

400<sup>TH</sup> ISSUE FREE DIGITAL COPY OF GUITARIST ISSUE #1 INSIDE

# Guitarist

Issue 400

NOVEMBER 2015 | £6.25

## + DANNY GATTON

*The real story behind the life and death of a legend*

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Find out which is best for your tone p94

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Why we're stuck on the Fender 'Showbucker' Strat



*Martin Barre on Tull's guitars*



*Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells Tele*



*Tommy Emmanuel on acoustic finesse*



*Martin 00-15E Retro acoustic*



*Ernie Isley on psychedelic soul*

Future



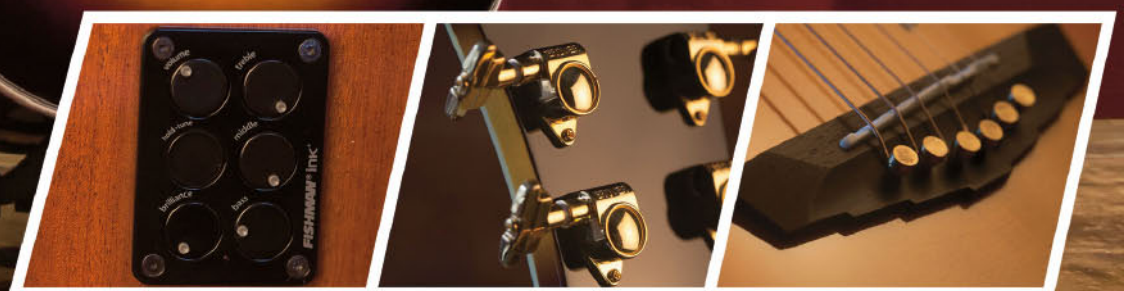


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## Phone-y War



Phones held aloft are as much a part of the gigging scene these days as beer in plastic cups and merch stands. When the band hits that climactic chorus, a small forest of iPhones sprouts up to capture 15 seconds of wobbly, badly lit footage to take home as a trophy for Facebook. It's a bit distracting, but essentially harmless souvenir-hunting, it could be argued – so why do so many artists hate it?

I got an insight into that this week, when speaking to a seasoned pro guitarist who's playing with a famous prog-rock band at the moment. He admitted that the night before, he'd really been in the mood to let rip and improvise without constraint – but as it came closer to the solo of a well-known track, he saw the phones go up in readiness and decided to play it safe, instead. It's a natural reaction even for an über-capable player like this chap: seeing YouTube's unforgiving, electronic eyes staring right back at him made him play more conservatively, lest he take a risk only to make a blunder and have it derided for eternity on social media. Is that what we really want from rock 'n' roll? Spontaneity and risk-taking should be rock's heart and soul, should they not? Be interested to hear what readers think about the issue. And speaking of issues (see what I did there?), this month's *Guitarist* is just a bit special, as it's our 400th edition. For the wonderful and loyal readers who've been with us from the start, we heartily thank and salute you one and all – congratulations for putting up with our musings for so long! To anyone new to the mag this month, a big welcome. We may be on our fourth century, so to speak, but we still love guitars and the music that is made on them as much as we did on Day One, and we hope you do too. Cheers!

Jamie Dickson **Editor**

## Editor's Highlights



### **Danny Gatton**

For some, he's the greatest player there's ever been: we learned a lot about Teles and more about his genius this month **Page 76**



### **Issue One**

Download a digital copy of the first-ever 1984 edition of *Guitarist* for free, then sit back for a blast from the past... **Page 44**



### **Never A Tull Moment**

It was a pleasure to catch up with a true gentleman of rock, Martin Barre, again – and how about those dinky ES-140s? **Page 62**



# Guitarist

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**86** Marshall hits back at its boutique rivals with a sumptuous model of its own







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COVER PORTRAIT BY  
*Joby Sessions*

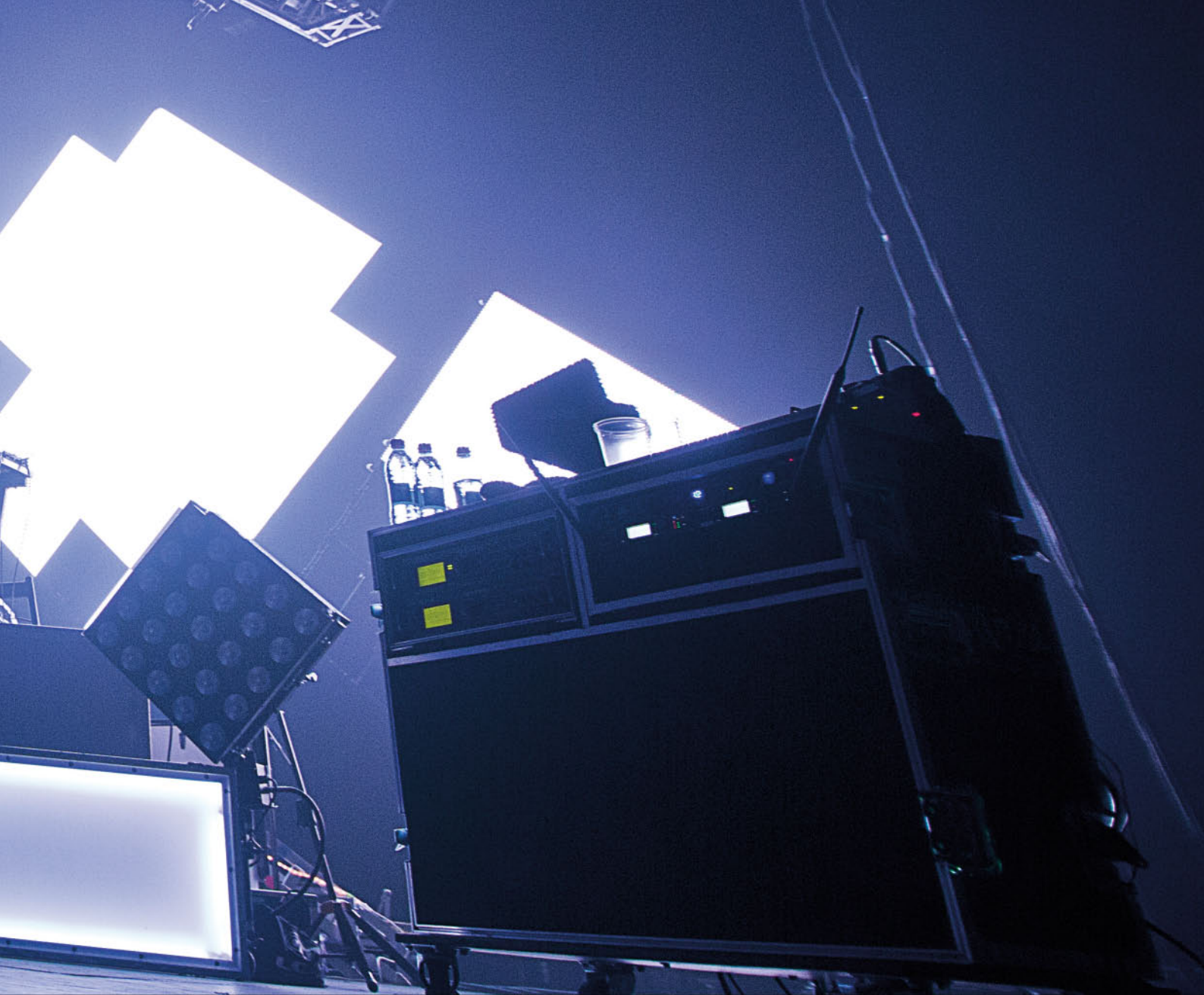




Zach Filkins from OneRepublic on stage with his Axe-Fx II rig.







