

EXCLUSIVE LESSONS FROM TOM QUAYLE » SAM BELL » ANDY WOOD » GIORGIO SERCI

Guitar ^{Interactive} 98

PLUS



WOLFGANG
VAN HALEN

Chris Shiflett

FOO FIGHTERS' AXE-MAN TALKS NEW SOLO RECORD & MORE

MARCUS
MUMFORD
TECHSESSION

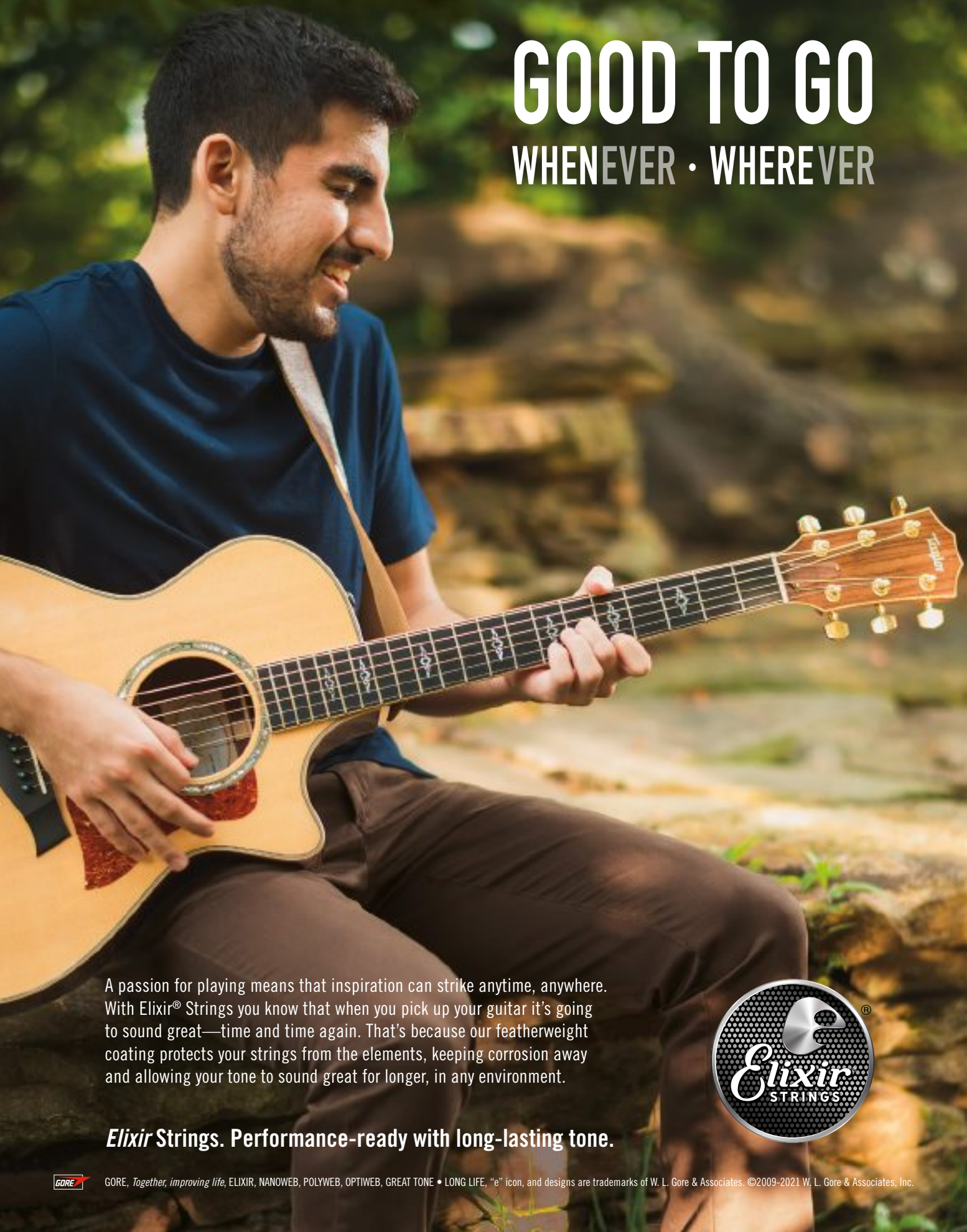
LATEST GEAR REVIEWS

MUSIC MAN EVH
TECH 21 CIARI GUITARS
MAYBACH

AND MORE

GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER • WHEREVER



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

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



GORE, Together, improving life, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, OPTIWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2009-2021 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

COMPACT SIZE, MONUMENTAL TONE.



IRONHEART
- F O U N D R Y -

WWW.LANEYAMPS.COM



FIND OUT MORE

WELCOME TO ISSUE

98



Hello and welcome to issue 98 of **Guitar Interactive Magazine!**



Editor
Jonathan Graham

For more than 25 years, **Chris Shiflett** has blurred the lines between genre and generation, balancing his full-

band projects with a thriving solo career. The Punk veteran, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Americana and rock songwriter and modern-day guitar hero is back with his latest album, 'Lost At Sea' (out 20th October 2023 via Snakefarm Records). Guitar Interactive editor **Jonathan Graham** speaks exclusively with Shiflett about the new release and

so much more in this issue's cover feature.

First impressions last a lifetime. Now a solo artist, **Wolfgang Van Halen** has prepared a lifetime to make his. The songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist has worked tirelessly towards the introduction of MAMMOTH WVH, his self-titled debut album. Now with his latest release 'Mammoth II' out now worldwide, Guitar Interactive Magazine talks with Wolf in this exclusive interview.

If that's not enough, **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at

Marcus Mumfords' approach to guitar playing, breaking down his percussive attack, note choice and overall dynamic feel 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, Nick Jennison & Giorgio Serci.**

Guitar Interactive

Editor

Jonathan Graham
jonathan@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Contributors

Jonathan Graham, Nick Jennison

Review crew

Nick Jennison, Sam Bell

Columns

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

Advertising Manager

Helen Bavester
helen@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

USA Advertising Sales

Lisa Spiteri
lisa.spiteri@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Design and layout

Simon Gibbs
simon@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

Video Editors

James Masterton & Dave Kidd

Sound Engineers

Dave Kidd

Camera Operators

James Masterton

Publishers

Guitar Interactive

Publishing Partners

Kim Waller

(c) Copyright 2023 Guitar Interactive Ltd. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission of the copyright owners. The views expressed in

Guitar Interactive

Welcome to **Guitar Interactive Issue 98**

GET IN TOUCH Ask a question, share your ideas and let's see what works!



iGuitarMag

Tweet your ideas and thoughts here



**facebook.com/
GuitarInteractive
Magazine**

Keep up-to-date with the latest from Gi



**www.guitarinteractive
magazine.com**

Full user access to our extensive website and content

Engineering
d & James Masterton
s
asterton & Dave Kidd
rs
eractive Ltd
ng Director
er

Contact

Sales and Information line:
+ 44 (0)1708 757 337

Fax Line: +44 (0)1708 757 528

Address: Unit A, Chesham Close, Romford,
Essex, RM7 7PJ, UK

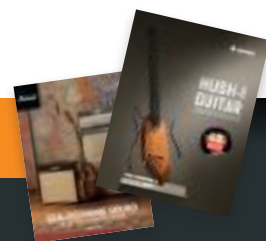
AD INDEX

Our advertisers.

DONNER 87
ELIXIR 126-127
ELIXIR 2
ELIXIR 42-49
ELIXIR 126-127

FRET KING 19
INTEGRAL 83
JOE DOE 83
LANEY 3

MARSHALL 15
MODER 31&59
PRS 29
SENNHEISER 97
VINTAGE 19



Guitar Interactive are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor or Publisher.

ISSUE 98 Contents

INTERVIEWS



Chris Shiflett:

Gi editor Jonathan Graham speaks exclusively with Shifley about the new release and so much more in this issue's cover feature.

010

Wolfgang Van Halen:

The songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist talks 'Mammoth II' and much more

024

FEATURES

Maybach Guitars: Maximum Quality... Uncompromised

036

REVIEWS - GUITARS, AMPS & FX

- 052_Music Man Steve Lukather L4 Steamroller
- 056_EVH Frankenstein Relic Series
- 062_Fret King FKV27SBK Country Squire Stealth Gloss Black
- 066_Ciari The Ascender Folding Guitar
- 070_Maybach Stradovari
- 074_Chapman Ghost Fret
- 078_Donner HUSH-I Travel Guitar
- 084_Marshall Studio JTM ST20C Combo
- 090_Positive Grid Mini Go
- 094_DOD Meatbox
- 098_Laney IRF-DUALTOP & IRF-LEADTOP
- 102_Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Series Fuzzy Brit
- 108_D'Addario XS Coated Strings

STUDIO TO STAGE

- 116_Boss Gigcaster 8 Streaming Mixer
- 122_MOD AUDIO - AIDA DSP Plugins

QUIETROOM

- 128_Cort L60 MF Acoustic
- 134_Martin SC-13E Special Burst

TECH SESSION



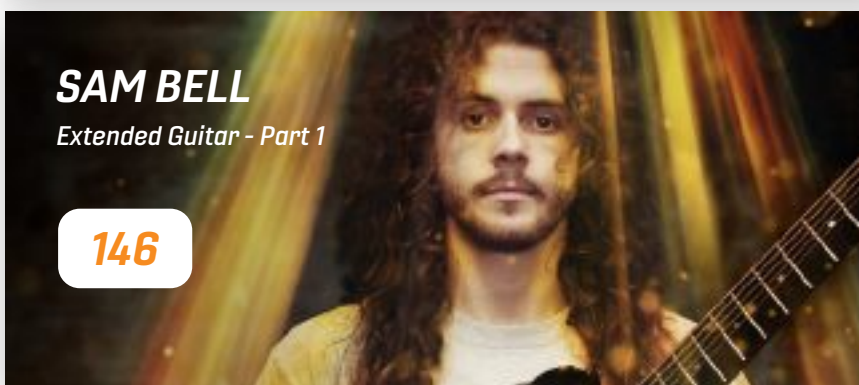
TECH SESSION
Marcus Mumford
— Nick Jennison —
Sponsored By Elixir

044



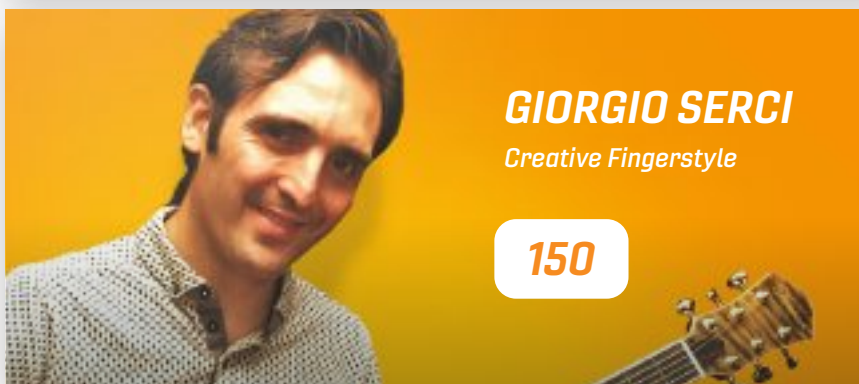
TOM QUAYLE
Modern Guitar - Part 8

140



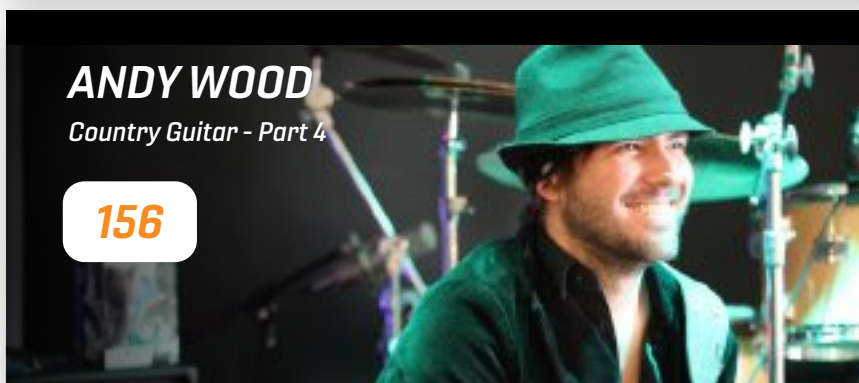
SAM BELL
Extended Guitar - Part 1

146



GIORGIO SERCI
Creative Fingerstyle

150



ANDY WOOD
Country Guitar - Part 4

156

COLUMNS

THE Interviews

For more than 25 years, **Chris Shiflett** has blurred the lines between genre and generation, balancing his full-band projects with a thriving solo career. The Punk veteran, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Americana and rock songwriter and modern-day guitar hero is back with his latest album, 'Lost At Sea' (out 20th October 2023 via Snakefarm Records). Guitar Interactive editor Jonathan Graham speaks exclusively with Shiflett about the new release and so much more in this issue's cover feature.

First impressions last a lifetime. Now a solo artist, **Wolfgang Van Halen** has prepared a lifetime to make his. The songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist has worked tirelessly towards the introduction of MAMMOTH WVH, his self-titled debut album. Playing every instrument and singing each and every note, his music presents a personal and powerful perspective, balancing memorable hooks and tight technicality. As many times as audiences have experienced his talent alongside the likes of Tremonti, Clint Lowery, and of course, Van Halen, we meet Wolf as an individual. Now with his latest release 'Mammoth II' out now worldwide, Jonathan Graham talks with Wolf in this exclusive interview.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES





For more than 25 years, Chris Shiflett has blurred the lines between genre and generation, but now, as a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Americana and rock songwriter and modern-day guitar hero is back with his new band, Tenacious D, the band's frontman and lead guitarist Shiflett is back with his new band, Tenacious D. In this exclusive interview, our contributing editor **Jonathan Graham** speaks exclusively with Shiflett about the new release and so much more.



Shiflett: AT SEA

balancing his full-band projects with a thriving solo career. The Punk veteran, Rock & Roll Hall of Famer, and Snakefarm Records founder, Shiflett discusses his latest album, 'Lost At Sea' (out 20th October 2023 via Snakefarm Records). Guitar Interactive has much more in this issue's cover feature. ▶

NAMED “Americana’s biggest rockstar” by Rolling Stone, Shiflett has played a crucial role in shaping the sound and the scope of modern-day rock music as a longtime member of the Foo Fighters.

He joined the band in 1999, after kicking off his career playing guitar for seminal pop-punk groups like No Use For A Name and Me First and the Gimme Gimmes. Foo Fighters quickly made use not only of his instrumental chops, but his songwriting capabilities, too, with Shiflett contributing to era-defining hits like “All My Life”, “Times Like These” and “Best of You.”

While flying the flag for modern rock ‘n’ roll, he also made time to pursue projects outside of the band. Groups like Jackson United and Chris Shiflett and the Dead Peasants found him in the driver’s seat, establishing his credentials as a frontman, while the long-running Americana podcast Walking the Floor saw him shining a light on his heroes and contemporaries, its 200-plus episodes highlighting the storytellers, songwriters and road warriors of contemporary roots music.

Two critically-acclaimed solo albums, 2017’s ‘West Coast Town’ and 2019’s ‘Hard Lessons,’ marked Shiflett’s entry into the Americana world, mixing classic Bakersfield influences with greasy guitar riffs, Marshall amplifiers and country rock rasp.

Shifty turns a new page now with ‘Lost At Sea,’ a solo record that builds a musical bridge between Nashville — where Shiflett has become a frequent visitor, performing on the Grand Ole Opry one minute and collaborating with Music City tastemakers like The Cadillac Three frontman Jaren Johnston and legendary producer Dave Cobb the next — and his native California.

Caught halfway between the honky-tonk saloon and the punk rock dive bar, ‘Lost At Sea’ is both eclectic and electric, making room for alt-country crunch, guitar-driven grit and sharp songwriting. Tying that mix together is Shiflett himself, a musical Renaissance Man whose influences are every bit as wide-ranging as his resumé. ▶



▶ YouTube

Chris Shiflett - “Damage Control”

'Lost at Sea' showcases the full range of Shiflett's abilities. There are harmonised guitar solos worthy of Thin Lizzy, amplified country anthems and roots rockers steeped in Tom Petty's influence."

There are harmonised
of Thin Lizzy, amplified
rockers steeped in





'Lost At Sea,' meanwhile, finds him bridging the distance between West Coast Town's honky tonk homage and Hard Lessons' overdriven crunch. Shiflett recorded the majority of the album in Nashville, working with producer/collaborator Johnston (songwriter behind nearly a dozen Number 1 country hits) plus a small cast of Americana all-stars – the likes of fellow guitar-slingers Charlie Worsham, Tom Bukovac and

Nathan Keeterle, all of whom laced the record with fiery fretwork.

He also teamed up with a number of co-writers, partnering with Kendell Marvel, Cody Jinks and others to fill 'Lost At Sea' with storylines that pack as hefty a punch as the music itself. "Black Top White Lines", a riff-heavy rocker that barrels forward at highway speed, was written with Johnston and ▶



 **YouTube**

Chris Shiflett - Dead And Gone (Lyric Video)

Marshall

STUDIO JTM
20W ALL-VALVE AMP
MADE IN THE UK



ERA-DEFINING SOUND

THE AMP THAT STARTED IT ALL IS BACK.

MARSHALL.COM

Brothers Osborne guitarist John Osborne, while “Carrie Midnight Texas Queen” — a nostalgic track whose shuffling swagger conjures up images of boot-scuffed Austin dancehalls — was penned alongside Nick Autry and Cary Barlowe.

“We wrote a lot of these songs during the lockdown,” recalls Shiflett, who spent much of the Covid-19 pandemic at home in Southern California. “Then I began making trips to Nashville to work with Jaren. He and I have a lot of overlap, in terms of the music we like. We made a guitar-centric record that encapsulates everything I’ve been listening to over the years, from the most country songs I’ve ever recorded to ‘90s punk, rock ‘n’ roll,

and even songs that sound like a California version of The Clash!”

‘Lost At Sea’ showcases the full range of Shiflett’s abilities. There are harmonised guitar solos worthy of Thin Lizzy, amplified country anthems and roots rockers steeped in Tom Petty’s influence. The breakneck pace and palm-muted guitars of “Parties” salute Shiflett’s early days within the Bay Area punk scene, while “Damage Control” — with its layers of reverb, pulsing percussion and Echoplex tape delay — flirts with the atmospheric dub that Lee Scratch Perry introduced.

Everything is grounded in melody. Shiflett nods to his heroes throughout, ▶



Shifty turns a new page now with 'Lost At Sea,' a solo record that builds a musical bridge between Nashville and his native California."



but he charts his own territory, too, whipping up a diverse sound that's distinctly his own.

A road warrior since the mid-1990s, Chris Shiflett continues to juggle multiple projects. 'Lost At Sea' is his most personal moment to date, stocked with genre-bending songs that never fail to push beyond boundaries. Call it Arena Americana. Call it California alt-country. Call it whatever you like. For Shiflett, it's just the latest stop on the road that goes on forever.

Chris Shiflett will release new album 'Lost At Sea' on 20th October 2023 via Snakefarm Records. ▶



CREATE YOUR OWN VINTAGE® PROSHOP® CUSTOM-BUILD™ GUITAR!

Vintage PROShop



One off master-built instruments created with love, care, and the traditional Vintage® values of super high specification.



 @VintageInstruments

 @vintageguitars_official

 @VintageGuitarsOfficial

www.vintageguitarsrus.com

FRET King

The All New 2023 Collection

FRET-KING
COUNTRY SQUIRE STEALTH



www.fret-king.com



Chris Shiflett:
LOST AT SEA
tracklist

'Dead And Gone'
'Overboard'
'Black Top White Lines'
'Damage Control'
'Weigh You Down'
'Burn The House Down'
'Where'd Everybody Go?'
'I Don't Trust My Memories Anymore'
'Carrie Midnight Texas Queen'
'Parties'



For more information on Chris Shiflett, including pre-sale details for 'Lost At Sea' and tour dates, please visit www.chrisshiflettmusic.com





WOLFGANG VAN HALEN:

second fir impression

First impressions last a lifetime. Now a solo artist, Wolfgang Van Halen has prepared a lifetime to make his. The songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist has worked tirelessly towards the introduction of MAMMOTH WVH, his self-titled debut album. Playing every instrument and singing each and every note, his music presents a personal and powerful perspective, balancing memorable hooks and tight technicality. As many times as audiences have experienced his talent alongside the likes of Tremonti, Clint Lowery, and of course, Van Halen, we meet Wolf as an individual. Now with his latest release 'Mammoth II' out now worldwide, **Jonathan Graham** talks with Wolf in this exclusive interview. »

st ns



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



 **YouTube**

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



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

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

Coming from such a musical household, it may come as a surprise, but outside of his father teaching him one drumbeat from an AC/DC song, Wolfgang taught himself every instrument. “My dad wasn’t the best teacher,” he laughs. “I would ask him to play something, and then he would just proceed to »

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

be Eddie Van Halen. He would look at me and say, 'Do that.' to which I would laugh and sarcastically reply, 'Sure thing, no problem.'

