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Interactive

Guitar

89

SATCH IS BACK

JOE SATRIANI TALKS
EXCLUSIVELY TO GI

+ INTERVIEWS



ICHIKA NITO

LATEST GEAR REVIEWS

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BOSS TECH 21
NEURAL DSP]

AND MORE

NICK
JOHNSTON
TECH SESSION



OUR GENERATION

Drones play Rotosound electric guitar strings: the sound of Briti



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sh punk rock since 1977

Welcome to **ISSUE**

89

Hello and welcome to issue 89 of Guitar Interactive Magazine!



Editor
Jonathan Graham

After writing and recording eighteen solo albums—and contributing some immense guitar skills to countless other projects over the course of three decades—one could potentially find themselves a little lacking for inspiration or fresh ideas. That is not

the story of Joe Satriani. With his latest release, ‘The Elephants of Mars’ (out now, via earMusic), Satch is back with a sonically spellbinding new album that ushers in a new era of Satriani musical mastery. Guitar Interactive Magazine editor Jonathan Graham sits down with the instrumental guitar pioneer to discuss the writing and recording of the latest record and much more in this issue’s exclusive cover feature.

Also in this edition, we talk with Ichika Nito. Although most of his viral YouTube videos come in at

under a minute, Ichika’s immense talent leaves a lasting impression. Giving his first interview to a British guitar publication, Ichika speaks on tone, technique, composition, his inspirations, and of course, his new signature six-string with Ibanez Guitars.

If that’s not enough, Sam Bell breaks down the lightning-fast technique and soulful phrasing of Nick Johnston in this issue’s Tech Session.

As usual, with every issue, we have a whole host of the latest and best gear reviews from around the world of guitar, with our team of world-class gear reviewers offering their unique insight, expertise, and personality, which as always, I hope you will enjoy. However, if that’s still not enough, don’t forget all of our exclusive lessons from Tom Quayle, Sam Bell, Chris Buck & Giorgio Serici.

Guitar Interactive

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Guitar Interactive

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ARIA 41
BASS DIRECT 107
BOHEMIAN GUITARS 51
ELIXIR STRINGS 29
FISHMAN 36-43
FOXGEAR 51
HIT n MIX 10-23
KUSTOM AMPS 73
MOOER 19&55
OVATION 31

PRS 67
SENNHEISER 15
SPECTOR 103
TECH 21 NYC 63



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ISSUE 89

Contents

INTERVIEWS



010

JOE SATRIANI:

Gi Mag editor **Jonathan Graham** sits down with the instrumental guitar pioneer to discuss the writing and recording of the latest record and much more in this issues exclusive cover feature.

ICHIKA NITO:

Giving his first interview to a British guitar publication, Ichika speaks on tone, technique, composition, his inspirations, and of course, his new signature six-string with Ibanez Guitars.

024

REVIEWS - GUITARS, AMPS & FX

050_PRS Silver Sky SE

056_Jackson - Pro Series
Signature Jeff Loomis
Soloist SL7

062_Peavey VYPYR X3

068_AMT - Pre-Amp P Lead

074_Gurus DoubleDecker MK II
Double MIAB Drive Effect
Pedal

078_Foxgear Echosex Baby
Vintage Delay

082_Hohner PentaHarps

086_Hit'n'Mix RipX DeepRemix

THE QUIETROOM

092_Martin SC 13E

096_Rathbone No. 6 Parlour

THE BASSMENT

104_Aria DMB-206 BK

108_The Dingwall D-Roc 5

TECH SESSION

034

NICK JOHNSTON
Nick Jennison

THE
TECH
SESSION
FILES

Tony
Loomis



TOM QUAYLE

Modern Guitar - Part 2

114

SAM BELL

Extreme Shredding - Part 2

118

CHRIS BUCK

Rock & Soul - Part 3

122

GIORGIO SERCI

Creative Fingerstyle - 'African Sunset'

128

COLUMNS

THE Interviews

After writing and recording eighteen solo albums—and contributing some immense guitar skills to countless other projects over the course of three decades—one could potentially find themselves a little lacking for inspiration or fresh ideas. That is not the story of **Joe Satriani**. With his latest release, 'The Elephants of Mars' (out now, via earMusic), Satch is back with a sonically spell-binding new album that ushers in a new era of Satriani musical mastery. Guitar Interactive Magazine editor **Jonathan Graham** sits down with the instrumental guitar pioneer to discuss the writing and recording of the latest record and much more in this issue's exclusive cover feature.

Internet sensation and renowned virtuoso **Ichika Nito** has captivated music fans and musicians the world over with his unconventional, experimental style and a wholly original musical approach. Although most of his viral YouTube videos come in at under a minute, Ichika's immense talent leaves a lasting impression. Giving his first interview to a British guitar publication, Ichika speaks on tone, technique, composition, his inspirations, and of course, his new signature six-string with Ibanez Guitars.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES

INTERVIEWS **EXCLUSIVE** INTERVIEWS
Gi



THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS

After writing and recording eighteen solo albums—and contributing some immense guitar skills to countless other projects over the course of three decades—one could potentially find themselves a little lacking for inspiration or fresh ideas. That is not the story of Joe Satriani. With his latest release, 'The Elephants of Mars' (out now, via earMusic), Satch is back with a sonically spellbinding new album that ushers in a new era of Satriani musical mastery. Guitar Interactive Magazine editor **Jonathan Graham** sits down with the instrumental guitar pioneer to discuss the writing and recording of the latest record and much more in this issue's exclusive cover feature.



JOE SATRIANI THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS

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THE 80s were a particularly special time for electric guitar players and fans alike. With each new passing day, a new six-string superstar would appear to emerge and seek to push the boundaries of what was deemed possible on the instrument, however, with varied results in the “but is it actually any good?” department. Enter Joe Satriani. More than merely a virtuoso soloist, Satriani has made his name in music, crafting and executing beautiful melodies that left some wondering why we even bothered with vocalists in the first place. Not only is Joe a musical icon, but he has also been a tutor to such luminaries as Metallica’s Kirk Hammett, Larry LaLonde of Primus and fellow New York native, Steve Vai. The mentoring of these contemporary greats alone would make Satriani a significant figure in the history of rock guitar. However, for Joe, this was just the beginning.

Satriani moved out to Berkeley, California, in 1978, supporting himself through teaching and performing with local bands. His first notable steady gig was with power-trio The Squares, self-releasing an EP in 1984 (a full-length release of the original





recordings would eventually follow in 2019) and then joining the Greg Kihn Band in 1986. At this point, inspired and fully determined to launch a solo career, Joe financed his full-length debut LP, 'Not of This Earth' through his a newly acquired credit card. A gamble on paper, but one that truly paid off. 'Not of This Earth' saw a wide release through Relativity Records in 1985 to critical acclaim, however, it would be his follow-up, 'Surfing with the Alien' that would launch Satch to the stars. Dropping in the fall of 1987, (also on Relativity), the album's almost unanimous rave reviews among the guitar publications helped start a steady march toward the rock mainstream. Over the next year, "Satch Boogie" and the title track "Surfing with the Alien" ranked on Billboard's Mainstream Rock chart and pushed the album to 29 on the Billboard 200; going on to be certified platinum by the RIAA. An unusual occurrence to this day for an instrumental album. »

Satch's apparent overnight success brought him considerable attention, not only from the Rolling Stones' frontman Mick Jagger, (playing guitar on his 1988 solo tour of Japan) but also from many of the large guitar brands, including Ibanez. 1989 proved to be an important year for Joe with the Japanese guitar giant, as the JS1 (his first JS signature guitar), would be introduced. Based on the 540R (Radius) model that Satriani had been previously utilizing, this custom model with refined body contours, neck shape and hardware, became the classic signature model we all recognize in Joe's hands (albeit with a few design tweaks over the years) to this day, from that original JS1 to the current JS2450.

With new axe in hand, the stage was set to work on the next album, 'Flying in a Blue Dream.' Released in 1989, the album even contained a couple of cuts where Satriani sang lead vocals. A mainstream concession that may have helped the record climb further in the charts—supported by the singles "I Believe" and "Big Bad Moon," that both climbed high on Billboard's Mainstream Rock chart. »

 **YouTube**

Joe Satriani "The Elephants of Mars"
(Official Music Video)



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After a lengthy period of writing and recording, his fourth release, 'The Extremist' would finally be unveiled to the world in 1992. Driven by the lyrical "Summer Song," (his biggest hit ever—reaching number five on the Mainstream Rock charts) 'The Extremist' peaked at 22, Satriani's highest-ever position on the Billboard chart. This record showcased Joe's ability to explore new territories in the field of folk, jazz, blues as well as hard-rock, served best by classy examples such as "Rubina's Blue Sky Happiness," "Why," "New Blues" and "Cryin'"—cementing his status as a household name for all guitarists to this day.

Over a dozen more incredible records have been released in the decades that followed, including the Glyn Johns-produced eponymous album from 1995, his 1998 epic 'Crystal Planet,' the electronically infused 'Engines of Creation' (2000) the prog-minded 'Black Swans and Wormhole Wizards' (2010) and hard-rock/fusion focused 'What Happens Next' (2018), just to name a few.

With each album or project comes a "levelled-up" Joe Satriani, ready to tell a new story with a fresh delivery each time...while bringing along some of the good bits from the previous instalments for good measure. In no better way has that been actualized than in his latest record's melting pot of ability, experience and intent, crafting an album that will quickly become an instant fan favourite. 'The Elephants of Mars' marks the legendary guitarist's 19th studio album in his more than 35-year career in music. This album also marks the debut of his new label partnership with earMUSIC, the international rock label of entertainment group Edel. »

"I want to show people that an instrumental guitar album can contain **far more creative** and entertaining elements than I think people are using right now."

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JOE SATRIANI THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS



 **YouTube**

Joe Satriani "Sahara"
(Official Music Video)

Joe Satriani had an admirably productive workingman's holiday, with the pandemic forcing time away from the road, that ultimately gave him and his touring band, all recording remotely in separate areas of the world during the lockdown, the ability to deliver an album-length journey that never dulls. "The Elephants of Mars" crackles with an exciting new energy, briskly travelling through stylistic roads that feel freshly updated, viewed through new eyes.

The guitarist challenged himself to create a "new standard" for instrumental guitar albums to be measured against, one which would work from "a new platform of his own design," as he terms it. "I want to show people that an instrumental guitar album can contain far more creative and entertaining elements than I think people are using right now."

From the gripping, sci-fi madness of "Through A Mother's Day Darkly," to the isolation felt in a decaying urban landscape, as depicted in the album's first single, "Sahara," to the general endorphin levels that peak as the elephants finally roar in the title track, "The Elephants of Mars" will stampede across your mind, leaving a sonic imprint that doesn't fade. »



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In 2020 with all-time constraints removed, “The Elephants of Mars” truly represents the album that Satriani himself hoped he could deliver with his band. “We did everything. We tried the craziest ideas,” says Satriani. And we entertained every notion we had about turning something backwards, upside down, seeing what could happen.”

‘THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS’ is available via earMusic in all formats worldwide now. »

‘THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS’ TRACK LISTING:

1. Sahara
2. The Elephants of Mars
3. Faceless
4. Blue Foot Groovy
5. Tension and Release
6. Sailing the Seas of Ganymede
7. Doors of Perception
8. E 104th St NYC
9. Pumpin’
10. Dance of the Spores
11. Night Scene
12. Through a Mother’s Day Darkly
13. 22 Memory Lane
14. Desolation

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JOE SATRIANI THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS



Joe Satriani has made the very tough decision to once again reschedule his European tour. Originally scheduled to take place in 2020 it had been rescheduled to begin in April 2022. However, with the current Covid restrictions and quarantine mandates not yet standardized throughout the world, it has been decided that the best path forward is to reschedule once again. The new tour dates will now be moving to 2023.

These NEWLY rescheduled shows are now set to begin on April 1, 2023, in Oslo, Norway and wind up on June 4th in Bordeaux, France.

Fans who are holding tickets for these shows, originally planned to take place in April, May and June 2022, will be honoured for the rescheduled dates.

His current band features celebrated drummer Kenny Aronoff (John Fogerty) bassist Bryan Beller (Aristocrats) and keyboardist Rai Thistlethwayte (Thirsty Merc) with Joe Satriani on guitar.

END «

JOE SATRIANI

EARTH TOUR
2022 / 2023

MAY 2023

- 12 BIRMINGHAM**
SYMPHONY HALL
- 13 GATESHEAD**
SAGE 1
- 14 MANCHESTER**
BRIDGEWATER HALL
- 15 GLASGOW**
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- 16 BEXHILL**
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ICHIKA NITO

Internet sensation and renowned virtuoso Ichika Nito has captured our attention with her unconventional, experimental style and a wholly original musical voice. In this issue, come in at under a minute, Ichika's immense talent leaves a lasting impression. In this publication, Ichika speaks on tone, technique, composition, and more. Interviewed with Ibanez Guitars. »

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otivated music fans and musicians the world over with his
sical approach. Although most of his viral YouTube videos
sting impression. Giving his first interview to a British guitar
his inspirations, and of course, his new signature six-string

GUITAR INTERACTIVE:

Congratulations on the release of your very first signature model, the Ibanez Q Series ICHI10. As a player who has used many brands to create music, what was it about Ibanez that convinced you it was the right destination for a signature guitar?