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## FIRST PLAY



**FENDER AMERICAN DELUXE  
STRAT HSS SHAWBUCKER**  
£1,339

.....  
**WHAT IS IT?** Feature-packed  
HSS 'SuperStrat'

# SET TO STUN

**Words**  
Dave Burrluck

**Photography**  
Joby Sessions

S-1 switching features alongside the Shawbucker bridge 'bucker on this fully loaded Strat. Pickup expert Tim Shaw tells us more about his new design

**E**arlier in 2015, Fender announced the Shawbucker-equipped American Standard and American Deluxe guitars. While the guitars themselves are pretty standard Fender fare, the Shawbucker is lesser known. Its designer is Nashville-based Tim Shaw, who won't mind being classed as a veteran of the musical instrument industry, with spells at both Gibson and Fender – and, interestingly, it's Tim's spell at Gibson that informs this new pickup design. One of Tim's earliest teachers was pickup legend Bill Lawrence – "I learned a lot from him about pickups and circuits," says Tim, which sounds like understatement – but it was at Gibson's old Kalamazoo plant that Tim's research began in earnest.

"I got there in '78 and met Walt Fuller, just about the time he retired," continues Tim. Fuller was working on what was to become the Heritage 80 Les Pauls, and the job of the pickups fell to Tim. "I had a lot of information from Seth Lover; I had his mimeograph sheets with all the specs and vendors of the materials for the original humbucker."

For a variety of reasons, the materials had changed. "You see, magnets at that time... well, it wasn't a precise science, so the Alnico mix could change – that was one variable."









1

Then there was the coating of the copper coil wire, which had changed from the thicker and more expensive plain enamel to thinner and more cost-effective polyurethane (known as single poly with trade names such as Polysol).

“So, a coil wound with 5,000 turns of plain enamel-[coated] wire takes up a little more room than 5,000 turns of wire coated with single poly and it sounds a little airier because it’s got lower capacitance,” Tim explains. “This was a detail that no-one cared about at Gibson at the time – the new poly coating was cheaper and more consistent, so they changed. Then the magnet material changed from Alnico II to V around ’71, though that’s not a documented change – hey, it’s a magnet, it works, who cares? So there were a bunch of changes – either actively, the wire, or passively, the magnet – that had changed. When I started looking at the old stuff, I realised whatever we were doing wasn’t what we started out doing. And as people seemed to like these old ones, my charter was, ‘Well, how close can we get?’”

The answer was pretty close indeed, and the “Tim Shaw” humbuckers, made in Kalamazoo between 1980 and ’84, are the stuff of legend.

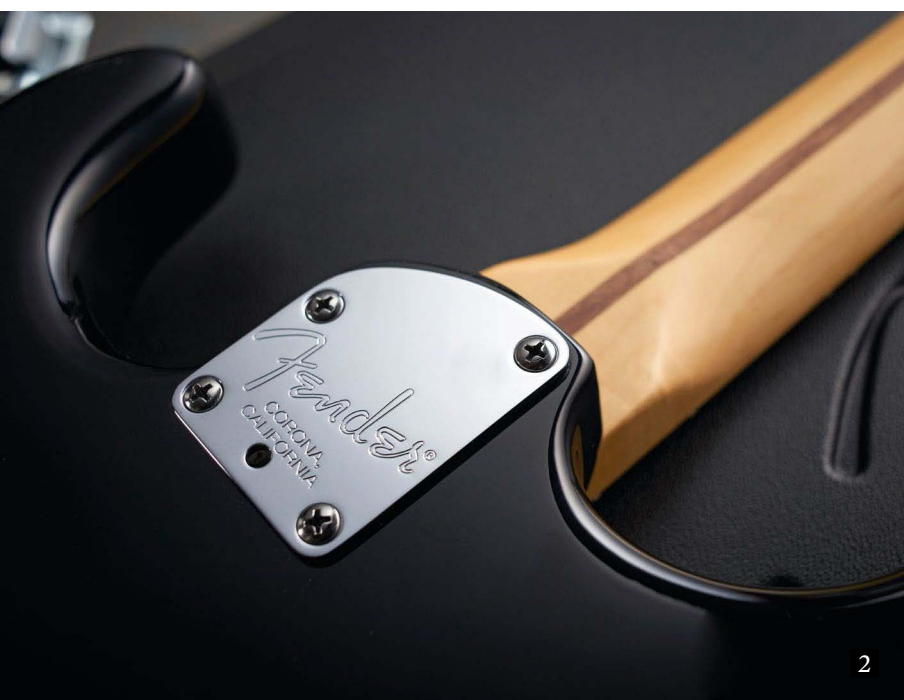
Tim left Gibson in 1992, and was hired by Fender in 1996. It wasn’t until he was asked to recreate his humbucker for Fender in 2013, however, that the Shawbucker project started. Tim and his research team built some prototypes to his original recipe.

“We had original spec and some hotter ones, overwinds of 42 gauge wire and stuff. We listened to them. Fender’s Justin Norvell picked the one he liked, which was the one I liked, and it ended up in the Strat you have there. So Alnico II magnet, plain enamel-coated wire and it’s not potted, not waxed

1. Alongside the new Shawbucker are a pair of ‘noiseless’ N3 stacked single-coil-sized humbuckers that use different Alnico magnets. If hum pick-up from standard single coils bothers you, these are extremely quiet
2. The tapered edge of the body heel requires a differently shaped neck plate. We also have Fender’s Micro-Tilt neck adjustment, which makes setup far easier than a vintage-spec Stratocaster
3. More refinements can be found at the headstock with rear-locking tuners – which feature staggered-height string posts – and LSR’s high-tech roller nut. These subtle tweaks dramatically improve the vibrato’s return-to-pitch efficiency







2

There's a very journeyman feel to the whole instrument, especially when you find your 'core' sounds

at all. There is an airier quality, a kind of transparency that you get when you don't pot them. Also, it's pretty much the lowest output, with a DC resistance of around 7.6kohms: the lower end of the humbucking wind."

Aside from the zebra Shawbucker, things look pretty standard here. Modern Fender features such as the two-post vibrato, staggered-height locking tuners, LSR roller nut and a compound-radius fingerboard (plus a very slick setup) are present and correct, but the S-1 switch within the volume control knob and an additional push switch above the dual tone controls tell us this is no standard ride. The five-way lever switch selects the bridge, bridge and middle, middle, middle and neck and neck pickups in parallel with the S-1 switch in its up (or off) position. Depress the switch and the combinations slightly change and are primarily in series, not parallel, with some additional trickery.

For example, in position 1 we have the bridge humbucker and the middle pickup in series, not parallel, while position 2 combines them in series with 'a special capacitor' on the bridge pickup. Position 3 selects all three pickups in a combined series/parallel linkage, position 4 links neck and middle in series with a special capacitor on the neck pickup and, finally,



3

position 5 links neck and middle in series. That small push switch instantly selects the bridge humbucker, bypassing the volume and tone.