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

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

Not only did Wolf canvas the world with Van Halen while in high school, but he also held down the low end on 2012's 'A Different Kind of »



Wolfgang Van Halen - Interview

“Not only did Wolf canvas the world with Van Halen while in high school, but he also held down the low end on 2012’s ‘A Different Kind of Truth.’”



YouTube

Mammoth WVH: **Epiphany** (Official Video)



Truth’— which debuted at #2 on the Billboard Top 200. When not on tour with Van Halen, he cut bass for Tremonti’s critically acclaimed ‘Cauterize’ (2015) and ‘Dust’ (2016), in addition to joining the band on the road. In 2019, Wolf handled drums and also played bass on half of the ten songs for Clint Lowery’s solo debut, ‘God Bless The Renegades.’

In the midst of all this, at the beginning of 2015, Wolf broke ground on what would become MAMMOTH with producer Michael “Elvis” Baskette [Alter Bridge, Slash] behind the board. Wolf began to embrace his voice, inspired by everyone from his father, to bands like AC/DC, Foo Fighters, Nine Inch Nails, TOOL, and Jimmy Eat World. “I’ve been singing my whole life, but it wasn’t until MAMMOTH that I really found



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.



© 2020 PRS Guitars / Photos by Marc Quigley

PRS PAUL
REED
SMITH
GUITARS

25TH
ANNIVERSARY

my voice. Elvis was great, and he helped me gain the confidence to become a lead vocalist.”

“The name Mammoth is really special to me,” says Wolf. “Not only was it the name of Van Halen before it became Van Halen, but my father was also the lead singer. Ever since my dad told me this, I always thought that when I grew up, I’d call my own band Mammoth, be-

cause I loved the name so much. I’m so thankful that my father was able to listen to, and enjoy the music I made. I’m really proud of the work I’ve done, and nothing made me happier than seeing how proud he was that I was continuing the family legacy.”

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



GTRs

WING 900



Aurora Pink



Aurora Purple



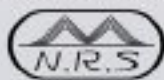
Aurora Green

JUST PLAY IT!

GTRS INTELLIGENT GUITAR W SERIES 900



MOOER





For more information on Mammoth WVH, please visit mammothwvh.com

“Throughout the whole process, I was finding who I am musically, and by the end, I got a pretty good handle on a sound I can claim for myself.”

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

Mammoth WVH – Mammoth WVH Tracklist

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



se visit:
vh.com



THE Features

From the very beginning, **Maybach** has written on its flag not only to manufacture instruments of the best possible quality but to implement this consistently with the promise of “Made in Europe.” This vision had been developed over three years of intensive preparation. It was successfully turned into reality when the **Maybach** ship set sail in 2011 and quickly set its course—driven by a wind of enthusiasm sparked by the many musicians thrilled by the quality of **Maybach** instruments.

HIGHLIGHTING THE BEST FROM THE WORLD OF GUITAR





MAYBACH

Maximum Quality..Uncompromi

From the very beginning, Maybach has written on its flag not only to manufacture instruments of the best possible quality but to implement this consistently with the promise of “Made in Europe.” This vision had been developed over three years of intensive preparation. It was successfully turned into reality when the Maybach ship set sail in 2011 and quickly set its course—driven by a wind of enthusiasm sparked by the many musicians thrilled by the quality of Maybach instruments.

H GUITARS:

ised



Another storm called the pandemic that fundamentally shook up the overall global economic situation from 2020 to 2022 brought new challenges for Maybach. However, the brand showed itself to be prepared for this situation as well.

Wood procurement, undoubtedly the central issue for every guitar maker in these times, was addressed by Maybach in good time, for example, to successfully master the balancing act between traditional guitar making and the unique requirements of the present day to protect the environment. This includes, on the one hand, intensive research & development in vintage guitar science, but also

creative and competent research for good wood sources in general and alternative woods in particular, to be able to professionally compensate for the dwindling supplies of classic tonewoods. This guarantees the uncompromising quality attested to Maybach instruments over the last years.

To offer the right product for every demand and price level, Maybach relies on a so-called 3D strategy in its production, which meets almost every musician's requirements. The three stand for the three Maybach production lines Standard Series, Classic Series and Masterbuilt. ▶



*Interview with **Maybach Guitars** CEO Toni Götz*

Standard Series

In the Maybach factory in the Czech Republic, the instruments of the Classic Series are expertly built by qualified guitar makers – for the most part, from certified woods of European origin. If African, South, or North American tonewoods are used, they come from sustainably managed plantations and are certified. Every Maybach guitar in

the Classic production meets the general sustainability criteria.

The Standard instruments are built to our established, fixed standards with the highest consistency. These standards naturally include the features of our “true spec” philosophy and offer optimal vintage handling and sound without compromise – and in a price range that is consistently tailored to the budgets of “working musicians”.



The Bodies

The bodies of the bolt-on instruments are made of two-piece European Alpine spruce or poplar, while the set-neck ones are made of two-piece Khaya mahogany or Okoume. The necks are made of European or North American maple and come with either a “fat” or “slim-taper” profile, while the tops of the Lester model, for example, are made of flame, solid maple of 3A grade.

Czech Workshop

Despite the traditional “true-spec” orientation in our production, modern times have a solemn word to say, especially regarding the instruments’ handling and functionality. You will find contemporary fingerboard radii like 9.5” for the bolt-on and 12” for the set-neck guitars and the use of compo-

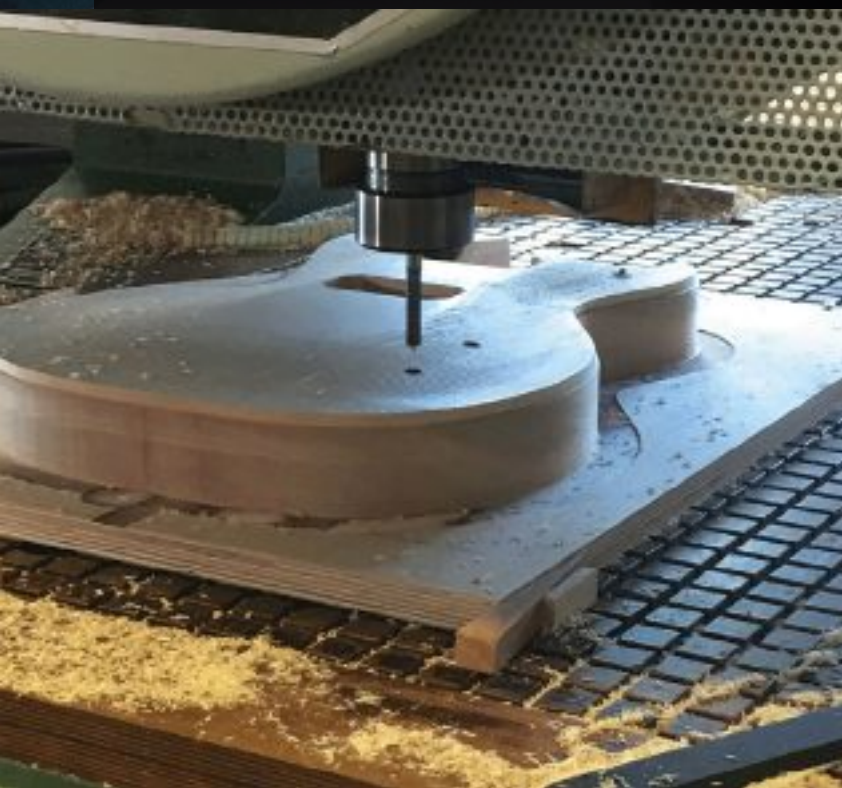
nents from proven, first-class manufacturers like pickups from Amber (DE) or Lollar (USA), tuners from Gotoh (JP) or Kluson (DE), pots and switches from CTS (USA) and Switchcraft (USA), tremolo systems from Gotoh (JP) or Bigsby (USA), fret wire from Sintoms (BY), etc. Like all Maybach instruments, the Classic Series are sealed with nitrocellulose lacquer.

However, the Czech Maybach Workshop offers the Maybach Custom Shop, an alternative to the usual Classic production for those with unique preferences in detail and maintaining specific optical preferences.

Classic Series

The instruments of the Czech Custom Shop are built from hand-selected woods, which are weighed before production and individually “matched” by our experts. In this way, we guarantee compliance with our weight standards and an optimal neck-to-body match from both acoustic and vibration aspects. The flamed maple is used for the necks of the Bolt-On instruments, the alpine spruce for the bodies is one-piece, and the tops of the Lester models are made of solid 5A grade maple.

Furthermore, the pickup selection is extended to aggregates from VanZandt (USA), Lindy Fralin (USA), or Monty’s (UK) in addition to the range of Amber (DE) and Lollar (USA) and the versatile VegaTrem (ES) is available here as



a tremolo alternative. For those who prefer a vintage 7.25" fretboard radius for their bolt-on instrument, this can be ordered to fit in the Custom Shop.

However, if you want to plan your Maybach guitar with us from scratch and tailor it to your personal preferences, then the Custom Shop Masterbuilt is the right place. Here, you work with a competent and highly motivated team of professionals under the leadership of master builder Nick Page. Here, you will experience how the motto "Dream your guitar, and we built it" is passionately translated into unique works of guitar art – day after day.

Masterbuilt

At the Maybach Custom Shop Masterbuilt in Wuppertal/Germany, individual one-off instruments and strictly limited small series are designed and built by Nick Page and his workmates. Due to the classic Maybach designs, everything is possible here – a wide variety of selected tonewoods in all grades, a large selection of the best hardware components, and first-class pickups. Of course, all possible and impossible nitrocellulose finishes are only one wish away. Plus: The Maybach Custom Shop Masterbuilt specialises in Paisley, Sparkle, or Multi-Layer finishes as well as in etched aluminium applications up to complete aluminium tops, and that in all ageing gradations – from very gentle to highly extreme.

The 3D strategy of Maybach production provides the basis for anyone looking for a sophisticated guitar to find the right instrument for them! Consistently aligned with our "true-spec" philosophy and the best possible "on-the-road" functionality, all three production lines offer the instruments that fit the individual sound, performance, and visual ideas, but also the budget of the respective musicians.

For more information on Maybach, please visit: maybach-guitars.de



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 the 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.

SPONSORED BY



UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES THE GREATS GREAT

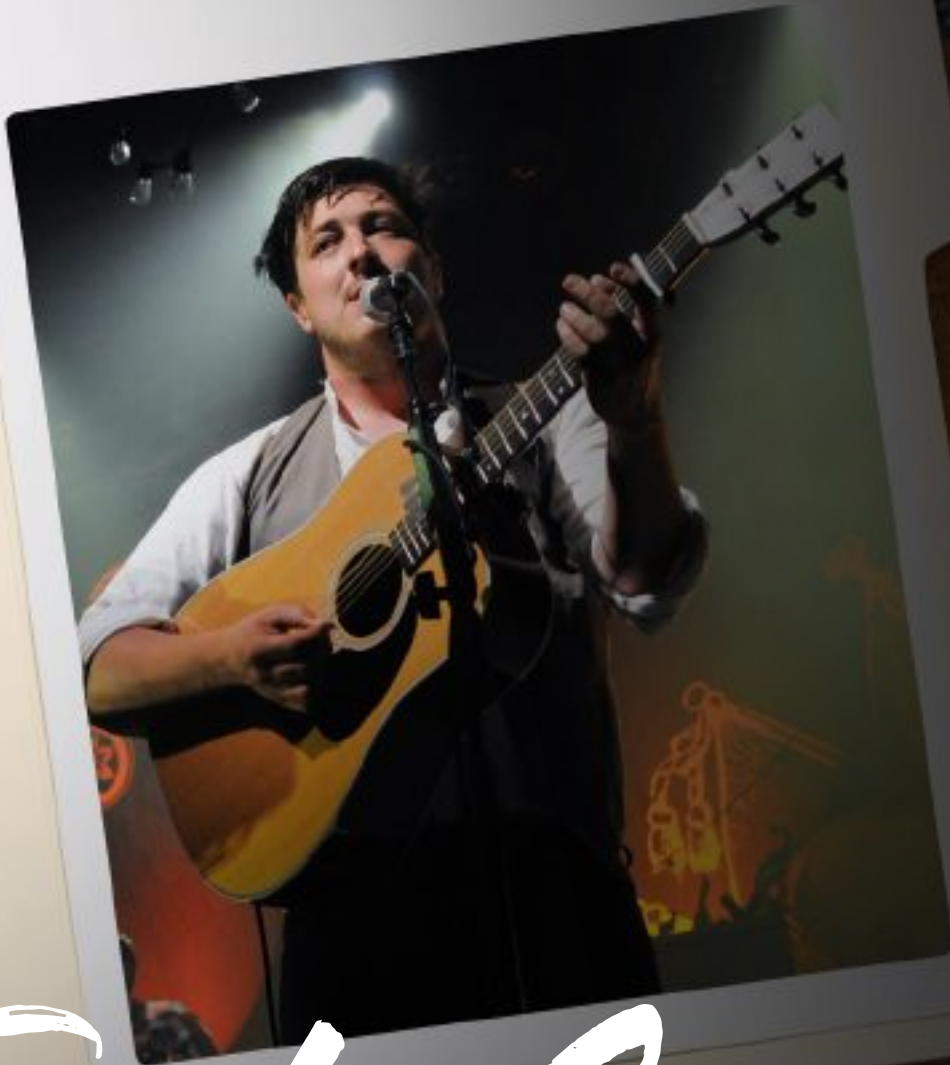


SPONSORED BY



THE TECH SESSION FILES

Marcus
Mumford



Tech Session

Marcus Mumford is a musician with hidden depths. A talented multi-instrumentalist who first cut his teeth playing drums for Laura Marling, alongside Ted Dwane, Winston Marshall and Ben Lovett—a trio of musical polymaths with whom Mumford would later form pop-folk phenomenons Mumford & Sons. In this issue's Gi Tech Session, **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at Marcus' approach to guitar playing, breaking down his percussive attack, note choice and overall dynamic feel. ▶



WHILE Mumford & Sons was the project that defined Mumford in the minds of many (not surprising, since his name is in the title), Marcus Mumford is far from a one-trick pony. Contributing as a songwriter and performer on everything from the Cohen brothers' film "Inside Llewyn Davis" and the soundtracks to "Ted Lasso" and "Daisy Jones & The Six", though to supergroup "The New Basement Tapes" alongside Elvis Costello, Pulitzer Prize winner Rhiannon Giddens, Taylor Goldsmith (Dawes) & Jim James (My Morning Jacket), Mumford has accomplished more by age 36 than most musicians will in a lifetime.

It's important to acknowledge the diversity of Mumford's body of work before we get stuck into this Tech Session (brought to you by Elixir Strings), because we're going to be focussing primarily on Mumford's early work with Mumford & Sons - specifically, his economical songwriting style. As such, this session is very beginner-friendly, but has a few interesting twists and turns that more advanced players will get a kick out of. So, grab your favourite acoustic and let's get going!

Bars 1-28:

We're kicking things off with some held-open chord strums. The actual chord shapes here are straightforward, but the





timing requires some attention due to the 2/2 time signature and the 7-bar phrase length. Hold the Em for 4 counts, the D/F# for 2 counts and the G for 8 counts, then repeat that timing for the Cadd9 (4 counts), G/B (2 counts) and the final Em (8 counts), and you'll be fine! Remember to stomp your foot in time with the bass drum on the second pass!

Bars 29-32:

The "verse" section of our Tech Session, and were we establish the strumming pattern that's at the core of this session. Think about it as "low" strings vs. "high" strings, but don't worry about being

too precise in terms of exactly *which* strings you're hitting. So long as there's a pronounced difference between low and high, you're good to go. There's also a very slight swing to the strumming here, but don't worry about making it exactly a full 8th triplet swing - just listen and feel it, and you'll be fine.

Bars 33-35:

Here we bump up against our first odd-time bar in bar 33 - a bar of 3/2, contrasting our 2/2 feel. Probably the best way to think about this is by playing one repetition of our strumming pattern as normal, and then "adding in" the two bass notes (G and F# on the low E string

SPONSORED BY



respectively) before starting the next pattern. Once you get a feel for this, it'll flow naturally.

Bars 43-51:

We're into the pre-chorus now, which once again incorporates the 3/2 bar from our previous section, this time in a 3 bar phrase as opposed to the 7 bar phrases in the previous two sections. Keep your eyes peeled for the little bass note "pick-up" in the third bar of each phrase.

Bars 52-55:

A more conventional 4-bar phrase here to build momentum into the «drop» (yes, folk music has «drops» too!). It's the same strumming pattern as before, but on a D major, punctuated by a Dsus4 in bar 54. Here, the «low» strings in our strumming pattern will be the A and D strings.

Bars 56-69:

A return to the chords from the intro, but this time as a "drop" chorus. Begin



22

22A

23



with a short strum of Em, followed by thumps on the guitar's body for a total of 6 counts (5 thumps, then a bass note pickup), then it's the same strumming pattern from the verse for 4 repetitions. Then it's exactly the same thing on a Cadd9 for 6 counts (4 thumps, then two bass notes) followed by 4 repetitions of our strumming pattern on Em.

Bars 70-83:

The same chords from our intro, but with strumming all the way through. The best way to think about this is as 2 repetitions of the strumming pattern on Em, 1 repetition on D/F# and 4 repetitions on G. Then we repeat this 2/1/4 repetition cycle on Cadd9, G/B and Em.}}

Bars 84-91:

One pass of our intro/chorus chords to finish, but this time with held open strums. Think of 4 counts, 2 counts and 8 counts for each chord in order, just like in the intro, and you're golden.

...and there we have it! A look at Marcus Mumford's deceptively simple songwriting style in Mumford & Sons. This should serve as an example of how much you can achieve with a relatively small number of basic chords, just by playing with rhythm bar and phrase lengths and arrangement tools like held chords, strumming patterns and drops. Have fun playing through this session, and hopefully, use some of these ideas in your own songwriting!



Marcus Mumford Tech Session Lesson

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.

GI97

GUITARS, AMPS AND EFFECTS



Ernie Ball Music Man Steve Lukather 30th Anniversary Steamroller

The Steve Lukather line of signature guitars gets an extensive makeover this year with the introduction of the new L4. Available in an HT SSS and HT HH configuration, and a limited edition 30th anniversary version with an HT HSS pickup configuration with Music Man double-locking floating tremolo. The L4 is the culmination of over 30 years of collaboration with Platinum and Grammy award-winning artist Steve Lukather whose accomplishments include an extensive session career (guitarist on over 1500 recordings), major solo work, the multiplatinum Michael Jackson "Thriller" album, and leader and a significant contributor of the rock band Toto.

WHEN it comes to signature guitars, Music Man goes all in. While it's common for some other brands to simply palette-swap an existing model (and maybe change the pickups) and call it a day, Music Man will work with their artists to conjure something completely unique from the ground up. Such is their commitment to giving their artists what they want, that signature models make up the bulk of their range, and the



er L4

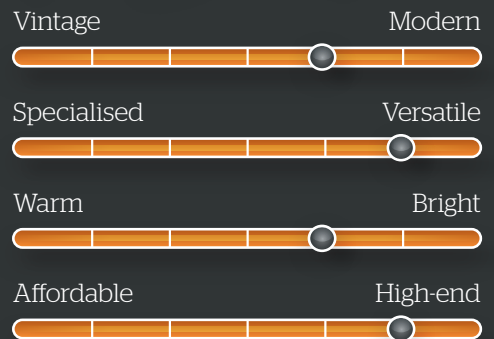
duction of the all-
version featuring
ulmination of
whose list of
r contributor on
he legendary



Ernie Ball Music Man Steve Lukather L4 30th Anniversary Steamroller

MSRP: (UK) £TBC / (US) \$3999

The Breakdown



For fans of

The best necks in the business.

Supreme versatility.

Floyd Rose antics.

For more information, please visit:

www.music-man.com/instruments/guitars





Steamroller



Blue Flame



Gator Burst

majority of what we'd consider the "classic" EBMM designs - the Morse, the Axis (yes, this was a signature model), the JP (and now the Majesty), and of course, the Luke.

NAMM 2023 saw the introduction of the fourth iteration of Steve Lukather's iconic signature guitar, and while the outline remains largely unchanged since the Luke I launched in 1994, the new L4 represents a significant evolution of this timeless design.