Ichika Nito: The first guitar I bought was an Ibanez 7-string guitar. Since then, Ibanez has been my main gear, and it's an honour to make my signature guitar with Ibanez.

Gi: What were the key fundamentals to crafting the Ibanez ICHI10? Did you always know exactly what you wanted regarding neck shape, tonewoods, pickups etc, and did anything change during the design process?

IN: I believe the more tones a guitar can produce, the better. On the other hand, I also want to give a specific role to a guitar as a specialist of one typical direction. The goal was to create a guitar that could blend and balance

those two contradictory thoughts in just the right way. The spec, such as three single coils, is the result of this. We also wanted to make an evolved guitar; this is why we chose the Q headless guitar as the design format.

Gi: With the Ibanez ICHI10, you now have your go-to custom instrument; however, what amplifiers and pedals do you like to plug it into?

IN: I mainly use LINE6 Helix and Kemper Profiler and use effects included in them. I like amp simulators because they offer more flexibility.

Gi: One of your latest tracks, «Awakening,» may be your most stunning composition to date. What inspired this track and unique music video?

IN: This song is based on the motif of Swan Lake and Japanese mythology. In the first half of the song, I put a little homage to the chord progression of the famous



"Awakening" on Ichika Nito Signature Guitar
- Ibanez ICHI10

section of Swan Lake. In the music video, I tried to give the image of mysterious Japanese gods.

Gi: What was it that first inspired you to learn to play the guitar or write music?

IN: I started playing the guitar because of my father. In the beginning, I listened to all the heavy metal CDs in my father's room, such as Iron Maiden, and played them. As I learned to play the guitar more and more, I started to feel wanting to write songs that could be played with just one guitar, like the piano solo songs that I originally liked, and I started composing.

Gi: In those early days when you were developing your skills, what did your average guitar playing day look like?

IN: I carefully delved into various genres one by one, learning and incorporating elements that I could make use of. For instance, I learned how to play mechani-

cal phrases through heavy metal first, then complex chords and rhythms with a clean sound from mass rock, and then jazz.

Gi: Do you remember any specific techniques or songs that were the most challenging for you to master?

IN: Everything. But I think the most difficult technique to learn for me was the octave tapping with the index finger and ring finger of the right hand. The index finger easily taps harder than the ring finger, and it plays the bass note of the octave, so I struggled a lot to balance those two notes.

Gi: You've created some of the most incredible instrumental compositions. What is your process for developing an idea from start to finish, and how do you know when you're on to something good?

IN: I make music in my head every day. And I pick up my »

favourites among them to make them concrete. In that sense, I can say every song is great in the beginning as a seed of an idea. But, throughout the process of making them into concrete music, playing on guitar and adding arrangements, there are two completely opposite ways for those seeds to bloom or not. When a seed could not bloom, I felt I just didn't have enough playing skill and musical knowledge.

Gi: When you compose a song, how important do you think it is to write for your fanbase? Does that influence your decisions at all?

IN: Frankly speaking, I don't pay attention to fanbase when I write songs. But when it comes to concrete music, I believe "they're gonna like this".

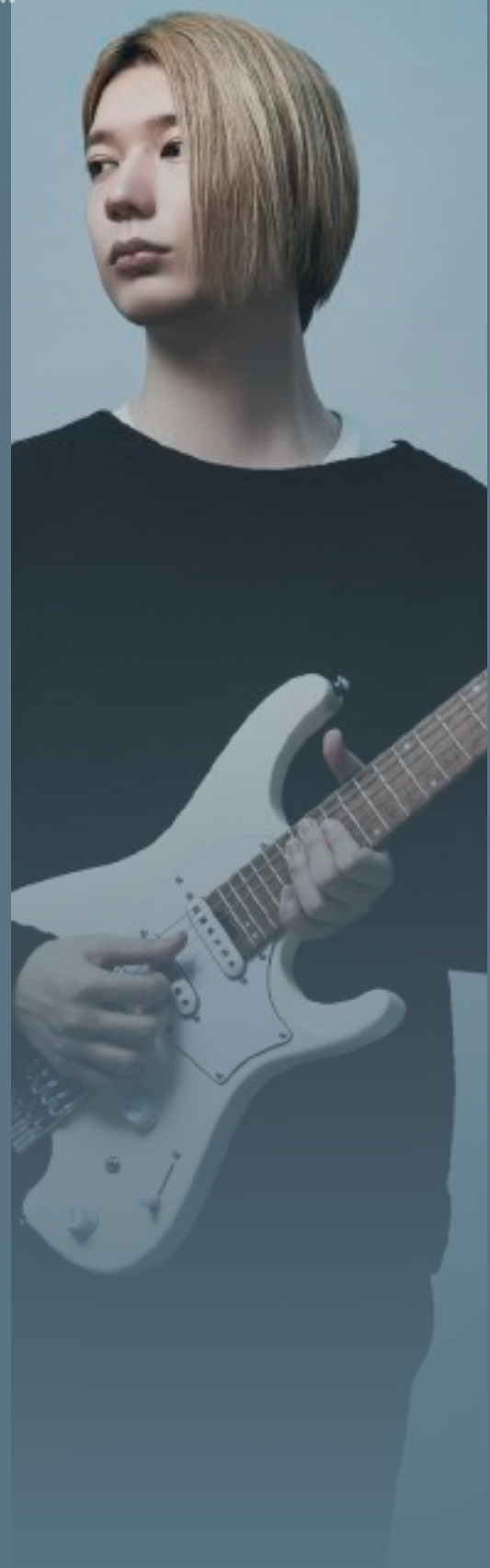
Gi: How do you know when your song is complete, and it's time to stop revising it?

IN: I feel it's done when I could feel I could give everything I had. I could say writing music is something like a diary.

Gi: Does improvisation play a part in your composing process, or do you prefer another approach?

IN: I use part of improvisations that I like to write a new song, or add them to another song. But I have not released improvisation as a song.

Gi: Whilst performing, there seems to be no limits to where you'll explore musically on the instrument. Scale-wise, how do you visualise the guitar neck, and were there specific methods you used to map the fretboard? »



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IN: I am not familiar with musical theories that guitarists should know, such as the CAGED system. In other words, I don't have preconceptions. I think it gives me more freedom on the fretboard.

Gi: Do you still have a specific practice schedule? What techniques are you currently working on?

IN: I have tons of short phrases about 30 seconds, but I forget old ones. So I practice those every day. When I play my old pieces, sometimes I find songs "How did I play this!?"

Gi: What is the best piece of advice you ever received regarding your playing development or composition?

IN: This is spiritualism, but you can be anyone you want to be. And you set a time limit when you work on something.

Gi: And what about the worst piece of advice?

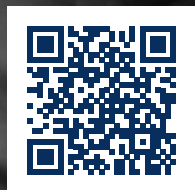
IN: When I was a student aspiring to be a guitarist, an acquaintance told »





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Ichika Nito - Orb
(Official Music Video)

me, “You’re not suited for music, so quit now and study.”

Gi: Do you have any advice for young guitar players and musicians looking to make that same kind of impact you have in such a short time?

IN: Once you have a strong image of what you want to be, think about the path you should take, the specific process you should follow, and the skills you need to acquire. Think really deep as if every single cell in your brain is about to explode. Then, follow the plan you’ve made and do it honestly and diligently. Often look back at the results and flexibly revise your plan. Then you can become anything you want to be.

Gi: Do you have any musical guilty pleasures? Would you share some with us, please?

IN: I often start recoding without tuning when I don’t feel strange. (This may be possible because I’m a solo guitarist and not in an ensemble with other instruments.)

Gi: Do you draw inspiration from other mediums outside of music?

IN: I love reading books, watching movies, and playing games. So I use the stories and emotions that impress me to write songs.

Gi: What can you tell us about your new music coming in 2021? Do you have plans for a full-length album release?

IN: I’m working on a full-length album that will be the culmination of my career. But before that, I’ll be releasing a few EPs, so please look forward to them!

Gi: With you now joining the distinguished list of artists on the Ibanez roster, are there other Ibanez artists you’d like to collaborate with musically?

IN: All of the Ibanez signature artists have been my guitar heroes since I was a kid, so it still doesn’t feel like I’m joining them, but if I could play with Steve Vai, that would be a dream come true.

END«

more information on Ichika Nito and to follow him on YouTube, head to: www.youtube.com/channel/UCq3Wpi10SyZkzVeS7vzB5Lw



THE Tech Session

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

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

UNDERSTANDING WHAT
MAKES THE GREATS GREAT

TECH SESSION_NICK JOHNSTON

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NICK JOHNSTON TECH SESSION



Tech Session

In this issue's Guitar Interactive Tech Session **Sam Bell** delves deep into the advanced guitar techniques of one of the fastest rising stars from the world of instrumental rock, Nick Johnston. »

BACK in Issue 54 of Guitar Interactive Magazine, I had the pleasure of interviewing the awesome Canadian guitar instrumental songwriter, Nick Johnston. Now I present to you this tech session that hopefully captures some of the technical elements of Nicks playing in a digestible example that you can take away and maybe get some inspiration from. Nicks music is perhaps some of the most honest and expressive instrumental 'guitar' music that I have personally heard in a long time. His approach to writing is often away from the

guitar, focusing on building interesting chord sequences around simple and effective melodies. This is all topped off with his incredibly natural almost vocal-like phrasing and raw natural tone coming from his single coil guitars. He is currently putting together a new album which will be with us very soon, however, my example is based around the vibe of his most recent solo album 'Remarkably Human'. Within the compositions on this record, we can hear almost cinematic soundtrack style arrangements accented by very tasteful lead guitar work.



Nick Johnston - Tech Session Performance

This doesn't mean that Nick doesn't like to crank up the juice however, far from it. Nick's almost saxophone like Legato playing is mixed with articulated hybrid picked runs, bluesy rakes, wide aggressive vibrato and expressive sweeps do crop in when the moment is right. Nick's unique style makes all of these rock techniques sound completely natural and some could say, remarkably human. He draws from a wide range of influences, namely Steve Ray Vaughn, Yngwie Malmsteen, Van Halen and Jeff Beck. You can hear all of these elements in his phrasing and his technical approach. Be sure to download the TAB for this lesson as there are a lot of notes! And check out the breakdown video lesson as well as I go into detail of articulating these lines. Let's dive in!

The Sound

Nick is known for being a Guitar direct into an Amp kind of guy. For this tech session, I used my Line 6 Helix. I used the Placater amp model which is based on a Friedman BE100 which is what Nick used to use, you can get a close sound by going for a cranked Plexi sound with a splash of reverb. The key to Nick's sound outside of his years of playing experience and fingers is that he uses Single Coils, he often plays around with the volume and tone knobs to get different articulations. I'd also say his pick choice accents his sound a lot as well, he normally

uses .88 Tortex picks, and these have a classic rounder edge and are a classic size. Giving the pick more contact with the string allowing Nick to articulate and control each notes dynamics with great effect.

Bars 1 - 4

This solo opens up with a simple melody over our Amadd9 to Abadd9 chord sequence. These chords are not diatonic to each other, for Amadd9 I am thinking Natural Minor and for the Abadd9 I am thinking Ab Lydian. Bars 1 and 2 feature the melody moving from the 5th of Am down to the b3, this leads us into the 5th of our Abadd9 chord which walks down from that interval to the #11 before sitting on the M3rd. Nick would most commonly start out writing tunes focusing on just a single note melody, he would then flesh out the harmony by trying to find chords that fit around each note or groups of notes. This is a very Soundtrack style Compositional device that most Piano players or string arrangers would use, however, Nick's approach on the guitar is one of the things that makes his music stand out.

