

Guitar *Interactive* 82

YNGWIE
MALMSTEEN
TECH SESSION

+ INTERVIEWS
WOLFGANG
VAN HALEN



+ JOSH RAND

MALMSTEEN

YJM RETURNS WITH 'PARABELLUM'

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Editor
// Jonathan Graham

Yngwie Malmsteen has always stood for uncompromising excellence. He has proven himself to be a unique artist in a career that now spans more than 40 years.

You can try to categorise him in any way you wish, but how this supreme Swedish craftsman has continually developed his music makes YJM sublimely transcend any definition you attempt to impose. With 'Parabellum' (his 21st solo studio album) out now, Gi editor Jonathan Graham chats with Yngwie about the new record, playing Russia in the '80s, his approach to improvisation, thoughts on 7-string guitars and much more.

Continuing our exclusive features on this issue's cover artist Yngwie Malmsteen, Nick Jennison 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 talk with Wolfgang Van Halen about his incredible debut MAMMOTH W VH, stepping out of the shadow of 14 years as a part of Van Halen and so much more. We also, speak to Josh Rand about his new musical direction in the form of The L.I.F.E. Project, his love of Ibanez guitars, as well as the future of Stone Sour.

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 Nick Jennison, Tom Quayle, Sam Bell & Giorgio Serci.

See you next time.

Guitar Interactive

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ELIXIR 156-162	PRS 89
EVENTIDE 73	ROTOSOUND 2&3



STETSBAR 65
TASCAM 49
TECH 21 81
VINTAGE 95
VOX 37

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ISSUE 82

Contents

INTERVIEWS



010

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN:

Gi editor **Jonathan Graham** chats with Yngwie about his new record 'Parabellum,' playing Russia in the '80s, his approach to improvisation, thoughts on 7-string guitars and much more.

022

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN:

First impressions last a lifetime. Now a solo artist, Wolfgang Van Halen has prepared a lifetime to make his. The songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist debuts with MAMMOTH WVH



032

JOSH RAND:

Gi exclusively speaks with Josh about the project's new musical direction, his love of Ibanez guitars, the future of Stone Sour and much more.



REVIEWS - GUITARS, AMPS

062 Friedman Cali

068 Aria 212-MK2 Bowery

074 BMG Arielle Signature

078 Gibson SG Special

082 Orange AD30

086 Gamechanger Light Peda

092 BOSS RC 500

098 Eventide Ultra Tap Delay

102 Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail Deluxe

THE QUIET ROOM

108 Kustom Sienna Pro 35w 1

112 Martin X series GPC- X2E Macassar

116 Shadow Soundsation BA

THE BASSMENT

122 Modern Vintage MVJ4-6

126 Elrick Expat NJS5

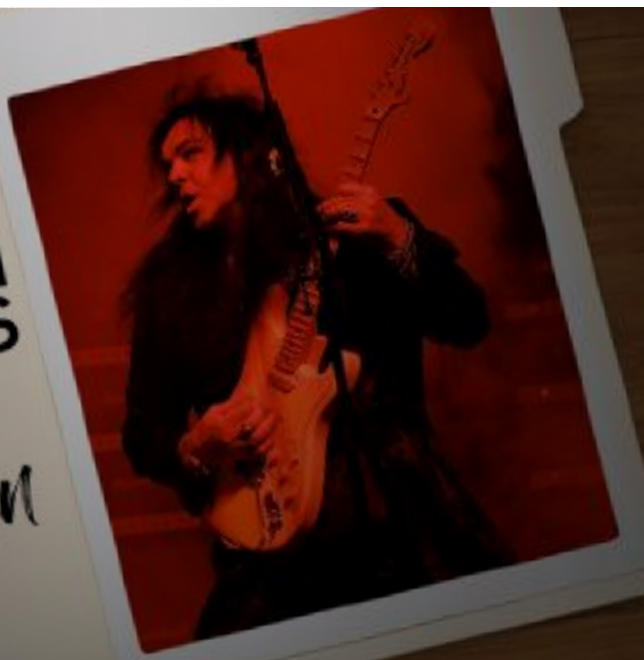
130 Barefaced One10T

134 Darkglass Element

042

**YNGWIE
MALMSTEEN:**

Nick Jennison

**THE
TECH
SESSION
FILES***Yngwie
Malmsteen*

COLUMNS

**TOM QUAYLE**

Developing Professional Technique - Part 3

140

144

SAM BELL

Rhythm Guitar Methods - Part 7

**Guitar
Concepts****GIORGIO SERCI**

Creative Fingerstyle

148

**NICK JENNISON**SET-UP YOUR GUITAR
LIKE A PRO- PART 2

156



THE Interviews

Yngwie Malmsteen has always stood for uncompromising excellence. He has proven himself to be a unique artist in a career that now spans more than 40 years. You can try to categorise him in any way you wish, but how this supreme Swedish craftsman has continually developed his music makes YJM sublimely transcend any definition you attempt to impose. With 'Parabellum' (his 21st solo studio album) out now, Gi editor **Jonathan Graham** chats with Yngwie about the new record, playing Russia in the '80s, his approach to improvisation, thoughts on 7-string guitars and much more.

We also talk with **Wolfgang Van Halen** about his incredible debut MAMMOTH WVH, stepping out of the shadow of 14 years as a part of Van Halen and so much more. Finally, **Josh Rand** speaks to Gi about his new musical direction in the form of The L.I.F.E. Project, his love of Ibanez guitars, as well as the future of Stone Sour.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH
GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES

THE ONLY WAY IS YNGWIE

Yngwie Malmsteen has always stood for uncompromising excellence. He has proven himself to be a unique artist in a career that now spans more than 40 years. You can try to categorise him in any way you wish, but how this supreme Swedish craftsman has continually developed his music makes YJM sublimely transcend any definition you attempt to impose. With 'Parabellum' (his 21st solo studio album) out now, *Gi* editor **Jonathan Graham** chats with Yngwie about the new record, playing Russia in the '80s, his approach to improvisation, thoughts on 7-string guitars and much more.

Yngwie is a rarity in today's music world. Not only for his incredible gift on his chosen instrument but also his vision and unyielding commitment with regards to the direction of his music. Love him or hate him, there can be no doubt that every note on any of his records is meant to be there and sound precisely as he would want. An incredible and rare achievement for an artist who has had multiple major record contracts during the course of his career to date.

Although he's been doing just fine solo for quite some time, it's worth noting that some of YJM's finest early work came in more of a collaborative form, as following one album with LA-based generic metal/hard rock act Steeler, Malmsteen would join the mighty, Alcatrazz. »



YNGWIE MALM

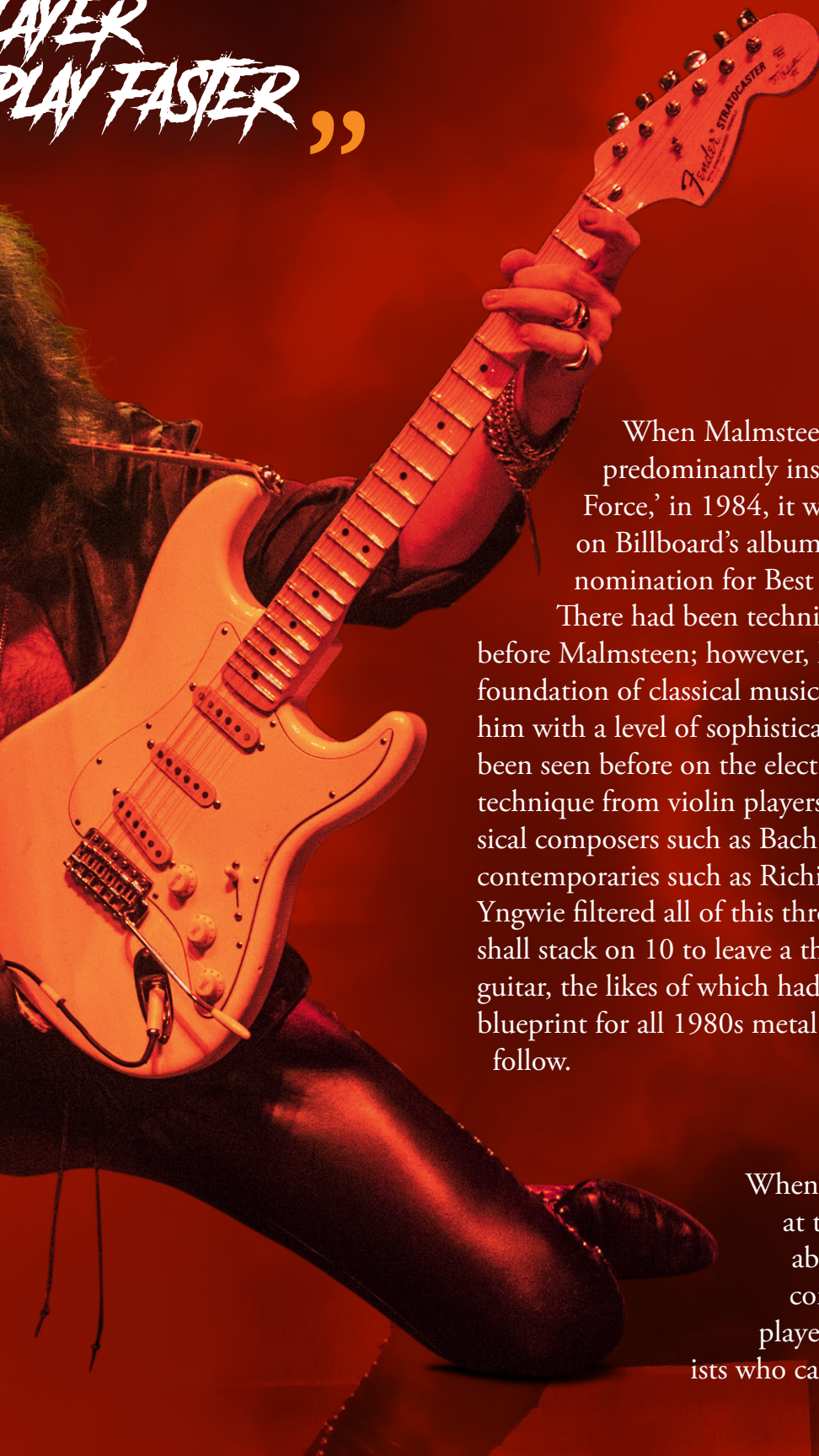
ONLY WAY IS YNGWIE

“I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE A VERY FAST PL
I'M SURE THERE ARE OTHER GUITARISTS WHO CAN F

Initially, Alcatrazz was formed by Graham Bonnet as a showcase of his own talents. Bonnet, who was, albeit briefly, part of Richie Blackmore's Rainbow (Replacing Ronnie James Dio in 1979), recruited Malmsteen, who instantly pushed the band toward a more elaborate, neoclassical approach. Their first album, 'No Parole from Rock and Roll,' was the result of this impressive collaboration, but it wasn't long before tensions within the group led to a clash over control between Yngwie and Bonnet which would see Malmsteen subsequently leave the band to go it alone.



“AYER
PLAY FASTER”



When Malmsteen released his first album of predominantly instrumental work called ‘Rising Force,’ in 1984, it was a phenomenon reaching #60 on Billboard’s album chart and receiving a Grammy nomination for Best Rock Instrumental Performance. There had been technically fast players on the scene before Malmsteen; however, his unique style, born from a foundation of classical music and progressive rock, provided him with a level of sophistication and elegance that had never been seen before on the electric guitar—deriving much of his technique from violin players performing the works of classical composers such as Bach and Paganini mixed with more contemporaries such as Richie Blackmore and Uli Jon Roth. Yngwie filtered all of this through a Fender Strat and a Marshall stack on 10 to leave a thumbprint on modern electric guitar, the likes of which had never been seen and create a blueprint for all 1980s metal guitar players to (attempt to) follow.

When interviewed by Guitar World at the time, regarding his technical abilities, Yngwie stated, “I don’t consider myself to be a very fast player. I’m sure there are other guitarists who can play faster. I play classical »



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runs, arpeggios and broken chords that, if played at a slower speed, would sound very nice as well. But if you do it very fast and very clean, but not necessarily as fast as someone else, you appear much faster because what you're playing actually makes more sense."

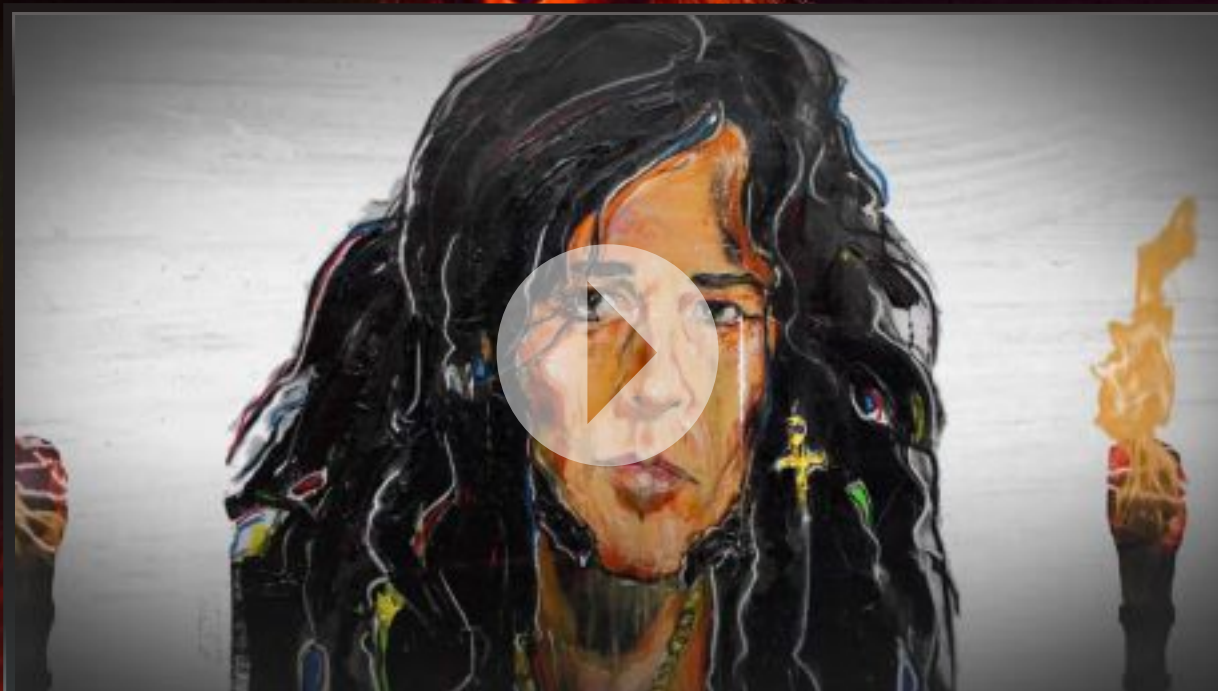
Yngwie seems to have developed fast technique simply because he didn't want to be limited, and at the same time, was obsessed with improvement. He was determined to take what he played one day and improve it in a particular way the next. Whether it was reeling off alternate-picking harmonic minor phrases easier than most guitar players find their way through a minor pentatonic scale. Or diminished arpeggios at lighting speed. Not since Eddie Van Halen had there been a guitar player been as influential to the prevailing sound of rock music.

Malmsteen's subsequent albums, 'Marching Out' and 'Trilogy,' did well to cement his reputation as a soloist. However, his fourth record 'Odyssey,' with the help of radio-friendly tracks such as; "Heaven Tonight" and "Dreaming," widened his audience beyond a devoted core of guitar fans and helped push the album into Billboard's Top 40 as well as success in Europe and Japan, and the then Soviet Union.

Nearly two decades on, and Malmsteen's legacy seems stronger than ever, and he certainly doesn't seem to be considering slowing down anytime soon with the old mantras of "Play Loud!" and "More is more" still very much his *modus operandi*.

Another aspect of his approach that has continuously shone through is his abidingly deep respect for the music he plays. Yngwie has constantly done whatever it »





Yngwie Malmsteen - Wolves At The Door (Lyric Video)

takes to bring out all of the colour, shade and hue embedded in each one of his compositions. Merely doing a very good job isn't an option. He wants to go—and does go—well beyond such limitations, into the lofty realms inhabited by an elite number of timeless masters. This has never been more focused and informed than on his startling new album 'Parabellum.' Malmsteen shares, "I always try to push myself on every album I do and attempt things which are more extreme than previously. But what has helped this time is that I wasn't able to go on the road because of the pandemic. It meant I could take much longer in the studio, both to write and record. Because I am usually always on tour, which is great, I haven't had the luxury of spending a lot of time working on new music for more than 20 years. But I suddenly had no pressure at all on that front. And I feel the album has benefited enormously as a result." »

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Yngwie Malmsteen's 'Parabellum' is out now via Music Theories Recordings / Mascot Label Group. »



Yngwie Malmsteen — 'Parabellum'

Tracklist:

Wolves At The Door
Presto Vivace in C# Minor
Relentless Fury
(Si Vis Pacem) Parabellum
Eternal Bliss

Toccata
God Particle
Magic Bullet
(Fight) The Good Fight
Sea Of Tranquility



Yngwie Malmsteen - Magic Bullet (Parabellum)

In support of his new album 'Parabellum,' Yngwie Malmsteen will hit the road across the US this fall, together with fellow guitar virtuoso John 5.

