturated feel like you would expect from a Bogner or Mesa style amp. The amount of Versatility available on top of all the other features with just that switch makes it a unit that really doesn't have any clear competitors.

No stone has been left unturned when it comes to connections either. It's fully midi capable and has an effects loop with blend, a preamp out for using with recording or going to slave to power amps, a power amp in allowing you to use external preamps, and a balanced line out for using an ear monitors or going to a front-of-house PA that already has a cab sim on it.

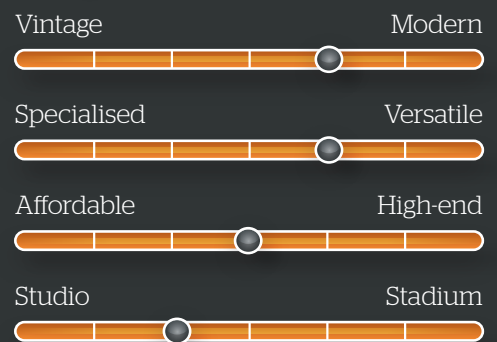
Having an available option to allow you to go completely cabless or not have to mic your cabinet from the stage is an impressive option in such »



AMT Stonehead SH-100-4R

MSRP: (UK) £TBC / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Rack-mounted gear

High-Quality tones

Solid build quality

For more information, please visit:
amtelectronics.com



a small unit. The number of features packed into the single rack space is surprising, considering that many full-sized heads don't have anywhere near the number of channels, independent EQs, or routing capability that this one rack-mount unit has.

Last but not least is a variable output switch that allows you to go from 100 watt, to 20 watts, to 2 watts. This makes the unit the perfect choice for small

practice setups at home and smaller gigs where larger volume but not overwhelming power is needed. Finally, you can also take the same unit and step up to multiple cabinets or a full stack for large shows. The stone head is a completely unique option that has all bases covered. If you're looking for new amps, this should definitely be on your list, especially at its low price point.

END «





Eric Stet's Gibson ES335 with Stop-Tail Stetsbar

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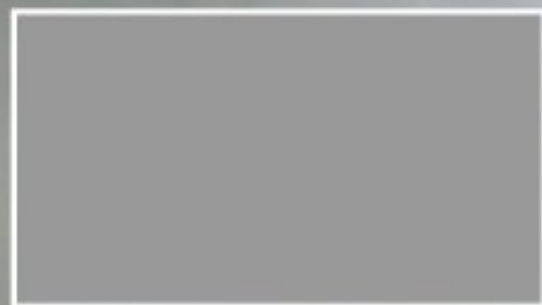
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No Mods, No changes

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

Nick Jennison
Guitar Interactive



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Line 6 Helix Stomp XL

An expanded version of the compact HX Stomp floor processor, the Line 6 HX Stomp XL carries the Helix pedigree* but ups the ante by providing eight switches, enhanced MIDI capabilities, and more. Like the HX Stomp, the HX Stomp XL serves up to eight blocks – amps, cabs, and stomps – per preset for greater sonic flexibility. Here's Nick Jennison to tell us more.

MODELLING OGs Line 6 launched their highly critically acclaimed Helix platform in 2015. “It’s too expensive!!” came the cry (despite being significantly more affordable than its competitors). Thus came the LT. “I just want the effects”, came the cry. Boom - HX Effects. “Make it smaller!!” came the cry. The HX Stomp was born... and what did folk say? “OK, not THAT small”...



XL boasts the same award-winning Helix family and an intuitive pedal editing mode. Like the HX Stomp set, and adds a fourth snapshot per preset for even

While there's no pleasing some people, Line 6 are giving it the old college try. The HX Stomp XL is essentially the HX Stomp (a pared-down Helix with all of the same sounds but in a tiny enclosure) with more footswitches. Yes, that's literally it. And for lots of guitar players, it's perfect. Hear me out on this.

The HX Stomp is absolutely ideal for players who don't really do a great deal of footswitching. Perhaps they use one sound for their whole gig, or they use the HX Stomp as part of a larger MIDI pedalboard. Sure, you CAN operate it with your feet, but it's fiddly. By contrast, the full-size Helix is ideal for switching on the fly, but it's a substantial investment in both money and space, especially if you intend to use it alongside other pedals. The HX Stomp XL is sort of the "goldilocks" Helix - enough footswitches to be practical, but still small and affordable.

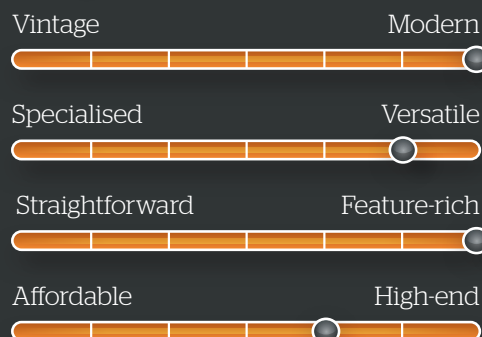
While there are a few functionality compromises compared to its big brother, one area where the HX Stomp XL absolutely does not fall short is in sound. The amp and effect models within are exactly the same as those featured in the full-fat Helix, and they sound and feel every bit as great as ever. What you do lose out on is in some of the processing power, meaning you won't be able to run long chains of DSP-heavy effects, and some of the I/O, such as XLR outs and external amp switching. »



Line 6 Helix Stomp XL

MSRP: (UK) £570 / (US) \$749

The Breakdown



For fans of

Helix tones and flexibility

Footswitches

Portability

For more information, please visit:

uk.line6.com



The latter is a bummer, but if you have a MIDI amp that can respond to the PC commands the HX Stomp XL sends, you can work around it.

The workflow in the HX Stomp XL is perhaps the most straightforward out of all the Helix models, with the combination of the capacitive footswitches and the Stomp's elegant UI making for a surprisingly slick and pleasant experience - even for someone like myself who hasn't touched a Helix in at least two years.

There's not a whole lot that can be said about the tones in this unit, other than to say that

they sound like a Helix. If you know even the first thing about amp modelling, you'll know what a ringing endorsement that is. Aside from the excellent amp and cab models, Helix has some of the absolute best effects in the game, with the usual standouts being the overdrives, modulations and the gorgeous updated reverbs. There are also some very convincing "utility" effects such as Poly Capo, DoubleTake and Poly Pitch, and while you can't run as many of these types of blocks on the HX Stomp XL as you can on the larger models, these effects are still available to you and function in exactly the same way. »



Line 6 Helix Stomp XL

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Manson x Cort®

Guitar
EDITOR'S
CHOICE

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In many ways, the HX Stomp XL occupies the “sweet spot” in the Helix range. It’s not as intimidating from a functionality, financial or physical size perspective as the larger models, but it’s not as “fiddly” as the Stomp, which really requires some external gear to get the best out of it. If you’re looking for an entry point into the Helix range, or you’re frustrated with the one you have because it’s either too big and fancy or too small and fiddly, this is the Helix for you.

END «

“If you know even the first thing about amp modelling, you’ll know what a **ringing endorsement** that is...”





Carl Martin The Strip Octa-Switch

Nicknamed The Strip, the fourth version of the popular Carl Martin Octa-Switch is one of most the compact yet advanced pedalboard switchers going. Just as with its predecessors, the signal path has an all-analogue design to make sure the original sound of your pedals is retained in full. The Octa-Switch sets players up with eight true-bypass FX loops that can be programmed across an equal number of banks and are backed by impedance-free, gold-plated relays. **Nick Jennison** reviews.

THE loop switcher has become a widely accepted part of the “guitar gear canon”, with the kind of technology that was once the sole preserve of unobtainable Bradshaw rigs being readily available in every guitar store in the land.

There are two distinct schools of thought when it comes to these handy devices: one group of uses wants every feature under the sun in their loop switcher, with complex MIDI implementation, parallel signal paths,

hi-res displays etc; the other (much, much larger) group craves simplicity and ease of use above all else. While I find myself in the former camp, it’s very easy to see where the latter are coming from.

The Carl Martin Octa-Switch “The Strip” is very much a loop switcher for guitar players who crave simplicity, but with some crucial features that many “bare-bones” loop switchers lack, such as MIDI, external switching, selectable outputs and an instant access mode.



Like the previous generations of Octa-Switch, it sports eight presets (which Carl Martin somewhat confusingly referred to as “banks”), with each preset offering instant recall of any combination of the eight true bypass loops. With the touch of a switch, you can go instantly from (for example) an overdrive, phaser and reverb in loops 1, 5 and 8 to a distortion and a delay in loops 3 and 7 - or any other combination that takes your fancy.

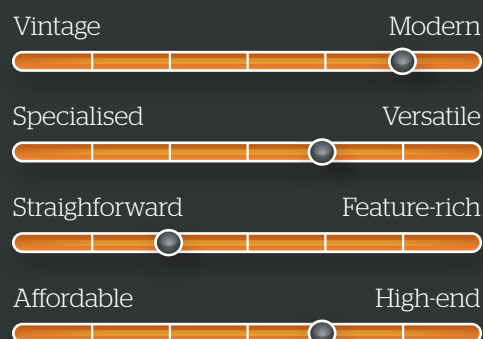
While previous Octa-Switches have been programmed using matrixes of 8 dip-switches, meaning pedal combinations couldn't be easily tweaked on the fly, “The Strip” has an instant access mode that allows you to add any of the eight loops to whatever preset you're using at the touch of a switch. If you like the resulting combination, you can hit the store button, and whatever combination of loops you have set up will be saved as a preset. It's super easy to create presets this way, but a slight criticism I have of this method is that you can't “save” a preset using your feet (for example, by pressing and holding the instant access switch) - you have to bend down and press the “store” button. »



Carl Martin The Strip Octa-Switch

MSRP: (UK) £455 / (US) \$499

The Breakdown



For fans of

Pedals

Simplicity

Saving the dance moves for during the guitar solo

For more information, please visit:
carlmartin.com



Not exactly a deal-breaker, but an inconvenience nonetheless.