Aside from the new finishes, perhaps the most significant change is the pickups. Available for the first time with three single coils, alongside more traditional HH and HSS configs, the new L4s all feature Music Man's new HT pickups. Inspired by the processes that led to the development of Ernie Ball's M-Steel and Cobalt Slinky strings, these heat-treated pickups offer higher output than traditional designs, while also offering extended dynamic range and frequency response. This is quite the

achievement, since the hotter a passive pickup gets, the more the constricted the dynamics, high treble and deep bass tend to become, but the clever folks over at Music Man seem to have pulled off genuine alchemy here. It's clearly been a big enough change to catch Lukather's attention, and when you plug these guitars in, it's easy to see why.

Of the five new L4 models announced, the one that immediately caught my eye was the limited edition 30th Anniversary "Steamroller" - not just for its stunning aesthetics, but for how it harks back to the original Luke I with its HSS pickups and recessed Floyd Rose tremolo - a rarity, since most Lukes since the Luke II have come with a standard 2-point tremolo.

Let me tell you, "Steamroller" is an appropriate choice of name here, because this guitar is an absolute monster. It comes straight out of the case with an almost-too-easy setup that practically dares you to shred on it, and the neck feels unbelievably good under the hand. To be fair, that's something that seems to be common to all Music Man guitars, but there's something about the neck shape on the Luke that just *works*. It's crazy fast, but it's not a "shredder's" neck profile, and you can wrap your thumb around it and wrestle it too if that's what you're into. Sonically, those new HT pickups really deliver the goods, while the HSS configuration offers the kind of versatility that a player like Lukather requires - whether it's huge slabs of rock, Texas-inspired blues, "MJ" funk picking or soulful throaty lead tones, the L4 delivers.

The new Music Man L4 is a guitar befitting one of the all-time greats. It offers incredible playability, elegant and eye-catching visuals and a palette of stunning tones that will not only hang in any musical setting, but excel. This is a serious instrument for serious players, and if that's you, you need to check one out.



EVH Frankenstein Relic Series

If your playing incorporates the gamut of rock pyrotechnics—the EVH Frankenstein Series Relic was built with you in mind. Paying tribute to Edward Van Halen’s revered proto-superstrat platform, draping it in a road-punished, solid-coloured finish and updating it with modern hardware and electronics, the Frankenstein Series Relic includes a comfortable quarter-sawn maple neck and a playing compound-radius fingerboard, and its dive-bomb-only D-Tuna-equipped Floyd Rose lets you mimic Eddie’s signature trem-work with ease **Nick Jennison** Reviews.

A strong contender for “Most Important Guitarist Of All Time”, Edward Van Halen’s explosive 1978 debut heralded a seismic shift in not only the way guitar was played, but in the form the electric guitar would take for decades to come. Perhaps the most iconic of Ed’s innovations is his legendary “Frankenstein”; an unholy union of Californian playability and Kalamazoo grunt, and the world’s first “Superstrat”. There’s probably no more recognisable guitar in all of rock history.

Perhaps a little TOO recognisable for some folks, particularly in the striped finishes that adorn the EVH brand’s loving recreations of Ed’s legendary guitars. Fortunately, there is an answer ▶



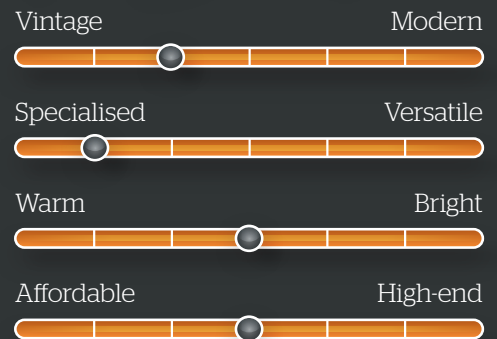
EVH Frankenstein Relic Series



EVH Frankenstein Relic Series

MSRP: (UK) £1249 / (US) \$1699

The Breakdown



For fans of

Juicy rock tones;

Road-warrior aesthetics;

Effortless playability

For more information, please visit:

www.evhgear.com



in the form of the new “Frankenstein Relic” series. Essentially, these guitars are “Frankie” replicas, but without the stripes. Available in black, red and white heavily relic’d finishes, they’re handsome and hugely evocative of Ed’s legendary guitar without being quite so “on the nose” visually.

The body is a classic Strat shape, complete with cut away pickguard and exposed pickup routes, housing a direct-mounted Wolfgang humbucker along with a vestigial neck single coil and a pickup selector that aren’t actually wired in - just like Ed’s original. With only

a single volume pot (with a knob marked “tone”), this is not a guitar that promises an endless array of tones - rather, it delivers one voice with laser-focussed excellence. In the world of the Frankenstein Relic, it’s always rock o’clock.

So yes, one tone, but my word, what a tone! It’s powerful, articulate and very well balanced, with a tight low end that chugs and thumps with the best of them, and is beautifully responsive to your pick dynamics while still being forgiving enough for all manner of shreddy tomfoolery. ▶



MOOER IAMP - INTELLIGENT AMP SERIES

POWERED BY iAmp



MOOER's iAmp app was designed for you - the modern guitarist. We have channeled decades of research into the creation of a system that puts 52 amplifier models 49 effects at your fingertips with ultimate control through your tablet or smartphone using the MOOER iAmp app.

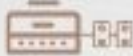
MOOER's Intelligent Amp Series comes loaded with the latest technology to give you what you need as a player wherever you are in your journey. From huge vintage amp tones with touch-sensitive response to dreamlike modern clean textures based on powerful delay and modulation algorithms, each MOOER Tone Library sound is fully customizable to your needs.

For the practicing musician the Intelligent Amp Series offers 40 drum machine varieties and 10 metronome types which sync effortlessly with a colossal 80 second looper so you can explore ideas over your own chord structures or nail that tricky lick you've been working on.

Each model in the Intelligent Amp Series can be paired with the MOOER GWF4 wireless footswitch for preset changes and full control over the looper and drum machine making them powerful tools for practice too.

With MOOER OTG you can record directly onto a compatible device making the Intelligent Amp Series the perfect choice for content creators who depend on immediate results. With MOOER Cloud you can download the latest MOOER signature artist presets as well as uploading your own sounds.


SPECIALIZED APP
FOR MORE ENJOYMENT


101 AMP MODELS
AND EFFECTS


40 DRUM GROOVE
AND 10 METRONOMES


INTEGRATED APP TUNER


80-SECOND LOOPER


OTG DIRECT RECORDING


SUPPORT WIRELESS
FOOTSWITCH
(SWITCHING PRESET/DRUM
OR LOOPER CONTROL)


BLUETOOTH 5.0
HIGH-QUALITY
AUDIO INPUT


MOOER CLOUD
FOR TONE SHARING



SD30i



HORNET 05i



HORNET 15i



HORNET 30i

The tremolo, an aged, EVH-branded Floyd Rose, is everything you'd hope for in such a unit.

It takes confidence and experience to get the best out of a single pickup guitar like this, but if you've got the chops and the touch, this guitar will reward you with heaps of character and expressiveness.

If you're played any guitars that have bourn the EVH name, the neck profile on this instrument will feel very

familiar. It's not "shredder-thin", but it's very fast and comfy. The 12'16" compound radius makes for a very low action without a hint of buzz, and the jumbo frets make legato and bending an absolute breeze. The relic finish is very good, but the neck really stands out in this regard, with a very authentic "played-in" look and feel.



The tremolo, an aged, EVH-branded Floyd Rose, is everything you'd hope for in such a unit. Yes, there are compromises when it comes time to change strings, but the performance benefits are well worth the extra headache. Where this guitar differs from some previous EVH guitars is that the bridge is floating - meaning you can not only dive, but also pull up. This not only makes harmonic screams even more dramatic, but also facilitates better chord shimmers, bar vibrato and pseudo-slide lines. It also comes fitted with a D-Tuna, making traditions between standard tuning and drop-D an absolute breeze.

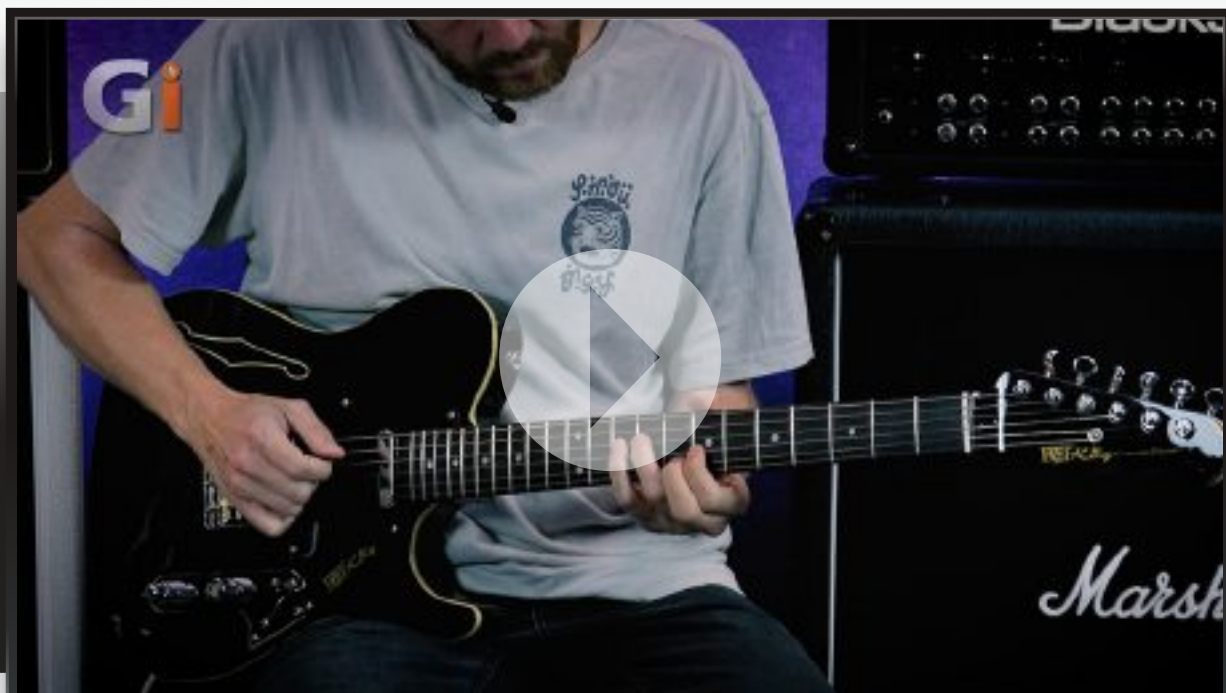
The EVH Frankenstein Relic is a "Frankie" through and through, but in a finish that doesn't scream "signature guitar" quite so hard. It plays like a dream, and has a powerful and expressive tone that makes it hard to put down. Funk choppers, jazz cats and blues dads may want to look elsewhere, but if you're a rock player who wants a rugged, handsome and focussed instrument, this guitar will do you proud.



Fret King FKV27SBK Country Squire

The Country Squire is one of Fret King's most enduring styles—a proud benchmark for the brand. The best attributes are sometimes hidden, as they are in the Country Squire Stealth with an intriguing “Old school”, period-perfect tone, or an “altered state” hum cancelled edge—the Stealth delivers it. **Sam Bell** explores the emblematic tonalities and great sustain of the Fret King FKV27SBK Country Squire.

IN this Guitar Interactive review, I'll be diving into a visual and audio treat from Fret King Guitars. This time, I looked at a Tele-style design called the 'Country Squire' in Stealth Gloss Black. This beautiful object does more than country, though. Tele's are known for their simplicity and versatility. The Country Squire has a few cool hidden features, cool looks, great sounds and a price tag that isn't too shabby! ▶



Fret King FKV27SBK Country Squire Stealth Gloss Black

re Stealth Gloss Black

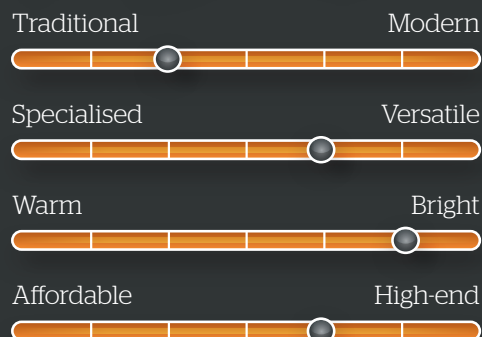
blending the familiar with the contemporary. Equipping pairing of visible and invisible pickups delivers either and more with Fret-King's signature versatility. Country Squire.



Fret King FKV27SBK Country Squire Stealth Gloss Black

MSRP: (UK) £699 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Superb playability

Sleek good looks

Blending the familiar with the contemporary

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.jhs.co.uk/collections/fret-king-guitars>



It's probably a bit slicker than a classic tele without being too "wizard-like."

First of all, this is what you'd expect of a T-style design; we have the T-style body, 22 frets, 25.5 inch scale length, Wilkinson Ashtray 3 brass saddle bridge, and 3-way pick-up selector for the two visible pickups. The guitar features a unique pickguard and a strat-style pickup selector placement. The Stealth Gloss black looks awesome in the flesh, and the painted F hole gives the guitar a classic/contemporary vibe.

The body is made from American Alder; it's made from three pieces with a 4-inch centre block. The neck is bolt-on and made from Hard Rock Maple with a light oil finish. It feels almost satin-like to me. The fretboard features an easy-playing 10' radius on an Indian Rosewood fingerboard. The headstock sports Fret Kings' unique, flashy design and is topped off with super sturdy Wilkinson WJ05 tuners. Everything feels solid out of the box, nothing coming loose or looking particularly shabby. Great quality guitar!

Stealth Black might be the name of the finish, but there's another reason for the stealthiness of this guitar. First of all, you might see that the pickups look standard for a T-Type. Two Fret King pickups designed by Trev Wilkinson

himself. They sound amazing! However, under the pickguard, there's also the Bukka Phantom Coils, which can be switched on via the push/pull volume pot. This allows us to get hum-cancelled style tones from the single coils, adding a new level to the tonal pallet. If that wasn't enough for you, this guitar, like other Fret King guitars, features the Vari-Coil control. This allows us to 'wind' the pickups either hotter or cooler. In the Country Squire guitar, this allows us to go from a hot tele sound to a more classic T-style sound. And if country is your thing, you'll be able to dial many different eras of sonic exploration. However, it's not just country this guitar can do. It sounds great with high gain and processed sounds as well. There's a reason why lots of metal bands use Teles on recordings: there's plenty of twang and punch. So, in my opinion, this guitar is incredibly versatile

The neck feels great: C shape, 10-inch radius, 25.5 scale length—nothing really gets in the way. It's probably a bit slicker than a classic tele without being too "wizard-like." So, no matter what your playing style or needs, it's a great all-rounder. The medium frets feel great...and of course, no dings or rusty



edges. Everything feels like the quality you'd expect.

If you're in the market for a T-style guitar and want something a bit different, the Country Squire might be worth checking out. It's not a bad price for what you get (check out Fret King's website for the current RRP), and

you get a gig back; what's not to love? Fret King makes unique yet classic designs affordable for the practising musician, and I'd say they are worth considering if you're looking for a great T style in your collection.



Ciari The Ascender Folding Guitar

The Ascender Standard is the latest in Ciari's collection of stage-quality, full-size professional electric guitars with patented folding technology. This folding electric guitar features a surf-forward, satin basswood body, "wave top" 3+3 headstock, natural-neck finish with ebony fingerboard, Ciari locking tuners, master tone and volume electronics with pick-up selector, and our back "throttle" actuator. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

CLOSE your eyes and think of the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the words "travel guitar". It's probably not great, now is it? Maybe some short-scale atrocity with a body the shape of a half-sucked boiled sweet, frets that require more stronger tetanus shots than the exotic location you're about to travel to and a tone that can charitably be described as "a sound".

Yes, these weird little guitar homunculi have been around for ages, but no serious player would be seen dead with one. Which is where Ciari Guitars come in. The Ascender is not a "travel" ►



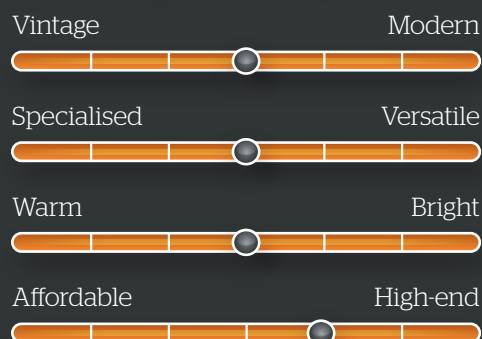
Ciari The Ascender Folding Guitar



Ciari The Ascender Folding Guitar

MSRP: (UK) £TBC / (US) \$1799

The Breakdown



For fans of

Great humbucker guitars

Effortless playability

Travelling light

For more information, please visit:

ciariguitars.com





guitar”, as the Ciari guys are keen to point out, but a legitimate, pro level instrument that just happens to fold in half and fit into a backpack. Yes, you read that right. It folds in half - with the strings on, and tuned to pitch. This is accomplished with some good old fashioned mechanical engineering, and a complex-looking but very elegant set of levers and springs in the back of the guitar’s body. It’s wild to see, but what’s even crazier is just how good the Ascender is as an instrument.

The Ciari Ascender has pulled off something we've all been hoping for for years - it's a legitimate, pro-level instrument that's easy to travel with.

When I say “good”, I don’t mean “good for a folding guitar”, I mean “is an excellent guitar in it’s own right”. It comes Plek’d from the factory, and plays like a dream. The mahogany neck is comfortable, finished in a very tactile satin and with a genuine ebony fretboard and 22 jumbo frets, perfectly level and with no chokes, buzz or sharp ends - even up in the dusty end where the guitar’s “hinge” is. Speaking of which, the hinge mechanism—made entirely from high-grade aircraft aluminum—feels very natural under the hand. It isn’t sharp, distracting or even noticeable while playing.

So it plays great, but what about the sound? Surely the small body size and the big hole in the back “kill the tone” or something like that, right? Nope. The Ascender sounds like a great humbucker guitar. Loaded with a pair of Seymour Duncan ‘59s, there’s tons of vintage-voiced punch and clarity, with excellent touch sensitivity and an even response all across the neck. Of course, metal players may want to spec this guitar with hotter pickups, and Ciari is happy to accommo-

date, but the fact it sounds so “right” with vintage-voiced low output humbuckers is testament to how good the Ascender is.

So yes, it folds in half. But apart from that, the Ascender is a very traditional guitar, and a very good one at that. There’s a traditional headstock. You can use normal strings, and don’t need to cut the ball ends off. It even looks like a traditional guitar, especially from the front where the only clue that it’s a folding guitar are the six tiny slots in the fretboard at the 12th and 14th frets that guide and protect the strings when the Ascender is folded and unfolded.

The Ciari Ascender has pulled off something we’ve all been hoping for for years - it’s a legitimate, pro-level instrument that’s easy to travel with. Whether it’s going in your suitcase or the overhead locker or under seat (yep - it’s the only full-size guitar that qualifies as a “Personal Item”!) on a long-haul flight, or on your back as you traverse a major city on foot/two wheels/public transport, it’s an instrument that can go anywhere without compromise in tone or playability.



Maybach Stradovari S61

German brand Maybach is not shy about innovation in so many of its models; however, with the S61 they also prove the classic phrase; “If it’s not broken, don’t fix it!” Since 1954, guitarists worldwide have been captivated by this unique guitar design: the ST style model. It is still the most successful solidbody electric guitar due to its versatility and sound variety, ingenious tremolo system, and incredibly ergonomic body shape. It has become a staple of popular bands of all genres. A remarkable career for an instrument...and it continues with the Maybach Stradovari S61. **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look.

IF there’s one thing we have an abundance of in the guitar gear “space”, it’s “S-type” guitars. While we’re not allowed to use the actual word to describe anything that isn’t made by the big boys over in California, we all know what we’re talking about here - bolt-on (usually maple) neck, 6-a-side headstock, contoured double-cut body, three single coils, blade switch, tremolo... you get the gist.

Leo’s timeless design transcends “classic” and has become an electric guitar “archetype” - potentially THE electric guitar archetype, especially as depicted in non-guitar-centric media. As such, everyone and their dad has had a go at making one, and it takes something quite special for a guitar of this style to rise above the crowd.

This is where German guitar makers Maybach come in. Designed in Deutschland and built by hand by a small team in Europe, Maybach’s bread and butter is making loving recreations of classic guitars from the ‘50s and ‘60s, but with the benefit of decades of experience, modern production techniques and the same German engineering precision as their automotive namesake.

The Stradovari S61 is a fitting tribute to the most revered of S-types. It sports a two-piece alder body, maple neck with a 21-fret “slab” rosewood board, complete with skunk stripe and single-action truss rod and bone nut. The tuners are a small button “split post” design (aka, the best non-locking tuners for stability), and everything is finished in a tastefully aged nitro. When I say “tasteful”, I mean it - so often, relic jobs can look like some kind of unfortunate mishap, but Maybach’s ageing is some of the most authentic I’ve ever come across. Every scrape, knock and crack is in a spot where you’d expect to find one on a real vintage guitar, and the exposed wood, hardware and plastics are all suitably dirty and discoloured.