END «

'Parabellum' US Second Leg Tour dates

11/18/2021	Glenside, PA - Keswick Theatre	12/01/2021	Columbus, OH - King
11/19/2021	Buffalo, NY - Showplace Theater	12/02/2021	Des Plaines, IL - Des
11/20/2021	Poughkeepsie, NY - The Chance Theater	12/03/21	Detroit, MI - Diesel
11/21/2021	Albany, NY - Empire Theatre	12/06/2021	Grand Junction, CO -
11/23/2021	Munhall, PA - Carnegie of Home stead Hall	12/08/2021	Reno, NV - Virginia S
11/24/2021	Harrisburg, PA - HMAC CENTER	12/09/2021	Agoura Hills, CA - Ca
11/26/2021	Derry, NH - Tupelo Music Hall	12/10/2021	Fresno, CA - Tower T
11/27/2021	Newton, NJ - Newton Theater	12/11/2021	Montclair, CA - The C
11/28/2021	Richmond, VA - The National	12/12/2021	Santa Clarita, CA - C
11/30/2021	Ashwaubenon, WI - EPIC Event Center	12/14/2021	Albuquerque, NM - S
		12/16/2021	Dallas, TX - Gas Mon

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www.yngwiemalmsteen.com





W O L F S E C I M P

First impressions last a lifetime. As a songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist, Wolfgang Van Halen's self-titled 2021 debut album offers a personal and powerful perspective on his life. We have experienced his talent and charisma as Wolf as an individual for the v

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

SECOND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Now a solo artist, Wolfgang Van Halen has prepared a lifetime to make his. The instrumentalist has worked tirelessly towards the introduction of MAMMOTH WVH, n. Playing every instrument and singing each and every note, his music presents a active, balancing memorable hooks and tight technicality. As many times as audiences alongside the likes of Tremonti, Clint Lowery, and of course, Van Halen, we meet every first time now. **Jonathan Graham** talks with Wolf in this exclusive interview for Guitar Interactive Magazine. »

IN writing all of the songs and performing every part of the instrumentation and vocals, Wolfgang Van Halen has already established his own musical identity with the release of his debut album *Mammoth WVH* (available worldwide via EX1 Records/Explorer1 Music Group). From the rocking opening guitar riff on album opener “Mr. Ed” to the driving bass and drums on album closer “Stone,” *Mammoth WVH* showcases the various musical influences that have inspired Wolf. Songs like “Resolve,” “The Big Picture,” and “Think It Over” are all sonically different from each other but unique to what *Mammoth WVH* is all about.

Late last year saw the first single “Distance” drop to universal praise and chart success. The track—written as a tribute to his father and guitar icon Eddie Van Halen—is another side of *Mammoth WVH*. On release, it promptly rocketed into the #1 spot on US rock radio, with the emotional music video having been viewed over 4.6 million times on YouTube. Surprisingly, the song was not originally intended to be on the debut album, but due to the overwhelming response, it has been added as a bonus track, with all of Wolfgang’s proceeds from “Distance” being donated to the charity Mr. Holland’s Opus. »



“You only **have one chance** to make a first impression, and I wanted to do so to the best of my abilities,”

To coincide with the album announcement earlier this year, Mammoth WVH made their performance television debut for late night on Jimmy Kimmel Live! The band—currently on tour in the United States supporting Guns N’ Roses—comprised of Wolfgang Van Halen (guitars/vocals), Ronnie Ficarro (bass/vocals), Jon Jourdan (guitars/vocals), Frank Sidoris (guitars) and Garrett Whitlock (drums).

Coming from such a musical household, it may come as a surprise, but outside of his father teaching him one drumbeat from an AC/DC song, Wolfgang taught himself every instrument. “My dad wasn’t the best teacher,” he laughs. “I would ask him to play something, and then he would just proceed to be Eddie Van Halen. He would look at me and say, ‘Do that.’ to which I would laugh and sarcastically reply, ‘Sure thing, no problem.’”

His father often played guitar against his mother’s pregnant belly, however, and Wolf clearly absorbed those vibrations from the womb. By the age of 10, his Pop gave him a drum kit for his birthday. To this day, Wolf considers himself “a drummer before anything else.” As he developed as a musician, he learned how to play the guitar in order to perform “316” — which his father penned for him — at a 6th-grade talent show.

In the summer of 2006, when he was 15 years old, Wolf grabbed a bass and began noodling for the first time. While at the legendary 5150 Studios, his impromptu woodshedding inspired Eddie and Uncle Alex. Endless family jam sessions followed. By summer’s end, Wolfgang phoned David Lee Roth’s manager, and by winter Roth showed up for rehearsal. They rocked “On Fire,” and “That’s how the 2007 tour began,” says Wolf.

Not only did Wolf canvas the world with Van Halen while in high school, but he also held down the low end on 2012’s ‘A Different Kind of Truth’—which debuted at #2 on the Billboard Top 200. When not on tour with Van Halen, he cut bass for Tremonti’s critically acclaimed ‘Cauterize’ (2015) and ‘Dust’ (2016), in addition to joining the band on the road. In 2019, Wolf handled drums and also played bass on half of the ten songs for Clint Lowery’s solo debut, ‘God Bless The Renegades.’ »

Greg Koch
GRISTLE-TONE
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In the midst of all this, at the beginning of 2015, Wolf broke ground on what would become MAMMOTH. Michael “Elvis” Baskette [Alter Bridge, Slash] behind the board. Wolf began to embrace his voice, his father, to bands like AC/DC, Foo Fighters, Nine Inch Nails, TOOL, and Jimmy Eat World. “I’ve loved music since I was a kid, but it wasn’t until MAMMOTH that I really found my voice. Elvis was great, and he helped me grow into a lead vocalist.”

“The name Mammoth is really special to me,” says Wolf. “Not only was it the name of Van Halen, but my father was also the lead singer. Ever since my dad told me this, I always thought that was my own band Mammoth, because I loved the name so much. I’m so thankful that my father was able to enjoy the music I made. I’m really proud of the work I’ve done, and nothing made me happier than knowing how proud he was that I was continuing the family legacy.”

“You only have one chance to make a first impression, and I wanted to do so to the best of my ability,” he affirms. “Throughout the whole process, I was finding who I am musically, and by the end, I got a pretty good handle on a sound I can claim for myself.” »



Wolfgang Van Halen - Mammoth WVH: Distance (Official Music Video)

MMOTH with producer
inspired by everyone from his
been singing my whole life,
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“Not only did Wolf canvas the world with Van Halen while in high school, but **he also held down** the low end on 2012's 'A Different Kind of Truth.'”



Mammoth WVH: Don't Back Down (Official Video)

Mammoth WVH is out now
worldwide via EX1 Records/
Explorer1 Music Group.

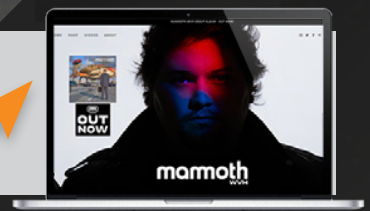
END «

Mammoth WVH – Mammoth WVH Tracklist

1. "Mr. Ed"
2. "Horribly Right"
3. "Epiphany"
4. "Don't Back Down"
5. "Resolve"
6. "You'll Be the One"
7. "Mammoth"
8. "Circles"
9. "The Big Picture"
10. "Think It Over"
11. "You're to Blame"
12. "Feel"
13. "Stone"
14. "Distance"

For more information on Mammoth WVH, please visit:

mammothwvh.com



JOSH RAND:

Rotating back to the real-world after an extensive two-year run on the road completing Stone Sour's 'Hydrograd' cycle, Josh Rand resumed his routine of immersing himself in his craft, songwriting with clear intent—breaking new ground and exploring new sounds. Out of that journey comes The L.I.F.E. Project, an impressive and powerful debut EP from Rand's band of the same name. **Guitar Interactive Magazine** exclusively speaks with Josh Rand about the project's new musical direction, his love of Ibanez guitars, the future of Stone Sour and much more. »

THE L.I.F.E. PROJECT



OVER the last two years, a series of events would prompt Josh Rand to make some significant professional decisions. His bandmate and frontman Corey Taylor confirmed that he would be pursuing a solo effort, effectively putting Stone Sour on an indefinite hiatus. While navigating the uncertainty of how the band would be moving forward, Rand, along with the rest of the world, would then experience an altered reality that no one could have anticipated—as life ultimately came to an abrupt halt in the wake of a global pandemic.

Faced with the pause of his primary outlet combined with the new reality of life during

an era of socially-distanced interaction, Rand's respite remained: his music. Already some six months into a healthy writing regimen, Rand established a working rhythm that, come hell or high-water, was certain to proceed.

The pivot would find Rand continuing to push his creative pace as a songwriter while devising a brand new outlet that would feature his stylistic signature throughout. Accustomed to working with the kind of vocalist that is equally commanding and versatile, Rand knew he wanted to maintain a standard of a dynamic lead, while bringing something new to the space of hard rock and metal.





As chance would have it, just a few degrees of separation stood between Rand and Paralandra frontwoman Casandra Carson. Carson's beau, Jaron Gulino, performs alongside longtime Roadrunner Records A&R veteran Dave Rath - a longtime associate of Stone Sour. After a brief connection at a pre-Covid gig, Carson's talent was on Rath's radar. Aware that Rand was in the thick of songwriting with a strong female lead in mind, Rath managed to connect the dots and bring the musicians together to explore the potential.

With Rand situated in Des Moines, IA and Carson located in Springfield, MO., the Midwest connection paved the way for creative connection that resonated instantly and was further cemented as the right decision when Rand finally heard Carson sing.

Equipped with the kind of vocal warmth and range that sets her apart from other vocalists in the space of aggressive rock, Rand began to see the full potential of his project coming to fruition and the kind of raw talent that would be voicing it. The mesh of Rand's dynamic »

“Written, arranged, recorded, and produced entirely by Rand, The L.I.F.E. Project presents **an important milestone** in an already decorated career...”

instrumentation in tandem with Carson’s powerful vocal prowess presented a unique amalgam - one that would allow the songwriter the ability to compose without limitation.

The resulting introduction of Rand’s L.I.F.E. Project is a five-track EP that offers a complete presentation of the songwriter asserting his

stride after more than two decades steeped in his craft. Building off of the sonic stamp he established during his six-album, twenty-year tenure with Stone Sour, Rand’s current iteration holds true to his track record, without relying on it, all while penning a new chapter in his artistic anthology. »



The L.I.F.E. Project - The Nothingness (Official Video)



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The L.I.F.E. Project - Worthwhile (Official Lyric Video)

Written, arranged, recorded, and produced entirely by Rand, The L.I.F.E. Project presents an important milestone in an already decorated career - one that establishes his own identity complete from concept to execution.

Stylistically, L.I.F.E. is a fluid combination of classic metal sensibility and Rand's penchant for pushing the boundaries of contemporary heavy. From the ethereal, cinematic soundscape of the piano-latent ballad in 'Worthwhile' to the sonic sledgehammer "A World On Fire," the broad spectrum would be especially impressive as a collaborative effort, only L.I.F.E. remains entirely Rand.

Strengthened by the versatile, vocal soar of Carson, songs like "The Nothingness," "Purgatory," and "Ignite" flex an articulate side of aggression that resonates as soul-bearing in a cathartic ebb and flow that is as genuine as it is diverse. The auspicious introduction establishes a framework of a true powerhouse in the making, despite the fact that the project remains a work in progress yet to achieve its full potential.

The L.I.F.E. Project is out now on all formats worldwide.

END◀



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The L.I.F.E. Project — The L.I.F.E. Project Tracklist:

Ignite

Purgatory

The Nothingness

Worthwhile

A World On Fire



For more information on The L.I.F.E. Project, please visit:
thelifeprojectband.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.

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UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES THE GREATS GREAT



TECH SESSION_YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

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Malmsteen



Tech Session

With a career that has spanned 40 years and with over twenty albums to his name, Yngwie Malmsteen's influence on modern electric guitar is remarkable. By drawing influences from classical composers such as Bach, Paganini, and Vivaldi, and fusing it with contemporary stylings, he is a founding father of the neo-classical genre. **Nick Jennison** explores the incredible techniques of YJM in this issue's Tech Session.»

THERE have been only a small handful of guitarists that can claim to have revolutionised the way we think about our instrument. Take the emergence of Edward Van Halen, for example; almost overnight, the guitar playing world was turned on its head as gunslingers across the globe desperately tried to work what on earth was going on in *Eruption*. Earlier still, Jimi Hendrix had the guitaring greats of the era hanging their heads in defeat. So it was in 1983 when Yngwie Malmsteen (Yngwie J. Malmsteen, mind you) was unleashed on

unsuspecting guitar players everywhere.

Equal parts Blackmore and Paganini and aged just 19, Yngwie's staggering technique, inventiveness and ferocity shook the guitar playing world to its core. It was a musical and technical paradigm shift that gave birth to a wave of "neo-classical" guitar heroes, including Paul Gilbert, Jason Becker, Marty Friedman and Vinnie Moore. If we were ever to carve a rock guitar, Mount Rushmore, his face would be on it – probably wearing aviators.



Yngwie Malmsteen - Tech Session Performance

Make no mistake, Yngwie is a genuine, bona fide guitar god. And now, dear reader, we're going to see what makes him tick.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

As you work through this tech session, I think it's important to keep a few things in mind:

Yngwie has a deeply idiosyncratic technical and musical style, and it's these quirks that make his playing so unique and instantly recognisable. We're going to be focusing not only on the types of lines Yngwie plays, but most importantly how he plays them. I've chosen to stick faithfully to Yngwie's (somewhat unconventional) technical style, which involves a strict set of picking rules that I'll outline in a moment. While this is not the only way - and perhaps not even the most efficient way - to play the lines in this study, it's the only way to really capture the Yngwie "vibe", and it's definitely worth the effort.

Much of Yngwie's playing is improvised, and his feel is often quite rubato. Don't focus on matching the complex rhythmic groupings in this study exactly, but rather concentrate on starting and finishing in the right place, and allowing the notes in between to flow freely.

Yngwie is a comparatively light picker and has an incredibly deft left-hand touch. Stay loose!

This piece is really hard! Don't expect to master it straight away. Take it one section at a time, and with effort and dedication, you'll get there. Good luck!

PICKING RULES

As previously mentioned, Yngwie's picking technique follows a very strict set of rules that are not only remarkably elegant and efficient but are also absolutely critical to nailing the Yngwie sound.

The pick must move in a relatively straight line, but at approximately a 45-degree angle to the plane of the strings. Downstrokes move towards the pickguard and "bury" between the strings, while upstrokes pull up and away from the pickguard.

String changes, where possible, happen after an upstroke. This is because the picking angle mentioned above causes upstrokes to "escape" the plane of the strings.

When there is an even number of notes on a string (2, 4, 6, etc.), strict alternate picking is possible. »

When there is an odd number of notes on a string (3, 5, etc.) during an ASCENDING line, the last note will be a downstroke followed by a sweep to play the first note on the next string.

When there is an odd number of notes on a string (3, 5, etc.) during a DESCENDING line, the last note on the string will be a pull-

off followed by a downstroke to play the first note on the next string.

This sounds like a lot to take in, but once you master this system, you'll find it's strangely intuitive and very effective indeed. Most importantly, however, it sounds right. »



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BARS 1-2:

We begin with a short sweep followed by a wide “classical” vibrato on the high F# note. This is achieved by pulling the string towards the bridge then pushing it towards the headstock, rather than the “ceiling-to-floor” motion used to create the more traditional “rock” vibrato that appears at the end of this phrase. Your “rock” vibrato should be wide and intense, but medium in speed - go too fast and you’ll sound like Zakk!

BAR 3:

This is the first time we come across a recurring feature in this piece, the 3-string arpeggio. Here we’re playing inversions of an Em arpeggio (with a cheeky E major on the final repetition), but later in the piece, we’ll use the same picking pattern to execute Am and diminished 7th arpeggios too, so let’s take this time to get it right. The upstrokes used to play this line are not actually sweeps, but individual “escaped” upstrokes, while the three consecutive



Yngwie Malmsteen - Tech Session Lesson

downstrokes are played as one long sweep. For maximum authenticity, palm mute the G and B strings.

BAR 4:

There are two distinct Yngwie-isms on display here - a single string “fours” sequence and a descending legato run in the “Black Star” or “harmolean” shape (so-called because it’s a mix of harmonic minor and aeolian scales). Focus on the downstroke at the beginning of each fours pattern, and you’ll be fine. Flick to your bridge pickup as you begin the slide into the legato run, and give it some big vibrato at the bottom!

BARS 5:

Here we have the same arpeggio mechanic as bar 3, but on an Am arpeggio.

BARS 6-7:

Big vibrato and bends precede a long picking run inspired by Far Beyond The Sun. This run is best thought of in two parts - a series of descending “fours” on a single string, followed by a “threes and fours” run across the strings. For the single string run, concentrate on the downstroke at the start of each set of fours as in bar 4. The

“threes and fours” run that follows begins with a legato “pickup,” then two seven note groups of “DOWN-up-pull off-DOWN-up-down-up,” first on the B and G strings, then on the D and A strings. Visualise these two groups separately, and you’ll be fine.