Bars 5 - 6

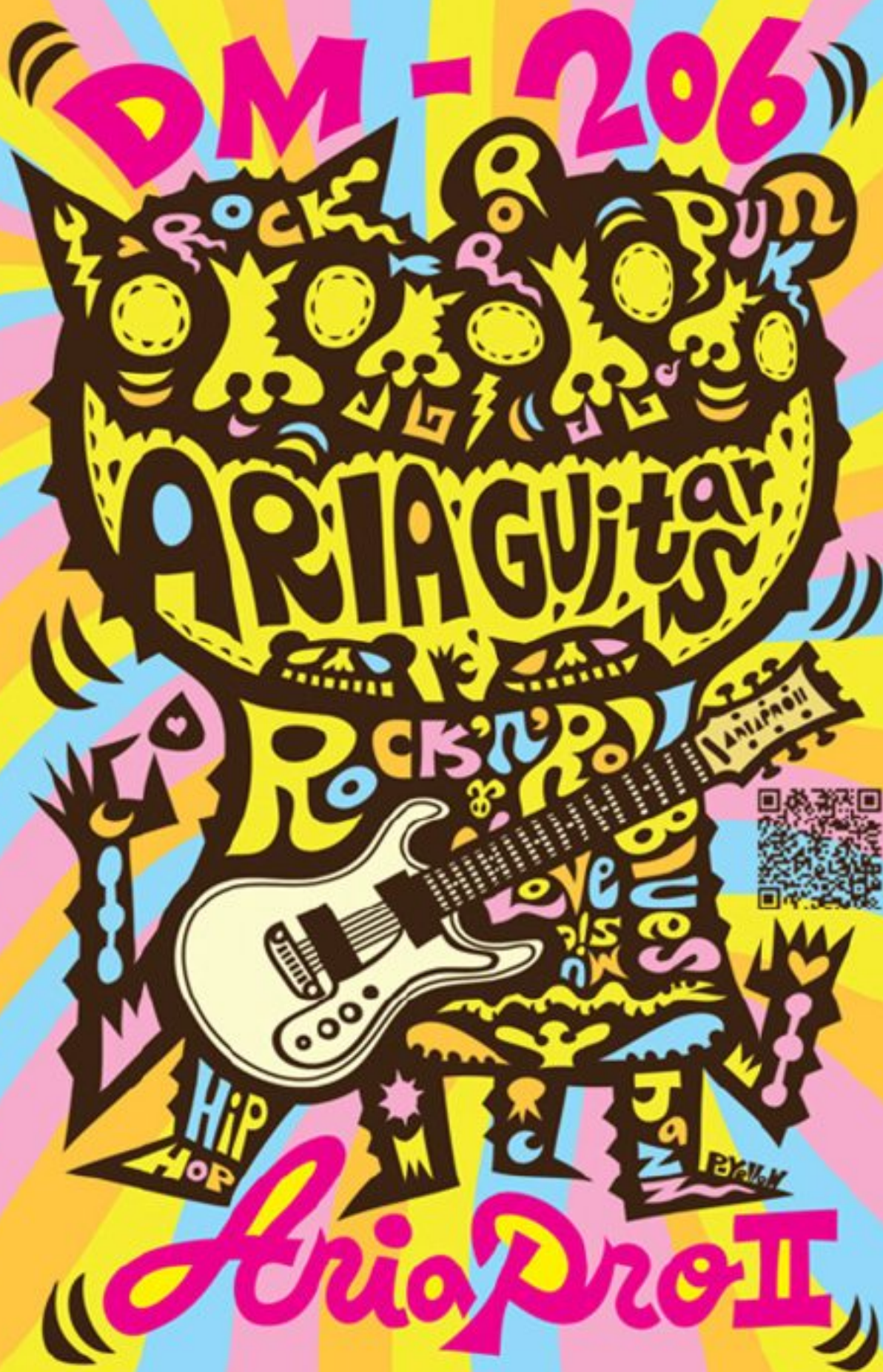
Nick has a strong blues influence in his playing, namely Steve Ray » Vaughn. This is a classic A Blues scale run over the Amadd9. Notice how there is a strong use of Legato in

the articulation of this line, Nick will often improvise his fills between thematic melodies, and there are many bluesy lines like this in his albums. The main thing to aim for is the cool, calm and relaxed swagger that he gets when he executes these lines. I find it hard not to rush, so taking a leaf from Nicks book I tried to relax as much as possible on this run.

Bars 7 - 9

The chord sequence turns to an Fadd9 for bar 7 then up to G# Diminished in bar 8. For these two bars I have used some shapes that Nick commonly uses for extended arpeggios and sequenced them in groups of 4 with Hybrid Picking. You don't have to use Hybrid Picking of course, but it certainly helps to get the sound that Nick does when playing these strong sounding lines. The line ends with a semi-tone bend on the B string





12th fret which gives us our m3rd note over the Amadd9 chord.

Bar 10

This is a classic Am Triad sweep with some extras thrown in, the line starts with a slide from the 5th up to the b13 before ascending the Am Triad, on the high E string we're going to hit the b5th on the 11th fret before moving up through the line and doing a slide tap between the M7 and Root of Am. So far this line has highlighted the b13, b5 and M7. These are all quite dissonant notes over Am, however, they really create a cool tension within this classic sweep arpeggio. Nick manages to do this kind of sweeping a lot in his

playing without it sounding mechanical or like he's trying too hard, it's very natural and used more like a textual device to highlight those unusual intervals. »

Bars 12 - 13

This is the first real full on legato run of this tech session, it uses a mixture of chromatic notes within an Am Pentatonic Box shape moving down in groups of 3, there are some unison notes when we move to the B and G string, Nick does a lot of this kind of thing in his playing, it really helps add some rhythmic interest to this kind of phrasing. The line wraps up with two Triad based sweeps (Em and Am) the Am sweep lands on a microtone



bend on the b5th before moving down to the b3 and landing on the root. This is definitely a classic Nick Lick!

Bars 15 - 16

Here's another extreme legato example from Nicks playing, this occurs over the G7 chord before we move into the chorus of the piece. We start by ascending a Bm7b5 arpeggio (this gives us a G9 tonality over G) this shape is using a 2-1-2 pattern (two notes on a string followed » by one note etc) a common device for fretboard visualisation used in modern legato playing. Before descending through notes of a G Mixolydian scale, notice how the pattern starts in the 13th position on the E string but then reverse shifts to the 15th fret B string, some people might call this 'Reverse Linier' Legato. It's a great way of getting more out of your legato runs without having to position shift too wildly around the neck.

Bars 17 - 22

We have now reached the 'Chorus' of my Tech Session Example. This part moves between A Major and F Major. For this Melody I'm simply working on a melodic contour and rhythmic theme that starts in a high octave from our previous legato run that descends to a lower register in bars 21 and 22. I am making sure the notes sustain nicely, using pick rakes and pre-bends to

highlight a different kind of vibrato on certain notes to get a more dramatic and vocal-like effect.

Bars 22 - 24

This is the final phrase, it starts by descending notes of the F Lydian scale starting on a 3rds based sequence from the 10th fret G string. In Bar 23 the F chord then turns into an Fm Triad. I highlight this change by playing an FmMaj13 arpeggio as this really highlights the change dramatically with all of the tasty sounding chord extensions I could desire.

In Summary

Hearing Nicks playing for the first time blew my mind, his playing and phrasing sounded so natural. He has the whole tech shred thing going on, but never at the expense of hindering his inspiring tone or most importantly and prevalently his songwriting expertise. He is a Musician before he is a Guitarist, however, his Guitar playing is outstanding whilst also being understated in his albums. I feel the main lesson here is that delivery (tone, dynamics, articulation) is worth much more than any accumulation of technique. Nicks more technical playing could be seen as quite traditional, but the way he approaches it from Tone, Dynamics and Articulation are what makes it sound so natural and beautiful.

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.

GI89

GUITARS, AMPS AND EFFECTS



PRS SE Silver Sky

The original Silver Sky was designed in conjunction with John Mayer to elevate a familiar guitar aesthetic with PRS Guitars' world-renowned innovation. That collaboration is now making its way into the SE line with the goal of delivering a more affordable version of the Silver Sky—with all the same PRS quality! The SE Silver Sky features a lightweight poplar body loaded with a trio of 635JM “S” pickups to deliver all the glassy highs and round bottom end that you’d expect out of a classic three single-coil configuration. **Nick Jennison** gives us the rundown.

PERHAPS the most eagerly awaited PRS release since the original Silver Sky in 2018, the SE Silver Sky has had the internet rumour mill humming for years now. Given how good the original is, the prospect of a more affordable version is very appealing - if it's any good, that is.

Built-in Indonesia by Cor-Tek under PRS's watchful eye, the SE line of guitars never disappoints, but they often come with some design compromises to keep the price reasonable - flat tops in lieu of violin carves, different hardware, different construction methods etc. What makes the SE Silver Sky unique in this regard is how similar it is to its big brother. The body style, headstock, neck carve... even cosmetic elements like the switch cap, knobs, jack plate and tuner buttons are the same as the core model.

There are some key differences, however. The neck comes in a satin finish rather than a nitro

What makes the SE Silver Sky unique in this regard is **how similar it is** to its big brother..”

gloss, and the fretboard radius is slightly flatter at 8.5” rather than 7.25”. The frets are also a little taller compared to my 2018 model. The nut is synthetic bone rather than the bone nut found on the core model, and the body is poplar rather than alder. What's interesting is that none of these changes seem to be “cost-cutting” efforts to use standard SE parts, materials and tools, since none of these specs or materials appear on any of the other SE line of guitars. Regardless, the overall effect is a Silver Sky that's a little less “specialised” than the core model.



PRS SE Silver Sky

MSRP: (UK) £895 / (US) \$849

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Fat single-coil tones.

Exceptional PRS quality.

Some guy named John.

For more information, please visit:

prsguitars.com



“To my mind, the SE Silver Sky is the Silver Sky **for everyone.**”





Tones come courtesy of three 635JM “S” pickups, which are east Asian made versions of the pickups found on the core model, and in a side-by-side comparison with the originals, they stack up impressively well. The covers may not look quite as handsome as the core models, but the sounds are killer. If you’re unfamiliar with

the Silver Sky sound, it’s bigger and fatter than your typical Strat, with a fuller low end and slightly more rolled off high end, but there’s still plenty of that 60s single-coil character.

Playability-wise, the SE Silver Sky comes set up with a fairly “manly” action, but it was trivially easy to bring this down to

my preferred 1mm action height, without a buzz or choke anywhere on the fretboard. If anything, the flatter fretboard and taller frets make the SE model even easier to play than the core version!

To my mind, the SE Silver Sky is the Silver Sky for everyone - it's a little less specialised, significantly more affordable, and still exceptional in its tone, playability and quality.

END «



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Logan J Parker photo by @fraserirvine

Jackson - Pro Series Signature Jeff Loomis Soloist SL7

The Jackson Pro Series Jeff Loomis Soloist SL7 is not only for Arch Enemy fans—it would be a huge asset to the serious Metal guitarist who requires a precision instrument. It is an especially good choice for the touring musician but will fare equally well in the studio, especially when paired with a high gain amp. **Rodney McG** Tells us more.

THE Jackson SL-7 7 string soloist is the signature model of guitar virtuoso Jeff Loomis. Loomis is known for his instrumental albums as well as being a member of prominent metal bands Nevermore and Arch Enemy. Needless to say, this guitar is based around fast playing and straight to the point, aggressive styling.





Jackson - Pro Series Signature Jeff Loomis Soloist SL7

MSRP: (UK) £1377 / (US) \$1699

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern

Specialised Versatile

Warm Bright

Affordable High-end

For fans of

Extended range instruments.

Shred machines.

Jeff Loomis.

For more information, please visit:
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The build is a Basswood body topped by a sandblasted Ash face. It's a solid Maple neck through the body with graphite reinforcement. The SL-7 also has a full-body, fretboard, and headstock binding with matching Ash faceplate on the headstock, as well as a raised chrome Jackson logo. The traditional Jackson shark-fin mother of pearl inlays is also on board with the ebony fingerboard.

The pickup set is dual humbuckers in black chrome from Seymour Duncan, also a Jeff Loomis signature model. The tremolo is a 1500 series Floyd Rose. The neck is slim and definitely designed for fast playing and shredding. Combined with a compound radius going from 12 to 16", it makes

MOOER



Electric guitar



Bass



Intelligent Pedal

- Compact size with minimalist design. Eliminates the need to carry a massive power supply or deal with complicated user interfaces. Simply set up your effects chain and jump into your practice session or performance.
- Based on MOOER's unique MNRS technology for high-quality digital amp models and effects in a small form factor.
- Supports USB-OTG for live streaming or quick recording.
- Download the free mobile app to easily edit your tones and share them with others as well as download different effects modules and tools to expand your own tonal possibilities.
- Supports MOOER's F-series wireless footswitches for preset switching and looper/drum machine control.
- Bluetooth audio playback for practice and jamming.
- Built-in 126 different effects, tuner, 10 metronomes, 40 drum machine, and 80-second looper capacity.
- 73 built-in bass guitar effects. Dual effect chains for bass guitar, with 10 classic bass guitar amplifier models.
- Supports effects for other instrument with future firmware update.
- Individual headphone output.
- 1900mAh lithium battery for up to 4.5 hours duration and support for charging via mobile phone power bank.

121212



“The overall tone of the guitar came across as balanced, with very throaty sounding mids that didn’t quite sound like other pickups from the genre...”

for an extremely flat profile that also lends itself to high speed rhythms, riffing, and lead work.