In terms of playability, the S61 does make some concessions to modernity in the form of a 9.5” radius and medium jumbo frets - discreetly tacking two of the “flaws” common to vintage instruments. The result is an action that’s very comfortable, and can accommodate everything from Swedish shred to Texas blues, without disrupting the classic “look”. ▶

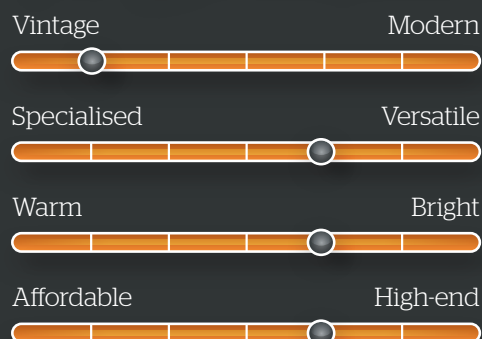
impressive Stradovari
de have been inspired
uitar ever. Thanks to
e, it quickly became
with the Maybach



Maybach Stradovari S61

MSRP: (UK) £1999 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Classic Californian guitars

Tasteful relic finishes

Amazing pickups

For more information, please visit:

maybach-guitars.de



The relic-ing is every bit as good, as is the playability, and the pi Maybach AND a nice amp when compared to a custom shop "S"

A real standout is the Amber pickups. Hand wound in Germany under the watchful eye of Wolfgang Damm (a student of Seth Lover, and inventor of the Gibson P94), these are without doubt some of the best single coil pickups I've ever played. They're balanced, lively and exceptionally dynamic, with a generous output for a vintage-style single coil. The top end is super sparkly and clear, but somehow isn't piercing or shrill with high gain, and crucially, there's no microphonic



Maybach Stradovari S61

Pickups are definitely better, and you have change for a SECOND



feedback or excessive hum, even under studio lighting with a loud gainy amp. The only way this guitar falls short of sonic perfection is that the bridge pickup isn't wired to a tone control, which means no creamy Eric Johnson leads without performing a (very minor, admittedly) modification. That, and having to take the neck off to adjust the truss rod were the only faults I could find with this superb guitar, and they're both "vintage correct", so I should probably take my complaint up with Leo's ghost.

This leads me to perhaps the biggest plus point for the Stratovari S61 - the price. While this is by no means a "cheap" guitar (tipping the scales at just under £2k at the time of writing, subject to change), it's literally 2/5ths of the price of a custom shop relic from the "F" brand. The relic-ing is every bit as good, as is the playability, and the pickups are definitely better, and you have change for a SECOND Maybach AND a nice amp when compared to a custom shop "S". It feels quite bizarre to describe a hand made, high-end relic guitar as a bargain, but that's exactly what it is - a bargain!



Chapman Guitars 2023 Ghost Fret E

After a few years out of production, the Chapman Ghost Fret returns to the brand's lineup by porting a powerful Seymour Duncan humbucker, rock-solid roasted maple neck, and rolled ebony fretboard. The revamped Ghost Fret Pro is a performance-centric workhorse optimised for high-octane rock and roll.

I'm sure everyone reading this is familiar with the story of Chapman Guitars. The brainchild of YouTube star Rob Chapman and designed collaboratively by polling players and fans of the brand, these instruments shook the "guitar space" and saw mass adoption, particularly among younger players, thanks to their impressive spec and quality-to-price ratio. Back when I was still teaching face-to-face, it seemed like at least half of my degree-level students owned a Chapman.

Fast forward to 2023, and Chapman as a brand seem to be healthier than ever, with the launch of the ultra-high-end "British Standard" line, a slew of new signature models, and the return of one of their most beloved discontinued models - the Ghost Fret. This offset design clearly has some Explorer DNA, but to my eye, it's more reminiscent of a Jackson Kelly crossed with an inverted version of the Hamer GT Customs played by Glenn Tipton. Like the other guitars in the Chapman line, it's a modernist take on a familiar aesthetic. It's also a featherweight compared to Gibsons of a similar shape, weighing in at just 7lbs, likely due to its smaller, more elegant silhouette and Korina body.

It's a visually very striking instrument, not just for its shape, but the satin Korina top finished in transparent Sonic Boom Blue - a colour very reminiscent of the Blue Matteo PRS guitars of the early 2000s. It's a very clean and un-fussy design, with sharp lines, minimalist hardware and a single "infinity" inlay on the 12th fret. The roasted maple neck is finished in a very tactile satin, and the Macassar ebony board has glow-in-the-dark side dots to help you get around on dimly lit stages. It also sports 22 jumbo stainless steel frets - a very nice high-performance appointment.

Speaking of performance, this guitar shreds like nobody's business. The factory action is very low, but without a hint of choking or buzzing, making for an effortless playing experience that almost dares you to go faster. It's actually quite addictive. That's not to say that this is purely a shredder's guitar, but it's certainly one of the more "specialised" instruments in the Chapman range (as opposed to the ML3, for example).

That specialisation is very evident in the guitar's sonics. The Seymour Duncan Alternative 8 and Distortion pickups are hot and very mid focussed, with that signature Rob 

Pro

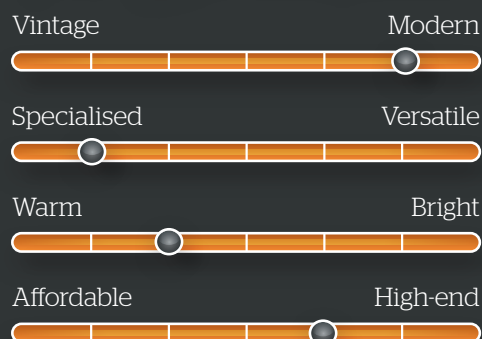
ular demand! Featuring a compact Korina X-style fingerboard with stainless steel frets—the re-metal styles. **Nick Jennison** reviews.



Chapman Guitars 2023 Ghost Fret Pro

MSRP: (UK) £1149 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Crazy playability

Mid-focussed rock tones

Aggressive, modern aesthetics

For more information, please visit:

<https://digitech.com/>



Chapman “cocked wah” honk evident in all three positions. It’s a voice that sounds massive and articulate through a ton of gain, and whether you’re playing intricate heavy riffs or searing solos, this guitar will make its presence felt in a dense mix. Through a Marshall-style amp, it’s more Tom Scholz than Paul Kos-

soff—but then again, who’s buying a guitar that looks like this to play the blues?? Interestingly, the midrange push does lend itself very well to vocal slide playing through a more distorted amp, and the coil splits are very convincing for modern, wiry distorted tones and super-processed cleans. If modern and

The Chapman Ghost Fret Pro is a very welcome return—it’s a guitar with a strong identity, and doesn’t pretend to be something it’s not.



aggressive tones are your bag, the Ghost Fret especially delivers.

The Chapman Ghost Fret Pro is a very welcome return—it's a guitar with a strong identity, and doesn't pretend to be something it's not. If you're looking for a one-axe-fits-all in-

strument that's at home in any musical setting, you should probably consider an ML3. But, as an out-and-out, unashamed rock machine, the Ghost Fret reigns supreme in the Chapman range. We're delighted to see it back.



Donner HUSH-I Travel Guitar

Sam Bell reviews the Donner HUSH-I Travel Guitar. Allowing you to seemingly practice anytime, anywhere—the HUSH-I delivers ultra-quiet performance, equipped with a preamp system providing a natural-sounding acoustic tone through headphones or the 6.35 port output. As lightweight as a laptop with a headless design, button tuners, and removable frames, the Donner HUSH-I may be the answer to taking a guitar on the go. Let's find out more.

HEADLESS Guitars have been/ still indeed are all the rage. They look like something from Star Trek, and they lead to convenience and Avant guard design. In this review, I'm going to be diving into a new offering from the music gadget company Donner. This is a silent acoustic guitar that could fit most conceivable places.

Donner is well known for creating affordable gear for the practising musician. Everything from FX pedals, accessories and guitars is covered, all within a very palatable price point. Perhaps most popular with Guitarists starting out in the very first steps of their journey and pro musicians looking for quick and usable accessories for their work.

The Donner Hush-I gives us a headless guitar with a streamlined body, the tuners are on the butt end of the guitar. There are removable frames that provide us with a picking hand armrest and leg rest so it feels a little bit more like a regular-sized guitar, but it's not imperative that you attach these every time as the guitar can be balanced on one leg in a

sitting position and it does have sturdy strap pins if you wish to play standing up.

You can run this guitar two ways. There's a ¼-inch jack out if you wish to plug the guitar into an acoustic amp, PA system or DAW. But the way I feel that Donner wants us to use it is with the headphones (included!) to make it a truly silent travel practice experience. The guitar is powered by a 9-volt battery, which gives us a pre amp which features a volume, bass and treble control, plus a phase switch. The pickup system is Piezo, mini magnets under the bridge, within the body of the instrument, leading to a direct translation of the steel strings to output. Donner's website says that the 9-volt will last up to 50 hours of playing, which is plenty.

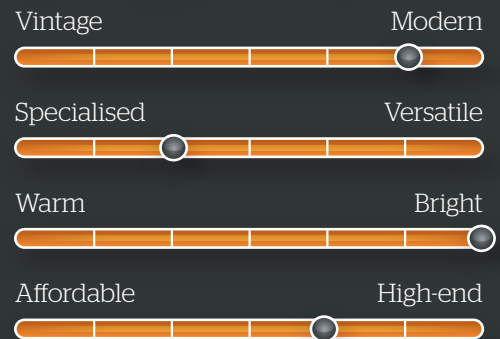
The neck looks very cool; its symmetrical radius, light and well-balanced. The rounded fret edges make the instrument feel smooth. My only gripe with the guitar is the traditional acoustic bridge, which makes it very hard to adjust the action. The guitar does have a truss rod on the body end of the neck, which can be adjusted to set the angle of ▶



Donner HUSH-I Travel Guitar

MSRP: (UK) £279 / (US) \$299

The Breakdown



For fans of

Clever design

Value for money

A portable guitar is as lightweight
as a laptop

For more information, please visit:

idonner.eu



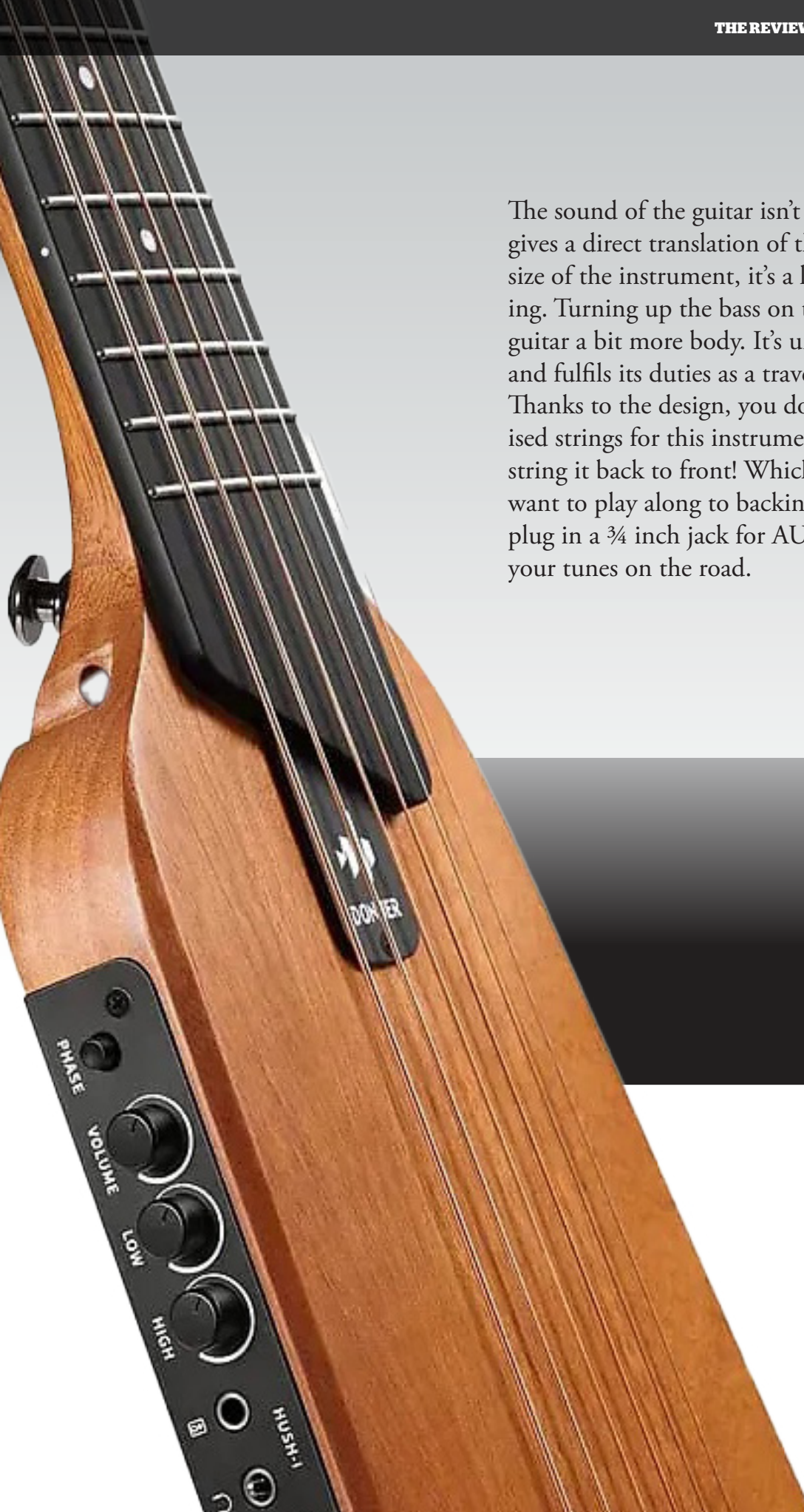
Donner delivers affordable gear that does its job well!



the neck. But out of the box, the guitar had incredibly high action; we managed to get this down a bit in the studio with some truss adjustment. However, if you want to make this a smoother playing experience, it may be worth taking it to a professional to bring the bridge saddle down a small amount to make it more playable.



Donner HUSH-I Travel Guitar



The sound of the guitar isn't bad at all, the Piezo gives a direct translation of the strings. Due to the size of the instrument, it's a little shallow sounding. Turning up the bass on the Preamp gives the guitar a bit more body. It's undoubtedly workable and fulfils its duties as a travel practice instrument. Thanks to the design, you don't have to buy specialised strings for this instrument, but you do have to string it back to front! Which is quite fun. If you want to play along to backing tracks, you can also plug in a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch jack for AUX, so you can take your tunes on the road.

When writing these reviews, I try to be mindful that not all gear is designed for everyone. The HUSH-I is certainly designed for a few purposes. First of all, a travel guitar. Something to take on holiday, take on a business trip, or take on the tour bus. It's not meant to be an instrument that promises a grandeur of tone and playability, but it serves its purpose and is full of features for a very reasonable RRP. In the travel guitar world, this is definitely an option worth considering. Donner delivers affordable gear that does its job well!



J O E ♥ D O E

GUITARS



**LIMITED EDITION
2023 SERIES**

Vintage

www.vintageguitarsrus.com



@VintageInstruments



@vintageguitars_official



OWN YOUR SOUND

'Analogue' Close Cab Miking System for acoustic, bass and electric guitars.

- ✓ No need for microphones on stands, and all the associated pitfalls. INTEGRAL delivers the pure analogue sound from the speaker to the mixing desk. 100% analogue.
- ✓ Reduces sound overspill in any live or studio environment.
- ✓ Quick, clean, easy fit and forget installation.
- ✓ Fits easily onto rear mounted or front mounted speakers.
- ✓ Plug in and go.



www.integral.uk.com

BUY NOW

Marshall Studio JTM ST20C Combo

Marshall's Studio series has long served as a *Gi Mag* favourite, as it perfectly packs many of the compact, gig-and-studio-ready combos and heads. From the Super Lead to the Silver Jubilee, the Studio series has a long history—with the ST20C Studio JTM, it reaches all the way back to the beginning. **Nick**

THE JTM45 is the amp that started it all. What do I mean by “it all”? Well, Marshall amps for one thing, and by extension, the sound of rock guitar. That high-gain amp you have sat next to you? It probably traces its lineage back to the JTM. That legendary rock tone from the ‘60s and ‘70s that you love so much? Probably recorded using either a JTM or one of its younger siblings (like a 1987, a 1959, or possibly even a 2203).

It's fitting, then, that Marshall should mark a “changing of the guard” in the form of new ownership by Zound (the company that already owned Marshall Headphones) by re-visiting the amp that started it all. The result is the Studio JTM - a 20w take on the classic JTM45, and my word is it good.



company's iconic amplifier models down into combo series encompasses almost the entirety of Marshall's **Jennison** reviews.

Let's start by getting the superficial stuff out of the way. This might be the most handsome amp I've ever seen. I am prone to hyperbole, but I'm really struggling to think of a more attractive looking amp! I really like the look of a Bogner Shiva. Magnates look super cool. And of course I think my amps of choice (Victory) all look great, but the Studio JTM has Audrey Hepburn levels of timeless elegance and beauty. The non-textured black tolex, the wheat grille cloth, the silver face plate with matching "coffin" logo... even if it sounded a bit rubbish, I'd want one on my shelf just to look at.

As it happens, it sounds fabulous. If you're familiar with the sound of a Super Lead (most commonly referred to as a "Plexi", although that term can refer to a number of amps), you might think of the JTM tone as a less refined, more "raw" version of that tone. It breaks up earlier, with a more blown-out low end and a more aggressive midrange punch. That's if you crank it up of course. It's far from a one trick pony that needs to be cranked to sound good though - the JTM clean is one of my absolute favourites, which makes sense, given it's essentially a Fender Bassman with a British accent.

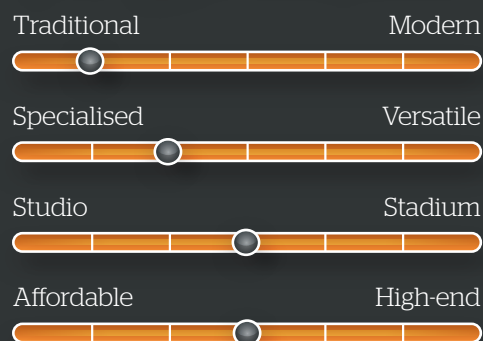
While the Studio JTM is capable of a whole range of tones, you probably shouldn't ►



Marshall Studio JTM ST20C Combo

MSRP: (UK) £999 / (US) \$1945

The Breakdown



For fans of

Classic British tones

Jaw-dropping good looks

Not going deaf

For more information, please visit:

www.marshall.com



The Studio JTM is available in both head form (with matching 1x12 and 2x12 cabs), or as a compact combo like the one we're looking at today.

expect channel switching wizardry. While this is a two-channel amp, it comes in the form of two sets of inputs - “normal” and “high treble”, each with high and low sensitivity inputs. You can of course use a patch cable to “jump” the channels and blend the two to your heart’s content, but each channel’s voice is useful all on it’s own. The “normal” channel has a very warm, rolled off

high end that’s super flattering for aggressive fuzzes and amp-in-a-box pedals, while the “high treble” channel will add sparkle and clarity to both congested, mid-heavy over-drive pedals and muddy humbucker guitars alike.

Other features include a very useful emulated DI, which is very convenient for both ▶



HUSH-I GUITAR

A NEW WAY TO PLAY GUITAR



If I'm being honest, I despaired a little when Marshall were bought by a headphone company earlier this year, but my word was I mistaken.





recording and going direct to FOH (although you'll still need to run a speaker on stage), and a slightly less useful FX loop. Why less useful? Well, the charm of the JTM's overdrive is the way the power amp breaks up so quickly, and the FX loop is, by its very nature, between the preamp and power amp. If you're hoping for clean reverb and delay sounds while cranking the Studio JTM, you'll likely be disappointed - and if you run the amp clean, you're just as well running these effects in front. Still, it doesn't do any harm having it there.

The Studio JTM is available in both head form (with matching 1x12 and 2x12 cabs), or as a compact combo like the one we're looking at today. The first thing that should be noted is that this combo sports a 12 inch Creamback M,

and not a 10 inch speaker like some recent Marshall combos. While there's nothing wrong with 10s, they have a tone all of their own, and one that's maybe not what we associate with the Marshall "thing", which is part of why some of these combos have been a little disappointing. Kudos to Marshall for including a legit 12 inch driver here, and a very good one at that!

If I'm being honest, I despaired a little when Marshall were bought by a head-phone company earlier this year, but my word was I mistaken. If the Studio JTM is anything to go by, Marshall are back with a vengeance. It's an fabulous sounding amp that honours the legacy of the legendary amp that it's based on, instead of just cashing in on it.