BARS 8-11:

Take a breather! We’ve got some low chugs followed by a surprisingly easy flurry on the low two strings. In bar 9, we re-visit the classic “Black Star/harmolean” shape, with picking this time. There’s a legato flourish on the high E string, followed by four picked notes on the B, “DOWN-up-pull off” on the G and D strings. Pick lightly, and concentrate on the first downstroke on each string. In bar 11 we’ve got some ascending tritone intervals outlining a dramatic diminished 7th chord, inspired by I’ll See The Light Tonight. Big vibrato, as per usual!

BARS 12-13:

Here we enter the “theme” of the piece - a harmonized pedal-tone figure inspired by Black Star. It’s a big stretch, but at this speed, it’s really best to try and keep the all the notes (barring the last one) on one string if you can. While re-positioning

» the 12th fret E note on the B string (17th fret) will undoubtedly feel easier on the left hand, it'll play havoc with the picking, and it's not how Yngwie would do it - we've come this far in the name of authenticity, it seems a shame to give up now. To keep your picking consistent, focus on striking the first two notes with downstrokes, and hitting the last three as "down-up-DOWN."

The soaring unison bends that follow are also straight out of Black Star.

BARS 14-15:

We've got the same pedal point there, followed by another picking run that makes use of the "threes and fours" mechanic from bar 7. For the natural harmonic, give it some vigorous whammy bar vibrato if you have one, or if you don't (as I didn't) you can bend behind the nut to achieve the desired effect!



BARS 16-17:

Time for some tapping! While you might not immediately associate Yngwie with this technique, a quick look at some concert footage will show he uses it pretty regularly! Here, we're tapping every right-hand note but the first one twice. Concentrate on the first tap in each position and let the notes in between follow naturally.

BARS 18-19:

One more time around our theme, followed by the now familiar 3-string arpeggio pattern, this time outlining a very characteristic diminished 7th tonality. Yngwie uses this kind of line all the time, and it's easy to see why! Again, there are perhaps more efficient ways to play this, but they won't sound as authentic as the approach we're using here.

BARS 20-21:

The next segment focuses on some of the techniques and ideas that Yngwie uses frequently, but perhaps don't get talked about enough. We're also moving from a harmonic minor tonality (in E) to a phrygian dominant vibe (in B). While E harmonic minor and B phrygian dominant share the same notes, we're leaning

heavily on B, D# and F#, which gives us that characteristic phrygian dominant vibe. You don't need me to tell you something different going on though; it's pretty clear to hear!

We begin with a legato run following a screaming high note. The ornamentation on the high note during my performance wasn't intentional, but I couldn't help myself! You should feel similarly free to decorate these lines as you see fit.

For the legato run (which makes use of our now familiar "Black Star/harmolean" shape), flip to your bridge pickup as you begin the long descending slide. Think about this run in three-string groups. Keep your picking light and your pull-offs aggressive to get that "meowing" sound.

BARS 22-23:

The descending trills outline a diminished 7th chord, harmonised in parallel minor 3rds (much like the arpeggios in bar 19). For the chromatic pull-offs, it helps to target the highest notes on the E and G strings and let the remaining notes take care of themselves. If you finish too quickly (like I did), keep going onto the A and E strings as long as you need! »

BARS 24-25:

Inspired by his infamous Blues Solo and Red House performances, Yngwie's fierce blue rock playing doesn't get anywhere near the attention it deserves. The slightly bonkers stretch that starts this lick is challenging and requires a light but accurate touch. If you can't manage it, consider either tapping the high notes or re-positioning the 7th fret B on the 2nd string (at the 12th fret) - as ever though, this comes at the expense of authenticity and right-hand ease.

The bluesy lick that follows is more akin to Eric Johnson's legendary 5s mechanic. Yngwie and Eric are actually quite similar when it comes to picking strategies (despite being worlds apart musically). The key to making this work is hitting the 7th fret note on the E string with an escaped upstroke, and sweeping on the G-to-B string and D-to-G string crosses. You can approach this with a more aggressive right-hand touch, but be sure to lighten up for the next few licks.



BARS 26-27:

A three-note legato version of the diminished 7th arpeggio. Concentrate on the first note of each group, and playing one repetition, two lots of two, one again and finally two lots of two (one-two-two-one-two-two). The right way to play this would be to sweep on all of the B-to-E string crosses, but an alternative method would be to hammer the B string notes without picking them.

BARS 28-31:

Two more pedal tone themes, with two examples of Yngwie's ascending picking mechanics. Put simply; every new string must start with a downstroke. When playing even numbers of notes on a string, you can use alternate picking as each string will finish with an escaped downstroke. If there is an odd number of notes on a string, you should sweep to get to the new string. This is what we'd generally refer to as "economy picking," except Yngwie only does this in the ascending direction. It's surprisingly elegant once you get the hang of it, and definitely worth persevering with.

BARS 32-39:

Here we enter the solo section, inspired

in no small part by Far Beyond The Sun. We're also back in our phrygian dominant tonality, this time in E. The riffs are fiddly, but work well if you follow the picking rules laid out earlier. Stay light on the trills, or you'll risk running out of steam.

BARS 40-42:

We launch into the first solo with a descending run straight from Far Beyond which makes use on one of Yngwie's favourite harmonic minor pathways and once again falls squarely within the established picking system. A screaming high bend precedes a long set of ascending 4s. Once again, focus on the downstroke that starts each group to keep your hands in sync.

BARS 43-44:

The legato passage that starts this phrase is almost identical to line in bar 4, but transposed into our new key. We're starting to notice the same patterns cropping up again and again, and that's a good thing!

BARS 45-48:

A monster of a lick, demonstrating Yngwie's tendency to phrase "across the bar lines". Don't focus on getting all the »

complex rhythmic groups exactly right - that's not the point here. The idea is to start and finish in the right place rhythmically and allow the remaining notes to fall where they may.

We begin with an interrupted version of bar 40's Far Beyond shape, followed by a screaming high slide. This transitions neatly into the iconic Yngwie 6es pattern (it took some willpower to wait until now to bust it out!). Essentially, the pattern is made up of three notes grouped as "high-low-middle-high-middle-low" - in this instance we play C-A-B-C-B-A. Focus on the downstroke at the start of each pattern to stay in sync. After a brief pause on fret 20, we launch into a deciding version of the now familiar "threes and fours" pattern, but this time inverted (fours and threes!). Finally, we've got a ripping ascending E major sweep arpeggio with a soaring slide bend up to a high E. If you have 22 frets, you can slide to there and bend the rest of the way. If (like I was) you're playing a guitar with 21 frets you'll have to tough it out and bend a tone and a half to reach the highest note. With your pinky. Those .008s don't seem so silly now, eh?

BARS 49-56:

Whew! Time for a rest. What Yngwie study would be complete without the ubiquitous synth duel. Inspired by Jon Lord and Richie Blackmore's famous battles, we can take this moment to riff out while our virtual keyboard player lays down the gauntlet.

When it's our turn to go again, we have a string skipping version of the 6es mechanic discussed in bars 45-46. This is made possible by starting each group on a downstroke and finishing on an escaped upstroke, and it's pretty damn difficult any other way! The ascending run that follows is an amalgamation of the ones found in bars 29 and 31 - if you've mastered those, this one should feel quite comfy.

BARS 57-62:

That pesky keyboard player is at it again! Better show them who's boss. Some tremolo picking sets us up neatly for a one-two punch of descending one string fours followed by a "threes and fours" descending run. We've seen these ideas a few times already in this piece, and if you've made it this far you'll know exactly how to handle them.

BARS 63-64:

Here we have a cool example of what Yngwie refers to as “pizzicato”, based on the violin technique of the same name. We’re sounding all the notes here (including the open strings) with the left hand, outlining an Am triad using the “6es” pattern from bars 45-46 and 53-54 - the only difference is that the low note in each group is an open e string. You may find that you race through this sequence too quickly - if you do, one more repetition of the highest grouping (open 17 and 20) should fill the time until the next lick! If on the other hand, you’re a little slower getting through it, feel free to miss off the final repetition. Whatever works!

BARS 65-68:

Home stretch now, and we’ve got the same arpeggio sequence we started with, this time on those classic diminished 7th arpeggios. We’re in harmony with the guitar on the backing track, so be sure to stay in time!

BARS 69-70:

A dramatic finish, we’ve got an Em triad arpeggio with a bend up to the 24th fret high E to kick us off. Because of the relatively slow speed, it’s ok to play this with all downstrokes - it’s plenty efficient and (in the Yngwie system at least) probably more reliable than trying to alternate pick each note. Last but not least, we finish on a B power chord and an E major - a compositional technique known as tierce de picardie, finishing our otherwise minor piece on a major chord. A suitably grandiose ending to the musical odyssey (pun intended) that we’ve just undertaken!

I don’t know about you, but I need a cup of tea after that! All that remains is to say thank you, dear reader, for sticking with me this far. It’s been a total privilege to bring you this look into the style of one of my heroes. I hope you enjoy learning this as much as I enjoyed writing it. Practise hard, and more importantly – **PLAY LOUD!**

END «



TH

Along with his monstrous fiery delivery, a huge volume makes Yngwie so incredible tone. While his sound has changed somewhat over the years, the fundamentals remained the same. He uses a DOD 250 overdrive, cranked to 11, a noise gate, and hall reverb. It's a simple setup; there's nowhere to hide. It's unforgiven. You have to be total. It's a game, but if you can rise to the challenge, the tone is mesmerising. It's like playing with the difficulty set on expert.

The Strat I used for this session is a Yngwie Malmsteen signature model, and signed by the man himself. The developed fretboard is an experience.

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a bit like a built-in obstacle course - the sort of left-hand slips that would be completely unnoticeable on a regular guitar will see your finger slide into what feels like an inescapable chasm! The level of accuracy required to make this guitar work is a serious challenge, but it's worth it for the incredible expressive control it affords you. Bends feel incredible, and it just begs for that wailing Yngwie vibrato. The Di-Marzio HS-3 pickups are very low output but surprisingly fat, and the broad dynamic range and lack of compression seem to exaggerate the nuances in your playing. Volume and tone controls were wide open.

Amp wise, it had to be a Marshall YJM100. Conventional wisdom with Plexi-style amps is to set everything to 10 and use a jumper

cable to bridge the inputs for more gain and low end. While this is certainly a great sound, it's not the early Yngwie vibe I was going for. Instead, I plugged straight into the high treble input with the treble set high, presence low and mids and bass a little below halfway. The channel volume and internal boost circuit (a replica of Yngwie's DOD 250 preamp) were dimed, and the built-in attenuator was set as loud as we could stand it!

The cabs were fitted with G12T-75s, and mic's with a single SM57, with a little delay and lashings of hall reverb, were added at the mixing stage.

END «



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

Friedman Cali

Dave Friedman and Grover Jackson are both world-renowned for products of the very highest order, so it comes as no surprise that the Grover Jackson designed Friedman Cali is a guitar that just screams quality. With each piece of wood hand-selected, there are no compromises here, just superb craftsmanship. **Phil Short** steps straight back to the '80s as he reviews the full-on power spec'd super-strat, The Friedman Cali.

FAST cars, tight leather jeans and bright neon coloured finishes. The 1980s was an exciting time for product development, disposable cameras, CDs and the Nintendo game boy all came out in the 80s and changed our lives forever, but even more important than that was the explosion of modern shred guitar. In 1978 Eddie Van Halen blew the world away with his unheard of and pioneering rock guitar style. Ripping a hole in a Charvel strat body big enough for a humbucker combined with his two-handed tapping technique, he changed the face of guitar forever.

Fast-forward 40 years, and the super-strat is probably still one of the most popular guitar designs in the world today. Humbuckers, Floyd rose bridges, 24 frets, super skinny necks and light strings quickly became the order of the day. Certainly, for modern rock guitarists, the 1980s are perhaps considered the golden era for guitar design and innovation, and many of the companies that sprang to the fore in that season built some incred-

“This model sports the **same body shape** as the Vintage-S...”

ible guitars. The likes of Ibanez, Charvel and Jackson offered the top of the line, ultimate hot-rodded instruments of the pros.

But over the years, there was a certain mojo that seemed to disappear. Instruments started to be made cheaper, which on the one hand was great because it made them more attainable for everyday enthusiasts, but on the other hand, we started to lose a bit of what made these guitars special, and many iterations of this formula became stale and lifeless, lacking the mojo of a previously golden age.

The increasing trend in extremely skinny necks, whilst offering, for some, easier playability, also started to lose some of the tone »



Friedman Cali

MSRP: Varies depending on spec

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



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Custom guitars

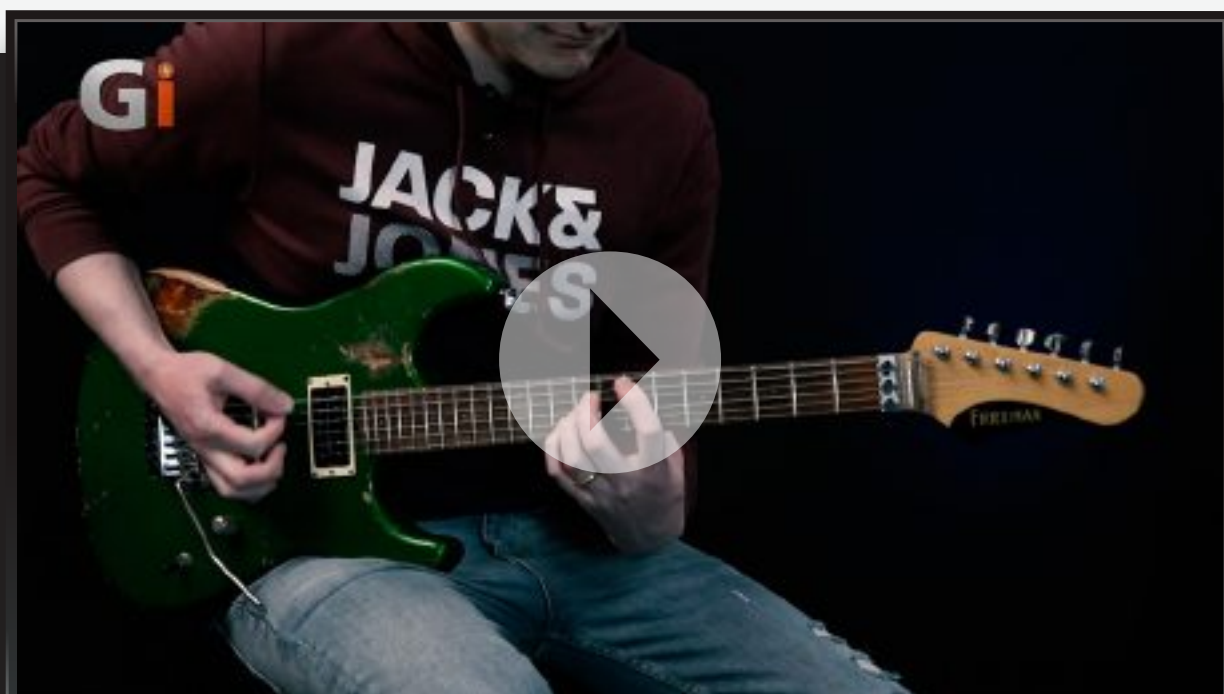
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of the original designs, with less wood to resonate. Pickups began getting louder and more powerful to push the amplifiers of the day into more overdrive and distortion, until eventually there came a point where the components of the guitar had little effect on the tone altogether, with the focus of tone mostly coming from pre-amp distortion and pickup design. This approach created some of the most iconic tones in modern metal, but this was a departure from those early hard rock tones that had a certain something to them.

Enter the Friedman Cali. A true Hot Rodded masterpiece, inspired by and in keeping with that early hard rock movement. This model sports the same body shape as the Vintage-S but has two humbuckers, a maple neck and a 22 fret pau-Ferro fretboard equipped with an original Floyd Rose bridge. The two humbuckers are voiced for an edgy rock tone, but they are low output pickups, in keeping with their original heritage. They offer a throaty but very dynamic and articulate tone and their low output allows the quality of the guitar build to shine through. »



Friedman Cali



Eric Stet's Gibson ES335 with Stop-Tail Stetsbar

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market by miles!"

Nick Jennison
Guitar Interactive



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

The pickups, designed for a man, are wonderfully clean, edgy but surprisingly smooth. Compared to the slightly slimmer neck profile to accommodate the Fender provides a huge amount of the tone, giving the guitar a more aggressive tone than up with gain, yields a tight

The guitar feels remarkable for its size, but for those who love those vintage authentic hot-rodded v

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



and voiced by Dave Fried-
dynamic, yielding tones that are
sweet and chimney when played
the vintage-S model, the Cali has a
profile and slighter flatter radius
loyd-rose bridge. The bridge also
at of additional bottom end to
itar a much throatier bark and
than its counterpart, and juiced
thick but wonderfully clear voice.

ably traditional for an instru-
it it's much welcomed for those
styled instruments and want an
version of their favourite S-type.

Just like the rest of the guitars in the range, the guitar is set up with the fabled Plek technology, allowing for ultimate playability and action height without the fret buzz. Intonation is spot on all the way up the fretboard, and it stays in tune even under the most intense amount of whammy bar abuse.