“The Strip” also supports the four-cable method, where some effects are run in front of the amp and others are in the amp’s effects loop - a must for players like myself who rely primarily on amp gain for their tone. Loops 6-8 have their own input and output jacks, which makes configuring your rig this way very simple, and the quality of the relays mean you won’t lose any tone in the process.

As far as switching goes, there’s a very rudimentary MIDI output, sending program changes 1-8 corresponding to the eight presets on the Octa-Switch. You can’t change

these messages, and the channel is fixed to channel 1, but for most guitar players, this will be more than sufficient. There are also two assignable outputs and four external switches, all of which are assigned using Carl Martin’s familiar “dip-switch” matrixes. All of this means that with a single stomp, you can change which pedals are active, switch presets on a MIDI pedal, switch channels on your amp, and even switch which amp you’re sending the signal to!

Other features include a switchable 500k Ohm input buffer to prevent signal loss (I’m surprised it’s not a 1Meg buffer, but these guys know what they’re doing, so I’ll trust their judgement here!), a switch for either »



Carl Martin The Strip Octa-Switch



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mute or bypass, and most importantly - horizontally placed jack sockets! That might not seem like much, but vertically aligned jacks on a loop switcher make fitting standard patch cables a nightmare, meaning you either have to spring for expensive “solderless” cables or sacrifice a ton of pedalboard space to make room for straight 1/4” jack plugs. Not so on the Octa-Switch, thankfully!



While it's still very much a "simple" loop switcher, the Octa-Switch "The Strip" offers enough modern functionality to satisfy the needs of almost every guitar player. It's housed in a rugged metal enclosure that will easily withstand the rigours of the road, and operating it is a piece of cake. If you need a loop switcher (and you do trust me), this is one very worthy of your consideration.

END «

"If you need a loop switcher (and you do trust me), this is **one very worthy** of your consideration..."

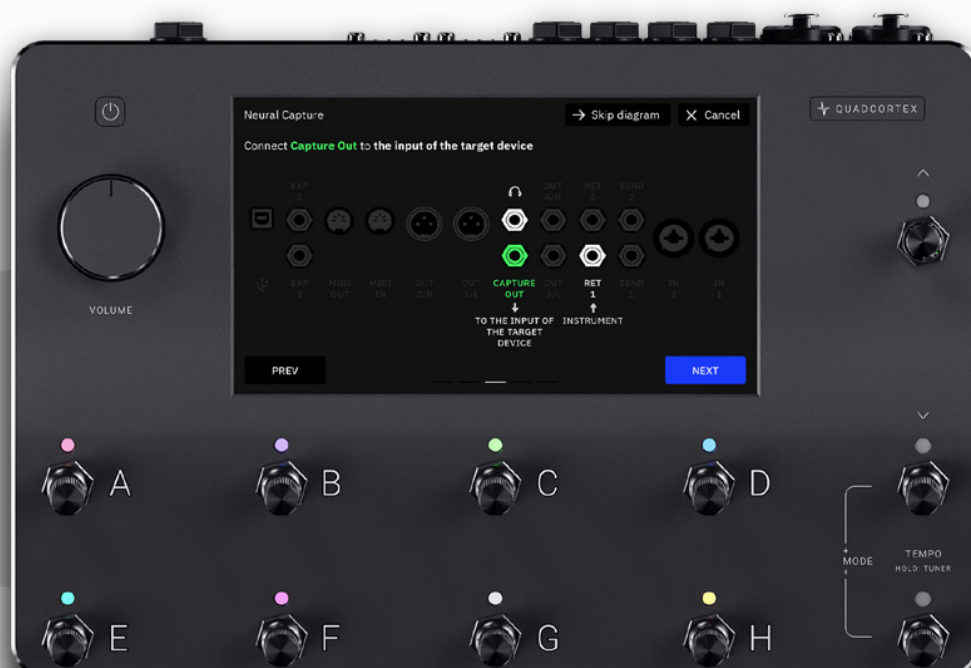


Neural DSP Quad Cortex

The Quad Cortex floor processor from Neural DSP fuses high-precision studio guitar and bass tones with real-world gigging flexibility. This slim, self-contained floor processor is powered by Quad-Core SHARC DSP and Neural's proven sound-modelling technology to bring today's players the ultimate in grab-and-go session accessibility. Inside, more than 50 amps, 1,000 cabs, and 70 stompboxes serve as building blocks for crafting your favourite rigs.

Nick Jennison tells us more.

IF you've been in this industry long enough, you'll've seen the waves of "amp-replacement" guitar tech come and go: each claiming to be the solution to the woes of the valve amp user. First came solid-state amps; then digital rack units, the infamous "kidney bean," all culminating in the latest crop of modellers/profilers. As a bit of a "modelling sceptic", even I have to admit that this current generation is pretty close to the real thing.



Imagine my surprise when plugin mavens Neural DSP announced they were venturing into the world of hardware amp modelling with the Quad Cortex. The queues to test the beta version at NAMM 2019 extended around the block, but when I finally had a chance to sit down and try it on the Sunday afternoon (literally while the stand was being disassembled!), I was in full cynic mode ...and you know what? I was floored. The feel, tone and response was staggering. I knew right then that I was dealing with something special. Fast forward 18 months (and a global pandemic) and finally, it was time to review a production model. Was it as good as I remembered? In a word, yes.

Ok, let's zoom out a bit here and talk about what we're looking at. The Neural DSP Quad Cortex is a floor-format amp modeller with the ability to create "captures" of your amp, pedals, speaker cabinet, etc. "Sounds like pretty much every other modeller on the market then", right? Well, there are a few key differences that set the Quad Cortex apart from the crowd. First of all, the processing power under the hood is way, way in excess of anything else out there short of a high-end studio computer. Running out of DSP is a common problem with modern modellers, but with four of the most powerful processors available providing the juice, you'll never bump up against this with the Quad Cortex.

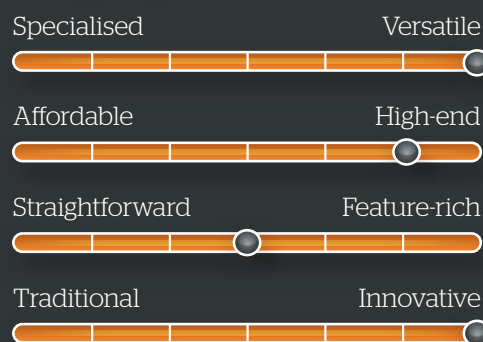
Second, and more interesting in my opinion, is the way the "capture" function works. On the surface, it's pretty similar - you connect the Quad Cortex to your amp/pedal/microwave etc, it plays the sounds of whale song and dial-up modems through your gear and records the result. What sets it apart is the way the resulting sound is captured and interpreted by the Quad Cortex. It uses a neural network that operates in



Neural DSP Quad Cortex

MSRP: (UK) £1599 / (US) \$1849

The Breakdown



For fans of

Supremely lifelike amp capture

Processing power

Slick UIs

For more information, please visit:
neuraldsp.com/





a very similar manner to human hearing to decode the Dr Who noises into something that sounds like your rig, and the result is unbelievably natural. The machines are coming for us.

As if that wasn't enough, because there's so much power on tap, you can have multiple captures active in a single preset. You don't have to capture your entire overdrive > compressor > amp > cabinet signal chain in one go: you can capture the individual elements of your rig and put them together in any way you'd like. If you want to have the same fuzz capture feeding two different

amp captures, that's no problem. Why not make it four? Each with their own stereo reverbs? The Quad Cortex won't break a sweat.

If that sounds a bit like hard work, don't worry. The Quad Cortex comes with a host of factory captures that sound and feel incredible. I've owned a number of the amps they've captured and playing these captures felt so lifelike that I'm confident I could tell you where the knobs were set. But if amp models are more your speed, there are a ton of those available too: all based on Neural DSP's award-winning plugins. It's

“The Quad Cortex comes with a host of factory captures that **sound and feel incredible...**”

also a dream to edit, thanks to the gorgeous touch-screen display and the clever footswitches that double as encoders. If delving through menus has put you off modellers in the past, fear not: if you can operate a smartphone, you can operate the Quad Cortex.



Neural DSP Quad Cortex



On to the effects, and this is where the Quad Cortex falls slightly short, in my opinion. Don't get me wrong, the included modulation effects, delays, and reverbs sound very good, but they aren't as "next-gen" sounding as the amp sims and captures are. There's also a significantly smaller selection than you'd get with some competitors. That said, it's very important to remember that this is a very new unit from a very new company - there are no doubt going to be regular updates, with more toys for you to play with.

I was a little concerned that I was too hyperbolic in the video portion of this review when I announced "the future is here", but on reflection, I stand by that statement. I've never played a modeller that has sounded and felt as convincing as the Quad Cortex, and I've never been so tempted to retire my amps to the studio. If it can convince a crusty rocker like me, I'm certain you'll dig it too. I highly recommended.