Positive Grid Spark Go

Just when you thought it was safe to assume great tones couldn't come any smaller—play when Positive Grid Spark GO portable guitar amp—a tiny, app-supercharged beast! We're talking seamless in-chock full of amps, pedals, Auto Chords, Smart Jam, 50,000 tones on the cloud, and so much more.

SINCE NAMM 2022, I've been waxing lyrical to everyone who would listen about how good the Positive Grid Spark Mini is. It's tiny, portable, sounds enormous and feels great to play. It looks fab on my desk, and works as an absolutely phenomenal bluetooth speaker. I've taken it on road trips (my car is an older Jag without an aux in), to barbecues on the beach, and most recently to provide music in a large courtyard at a friend's wedding - and we even got a noise complaint!

As a practice amp, it's basically perfect. Imagine my surprise when, less than a year later, Positive Grid announced the even smaller and even more affordable Spark GO. At an impressive 5w, given that it's a similar size to a compact camera, the Spark GO is small enough to fit in your pocket, or dangle from your guitar strap. It weighs just 346g/0.76lbs and still pushes out 82dB SPL - similar levels to a passing freight train!



ver and wherever you feel inspired with the Posi-
integration with the acclaimed Spark App that's
re. **Nick Jennison** reviews.

*Given its diminutive size and equal
diminutive price point, it's kind of a
no-brainer!*

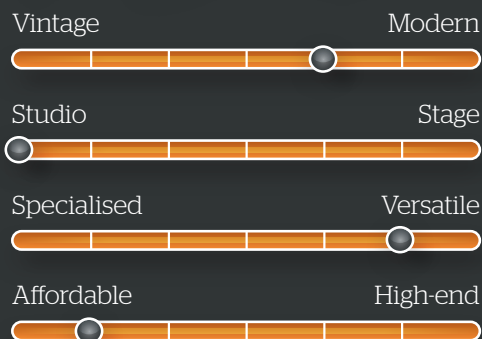
The physical controls are very simple, with a large volume ring to control how loud your guitar signal is, a button to toggle between four presets (which all sound excellent, and represent a good cross-section of the sounds the Spark GO can produce) and a rocker switch for controlling the volume of the music you're streaming over Bluetooth. The majority of the control comes via the Spark app, though. Connect to your favourite mobile device over Bluetooth and you'll have full control over your signal chain, from amp type to effects selection, with each "block" offering a good level of tweakability without getting too granular (you can tweak the treble middle and bass, but not the transformer ripple, for example). You can also save, recall and share your favourite sounds, and download presets from the ToneCloud if you're looking for a shortcut to a particular tone - or just looking for inspiration. ▶



Positive Grid Spark Go

MSRP: (UK) £TBC / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown



For fans of

Great sounding amp modelling

Making practice more fun

Taking your tones anywhere

For more information, please visit:

positivegrid.com

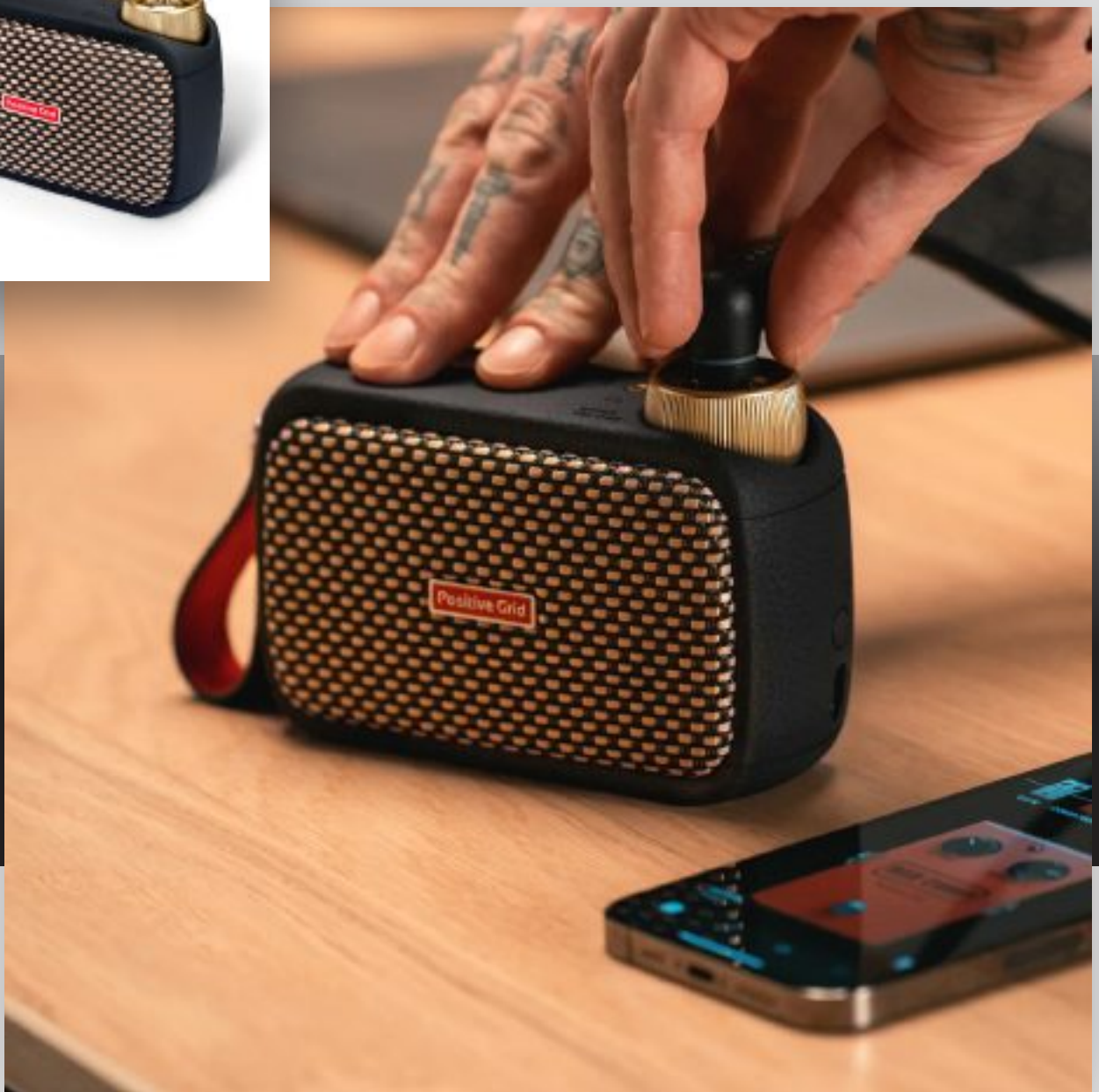


Sonically, the Spark GO is as impressive as I've ever heard from such a tiny amp. There are some compromises compared to the Spark Mini - specifically, the Mini is stereo as opposed to the mono output on the GO, and the GO does roll off more low end than the Mini, cutting off at 110hz. What's the same is the excellent amp and effect modelling, with a comprehensive variety of tones that all sound very authentic and feel excellent to play.

As an ultra-portable practice solution, the Spark GO is an excellent choice. It feels great to play, has a ton of useful practice tools and looks very cool (like a small vintage camera or something). It works as a great-sounding Bluetooth speaker that competes well with similar-sized speakers - but with the addition of killer-sounding amp models. Given its diminutive size and equal diminutive price point, it's kind of a no-brainer!



works as a great-sounding Bluetooth speaker that competes well with similar-sized speakers - but with the addition of killer-sounding amp models.

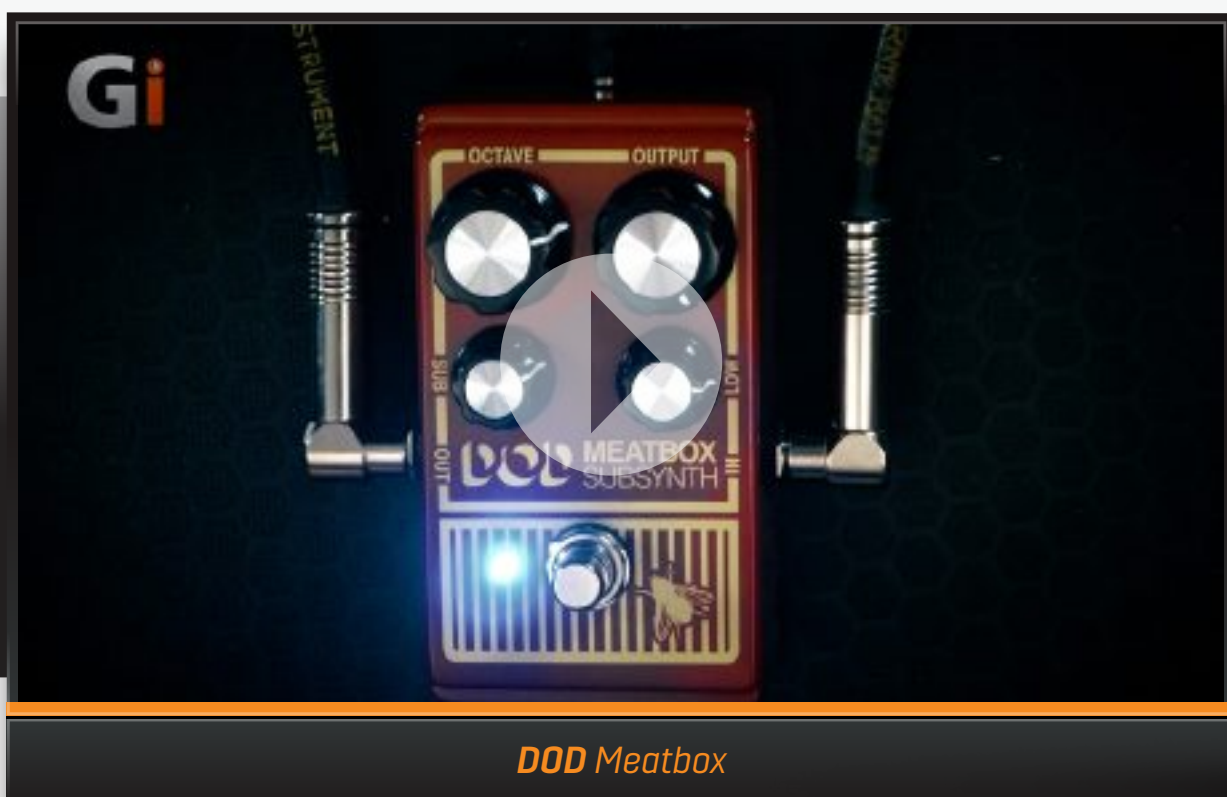


DOD Meatbox

The original '90s DOD Meatbox was a short-lived and misunderstood stomp box widely known for its unique sound and an array of controls that some found confusing. Thankfully, DOD has reissued this true-bypass pedal, recapturing the pedal's classic sonic glory with a much easier-to-navigate control layout. Bassists, guitarists, and producers can use it to fill up open space within your mix or just beefing up your tracks with some booming synth presence.

I like many other guitar players my age, have a massive soft spot for DOD pedals. As a young man, I was fascinated by the ads in the guitar magazines of the day for these colourful, outlandishly named boxes. I had no idea what they sounded like, and no way of finding out, but I knew I wanted them all.

Fast forward to 2023, and after an extended hiatus, DOD are back! With a slew of reissues of vintage classics like the 250 Overdrive/Preamp and more modern designs like the Gunslinger MOSFET Distortion, I was positively spoiled for choice for review subjects... So I chose the one with the funniest name: the Meatbox. ▶



DOD Meatbox

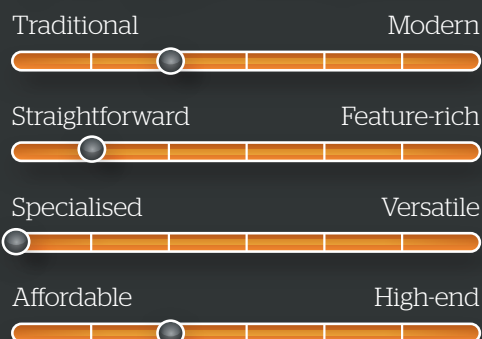
or its incredible speaker-bursting synth-bass sound
ss Meatbox Subharmonic Synth Pedal to showcase
nd synth fanatics: rejoice! It's a perfect tool for filling
ence. Here's **Nick Jennison** to tell us more.



DOD Meatbox

MSRP: (UK) £149 / (US) \$169

The Breakdown



For fans of

Thunderous, analogue lows

Twiddling knobs

Putting "fun" above "function"

For more information, please visit:

digitech.com



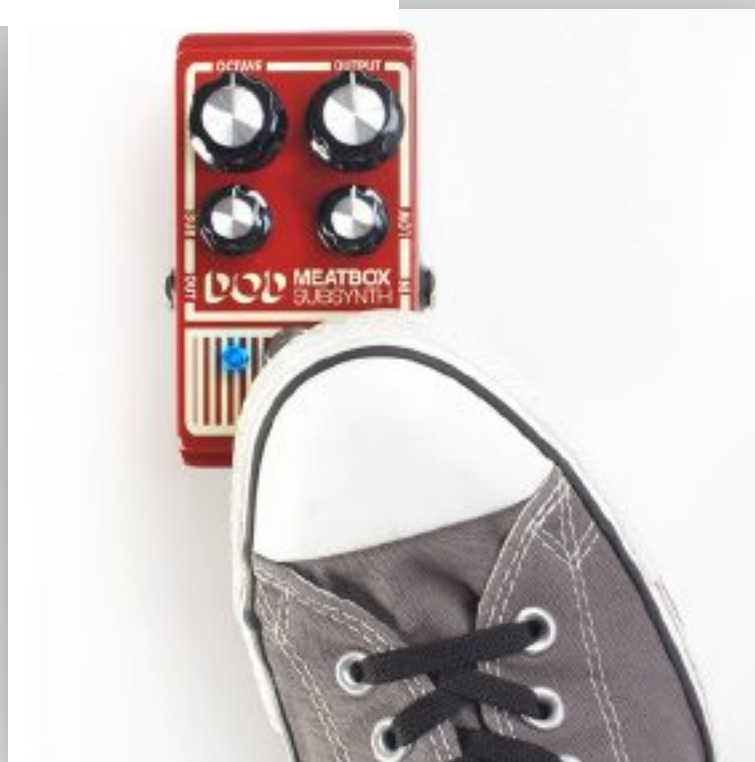
Given its diminutive size and equal diminutive price point, it's kind of a no-brainer!

The Meatbox is an octaver and a subharmonic synthesizer, offering a multitude of ways to perform a single task - add a massive low octave to your guitar or bass signal. That's it. No multiband overdrive, no step sequencer, no polyphonic harmoniser, just thick, analogue, occasionally unpredictable low-end girth.

The super simple control layout of "output" "octave", "low" and "sub" invites experimental

knob-twiddling more than pre-meditated precision dialling. The "octave" control determines the blend of dry and processed signals, while the "low" and "sub" controls determine the exact makeup of the additional low-end information. Honestly, it's best not to overthink it when it comes to these controls and just get your hands dirty twisting knobs. There is a whole plethora of great low-octave sounds to be had, though, with everything from traditional octave divider tones to uncontrollable walls of sub-noise that make your speakers fart and compress in a delightfully chaotic way. There's even enough output to get a convincing boost, if you just want a characterful way to pulverise your preamp valves.

The DOD Meatbox is everything I hoped it would be - unique, chaotic, and a lot of fun. Whether you have a specific low octave sound in mind, or you just want an "inspiration machine", this is a great pedal to have in your collection.





MK 4

For stage and studio

The MK 4 large-diaphragm true condenser microphone is the perfect choice for anyone looking for outstanding condenser sound, rugged design and excellent value for money. As at home in the studio as it is on stage, the cardioid MK 4's fine resolution and excellent sound quality make it ideal for vocals, acoustic guitars and on guitar amps.



SENNHEISER

Laney IRF-DUALTOP & IRF-LEADTOP

Laney Amplification's continued commitment to innovation seems to know no bounds—especially in the Black Country Customs range to the superb LA Studio amplifier, which dropped earlier in the year. In the historic UK brand's line of forward-thinking products in this review of the Laney IRF-DUALTOP

IN a separate review from Guitar Interactive, you will hear me waxing lyrical about Laney's excellent IRF Loudpedal. Given its tiny format, comically low price and distinct lack of magical glowing bottles, this excellent little device has no right sound as good as it does. It's so good, in fact, that Laney has taken the IRF ball and run with it. The new IRF LEADTOP and DUALTOP amp heads are essentially the same fantastic design as the Loudpedal, but in the form of compact, desktop-

friendly heads—and at a similar “no brainer” price tag.

The smaller of the two, the LEADTOP head is a single-channel design, featuring the Loudpedal's hugely versatile Channel 1. An absolute chameleon of a circuit, this channel spans everything from sparkling cleans through to fat and juicy high-gain lead sounds with a single gain control. It also sports the same perfectly voiced boost function from the Loudpedal -

IRF-LEADTOP



OP Amp Heads

lly in recent years, from their remarkably good
ar. **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at the latest
TOP & IRF-LEADTOP amp heads.

When you factor in the crazy pricing, it's hard to imagine why anyone WOULDN'T want one of these

it's mostly clean, but with a bias towards the mids and upper mids for a vocal and present "push" without becoming harsh or muddy. A little bit of gain and healthy amount of boost, and you have a Timmons-esque glassy chime. Push the gain with a more conservative boost, and you have an articulate metal riffing tone.

Speaking of riffing tones, this is where the DUALTOP head comes in. It's a two-channel head, with the same channel from the LEADTOP head as its first channel, paired with a dedicated high gain second channel, making it a fully-fledged "Loudpedal-in-a-headshell". This second channel is beefy and aggressive with a fuller low end than channel one, but tight and percussive in a way that is perfect for heavy styles, but also works admirably a big, fat crunch tone.

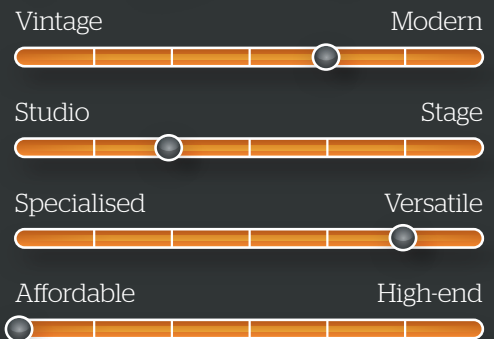
Both ends feature a generous 60w power section, switchable down to a whisper quiet >1w for bedroom playing. They're loud enough to gig and rehearse ➔



Laney IRF-DUALTOP & IRF-LEADTOP Amp Heads

MSRP: IRF-DUALTOP £259 /
IRF-LEADTOP £169

The Breakdown



For fans of

Meaty high-gain tones

Versatility

A lot of amp for the money!

For more information, please visit:

laney.co.uk



IRF-DUALTOP



Laney IRF-DUALTOP & IRF-LEADTOP Amp Heads

with, but also ideal desktop companions for practising, home recording and just jamming for the fun of it. To that end, they also sport the same excellent cab simulated DI out from the Loud-pedal, but with two switchable voices - a 1x12 and a 4x12. You can also defeat the cab sim if you'd like to use your own, as it's after the fact.

Both the LEADTOP and DUALTOP heads each come with their own accompanying speaker cabinets, perfectly voiced to compliment their tones, but

of course, you don't HAVE to use a cab if (like me) your house operates on a strict "no backline at home" policy. They're both lightweight, super versatile and sound just as good as the pedal that inspired them. When you factor in the crazy pricing, it's hard to imagine why anyone WOULDN'T want one of these - either as a "first quality amp" for a new player, a "backup and rehearsals" rig, outfitting a teaching studio, or as a perfect home/hotel room solution.



Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Series Fuzzy Brit

Taking the concept of its original Character Series pedals a step further, Tech 21 has broadened the Plus Series—celebrating the unique chemistry between specific historic amplifiers and specific speaker packages. With tones ranging from a '50s Fullerton to a Blackface and Silverface, Sam Bell reviews

IN this issue, I'll be taking a look at one of Tech 21's new pedals, which is part of their Character Plus series of compact "amp in a box" solutions. The SansAmp Character Plus series features classic amps paired with a classic boost. Each pedal features two channels with a unique character control, which changes the overdrive and texture of the amp the pedal is based on. In this review, we'll be looking at the Fuzzy Brit, which gives us all kinds

of Marshall-like tones with a boost based on a Fuzz Face.

The pedal can be used in front of an amp or into the return using the main amp as a slave amp. Or it can be used directly using the XLR out. The XLR out has a matched speaker cabinet emulation, which interacts with the pedal's EQ, giving a balanced sound. The Fuzzy Brit's speaker emulation is based on a 4x12 with Greenback speakers. It sounds great, direct!



ne range of tonal options in its new SansAmp Character historic pedals and cleverly unites them together in single s the Character Plus Series Fuzzy Brit.