A simple, but highly tuned and robust rock workhorse, with tonnes of tone and a surprising array of stylistically versatile sounds available. For those who want vintage-hot, authentic old school fire and vibe, the Friedman Cali is well worth checking out.

END «

Aria 212-MK2 Bowery

Aria continues its run of seriously impressive new releases of late with the 212-MK2 Bowery. In the exclusive Guitar Interactive review and first look, **Nick Jennison** puts it to the test.

THE “affordable” guitar market is full to bursting of variations on the same two basic designs. There are bolt-on, double cut, 25.5” scale guitars with pickguards and tremolos, and there are set-neck, mahogany-bodied, 24.75” scale, single cut guitars with humbuckers and a two-piece bridge. While there’s absolutely nothing wrong with either of these classic designs, variety is the spice of life.

Aria’s 212-MK2 “Bowery” is the latest in a run of superb guitars that offer the budget-conscious player a way to stand out from the crowd. It’s a vintage-inspired instrument, but without the inflated price tag and dubious build quality that often comes with older guitars - particularly more unique ones.

As with all of the Aria guitars I’ve looked at recently, the first thing that struck me about the Bowery was its looks. This guitar positively drips ‘50s cool, with chrome hardware over a sparkle blue finish that wouldn’t look out of place on a vintage Cadillac. The natural gloss back and neck really make the top finished “pop”, as does the cream binding.

In terms of construction, it’s a 22 fret, 24.75” scale double-cut, with a flat-topped nato body

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...”

that’s chambered for a touch of semi-hollow resonance. While it’s almost impossible to isolate a single variable when evaluating a guitar, there is a certain “air” and midrange honk present in the tone that’s reminiscent of a 335. The tone isn’t quite as open as a semi-hollow, but there are hints of it there for sure. If you’ve ever compared a 335 to a Lucille, you’ll know what I mean?

The neck is slim and easy to play, with a dark rosewood board and 22 medium jumbo frets.»



Aria 212-MK2 Bowery

MSRP: (UK) £699 / (US) \$749

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Clear, airy chime.

Bigsby wobbles.

'50s cool.

For more information, please visit:

ariaguitars.com/



As with every Aria I've looked at in the past, the fit and finish is excellent, with no high frets, dead spots or rough edges. The factory setup is nicely balanced, and should suit most players right out of the box.

The licensed Bigsby tremolo is the star of the show, both visually and functionally. As much derision as Bigsbys may draw

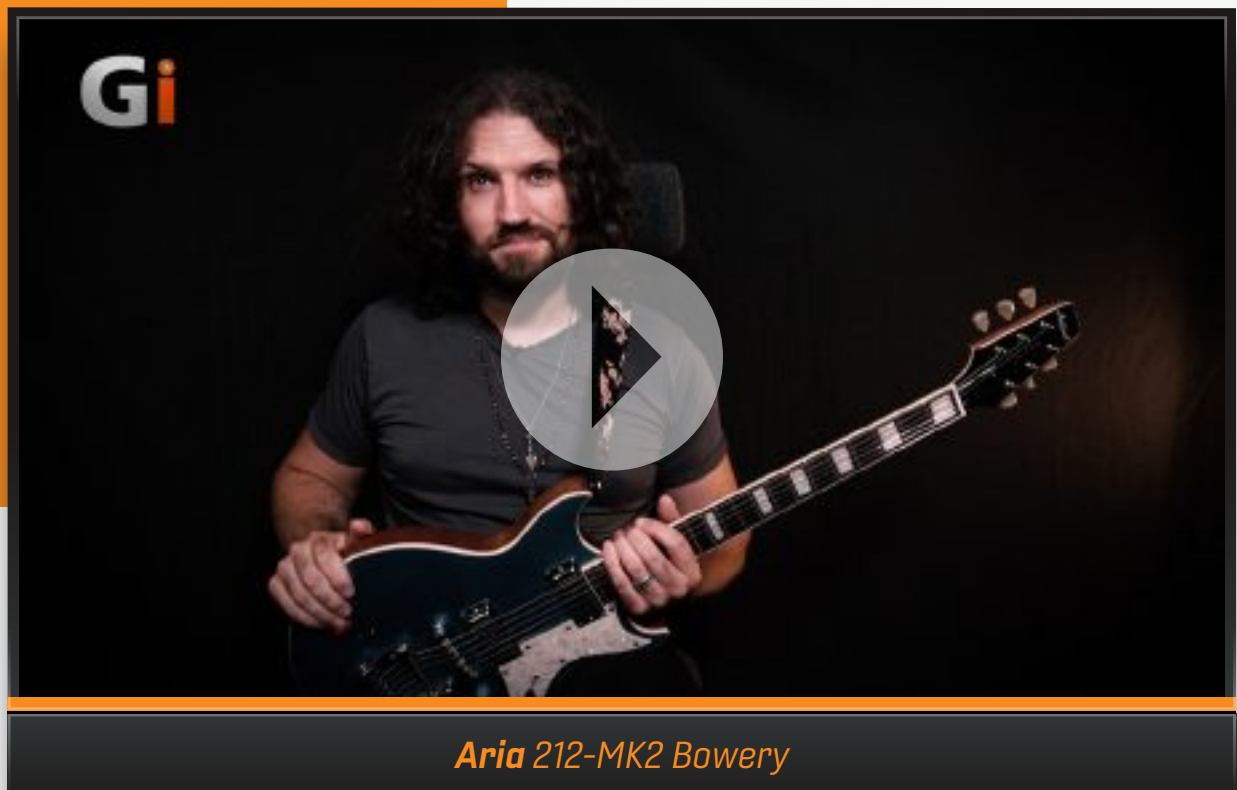
from the dive-bomb brigade; they impart a certain visual and sonic "class" to a guitar. It's been my experience that replacing a two-post tailpiece with a Bigsby adds an airy, extended treble to a guitar's tone, and that's very much the case here - although as mentioned above, that's probably as much to do with the construction method as the hardware.



From a functional perspective, it works very well indeed, with that characteristically “in-tune” chord wobble that only a Bigsby can deliver. Tuning stability is very good, thanks to the roller bridge and a well-cut nut that - provided you keep it well lubricated - doesn’t stick, pinch, bind, or do anything else to affect tuning stability.

The overall open and airy tone of the Bowery 212-MK2 is further en-

hanced by a pair of Aria’s AlNiCo V mini-humbuckers. While I’ve been somewhat critical of Aria’s full-size “Classic Power” humbuckers for being a little muddy, I’m a big fan of their mini-humbuckers. They’re bright and punchy with tons of chime and character. Suppose you’re not familiar with the mini-humbucker sound. In that case, it’s somewhere between a P90 and a beefed-up Tele: absolutely perfect for blues, Americana, surf, rock & roll, classic rock, »





garage rock - any style where a single coil might be a little weedy, but a full-size humbucker might be too fat and smooth.

Once again, Aria has produced an affordable guitar, desirable and unlike just about anything else you'll find in this price bracket. If you're just starting out and want a really great guitar that'll stand apart from the crowd without breaking the bank, this might be the guitar for you. If you're a seasoned player who's looking for a unique flavour to add to your arsenal, this might be the guitar for you too.

END«



SIBLING REVELRY

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BMG Arielle Signature

Brian May and Brian May Guitars are delighted to present a brand-new addition to the BMG line for 2021, the result of a fresh collaboration with American singer, songwriter, guitarist Arielle and the first original instrument build that the Queen virtuoso has actually contributed to since he and his father embarked on the construction of the Red Special almost 60 years ago. Here's **Nick Jennison** to tell us more.

ARTIST signature guitars run the gamut of “ordinary” to “absurd”. One end of the scale, you have endless “artist” models that are little more than a palette swap of a stock guitar. On the other end, you have instruments so far removed from traditional guitars that calling them a “guitar” almost seems wrong. As with so many things, the best stuff is somewhere in the middle: an opportunity for an artist to express what they really want in a guitar and offer something genuinely cool and unique to us guitar buyers.

What has been particularly interesting recently - and one of the many positive things that have come from women becoming more visible in the traditionally male-dominated guitar-o-sphere - is seeing what happens when guitar manufacturers take the time to ask their female artists what they want in a guitar. What we're getting are innovative and visually striking guitars like the Music Man St Vincent, Lari Basilio's Ibanez LB1, and the subject of today's review - the Brian May Guitars Arielle signature model.

The Arielle is notable for being the first non-Brian-May guitar from BMG, although it shares a good deal of its DNA with the Red Special: particularly its use of three Burns Tri-Sonic style single-coil pickups and a pickup switching matrix that allows the player to turn any or all of the pickups on or off, as well as flipping the phase on any of the pickups. While it's a little more cumbersome to use in the heat of battle, this switching matrix offers no less than 13 distinct tones, ranging from chiming to fat to sitar-like.

Visually, the Arielle is as bold as it gets. The body style is somewhat reminiscent of a Firebird (especially with its raised centre block) but scaled-down and with more refined angles. That said, this is by no means a “small” guitar. It's larger than a typical Strat or Tele and has a fair amount of weight to it. The neck is very reminiscent of a Red Special, with a wide fretboard and a profile that's substantial but not clubby. Like the Red Special, it's a 24” scale length, which makes for a very slinky playing experience! »



BMG Arielle Signature

MSRP: (UK) £795 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Supreme tonal versatility

Vintage character

Being noticed

For more information, please visit:
<https://shop.brianmayguitars.co.uk>



Hardware comes courtesy of a set of Grover locking tuners and a 2-point Wilkinson tremolo. These are some of the most solid and reliable parts on the market, and it shows in the Arielle's rock-solid tuning stability.

The BMG Arielle is a totally unique instrument in terms of looks, sound and feel. It offers incredible tonal versatility while still retaining a character all of its own. You're getting a whole lot of guitar for the money, too, with quality woods and hardware throughout. The only question is: are you cool enough to pull this guitar off?

END «



GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER • WHEREVER

A passion for playing means that inspiration can strike anytime, anywhere. With Elixir® Strings you know that when you pick up your guitar it's going to sound great—time and time again. That's because our featherweight coating protects your strings from the elements, keeping corrosion away and allowing your tone to sound great for longer, in any environment.

Elixir Strings. Performance-ready with long-lasting tone.



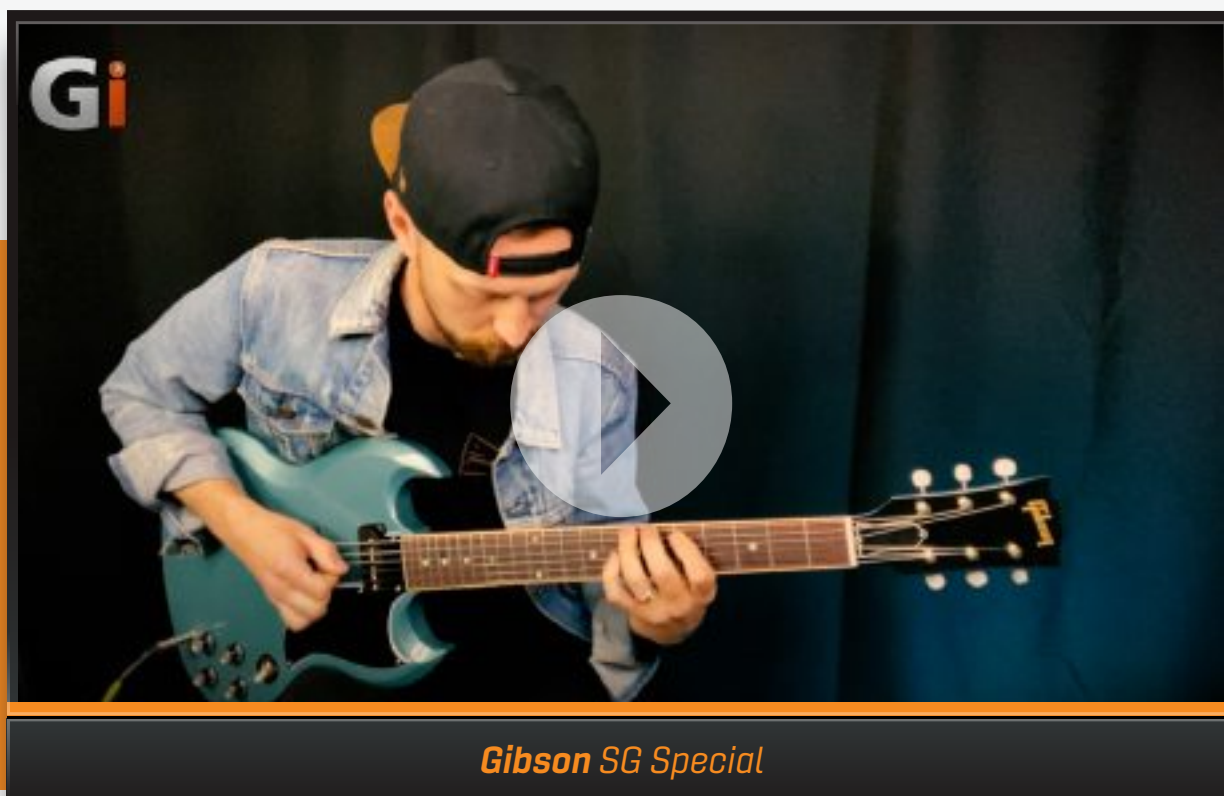
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Gibson SG Special

Gibson's SG range has never been as diverse. The SG Special is one of the more unique models on offer, featuring a pair of snarling P90 pickups and available in an elegant Faded Pelham Blue finish. This gorgeous guitar will turn heads for both its tones and classic style. Here's **Billy Campbell** with the full review.

THE American made Gibson SG Special brings back all the classic designs, specs and tones that made it a musical and cultural icon. The minimalist yet incredibly versatile SG Special has stayed relevant since its early inception, all the way to today.

This early '60s style SG Special is a lightweight, easy-to-play and inspiring guitar. Finished with Gloss Nitrocellulose Lacquer in Faded Pelham Blue. Featuring comfortable contours all around »





Gibson SG Special

MSRP: (UK) £1299 / (US) \$1499

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High End



Studio Stadium



For fans of

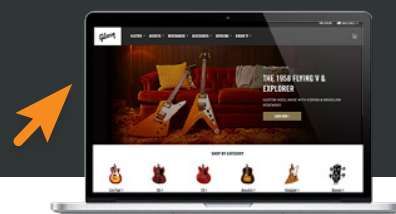
Slim neck profile

Comfortable compensated bridge

Classic Gibson design

For more information, please visit:

gibson.com



the thin yet balanced mahogany body, Gibson's fast-playing, slim-taper mahogany neck and bound 12" radius rosewood fingerboard features 22 medium-jumbo frets (with old school acrylic dot inlays, adding to the vintage vibe of this guitar). The Compensated Wraparound bridge is finished in chrome, with Black Top Hat knobs with Silver Reflectors, Vintage Deluxe tuning machines with White Buttons, and a vintage black 5-ply pickguard. The graph tech nut is 1.69" wide.

The two P-90 pickups are fat, with a low end that is full, yet has none of the excessive bass frequency buildup that can sometimes be found in Humbucking style pickups. The top end is biting and clear without being harsh. That translates into an almost "best of both worlds" pickup set, both aggressive yet warm. Equally at home with pristine clean tones for country or jazz sounds, as it is with a heavily

overdriven amp geared towards crunchy rhythms and leads. These P90's are also fully wax potted to eliminate any unwanted microphonic feedback.

The SG Special is equipped with a 3-way toggle switch, hand-wired controls and orange drop capacitors. This is a very noticeable and beneficial feature if you prefer to rely on the guitar's volume knob for varying your level of gain and response, as opposed to channel switching.

The Gibson SG Special will ship with 10-46 gauge strings tuned to E standard and comes with a protective hardshell case and accessory pack. At a retail price of \$1499 USD, the SG special is full of tonal variety and comfortable features, packaged in one of the most iconic looking instruments of all time. Check one out at your local Gibson dealer!



END «

NOT NEW!



SansAmp GT2 (1993)

Affectionately referred to as the "desert island" pedal, the SansAmp GT2 is unchanged (except for the DC input very early on). Consistently in production since introduced, it enables you to "architecturally" create your own rig in seconds.

SansAmp Classic (1989)

B. Andrew Barta's unique invention was the catalyst for the whole "going direct" movement over 30 years ago. Since then, SansAmp has evolved into an extensive line of pedals and racks, as well as being the heart of our Fly Rig[®] Series. Of the pedal formats, the SansAmp Classic is the most sophisticated.

EXCITEMENT
NEVER GETS
OLD



SansAmp Bass Driver DI (1994)

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

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

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

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

TECH 21
Analog BrillianceSM
tech21nyc.com

Orange AD30

Mick Hughes—live engineer for the Led Zeppelin reunion tour—described Jimmy Page “the loudest 30 watts I have ever heard!” That’s not the only thing about the Orange AD30 of 2-channel tube amplifiers out there, but you’d be hard-pressed to find an amp that sounds as good as the AD30. That’s because the AD30 is more like two completely separate amplifiers. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, we thought we’d showcase just what makes it more.

THERE’S always discussion amongst the guitar community around what makes a piece of gear “vintage”. For some, it’s any piece of gear that’s 20 years older or above—a definition that would seemingly include gems like the Go-rilla GG-20, the Johnson J-Station and those “is it a heart or a toilet seat?” guitars from Daisy Rock.