Teamed with the pickups is a no-nonsense electronic setup consisting of a single volume knob, no tone controls, and a pickup selector. Direct and to-the-point and making the sound of the pickups clear and without excessive options to dull the output.

The 1500 series tremolo held up well and after a bit of string stretching, it played accurately and stayed in tune even after some heavy whammy abuse.

The overall tone of the guitar came across as balanced, with very throaty sounding mids that didn't quite sound like other pickups from the genre. It had solid clarity, and slightly rolled off high-end cutting out excessive harshness under High Gain applications, which is very likely what anybody looking into this guitar is going to be using it for.

The neck pickup added the bubbly rolling sound you traditionally are going to look for in a lead tone, but being active kept it articulate and without the excessive mud that can be common for pickups in that position.

The guitar balanced well, and wasn't as light as you might expect from other Basswood guitars you may have experienced. Likely due to the fact that it has not only the maple neck through the body strip, but the Ash top likely helps give it some substantial feel. While not a heavy guitar, it doesn't have the excessively light or cheap feeling that many Basswood guitars can have. The Jackson SL-7 is a true shred machine from top to bottom designed for one thing specifically, and it delivers on that one thing extremely well.

END «

Peavey VYPYR X3

No more having to take multiple amps to a gig for different instruments or settling for a one-instrument Peavey Vypyr X 3 1x12-inch 100-watt Modeling Guitar/Bass/Acoustic Combo amp. It's a guitar, bass, and acoustic bass amplifiers. By utilizing Peavey's groundbreaking Variable Instrument Input, this amp adjusts its input sensitivity based on what instrument you use, ensuring the best sound possible. **nison** reviews.

MODELLING amps are a fantastic tool for guitar players on every rung of the ladder. They offer an affordable and portable way to access a huge range of tones in a portable (and usually very affordable) package, which is equally useful for novices looking to find their "sound", or working musicians who need to cover a whole range of tones in a single amp.

The Vypyr line of amps is Peavey's very popular line of modelling amps, updated and refined into three models - X1, X2 and X3, the latter (and larger) of which we're looking at here. It's a 1x12 combo with a whopping 100 watts of power and entirely



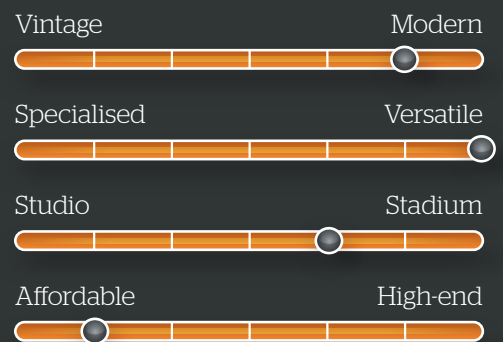
so-so tones from an unoptimized amp. The multi-bo Amp contains models of electric, acoustic, and powerful combo amp changes the gain structure and e from electric, acoustic, and bass guitars. **Nick Jen-**



Peavey VYPYR X3

MSRP: (UK) £339 / (US) \$399

The Breakdown



For fans of

Analogue distortion.

Simple controls.

Versatility.

For more information, please visit:

peavey.com



analogue distortion using Peavey's "TransTube" technology. This is pretty unique among modelling amps, and yields an immediate and very "real" feeling distortion. Anecdotaly, in my years of teaching in universities, I've played a LOT of affordable solid-state combos, and I've always been taken by how great Peaveys in this price range sound - I've even gigged a Bandit 112 a couple of times when my own gear was unavailable!

The Vypyr X3 offers the entire gamut of tones from cleaner-than-clean to crushing modern high gain, but with 36 amp models rather than the hundreds usually found on this kind of amp. This is a good thing, since it eliminates a lot of the anxiety that comes with having too many options.



Peavey VYPYR X3



“As you’d expect from a guitar **bearing the Wilkinson name**, the hardware on the V6HM is first class...”

Each amp has three selectable channels, and is controlled by the “WYSYWIG” interface that displays where the knobs are set as soon as you load an amp. Pair this with a range of “stomp” effects like fuzz, overdrive and compression, along with studio-grade reverb and delay and you can conjure pretty much any tone you’ll ever need with an absolute minimum of fuss.

Another feature that sets the Vypyr X3 apart from the crowd is how it handles other instruments. There are models for bass and electro-acoustic guitars, and the amp automatically reconfigures its input and output to best suit the instrument in question. As if that wasn’t enough, the Vypyr X3 has built-in instrument models that can take your standard six-string electric and convert it into a baritone, a bass, an electro-acoustic or even an electric violin! These are great for recording demos where you need an instrument that you don’t have handy, but they’ll also be super useful for gigging musicians that don’t

want to take a fleet of guitars with them to every gig.

Controlling this amp from the top panel is a breeze, but you can also use the iOS app to make this process even simpler. It connects via Bluetooth, and gives you real-time two-way control over every feature in the amp. The changes you make in the app are reflected on the top panel, and vice versa. Speaking of Bluetooth, you can also stream your backing tracks to the amp via Bluetooth or the aux-in jack, or connect via USB for recording, playback and real-time control.

The Peavey Vypyr X3 is a strong contender in a crowded section of the market. The instrument models are a lot of fun, and the analogue distortion is super punchy. If you want a ton of tones for very little outlay, this might be the amp for you.

END◀

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KOTZEN
RK5
Signature
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**BASS
FLY RIG
v2**

Whether you're a touring pro or bedroom hobbyist, a Tech 21 Fly Rig eliminates the constraints of space, cable spaghetti, crackling patch cables, dying batteries, ground loops and, best of all, stress. Without sacrificing tone. So you can be inspired to focus on your playing and not wrestling with your gear.

Each Fly Rig contains an all-analog SansAmp™ heart and is crammed with useful features. All in a rugged, all-metal housing just over a foot long and just under 21 oz. You can just toss it in your gig bag and head for the door.

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AMT Pre-Amp P Lead

AMT Electronics presents a new line of tube guitar preamplifiers. Part of the AMT Bricks includes preamps, effect pedals, noise suppressors, cabinet simulators, controllers, pedals. The AMT Bricks P Lead, based on the response, characteristics, gain, and tonal nuances similar to the

THE AMT Electronics P - Lead preamp pedal is a stomp style pedal that offers a hardware emulation of the preamp section from the original Peavey 5150 block letter amp.

It's definitely designed for travel and road work having an all-metal chassis.

One of the first things that noticeably sets the P - Lead apart from other pedals is that it has an actual preamp tube in it. The front of the housing contains a metal cage surrounding a single 12ax7 tube designed to create a more accurate tube tone emulation of the 5150 preamp section.

Being part of the bricks series from AMT Electronics, the design is ultra-compact, and the pedal will easily fit in the palm of most people's hands. The form factor is so small that two of them still wouldn't equal up to the size of the average midsize pedal from makers like Strymon.

The controls of the P-Lead are simple and to the point, having low, high, and mids, as well as level and gain on the front panel. There is

also a metal bar set in front of the footswitch jack that resembles the roll cage from a race car. This is designed to keep your foot from changing the controls when you're pressing the on-off switch. A smart idea to keep the small design form-factor still functional in a live setting.

On the sides, there are mini-pin connectors that allow you to connect this to other bricks pedals in the series, being other preamps, effects pedals, or cab sim loader pedals, and control them all via a mini switch. Pressing the on-off-on one pedal can be designed to turn other pedals in the chain on and off or change presets.

Also of note is the hard switch on the side that allows you to select between drive and preamp. Preamp being the standard set-up and emulation. Drive turns the pedal into more of an overdrive/boost in the style of a boss sd1, a tube screamer, or 808 commonly used in front of



ks series of devices, the AMT Bricks series in-
alboards and more. **Rodney McG** reviews the
milar to that of Peavey 5150 and 6505 amplifiers.



AMT Pre-Amp P Lead

MSRP: (UK) £TBC / (US) \$235

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Powerful tones.

Excellent build quality.

Peavey 5150 & 6505 Amps.

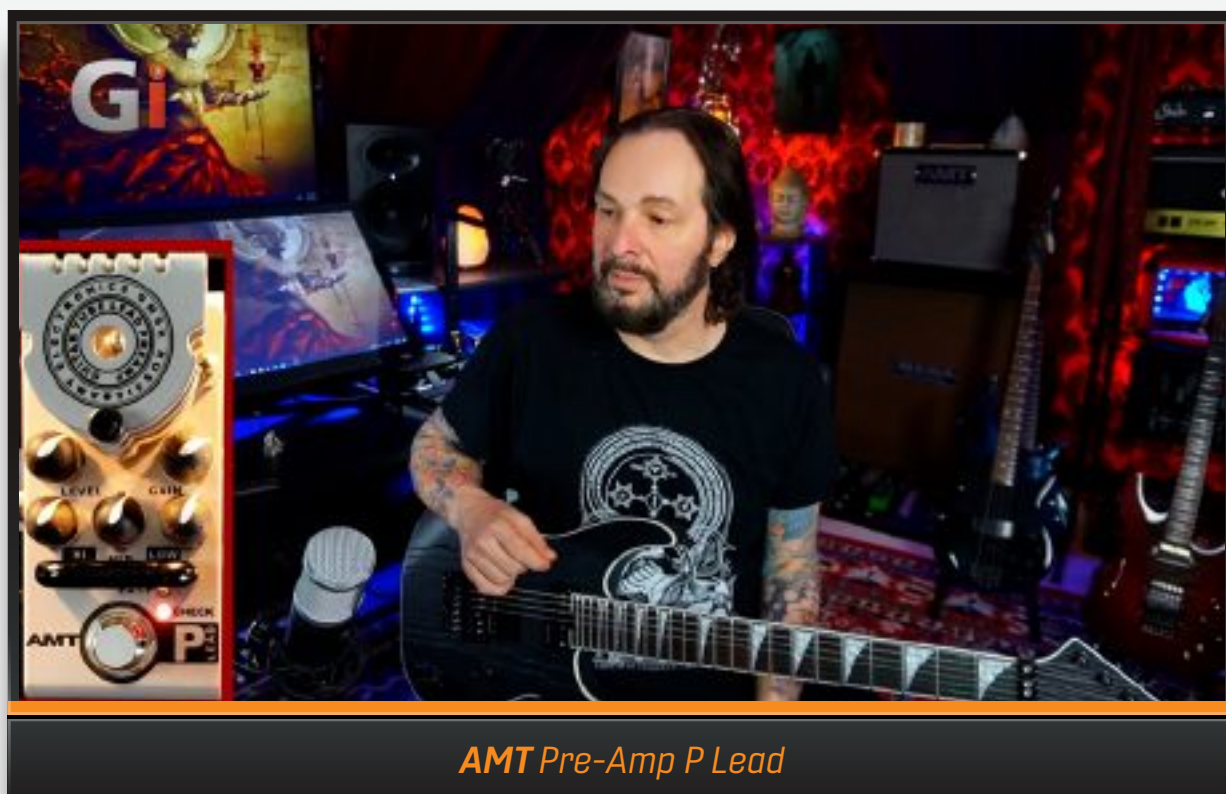
For more information, please visit:
amtelectronics.com



amps to boost the gain. It will function the same way, but give the flavour of the 5150 tone stack in its tone controls. This could be an interesting option for people looking for a new flavour of boost pedal but are tired of the same often imitated tone stack styles. Also being able to add the 5150 style flavor to the tone stack of an additional preamp offers some interesting and unique tone possibilities.

An important note is that the AMT P-Lead preamp is an emulation of the preamp section only. The power amp that you plug it into is going to make a huge difference in your end tone. If you want the exact

5150 emulation, you're going to want to plug this into a Peavey poweramp or head through the effects section, or an emulation poweramp that is similar in its tone. For the demo I used another piece of hardware from AMT that has a number of poweramp simulations in it, one of them being an emulation of the Peavey power section, so the chain was all based on AMT's Peavey emulations. Using a unit like that would also allow you to load and create cab impulses that emulate the sound of many popular 4x12 cabinets. This would effectively turn the Bricks pedals into a complete live rig that could go directly to a soundboard with no mic needed.



AMT Pre-Amp P Lead

SE[®]

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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



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PRS PAUL
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The AMT P-Lead offers plenty of gain onboard and is absolutely aimed at the heavy rock and metal audience looking for tones reminiscent of the popular and heavily sought-after original 5150. Even though it only has one tube, it certainly wasn't lacking in its ability to create thick, aggressive distortion in the style of the original Peavey series. The P-Lead seems like the optimal option for either people who want the 5150 sound, but can't carry around or more likely can't find one in good shape as they are becoming extremely rare these days, or someone who has a prized 5150 that doesn't want to risk taking it out on the road. Even someone that just wants a more easily transportable version that sounds close to the original. The P-Lead definitely punches above its weight for such an impressively small form factor.