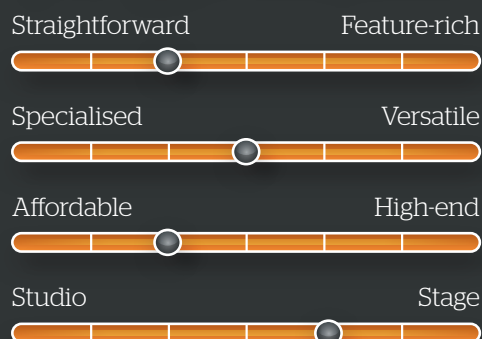
The pedal itself features two channels; both are identical, with their own gain, volume, treble, middle, bass and character control. The character control changes the identity of the amp sound. On lower settings, this gives us a Blues-breaker amp sound—clean, punchy and a little crunchy. Midway, the settings start to get a little more “Plexi” in character, with a bit more middle punch and grit. When on higher settings, the character control takes you into a modded Plexi sound with a lot more gain! Perfect for a classic Metal tone if needed. Having the two channels’ the same’ gives us the opportunity to have a ‘clean’ channel and a ‘boost’ channel if we so wish. But let’s not forget the awesome Fuzz Face style boost, which can be engaged on both channels, taking the tone shaping even further. The Fuzz Face boost gives us Level, Tone and Drive. Level alone can give a clean boost to the signal with lower drive settings; higher drive settings give you lots of Fuzzy sustain, which, in conjunction with the Marshall-style amp, allows us to access all kinds of tones from Cream-style blues through to Hendrix-like screaming bends all the way to Judas Priest heavy metal. ▶



Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Series Fuzzy Brit

MSRP: (UK) £329 / (US) \$279

The Breakdown



For fans of

American-style tube amp with a screaming-style overdrive

100% analogue circuitry

For more information, please visit:

www.tech21nyc.com





Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Series Fuzzy Brit

WANT TO FEATURE IN THE NEXT **GUITAR INTERACTIVE?**



IT'S SIMPLE. TO ADVERTISE...

**Get in touch with our sales team and let them
help you book your advert.**

Helen - UK AND EUROPE.

helen@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

T: +44 (0)7803 726 012

Lisa - USA.

lisaspiteri@guitarinteractivemagazine.com

T: 973-610-0441



So, in summary, the Tech 21 Fuzzy Brit is an awesome all-in-one Marshall amp emulation solution that can almost fit in your pocket

The sounds and overall feel are really impressive with the Fuzzy Brit; however, this little unit also gives you some great amp and speaker emulation options—making it a real go-to solution for the travelling musician. Bear in mind, if Marshall isn't your thing, the Character Plus series also features a Vox, Hi Watt and Fender edition, which are all just as versatile in their ballparks. The pedal itself is well built, sturdy footswitches and easy to use layout make this perfect for road use. Plus, it's probably the same size as your average supermarket chocolate bar, so it'll fit nicely into your gig bag. It's got a very sturdy metal construction and can be powered by 9-volt adapters. It comes with its own resilient 9v adapter with a nice, fabricated power chord, which won't get tangled up or start to cut out because it has been used twice. It's super!

If the direct-to-desk thing isn't your cup of tea, you can use it with an amp and change the character of the amp nice and easy; perfect for those gigs where you're using a shared or house backline and want to bring your own tone. This will also enable you to use external FX after the pedal if you're into reverbs/delays; this isn't quite possible when using the XLR out unless you prefer your ambient effects in front of the preamp of an amplifier, which I personally wouldn't do, but you do you.

So, in summary, the Tech 21 Fuzzy Brit is an awesome all-in-one Marshall amp emulation solution that can almost fit in your pocket. There are tons of tones in a small footprint, with sturdy pro construction that you can easily use on the road... or just enjoy at home! Need I say more? Check one out! I love it.



D'Addario XS Coated Acoustic Strings

Nick Jennison reviews D'Addario's XS coated acoustic strings—an innovative line of guitar strings that deliver incredible tone, plus deliver incredible reliability. If you play guitar regularly, hate unexpected breaks and/or love what D'Addario XS has to offer.

“STRINGS are strings”, right? You’d be surprised how common this attitude is among guitar players, but it couldn’t be further from the truth. The string is both the part of the instrument that you actually *play*, and the thing that actually produces sound. Consider it this way - a string without a guitar, if stretched tight enough, can make music. A guitar without a string cannot.

This is *especially* true with acoustic guitars, where string gauge and material are some of the only ways to manipulate the tone of your guitar, and without the signal processing typical with electric guitars, the sonic differences between string sets are even more pronounced.

Of course, sound is not the only consideration when choosing strings. Playability is an equally important factor, as is longevity - hence the



gs

gs specially coated to prolong life expectancy and
r the feeling of dead strings, then you'll probably

D'Addario XS strings are everything that they (and many other brands of coated strings) purport to be.

popularity of coated strings, which are a great option for improving string life, but can be something of a compromise. This is where New York string pioneers D'Addario come in. Following on from the success of their wildly popular NYXL and XT strings, the XS string range make use of the same premium materials and manufacturing techniques, but with a more aggressive coating for even longer string life. What's more, they're now shipping on every new Taylor guitar.

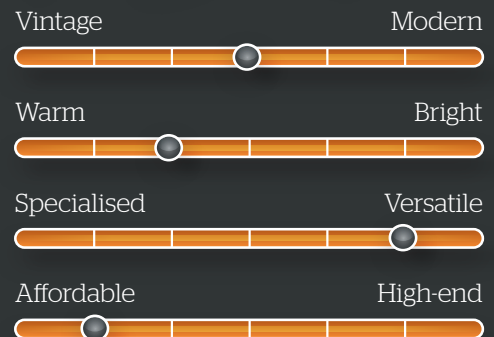
Where the XTs are made with a treated wrap wire, the XS strings are made using a more traditional film coating, and have a similar "smooth" feel to some of the most popular coated string brands (some of whom actually use D'Addario strings and apply their own coating - a surprisingly common practice). What's interesting is that they don't seem to exhibit any of the drawbacks of coated strings that many players - myself included - find so off-putting.



D'Addario XS Coated Acoustic Strings

MSRP: (UK) £18 / (US) \$20

The Breakdown



For fans of

Smooth play feel

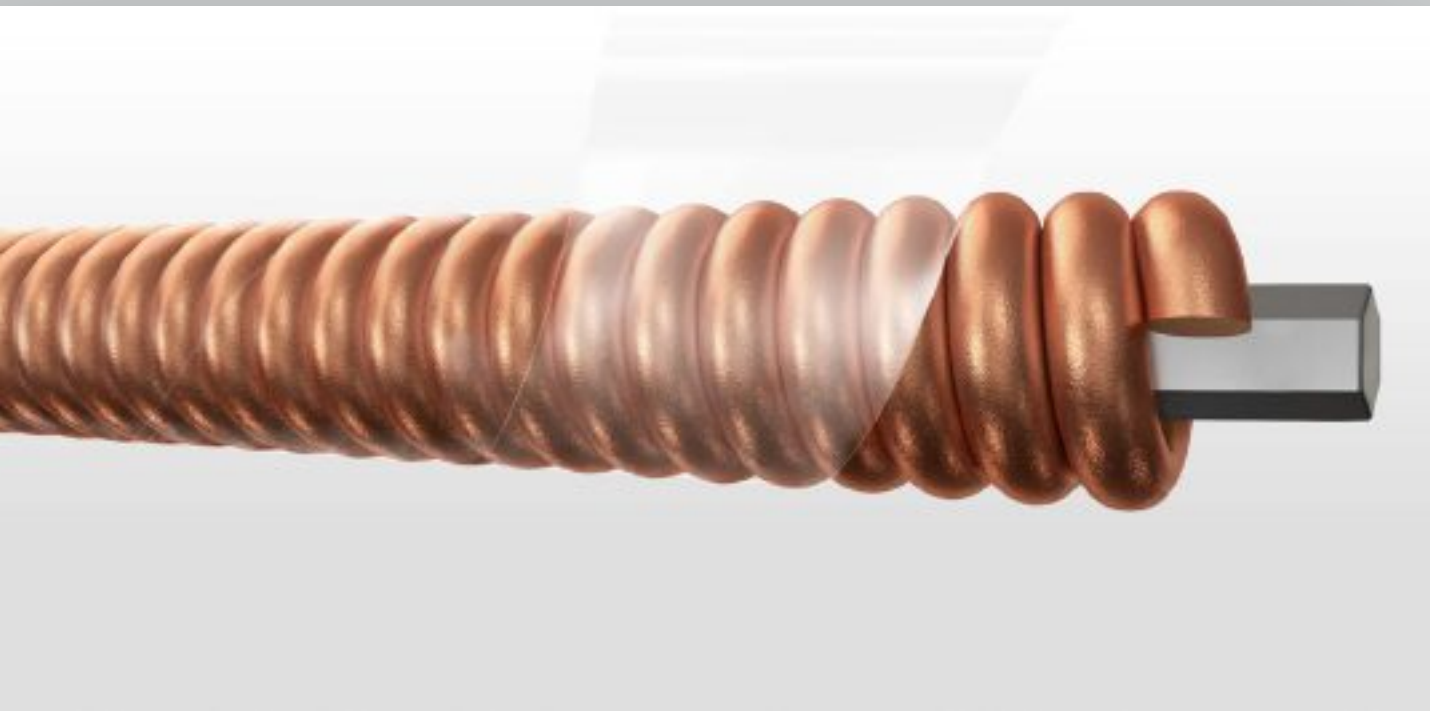
Long string life

"Un-coated string" tone

For more information, please visit:

daddario.com





D'Addario XS Coated Acoustic Strings

Firstly, the feel. I tend to find coated strings hard work - I slide off them, which means I tend to apply too much fretting pressure just to stay “on” the string. I also find it difficult to get a convincing pull-off using just the friction of my left hand calluses, because of the slickness of the string. While the XS strings certainly feel smooth, I found them very comfortable and “natural” to play.

Next, the tone. Coated strings can often sound a little dull compared to an equivalent non-coated set, and I think this is down to the way the coating is applied. Now, this is





just a hypothesis, so take my inexperienced opinion for what it is, but strings can become dull if the gaps between the winds fill with dirt. A thick coating can have exactly the same effect. Now, it could be down to the thinness of the coating (which is **incredibly** thin) or the way it's applied, but the XS strings sound as bright and vibrant as I'd expect from an uncoated string, with an impressively long and even sustain to boot.

Finally, performance. While I haven't had the XS strings for long enough to really test their lifespan, I do happen to know several guitar players who absolutely **destroy** guitar strings. There's something in their skin chemistry that corrodes strings the way that sea air corrodes ships. So, I took the beautiful Taylor guitar that these strings came fitted on to be played by each and every one of them, and then left the guitar in its case for a few days. This is a recipe

for dead strings in my experience, but the XS strings came out looking, sounding and feeling brand new. They also took almost no time to bed in, and held their tuning exceptionally well.

D'Addario XS strings are everything that they (and many other brands of coated strings) purport to be - they have the tone we love from uncoated strings, but with a greatly increased resistance to wear and corrosion and, as such a much longer lifespan. They feel great, and have the same "squeak-reducing" effect of traditional coated strings without dampening the tone in the process. Honestly, they're hard to fault, and even at double the price of a traditional string set, they're something of a bargain since they're going to last more than twice as long, and save you the time and effort of several string changes in that time. It's easy to see why Taylor Guitars likes them so much!



Studio to Sta

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

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

age

GI98

PLAY IT - RECORD
IT - PERFORM IT



Boss Gigcaster 8 Streaming

Boss' Gigcaster 8 is a powerful all-in-one audio command powerhouse, purpose-built for streaming audio and video content. Plug in a guitar or bass and play with flagship-level GT amp modeling with studio-grade processing from the VE series. Or bring in a keyboard or drum machine. It could very well be an essential partner for anyone creating music-focused media.

WHEN

the world closed in 2020, I (like many other musicians) was thrust into the world of live streaming. The learning curve was pretty steep, and much of the gear I was using was pretty janky, but I quickly came to love it. Our weekly education streams on the GI YouTube channel quickly grew into a community of like-minded guitar players, and Monday nights quickly became a highlight of my week. As much fun as the streams are, though, I'd be lying if I said the

tech always cooperated, which is why I was so excited to check out the Boss Gigcaster 8.

While the Gigcaster 8 is ostensibly digital mixer aimed at streamers, it's way, way more powerful than its name suggests. On the surface, it has four combo XLR/jack inputs on its back along with a single jack input for a guitar on the front. It also offers a stereo output along with four headphone outputs, one of which is compatible with a headset mic. Each input has its own fader, and each headphone output

has its own dedicated volume control, along with faders for a USB input, the "mobile" aux input jack, a device connected via Bluetooth and the 8 "pads" (these are VERY cool - more on this later). Each of these faders can be easily assigned to the main mix and headphone mixes via the "mute" and "headphone" buttons, and each comes with a full suite of EQ, compression and effects, accessed via the channel's top button or the large touch screen. Yes, touch screen. ▶



g Mixer

built for musicians who livestream and create au-
ps and effects. Connect mics and process voices
machine using the line inputs. The Gigcaster 8
a. **Nick Jennison** reviews.



Boss Gigcaster 8 Streaming Mixer

MSRP (UK) £665 / (US) \$699

The Breakdown

Studio Stage



Specialised Versatile



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Great audio for streams and content creation

Easy, intuitive user interfaces

Massive versatility

For more information, please visit:

boss.info



This bright and generously proportioned display is the heart of the Gigcaster 8, and it's how you access its more detailed features. It affords huge "tweakability" for all of your inputs via a very intuitive and easy-to-navigate interface - something that's absolutely invaluable in a live broadcast, especially if you're doing it solo, like most of mine are! Mic inputs can be easily configured for singing, dialogue or console-style processing that's appropriate

for synths, drums, acoustic instruments or any other source you might want to connect. There are reverb, delay, modulation, and even special effects presets for things like radio and telephone vocals. These effects are not just for musicians - they're great for adding interest, humour and drama to your live content.

The most powerful effects suite in the Gigcaster 8 is definitely on the guitar





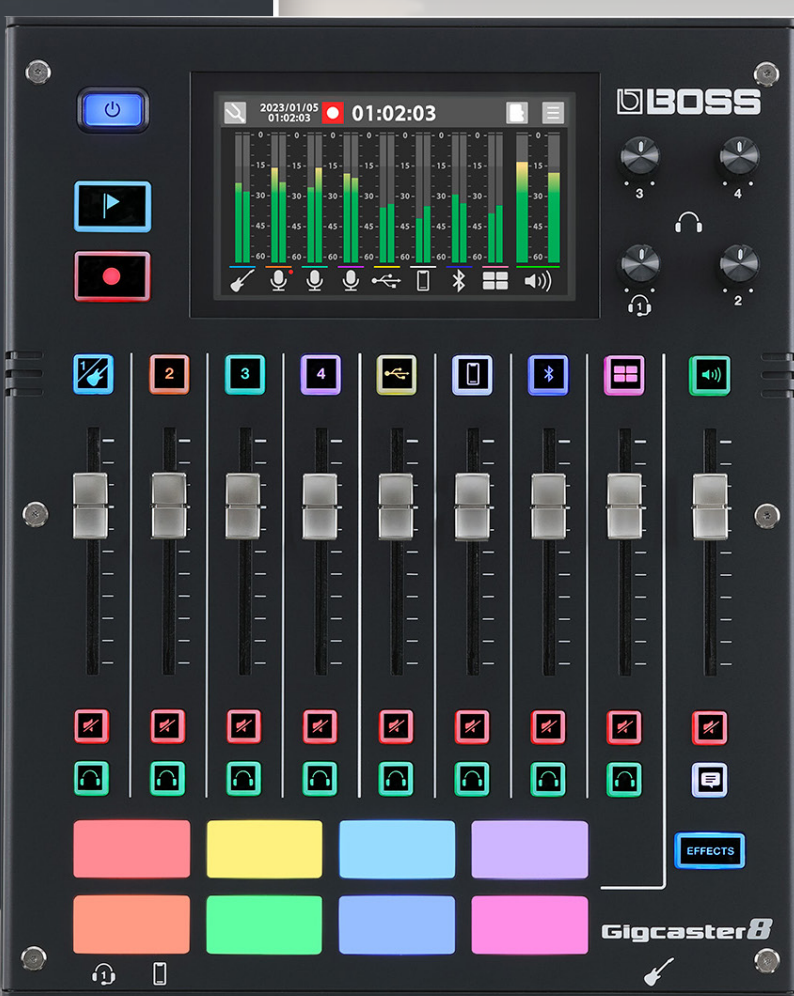
input though. This channel comes loaded with an entire guitar signal chain, using BOSS's latest amp and effects models taken directly from the GT-1000. There is a huge range of tones available in the bundled presets alone, from fantastic feeling high gain amps to beautiful ambient cleans, acoustic simulation, rotary speakers, you name it. Of course, you're not limited to the presets - you can get as deep with your signal chain as you'd like in the edit window, or using the dedicated Gigcaster app.

Perhaps my favourite feature - and perhaps the most misunderstood feature, based on the other reviews I've seen - is the 8 touch pads. They fulfil two functions - triggering sound effects, and also for quickly and easily controlling both the built-in features on the Gigcaster, but also external software and hardware via MIDI. You can assign these pads (in banks of 8) to do all manner of things, from switching guitar presets to enabling and disabling vocal effects, all the way through to switching scenes and playing effects and overlays in software like OBS. ▶

All in all, the Gigcaster 8 is a hugely full-featured unit that's perfect not just for streamers, but also for online guitar teachers, podcasters... you name it.



*and very well thought out device
content creators, video professionals,*



What's more, you can also mirror these pads on a GA-FC footswitch! This gives guitar players the option of controlling everything from their tones to their camera angles without having to take their hands off their instrument!

So yes, the Gigcaster 8 is a fantastic live-streaming audio tool, but it also works wonderfully as a recording device. It functions as a 20x18 USB interface, compatible with any modern DAW, but it also records both stereo and multitrack audio to a micro-SD card. There's also a large button to write markers to the audio being recorded, to greatly speed up your workflow when it comes time to edit.

All in all, the Gigcaster 8 is a hugely full-featured and very well thought out device that's perfect not just for streamers, but also for content creators, video professionals, online guitar teachers, podcasters... you name it. Perhaps my only criticism is that the name "audio streaming mixer" doesn't come close to describing the capabilities of this unit. It's fantastic, and I will most certainly be adding one to my streaming setup.



MOD AUDIO - AIDA DSP JCVM Tweaker & Vibro Amp Plug

Developed in collaboration with AIDA DSP, MOD Audio has announced the release of three new amp modelling devices. and utilising AI technology, Vibro, JCVM and Tweaker promise to offer guitarists with a range of advanced tone-shaping possibilities with significantly enhanced sound quality using advanced machine learning techniques. **Nick Jennison** Tells us more.

IN a recent edition of Guitar Interactive Magazine, I had the pleasure of looking at the MOD Dwarf from MOD Audio. It's a very clever take on the "do it all" signal processor - it's tempting to use the term "modeller", but that's not really what it is. The MOD Dwarf hosts plugins and links them together in chains referred to as "pedalboards". It's an elegant and well-realised ecosystem, but there was one very noticeable "weak link" in the chain - the amp tones.

Now, for all but the most avant-garde guitar players, a great amp tone is make-or-break. You can have the most powerful, best thought-out processor, but if the amp tones aren't great, forget about it. This is where the new Aida Audio JCVM, Tweaker, and Vibro plugins come in. Available for a nominal fee in the MOD Audio plugin store, these amp modelling plugins

take advantage of the latest machine learning technology for maximum authenticity of tone and feel.

The highest gain of the bunch, the JCVM is essentially every flavour of Marshall in one plugin. It runs the gamut from mid-forward British cleans (that aren't very clean, but that's Marshalls for you!) through to Plexi-ish "Crunch" mode, 800 grind in the "Rock" mode, and more modern over-the-top gain in the form of the mid-pushed "Lead" mode and the more aggressive and scooped "Metal" mode. Each of these modes offers not only a different level of gain, but an entirely different voicing and EQ signature, which can be further tweaked with the 3-band EQ and presence controls.

Speaking of tweaking, the "Tweaker" is basically an Egnater Tweaker re-imagined ▶

JCVM, gins.

use of three new plugins for their range of amp
e to redefine amp modelling and provide users
sound quality by processing audio data with ad-

AIDA DSP

MOD



AI CRAFTED TONE



MOD AUDIO - AIDA DSP JCVM, Tweaker & Vibro Amp Plugins.