More discerning types will argue that a “vintage” piece of gear can be much younger, provided it’s truly excellent. A “classic”, if you will? Well, whichever of these definitions you roll with, the Orange AD30 fits the bill—it’s 20 years old this year, and it’s absolutely killer.



e's Orange AD30 twin-channel amplifier head as AD30 that appears to defy physics. There are a lot of sounds as different from one channel to the next in one than a single amplifier with two tones. This classic amp so good. **Nick Jennison** tells us

One of the amps that marked the “second coming” of the legendary British amp brand around the dawn of the new millennium, the AD30, was the brainchild of lead designer and eccentric genius Adrian Emsley. The name is a non-too-subtle nod to the Vox AC30, the inspiration for the EL84-powered AD30 (originally released as a single channel head and combo). That's about where the similarities end, though.

The classic two-channel AD30 (as used by Jimmy Page) was introduced in 2001 and has remained the most popular iteration of the amp. It's a 30w all-valve design, including a GZ34 valve rectifier like the ones found in '60s AC30s, which was notably absent in AC30s produced between 1970 and 1993. Unusually, the two channels are close-to-identical in sound and function, save for a little bit of extra aggression on channel two. While this may seem puzzling at first, it's actually the secret to this amp's enormous versatility.

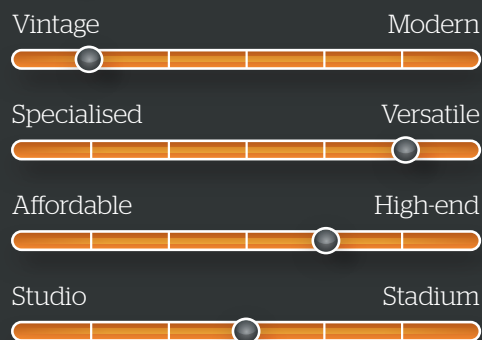
Both channels cover the entire gamut of gain from sparkling chime to thick and fuzzy saturation, giving you a tonne of options. Maybe you want a crunchy rhythm sound that cleans up nicely and a lead sound with more punch, volume and sustain? »



Orange AD30

MSRP: (UK) £1209 / (US) \$1499

The Breakdown



For fans of

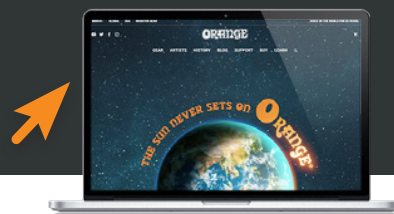
Classic British tones.

Versatility.

Simplicity.

For more information, please visit:

orangeamps.com





How about two cleans - one brighter and more percussive, one slightly darker for running dirt pedals? Maybe you just want to crank the gain on both channels, but you want some more volume and midrange for solos? Can you think of another two-channel amp that'll do all of that? I can't.

Tonally, there's definitely a touch of that "AC" chime at lower gain settings, but the AD30 is very much its own beast once you start turning the gain up. Where an AC30 gets searing and splatty when you crank it (the famous "blizzard of nails" tone), the AD30's overdrive is Orange through and

through - thick, mid-forward and more "fuzzy" than "buzzy". There's a good deal more gain and low end available than in a traditional "AC" circuit, too, although a Rockerverb this most certainly is not. The gain is loose, saggy and grainy, and very well suited to "classic" playing styles.

The EQ (as with all Orange amps) is highly interactive, with much more scope for drastic tonal sculpting than most classic British heads. This is particularly interesting when you start to wind up the volume and overdrive the EL84 power amp tubes. Driving the midrange hard into the clipping power

stage produces a very “vowel-y” tone, while the bass control essentially becomes a “sag” control - you can get either channel to be blown-out and fuzzy, articulate and vocal or somewhere in between.

As we’ve come to expect from Orange, the AD30 is engineered to be completely indestructible. It’s a heavy beast, made of heavy bent steel and birch ply. This is a rugged bruiser of an amp in both construction and

performance, but it’s a real looker too. There’s something about the Orange “picture frame” format, the oversized knobs and the pictograms that really appeals to me.

The Orange AD30 is a stone-cold classic of the modern era. It’s toneful, powerful, versatile without being overly complicated, and has withstood the toughest test of all - time.

END «



Orange AD30

Gamechanger Light Pedal Optical S

Serving up a truly unique creative platform for adventurous tone chasers and stompbox Pedal is the world's first optical spring reverb system—bringing the potential for adding it has a traditional spring reverb tank at its core, the Light Pedal adds an innovative array of different points of the spring to harvest unique overtones and harmonics produced along with more.

SPRING reverb is a thing of beauty, no question. It was the first “effect”, pre-dating fuzz, wah, tape echo and even tremolo. The digital arms race of the ‘80s, ‘90s and ‘00s and the pursuit of clean, perfect-sounding “studio-grade” reverbs led many guitarists to overlook the humble spring tank and its glorious imperfections, but the last decade has seen legions of guitarists embracing the drippy, splashy vibe-y-ness of the most primitive of artificial reverbs. But don’t call it a comeback...



Spring Reverb

Box fanatics, Gamechanger Audio's Light Pedal brings new sonic textures to your playing. Though it uses an array of infrared optical sensors aimed at different lengths, here's Nick Jennison to explain

Enter Gamechanger Audio - the Heston Blumenthals of the guitar pedal space. Not content with using plasma tubes to power fuzz pedals, the Latvian boffins have decided to take a crack at spring reverb... using the power of light!

The Light Pedal is a unique and highly innovative take on a reverb pedal, using a combination of a traditional transducer-driven spring tank and an array of optical sensors. These sensors capture the output of the springs with much greater fidelity than the output transformer of a common-or-garden spring tank.

That's only the start of it, though. This highly tweakable pedal allows you to blend the cruder sound of the transducer (via the "springs" knob) in with the more lush and ethereal optical sensors to create a completely unique reverb that's somewhere between a clanky, resonant spring and a lush plate-like wash.

The real fun begins when you start messing with the various modes of operation, though. "Optics" allows you to select between various combinations of optical sensors for subtly different reverb textures, while "Sweep" will cycle through the sensors to create a gorgeous modulated reverb. "Tremolo" »



Gamechanger Light Pedal Optical Spring Reverb

MSRP: (UK) £299 / (US) \$349

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Straightforward Feature-rich



Affordable High-end



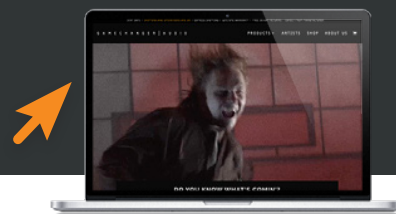
For fans of

Spring reverb.

Experimentation.

Pedals that look gorgeous.

For more information, please visit:
gamechangeraudio.com



turns the sensors on and off for a pulsing optical tremolo that only affects the wet signal.

“Reflect” and “Feedback” both feed the signal back into the tank multiple times - the former producing a lo-fi sounding delay that blurs the line between delay and reverb, the latter producing chaotic, resonant feedback that’s perfect for drones, washes and other noisy goodness.

Finally, “Harmonic” produces a shimmer-like effect, but unlike digital shimmer reverb where a pitch-shifted signal is fed back into the reverb, the Light Pedal achieves this effect by driving the springs using a special circuit that emphasises the upper harmonics of the signal. »



Gamechanger *Light Pedal Optical Spring Reverb*

SE

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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



PRS
PAUL
REED
SMITH
GUITARS

25TH
ANNIVERSARY

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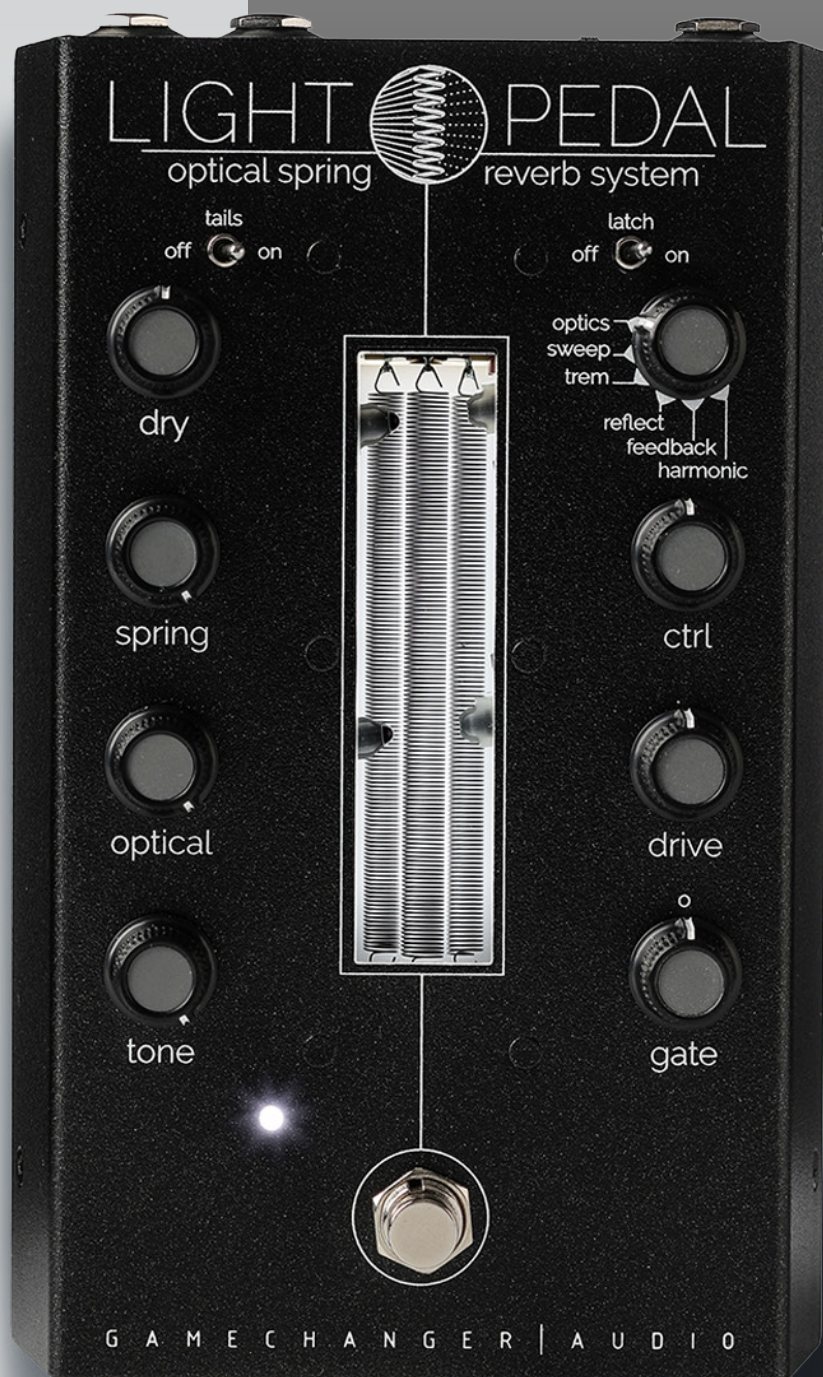
‘If your imagination is big enough, there’s **endless fun** to be had...’

There are a bunch of other useful performance features, too. You can create gated or ducked reverbs with the centre-notched “Gate” knob. The footswitch can be set to latching or momentary operation (especially useful in “Feedback” mode), and there’s a three-position “shock sensor” that shuts off the wet signal when an impact is detected to/near the pedal. This means you can stomp around on stage as hard as you like without the springs sounding like a cannon going off, but you can still get that sound, too if you so desire. Lastly, the “Ctrl”, “Springs”, “Optics” and “Gate”

knobs can all be assigned to an expression pedal for real-time control.

The Light Pedal is a truly unique reverb pedal - in concept, execution and sound. It’s capable of a huge range of sounds that go far beyond the constraints of a traditional spring reverb, but stays firmly in the analogue domain with all the immediacy and organic lushness that comes with it. It’s a tweaker’s pedal for sure, but if your imagination is big enough, there’s endless fun to be had.

END «



BOSS RC 500

Featuring best-in-class 32-bit AD/DA and 32-bit floating-point processing, the RC-500 from BOSS captures your personal sound with full fidelity and keeps loops crystal clear, even with multiple overdubs. Plus, with 13 hours of stereo recording time, there's plenty of space for extended creative journeys. **Sam Bell** tells us more.

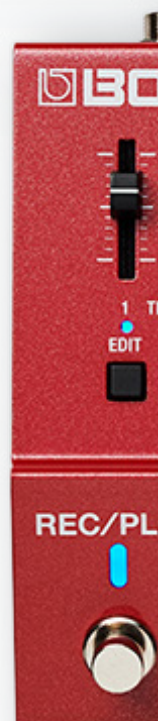
LOOP pedals are awesome. They are a great tool for composition, performing and practising. For composition, they really push the musician to use their instrument in new creative ways, it also pushes the composer's ideas into new realms. Starting with a melody or starting with the chords are just a couple of the infinite options we have with the looper.

Musicians can become a one-person band using a looper, showcasing the whole process from the small fragment of the initial idea all the way up to the full presentation; the audience can hear and appreciate all the layers that go into creating a soundscape. And finally, practice, any musician wishing to hone their improvisational skills can on the fly record a progression into the looper and practice soloing. Or practice

coming up with cool parts for a song, test them out. Or test out harmonies, chordal relationships, bass lines, rhythms, timing; the list is endless. The looper is the ultimate practice tool.

In this issue of Guitar Interactive, I have the pleasure of looking at the BOSS RC-500. This is a two-track loop pedal. Boss has an extensive and high-quality range of loop pedals available for all types of musicians. The RC500 is perhaps the biggest looper you can get that still runs on battery and will fit nicely on a pedalboard alongside a host of other pedals. And it has a few extra cool features that other models don't have. Let us take a look.

The RC 500 is a two-track looper with onboard mixing and deep control options. »





BOSS RC 500

MSRP: (UK) £269 / (US) \$359

The Breakdown

Straight forward Feature-rich



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Studio Stage



For fans of

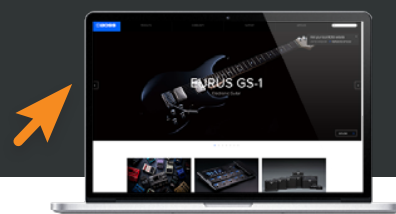
BOSS classic design

MIDI capability

Easy to use

For more information, please visit:

boss.info



REVIEWS **LOOPER REVIEW**

Each track features its own Loop FX (repeat, scatter, shift, and vinyl flick) for dynamic and creative loop performances. You can stop and start each track to create different musical sections or overlays, which can really help expand how far you take your loop compositions. The Mono/stereo inputs allow for easy pedalboard integration, plus the independent XLR mic input with phantom power means we can also integrate other types of instrumentation sources into our loops (percussion/vocal etc).

The musician can further express their ideas with the RC-500 with its inbuilt drum kits/loops. The RC-500 features 16 different drum kits and 57 preset rhythms with A/B variations. We can also further our control of the units features. Support for external footswitches, expression pedal or MIDI I/O is provided with space-saving mini TRS jacks.

We're supplied with a bright LCD with a multi-colour backlight for viewing loop status and editing parameters. This is quite helpful for seeing where you are in your loop »



Vintage®

#VINTAGETONE

Guitars Built For The Working Musician

The V100P with new sonic variations thanks to its unique choice of Wilkinson 'Soap Bar' pickups serves up a pleasant tonal twist, capturing the defined lows and throaty mids of a double coil, with the transparent top end of a single coil. Ready-made for blues and classic rock tones. Play on.



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Sound Sation
Shadow series

Character, the real one.

✓ 12 models

✓ Stunning Satin Black finish

✓ Hi quality craftsmanship & hardware




Distribution

and makes navigating the features pretty intuitive for on the fly parameter changes. And finally the RC-500's quality 32-bit AD/DA and 32-bit floating-point processing means that loops keep their sonic integrity with up to 13 hours of recording time in stereo. You can store up to 99 phrases on the unit and load them as WAV files on and of the unit via the USB connectivity.

If all that wasn't enough, the unit runs on four AA batteries or via a 9-volt power supply. So this pedal will work well in various pedalboard/non-pedalboard situations depending on the environment you wish to loop in!



What do I think? Well... For the seasoned looper, this pedal is fantastic—lots of features that will be easily digested. If you're a first-time looper, I'd suggest checking out simpler pedals such as the RC-5, as it can be easy to get lost and confused with the RC-500's features if you don't have much experience of looping. However, if you're looking to take your looping to the next level, the RC-500 is well worth looking into.

I really enjoyed having the option of mixing between two tracks, the creative possibilities using this pedal are fairly endless. Being able to change the phrase length and have a count in was also helpful for various applications as well. As always BOSS makes quality gear that is fairly easy to use once you understand how BOSS lays its pedals out.

The RC-500 is a worthy addition to Boss's fantastic loop pedal range; go check one out!