### Feel & Sounds

The refined nature of the Deluxe is reflected in its feel, with the modern, slender but not over-thin and quite full-shouldered 'C' profile of the neck, larger frets, the compound radius 'board, and the chamfered corner of the neck heel – not to mention the slinky in-tune vibrato system. While initially daunting, the expanded sounds give you many options both in cleaner classic Fender territory and beefier gained situations. The first surprise is how matched the 'bucker is with the N3s. It's a little thicker, wider and smoother sounding, and a little louder, but tonally, there's plenty of Fender-y high-end bite. While the bypass sound may be a little bright for some, voiced with the volume and tone in circuit, that crispy high end is slightly attenuated and it really sits well with the 'noiseless' N3s. These units certainly don't pick up as much hum as a standard single coil in solo selection – mixed, they're even quieter.

Push the S-1 switch down and, in series, the bridge/middle selection sounds bigger and wider than the sole humbucker. Position 2 is more hollowed, a great rootsy low-gain



4

rhythm sound, and position 3 is wider and darker but still very Fender-y. The two neck/middle selections provide another flavour of Fender funk. There's not a bad sound to our ears anywhere, although the N3s do sound quite 'modern' – bright-edged and hollowed, less thick and chunky compared with Texas Specials, for example – but that balance between the humbucker and the N3s means you're not contrasting balanced levels.

There's a very journeyman feel to the whole instrument, especially when you find your 'core' sounds, whatever they might be. It's obviously oh-so-Fender, but the Shawbucker addition doesn't mean, like some, that we have a Fender/Gibson duality. Sure, you could use it like that, but to our ears, this is 100 per cent a Fender guitar with a low-output clean, clear humbucker that really works. Is it the 'best' PAF-alike out there? Well, there's an open, uncompressed voice here that really suits and it might just change your view on humbucking-pickup-equipped Strats. Frankly, our much loved old Road Worn feels like a museum piece in comparison.

### Verdict

If you prefer a more conventional drive, then we'd suggest the cheaper Shawbucker-equipped American Standard, but the raft of upgrades on offer here – not to mention the S-1 switching – kicks the Deluxe into a different league. It's more refined, and will suit someone who knows their guitars and needs a lot of sounds from a single instrument. **G**

4. The new Shawbucker is highly vintage-informed and falls into the low-output side of the PAF-alike humbucker. It's very different from the high power 'buckers that were a common mod in the 80s

It might just change your view on humbucking-pickup-equipped Strats... Our much loved old Road Worn feels like a museum piece in comparison



## FENDER AMERICAN DELUXE STRAT HSS SHAWBUCKER

**PRICE:** £1,339 (inc case)

**ORIGIN:** USA

**BODY:** Alder

**NECK:** Maple, Modern 'C' profile, bolt-on with Micro-Tilt adjustment

**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5")

**NUT/WIDTH:** LSR roller/42.8mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood, 241-356mm (9.5-14") radius

**FRETS:** 22, medium jumbo

**HARDWARE:** Chrome-plated 2-Point Deluxe vibrato with pop-in arm, Deluxe staggered cast/sealed locking tuners vibrato, vintage-style tuners with Fender logo

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 54mm

**ELECTRICS:** Fender Shawbucker (bridge), Noiseless N3 single coil-sized humbucker (middle, neck), 5-position lever pickup selector switch, master volume (with S-1 switch), tone 1 (neck), tone 2 (middle and bridge)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 3.47/7.6

**OPTIONS:** Maple fingerboard, Sunset Metallic and 3-Color Sunburst cost £1,399

**RANGE OPTIONS:** Other American Deluxe Strats are available from £1,159. See [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

**LEFT-HANDERS:** No

**FINISHES:** Black (as reviewed), Olympic Pearl, Sunset Metallic, 3-Color Sunburst. Satin urethane neck; gloss polyurethane body

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9/10

**PROS** A hugely refined Stratocaster with low-output bridge humbucker and versatile S-1 switching

**CONS** Vintage purists, or indeed lovers of high output 'rock' HSS Strats, should look away





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## FIRST PLAY



**MARTIN 00-15E RETRO**  
£1,549

**WHAT IS IT?** Old-style 14-fret 00  
with cutting-edge electronics

# Modern Retro

Martin's latest Retro model is an old-style, all-mahogany 00 with modern playability and advanced electronics. Nothing is what it seems...

**Words** Dave Burrluck **Photography** Joby Sessions

**M**artin might have the reputation as *the* heritage acoustic guitar company, but on so many levels, it remains remarkably advanced. It's this wolf-in-sheep's clothing 'deception' that's at the heart of Martin's seven-strong all-non-cutaway 14-fret Retro series, to which this 00-15E was added earlier this year. It's flanked by four dreadnoughts, one 000 and an OM, but is the only mahogany-topped Retro model, and also the most affordable. The old-meets-new duality of these Retro guitars is highly evident here: an old-school Depression-era design married with the sort of electronics that will take you to the moon and back. Well, almost...

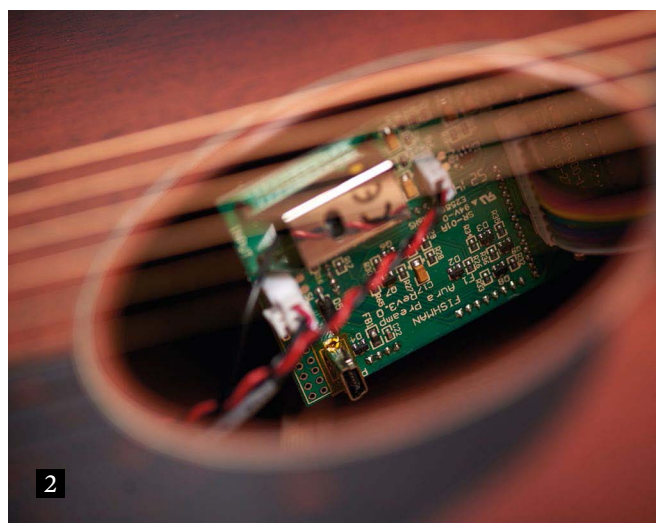
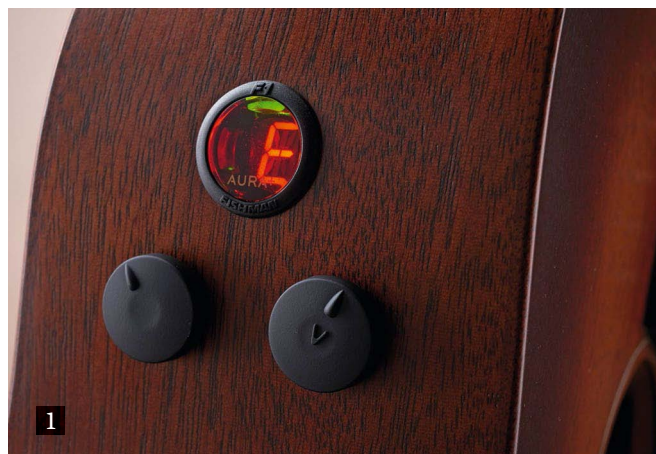
But before we get to the spaceship bit, unplugged, the actual guitar might simply bowl you over on first strum. Why? As we remarked in our earlier review of the 00X1AE, the 00 is a pretty rare bird in Martin's line-up. Yet if you prefer a smaller body guitar but don't want to drop right down to a 'parlour', it's a highly comfortable choice for the seated player – although Martin fits a second strap button on the heel and with these expansive electronics onboard, you wouldn't want to waste that power if all you planned to do was strum and pick at home.