END «

Studio to Sta

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

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

GI81

PLAY IT - RECORD
IT - PERFORM IT



Xvive U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System

Xvive's U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System in-ear monitor wireless system providing additional high-quality monitoring. It works brilliantly, no matter the band-wide mix. Pair this receiver and transmitter and take your live performance to astounding clarity and reliable wireless architecture, this portable, affordable system is a must-have for each and every time. **Tom Quayle** and **Nick Jennison** tell us more.

GOOD monitoring is essential both on the stage and in the studio – ask any musician and they'll tell you that the difference between an okay gig or session and a great one can often be down to the monitoring setup on hand. With stages getting quieter and technological improvements year on year, in-ear monitoring is becoming more and more popular these days, meaning good wireless in-ear monitoring solutions are becoming an essential part of every live and studio musician's toolkit.

In the world of wireless in-ear monitoring people are generally looking for accurate sound, great wireless range, low interference, and long battery life. Traditionally these requirements have come at a steep price point, but the Xvive U4 In-Ear Monitoring Wireless System aims to change that with its superb feature set at an affordable price point.

Most wireless in-ear systems are based on small, pocket-sized receivers paired to a large transmitter base, often half or full sized rack units with delicate, flimsy antennas that are both heavy and awkward to transport. The Xvive U4 offers the most compact wireless IEM system we've ever seen, more akin to some of the wireless microphone or guitar setups on the market. It features a tiny receiver and incredibly compact transmitter that functions as an XLR connector that plugs directly into your chosen output with the wireless transmitter unit attached to the back. Xvive include an XLR to Jack convertor in the package for those that aren't using XLR as their output of choice. It's a very tidy and compact solution but does stick out quite a way from whatever it's plugged into, giving cause for concern if someone were to walk into it, potentially damaging either the transmitter itself or whatever its plugged into. A short extension cable would solve »

em is the perfect solution when it comes to
er whether you're using it for an individual or
rmances to the next level! Boasting sound of
able option ensures excellent performance



Xvive U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System

MSRP: (UK) £199 / (US) \$229

The Breakdown

Straightforward Feature-Rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-End



Studio Stage



For fans of

A good monitoring experience on stage

The same in the studio

Reliable gear

For more information, please visit:

xviveaudio.com





this problem and the compact nature of the setup is certainly very welcome as long as you won't be bumping into it.

Both units are incredibly well built to stand the rigours of gigging or travelling and could be thrown in a gig bag with confidence thanks to all metal construction and drop proof sturdiness with no controls or vital components sticking out

from the design or feeling fragile. Operation is very easy with only the necessary controls for channel switching, volume and power plus the ability to switch between Line and Aux levels depending on what you're plugged into.

The U4 is a 2.4Ghz device with 6 wireless channels available. For some users this may be a concern given how crowded

“Both units are **incredibly well built** to stand the rigours of gigging or travelling ...”

the 2.4Ghz space is with consumer devices, but we experienced no drop out or interference issues in a studio environment with multiple smart 2.4Ghz plugs, phones, iPad, computers and various smart enabled devices in the same room. Your mileage may vary of course and if

you regularly play in very large venues you may be better off with a higher bandwidth 5Ghz device. For most users the U4's 2.4Ghz operation will more than suffice and offer great stability with the 6 channels on offer. »

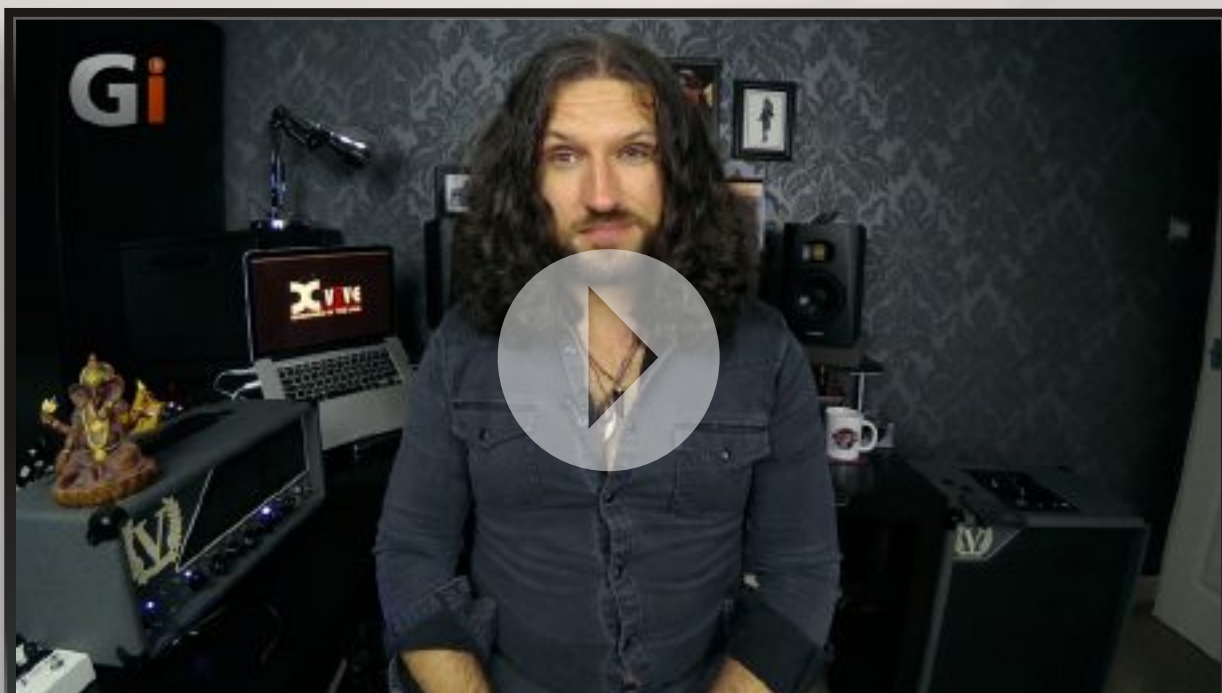


Xvive U4 Wireless Review - Tom Quayle

Latency and sound quality are superb for such an affordable setup. Xvive quote 5ms of latency for the U4 and our own tests, measuring the figure in a DAW, confirm this figure. The vast majority of users will never be able to feel 5ms of latency given that it's similar to standing a normal distance away from a guitar cab on a large stage and in use this reviewer couldn't de-

tect any feeling of lag even with fast legato runs through an Axe FX unit that has its own inherent analogue to digital conversion latency.

The U4 is a mono monitoring solution with 24bit/48kHz operation for excellent sound quality. Since Xvive doesn't ship a pair of cheap headphones with



Xvive U4 Wireless Review – Nick Jennison

the unit you need to use your own and, paired with a set of custom moulded ACS triple driver in-ear monitors, it's a total pleasure to listen to music, guitar or any other source through the U4. With a dynamic range of 107dB and full range 20Hz-20kHz operation your listening experience isn't compromised in any way and represented accurately, allowing you to play at your best with inspirational sound at all times. If you're wondering why the U4 is mono, remember that most monitoring systems are mono too. Stage wedges, mixer Aux outputs and fills are all mono so it's the most appropriate setup for consistency and means half the bandwidth of a stereo monitoring setup. You need to be sure that your chosen output is setup as a mono sum, but almost all mixers, audio interfaces and guitar modelling units allow you to do this with ease. There is also a great deal of volume on tap should you need it on a loud stage thanks to the headphone driver built into the receiver unit.

Wireless range and battery life are also very good at this price point with over 90ft of range on tap before drops outs (again tested as an accurate claim by us

here at GI) and just over 5 hours of battery life from a full charge. Both units feature internal batteries charged via the included double USB micro cable. It's a shame that the more modern and flexible USB-C connector wasn't utilised here and those internal batteries could be a future source of concern if they start to lose charge capacity over time or if you forget to charge the units before a show. But, from a single charge you should have enough juice for a couple of normal gigs or a long studio session – just don't forget to charge them when you get home!

All said and done, the Xvive U4 is a fantastic wireless IEM solution that doesn't break the bank and offers superb sound, build quality and features without much compromise. Those playing really big venues might need to look at higher-end and more expensive 5Ghz solutions, but the average user would do well to check out the superb value proposition that the U4 offers. Highly recommended.

END«

On-Stage Influencer Starter

We frequently receive questions from Gi readers about how to get started, so we've set Nick Jennison the task of showcasing some of the more affordable gear that will give you just about all you need to get your videos looking their best.

WHILE we're lucky at Guitar Interactive to have a fancy studio, expensive lights and cameras and a dedicated team of professionals that handle the filming and editing (and who helpfully remind me that 6 minutes of finger-ending shred might not be the best way to demonstrate a new piece of gear), you absolutely do not need all of that stuff to make great looking and sounding videos.

Here's what you DO need:

- A camera
- A source of light (you can't film what you can't see!)
- Something to capture the audio
- Something to stand in front of

Let's start with the one you should worry about least, but the one everyone fixates on the most: the camera. Even as recently as 4-5 years ago, you needed an expensive camera to even come close to capturing pro-quality video. Now, just about any modern smartphone can do it. Even with the superb cameras at our disposal, we still occasionally use an iPhone for certain shots at GI. If you have a phone, you have as much camera as you need right now.