END «

“What do I think? Well... For the seasoned looper, this **pedal is fantastic...**”

Eventide Ultra Tap Delay

Sam Bell reviews the Eventide Ultra Tap Delay, a unique multi-tap effect pedal capable of volume swells, and extraordinary modulation. It's the perfect tool for staccato leads – everything from reversed reverbs to the sound of ripping it up in the Grand Canyon! but just how good is it? Let's find out more

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

In this review, I'm going to take a look at the Ultra Tap Delay. This is truly a wild stereo delay pedal, it's definitely a sibling of the Blackhole Reverb in terms of the potential for gravity-defying ambient sounds. If you're looking for a crazy delay pedal, this is worth checking out.

The basic concept behind the Ultra Tap is the focus on being able to really dive into the sonic shape of the 'Taps' (Delay Repeats) We can do standard Delay

things, such as change the length/sub-division of the Repeats, the Feedback/Rate, Mix and Tone. However, the Ultra Tap brings in some other really cool features to help further shape our 'Taps'.

We can change the way the repeats interact with each other. We can have them speed up and slow down, or we can have them change volume etc, using the Spread & Taper controls. We can have them modulate to a specific waveform using the 'Chop' control.

Another cool feature is being able to dial in 'Pre-Delay', where we can offset the start of the delay signal by a specific subdivision or time. With the 'Taps' control, we can create modulation or reverb like sounds by bringing in more repeats at different rates. We can even 'Slurm' them together using the Slurm control to create a washy texture. »



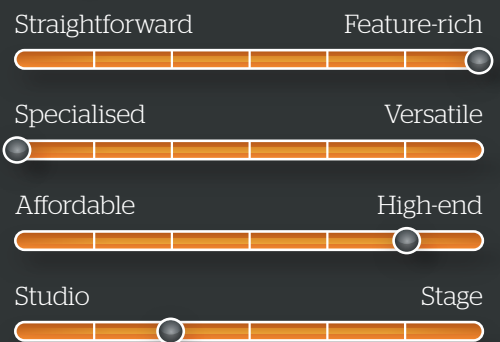
e of rhythmic delays, glitchy reverbs, huge pads, swelling chords, and other evolving effects Eventide bill it as “the mother of all Echoplexes,”



Eventide Ultra Tap Delay

MSRP: (UK) £279 / (US) \$279

The Breakdown



For fans of

Unique reverbs and choruses

Expressive modulation

Unlimited tonal possibilities

For more information, please visit:

eventideaudio.com





The options are truly endless with this pedal, and the range of sounds and textures we can get from it are versatile. It's safe to say, however, the style of sounds are quite specialised towards specific uses within certain creative contexts (made by the user). This isn't a standard Delay Pedal; this is something from out of space!

The pedal itself is a very small footprint. It does require a bit of time to get used to how controls interact with each other. But once you get the gist, it's easy to navigate and there are tons of sounds to be found. The chrome finish does make it a

bit tricky to see the controls; I'd imagine in a low light scenario that this pedal would be tricky to get around. However, I think the intended use of this pedal is to 'set and forget'. Make your pre-sets, save them and then head to the stage or the studio!

Talking of pre-sets, you can switch between 5 of them on the pedal itself. It also has full MIDI capability if you want to grab some more pre-set places. And not to forget, you can also plug this pedal into your computer and use the Eventide Device Manager Editor software to further get into the mechanics of the pedal and the sounds.

Talking of pre-sets, you can **switch between 5** of them on the pedal itself. ..”

This is definitely a high-end unit, tons of features, crazy delay/modulation/sound shaping options. If you're looking for something truly unique in the world of ambient/delay pedals, the Ultra Tap is certainly worth looking at!

END «



Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail Deluxe

The Vapor Trail Deluxe builds on the proud legacy of Seymour Duncan's original Vapor Trail delay pedal, adding new sonic modes and storable preset locations. These additions make the pedal a true upgrade. **Billy Campbell** tells us more.

EXPANDING

on the hugely popular Vapor Trail Delay, Seymour Duncan brings out the all-new Vapor Trail Deluxe Analog Delay pedal. The New Vapor Trail Deluxe builds on the original's lush and expressive analogue bucket-brigade style delay by adding a myriad of control options, new sonic modes, and storable preset locations.

Seymour Duncan has used 4 of the largest bucket brigade chips in production to achieve enhanced tone and delay time, with all of the warmth that comes from an analogue circuit. This technology enables the pedal to go from a subtle shimmer to fast rotary-style warble effects with ease. New enhanced control features include the tap tempo button with subdivisions, an expression pedal jack for added external control and delay tails on/off options for letting your repeats carry over if you choose.

For enhanced routing flexibility, there is a Wet insert (send/return), top-mounted input and output jacks, and is 100% True Bypass for preserving signal integrity.

The Vapor Trail deluxe offers up to 1.2 seconds (Normal 37ms to 1.2s Normal / 6ms to 300ms Micro) of 100% analogue delay, with onboard tap-tempo functions offering the choice of 1/4 note, dotted 8th note, 8th note and 8th note triplet subdivisions. Harmonically rich and textured analogue modulation control can easily be adjusted with the rate and depth controls. There are three storable presets for quickly and easily access to your favourite delay settings, consisting of any time, rate or depth options, as well as the four new special modes.

Instantly access Micro Delay for extremely fast repeats, which authentically replicates double-tracked, slapback, and Leslie speaker style effects. Pitch



xe

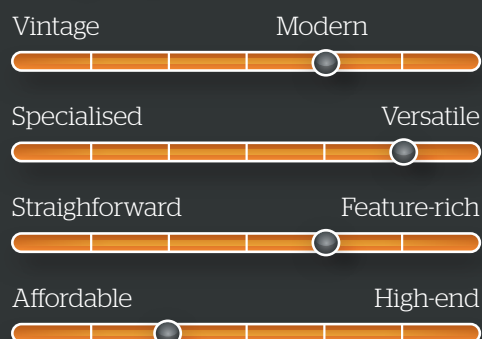
or Trail analogue delay pedal by adding expand-
Vapor Trail Deluxe analogue delay one of a kind.



Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail Deluxe

MSRP: (UK) £265 / (US) \$327

The Breakdown



For fans of

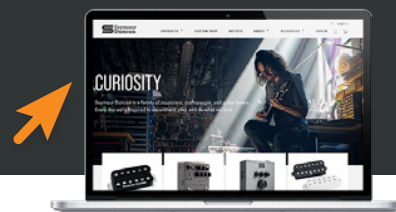
Authentic analogue delays

Superb Build quality

Great looks

For more information, please visit:

seymourduncan.com





Sequence, which introduces up and down octaves in 8 customizable rhythmic sequences. Pitch Bender, which puts dive-bomb and glissando effects only a tap away, and Runaway, which offers endless repeats and the sonic buildup of runaway delay.

The Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail Deluxe offers the total array of delay effects, from subtle echo to an endless textured, atmospheric soundscape, all with complete control. The pedal retails for \$229 USD and will add a whole new depth to your effects arsenal. Stop by your local Seymour Duncan dealer and test it out!

END◀

“Stop by your local Seymour
Duncan dealer and **test it out..!**”



Seymour Duncan Vapor Trail Deluxe

THE Quietroom

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

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

WHEN ONLY
ACOUSTIC WILL DO

Kustom Sienna Pro 35W 1x10

Combining some seriously good looks with great tone, Kustom's Sienna Pro series acoustic guitar amp is a live or home setting. Featuring brand new speakers exclusively developed for the Sienna Pro series, it works to retain each instrument's unique harmonic content while contributing a sparkle to your sound. Check out the full review.

THE Kustom Sienna 35 Pro is a highly affordable acoustic guitar amp, featuring over 30-watts of power, eight built-in Modulation/Reverb Effects three-band EQ, Notch Control and jack two inputs (line/mic & guitar). Around the back, we have a headphone/line out and speaker out options.

The sound from the 1x10 speaker (I accidentally said 8-inch speaker in the video review, doh!) fills the room nicely, and the EQ/Notch control's respond well to your acoustic guitar, giving you flexibility over your tone. The Notch control can also help with dialling out any troublesome frequencies that might cause feedback. The effects give us different types of reverb/chorus combinations, from a lush hall reverb with chorus to a slapback room sound; these FX can be mixed in using the level control. This definitely helps expand on your guitar sound, offering up a wide range of combinations to suit just about any acoustic tone...and all this at a stunning price. »



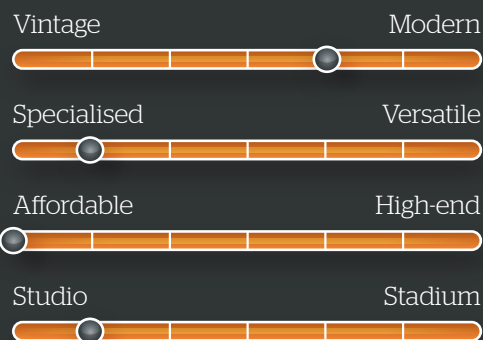
Acoustic instrument amplifiers can easily inspire in the Sienna Pro Series, the Kustom Sienna Pro 35W 1x10 is bringing quality to the sound. Here's **Sam Bell** with



Kustom Sienna Pro 35W 1x10

MSRP: (UK) £189 / (US) \$219

The Breakdown



For fans of

Transparent acoustic tone

Stand out looks

Great value for money

For more information, please visit:
kustom.com



THE QUIETROOM AMP REVIEW

The unit itself is very lightweight and the build is pretty sturdy. I'd easily recommend for some small acoustic gigs filling smaller rooms. Definitely worth checking out if you are looking for your first acoustic guitar amp, it's affordable and it looks and sounds great!

END◀



Explore the Elements.



An Ovation guitar is a hybrid of organic elements and ground-breaking technology. The original elliptical bowl design married with select tone woods and integrated, optimized electronics offers unmatched, time-tested live performance. Nature + Innovation = Ovation

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GUITARS

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Martin X Series GPC-X2E Macassar

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

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

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

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

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

“The rugged **construction and attention to detail** mean that this guitar does equally well at home, outdoor environments, or on stage..”

Macassar



Martin X Series GPC-X2E Macassar

MSRP: (UK) £739 / (US) \$699

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Bright Dark



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Martin quality at an affordable price

Slimmer neck profiles

Impressive looks

For more information, please visit:

martinguitar.com



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

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

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



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

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

END «



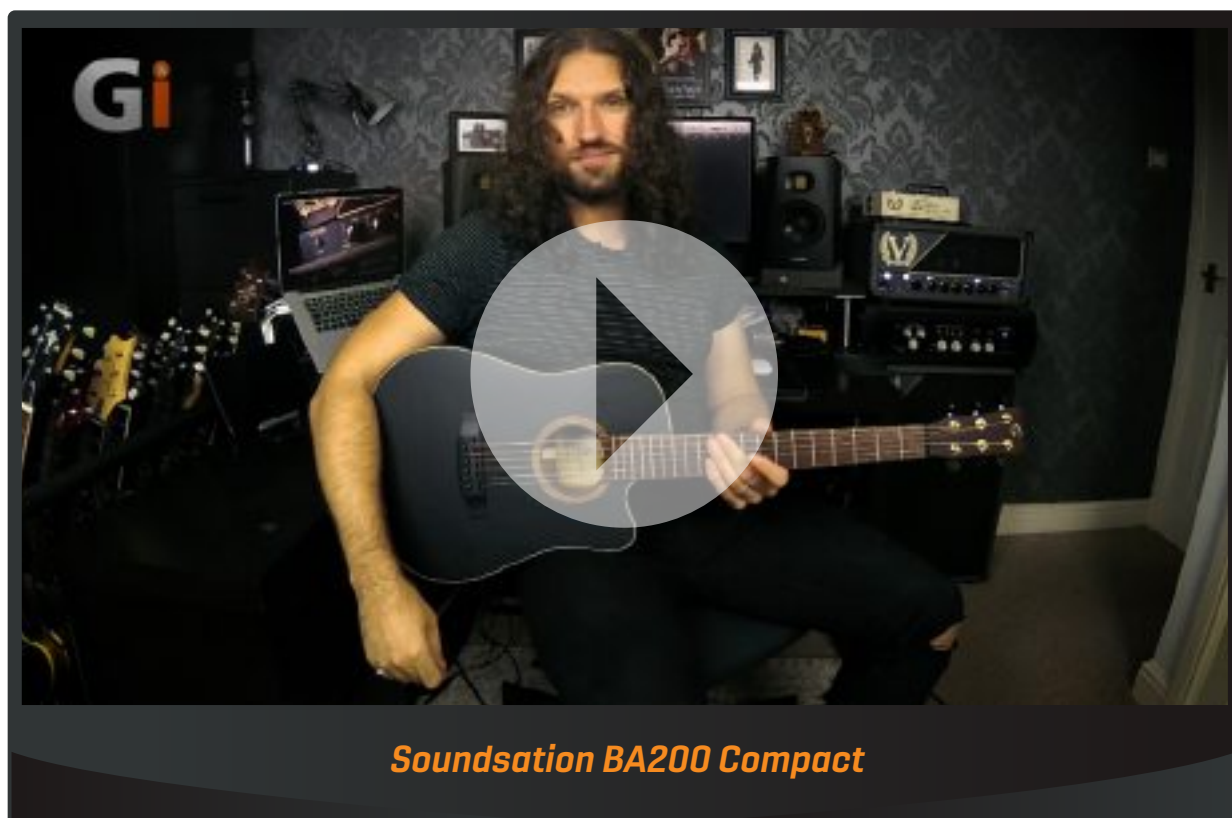
Soundsation BA200 Compact

Nick Jennison reviews the Soundsation BA200. A compact version of the Soundsation Shadow Series line, the BA200 acoustic guitar is only 83cm long but still delivers big in the tonal department.

I love small-bodied acoustic guitars. You can recline on the sofa and play one without having to reach around a large body, they feel much more comfortable hanging from a strap, and the smaller neck and shorter scale make for a much easier playing experience. They're also a great choice for student instruments - if

you've ever tried to teach an 8-year-old how to hold a dreadnought, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

The Soundsation BA200 Compact is just such a guitar. It's a diminutive 83cm (32.6") from end to end with a petite parlour body shape, but it's still a full »





Soundsation BA200 Compact

MSRP: (UK) £249 / (US) \$TBA

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Big sound for little money

Great playability

Small-bodied acoustics

For more information, please visit:
soundsationmusic.com



“The Soundsation BA200 Compact is a very **well built guitar** that’s a lot of fun to play...”

4/4 scale instrument with a 14th fret neck join. It sports a mahogany neck, back and sides and a solid sitka spruce top - pretty impressive on an affordable, small body guitar where laminate tops are much more common - all under a really tidy matte black finish.

In terms of playability, this guitar is a lot of fun. The small body shape makes it easy to find a comfortable playing position, and the neck profile feels great - it’s small enough to be easily manageable for players with smaller hands while still having enough front-to-back depth for larger players like myself. The factory action is pretty good, and the shorter scale length gives the guitar a loose and easy playing feel.

Tonally, there’s a lot to like. While you’d be foolish to expect huge cinematic lows from a guitar this small, there’s plenty of

projection for strumming styles, especially if you have a lighter touch or use a thinner pick. This guitar really shines with gentler styles though, with a sweet and mellow voice that’s ideal for fingerstyle playing. That said, single-note leads sound great too, and definitely benefit from the loose playing feel.

The Soundsation BA200 Compact is a very well built guitar that’s a lot of fun to play. The small body size makes it an ideal travel guitar, and when you combine this with a slinky playing feel and a sweet, mellow tone and you have the perfect instrument for students - especially younger players with smaller frames. That said, pretty much any player will get a kick out of this guitar.

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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GI82

THE PLACE FOR BASS



Modern Vintage MVJ4-66 Fretless

Modern Vintage is back once again with another mouth-watering delight in the Gi Bassment keeping the old-school sound, feel and vibe, while tweaking that elusive formula to meet the demands. **Dan Veall** reviews the Modern Vintage MVJ4-66 Fretless.

WE recently looked at the Modern Vintage MVP-62, a respectful nod to a Leo classic with attention to the sort of updates that make a vintage staple ready for a modern age in a recent issue of Gi. The instrument impressed me. I found that both playability and tone through my Bergantino studio rig was excellent.

Modern Vintage is bringing their “A-game” and currently have four different models of guitar available. The Precision model, a Stratocaster, a Telecaster and here, in glossy black, a Jazz bass model. This particular example takes its lead from a ‘66 era Fender Jazz bass, but furthermore, it is fretless and sounds wonderful as you will hear in my video review.

So first up, let’s look at the vintage aspects of the Jazz instrument and then move on to the tweaks that make this instrument one for your shopping list:

Quality body and neck woods take up the familiar outline: Alder for the body and Maple for the neck. The whole instrument weighs in at just over 4Kg and sits well balanced on my leg. Starting up at the neck end of business, the Maple has been heat-treated, which is sometimes known as ‘roasting’. This is a method that isn’t just about cooking wood in an oven by any means, more a carefully controlled process that is said to improve both tone and stability. Certainly, I immediately felt that the MVP-62 had a rich resonant tone even before I had a chance to plug it in, so maybe there’s something in it! - Of course, for those gigging across continents, anything that is stable and less likely to be affected by atmospheric conditions is going to be well received! Whilst we are up at the headstock, Modern Vintage treat us to colour matched cap and quality Hipshot lightweight tuning keys that no doubt add to the look of

the instrument as well as providing some weight relief.