END «

Gurus DoubleDecker MK II Double MIA

Gurus' products are the result of one highly efficient research and design team, creating overdrives, distortions and modulation units which are meticulously hand-built, with skilled and experienced craftsmen and engineers from USA, Russia, Poland, Italy and DoubleDecker MK II Double MIAB Drive Effect Pedal.

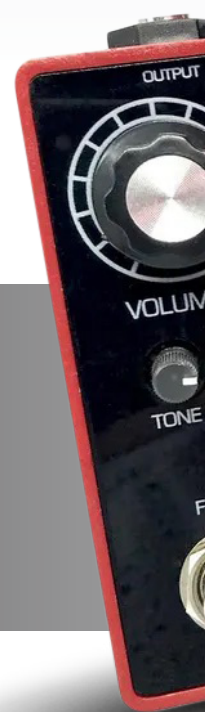
WE all love the tone of a raging Marshall amp, but honestly, in 2022, who wants to deal with one? Quite apart from the weight, the bulk, the expense and the maintenance costs, have you ever tried using one on stage? Good luck getting it past 2 on the master volume without your sound engineer and singer threatening your immediate demise, and sad as it is to say, these amps NEED to be cranked to sound "right".

Fortunately, there are a wealth of "Marshall-In-A-Box" pedals out there that promise to turn your Hot Rod Deluxe or AC15 into a screaming demon of rock, with various levels of success. Well, dear reader, I've played most

of them, and the Gurus Double Decker MkII is up there with the very best.

A streamlined, more pedalboard-friendly version of the excellent-but-enormous Double Decker, this pedal offers two channels of ECC83 driven British filth that each runs the gamut from JTM45 to modded 800. There are gain and volume controls for each, along with tone and presence controls for each channel. These powerful controls allow you to tailor the high end on this pedal to match the amp you're running into - be it a bright sounding silverface twin or a dark sounding JTM.

"The Raw Dawg 60 is the journey musicians **dream combo**..!"



B Drive Effect Pedal

ing a vast selection of professional quality the finest components by a team of highly China. **Nick Jennison** reviews the Gurus

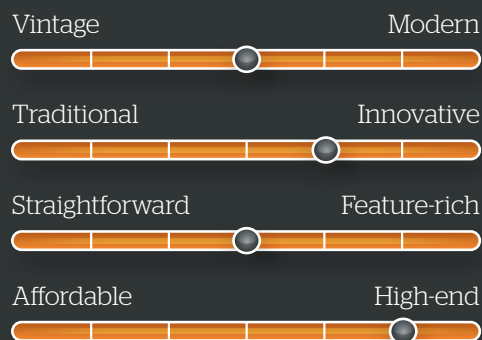
There is also a switch in each channel to engage the “Jose mod” circuit - a loving recreation of the mods performed by Jose Arredondo on the Marshalls used by Steve Vai, George Lynch, Eddie Van Halen (allegedly at least) and many other rock luminaries of the 80s and beyond. Switching it on produces a gloriously compressed “brown” tone that’s just fantastic for searing riffs and fat vocal leads, while disengaging it makes everything louder, cleaner and more open - think Page, Hendrix or even Slash.



Gurus DoubleDecker MK II Double MIAB Drive Effect Pedal

MSRP: (UK) £319 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

High gain Marshall tones.

Low gain Marshall tones.

Every kind of Marshall tone!

For more information, please visit:
jhs.co.uk/collections/new/products/gurus-double-decker-mkii-double-miab



The two channels each have their own inputs and outputs, so if you run a switcher, you could have each channel in its own loop, and you can even stack them one into another for crazy levels of gain. While each channel is very similar, they do have subtly different sounds thanks to different clipping stages. Channel 1 uses NOS germanium diodes for a chewier, looser feel, while channel 2 uses symmetrical LED clipping for a smoother, tighter feel that's amazing for lead work.

In terms of compatibility, we tried the Double Decker MKII into a whole range of amps with mod scoops, pushed mids, high headroom, early breakup, and there wasn't one amp that it didn't sound fantastic through. It also takes boosts and fuzzes like an absolute champ, so if you're looking for a gain stage to smooth out your dirt pedals, this is a great choice.

END ◀



Gurus DoubleDecker MK II Double MIAB Drive Effect Pedal



Kustom®

MODELLING AMP

The Kustom KMOD20 is the world's easiest to use modelling amplifier. The engineers at Kustom have already initiated all of the setup steps for you. Just choose the amp model preset you want, and adjust the volume to your desire, it's that simple. The KMOD20 utilizes 24 different amplifier models, 24 bit digital reverbs, delays and modulated effects as well as EQs, cabinet simulators and signal enhancing conditioning. The result is natural and intuitive.

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Foxgear Echosex Baby Vintage Delay

Nick Jennison reviews the Foxgear Echosex Baby—the smaller protégé of the original award-winning Gurus' Echosex—producing enchanting echoes with a distinctive, ethereal, almost primordial sound, all without hauling around an original, vintage Binson Echorec unit. The Echosex Baby has all the same controls and features that bring to life expansive lush tones of its predecessor, all without the tube of the larger Echosex.

WHEN it comes to delay, the main food groups of “digital”, “analog” and “tape” are well catered for. But when it comes to drum echo, well, that's more of a rarity. In fact, many guitarists aren't even aware this kind of delay even exists! You'd be wise not to sleep on drum echo though, since some of the best delay sounds ever recorded come from this the legendary Binson Echorec. This is not hyperbole - the Echorec is responsible for everything from Pink Floyd's “Echoes” to the delay on John Bonham's drums on “When The Levee Breaks”.

The Foxgear Echosex Baby is a compact take on the award-winning, valve-driven Gurus Echosex and offers up authentic-sounding Echorec delays in a pedalboard-friendly (and wallet-friendly) package. Don't let its size and price fool you though, this is a very serious

pedal. Steve Lukather has one on his board, and if it's good enough for Luke...

The five knob interface is refreshingly simple while still offering a ton of versatility. You have the usual controls for time, repeats and level, along with a tone control for taming (or emphasising) the high end along with an “age” control that introduces a killer organic sounding modulation.

The range of delays available is very broad, and while there's no tap tempo option, it's easy to achieve everything from crisp rhythmic echos to washes of ambience on the long side, through to country slap and even pseudo chorus effects at the other extreme. However you set this pedal up, it sounds great, and it's hard to find a bad sound.



ay



Foxgear Echosex Baby Vintage Delay

MSRP: (UK) £119 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Straightforward Feature-rich



Traditional Innovative



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Old school delay sounds.

Small form factor pedals.

Some guy named Mr Gilmour.

For more information, please visit:

jhs.co.uk/collections/foxgear



The enclosure is super compact, with a rugged metal back and sides and a cool plexiglass style front that illuminates when the pedal is powered on. The slim profile and top-mounted jacks make this pedal easy to fit on any board, and it runs on a standard 9v centre negative power supply.

With so many great old school delay tones in such a small and relatively inexpensive package, it's difficult to find a reason NOT to own one of these pedals. If you're a delay user, you need one in your collection.

END «



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Hohner PentaHarps

The Pentatonic scale is one of the most useful in popular music. Play any of these notes and you can't go wrong. By adding the "Blue Note" the player can add extra expression and versatility, this is why it's often called this scale as "Playing in the Box", and it is one of the first scales to learn when playing a harmonica. Mastering advanced techniques that could take years to learn on a harmonica you would have to perfect advanced techniques that could take years to master.

Nick Jennison Tells us more.

THERE'S an old trick that Nashville session guitarists used to do when it came to playing other stringed instruments - banjo, mandolin, uke, even oddball instruments like bouzouki: just tune it like a guitar! Once you realise that any fretted instrument can be tuned in a way that's familiar, you can go from zero to making music in no time.

Hohner has taken a similar concept with their PentaHarp line of harmonicas. Designed specifically for guitar players, these harps (that's what the cool kids call harmonicas, or so I'm told) are physically indistinguishable from a traditional diatonic model with one notable exception: the tuning.



es in the right key, and you can't play a wrong
s is known as the "Blues Scale". Guitarists refer to
solo; however, to play this scale on a standard
master! That's where the PentaHarp comes in.

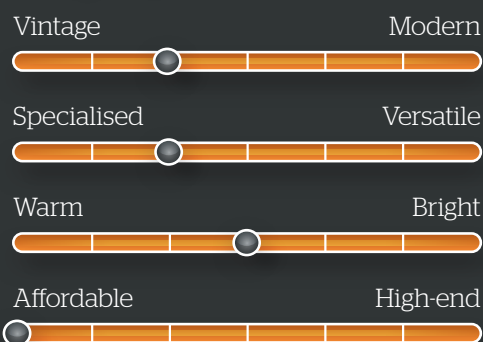
Pen-
y for
kids
a-
el,
Where a regular harp is tuned to the notes of a
major scale, Hohner's Pentaharps are tuned to the
most useful scale in rock and blues: the minor
blues scale! What this means is that no matter
which hole you blow or draw (what the cool kids
call sucking), you'll get a note that corresponds
with the blues box on your guitar. It's literally im-
possible to play a wrong note - something I wish I
could say about the guitar!



Hohner PentaHarps

MSRP: (UK) From £40

The Breakdown



For fans of

Quick learning curves.

Playing the right notes.

Not playing the wrong notes.

For more information, please visit:

pentaharp.com

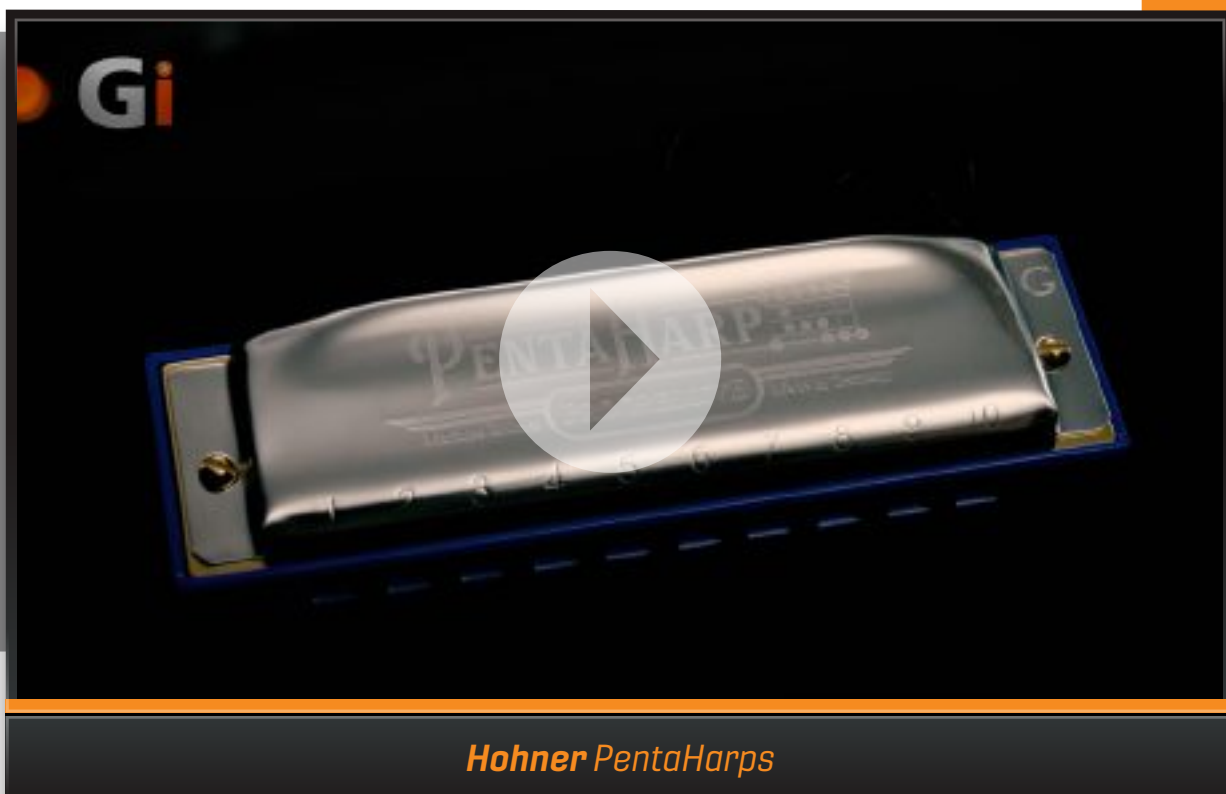


If you're wondering how easy it is to get going, let me put it this way - I don't play the harp, but I was able to get a convincing enough blues solo out of one of these harps within about 5 minutes of taking it out of the box. In fact, the performance you can see on the video review is literally my first time playing one of these harps along with a backing track. Sure, I'm not about to win any awards, but I was able to make music with precisely zero practice.

As you'd expect from Hohner, these harps are superb quality instru-

ments, with a beautiful, even tone right across their entire range. No voodoo "break in" methods were necessary, meaning you can drink your whisky instead of soaking your harp in it. They come in a variety of keys, and each one comes with a hard case and instructions on how to get started - not that you'll need them! If you're a guitar player who's "harp curious", these instruments are a great way to get started!