MSRP Priced at €1990 each

The Breakdown

Studio Stage



Specialised Versatile



Straightforward Feature-Rich



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Killer amp tones

Simple user interfaces

The MOD Audio ecosystem

For more information, please visit:

mod.audio/neural-modelling/



in a plugin. These surprisingly intuitive little amps are known for covering the entire spectrum of classic guitar tones, and you'll find all of these tones in this plugin too. The "AC" and "USA" modes handle cleans through to breakup tones, with a distinctly "Voxy" and "Fendery" flavour depending on which mode you've chosen, while the "Brit" mode is much higher gain with a very smooth high end and a chewy, lively midrange that's perfect for blues and rock soloing.

The cleanest of the bunch, the Vibro is Aida Audio's take on a Fender Vibrolux. The three modes represent the two channels (Normal and Bright), as well as an option to bridge both channels for a little more hair and compression. Both "Norm" and "Bright" modes offer a beautiful vintage chime and punch, with an added dose of sparkle from the "Bright" mode, and both modes start to break up nicely when you push them. The "Bridge" mode, even more so, with a healthy dose of Keef-esque bite and SRV-ish clean-but-dirty sustain.



MOD AUDIO - AIDA DSP JCVM, Tweaker & Vibro Amp Plugins.



Because there's so much going on under the hood, these plugins are quite CPU-hungry, with loads up as high as 75% with just one amp plugin and a cab sim, and to ameliorate this, each plugin comes with “light” modes. There are several settings on each, allowing you to determine how much CPU power you want to dedicate to the amp sim. There is a tradeoff in tone, but in a mix, you're unlikely to spot the difference. That said, it's nice to have

the option to run these plugins at their highest resolutions for recording or for “amp only” applications.

The JCVM, Tweaker & Vibro by Aida Audio have addressed the biggest weakness of the MOD Dwarf in a big way. They all sound fantastic, and feel super realistic. They also hint at exciting things to come for the MOD Audio ecosystem. Definitely one to watch!



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

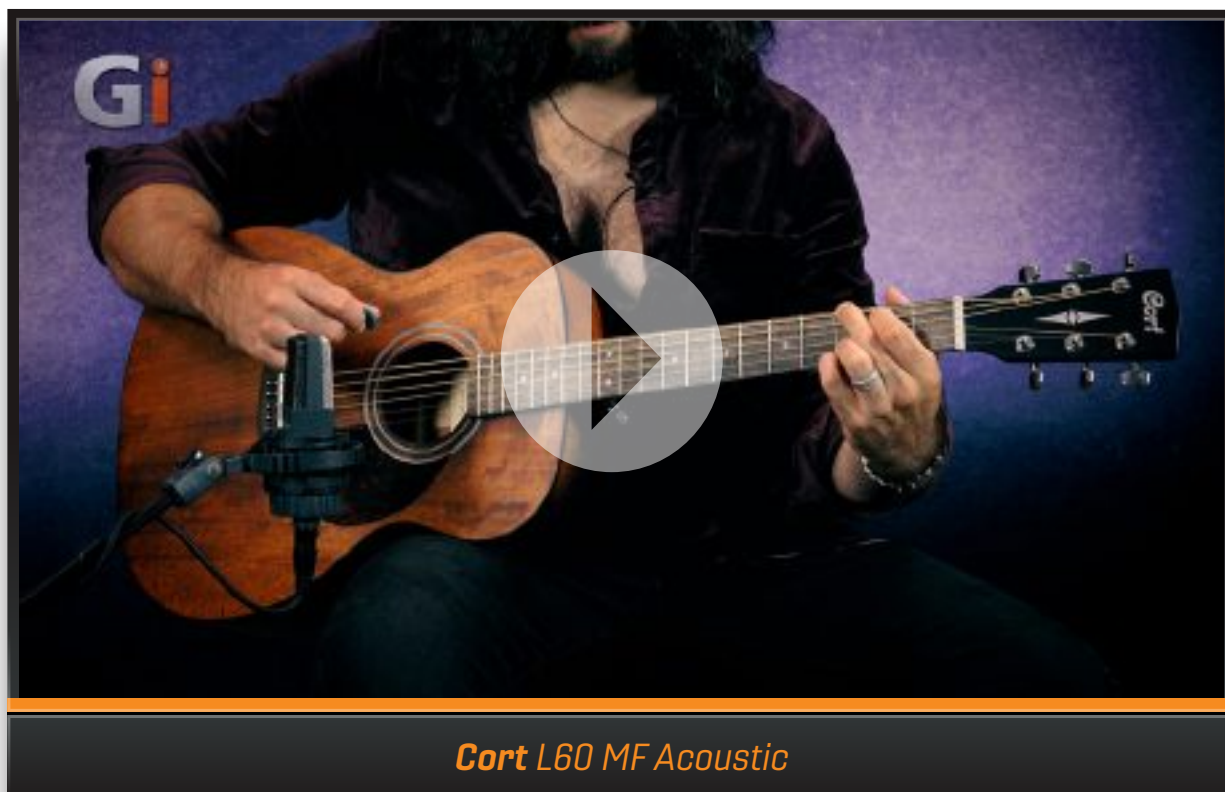
SPONSORED BY



Cort L60 MF Acoustic

Nick Jennison reviews the Cort L60 MF Acoustic—Cort's homage to great vintage acoustic guitars with the look, sound, feel and playability of those fine instruments with uncompromising quality and excellent value. The dark, open-pore finish of the L60 MF ensures the wood choice resonates naturally—providing balanced dynamics, with ample bottom-end response that doesn't inhibit the top-end.

EAST Asian guitar manufacturers par-excellence Cort have been making some exceptionally impressive acoustic guitars lately. Sam Bell was very impressed with the Gold series guitar he looked at recently, and I couldn't resist taking the Flow OC I reviewed home with me. While they're by no means cheap, these higher-end guitars easily compete with instruments twice their price, and hint at the kind of work Cort can do when the constraints of cost are removed. ▶





Cort L60 MF Acoustic

MSRP: (UK) £259 / (US) \$TBC

The Breakdown

Traditional Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Easy playability

Warm tones

Value for money

For more information, please visit:

cortguitars.com





The Cort L60M It looks attractive a tone that w

Of course, not everyone is looking for a guitar close to a grand for a guitar. The quality more than makes up for the asking price, it's still a very good value outlay. Fortunately, Cort has a reputation for great quality guitars in the sub-£200 mark, and the L60M is just such an instrument. It's a dreadnought-sized all-mahogany guitar with an open pore finish that looks like a well-set it apart from the "Standard Dreadnoughts" that dominate the lower end of the market, but with a sound that's outlandish in a way that appeals to traditionalists.

Like its pricier siblings, the L60M sports a very playable, slightly slanted great action straight from the factory. It might not have the asymmetrical ergonomic neck profile of the more expensive models, but it's still a very comfortable instrument to experience right up to the 12th fret. This is refreshing to see, as many acoustic guitars can often play better in the open position, but develop a resistance that's positively finger-breaking as soon as the 5th fret. It's the playability of the higher frets that has made it to the L60M.

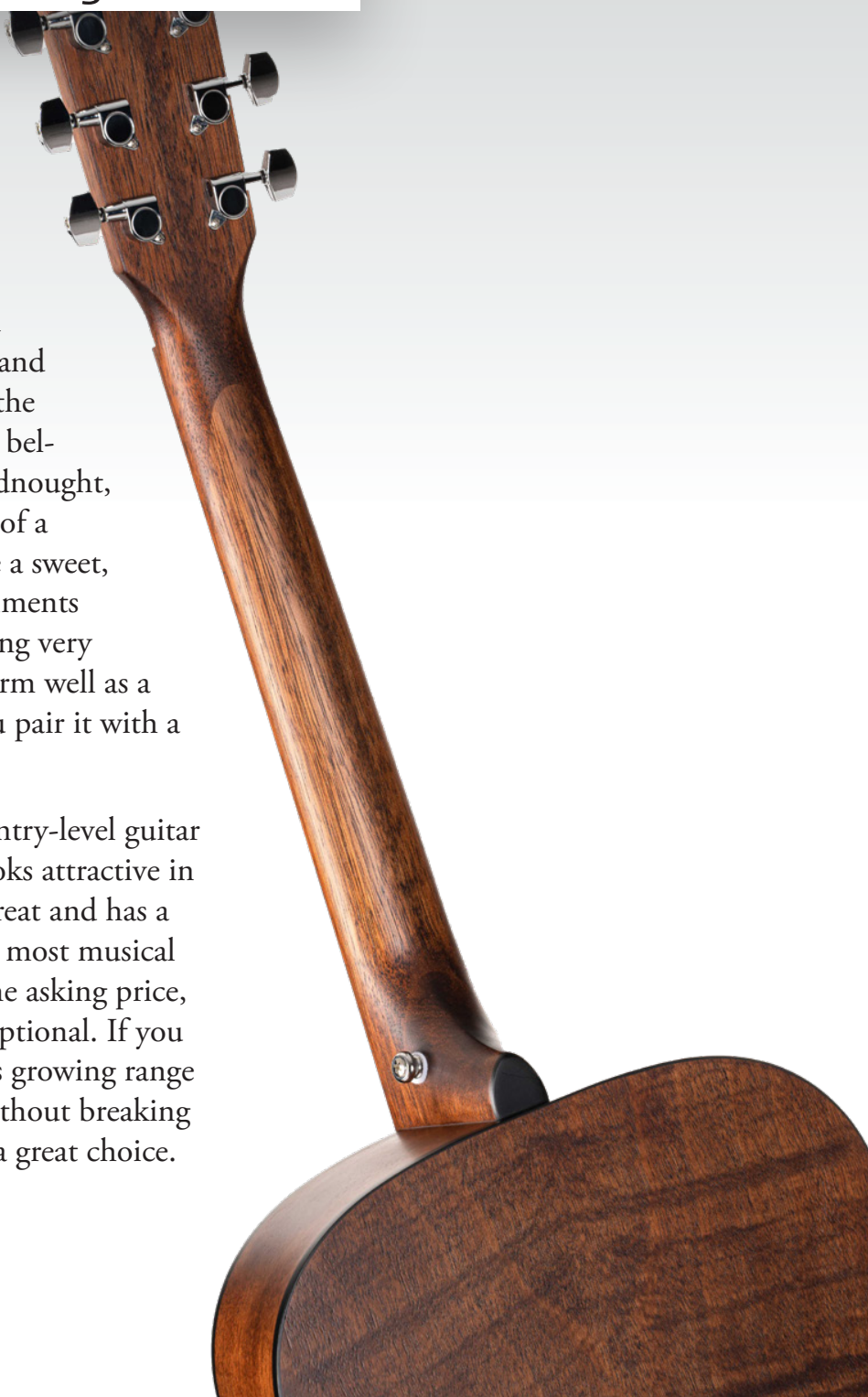
M is an entry-level guitar with a lot to offer. Active in an unfussy way, plays great and has will deliver in most musical settings.

e can justify
itar, and while
arrants the
very significant
t has a number
n their range at
the L60M is
It's an orches-
guitar, with an
oks great, and
ea Of Spruce
ninate this
without being
might upset

the L60M
im neck with a
m the factory. It
mmetrical, high-
le of a Flow,
ortable playing
ne neck join.
since budget
just fine in the
op an action
reaking even as
great that the
-end models
4.

Sonically, the L60M is balanced, softly spoken and on the warm side. Mahogany body guitars are always more mid-forward than spruce-topped models, and that's definitely true of the L60. It doesn't have the bel- lowing punch of a dreadnought, nor the extended highs of a jumbo, but it does have a sweet, warm voice that compliments fingerstyle and flatpicking very well, and will still perform well as a strumming guitar if you pair it with a lighter gauge pick.

The Cort L60M is an entry-level guitar with a lot to offer. It looks attractive in an unfussy way, plays great and has a tone that will deliver in most musical settings. Considering the asking price, the quality is quite exceptional. If you want to get in on Cort's growing range of fantastic acoustics without breaking the bank, the L60M is a great choice.



Martin SC-13E Special Burst Acoustic

Do you want to play leads all the way up the neck on an acoustic guitar? Well, your prayers have been answered with the SC-13E. Martin Guitars' SC-13E—with its patented Sure Align neck system—gives you full access to the upper fretboard so you can comfortably reach those high notes. It's also equipped with a new, low-profile velocity pickup system that ergonomically accommodates your hand as you move up the neck, giving you the comfort and control of an electric. **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at the Martin SC-13E Special Burst acoustic, featuring a mahogany body and ziricote fine veneer gloss finished back and sides.

WHEN the Martin SC-13E dropped at NAMM 2020, I was lucky enough to be in the room for the “big reveal”. In fact, I think I was the first person to play one post-launch (I was so excited I literally ran and grabbed one). My first thoughts were, “Oh wow, Martin has made a guitar for me!”...

Let me explain. I love the “Martin sound”. We refer to it here at GI towers as “the sound of the records” (© Jonathan Graham). I think it's reasonable to say that most Martins don't exactly play like butter though. They make you work. Don't get me wrong, it's always *worth*



Martin SC-13E Special Burst Acoustic

Acoustic

been answered
access to all frets
y neck barrel that
playability of an
a spruce gloss top



Martin SC-13E Special Burst Acoustic

MSRP: (UK) £2099 / (US) \$1999

The Breakdown

Vintage Modern



Specialised Versatile



Warm Bright



Affordable High-end



For fans of

Effortless playability

Exceptional plugged-in performance

Still sounding like a Martin

For more information, please visit:

martinguitar.com



Speaking of the piezo, the pickup system on the SC-13E is the excellent LR Baggs Element system.

the work, but being a pretentious shredder I always find myself gravitating to acoustics that are easier to play, even at the expense of the sound.

Well, the SC-13E is the answer to this conundrum. It sounds like a Martin, but it plays like an electric. If you've played enough acoustics, you'll know how impressive this particular magic trick is. The SC-13E Special is basically the same recipe, but with some extra fanciness in the form of ziricote back and sides, without a significant increase in price.

Spec-wise, the SC-13E has an offset body style that uses some special bracing wizardry (technical term) under the solid spruce top to make it not only resonant and powerful beyond its small size, but also extraordinarily feedback resistant, meaning that when you play live you

can crank it louder, compress harder and even use a healthy amount of distortion if that's your bag. The 25.4" scale "sure align" neck is a slim asymmetrical design with a 13th fret join, although the high frets are still easily accessible thanks to the generous cutaway - and unlike many cutaway acoustics, the higher register sounds just as good as the lower octave.

Rather than a glued-in join, the neck attaches via a unique bolt-on mechanism. Far from a cost-cutting measure, this is actually a very clever piece of design that allows for much greater setup tweakability without having to adjust the guitar's saddle (which comes with a whole host of problems, not least of which is how the saddle affects the response of the piezo pickup). This is how Martin are able



The SC-13E Special is, in my opinion, a perfect example of a “player’s acoustic”.

to get the action so bonkers low, and still have the SC-13E sound great, even when you dig in with a heavy pick.

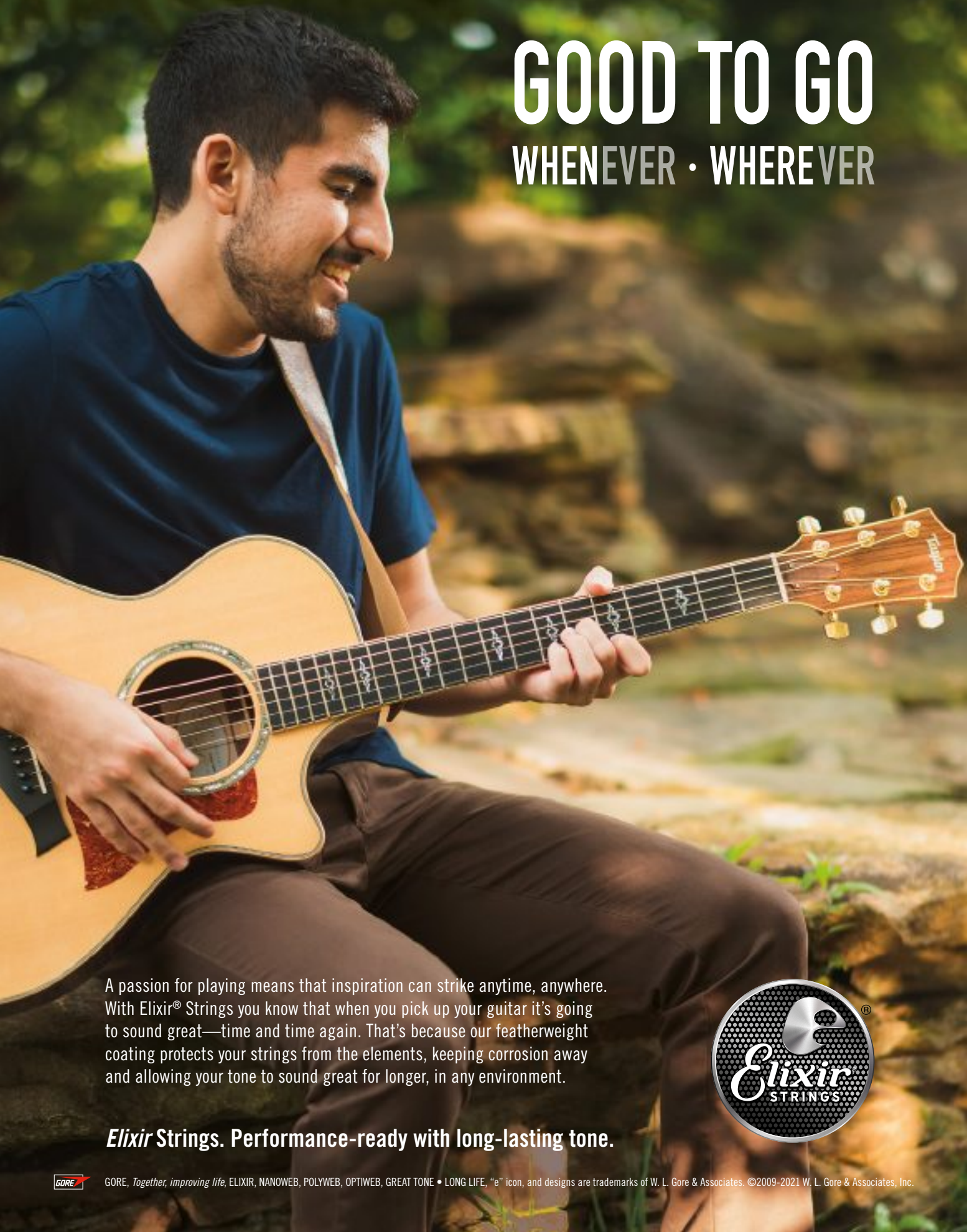
Speaking of the piezo, the pickup system on the SC-13E is the excellent LR Baggs Element system. It’s a very natural sounding pickup, but also exceptionally feedback resistant. If you play live with an amp, this will allow you to get the guitar’s top “going” way before the onset of feedback, and it also takes effects exceptionally well.

The SC-13E Special is, in my opinion, a perfect example of a “player’s acoustic”. It works with you rather than against you, which means no musical idea is off-limits because of the guitar. But it also sounds like a Martin, which is a huge deal on a guitar this playable.



GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER • WHEREVER



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

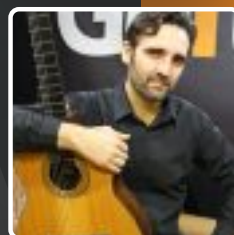
Elixir Strings. Performance-ready with long-lasting tone.



GORE, Together, improving life, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, OPTIWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2009-2021 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

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



CONTINUOUS *TOM QUAYLE* SCALE *PART 8* EXERCISES



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



HI guys and welcome back to my column for issue 34. We've done a lot of pretty complicated material over the last 33 issues but for our 34th outing we'll be dealing with a concept that is really very simple but will challenge you as much as anything we've looked at so far!

One of the big issues that I see improvising guitar players deal with time and again is grounded in their ability to visualise scales in a manner that prevents them from having to jump around the fretboard to keep up with chord changes. Most guitar players have a really hard time creating a continuous line over a set of changes without 'jumping' to a more familiar area of the neck and thus breaking the line they had started to play. This is

because we are taught to visualise our scales and arpeggios from the lowest note upwards, constantly referencing back to the lower root note when we are looking for the next scale or arpeggio shape for each new chord. For this issue I want to introduce you to a system of practice that will help you to develop this visualisation process so that you can always see where the nearest scale shape or note is for a new chord to the one you just played over. If you get good at this you will always be in control of the direction of your line and be fully aware of where the nearest scale or chord tone is for each new chord you have to play over.