Finding our way down towards the body and the comfortable neck profile, it’s a Jazz feel and tone, smooth and blemish-free fitted neck binding, down the rich looking board. Very smooth.

Back to the body for Modern Vintage pickup voiced pickups hood familiar Jazz bass humbucker Volume-Master Tone between pickups with though getting the required some fine adjustments. I would say the had less of a mid “f” open sounding quality.

The period-correct features a 4-ply tortoiseshell



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today's serious

well as providing

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Alder body fea-
seshell »



Modern Vintage MVJ4-66 Fretless

MSRP: £1499 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Affordable High-end



Studio Stadium



For fans of

Modern Vintage quality

Fretless

Naturally bright instruments

For more information, please visit:
https://www.bassdirect.co.uk/bass-guitar-specialists/Modern_Vintage.html





Modern Vintage MVJ4-66 Fretless



pickguard which does look quality versus some of the examples out there with “printed” tortoiseshell graphics.

Like the MVP-62, this instrument comes with a bridge featuring steel saddles. I’m liking this configuration and have the same on my own 70’s precision back at Dood Towers.

Modern Vintage instruments feature 2-way truss rods in the necks and, the neck profiles themselves have been shaped to best fit preferred specifications of the era. Indeed Sonata Marketing’s John Files used his own collection of vintage Fenders to size up the neck profiles, I understand.

There’s certainly attention to detail in these instruments too. I mentioned the fretwork

is very tidy on the P model, but even body and neck joins, the edges of the fretboards and even screws fitted are all neatly applied. Yes, I have seen wonky screws and bad fretwork even on premium basses in the past! Fretless bass fingerboards need to be properly radiused too and this one feels even and ‘rattle’ free.

Rounding up, both the basses in the Modern Vintage range feel great quality and deliver some rich resonant tones. Backing the tone off on both delivers a nice thump too.

I wouldn’t mind spec’ing out my own P bass one day!

END«

Elrick Expat NJS5

Back to The Bassment, comes another example from Elrick Bass Guitars hailing from the U.S. The company set themselves up and opened their doors in 1993, launching a new range of instruments at NAMM that year. Today, **Dan Veall** looks at a high spec' model, the Expat NJS bolt-on 5 string.

THIS Alder bodied super jazz style bass feels good in the hands, and acoustically, I am treated to a clear balanced tone with the slight hint at a scoop in the mid-range. All bets are off when it comes to plugging in, given that the electronics will make a significant difference to the sound.

Speaking of which, a pair of Bartolini J coils will offer some nice tonal colour and that we can access a wide range of tones from the NTMBF 3 band active EQ. In my video, I demonstrated a few tones available from the circuit, but given the options, there's something for everyone in there, including bypassing the entire active circuitry for some passive vibes. Personally, given that the backline on the day offers a "what goes in comes out" nature, I liked the added colouration that the circuit engaged brought to proceedings*. Generally speaking, I use the

same studio rig so you can hear more of what the bass sounds like verses backline.

The bolt-on neck enjoys a 6 bolt fixing deep in to the body with a further sculpting to the heel area of the bass to move as much wood out of the way as possible for reaching those higher frets. This made for a neat and stylish cutaway around the back with no obvious adjustment to the smooth lines around the front. May I draw your attention to the lower cutaway that reaches all the way back to fret 24! This bass invites you north of the border for some tasteful noodling!

Balance is maintained in the sitting position with a well placed leg counter, and in standing with a strap, the upper horn reaches toward the 12th fret. Weight distribution is further enhanced with the inclusion of super lightweight tuning keys from Hipshot USA.

Anchoring the style of business, Elrick's custom bridge looks as full as the rest of

Playing the neck even though a 19" a little wider than for 5+ strings. The of the neck really like I was playing 18mm!

The 16" radiused this example has the block marker combination rea

I must mention thing that I always on instruments.

Powering up my thunder as the d the EQ became the lows. On thi



USA. Robert Elrick and
instruments at the Summer
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strings at the other end
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looks every bit as taste-
the instrument design.

feels fast and inviting
9mm string spacing is
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a lovely grain and
ers with the pickguard
lly lifts the whole look.

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apparent advancing
s example, I didn't »



Elrick Expat NJS5

MSRP: (UK) £2699 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



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Warm Bright



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For fans of

A superbly versatile bass

Money well spent.

For more information, please visit:
https://www.bassdirect.co.uk/bass_guitar_specialists/Elrick.html



feel the need to touch the treble for most styles and even found a pleasing “P bass” like tone from the solo’d front pickup.

Dialling the mids and making use of the push-pull on the mid-level helped to zone in on the useful tones with plenty of room for inspiration.

Yes, we are looking a premium price tag here in a market full of super jazz type basses. That said, this one is worthy of a visit to the likes of Bass Direct to give it some of you attention.

END «



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Barefaced One10T GI

When Barefaced launched the One10 in 2015, it blew everyone away—no one expected a cab to go quite so loud. However, it couldn't do sparkly clean tweeter sounds as well as a cab with a tweeter comes in! **Dan Veall** tells us more.

I tend not to watch previous review videos, but thinking back to the Barefaced One10 review I wrote back in 2017, I recall wondering whether it would benefit from the inclusion of a tweeter.

Well, it seems that I wasn't the only one as today we look at the brand new Barefaced One10T

A well designed two or three-way system can certainly help the sound as a whole, and Barefaced Audio could never be ?? for being a brand that cut corners or put anything less than 100% into the design of their products.

I've watched Barefaced as a brand taking shape from the very early prototyping posts on bass community forums by company owner Alex Claber, (who I might add is an incredibly knowledgeable chap with the sort of drive that is akin to a terrier with a meaty bone to chow down on).

So, when it comes to adding a tweeter to a speaker cabinet, you know that the drivers will be well-matched with the right sort of crossover to suit the voice of the cabinet as intended.

So what makes this cabinet special versus other 1x10's on the market? Ok, a little word about the 10" drivers in this range of cabinets:

Designed by Barefaced and Eminence USA, the is partly an answer to demand in that rather than offering a less coloured, high transient response, high dynamic, flatter response output of the 12XN550 found in the Barefaced 'BIG' range, such as the Big Twin II and the Big Baby II, the 10CR250, a 250W RMS driver offers a more coloured approach that is pleasing tonally and sympathetic to the needs of bass guitar sound. Its response takes drive effects particularly well.

Indeed, this little cabinet uses a rather clever Hybrid Resonator (which as »

cab this small to have such a huge warm sound,
with a good tweeter...that's where the NEW One10T



Barefaced One10T GI

MSRP: (UK) £549 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



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barefacedaudio.com



Barefaced go on to say, “damp[ens] the mid-bass hump and fatten[s] the deep lows with two controlled resonances working in unison, and giving you a ton more power handling in the real bass”) which delivers quite an impressive perception of low end from a deliciously compact cabinet offering.

I’m yet to break this cabinet in, so in my review video, it could be argued that the full bottom end and open tone is yet to be experienced, but that didn’t stop me from cranking up some serious low B action; some long, slow high energy notes to see what the cabinet would deal with. No high pass filtering or limiting here, I’ve got the bass EQ boosted in the video.



Barefaced One10T GI



I'd argue that the space that I recorded in wasn't the best match for micing up - but if you were here and experienced how good the cabinet sounded, well, then you'd be happy with using it at "The Dog And Duck" on a Tuesday night and Massivo Tone Studios at the weekend.

Well-thought-out appointments come as standard too, metal corners to protect the cabinet, feet on two sides allowing for vertical or horizontal positioning and a side handle for when you make just one journey from your car to the rehearsal room, with your bass and amp in a bag on your back!

Weighing in at a mere 8Kgs, this 38cm tall cabinet is rated at 8 ohms nominal impedance, a pair of these would make a super little stack, but a quick look at the available cabinet offering from Barefaced will soon have you salivating at a modular set-up pairing your favourite cabinets for every possible gig.

On that subject, I do like that if you are utterly confused about which cabinets to buy, you can contact Alex Claber himself, who, as a bassist too, has a huge amount of experience and can direct you towards the right cabinet for your needs.

Oh, and should you, for some unknown reason, make the wrong choice, Barefaced

Audio even offers a one month trial period (T&Cs apply) with a full refund.

So, expert knowledge and an extended return period on top of a great sounding range of cabinets: It's hard not to see why Barefaced Audio has cemented itself as a brand that stands behind its products confidently and rightly so.

Barefaced have a webshop, and you have the option of selecting either steel or cloth front grill (choice of two colour cloth grills no less!). I may be a bit fussy here, but owing to the position of the tweeter, the new grill is a different design to that of the One10, non-tweeter model.. and I have to say, I think I prefer this one... eyes left, that's the new Barefaced logo too, firmly attached to the grill, it's never going to rattle or vibrate at high output volumes!

Overall, this is a great cabinet that would suit those who like tuneful backline rather than FRFR offerings for modellers, those who are fed up with tugging anvil-like cabinets around and those that like to surprise bandmates!

END «

Darkglass Element

Headphone Amp, Cabinet Simulator, Professional DI box, Audio Interface, IR loader, jam bu that this pedal sized box can't do? **Dan Veall** takes a closer look at the Darkglass Element.

GIVEN its flexibility, my video review is more of an overview of Element as a device, because there are just so many possibilities of use! How Darkglass have crammed so much into one box is pretty impressive.

In simplicity, you can plug a signal path into the Element and either add EQ and speaker emulation to the DI XLR output (for passing to PA or recording device) or simultaneously blend it with Bluetooth, audio interface (USB) or auxiliary input sound for sending mixed to two sets of headphone outputs. The headphone levels and bass to music blend are controlled by LED-lit touch-sensitive sliders on the top panel.

Immediately out of the box, Element offers us five-speaker emulation slots to program, but by default are populated with some professional captured cabinet IRs. Each program slot has an EQ function (of which there are two different types) that can be programmed to further flavour your outgoing bass tone.

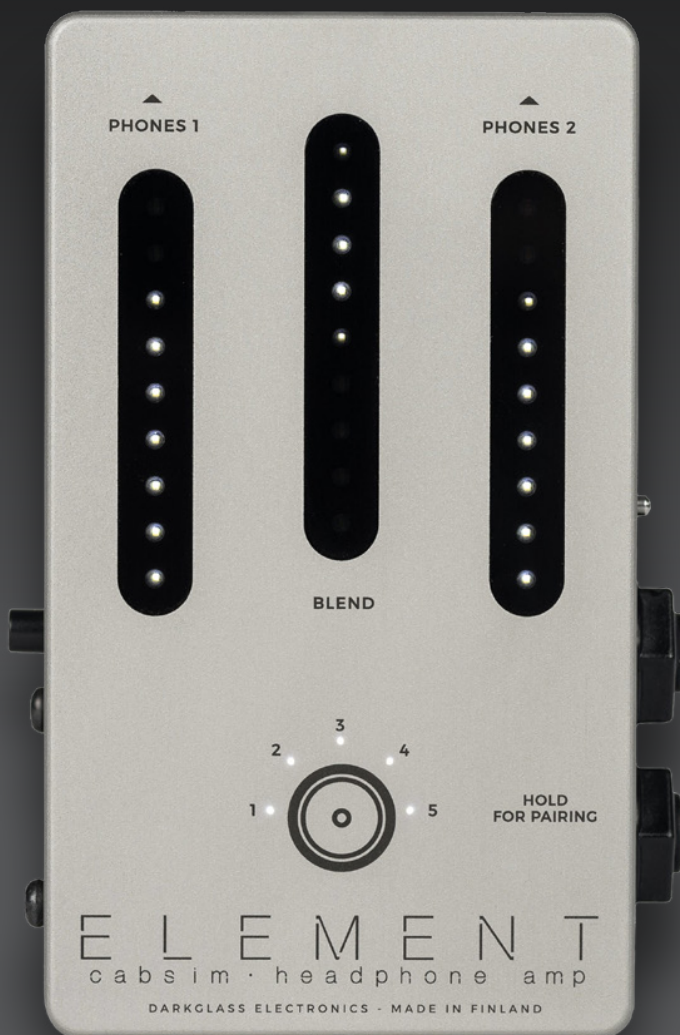
Thanks to the USB-C connection provided, Element can easily connect to your desktop and access the Darkglass Suite application offering further tweaking and remote access to the device functionality. The same USB-C is your direct connection for the multi-channel audio interface - yes this tiny box and your laptop may be all you need to capture some great instrument sounds, record and write on the move!

Although you will still need an external power adaptor for Element.

The Element will sit very happily at the end of your pedal chain on a board, where you can make use of all that juicy affected tone. It is great for sending a DI with a top-quality cabinet simulation dialled into the 'sound-man' for a silent stage set-up. Great also for In-Ear Monitor fold-back too - even for just your use!

But wait! What if you have a vintage valve amplifier like my own here that doesn't have a line out or balanced DI? You can daisy »

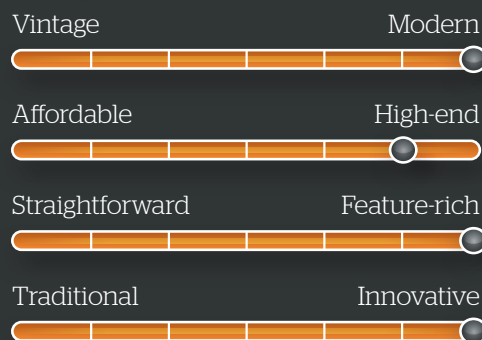
uddy for playing with friends. Is there anything



Darkglass Element

MSRP: (UK) £259 / (US) \$279

The Breakdown



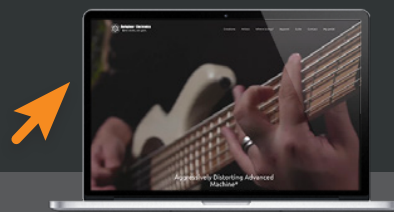
For fans of

State-of-the-art cab sims

Compact pedal format

For more information, please visit:

darkglass.com



chain into your speaker cabinet and then into the “Speaker” input on Element! (It isn’t a load box, so please don’t run your valve amps without a suitable load!) - With this configuration, it now means that I can run my tasty tube sound and capture it with or without a cabinet sound! This is especially useful for those who like to make use of that power amplifier compres-

sion sound and feel that you get from tubes cranked! (Most DI outputs on modern amplifiers pick their signal from before the power amplifier section)

For amplifiers that are rated at 100W, you can insert Element in the path from speaker output on the amplifier and cabinet itself. This opens up some really interest-



Darkglass Element

ing options with inserting IR's in the XLR path.

I like that many modern amplifiers (such as the Darkglass D Class offerings) can run without a speaker cabinet attached at all and, should you find a need to do so, you can connect the speaker output of a suitable amplifier to Element.

A final comment re: connecting speaker level outputs to Element - Read the manual, always - and never plug a speaker output into any other pedal, audio interface or another amplifier unless, like Element, it has a specific configuration for being able to do that. Speaker output has a much higher voltage swing than the tiny voltages involved in instrument-level signals.

The Element is brilliant. I like that when the pedal was released it didn't have the audio interface functionality, but that was added free of charge later on - this idea that firmware updates mean that software can be customised and new features added.

This little box is like a DI on steroids, the IEM hub that people don't know they need, the multifunction headphone ampli-

fier and the USB Audio interface that will make tracking bass on the move so simple!

I think if you are a gigging musician, this pedal will prove to be an invaluable tool to keep in your kit bag, but you may find that it will be next to your desktop often as a great recording and practice hub too.

It makes a great silent amplifier set up being driven by the Darkglass Hyper Luminous, try it!

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 3**

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 3

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 Concepts Column 7: Spread Triads

Hello and welcome to the latest instalment of my rhythm guitar concepts column, so far we have been looking at timing, dynamics and being mindful of the chord voicings we choose when we're playing with other musicians. Today we're going to take a look at something a little bit different, spread triads.

Taking any closed three string voicing of a triad, for example, a C Major triad on the top three strings (G string 5th fret, B string 5th fret and E string 3rd fret) and moving the middle string note down an octave creates a spread triad. In this case, the note on the B string 5th fret was the note E (which is the 3rd of the C chord) this gives us a C/E spread triad voicing. We can do this for all triads, starting on different string sets. Doing this will not only expand the texture of the chord voicing but also leads to lots of voice leading possibilities. Voice leading is where chord sequences are connected closely by a melody note, while this is a simple explanation, the subject can go very deep! However, for now, I'm going to keep it simple. »

In the example that accompanies this column, I have prepared a short spread triad etude that features in the clean guitar part from my song 'Function'. This short section of music was inspired by experimenting with some spread triad voicings. I personally wouldn't have come up with this particular chord sequence if I hadn't been visualising »

these kinds of shapes, this is a good example where sometimes patterns can help inspire certain musical pieces. However, I used my ear throughout the experimentation, with the simple rule "if it sounds bad, it probably is bad!"

The etude moves through some strong cadences with the top note of each spread triad leading down to the next voicing. Giving us a moving top note melody and a close descending bass melody in the lower register. Throughout the piece I am using hybrid picking, I am picking with A string with the pick and then using my middle finger for the G string and my 3rd finger for the high E string. This is something else that I feel is

very cool about spread triads, you can apply fingerstyle techniques to the shapes very easily, giving you many options for melodic movement within the chord voicing.