END «



Hohner PentaHarps

As you'd expect from Hohner, these harps are superb quality instruments, with a beautiful, even tone right across their entire range."



Hit'n'Mix RipX DeepRemix

Nick Jennison reviews Hit'n'Mix's RipX: DeepRemix—and audio editor; AI machine learning drums, bass or other instruments inside a complete mix; suitable for creating stems for backing tracks, and much more.

HAVING taught music production in colleges and universities for some time, one of the questions I used to get from students all of the time was “can I take the drums/guitar/vocals/sousaphone (etc) out of this finished recording?”. A good number of you will realise this is impossible (or so I thought), but in case you don't see why this would be a problem, let me explain why this is such a problem.

Think about a recording as a cake. The individual tracks (kick drum, hi hat, bass, backing vocal 7 etc) are the ingredients that go into making the cake. In the mixing process, you blend these ingredients in the right proportions - then you put it in the oven to bake (bouncing the mix down to a stereo .wav/.mp3 etc). Once your cake is baked, you can't go back and add more flour, or take the egg out. Well, Hit'N'Mix scoffs at this



learning-based editing tool to separate voice,
for DJ sets, as a tutorial tool to learn songs, for creat-

ual laws of audio engineering, and have just produced
.4-b a piece of software that can “un-bake” the cake:
RipX.

It's available as two versions: the super-pro Deep-
Audio that allows you an absolutely insane level of
audio tinkering, and the more musician-friendly
version we're looking at today - DeepRemix. With
a deceptively simple and intuitive interface, RipX
allows you to drag an audio file into its main
window, where it's analysed and converted into a
“Rip”. Once this process is complete, you're pre-
sented with a piano roll style representation of your
track, with each note of each instrument repre-
sented as its own line. These lines are colour coded
by instrument (or “layer” as RipX calls it), enabling
you to see exactly what each instrument is playing.

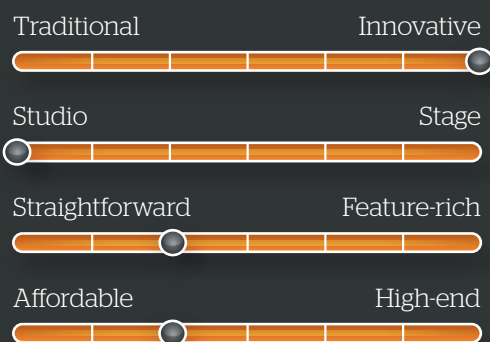
The mixer in the bottom right corner gives you
control over the level and panning of each “layer”,
with a solo and mute button for each. You can
solo up the guitars, mute the bass, turn the drums
down... honestly, it feels a bit like witchcraft.
There's also an equaliser for each layer, so if you're
turning the kick drum up and now it sounds too
boomy, you can take some of the low end out - not
out of the whole mix, just the kick drum. If you're



Hit'n'Mix RipX DeepRemix

MSRP: £79

The Breakdown



For fans of

Making remixes.

Hearing isolated parts.

Defying physics.

For more information, please visit:

hitnmix.com



dissatisfied with the layers RipX has decided on, you can create layers manually, and easily re-assign notes to any layer you like.

Clicking on any note, you can drag it up and down in pitch, or change its timing or length. If you want to change the notes in the bassline, for example, you can do this with ease. You can also fix timing errors just as easily. Additionally, a drop-down menu gives you the ability to radically edit individual notes - you can add or remove vibrato, add delay or reverb to individual notes, or even create harmonies!

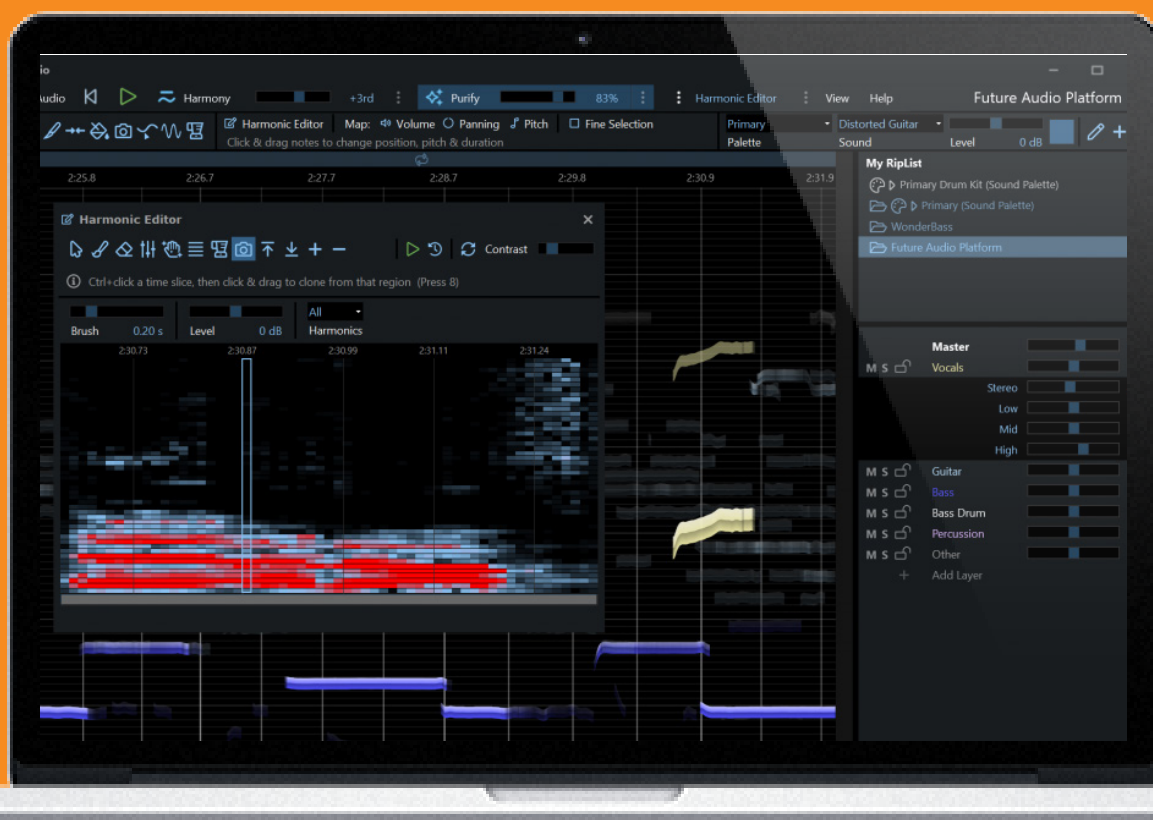
Your editing options are not limited to within RipX, however. You can export your “Rip”

(including your edits) as stems to be processed in your DAW, or even as MIDI files to use with software instruments. Ever wondered what Metallica would sound like if they were all playing Oberheim synths? RipX is here, egging you on to try.

RipX DeepRemix is an immensely powerful piece of software that promises big things, and delivers on them all. If you’re a remixer, a producer, a musician who gigs with backing tracks, or even just a guitar player who wants to learn songs by isolating guitar parts, you can file RipX under “must-have”.

END «





“You can add or remove vibrato, add delay or reverb to individual notes, or **even create harmonies..!**”

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

Martin Guitars SC-13E

Martin guitars return to the pages of Gi with arguably the company's most significant release since they created the dreadnought. With its offset cutaway shape and innovative Sure Align neck joint, the SC-13E is a bold new direction in design for the company, but does it live up to the hype?

Here's **Rodney McG** with his in-depth review.

THE SC-13E sees Martin bringing new innovation to one of the guitar field's most traditional instruments. The SC-13E sets itself apart by being a bolt-on acoustic. The bolt-on is sculpted at multiple angles using what Martin calls the Sure Align joint. This is supposed to offer superior stability to the neck joint of the body while also creating a comfortable pocket for the fretting hand to be able to reach the highest frets.

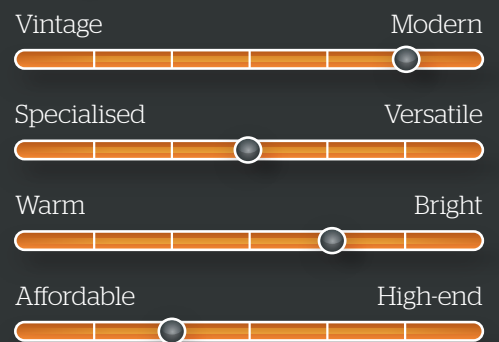




Martin Guitars SC-13E

MSRP: (UK) £1599 / (US) \$1,899

The Breakdown



For fans of

Guitar innovation

Fast acoustic necks

A Martin for a great price

For more information, please visit:

martinguitar.com



The construction of the SC-13E mirrors Martin's most recent offerings with a Sitka Spruce top, Ziricote back and sides done in a gloss finish with a white finding and tortoiseshell pickguard.

The neck leaves the gloss behind with a satin finish for a smoother feel under the fretting hand. Breaking again with tradition is the round Halo style fret markers and slim-line contoured tuning pegs called the Skeleton Key shape. They definitely resemble the old Victorian keys in that style.

Finally, onboard is a soundhole pickup, the LR Baggs Element system. This system offers two rotary controls accessible through the soundhole. One is a volume, and the other a tone. The tone has a centre detent

that locks easily into position and lets you know where the unaffected center-point is. The movement to the right brings you more bass and adds a rounder, fuller overtone to the output. Movement to the left brings in more treble and definition. Movement in both directions offers a great deal of boost and cutability for detailed sound-shaping without the need for an additional preamp or EQ.

Despite its slightly different shape, the guitar sounds rich and full with plenty of detail and resonance. The big attention point, here again, will be the single-cut style neck attachment and higher for access. Virtuoso soloists, Rock and metal players that may transfer electric songs over to acoustic, or

“Despite its slightly different shape, the **guitar sounds rich and full** with plenty of detail and resonance...”



even jazz players who want less restriction in an acoustic instrument for their set are definitely going to be target audiences for the SC-13E.

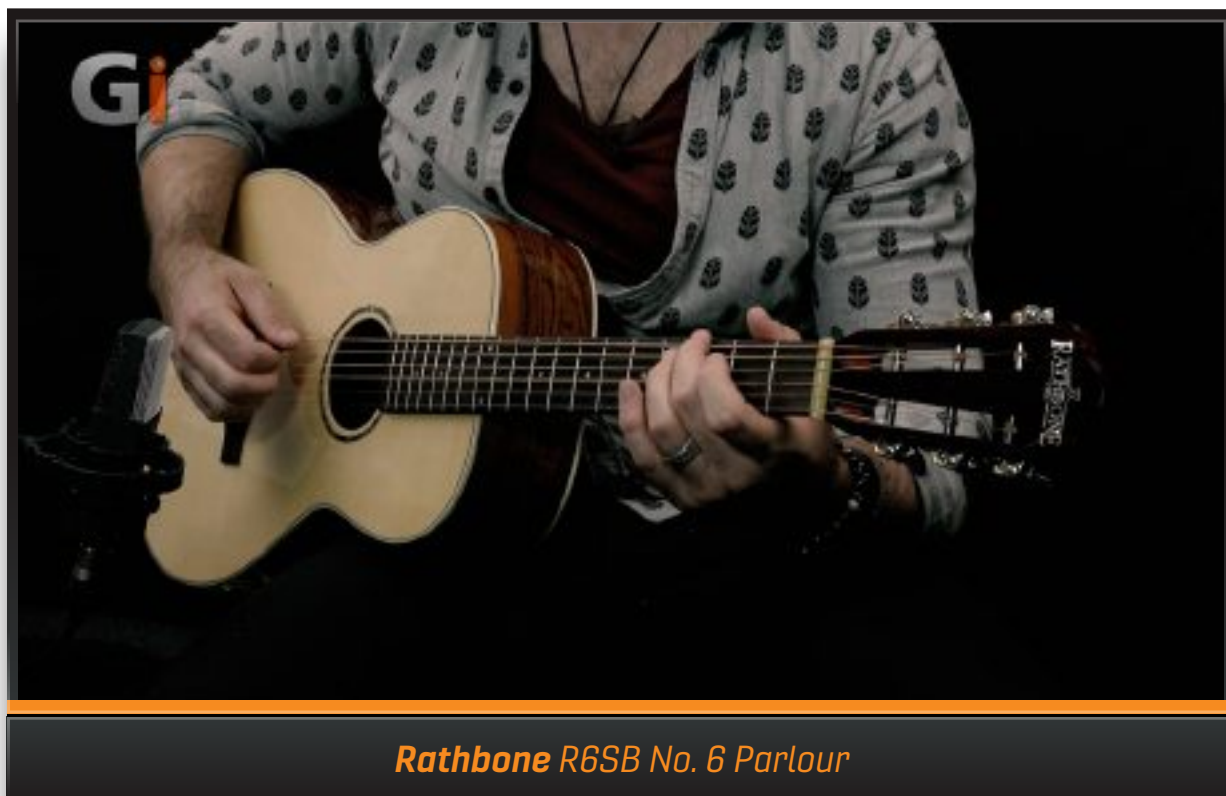
The appeal is definitely to be somewhat of a hybrid in between acoustic sound and electric feel. The neck is fast, easy to navigate, and the multi-angle sculpted neck joint allows for relaxed hand positioning when moving even up to the highest fret. Definitely something unique and innovative from Martin Guitar, that should interest players from multiple genres.