So what about the rest, then? Well, On-Stage have some great tools to get you started. Let's start with the VLD360 Ring Light. Ring lights are great because they produce an even, diffuse light that looks flattering on the subject - there's a reason so many "beauty" YouTubers use them! This one is a fine choice because it offers three different "temperatures" of light from warm to cool, as well as adjustable brightness. Crucially, it doesn't flicker, »

r Kit

making videos. With that in mind, we thought the options from leading brand On-Stage that without breaking the bank



On-Stage Inflencer Starter Kit

MSRP: Varies, head to more info below

The Breakdown

Straightforward Feature-Rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-End



Studio Stage



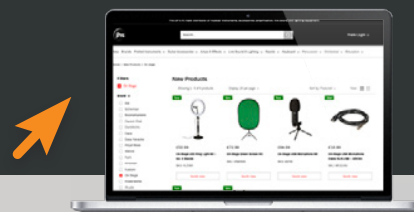
For fans of

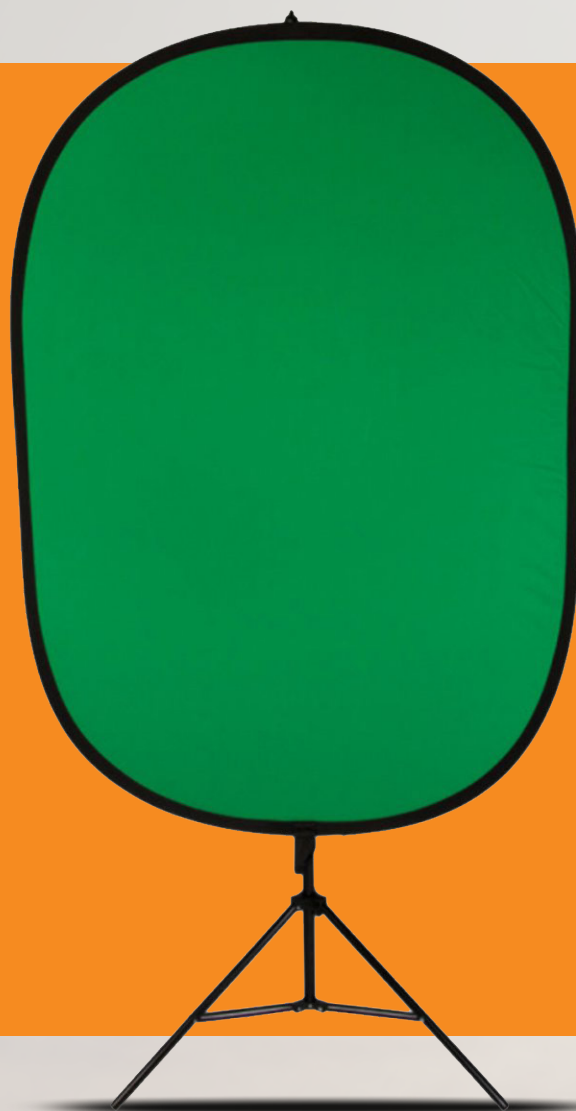
Making video content

Simplicity

Reliability

For more information, please visit:
https://www.jhs.co.uk/collections/new/brand_on-stage





meaning you won't need to worry about matching your shutter speed to the light source - you can just point and shoot. It also comes with two adjustable stands for desktop or floor mounting, as well as a phone mount to save you from having to buy a separate phone stand.

For audio, there are a few choices here. Ideally, you'd have an audio interface and

some dedicated mics, but if that's a little out of your budget/skill level, you can always use a USB mic like the AS700. This large-diaphragm condenser plugs directly into a USB port and is absolutely perfect for capturing dialogue, with a robust low end for that "voice of the heavens" vibe you hear in professional productions. It also works well for singing, acoustic guitar and even micing up electric guitar amps,

“So what are you waiting for? I wanna see your videos - **get cracking..!**”

but for electric, you could always opt for a USB cable like the IC-10U. Plug this into your guitar and your computer, load up one of the countless excellent free amp sims out there, and you're good to go!

That just leaves “something to stand in front of”. If you have access to a cool-looking space, or even just somewhere you can hang a backdrop, you're good to go. But if everywhere you have access to looks sub-par on camera, you might try a green screen. The VSM3000 Green Screen Kit »





is a portable pop-up screen that's easily big enough for most applications without being so big that it becomes cumbersome. It folds into a handy carry bag for easy storage and clips onto the included stand in seconds. If you're tight on space, this is a great option. If you'd prefer, you can always use the blue screen on the reverse of the green screen, but it's usually a bit

trickier to key out. That said, the blue actually looks quite cool as a backdrop on its own!

So there you go! All the tools you could need to start producing your own content, and all in one place. Sure, if you shop around, you



might be able to find similar items for slightly less money, but take it from someone with experience buying this stuff on the cheap: the quality of “no-name” gear is... mixed (and that’s putting it politely!). When you buy from a brand like On-Stage, you know what you’re getting, and nothing here is going to break the bank. So what are you waiting for? I wanna see your videos - get cracking!

END «

On-Stage®



THE Quietroom

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

WHEN ONLY
ACOUSTIC WILL DO

Orange Acoustic Pedal

Orange's Acoustic Pedal combines the best of their Acoustic Pre TC pre-amp and Crush low-noise pedal. Designed as an all-in-one solution for live acoustic performance, the A well as a balanced XLR out for plugging directly into a PA system – no DI box necessary.

ORANGE is well known for its earth-shaking electric guitar amps, huge control knobs, vintage design, simplicity and power. But they also do a great job with acoustic instruments as well. Today I'm taking a look at the Orange Acoustic Pedal.

The Orange Acoustic Pedal is an Acoustic Pre-Amp that is designed to work well with other pedals, offering players high headroom and tonal flexibility. The pedal itself is based upon a mix between Oranges' Crush Acoustic 30' amp and their Pre-TC pre-amp in a compact unit.

Orange says that one of the advantages of the pedal is its tonal clarity, preserving the natural voice of your instrument. The Class-A pre-amp & JFET circuitry, which features a single-ended design, gives us a clean sound that delivers extremely low noise, even when

the Treble knob is at its highest setting. It's also worth mentioning the pedal uses an 18V operation which gives us even more headroom and tonal clarity. And I'd have to agree; the pedal does have a nice crisp clarity to it; it really does the job well of translating your guitar's tone direct to the PA.

The EQ is detailed yet simple to operate, featuring Bass and Treble controls to shape the outsides of your tone. Then the Middle range control brings in the body of the sound, which can be further tweaked with the notch and Q-Factor controls. Perfect for emphasising the character of your beloved acoustic guitar & dialling out any troublesome feedback through a PA system when you turn up to the venue. Plus, we also have a phase cancelling switch to get rid of any issues with phasing that we might have depending on the playing situation. All of this goes to a high-quality XLR out. »

h Acoustic 30 amplifier into a highly versatile, Acoustic Pedal sports a 1/4-inch mono output as y! **Sam Bell** reviews.



Orange Acoustic Pedal

MSRP: (UK) £499 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Straight forward Feature-rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Studio Stage



For fans of

Psychedelic design

Highly versatile pedals

Exceptional build quality

For more information, please visit:

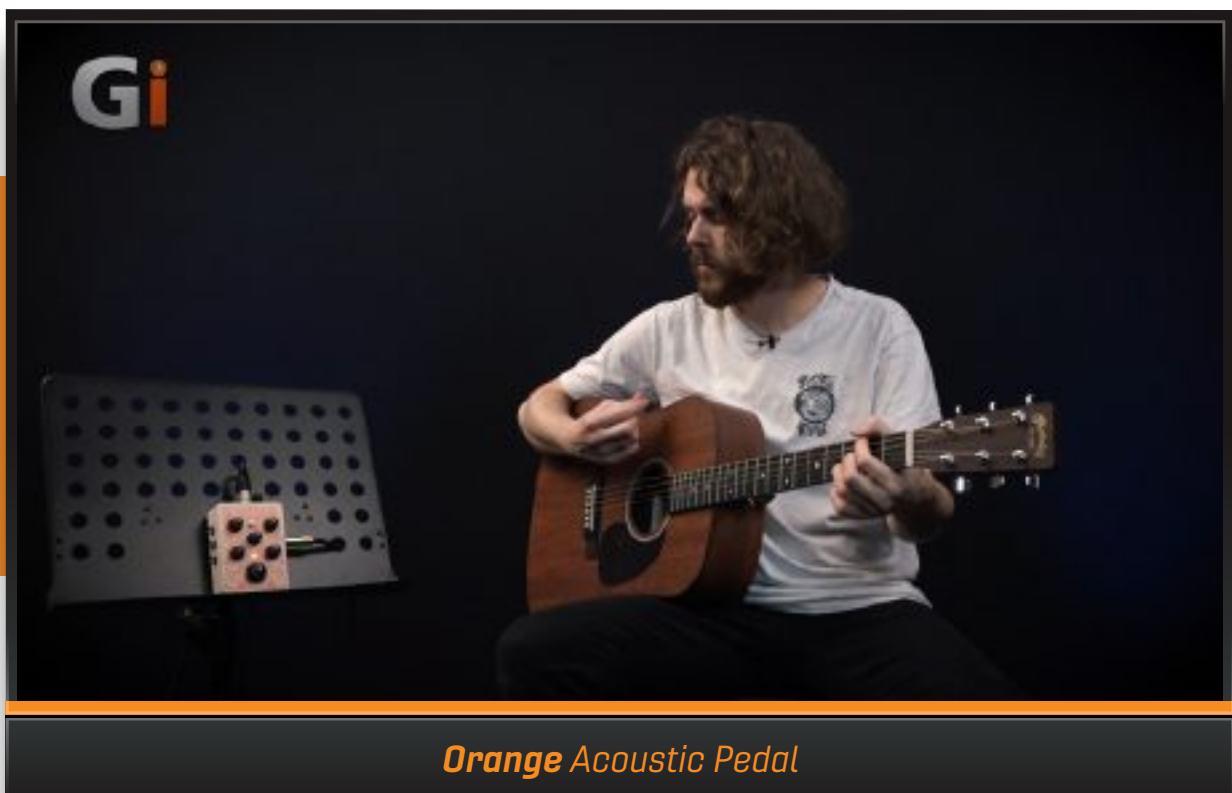
orangeamps.com



The pedal also comes equipped with its own FX Loop, so you can bring in your favourite reverbs/delays/modulations/extra effects into the pre-amp before sending it out to the XLR. This is very cool; it would have been nice to have a simple Reverb or something similar built in for flexibility; however, most modern PA systems have you covered on that side of things.