Try to experiment with this concept, my etude here uses only Major Triads and it sounds very dramatic. Try the concept with Minor, Augmented, Diminished and Sus triads as well, there are some fantastic sounds to be had! This concept can be taken further with the subject of triad superimposition, where you can play for example a G Triad over an E bass note to get an Em7 chord. You could also arrange these triad shapes with another guitarist by harmonising the triads to get a pretty melodic sound from a spread triad arrangement.

Have fun, until next time, happy exploring!

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Concepts 7: Speed Triads

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CREATIVE FINGERSTYLE



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

HELLO there and welcome to Guitar Interactive's Quiet room.

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

In most, if not all, art forms, travelling is a constant source of inspiration. Often travelling is used as a metaphor to describe the act of following an itinerary, implying a sense of artistic exploration or development. This approach does often result in a more meaningful, thematic

or story-telling outcome. This may also be reminiscent of the role of the troubadours in history.

Apart from the romantic aspect of this metaphor, the practical merits are not to be dismissed. I vividly remember attending an improvisation Masterclass led by a wonderful percussionist, who proposed an improvisation task following an imaginary itinerary through a thick jungle, into idyllic landscapes kissed by the sun and refreshed by the water drops from a fall nearby. The group had to improvise with their own instrument in a way that described or somehow reflected on »

the mood and connotation presented by each individual scenery. It was fascinating to notice that many improvisers responded in similar musical ways, particularly from a dynamic and tonal standpoint.

This prologue may suggest that I have done all of the before writing this piece... Well, not literally. However, I did compose the piece in the studio, just before filming, and in addition to the adrenaline caused by such an urgent deadline, the concept of travelling through various landscapes was utilized with the main purpose of giving structure and story-telling qualities to the piece. The landscapes I had in mind, in my opinion are not important and, in a way, I'd prefer the listeners to be unaware of these. I like the idea of the same piece of music evoking as many stories as the number of listeners experiencing these.

One thing I'd like to share though, is that I wanted the intro to feel like a car idling stationary, ready to go somewhere; and there I went.

HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

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

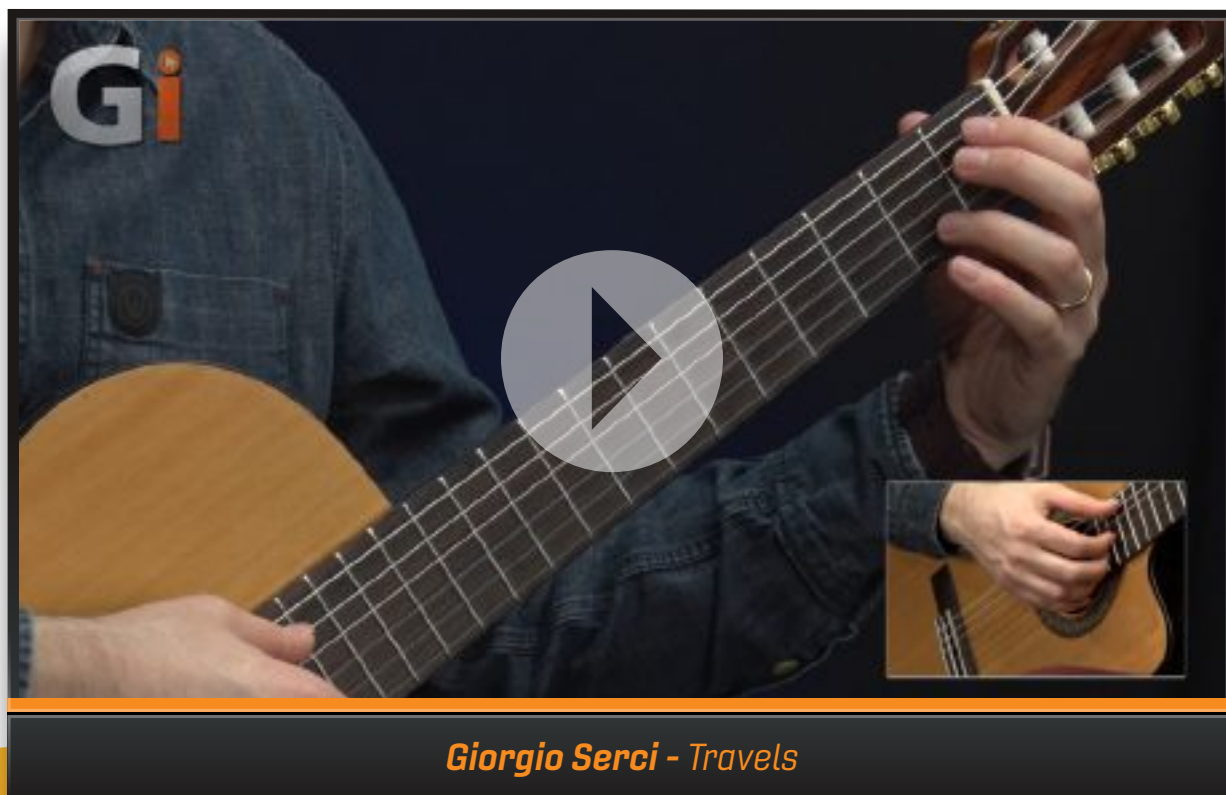
Here are the chords utilized and described in a concise manner, omitting the passing notes. »

D	D	D	D
F#7b9/A#	Gmaj7/B	A7/C#	D
F#7b9/A#	Gmaj7/B	A7/C#	D
D/C	Gmaj7/B	A/B	E/G#
Em/G	D/F#	Gadd2	D/F#
Gadd2 G/A			
D	D	D	D
F#7b9/A#	Gmaj7/B	A7/C#	D



F#7b9/A#	Gmaj7/B	A7/C#	D
D/C	Gmaj7/B	A/B	G#m7
Em/G	F#m7	Dm/F	Em7 F#m7
Gm6 Asus4b9			
D	E/D Eb/D	D	E/D Eb/D
D	E/D Eb/D	D	

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 recurrent use of 8th and syncopated 16th notes, with the occasional 8th note triplets.

MELODIC INGREDIENTS:

The melodic content navigates different registers and although gravitates around the key of Bm (Dmajor), it explores a few neighbor tonalities, like for example A major and G melodic minor.

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 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: Play a D major, (d shape) with the rhythm shown in the video lesson. Play a descending bass line from open D, followed by little f on fret 4 of A, index on fret 2 of A.

BAR 2: Index on fret 1 of A, open G, ring f on fret 2 of B and open e and middle f on fret 3 of B.

BAR 3: Index on fret 2 of A, ring f on fret 4 of



D, open G and middle f on fret 3 of B.

BAR 4: Barre' on fret 2, ring f on fret 4 of A, little f on fret 5 of B, middle f on fret 3 and then 2 of e. Play a descending bass line from open D, followed by little f on fret 4 of A, index on fret 2 of A.

BAR 5-8: Like bar 1 till 4.

BAR 9: Barre' on fret 2, middle f on fret 3 of A, ring f on fret 3 of B, index on fret 2 of G and e, followed by little f on fret 3 and 5 of e and a final middle f on fret 3 of B.

BAR 10: Index on fret 1 of A, open G, ring f on fret 2 of B and open e and middle f on fret 3 of B.

BAR 11: Barre' on fret 4 of D, G, B followed by middle f on fret 5 and little f on fret 7 of B. Open B.

BAR 12: Little f on fret 4 of E, middle f on fret 2 of D, index on fret 1 of G and open B.

BAR 13: Ring f on fret 3 of E, middle f on fret 2 of D, open G and B.

BAR 14: Index on fret 2 of E, open D, middle f on fret 2 of G, followed by little f on fret 3 of B and ring f on fret 2 of B.

BAR 15: Middle f on fret 3 of E, open D and B with index on fret 2 of G.

BAR 16: As bar 14

BAR 17: Middle f on fret 3 of E, open D and B with index on fret 2 of G. Next, open A, ring f on fret 5 of D, middle f on fret 4 of G, index on fret 3 of B.

BAR 18 TO 33: As from Bar 1 till 15

BAR 34: Barre' on fret 4 with little f on fret 7 of e.

BAR 35: Index on fret 3 of E, ring f on fret 5 of D, middle f on fret 4 of G and little f on fret 5 of B.

BAR 36 TO 37: As from Bar 34 till 35. In bar 35, add little f on fret 2 of B.

BAR 38: Open E, D, G and B. Next, same voicing on the second fret.

BAR 39: Middle f on fret 3 of E, index on fret 2 of D, ring f on fret 3 of G and little f on fret 3 of B.

BAR 40: Play D (d shape) with barre' on fret 2. Add little f on fret 5 of e. Then, same shape on fret 4, 3 and back to fret 2. Repeat 3 times to end on a D major. »

Congratulations, you have completed 'Travels'!

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:

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*Until the next time -
Good-bye.*

PART 2





— Electric Guitar Edition with **Nick Jennison**

SET-UP YOUR GUITAR LIKE A PRO:

HOW HIGH SHOULD I SET MY ACTION?

Sponsored by ELIXIR Strings

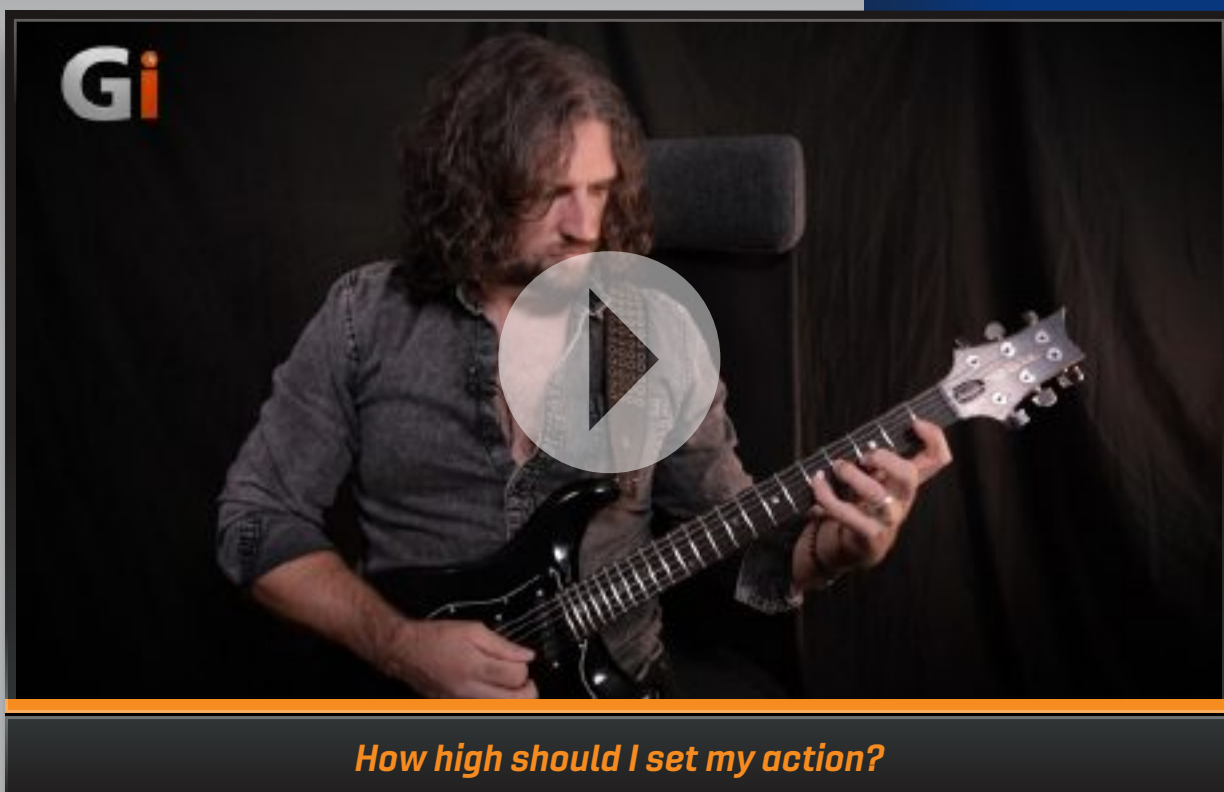
ACTION height is a much-misunderstood aspect of guitar setup. Like string gauge, there's a bit of a "macho" hangover when it comes to action height, with some players asserting that higher always equals better - embrace the pain, bro! By contrast, there are other players who swear by actions so low that they're impractical for anything besides the absolute deftest of touches - not exactly a recipe for expressive playing!

The juice, as you might expect, is usually somewhere in between these two. »



But where exactly? If no two players (and, for that matter, no two manufacturers) can agree on what a «perfect» action is, how are we supposed to find out? Well let's get into it.

First, it's important to acknowledge that no two guitar players are alike. Even excluding musical tastes, experience level and playing background, humans (and by extension, guitar players) vary drastically from individual to individual. Hand size, finger length, grip strength, pain perception, physical stature, neural efficiency, muscle fibre type, fine motor control... all of these are important variables that will influence your preferred setup. Yes, we can make recommendations based on averages, but an individual is not an





average - YOU are not an average. We can do better.

Instead, let's use a four-factor model for determining YOUR ideal action height that takes into account your anthropometry, playing style, preferences and experience level. This works with any guitar with an adjustable bridge, but it does take a little experimentation. Let's start with...

FRETTING PRESSURE:

Perhaps the most important determining factor for setting your action height is your fretting pressure. Let's start by saying that there's no "right" or "wrong" amount of pressure for everyone, as measured on something like a handgrip dynamometer. As we mentioned earlier, humans vary drastically from individual to individual.

Because of this, there is no one-size-fits-all action height, and you should adjust it to fit your own fretting pressure - specifically your "maximally relaxed" fretting pressure. Try this: play with as little force in the left hand as feels comfortable. If you can produce clean fretted notes, try notching your action up a sniff. Keep doing this until you can't produce clean notes with a MAXIMALLY relaxed hand. Once you find this height, lower the action just a little until those maximally relaxed notes are ringing clearly.

HAMMER-ON STRENGTH:

There's a relationship between legato technique and action height that's important to get right: too low, and you won't get the proprioceptive, tactile feedback you need to play accurately. Too high, and it'll be a struggle to sound notes with a relaxed left hand. Since hammer-ons are more of a "strike" than a "press", having to move the string further than is comfortable can quickly slow the velocity of your hammering finger, robbing you of the string-on-fret impact you need for a convincing hammer on.

The solution? Find your maximally relaxed hammer-on (the hammer-on you can do with the least amount of force that feels comfortable), and adjust your action up until you can't execute one anymore. Then back the action down just enough so that fully relaxed hammer-ons come out cleanly.

PICKING ANGLE OF ATTACK:

One of the coolest discoveries of the last decade or so is pick slanting - the way different players angle their pick path towards and away from the guitar's body to enable efficient string changes. Some players have a shallower angle of attack (say, 15 degrees, like Andy Wood), while others pick on a path with a very pronounced angle (45 degrees »





or greater, like Eric Johnson). Either strategy is totally fine for efficient string changes, but the steepness of your attack does have an implication on your action height. Put simply; a steeper attack will produce more «fret slap» (the sound of the string bouncing off the frets) at a given action height than a shallower angle of attack. The more aggressively you pick, and the lighter your string gauge, the more apparent the «fret slap». Speaking of which...

YOUR PREFERRED GENRE(S):

Some playing styles sound better with the «sizzly» sound of a low action. Others, not so much. Take funk, for example. Nile Rogers style sparkle can sound really cool with a low action and the strings slapping the frets on every strum. By contrast, Steve Cropper style soul comping will usually benefit from the more pure tone that a slightly higher action will produce (so long as it still meets our criteria for fretting pressure and hammer-on strength). The sizzle of a low action can add some definition and attack to a high gain tone (take players like John Petrucci, for example). By contrast, if you dabble in slide

playing, it makes sense to keep your «normal» action high enough that you can pull the slide out at any point and feel comfortable.

So there you have it: a comprehensive guide on how to discover your perfect action height. Work through this list, making adjustments and taking notes as you go, and pretty soon, your instrument will be sounding and feeling better than it ever has - and hopefully, you'll play better and make better music because of it.

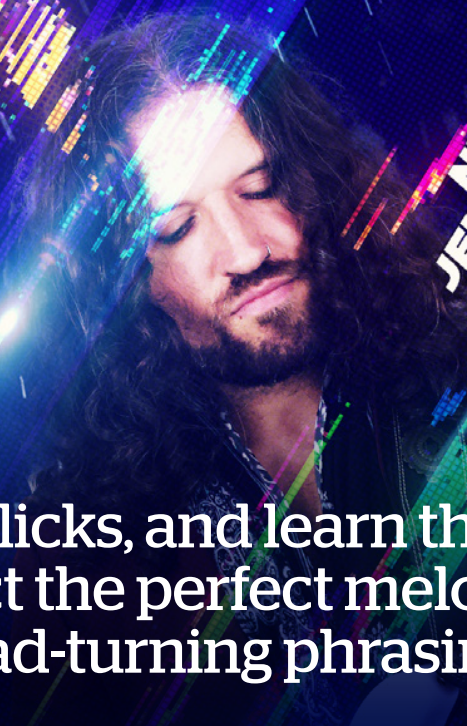
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NICK JENNISON'S THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MELODY & PHRASING

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