It's a beautifully simple, unadorned guitar with a single ring rosette, no edge binding, minimal inlays between the 5th and the 9th frets and a deep brown-hued satin finish with subtle sunbursting to the top only. Tuners here are the not-overly-special open-backed Grover type, while the 'Modern Belly' ebony bridge, with ebony pins, has a compensated Tusq saddle – preferred for its use with the under-saddle pickup – and beautifully cut bone nut. Old-style small frets and a pretty low setup again hint at vintage, but the neck shape is more contemporary: a slightly V'd deep-but-not-big profile (21mm at the 1st fret; 23.4mm at the 10th) with Martin's wider nut width, just over its 44.45mm (1.75-inch) specification at 44.8mm. Typically, the string spacing over that nut is maximised with a 39mm spread, while bridge spacing is airy at 54mm. The neck also has the shorter Martin standard scale of 632.5mm (24.9 inches).

In terms of detail, the top is braced with Martin's A-Frame 'X' bracing and the neck is joined with a 'simple' dovetail. It's all crisp and clean yet remarkably unshowy.

### Set Your Controls

A quick gander inside the soundhole reveals a large PCB and multi-coloured ribbon wires, not to mention the circular control

panel and dual multi-function control knobs placed above the waist on the bass-side upper bout. This all tells us we're on for something special: Fishman's F1 Aura+. "Aura Acoustic Imaging technology," says Fishman, "uses digital algorithms developed in Fishman's audio laboratories to restore a studio-mic'd sound to an acoustic instrument. To achieve this, we've recorded this instrument using world-class microphones and techniques to capture an 'image' of the natural sound that it emits when mic'd in a professional studio. This image, when recorded direct or played through an amp, mixer or PA, blends with the under-saddle pickup to produce an incredibly accurate recreation of the original recording."

But don't worry if you're a technophobe: the typically clever design has an Easy mode where the upper knob is simply volume. When you press it down, it mutes the output and engages the tuner. The lower control, rotated, adjusts a mid-scoop or, pressed, selects one of the three onboard Aura images or the standard undersaddle 'dry pickup' sound. For the more "adventurous player", says Fishman, we also have the Performance mode with its Play and Edit functions. In Play, we still have the tuner and volume, blend (between the Aura image and the dry pickup) and phase can be adjusted – plus, there's a neat anti-feedback circuit. In



1. While it might look like something from the Depression era, the tuner display and two push-and-turn control knobs tell us there's much more onboard
2. Here's the proof: the PCB for the onboard Fishman F1 Aura+ pickup system
3. Simple and timelessly elegant: Martin's classic headstock, with its classy open-backed Grover tuners
4. The 14-fret neck to body join began appearing on Martin guitars in the very early 1930s; the first all-mahogany Martins date back to the previous decade



Edit you can specifically tailor, and save, each Aura image with three-band EQ, image/pickup blend, compression and anti-feedback. And once you've carried out any tweaks you want to make, you can return to Easy mode. Got that?

### Feel & Sounds

Electronics aside, this is a really characterful instrument, which might surprise you, even if you've played smaller bodied all-mahogany guitars. It did us. The hardwood top (as opposed to softwood spruce, or even cedar) imparts a more fundamental tone without the sparkle or explosiveness of spruce. It has a lovely rounded high end, with a balance in the bass that has more 'classical guitar' to it than the design might suggest. Mids are solid but far from over-cooked, so we avoid the mid-honk of many smaller body designs. The shorter scale means a subtly relaxed string tension and a more intimate voice, perhaps – it's certainly a picker's dream, especially for more reflective styles. But use a pick and that evenness is going to win you admirers in a studio or live setting as a rhythm player, helped by a compression when you hit it hard that won't have the sound engineer reaching for a limiter. We're swayed, and we haven't gone near an amp.

Beginning in Easy mode, you can listen to the 'dry' pickup sound. It's a fairly accurate







5. Like Taylor, Martin prefers a synthetic Tusq saddle for its under-saddle pickup electro guitars; here it's compensated for accurate intonation

It's a really anti-Taylor-like statement: old-looking and utilitarian, but with the sort of onboard technology that's pretty much state-of-the-art

representation of the acoustic voice – though a little dark for some tastes perhaps – and certainly benefits from adding a little mid-scoop from the tone control. The three images, which subtly vary, all add more acoustic-like ‘reality’. The ability to change phase and add the mid-scoop (treble and bass boost) actually means you have plenty of control. If you're working with outboard EQ (and/or a sound person) you might never need to enter the more complex Performance mode.

When you do, however, you have the chance to tweak each of the now nine images, three-band EQ on both the dry pickup and image, pickup/image blend, compression and anti-feedback (a neat auto system). Changes are automatically stored so you could easily have either subtly or quite contrasting ‘voices’. Use is everything, however: the more familiar you are, the more you'll be able to maximise the frankly vast and good-sounding potential.

### Verdict

There's a Jekyll and Hyde character here, which – for certain players *au fait* with more modern technologies – produces a highly versatile, creative sound palette that looks like it came out of the Great Depression. It's a really anti-Taylor-like statement: old-looking and utilitarian, but with pretty much state-of-the-art onboard technology. If you don't need the technology, you can still use the instrument in Easy mode, which might just be the perfect compromise, especially if you have your own outboard acoustic rig. For once, we have some serious choice from a very serious guitar. **G**



## MARTIN 00-15E RETRO

**PRICE:** £1,549 (inc case)

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** 14-fret 00-size electro

**TOP:** Solid mahogany

**BACK/SIDES:** Select hardwood

**MAX RIM DEPTH:** 104mm tapering to 84.5mm

**MAX BODY WIDTH:** 362mm

**NECK:** Solid mahogany, Modified Low Oval w/Performing Artist Taper

**SCALE LENGTH:** 632.5mm (24.9")

**TUNERS:** Nickel-plated, open-g geared Grover w/ 'butterbean' knobs

**NUT/WIDTH:** Bone/44.8mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, 406mm (16") radius

**FRETS:** 20, medium

**BRIDGE/SPACING:** Ebony w/ compensated Tusq saddle/54mm

**ELECTRICS:** Fishman F1 Aura+ w/ tuner, 3 image presets, multi-function volume and tone/edit, Easy and Performance modes with phase, anti-feedback, blend, compressor, 3-band EQ

**WEIGHT (KG/LB):** 2.03/4.46

**RANGE OPTIONS:** See website

**LEFT-HANDERS:** Yes, same price

**FINISH:** Satin w/15-Style Burst

**Westside Distribution**

**0141 248 4812**

**[www.martinguitar.com](http://www.martinguitar.com)**



9 / 10

**PROS** Excellent build, sound (acoustic and amplified), old-school aesthetic and price

**CONS** The electronics system might be too complex for some players



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## FIRST PLAY



**ROLAND JC-40**  
£549

**WHAT IS IT?** A scaled-down version of Roland's classic JC-120 combo, built to celebrate that amp's 40th anniversary







# Chorus of Approval

Roland celebrates 40 years of the Jazz Chorus with this new gig-ready compact combo complete with that signature chorus sound