The unit itself features Oranges hallmark classic control knobs, funky psychedelic paisley design, and it's very easy to navigate and well built. And it's incredibly affordable. If you're looking to give your acoustic signal the integrity it deserves, and you're on a budget, this pedal is well worth checking out. It's straightforward, affordable, and perfect for the gigging acoustic guitarist.

END«



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FISHMAN[®]
Inspired Performance Technology™

Martin DC-X2E Rosewood

Another eye-catching and resonant model within Martin's X series line focused on maximising performance and tone for every player's budget.

Billy Campbell takes a closer look at the features of the Martin DC-X2E Rosewood in the Gi review.

THE Martin DC-X2E is the Dreadnought sized model within the X series. The classic and comfortable cutaway body design with X-bracing as standard has a Sitka spruce top, with figured Rosewood patterned, high-pressure laminate back and sides. The whole guitar has been done in a Hand-Rubbed finish that not only looks and feels fantastic but makes this a very rugged and stable build. A real standout in the X series line. The level of durability, playability and consistency, all at a very accessible price point. That combination of features addresses many of the concerns of travelling with a guitar that may be more delicate, or sensitive to environmental changes, or have a huge custom shop price tag without losing the quality or tone!

Thanks to the cutaway, even with the neck joining the body at fret 14, the extra access lets you easily get right up to fret 20. A welcomed feature that appears on

Thanks to the cutaway, even with the neck joining the body at fret 14, **the extra access** lets you easily get right up to fret 20.

many of Martin's models is the Performing Artist neck profile, which is a very comfortable, slender neck shape, that feels good in a variety of hand positions, whether in the lower or higher register.

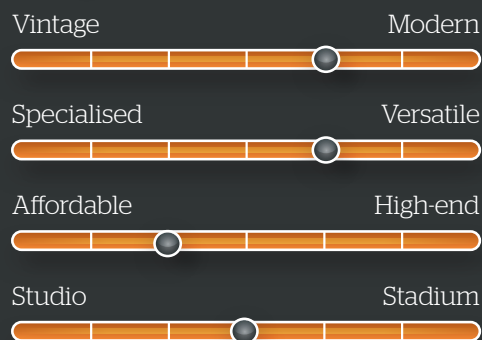
The DC-X2E Rosewood has a 25.4" Scale length, 1 3/4" nut width, and 20 vintage sized frets. The DC-X2E has a two-way adjustable truss rod and has been set up using a Plek machine, »



Martin DC-X2E Rosewood

MSRP: (UK) £739 / (US) \$699

The Breakdown



For fans of

Martin quality at an affordable price

Slimmer neck profiles

Impressive looks

For more information, please visit:

martinguitar.com



which uses the most modern technology to provide measurements and real-world playing conditions for very precise and consistent fret dressing. The process scans and dresses the guitar under actual playing conditions, strung and tuned to pitch. The result is every

guitar coming out of the factory being well intonated, with no dead or buzzing frets.

The DC-X2E houses Fishman's MX electronics with fine-tunable volume and tone knobs concealed on the inside of the soundhole.



Martin DC-X2E Rosewood



These are very clear and balanced pickups. Delivering a natural acoustic sound, and very useable adjustment ranges. Very convenient for adding variety to multi-tracked acoustic parts or tweaking your sound to the room or house PA.

The DC-X2E Rosewood Ships with Martin's Acoustic Lifespan 2.0 strings, featuring their anti-corrosion treatment, keeping the strings feeling smooth and maintaining the high-end chime of fresh strings for longer.

This guitar will also come with Martin's soft gig bag, with the added headstock, bridge, and endpin protection, a water-repellent exterior, and foam padding.

The DC-X2E retails for \$699, so go check one out at your local Martin dealer.

END «

Acus ONEFORSTREET 10

Phil Short review the Acus OneForStreet 10, the lightest portable amplifier ever. Equipped with Master Volume, balanced Direct Out, an internal multi-effect (two Reverbs, a Chorus and a Delay) and a quick-connect system external battery, the OneForStreet 10 could be all you need to bring your live performances to life.

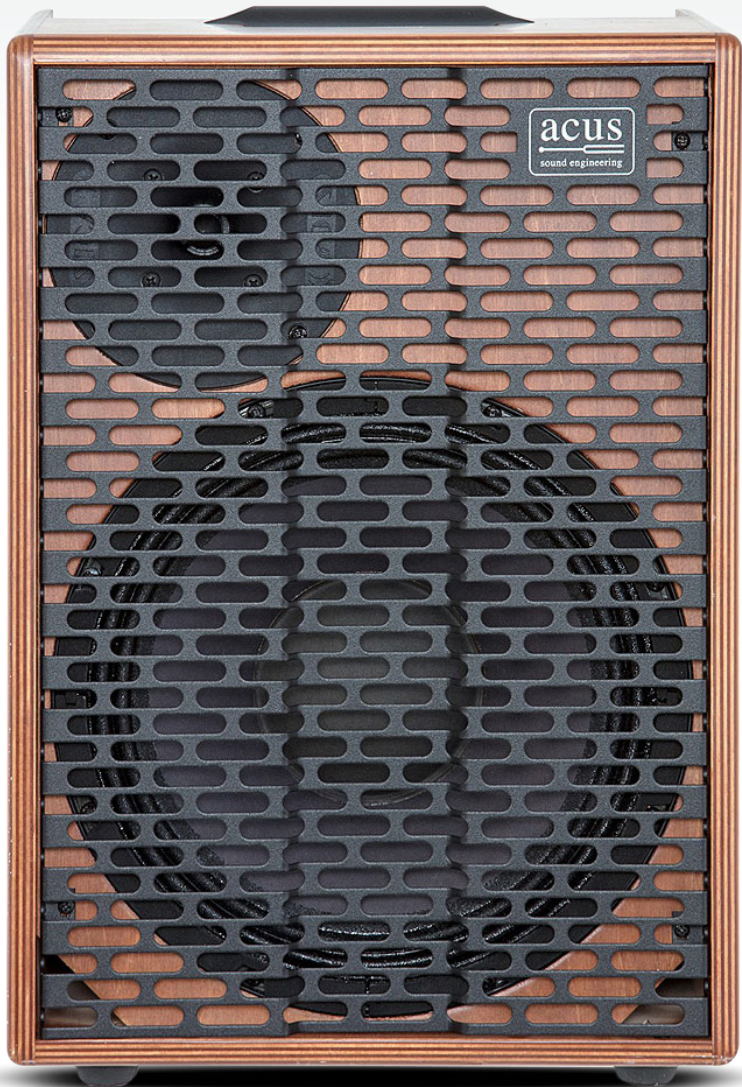
THE wandering minstrel. The entertainers of an old an ancient world, wandering from town to village, singing songs in exchange for a bite of supper and a bed for the night, or perhaps reciting poetry or telling stories of adventures from far and distant lands, or travelling street performers, putting on shows from town to town and city to city to earn their keep. The street performer/entertainer is an ancient art form that is still very much alive today. Head into Covent Garden in London, and you'll be able to witness a dazzling array of world-class entertainers, or even travelling on the London underground, you can hear some of the finest street performers in the world serenade the hustle and bustle of a frantic and busy city.

But the world is a noisy place, and just sitting in the corner with an unplugged instrument isn't enough to attract an audience. The busking amplifier is not a new idea, but they are usually big, heavy, and difficult to power. Most busking amps that are light enough to carry will usually only accommodate one

instrument and a microphone, but with limited options, and often they lack enough headroom to maintain and clear and open sound at the right volume.

Enter the OneForStreet 10. the answer for the travelling and outdoor musician. This is a lightweight, portable, yet very powerful amplifier, designed especially for the street performer! With three independent channels, all with their own gain, volume and eq controls, there is unparalleled flexibility. All three channels sport a TRS input, whilst channels 1 + 2 also sport an XLR input for microphones. There is an XLR output that functions as a D.I. out to send your mix to a larger PA system or to send it into a DAW for a live recording capture.