END «

Rathbone R6SB No. 6 Parlour

The No.6 exquisitely captures the spirit of Rathbone Guitars with its time-honoured short-scale Parlour design matched with visually captivating and great sounding tonewoods. This new model combines a Solid Spruce top with highly figured Bocote wood for an eye-catching mix that responds similarly to maple instruments and designed to deliver excellent projection and clarity, whether strumming or fingerpicking. Here's **Nick Jennison** to tell us more.

THERE are so many reasons to love a parlour guitar. The blues troubadour aesthetics; the comfort of the smaller body style; the easy playing feel of the short scale length; the sweet, articulate tone. A great parlour guitar is a thing of great joy, which is exactly what the Rathbone R6SB is.





Rathbone R6SB No. 6 Parlour

MSRP: (UK) £395 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Sweet, detailed tones.

Easy playability.

Blues troubadour aesthetics.

For more information, please visit:
rathboneguitars.com



The first Rathbone guitar to feature a slotted headstock design, the R6SB has a very cool early 20th-century look that's reminiscent of some of the pre-war acoustics that go for big bucks on the used market. It's a fairly traditional design with a solid Engelmann spruce top, mahogany neck and rosewood fretboard and bridge. The back and sides are bocote - a gorgeous figured wood from the same family as ziricote.

The slotted peghead is a standout feature, both visually and sonically. It alters the break angle of the strings in a way that increases downward tension on the nut, improving clarity and projection, particularly on open string notes. It's easy to scoff at the effect these design features might have on an electric guitar, but on an acoustic, these details make a world of difference.

Sonically, the R6SB is sweet and well balanced, with a lovely detailed high end. There's plenty of dynamic range for Flatpick-

ing lines, with a surprising amount of projection despite the small body shape. Strumming hard with a heavy pick can make this guitar "top out", but that's to be expected for a parlour - save those kinds of antics for your favourite dreadnought. That said, with a lighter pick, this guitar responds beautifully with a clear and percussive strumming voice. Where it really shines is fingerstyle, though, with a detail and clarity that really flatters more delicate playing styles.

The fit and finish on the R6SB are excellent, with understated but clean binding and rosette and a very nice gloss finish. The fretwork is great, with no sharp edges or dead spots, and thanks to the short scale length, it plays effortlessly.

The R6SB is everything you could want in a parlour guitar at a very affordable price. It looks great, sounds great and plays great. What's not to love?

END <

The R6SB is everything you could want in a parlour guitar at a very affordable price. It looks great, sounds great and plays great. **What's not to love..?"**



THE Basement

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THE PLACE FOR BASS



Aria DMB 206 Bass

Side by side with DM-206, Aria's DMB-206 fully inherits the heritage and tradition of the series as well as updated specifications to suit modern players' needs. Featuring a short-scale body is physically smaller and user-friendly for players with smaller hands—also a great option for the six-string players who want to explore the bass. **Sam Bell** tells us more.

THE time has come for me to review my first bass here at Guitar Interactive. Those who are regular may know me as a Guitar player, so Bass players, please take my opinion on this (as with all reviews!) with a pinch of salt. Being a Guitarist, however, I do create lots of music, and when I write & record, I play bass, and I think it is important for Guitarists to play bass (and vice versa!) as it helps your overall musicianship and no better than looking at this short-scale groover. »



the original DM
short-scale length, the
ideal choice for



Aria DMB-206 BK

MSRP: (UK) £419 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Iconic looks.

Value for money.

Short-scale basses.

For more information, please visit:

ariaguitars.com



In this issue, I took a look at the Aria DMB-206; this is a retro style, short-scale bass from Aria, who makes affordable & quality instruments. The DMB is part of Arias' Retro Classics series, featuring model lines that were originally launched in the 1960s.

The DMB206 features a Basswood body, Maple Neck, and Rosewood Fingerboard. The body design features a double cutaway with a slightly protruding lower horn on the cutaway, which gives the instrument a quirky look. The neck has 20 frets and has a scale length of 30 ½ which can be considered short scale. This gives the bass a unique tone compared to a standard scale length four-string bass which can be between 34 – 36 inches. It's also important to state the neck is a bolt-on neck with four screw holes connecting the neck to the body.

The electronics include two punchy Mini Humbucker pickups, one volume, one tone and one pickup selector that gives us three position choices (neck, both, & bridge). This is all offset with good solid chrome hardware. The model I reviewed featured the standard Black finish and white pickguard; however, the »





DMB 206 also comes in Vintage White and a 3 Tone Sunburst. All look fantastic!

How does it sound? If you're into Rock, Alternative styles, then the DMB206 will be right up your street; the short scale length emphasises a slightly more mid-range tone that's in your face and punchy. Experimenting with different pedals and amps, the humbuckers will give you the clarity and punch you need for those styles. In terms of playability, well... I'm a Guitarist playing a Bass; it's perfect for me; it doesn't feel too far from a regular guitar neck due to the short scale. The fretwork is great, super smooth, no harsh edges on the bass that I played and a very smooth fingerboard for moving around. As I'm not a 'proper' fingerstyle bass player, I'm not best qualified to say how this instrument fares with that style of playing; there are several places on the pickups to rest a thumb, however, but it might not be standard as far as I'm aware.

The verdict? If you're a rocker or an alternative indie guru or a Guitarist looking for a great sounding and playing bass – the DMB 206 is well worth a look, it's reasonably affordable, looks really cool, and it's built incredibly well considering the price. Go check one out!

END◀

Spector

NS PULSE II

?

**PLACE VIDEO
HERE**

Dingwall D-Roc 5

The D-ROC 5 from Dingwall is a cost-effective, but brilliant bass guitar. It features a classic d quality mahogany body, partnered with smoked nickel Hipshot/Dingwall hardware. It's a r heaven. This 5-string model comes in a sleek Matte Metallic Black finish which **Nick Jenn** look at in this exclusive review.

BASS players have always been a step ahead of guitar players like me when it comes to innovation. While us guitar luddites are notorious for fetishising 50s instruments that won't play/stay in tune and amps that require a team of sherpas to transport, our bass playing sisters and brothers have long ago embraced class D amps, lightweight high-efficiency cabs, active electronics and optimised, ergonomic instruments.

No manufacturer embodies this modern, forward-thinking way of building instruments more than Dingwall. Their basses have been wholeheartedly embraced by the modern metal crowd - as well as legendary virtuosos like Lee Sklar and Tony Levin - for their incredible playability, punch and clarity. The D-Roc Standard takes all of these qualities, but packages them in a more "rock & roll" body shape. It's like a Thunderbird from the far future, but without the neck dive or the excessive weight. And because these instruments are produced in China, they're actually pretty affordable too!

Let's start by talking about something I've been very vocal about in the past: fanned frets. If you're unfamiliar, fanned frets allow for different scale lengths on each string: longer on the low strings for higher tension and greater clarity, and shorter on the high strings so they don't play like high-tensile bridge cables. I'll be honest, I can't stand fanned frets on guitars, but on a bass it's a whole different story. Because of the differences in the way the instruments are played, and the roles they serve in a band, fanned frets on a bass feel very natural, and allow for some of the clearest and most punchy low notes you'll ever hear. Let me put it this way - the D-Roc Standard we looked at here was set up for an artist who was using it tuned F#-B-E-A-D. The fundamental of that low F# is about 23hz - right on the threshold of human hearing - and the D-Roc was quite happy to reproduce this absurdly low pitch with room-destroying clarity. There's even a hipshot D-tuner on the 5th string if you want to go even lower! »

design and a high-
match made in bass
ison takes a closer



Dingwall D-Roc 5

MSRP: (UK) £1699 / (US) \$2440

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Modern ergonomics.

Monster lows.

Futuristic aesthetics

For more information, please visit:

bassdirect.co.uk/



Electronics come courtesy of Dingwall's FD-3N pickups - three of them, to be precise. There's a 4-way rotary pickup selector offering bridge, bridge and middle in parallel, middle, and all three pickups in a special blend of series and parallel that sounds absolutely massive. The upshot of this is that you have access to sounds that are reminiscent of P-bass grunt, J-bass bridge pickup poke and Stingray grind, all in a hugely playable and thoroughly modern instrument.



Dingwall D-Roc 5

Sponsored by Rotosound



If you're looking for crazy playability and some of the most outrageous low notes you'll ever hear, but in a (relatively) affordable and eye-catching package, the Dingwall D-Roc Standard should be near the top of your list.

END <<



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THE Columns

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

CLASS IS BACK
IN SESSION

COLUMNS EXCLUSIVE COLUMNS
Gi



COLUMNS TOM QUAYLE

THE Tom Quayle COLUMN



Making Chromaticism Simple

MANY aspects of fusion and Jazz playing can seem very daunting at first and have an element of the dark arts about them. The mysterious and often over-complicated nature of concepts such as ‘playing outside’ and ‘chromatic approach notes’ used by all Jazz and fusion musicians, can seem like rocket science for the uninitiated. However, there are ways to develop your chromaticism that don’t involve a membership with MENSA and a four-year degree programme.

Let’s define what we mean by chromaticism and why it’s important. Playing chromatically doesn’t mean that we will simply be playing a chromatic scale (a scale containing all 12 notes available in western music). The idea is to connect scale tones by adding in some of the notes in between any scale notes a tone apart. Let me emphasise that this is a simplified concept and that chromaticism

can become a complex art form – the point is that it needn’t be in order to get started. Chromatic playing is important because it has become part of the vocabulary of Jazz/fusion playing and as such is required in order to sound authentic within the genre. I often hear many players who know countless scales and arpeggios and can play them over complex chord changes but still sound like something is missing from their playing. Often it is the chromaticism that is missing and the effect is easy to hear.

For the purpose of this tutorial let’s take a simple three note scale that most of you will already know – the G major scale. This scale is constructed from tones and semitones (two fret and one fret gaps respectively). Whenever we find a tone or two fret gap we can play the note in between to create a chromatic effect. We call these extra notes ‘chromatic additions’ to the scale. Some chromatic addi-



Tom Quayle: Fusion Fundamentals

tions sound better or smoother than others. On the low E and A strings try adding in the 6th fret with your third finger to create the pattern, 3,5,6,7 on each string. In this case the 6th fret is our 'chromatic addition'. Notice how smooth this sounds. On the D and G strings simply fill in the gap between the 5th and 7th frets giving you 4,5,6 and 7th frets. On the B and high E strings do the same process filling in the 6th fret this time giving us 5,6,7 and 8th frets.

Now you have a chromatic addition on every string simply by filling in the gaps. Try playing right through the scale and resolve or finish back to the 7th fret on the high E string (the note B). Notice that you can still hear the sound of a G major scale even though you've added in all of these chromatic notes. I have given you some examples of how you

can utilise this idea in the video and improvised a solo using chromatic additions in A Dorian (the same notes as G major).

Once you are used to the sound and technique required to play this new scale, feel free to add in these chromatic notes as you and your ear see fit. Try this technique with any other scales you know simply filling in gaps between any notes a tone apart to create a more authentic fusion sound. See if you can spot this kind of technique in solos by players such as Greg Howe, Brett Garsed and T.J. Helmerich.

Bear in mind that this is just the beginning of your chromatic journey, so keep searching for new sounds and I'll see you next time.

END «

PART 2

EXTREME SHREDDING

with Sam Bell

Sam Bell continues his new and exclusive column on the ultimate high energy playing.

HELLO and welcome to the second instalment of my Extreme Shred column! I hope you have been having fun with some of the concepts looked at in last issues lesson. Last time we took a look into a cool way of visualising 3 note per string scales that can be used to create legato lines that sound more 'arpeggio' based. We managed this by simply taking a 3 note per string scale and voicing it with 3 notes on a string followed by 1 note on the next etc. We called this technique 3-1-3 technique. I also spoke about how you can play these patterns with hybrid picking and legato for an ultra-smooth sound that players such as Greg Howe and Guthrie Govan are known for!

In this issue we are going to take some of these patterns and extend them with some tapping techniques and 4 note per string scales. Like I mentioned in the last column, this is extreme shred guitar! So I won't be talking too much about basic legato technique, I will be speaking about how I came up with some of the licks and patterns and also some



details which I think are pretty cool! Please refer to the video lesson and tab throughout these descriptions for each lick. Let's dive right in!