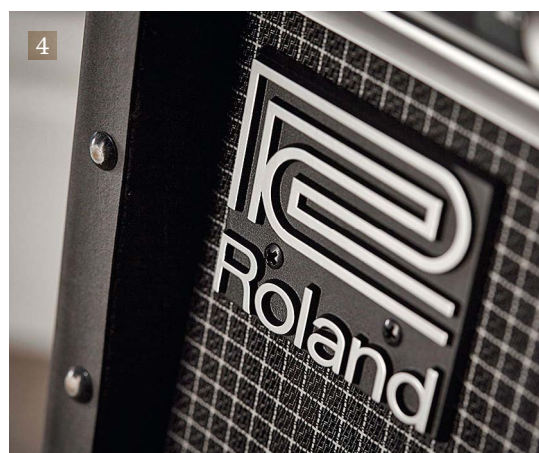
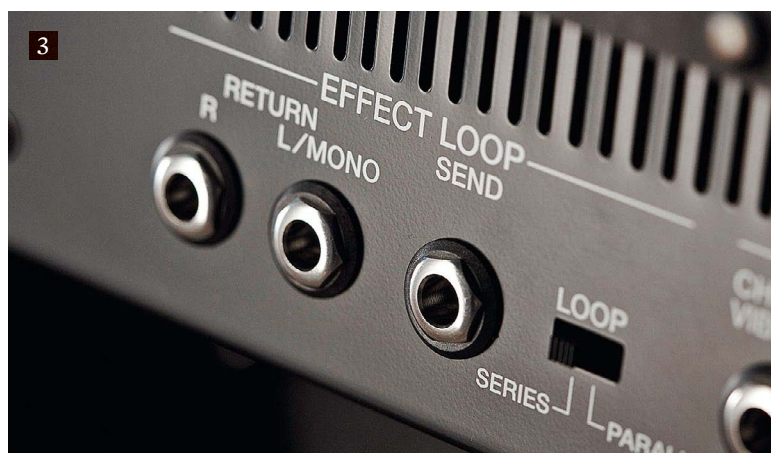
Words Nick Guppy Photography Neil Godwin

**I**t's not every day that a guitar amplifier celebrates 40 years of production, so when Roland's venerable Jazz Chorus range passed the milestone this year, what better way to celebrate it than with another new amp – appropriately named the JC-40. The original JC-120 was the first product to feature Roland's smooth analogue Chorus Ensemble effect, arriving in the shops back in 1975 and pre-dating the first Boss CE-1 by around a year.

Despite a complete lack of valves, at a time when many other solid-state products were little more than primitive amplified fuzz boxes, the Jazz Chorus carved its own niche, with unique styling and an unmistakable clean sound that continues to form the backbone of many top player's rigs today, from Pat Metheny to Metallica. Away from stadium rock, we can't ignore the African influence that gained greater prominence in the 1980s, largely thanks to Paul Simon's *Graceland* album. Make no mistake: the Jazz Chorus is the sound of African guitar.

Back in the mid 1970s, many players saw the Jazz Chorus as a more reliable version of another large valve-powered 2x12 combo, which was on practically every stage back then. Its unique look stuck in people's minds, and the sound proved to be the perfect foil for the heavy overdriven lead tones that were





becoming more and more popular. 40 years on, the Jazz Chorus is still going strong in its original 120-watt format. Now, we have a combo that promises the same great tones in a smaller package.

Essentially a scaled-down version of its big brother, the JC-40 features a pair of 20-watt output stages driving two 10-inch loudspeakers. The cabinet follows traditional JC flight case styling, with 'ready-rubbed' rivets on the front and silver dust caps on the loudspeakers behind the silver check grille-cloth. Inside the chassis there's a familiar-looking rugged printed circuit board holding most of the controls and front panel components. The JC-40's control panel offers a single channel, with mono and stereo inputs and controls for volume, bass, mid and treble, alongside the amp's built-in overdrive and reverb effects. The chorus section has speed and depth controls, with a four-way switch

that selects vibrato, off and fixed or manual control for the chorus.

On the rear, there are separate footswitch options for all three effects, together with a mono out/stereo in effects loop that can be run in series or parallel mode, and a speaker-emulated headphone jack that's ideal for silent practice.

### Feel & Sounds

The JC-40's stereo front panel inputs make it a perfect partner for players who use multi-effects floorboards, with wide-range clarity that will need a little tweaking if you want to keep some warmth in your sounds. We tried the JC-40 with single coil and humbucking guitars, both of which sounded equally impressive. The built-in distortion is somewhat warmer and smoother than earlier models, while the digital reverb is smooth and spacious, with a decently long tail. The

1. The JC-40 comes with Roland's distinctive loudspeakers, which have silver dust caps, just like the originals

2. The legendary Jazz chorus sound is a true wet/dry effect, using both speakers in stereo

3. The effects loop is mono out, stereo return and can run in series or parallel modes

4. The classic JC styling is recreated in miniature for the JC-40, complete with ready-rubbed rivets

5. With a choice of mono or stereo inputs, the JC-40 is a perfect partner for both multi-effects floorboards and pedal users



JC-40's chorus effect outputs a dry signal to one loudspeaker and a wet effect-only signal to the other, creating a three-dimensional soundstage that swirls and pulses in a very pleasing way. This is the core of the JC-40's sound – a distinctive and unique chorus effect that's been copied many times over the years, but it's hard to imagine anyone other than Roland doing it this well. You can control the speed and depth yourself using the Manual setting, or choose Roland's optimal settings with the Fixed option.

The vibrato effect adds another more vintage dimension with a wide range of speed and depth that covers ethereal, slow pulse effects to full-on surf. The JC-40 is also very pedal friendly, and sounds excellent with a high-end overdrive pedal plugged into the input jack.

### Verdict

The JC-40 is a worthy addition to Roland's catalogue, with enough volume to make it usable for small gigs, while the stereo input makes it an ideal partner for pedalboards and multi-effects. One big selling point is how compact and portable it is: easily carried with one hand and small enough to fit on one seat of an average family hatchback, it's ideal for small clubs, practice or rehearsals. However, it is on the pricey side and faces stiff competition from many other mid-priced products with onboard effects, although not many are true stereo and none will have the JC-40's signature 3D wet/dry chorus. If you fancy plugging into a little history, check it out. **G**



Core to the JC-40's sound is the three-dimensional soundstage that swirls and pulses in a very pleasing way

### ROLAND JC-40 JAZZ CHORUS 2X10 COMBO

**PRICE:** £549

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Solid state combo

**OUTPUT:** 2x 20W RMS

**VALVES:** None

**DIMENSIONS:** 436 (h) x 592 (w) 251mm (d)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 16/35

**CABINET:** Ply

**CHANNELS:** 1

**CONTROLS:** Volume, bass, mid, treble, distortion, reverb, modulation speed and depth, chorus/vibrato select switch

**FOOTSWITCH:** Up to 3 footswitches control chorus, distortion and reverb effects

**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:** Bright switch, mono in/stereo out effects loop with series/parallel switch, mono/stereo line out and headphones jack

**RANGE OPTIONS:** The latest version of the original and considerably louder JC-120 is available for £979

**Roland (UK)**

**01792 702701**

**[www.roland.co.uk](http://www.roland.co.uk)**

7/10

**PROS** Decent build quality, excellent tone and that wonderful stereo chorus effect

**CONS** On the pricey side; a fourth footswitch socket to switch the effects loop on/off would be nice





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# The Lineup

Don't miss it! Must-see guitar goings-on for the coming weeks...