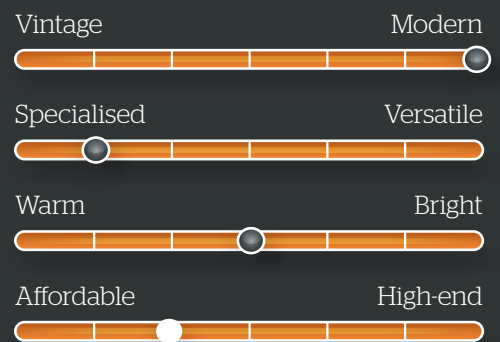
Channel one has some extra features giving the user a wider range of applications of the first channel. The first is the addition of built-in compression. This can be engaged via the on/off button and has a threshold control and a ratio control. This is a fantastic feature for instruments like acoustic guitar, »



Acus ONEFORSTREET 10

MSRP: (UK) £999 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Superb sonic clarity

Portability

Classic subtle looks

For more information, please visit:
acus-sound.it



where you may be switching between fingerstyle parts and strumming. This allows you to maintain more evenness in performance volumes, which is especially crucial when playing outdoors in busy and noisy areas. The sound of the compression is very natural and open, and we could achieve everything from light dynamic control to really squashed sounds.

Channel 1 also has three EQ styles in addition to the three-band EQ available to the channel. These are Flat (the same as channels 2 and 3), Bass - to accommodate bass

guitars, and Jazz - to accommodate semi-hollow or hollow-body Jazz style electrics. Depending on the style of music you may be performing and the lineup of instruments you may have, channel 1's variable features offer a lot of welcome versatility in the application of the unit, and each setting seems to work well for its intended use.

There is also a high-quality effects section that is applied across all three channels. Wonderfully, each channel has its own independent FX level control, so once your desired effect is dialled in, you can tweak



how much of this is blended with each individual instrument. A very fine and useful touch indeed.

Often on units of this nature, the built-in FX can be a bit of an afterthought and sound a bit cheap or sterile, and often end being ignored in favour of higher quality pedals. The onboard effects on the OneForStreet were refreshingly musical and pleasing to the ear. The reverbs sounded natural, whilst the chorus sounded rich and not in the least bit 'cheap' or 'tacky'. My personal favourite was the ambient reverb setting, which allowed colourful chords to ring out with beautiful sustain. Blended with a good vocal performance and the addition of a keyboardist, the potential for some stunning sounding performances is easily achievable.

Last but not least, is, of course, the addition of the Auxiliary input to connect backing tracks from a laptop or phone via a mini-jack cable. The OneForStreet can also be connected to an external device via Bluetooth for wireless playback. A nice touch and one less cable to worry about.

On the back, there is space for two battery units to power the OneForStreet. The unit can also be connected to a mains supply with the included power chord. Sadly the batteries are not included as standard and must be purchased separately, which is disappointing given that the main purpose of the amp is to be used in spaces where there is no access to mains power. Despite this one weakness, the unit is excellent, and the travelling busking musician will not be disappointed with the quality of sound and flexible options available.

END«



Crafter GAE 8/N Acoustic

First established in 1972 from the basement of founder HyunKwon Park, Crafter has long been a name synonymous with quality and attention to detail for the past half-century. Guitar Interactive's Phil Short takes a closer look at a recent release from the brand as he reviews the Crafter GAE 8/N.

THE Crafter ethos is two-fold: quality and affordability. Historically, the term 'affordable guitars' has often been a polite way of saying 'cheap guitars,' and until recently, unless you paid over a certain price point, you'd struggle to get a decent sounding guitar that also played well, held its tuning, and didn't present a multitude of problems.

Crafter, however, is a leader in the market of designing affordable guitars that genuinely play well, sound good, and by no means feel 'cheap' in the hands of the player. Good quality components are used, from the pickups and tuners to the choice of tonewoods, to ensure that the instrument plays well.

One of their most popular series is the Crafter GAE8-N Grand Auditorium Electro Acoustic Guitar. First impressions of picking this guitar up out of the box were that this was a well-made guitar, robust and reliable. Having played the guitar before looking up the price point online, we were genuinely surprised to see how low the price was, as the

guitar looks, feels and sounds like an instrument worthy of a much higher price bracket.

The guitar sports premium-level features like a solid Engelmann Spruce top, providing a clear, crisp, punchy and resonant tone, with Mahogany back and sides adding extra warmth and richness. The Indian Rosewood fretboard was of very good quality, which has been neatly bound in a cream/white bounding on a very comfortable mahogany neck.

Playability wise, the set-up was great right out of the box. The action height was very comfortable and would suit someone who might be used to playing electric guitar most of the time. It held its tuning really well, and chords rang clear across the whole fretboard, revealing good quality fretwork. The intonation was also spot on right the way up the fretboard, something that is often a problem on guitars in the lower budget price ranges.

The other fantastic inclusion is the L.R. Baggs element pickup. L.R. Baggs are themselves a household name in acoustic »



Crafter GAE 8/N Acoustic

MSRP: (UK) £439 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

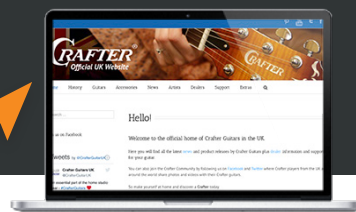
Comfortable neck profiles

Value for money

Traditional looks

For more information, please visit:

crafterguitars.uk.com





amplification and D.I. products and are considered by many to be the best of the best when it comes to amplifying your favourite acoustic instrument. The pickup sounds wonderfully natural, and the inclusion of a notch switch to help control the midrange frequencies is a welcome addition to dialling in that sweet spot for your sound system.

As well as the Grand Auditorium style, this model is also available in a Dreadnought style, 12 string version and Parlour version. Three finishes are available, a natural finish

with the spruce top, which is also available in a Tobacco Sunburst finish, and then a natural all Mahogany version is also available for those who like a darker and more rounded tone.

For those looking for a good quality acoustic but don't want to break the bank or are looking to experiment away from the electric guitar for the first time, the Crafter 8 series is definitely well worth checking out.

END «

Cort L200F Aged to Vintage

Vintage instruments are often considered the holy grail of acoustic guitar tone. The wood on the top cures and opens up more over time, and this unleashes a tonal quality that's often missing in new instruments—until now. Using a special process called ATV (Aged To Vintage), Cort uses unique torrefaction techniques designed to give you “that” fantastic tone right out of the box. So, just how good is it? **Tom Quayle** tells us more as he reviews Cort's L200F Aged to Vintage Acoustic.

CORT'S L200F is the company's take on the classic OM body shape at an affordable price point. This is classic 1920's small-bodied acoustic territory with a surprising array of features for the money and a look that would suggest a far higher asking price. Cort is well known for its value proposition, but the L200F might have taken that even further for those wanting vintage good looks and tone at an affordable price.

The L200F's OM body shape is constructed using a solid Sitka spruce top and beautiful rosewood back and sides with white binding and a classic tortoiseshell effect pickguard. The neck is mahogany with a period-correct ebony fretboard, small dot inlays and stunning gold finish, open-gear Grover tuners and machine heads. Cort have used their ATV (Aged to Vintage) torrefaction/wood baking system to artificially age the Sitka spruce top, providing a vintage tone straight from the factory and an aged colour to the

wood that looks wonderful and sounds even better. This is a tried and tested approach to ageing tops used by quite a few manufacturers now, and the L200F certainly has all the hallmark characteristics of an older guitar visually and tonally.

Cort has produced a beautiful guitar here enhanced by the choice of a semi-gloss finish that is smooth and wonderful to play whilst offering excellent protection of the lovely wood choices. It plays as well as it looks, too, thanks in part to the slightly wider 45mm nut, offering string spacing that will suit fingerstyle players well without alienating anyone else. The OM body shape is supremely comfortable without compromising tone, and the neck is slim enough to suit even smaller hand sizes with ease.

Tonally, the L200F is a match for those good looks thanks to the aged solid top, excellent construction and use of the ebony bridge and bridge pins. Sustain and resonance are as



Cort L200F Aged to Vintage

MSRP: (UK) £449 / (US) \$8TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Classic 1920's OM guitars

Fantastic value for money

Fingerstyle blues

For more information, please visit:

cortguitars.com





Cort L200F Aged to Vintage

good as anything costing two or three times the price, and the dynamic range provides a highly rewarding playing experience, especially for styles requiring dynamic subtlety.

Cort has also paired the L200F with the excellent Fishman Sonitone pickup system, installed in the soundhole to prevent any wood from being removed from the guitar. The Sonitone has become the go-to pickup system at this price point for good reason and serves the L200F very well with a realistic acoustic tone and response plugged in that compliments the stellar acoustic tone very well. The simple tone and volume controls will appeal to purists or those not wanting to read an instruction manual, but for more sophisticated EQ and anti-

feedback controls, you'll need to factor in an external preamp.

Cort has really knocked it out of the park with the L200F acoustic. It's a fantastic value instrument that competes well with much more expensive guitars and never reveals its budget-conscious roots. If you want a high-quality OM style guitar but can't afford one from the high-end builders in the guitar business, you can get a LOT of guitar for your money here with the L200F that won't make you regret not spending the extra cash. Well worth a look and another winner in the Cort acoustic range.

END «

THE Basement

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

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

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GI81

THE PLACE FOR BASS



Source Audio Ultrawave Multiband

If you're a bass player with an ear for nontraditional fuzz/distortion sounds and synthy character tones to be discovered in the Source Audio Ultrawave Bass pedal. The Ultrawave has up to 10 bands and lets users crank and saturate each to taste, yielding some of the filthiest Ultrawave Bass does doom, desert, and industrial with aplomb; however, it's this pedal's so **Rodney McG** to tell us more.