The concept is known as a 'Continuous Scale Exercise' and is incredibly simple in its ▶







premise. The hard part is actually doing the practice as it requires a lot of concentration and energy at first, but as with any exercise it becomes far easier the more you work at it. For the sake of argument let's say that we had to play over two Major 7th chords a semitone apart, Gmaj7 and Abmaj7. Since these two scales do not occur in the same key we have to play different scales over each one and for this exercise we'll be using G Lydian over the Gmaj7 chord and Ab Lydian over the Abmaj7. Our goal is to play eight scale tones over the first chord, initially ascending through one octave from root to root. Once we've played all eight notes we must then play another eight notes ascending over the Abmaj7 starting on the nearest scale tone above the last note we played over our Gmaj7 chord. In doing so we have to be able to visualise our A Lydian scale in the same position we were in for the G Lydian and keep the scale line constant without breaking its ascending flow. The exercise then moves back to the Gmaj7 chord and we continue to ascend through another eight scale tones always visualising the next nearest scale tone for each new chord, until we run out of fretboard.

The exercise can be developed in a number of ways, for example - starting

your line from each note in the scale, starting on each chord tone, descending rather than ascending scales, using combinations of ascending and descending notes, staying in one position, staying on one string. Use your imagination to come up with other ideas and you can really start to develop a fantastic method for always knowing where you are in a given scale and how to transition smoothly from one chord to the next without breaking up your line.

This exercise can be applied to any chord progression you choose and is very effective for developing your ears and learning to hear harmony in a linear way, understanding how scales transition smoothly into one another, rather than abruptly starting and visualising each new scale from its lowest note each time. As ever, watch the video for my examples and apply this exercise in your playing and you'll really start to notice a marked difference in the way you visualise and hear scales on the neck.

I hope this is useful – good luck with your playing and I'll see you in the next issue.



EXT



PART 1

TENDER GUITAR

by Sam Bell

Sam Bell Sales of eight string guitars are on a high and the web is alive with talk of 'extended guitars' - which we take to mean any guitar with more than 6 strings that isn't a 12 string Ricky or a Dreadnought acoustic! But who to turn to for advice? Step forward Sam Bell, guitarist with UK band Mask Of Judas - brand new on the GI team and your guide for our brand new series - Extended Guitar with **Sam Bell**.

HELLO everybody, Sam Bell here. Welcome to the first installment of my eight string guitar series. In this series we will be looking at the many options and advantages an eight string guitar can give us when writing music, I will be breaking down various techniques, concepts and some of my own riffs which I hope will give you a good insight and source of inspiration to pick up an eight string and create some brand new music for yourself! In this column I want to introduce this extended range instrument to readers who may be completely new to the idea of eight string guitar.

First of all let's talk about the subject of tuning. For the first riff example I am in standard tuning. Standard tuning on an eight string is just like a regular six string guitar in standard tuning, E A D G B E, with the addition of the 7th string B and our 8th string F#. This keeps the consistency of intervals between the strings, so our regular six string scale positions and chords can translate down onto the low B and F# strings with ease. This riff is based around the lower strings, and starts by outlining a G#m9, A#m, Bmaj7, C# chord progression using string skipping and slides. ▶

When playing this kind of stretchy wide interval riff in this area of the eight string it's key to keep the fretting hand index finger lightly muting the higher strings to keep excess string noise down. Be sure to keep your thumb in the middle of the neck in order to keep an even spread between the fingers. The riff ends with a string skipping tapping idea that outlines a C# power chord. I personally like to use my index and ring finger to tap the F# and E string respectively, this way I can keep my hand in a comfortable place to start the riff again.

Our next example is taken from the chorus of my song "Icicle" and utilises an eight string tuning that is relative to six string drop D. We are leaving all of our strings in standard tuning, however we are dropping the 8th string down a tone from F# to E which puts the lower three strings in an open power chord. This tuning, coupled with the awesome range available, is where the eight strings advantages really come into action. This riff starts with an octave chord idea outlining an E minor tonality followed by C and B minor. The second turn around utilises tapping on the low, low E string and our regular low E string! We can play the same frets on each string which makes visualisation of these kinds of arpeggio ideas much easier to execute. The second half of this chorus moves in to an Aadd9/Am tonality, and we have an extension of our string skipping arpeggio idea with a huge A minor arpeggio covering a lot of range within one position, which is another example of why having this range is useful not only to have low notes, but also have a nice range of notes available

within one position on the neck. Really keep an eye out on string muting on this tapping idea, we want to keep our picking hand palm and fretting hand index finger close to the strings, to keep stray notes from ringing out.

One of the most frequently asked questions I get about the eight string guitar is most often regarding either string gauge and/or scale length (the distance between the nut and the bridge) Due to the added range of the low F# string, it helps to have a longer scale length than a regular six or seven string guitar. It helps the string tension on the lower strings, which means the notes resonate much better, and gives the notes much more clarity in the low end in general. This added length does mean the string gauges you may be used to on a six string will feel heavier due to the extra tension put on the strings by the longer neck, for example a set of 10s may feel like 11s.

My Ibanez RG2228A has a scale length of 27 inches, which is an ideal length for an eight string guitar, it gives good tension in the low end without compromising the playability of the upper range. Ibanez do have several models of eight string guitar, from the RG2228 through to the more affordable RG8. All of these models feature the 27 inch scale length. Other makers have other ideas, of course, and I'll be joining the GI review team in the very near future, so that we can start adding eight string reviews to the mix!

The next subject I want to touch on is tone. The eight string is often associated with Metal, however its uses are incredibly versa-

tile and suit a wide range of styles. It is important though to be aware of balancing this extended range with other instruments in a live or mix situation. From experience I find its best not to over do the bass frequencies with the eight string and keep a nice upper presence in the middle range to cut through and blend around the bass. I like to think of the eight string working with the bass guitar to create a big sound, this doesn't necessarily mean the bass has to be an octave lower than the already low F#! Some basses can do this now, however, the magic of the extended range comes into action when we unison the lower notes, this creates a really power-

ful, present sound that really hits hard! The power of unison is not to be underestimated!

I hope you've enjoyed this first eight string installment in the series, hopefully it has given you some insight into the basic workings of an eight string guitar, and some inspiration for your own ideas. In the next issue we will be looking into some interesting ways of using arpeggios to create some wide interval, quirky sounding riffs!



Sam Bell: *Extended guitar*

Giorgio Serci

CREATIVE FINGERSTYLE

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

In this issue's column, I would like to share a solo guitar arrangement of a beautiful composition by one of my favourite composers, the Maestro Ennio Morricone. This piece is one of a few themes written for the much-celebrated Oscar nominee movie 'Cinema Paradiso', by film director Giuseppe Tornatore.

The original piece is in the key of Bb major, so when adapting it for guitar I decided to transpose it down to the more guitar-friendly key of A major, which would have allowed me to utilize the open A, D and E strings, particularly in the bass register.

Melodic ingredients:

As the melody is very delicate and singing-like, I have decided to use a legato approach and utilize the 'campanella' style as often as possible. This is evident in the first bar with the first melodic statement playing across the first 3 strings, letting notes overlap to each other.

One of the main challenges with this piece is holding the notes of the melody as well as those in the bass line as much as needed. Being a slow number, this becomes particularly laborious in places as we have to hold a note firmly while retaining enough flexibility in the other fingers that need to be changing position. ▶



Harmonic ingredients:

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

Aadd2	E7/B Aadd2/C#	D Aadd2/C#	F#7 Bm7 E7
Add2 E/G#	F#m D/F# E	A E/G# F#m	E6 D
Add2/C# D6	C#m A/C# D	A/E	E7
Aadd2			

Another important harmonic ingredient is the frequent use of inversions. This is evident in bar 2, 3, 5 etc. The main purpose of these inversions is to add melodic qualities to the bass line, which tends to ascend or descend step-wise in a singing like manner.

Rhythmic ingredients:

The piece is a ballad, with a very understated rhythmic palette. However, the harmonic rhythm, namely the rhythm in which the harmony unfolds, is pleasantly unpredictable.

As always, I would like to recommend exploring the above-mentioned techniques in order to compose your own pieces. We have to allow ourselves to make mistakes and reflect on the reasons why we like or not a particular sound, a chord progression or modulation. Eventually, these sounds will become part of your musical lexicon and you'll be able to use these with fluidity and effectiveness.

The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

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

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

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

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

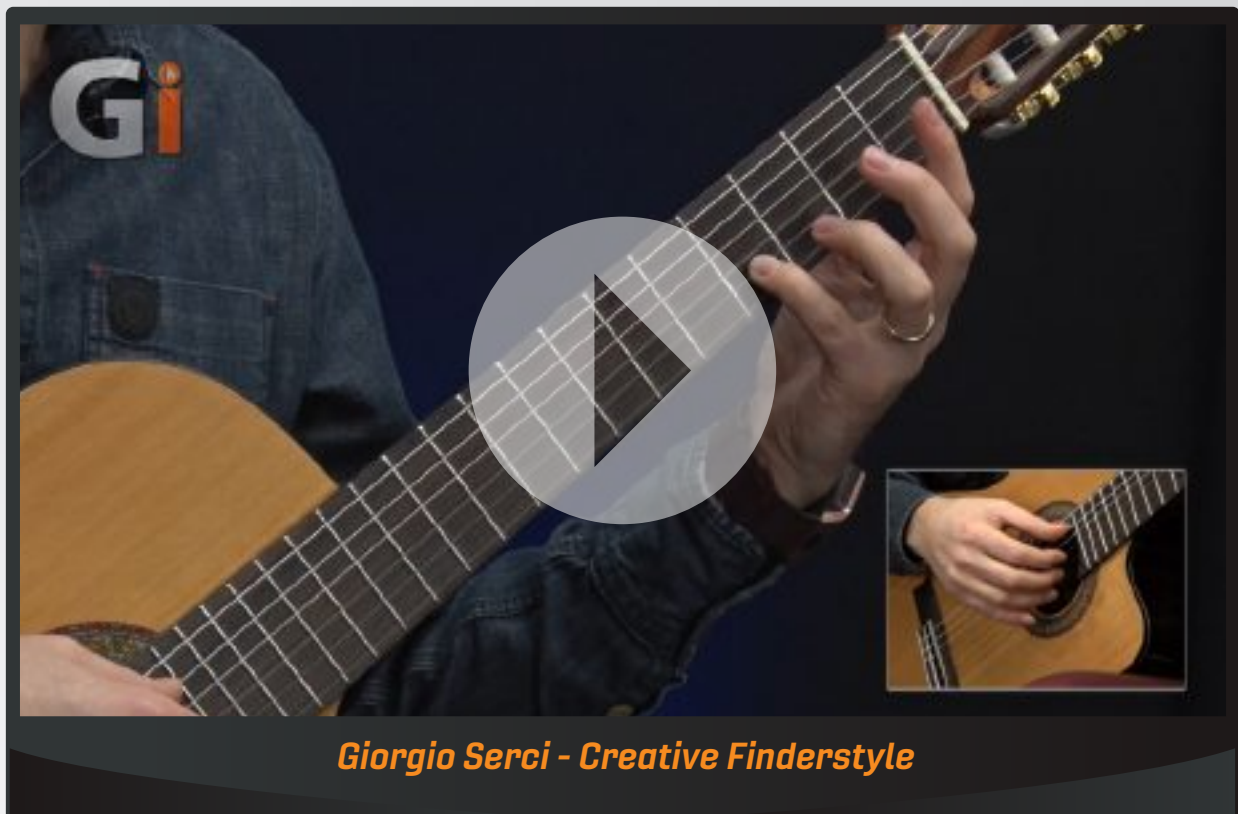
Bar 1: Open A, index f on fret 2 of D, little f on fret 4 of G middle f on fret 2 of B and open e. Open B, middle f on fret 6 of G and open e.

Bar 2: Middle f on fret 2 of A, index f on fret 1 of G and little f on fret 3 of B, followed by ring f on fret 2, little f on fret 3 and ring f on fret 2 of e. Next, little f on fret 4 of A with open 3, index on fret 2 of D, middle f on fret 2 of G and index on fret 1 of G.

Bar 3: Little f on fret 5 of A with ring f on fret 4 of D. Index on fret 2 of e, middle f on fret 3 of B, index on fret 2 of B. Next, little f on fret 4 of A with open e, index on fret 2 of G, open B, and index on fret 1 of G.

Bar 4: Barre' on fret 2 to play fret 2 of E, D and middle f on fret 3 of G followed by fret 2 of e. Next, index on fret 1 of A, open G little f on fret 3 of B followed by ring f on fret 2 of B. Next, barre' on fret 2 again to play fret 2 of A, G, middle f on fret 3 of B followed by little f on fret 5 of e. Next, barre' on fret 4 of G, B and e with middle f on fret 5 of B, followed by little f on fret 7 of 'e'.

Bar 5: Open A and B with index on fret 6 of G and ring f on fret 7 of e. Next, index on fret 7 of D, open B and little f on fret 9 of e. Next, ring f on fret 11 of A, followed by index on fret 9 of G, little f on fret 12 of B and index on fret 9 of e. ▶



Bar 6: Index on fret 9 of E and G with little f on fret 12 of e. Middle f on fret 10 of B and ring f on fret 10 of e. Next, open E, index on fret 7 of e, ring f on fret 9 of B and middle f on fret 9 of G.

Bar 7: Open A with little f on fret 9 of e and ring f on fret 9 of G. Next, index on fret 4 of E, middle f on fret 5 of B and little f on fret 7 of e. Next, index on fret 2 of E with little f on fret 5 of e. With the same barre', play fret 2 of G, B and again fret 5 of e.

Bar 8: Open E with little f on fret 4 of e, index on fret 2 of D, ring f on fret 4 of G and index on fret 2 of B. Next, open D, middle f on fret 2 of G and ring f on fret 2 of e, followed by open e, little f on fret 3 of B and open e.

Bar 9: Little f on fret 4 of A with open e, index on fret 2 of D and middle f on fret 2 of G. Next, open D, middle f on fret 2 of G, little f on fret 3 of B and ring f on fret 2 of B.

Bar 10: Open E with little f on fret 2 of B, middle f on fret 2 of D, ring f on fret 2 of G, broken chord.

Bar 11: Open E, D, B with index on fret 1 of G, broken chord as per the video.

Bar 12 and 13: Open A, index on fret 2 of D, middle f on fret 2 of G, open B, ring f on fret 2 of B, open e, index on fret 5 of e, middle f on fret 7 and 9 of e, with harmonic on XII fret of e.

Congratulations, you have completed this arrangement!

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

I strongly recommend experimenting with a few picking variations, changing the chords as you wish in terms of voicing (higher or lower), as well as trying the same picking pattern on a different chord progression, or using a 'capo' on fret 2 for a brighter outcome.

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

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

Focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help delivering the piece in a more accurate and consistent manner, while saving energy.

This will complete this creative fingerstyle lesson.

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

www.giorgioserci.com





You can also find me on [instagram](#) on [giorgio_serci](#) or [twitter](#) [@giorgioserci](#) as well as on [facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic](#)

*Until the next time -
Good-bye.*

Check me out here at
www.giorgioserci.com





NEW
COLUMN

with Andy Wood

Country

Balanced Alternate Picking continued...

In continuation of our last column, we're going to look at an idea here which I alternate pick, and I want you to understand why I alternate pick it.

The thing with alternate picking is it's just a technique. You use it to play ideas, but these same ideas could be hybrid picked, or

economy picked - as long as the rest of my background in mandolin playing and years of experience going down and up the neck like Brent Mason (who is one of the best) - a thumb pick and his middle and ring finger effect - pick middle pick ring rep

Guitar Interactive is proud to welcome back Andy Wood with the fourth instalment of his new column!

y Guitar

notes are there. As I've explained, playing had given me a great deal of, so I favour that, but a player (my all time heroes) actually uses the ring finger to achieve a similar effect instead of down up down up.

What we're focusing on here is technique that allows us to play whatever we want, not technique that limits us to play what our technique allows us to play.

So when you look at your typical rock shredder, they tend to favour one picking mechanic over another – some are good ▶

inside picker, others are good outside pickers. Some favour 3 note per string picking (Paul Gilbert, John Petrucci etc) while others find it easier to pick 2 notes per string (Zakk Wylde, Eric Johnson) – and while there's absolutely nothing wrong with that, in Country music, it wouldn't be enough as our phrases aren't dictated by notes per string, it's about the actual notes - speed comes later.

So in this lick we're outlining an A or an A6 sound. A6 has the same notes as an F#m7 though,



so you may find it easier to see this as being shape 4 of the F# minor pentatonic pattern, but I like to see the little A triad on the top 3 strings.

We begin by picking the 5th, #5 (chromatic) and 6th on the G string before jumping to the B string and playing the root, then walking chromatically from the 3rd up to the 5th on the high E. So in terms of notes per string we've had 3, 1 and the 4 so far - so being a good "pattern picker" will not help you here.

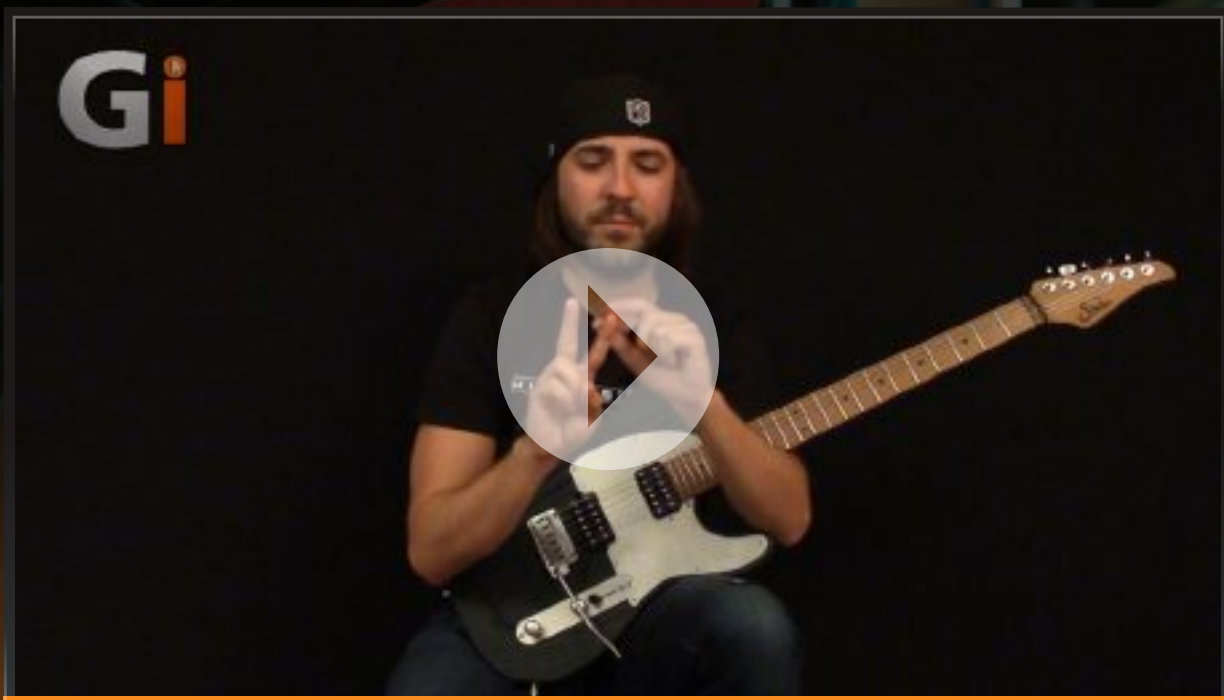
We then play out trust b3 to 3 movement on the high E and come down the arpeggio and target that same b3 to 3 movement on the D

string before ending on the root. So, notes per string wise, we have 3, 1, 6, 1, 3, 2, 1. A nightmare to play fast if you've only ever practised Paul Gilbert licks!

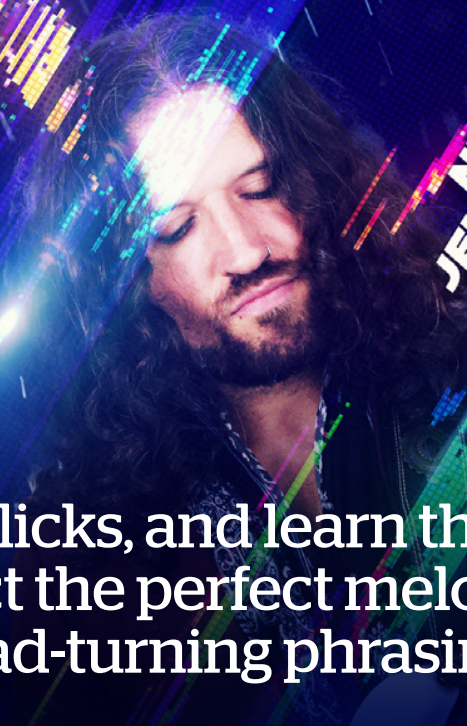
Stick with it though and just keep your technique focused on what you use to execute the ideas you hear, not the other way – we don't want to be hearing ideas our technique makes easy to play.

You can apply this logic to any line, just keep playing down up down up until you get where you need to be - I'll see you next time!





Andy Wood Country Guitar



NICK JENNISON'S THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MELODY & PHRASING

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

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

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

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

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

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



To find out more, visit: guitarinteractivemagazine.com/gi-plus/