## Guitar Club

*Vintage and rare guitar membership club, London*

**W**e'd all like to spend more quality playing time with vintage and rare guitars. And so, Guitar Club, a new concept from guitar enthusiasts Justin Silver and Sean Williams, is offering more of us the chance to do just that. We spoke to Justin to discover how it all works and just what kind of guitar experience potential members can expect.

### Can you explain the Guitar Club concept?

"As soon as someone's membership of Guitar Club is approved, they can take home an extraordinary rare or vintage guitar for less than the cost of a cup of coffee per day. The concept is simply a way for more guitarists to enjoy more guitars – specifically rare and vintage instruments that would ordinarily be unaffordable or extremely hard to source. And we make these available at a price most can afford, starting at just £10 per week. We're sort of like one of those flash car clubs where members can borrow an Aston Martin or Ferrari for the weekend, except you can borrow one of our guitars for weeks or months at a time, then swap them for another, a bit like a library for rare and vintage guitars. Rather than beautiful

rare and vintage guitars being stuck in bank vaults or kept on display without being played, we believe they should be played. It's almost criminal to have something made to make music just sitting there gathering dust.

"We're players ourselves, but just didn't have all the instruments in our own collections that we would love to try. Rather than trying out an instrument for a few minutes in a shop, the idea is to take it home for weeks or months, to really get into it."

### What are some of the instruments that will be available?

"We have classic guitars you'd expect to see – a pre-CBS 1965 Strat, a 1968 Les Paul, a 1962 335, a 1968 Tele. We also have more esoteric instruments, because part of the appeal of the club is you get to try guitars you might not otherwise have played. A current favourite is actually the cheapest guitar in the collection, a 1968 Norma EG421-4. It plays great and it looks so cool!"

### So you're always sourcing particularly fine examples of models?

"Something important to point out is that these are carefully selected instruments and

outstanding examples of their kind, rather than just random models from a particular year. As we all know, not all 1968 Les Pauls or Telecasters play the same and some manufacturers may have had more quality consistency than others. For example, our 1968 Telecaster is mostly pre-CBS spec, L series with screw-type bridge saddles, string wound bridge pickup, single string retainer on the headstock, nitrocellulose lacquer... In fact, it was featured in the 1998 *Guitarist* magazine calendar – need we say more!"

### Will the club be focused on members in the London area to begin with?

"To begin with, yes. Our collection and drop-off points are all in London at the moment. Members don't have to live in London, but they do need to be able to get to London quarterly. We hope to expand rapidly across the country in the very near future and we've already received great international interest in Guitar Club." 

Visit [www.rareguitarclub.com](http://www.rareguitarclub.com) for more information. Premium and Platinum Membership packages include extras such as insurance, collection and delivery.



# What's Goin' On

*All the best guitar events happening over the next few weeks, in one place*

## Def Leppard and Whitesnake with Black Star Riders 7 to 19 December

UK arenas

The last time these two monsters of rock teamed up in the UK was 2008, so this follow-up promises to be a step up, with the co-headliners bringing along former Thin Lizzy man Scott Gorham's band Black Star Riders as support. Whitesnake's set will find frontman David Coverdale reaching into his roots alongside the core 'Snake classics. Reb Beach and Joel Hoekstra's dynamic playing on Whitesnake's recent *Purple Album* brought a heavier spin on Ritchie Blackmore's Mk III Deep Purple compositions, but it's live where it will really take flight.

*Guitarist* recently heard the forthcoming Def Leppard self-titled album and can confirm it contains guitar-heavy moments and hooks that should please *Hysteria* enthusiasts. Out at the end of October, fans should have plenty of time to get acquainted...



### Richard Hawley 22 October to 10 Nov Various UK venues

New album *Hollow Meadows* finds Britain's finest Gibson, Gretsch and Martin-toting troubadour back to mellower romanticism and darker, tonesome drama after *Standing At The Sky's Edge* psych excursions. His Sheffield Arena tour on 6 November will be his biggest home show to date.

[www.richardhawley.co.uk](http://www.richardhawley.co.uk)

### Sonny Landreth 26 October Under The Bridge, London

It's a single UK show as part of a brief European jaunt, but when it's one of the very best slide players on the planet, it's worth travelling to. Landreth's recent *Bound By The Blues* album was a sublime return to his roots, and we can't wait to hear the Mississippi man working his magic in the Stamford Bridge venue.

[www.underthebridge.co.uk](http://www.underthebridge.co.uk)

### With These Hands: The Musical Legacy Of Eric Roche 13 November Haverhill Arts Centre, Suffolk

Following on from our current *Guitarist Presents Acoustic* issue's feature on the legacy of late fingerstyle player Eric Roche, this is sure to be a memorable evening celebrating his music. Martin Taylor and Alison Burns will appear together, alongside Clive Carroll and a roster of players including *Guitarist*'s own David Mead and Stuart Ryan.

[www.haverhillartscentre.co.uk](http://www.haverhillartscentre.co.uk)

### Walter Trout 17 to 25 November Various UK venues

It's been a tough road of recovery since his liver transplant in 2014, but Walter's focused determination to play for his fans again means these six UK dates (as part of the European 'I'm Back' tour) will follow the release

of a brand new album, *Battle Scars*, on 23 October.

[www.waltertrout.com](http://www.waltertrout.com)

### Striking Matches 9 to 22 November [www.strikingmatches.com](http://www.strikingmatches.com)

Sarah Zimmermann and Justin Davis have already earned a reputation for their assured songcraft, with several songs featured on ABC's successful music drama *Nashville*. But their guitar playing should not be overlooked, especially live where their carefully honed interplay is fully showcased, drawing on slide blues, jazz and bluegrass influences.

[www.ticketline.co.uk](http://www.ticketline.co.uk)

### Nick Johnston show and clinic 7 November The Mount Batten Centre, Plymouth

Fans of Paul Gilbert and Guthrie Govan should find plenty to admire

in the compositions of this Canadian rock instrumentalist – in fact, both players guested on Johnston's second album, *In A Locked Room On The Moon*, and all three of Guthrie's *Artisocrats* appear on his latest, *Atomic Mind*. The Schecter player is over in the UK for a rare visit with a full band show and a VIP masterclass.

[www.worldclassmusic.co.uk](http://www.worldclassmusic.co.uk)

### International Guitar Festival of Great Britain 7 to 27 November

New Brighton and Wallasey, Wirral

A month of events in the Floral Pavilion and The Queen's Royal Concert Suite will see a variety of established names and emerging talent. An acoustic set from Nils Lofgren, Ralph McTell, former Fleetwood Mac man Rick Vito, plus jazzers Martin Taylor and Ulf Wakenius are among the potential highlights.

[www.bestguitarfest.com](http://www.bestguitarfest.com)



# The Players

News and happenings from the world of your favourite guitarists



## Passion Of The Chris

Chris Rea to release anniversary boxset of concept album and film

It has been 20 years since Chris Rea broke new ground as a writer recording his soundtrack for a film project based on his childhood love of motor racing – specifically his hero, late Ferrari driver Wolfgang von Trips. Due to creative differences, the resulting film, *La Passione* in 1996 didn't quite capture Rea's initial vision, but he's putting that right with a special deluxe package, out on 6 November through his own Jazzee Blue Records.