THE Source Audio Ultrawave for Bass has a similar characteristic to other Source Audio units, in that it is deceptively simple from the outside. With an interface containing only four knobs and a small toggle switch, it could easily be looked at as just another simple Bass Distortion unit with a few tone-shaping options. But when we look underneath the hood, there's much more going on.

Essential to using the Ultrawave is the Source Audio Neuro app. The app can function from a phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop system. Hooking the Ultrawave up to the app unleashes its true potential. The Ultrawave boasts 44 different Distortion types. These can be combined, blended, and morphed in a mind-boggling amount of ways. They can also be applied to specific frequency bands by setting split points across

the EQ spectrum, and applying the Distortion to some, or all in varying degrees.

It also includes a number of other tone-shaping effects onboard. If controls, an 8 band graphic equalizer, noise gate, and ring modulator are available in every preset. All these options can be used in conjunction with stereo ins and outs that can be configured in a number of different ways outside of traditional routing.

The huge assortment of sonic possibilities will keep even the most serious of tone chasers occupied indefinitely. I could easily see the Ultrawave being used as a sound-shaping tool, or with other instruments as well as bass. I'm specifically thinking of synths and keyboards. The Ultrawave's huge routing versatility and available tone sculpting options definitely make it more than just another bass distortion. »

Bass Processor Pedal

scades of colour, there's a slew of gooey, glitchy
e splits monophonic and polyphonic signals in
t riff distinguishers on the planet. So naturally,
offer side that will really surprise you. Here's



Source Audio Ultrawave Multiband Bass Processor Pedal

MSRP: (UK) £259 / (US) \$249

The Breakdown

Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Traditional Innovative



For fans of

Vintage tones with a modern twist

Onboard versatile effects

Exceptional build quality

For more information, please visit:

sourceaudio.net





Source Audio *Ultrawave Multiband Bass Processor Pedal*

If you're not in the market for a distortion, but are looking at filters, and bass synth-style pedals, the Ultrawave is still well worth a look. It fits easily in the sound design category and not just a single item processor. My personal favorites so far are the ability to use multiple compressors at different frequency bands for really interesting textures, and using the stereo outs for the tremolo and ping pong style spatial movements that seem to be a specialty of the Source Audio Units. Truly, the Ultrawave is a unique and impressive piece of tone sculpting gear in an amazingly small package.

END◀



Tech 21 Geddy Lee DI-2112 Signature

In an attempt to streamline his gear for new projects, Geddy initially partnered with the go-to SansAmp, the GED-2112. Following the unit's success, the challenge then became to engineer a portable version on two nine-volt batteries, providing a feature-rich solution that is "grab-and-go" easy. So, does the DI-2112 preamp and more importantly, preserve all the tonal goodness of its fraternal twin? Rodne

WITH the DI-2112, Tech 21 brings us the third generation of its units based around the Geddy Lee signature tone engine. The DI-2112 is essentially the same as the original rack-mount GED-2112, sacrificing only the effects loop to be made into a smaller desktop package that is more portable. It could easily be mounted on a pedalboard if needed.

Not only does the DI-2112 feature the same dual engine design consisting of level, blend, mid, mid-shift, treble, Bass, and drive for the main unit. It also contains the secondary subchannel with its level and saturation bringing a bi-amp approach to tone shaping.

Also on board are the punch buttons that allow for the unit to be used in tight mode. This gives the sound more bite and aggression

in the upper mids and imitates the sound of a player digging in or playing aggressively, but at all dynamic levels. The routing is complete with balanced and quarter-inch outputs for both sections. The balance is carried via xlr.

If you want to simplify the routing of the DI-2112, this can be done by using a single output when configured properly. The unit's manual describes how to marry both outputs into a single connection for ease of use. The DI-2112 packs an impressive set of options, tonal variation, and major connectivity in a desktop package that could be compared to many slightly larger sized effects pedals on the market.

Make no mistake; although it's a Geddy Lee signature device, it's capable of far more. Unlike many gimmick signature pieces »



Signature SansAmp

Good people at Tech 21 to design a Signature SansAmp for a smaller, portable version that could run on batteries. Does it provide all the features of the rack-mount SansAmp? Andy McG tells us more as he reviews the Tech 21



Tech 21 Geddy Lee DI-2112 Signature SansAmp

MSRP: £375 (UK) / \$329 (US)

The Breakdown

Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Traditional Innovative



For fans of

Having complete sonic control over your sound

Open and rich tones

Geddy Lee

For more information, please visit:

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Tech 21 Geddy Lee DI-2112 Signature SansAmp



of gear, you can get Geddy's distinct sound and tone combination, but there are a huge number of other sounds and settings that are not only usable but truly different and interesting without being reminiscent of the unit's namesake.

It's clearly made in the heritage of the RBI and other classic SansAmp units, but with distinct changes to the eq stack and the

particular colour and feel of the drive.

With the DI-2112 bringing this signature unit into a small and portable package that sacrifices almost no features, it's a must-have for any fan of the classic SansAmp series, and some final touches are given to us by the tone of a true bass legend.

END «

Barefaced Audio Machinist

In an attempt to streamline his gear for new projects, Geddy initially partnered with the go-to SansAmp, the GED-2112. Following the unit's success, the challenge then became to engineer a DI on two nine-volt batteries, providing a feature-rich solution that is "grab-and-go" easy. So, does it preamp and more importantly, preserve all the tonal goodness of its fraternal twin? Rodne Geddy Lee DI-2112 Signature SansAmp.

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Barefaced Audio Machinist

MSRP: (UK) £249 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Traditional Innovative



For fans of

Dirty bass tones

Versatile drive pedals

Bespoke design

For more information, please visit:

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Barefaced Audio Machinist



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END◀

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 2**

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 veteran, **Sam Bell** continues his new and exclusive column focused on getting the most out of rhythm guitar playing.

Rhythm Guitar Concepts 5: Utilising Chord Fragments, Using Thirds and Articulation

In this instalment of Rhythm Guitar Concepts, I am going to take a look at how we can use larger chord formations to visualise smaller chunks of information. In today's example we are going to take a simple Am, G, and F chord sequence using E Shaped Bar chords, search for the 3rd intervals for each chord on the D and G strings and create a cool rhythm guitar part. These kinds of parts can be heard on 80s Michel Jackson records all the way through to modern artists such as 'The 1975'. The main purpose of this issue's lesson column, however, is to look at the different ways we can articulate the same riff to get different sonic results. The second example in this column utilises larger chord fragments to create a moving thirds sound through a chord shape using some of the articulations we cover in this lesson. »

Tone:

For this issue's column, I used a compressed clean tone with a medium thickness pick. This adds a little 'snap' to the tone and enables me to get different textures from various angles of the pick. For this example I am attacking the strings with a more parallel pick angle, I am letting the pick rest on each string before pushing through to the next string and I am utilising various amounts of palm muting to create different articulations. For this column, I am going to demonstrate several ways of playing this rhythm guitar part with various amounts of muting and pick attack to create different levels of texture.

Heavy Muting, Fast Pick Strokes:

I first played the riff with heavy palm muting and letting the pick softly but quickly pass through the strings. This is a great way of sitting back in a live or recorded mix whilst suggesting harmonic information, leaving space for the bass player, vocals, drums and any synths or pads.

Hard Attack, Quick Muting:

The second way of playing this riff is to attack the notes with no palm muting with a heavy attack but quickly and lightly mute towards the end of the sustain. This is a great way of creating a little dynamic flare to the

part if combined with the first option, or as a way of building the same part through a verse section for example.

Heavy Muting, Slow Pick Attack:

This is a much more percussive sound, slightly akin to the early 1950s muted raked arpeggios you can hear in Buddy Hollys playing. This technique uses muting with a slower pick attack, to the point that the two notes in the chord fragment almost sound like they are being played in sequence rather than at the same time. This is a great way of really building energy in a part, especially when played tightly with a rhythm section. It keeps the subtle edge of the first example but the percussive energy needed to build the part up textually.

Moving Thirds:

Later in the video I demonstrate an improvised rhythm guitar part that outlines the same chord sequence as the first example however this time I use more of the E Shaped chord formations on the top 4 strings (D, G, B and E) and grab the strings in pairs (D,G – G,B – B,E) in order to create a moving triad sound through each chord change. This creates more movement for each chord, combining this technique with other CAGED shapes will give you almost infinite possibilities when coming up with cool rhythm parts like these.



Concepts 5: Utilising Chord Fragments, Using Thirds and Articulation

Summary:

Articulation can change the direction of a guitar part, using smaller chord fragments can really add a melodic edge to your rhythm playing and fretboard knowledge can really expand where you take your rhythm playing in a big way. Be sure to dig deep and have fun utilising some of these approaches in your every day 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 there and welcome to Guitar Interactive's Quite Room.

In this column I would like to share a composition of mine called 'Clouds', another bespoke composition for the Guitar Interactive community.

I often like to think of composing like cooking, as in both art forms the choice and blending of ingredients is paramount. My students can normally tell from my food and recipes analogies that we are getting close to lunchtime. However, for this I don't always charge ...

Cooking a delicious meal is more challenging when we have a restricted selection of ingredients, however, in my opinion, this leads to thinking 'outside the box', which can result in a very interesting outcome.