Lick 1: Tap slides.

This lick uses a pattern that by itself outlines an E Dominant 9th sound. However it can be superimposed over other chords (like many of these licks) to create different extension tones. I utilise tapped notes on the top of the 3 note per string sections to extend the pattern further up the neck. Using slides on the tapped notes I can further extend this pattern, now we have something that is more like a 5-1-5 pattern as opposed to a 3-1-3. We will be looking at some more extreme examples of this 5-1-5 idea in the next column, but alas we must move onto the next idea.

Lick 2: Double taps.

This lick outlines a Dmaj9 tonality. Which works very well over F#m7 as well. This pattern has some double taps and tap slides within it. When doing tapped slides it's important to focus on accuracy of the slide, making sure you really homing in on the note you are aiming for within the slide. It can be hard to see where you are going when doing tapped slides, so like most new ideas, please practice slowly and aim for accuracy. Double taps are self-explanatory, it takes a bit of getting used to tapping twice for a wide interval trill on the top notes however with a

bit of careful practice these double taps will feel easy. My key bit of advice for these is to keep your tapping light and accurate, aim to tap near the fret wire as this is the most sensitive place for a hammer on to sound out when using hammering techniques. This will mean you can lighten up and not 'bear down' on the tapping too much which will make this technique sound much quicker and smoother.

Lick 3: 4 Note Per String & Position Shifts.

This pattern is a long sequence that uses a lot of mini ideas within the line to give it an interesting contour. The main points in this lick that I would like to address are the position shifts and the 4 note per string segment. When practising position shifts, make sure the first note that you slide into with your index finger is rhythmically strong. Simply practice each 'segment' of this line slowly up to the first slide into note and aim for accuracy, once you have that down then add the next segment and so on. You may also notice the 4 note per string section, if you find the stretch too much for this pattern you could substitute it for a chromatic 4 note per string idea for a fusion sound. Practising legato 4 note per string really helps with increasing fretting hand strength and dexterity. And it's also great to be able to throw 4 note per string ideas into your legato lines to create interest or move to other areas of the neck.

Summary:

Like with most licks, I find it best to take what you want from them, what you feel would benefit your own unique playing. So please whilst learning these licks, look for variations and see if you can find some of your own twists, turns and phrasings! Have fun, keep practising and I shall see you in the next issue of Guitar Interactive for some more extreme shred guitar exploration!

END«



COLUMNS **CHRIS BUCK**

**CHRIS
BUCK**

**ROCK
SOUL**





Having shared the stage with rock music icons such as Slash and Ritchie Blackmore, **Chris Buck** is one of the most exciting young guitar players on the music scene today. With his band Buck & Evans' debut album set for release in 2018, Guitar Interactive Magazine is proud to welcome Chris' brand new column exploring the world of modern rock and blues guitar playing. »

LESSON 3: HENDRIX

I Having shared the stage with rock music icons such as Slash and Ritchie Blackmore, Chris Buck is one of the most exciting young guitar players on the music scene today. With his band Buck & Evans' debut album set for release in 2018, Guitar Interactive Magazine is proud to welcome Chris' brand new column exploring the world of modern rock and blues guitar playing.

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but album set for release in 2018, Guitar Interactive Magazine is proud to welcome Chris' brand new column exploring the world of modern rock and blues guitar playing.

It pains me to say it, but Hendrix wasn't love at first listen for me. Far from it in fact. Comparative to the guitarists that first inspired me to pick up a guitar, his playing seemed imprecise; a little sloppy and rough around the edges, especially on live recordings. For whatever reason, it didn't resonate with my 12-year-old self. Still, I think there must have been some subconscious appreciation of his importance and influence as I





Chris Buck's Rock & Soul Lesson 2

“...IT'S THE EXPRESSION IN THOSE NOTES THAT HIT US WHERE IT HURTS OR WHERE WE FEEL IT MOST...”

absorbed what I felt I could at the time, before moving on to players whose style I found more ‘consistent’ and more accessible to understand and ultimately, emulate. Slash, SRV, Eric Clapton, Gary Moore and Rory Gallagher, to name a few.

Bizarrely, I don't recall a defining moment that it really ‘clicked’ for me, but 15 years on, it's those very idiosyncrasies that now form the lynchpin of my love of Hendrix; that loose, uniquely-Jimi approach to melody, harmony (and tuning...!) that make his

“HOW DIFFERENT WOULD HAVE VAN HALEN’S PANAMA SOUNDED WITHOUT A PICK?”



recordings so wildly exciting, dynamic and unpredictable. Most musicians spend a lifetime striving for those rare of-the-moment seconds of spontaneity and fluidity were the years of practice, dedication and theoretical knowledge combine to produce something infinitely more meaningful and

profound than the sum of their parts – a connection to some higher power that Jimi appeared to channel so effortlessly every-time he touched a guitar.

From a guitarist’s perspective, there are so many things that it’s easy to be drawn

to when analysing Jimi's playing and his approach; his lead work, playing with his teeth, behind his head, the twin Marshall stacks turned up to 11, his use of effect pedals...that it's incredibly easy to overlook the thing that he did for at least 90% of his time on stage or in the studio; play rhythm. Except, like most things related to Jimi, you couldn't really call anything that he played conventional, none more so than his rhythm work. And for me, this is where the true magic of his playing lies. If you haven't heard it, check out his version of Bob Dylan's Like a Rolling Stone live from Winterland on YouTube; his chord work underneath his singing is utterly mesmerizing and every bit as melodic as the vocal melody and later, his solo. Aside from an impeccable sense of melody and groove, the key to this was using his thumb (in his case, on his right hand) to fret the bass notes, leaving his index, middle, ring and little finger free for more intricate harmony. The result is a freedom that more traditionally fingered barre chords (i.e. index finger running along 5 or 6 of the strings) doesn't allow.

If using your thumb to fret bass notes is not something you've attempted before, be warned – it's a somewhat alien concept at first and may take some getting used to. I can't recall struggling at any great length with the execution more than I did the concept but at the time, it was the next logical evolution of my playing; I knew what it was that I was trying to emulate and I knew how to achieve. Understanding

this and attempting to get to grips with it was a reasonably seminal moment in my development as a guitar player and really helped define the path I took from that point on; it changed my approach to the role of not only chords but rhythm playing in general, blurring the boundaries between what had prior been a very clearly demarcated border between 'rhythm playing' and 'solos'. It's part of the broader brush that Hendrix painted with, redefining what we thought of as the limitations of guitar playing in the process.

This massively underappreciated facet of his playing is one of the many reasons that Jimi's true legacy runs much deeper than the showmanship, charred guitars and the posthumous tie-dye t-shirts. His musicality and poetic fluidity transcends his status as the poster boy for 60s psychedelia and ensures his ability to inspire in a way like no other musician, past or present. Listen to Axis, and I can guarantee you'll find something you'd previously missed...50 years on. Little Wing says more about Jimi's life than he could have ever intended - a snapshot of perfection that's over no sooner has it begun.

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CREATIVE FINGERSTYLE

Study n.23



HELLO

there and welcome to Guitar Interactive's Quiet Room.

In this column, I would like to share a short composition of mine called African Sunset, inspired by the beautifully rich and complex rhythmic vocabulary found in African music, particularly from Mali.

One of my favourite aspects of African rhythms is the recurrent use of polyrhythms, often morphing from binary to ternary rhythms, namely subdividing in multiples of 2 or 3. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of singing like melodies and heavily syncopated and/or displaced rhythms or, what in western music are described as metric modulation, consisting of implying different meters at once.

This piece starts with a 'chorale style' intro, namely a harmonized hymn-like melody. This is followed by the main theme, harmonized in thirds and super-imposed to an ostinato bass figure, consisting of quartet notes. The guitar is to be tuned in drop D, namely with the 6th down a tone to D. This will expand the range of the guitar in the lower register, and it will also make a few chords easier to play, like for example the F chord in bar 16 etc.

The melody consists of a short repeated motif, rhythmically displaced; in other words, whereas it's firstly presented on the 1st beat of the bar, this is repeated on the second beat of the 2nd bar, creating an effective rhythmic

tension and release, which feels like playing a $\frac{3}{4}$ over a $\frac{4}{4}$.

Below is the harmonic content of the intro and outro, described with chord symbols:

Dm13	C/E	Dm6 Add2/C#	Fmaj7#11	%
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The main theme navigates chords within Am (Am, F, G, Dm11), and A harmonic minor (E7).

This piece provides an opportunity to improve coordination skills, playing the bass line with consistency and with the intended dynamic variations, as well as presenting the melody in a singing-like manner (*cantabile*), while complementing it with harmonies, often a third below.

As always, inversions have been utilised to create melodic bass lines, which act as counter-melodies in the lower register. This is evident particularly in the intro/outro. The term inversion refers to the way a harmonic structure (a chord) is voiced or presented.

Triads can be voiced in three different positions/inversions:

a): Root position: root is lowest note in the chord

b): 1st inversion: 3rd is the lowest note in the

chord – (b)

c): 2nd inversion: 5th is the lowest note in the chord – (c)

Seventh chords could also be voiced as a 3rd inversion (7th in the bass). For example D/C = D7 3rd inversion, described by (d)

One of the technical hurdles of this piece is the need to use keep the melody at the fore or the arrangement. To do this, it may help to sing it while playing it, to be sure we are emphasising as needed.

As always, I would like to recommend re-searching the above-mentioned techniques in order to be able to use these 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 we should be able to use these effectively and creatively.



The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

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

'p' often plays the first two notes of each broken chord, as in bar 1 and 'i, m, a' follow.

Play each 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 'i, m and a' fingers, so attack is needed to outline the melody.

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

INTRO:

BAR 1: (beat 1,2): Open D (6th), A, D (4th) with index on fret 5 of G, middle f on fret 6 of B and little f on fret 7 of e, followed by index (from previous barre') on fret 5 of e.

(BEAT 3,4): Middle f on fret 2 of D(6th), index on fret 1 of B, little f on fret 3 of e and fret 1 of B again.

BAR 2: (beat 1,2): Open D (6th), A, D (4th), middle f on fret 2 of G, open B and index on fret 1 of e, followed by open B.

(BEAT 3,4): Ring f on fret 4 of A, index on fret 2 of G, open B and e, followed by fret 2 of G again.



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BAR 3 AND 4: Middle f on fret 3 of D(6th) ring f on fret 3 of A, little f on fret 3 of D with index on fret 2 of G, open B and e, followed by a 'freely' arpeggio of the upper chord structure.

BAR 4, 5, 6, 7: Open A.

SECTION A:

BAR 8, 9, 10, 11: Open A, middle f on fret 2 of G, index on fret 1 of B, pull-off to open G and B and ring f on fret 4 of G with middle f on fret 3 of B. This pattern is repeated, displaced of one beat.

BAR 12, 13, 14, 15: As previous 4 bars.

BAR 16, 17, 18, 19: Similar pattern to the previous one but with the following fingering: Ring f on fret 3 of D (6th), middle f on fret 2 of G, index on fret 1 of B. Pull-off to open B, back to fret 1 of B. Open e, followed by middle f on fret 2 of G and little f on fret 3 of B.

Next repeat section A, adding only a passing note in the final bar (E on fret 2 of D 6th).

SECTION B:

BAR 25 TO 28: As from bar 8 to 11 but over an open D pedal.

Repeat from the top and then play bar 13.

BAR 13: Open E, middle f on fret 2 of A, little f on fret 4 of D, index on fret 1 of G, open B and e. Next, play the natural harmonics found on the 12th, 19th and either on the 5th fret or directly above the sound hole.

BAR 29 TO 32: As previous 4 bars, but with an E7 on beat 2 of bar 31 (middle f on fret 2 of D (6th) index on fret 1 of G and little f on fret 3 of B).

SECTION C:

BAR 33 TO 40: As from bar 8 to 15, apart from landing on an Am in bar 39.

SECTION D:

FROM BAR 41 TO 44: Play an Am, G, F and C triads over an A pedal, with a triplet figure displaced by one quaver (8th note). These will be played with a 3/6 barre' (the first 3 strings), on fret 5, 3, 1 and landing on C major. These 4 bars are repeated.

BAR 45 TO 48: Similarly to the previous 4 bars, alternate G and C major triad over an F, fret 3 of D (6th). Repeat these 4 bars twice.

BAR 49: Open D (6th), A, ring f on fret 3 of D, open G, index on fret 1 of B and open E. Hold this chord for another bar (a Fermata sign was used to save space)

BAR 50: Middle f on fret 2 of D (6th), index on fret 1 of G and little f on fret 3 of B.



Hold this chord for another bar as per bar 49.

Repeat from the Sign to the Coda.

OUTRO: As the intro but with a slightly different RH pattern at the end.

Congratulations, you have completed 'African Sunset'!

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 classic tune arranged for solo guitar and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions and re-arrangements.

END «



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

*Until the next time -
Good-bye.*

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