"The only way for me to present a project of this nature is as a 72-page book, with the two CDs and two DVDs," explains Rea. "The breadth of the work involved is best represented in this format."

The coffee-table book will contain stills from the von Trips archive, along with images of Rea's own paintings. And the von Trips documentary and films which accompany the music will also premier new footage. "The idea with the new film sequences is they give a visual representation of what the music is about," Rea says, "and this has been achieved by using unseen archive footage or going to places such as Monthéry or Monza to shoot new footage."

With the remastered album itself set to have a new tracklisting and even new versions of some tracks, this goes far beyond a traditional reissue and continues Rea's focus on deluxe audio and visual box sets that begun on 2005's *Blue Guitars* and continued with his most recent album of new material, 2011's *Santo Spirito*.

[www.chrisrea.com](http://www.chrisrea.com)

**K** eith Richards can barely stay out of the news lately. *Sgt. Pepper's, Metallica* and *Black Sabbath* have all been in the firing line of Keef's critical tongue as he promotes his new solo album, *Crosseyed Heart*. But it seems he's keen to continue the musical creative streak. He recently told iHeartRadio that The Stones have plans for a new album: "It looks closer," he said. "Don't know where, don't know when yet... We had a little chat. We were just saying, 'We gotta get in the studio, right? Right? That's agreed. Okay, boys, that's agreed.' Where, when – [we] scratch our heads." If and when it surfaces, it will be the Stones' first new album since 2005's *A Bigger Bang*.

Guitarist was saddened to hear about the passing of **Gary Richrath**, guitarist and songwriter with *REO Speedwagon* between 1970 and 1989. Richrath wrote several key songs for the band, including *Ridin' The Storm Out*, *Take It On The Run* and *Golden Country*, while also performing lead vocals on a number of tracks. He was 65.

**Analog Alien** has announced a signature dual-effects pedal for **Joe Walsh**. The Double Classic (\$299) combines two essential circuits, Compressor & Classic Amp. The latter aims to capture the valve-like tone of Joe's vintage amp preferences with bass, treble, gain and output controls, while the compressor offers a 'sensitivity' setting to allow for pickup variations, as well as the more conventional ratio and output (volume) controls.

**Ringo Starr** has been having a clear out, and it's resulted in a whopping 800 items – including rare Beatles memorabilia – owned by the drummer and his wife, **Barbara Bach**, going to auction on 4 and 5 December at Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills, California. We'll be making a beeline for the "fire-glow" 1964 Rose-Morris Rickenbacker known as the 'Beatle-Backer' that **John Lennon**



Earl Slick is on Lisa Ronson's new album, out in November

owned and later gave to Ringo, plus a Gretsch Tennessean given to Starr by **George Harrison**. The Rickenbacker has significant additional kudos as a result of having been played live by Lennon during the Fab Four's 1964 and '65 Christmas shows, and has a pre-sale estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000 as a result. There's even a Les Paul in the lots, given to Ringo by **Marc Bolan**. A portion of the proceeds from the auction will benefit the couple's Lotus Children Foundation, which focuses on social-welfare issues around the world.

We hear that **Mick Ronson's** daughter **Lisa Ronson** is set to release her debut album, entitled *Emperors Of Medieval Japan* on 6 November. The progressive mix of synth pop and alternative rock with dystopian-themed lyrics features contributions from notable **Bowie** guitarist collaborators **Earl Slick** and **Tin Man Reeves Gabrels**, alongside keyboard player **Morgan Fisher** (Mott The Hoople, Queen), saxophonist **Terry Edwards** (PJ Harvey, Yoko Ono) and guitarist/programmer **Paul Cuddeford** (Paul Young, Bob Geldof, Ian Hunter).



# Headroom

*New gear and guitar arcana you need to know about. This month: Celebrating 70 years of Slowhand*

## 1 Fender Eric Clapton Signature Stratocaster £1,569

This alder-bodied model has proved itself to be a versatile players' choice since its launch in 1988. The three Vintage Noiseless pickups have active mid-boost (25dB) to call on from the volume pot, with Fender's TBX (Treble Bass Expander) tone-control circuit to enhance tonal options for lead work further. Clapton's smooth V-shaped neck, vintage-style medium fretwire and blocked original Synchronized Tremolo preferences complete a landmark Strat.

[www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

## 2 Slowhand At 70: Live At The Royal Albert Hall £12

Following its showcase at cinemas, you can re-live Eric's birthday bonanza at home from 13 November on Blu-ray and DVD, with versions including two CDs and three LPs also available. Between first performing at the prestigious (and personal favourite) venue with The Yardbirds as a young Tele-totin' buck and his seven-night residency in May this year, Clapton has played an incredible 200 shows there. Throughout the set, he covers key solo, Blind Faith, Derek And The Dominoes and Cream classics, but also nods to his blues mentor, Muddy Waters (*Hoochie Coochie Man*). Not many artists could pull together live footage spanning six decades, but this package does just that as the Deluxe Edition contains the DVD, CDs and a special bonus DVD compiling Slowhand's Albert Hall performances over the years, which include Cream's farewell and reunion tours in 1968 and 2005, and 1990's *Journeyman* tour footage. There's also a 60-page hardback photobook included.

[www.eagle-vision.tv](http://www.eagle-vision.tv)

## 3 Fender 25dB Mid Boost Kit £75

If you already have a Strat and would like some Slowhand active mid-boost circuitry installed, Fender offer the means. Clapton has often referred to its effect on his tone as 'compression' but the mod can also bring P-90 meatiness to your single-coils.

[www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

## 4 Martin 000-28EC £2,799

Clapton kept his 000-28 close during the 70s, a choice inspired by and aspired to after seeing footage of his hero Big Bill Broonzy playing one. His *MTV Unplugged* performance brought it worldwide attention and this signature model followed. Available in natural or 1935 Sunburst, the top is quartersawn solid Sitka spruce with premium East India rosewood back and sides. The fretboard is solid black ebony and neck construction is mahogany blocks with a dovetail neck joint. Clapton's signature is inlaid in mother-of-pearl between the 19th and 20th frets and the neck sports his preference for a modified V-shape profile.

[www.martinguitar.com](http://www.martinguitar.com)

## 5 Give Me Strength: The 1974/75 Recordings \$72

This boxset captures a special year in Clapton's recording life, with 88 remastered, remixed, rare unreleased and live recordings that cover his landmark solo albums *461 Ocean Boulevard* and *There's One In Every Crowd* with the remixed *E.C. Was Here* live album. The 60-page book includes rare photography, while the included Blu-ray features a new 5.1 Surround Sound mix of *461 Ocean Boulevard* and original quadrophonic mixes of that album and *There's One In Every Crowd*. Blues fans should check out the *Freddie King Criteria Studios Sessions* with previously unreleased versions of *Boogie Funk* and the full 22-minute *Gambling Woman Blues*.