In this piece, for example, I have decided to start from a lovely chord, in a key often avoided. This is a Bmaj7/D# voiced in open position, in order to capitalize on the open 'B'. To unify my chosen non-diatonic chord progression, I have restricted my melodic palette to 'two-notes-per phrase', which I adhered to for the most part. »

As it normally happens, after the second chord, I have found myself playing many variations, most of which I was happy with and although composing is about trying different options, eventually a decision must be made. This is the reason why often we may start writing one or several pieces destined to remain incomplete for a quite some time if not for good. The way I deal with this is setting a deadline and thinking about the use of the piece. In other words, while the pieces for guitar interactive tend to be quite short to be able to go through these in a relatively short amount of time, pieces for a live show may be not only be longer, but feature purposeful ingredients and sections to enhance the piece further and making it fit within a set. So, when writing your pieces, make an effort to complete them imagining the context within which these will be performed as well as who these will be performed by, in terms of technical abilities and stylistic persuasion. These sort of prerequisite will help making up our mind and completing our pieces.

HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

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

Bmaj7/D#	C#13	Bmaj7#11	A (#11)	E	F#/E
Eadd2	Cmaj7#11			IV	
Cmaj7#11					

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:



The piece features a continuous 16th driven, fingerstyle picking hand part, with the main melody being pushed throughout.

MELODIC INGREDIENTS:

The melodic content navigates a few tonalities, and features a recurrent use of tension and release with the 4ths (perfect or often augmented) resolving to the 3rd of the chord and has a singing-like quality throughout.

As always, I would like to recommend exploring the above-mentioned techniques in order to compose your own pieces. We have to allow ourselves to make mistakes and reflect on the reasons why we like or not

a particular sound, a chord progression or modulation. Eventually, these sounds will become part of your musical lexicon and you'll be able to use these with fluidity and effectiveness.

The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

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

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



Giorgio Serci - Creative Fingerstyle

for the note to cut through.

Play this part in a relaxed and clear manner, making sure your thumb is a little forward compared to the 'i, m, a' fingers, in order to prevent it from colliding with the 'i' finger. As always, focus on attack and tonal consistency. The melody and the supporting harmonies will be played with the 'a' finger, so more attack is needed to outline the melody.

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

BAR 1: Little f on fret 4 of e, index on fret 1 of D, ring f on fret 3 of G and open B. Repeat replacing the little f with middle f on fret 1 of e.

BAR 2: Middle f on fret 2 of e, little f on fret 4 of A, ring f on fret 3 of G and open B.

Repeat replacing the middle f with the index f on fret 1 of e.

BAR 3: Barre' on fret 1, middle f on fret 2 of A, ring f on fret 3 of G and little f on fret 4 of B.

BAR 4: Barre' on fret 2, little f on fret 4 of B, open A, fret 2 of D, G and B.

BAR 5: (beat 1 and 2) Play open B followed by 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 and e, finishing this bar with

the little f on fret 4 of e.

BAR 5: (beat 3 and 4) Index on fret 2 of e, open e, then arpeggiate with ring f on fret 4 of D, middle f on fret 3 of G and open B.

BAR 6: (beat 1 and 2) As bar 5

BAR 6: (beat 3 and 4) Index on fret 2 of e, middle f on fret 3 of A, and arpeggiate with little f on fret 4 of D, open G and B, finishing this bar with an open 'e'.

BAR 7: (beat 1 and 2) Open E and e, then arpeggiate with 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 and index on fret 2 of e.

BAR 7: (beat 3 and 4) Middle f on fret 3 of G with little f on fret 4 of e, followed by index on fret 6 of D with little f on fret 7 of e and finally, natural harmonic on xii of E, followed by open B and little f on fret 12 of 'e'.

Congratulations, you have completed 'Clouds'!

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

I strongly recommend experimenting with a few picking variations, changing the chords



as you wish in terms of voicing (higher or lower), as well as trying the same picking pattern on a different chord progression, or using a 'capo' on fret 2 for a brighter outcome.

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

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

Focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help delivering the piece in a more

accurate and consistent manner, while saving energy.

This will complete this creative fingerstyle lesson.

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

Check me out here at
www.giorgioserci.com



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.*

PART 1





— Electric Guitar Edition with **Nick Jennison**

SET-UP YOUR GUITAR LIKE A PRO:

AM I USING THE RIGHT STRING GAUGE?

Sponsored by ELIXIR Strings

ALONG with “what overdrive pedal are you using”, “why are you playing so many notes?” and “why are your jeans so ripped?” (I see you, YouTube user jm0pq76q), perhaps the most common guitar playing question I’m asked is “what gauge of strings are you using?”. I’m a serial string-gauge experimenter: I played 9s growing up, but I’ve had spells playing everything from 8s to 12s.

Let’s first start out by addressing the elephant in the room: string gauge matters, »



but not for the reasons you might think. There's a common bias that bigger strings sound "better", and light strings are for effete weaklings that lack the manly man strength to play manly man strings and thus will forever be barred entry to the exclusive "big strings big tone club". As well as being exclusionary, this belief is pure nonsense. I've seen 12-year-olds playing 12s, and competitive powerlifters playing 9s.

String gauge is a very individual thing, and it's important to get the right size of string to match your playing style. While SRV had a phenomenal tone playing big strings, you can't extrapolate that to mean that YOUR tone will be better with big strings. To put it another way, Usain Bolt wears a UK size 13 shoe, but



Am I using the right string? Part 1



if I bought some size 13s, it's highly unlikely that they'd make my 100m time faster.

So let's put bias aside for a moment and talk about what DOES matter and how you should select your strings.

PLAYING STYLE:

The most obvious consideration when choosing a string gauge is your playing style. If you spend most of your time smashing out big riffs and chords, the added stability of a thicker gauge might be ideal for helping you stay in tune, especially if your attack is heavy. By contrast, if you're a bit of a shred-head with a lighter touch, a lighter gauge will help you keep your bending and vibrato feeling effortless and stop tension creeping into your playing.

FRETTING PRESSURE:

This is where individual differences in hand strength really come into play. Some players, even with a very relaxed touch, just can't keep light strings in tune. If you have tall frets, this can be even more of an issue. If you have this problem, the first course of action is to assess your technique and make sure you're not power gripping, but if you're keeping a relaxed touch on the guitar and still having tuning problems, maybe try a gauge up.

The opposite is true if you have to exert excessive force just to fret notes. Fretting should feel like it's no effort at all, and if you have to really squeeze hard just to get the notes out, consider moving down a gauge.

INJURY STATUS:

Playing injuries happen. They're usually the result of doing too much too soon, and they usually get better all by themselves. If you're injured, don't panic. You probably don't need to stop playing altogether, but you should start by reducing your workload to something your body can easily tolerate. One valuable tool in your arsenal is string gauge since lighter strings require less energy to fret. Going down a gauge or two while you heal up is a great way to assist in rehabbing a playing injury. You'll get back to your regular strings in the fullness of time - or you might decide you like a lighter feel and stay there!

YOUR INSTRUMENT:

Lastly, there's your instrument itself! Do you usually go for 9s on your Tele, but you've recently bought a Les Paul and want the same feel? Maybe try 10s. As a rule, a given string gauge on a shorter scale length guitar (like a 24.75" Les Paul) will feel looser than they would on a longer scale length guitar (like a 25.5" Fender scale guitar). »





Another consideration is tuning. As a rule of thumb, for every tone (two frets) that you tune down, you should go up one full gauge to maintain a similar playing feel. If you're used to 10s in standard, but would like to experiment with drop C (low to high: C-G-C-F-A-D), maybe try 11s, with the lowest string from a set of 12s if you really want to maintain the same tension across the set.

One final consideration is any quirks the instrument may have. If you have a vintage instrument that you just can't get the action low enough on for a slinky feel, a lighter string gauge might offset that somewhat. Likewise, if you have a tremolo-equipped guitar, a lighter gauge will enable you to set the trem up so it's more sensitive, while a heavier gauge will require more spring tension resulting in a stiffer feel (which might be exactly what you're looking for!).

So there you have it: some things to take into consideration when it comes to finding the right string gauge for your personal style.

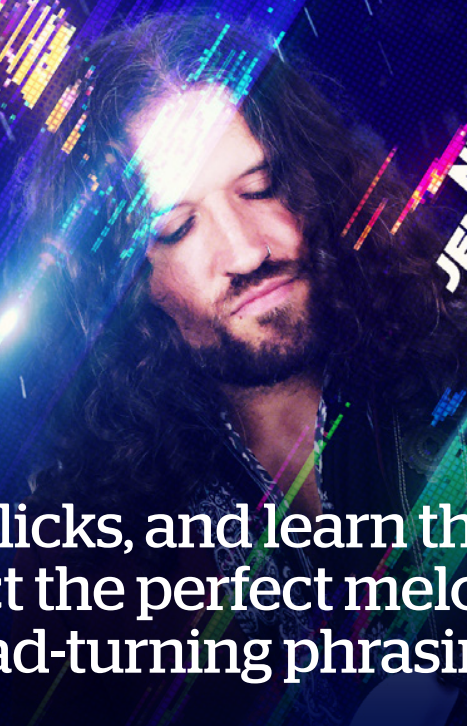
Remember, there is no "better" or "worse" when it comes to string gauge (no matter what the "blues bro" down the local guitar shop told you), so don't be afraid to experiment. Strings are pretty inexpensive, too, so try a bunch of sets and find what works for you. You won't be sorry.

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