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

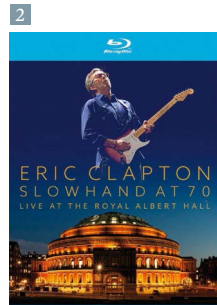
## 6 Marshall 1962HW Bluesbreaker £2,699

This hand-soldered 30-watt valve combo represents a significant investment, but it is the most faithful recreation of a landmark in tone; the amp Clapton used with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers in 1966 that would in turn name it. The circuit is based on the first production run: four ECC83 valves, two KT66s in the power stage and the GZ34 rectifier that aids the output stage compression and striking, organic sustain that help cement both the Bluesbreaker's and Clapton's reputations.

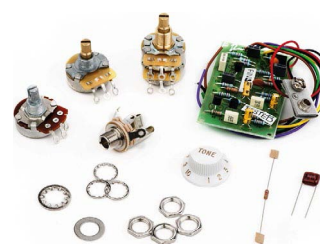
[marshallamps.com](http://marshallamps.com)



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# THE GAS MAN

## *Alright, Squier?*

**Simon Kingman** is the stellar guitarist with Zervas & Pepper, but he's an avid hunter of vintage guitars in his spare time. In his new column, he shares his trading tips

**G**uitar Acquisition Syndrome is a recent term that probably conjures up an image of a guitar anorak frantically scouring the dreaded auction and free-ad sites, unable to satisfy their craving for yet another guitar. But hasn't this trait always been present in us musicians? Naturally, we all want the best gear we can afford, but the secondhand market often gives us access to unusual guitars no longer on the market and it can be fun tracking them down.

We all have our own special tipples. Personally, I can't resist a classic American or Japanese Semi, or an 80s JV Squire or an LP Junior... or a Thinline Tele, for that matter. In fact, being a musician who works in various genres and loves acoustic guitar as much as electric, I can be quite fickle and persuade myself I need all sorts of different instruments for a particular new job, and these can range from solid electrics, semis and hollow jazz boxes to steel- and nylon-strung acoustics. The list just gets bigger!

My guitar fetish started when I worked in music shops in the mid-80s. Being surrounded by such beautiful, shiny new instruments, there was no such thing as a relic back then, just a beat-up guitar. 30 years on, what works for me and keeps me from having to buy a bigger house or getting divorced is to keep my collection limited to around 10 guitars. Six of these have been with me for many years and are my main live instruments. The other four are 'floaters' and are in danger of being sold at any time, to pay for the next cutie that I persuade myself I need. But hey, there are worse addictions.

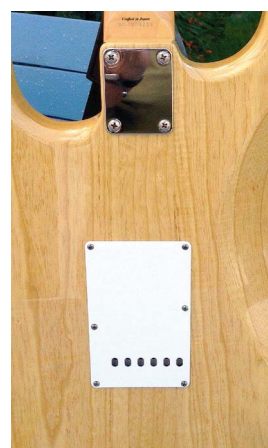
The not-so-common Japanese Fender 1967 reissue Strat pictured here is one that I recently picked up for £400. The sale included a set of Bare Knuckle pickups that the previous owner had fitted, a Fender gigbag and the original pickups. Most of the guitars I buy are from internet ads and auctions, which means either driving a fair distance to play it or take a risk using a courier. I generally opt for the courier, which

means I always try to buy something that I know I can sell on if I don't 'click' with my new acquisition.

Going back to my love for JV Strats, I've been using an original '83 Fiesta Red 1962 reissue for the past 10 years, upgraded with Fender 57/62s – an excellent low-ish powered vintage correct pickup set. But lately, I've been looking to upgrade to something with a little more poke. Hence, I was interested in the '67 reissue to harvest the pickups! However, the '67 is a fantastic guitar for the money, natural ash body, with a slim neck complete with the transition period-correct Fender logo on its large headstock and a four-bolt neck plate. There's a huge number of Japanese

Fenders on the market and, for my money, the reissues always represent a bargain for under £400, even without a set of Bare Knuckle pickups.

The key is to do your research and know what you're buying, as there is a lot to choose from and mistakes can easily be made. Some pointers for any newbies who fancy a used Japanese reissue is: to familiarise yourself with the different types of Fender logo; check on the back of the neck above the neckplate that it's stamped 'Made in Japan' or 'Crafted in Japan'; if you're looking for an original JV Squire or Fender reissue, make sure the serial number on the neck plate begins with JV. Until next time, happy hunting! 





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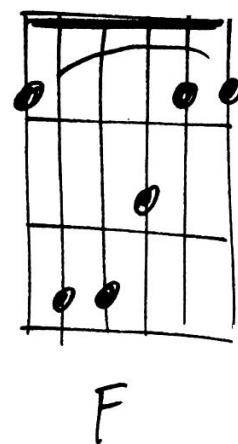
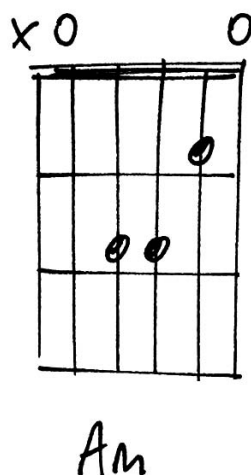
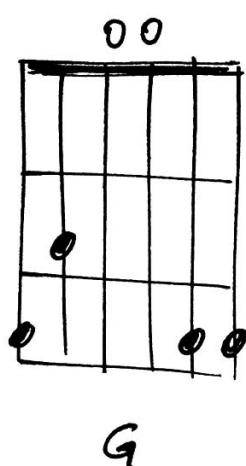
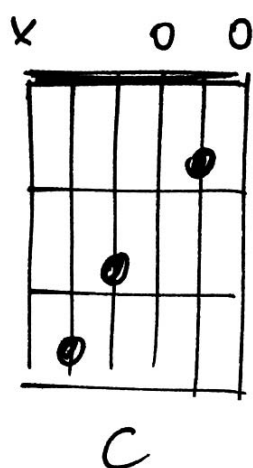




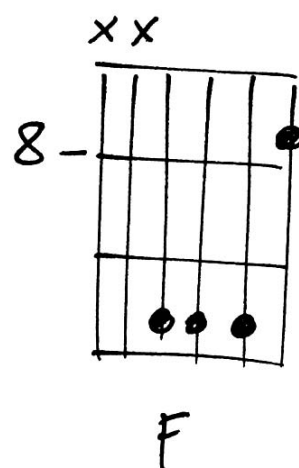
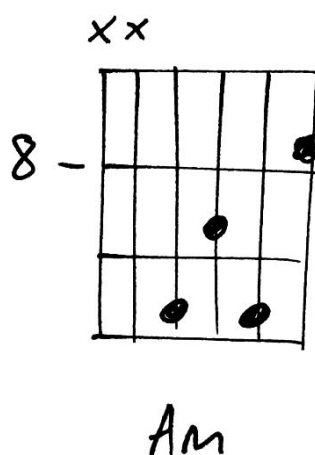
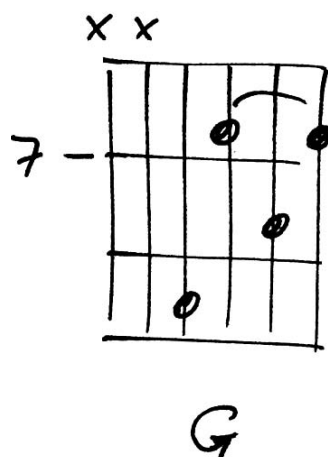
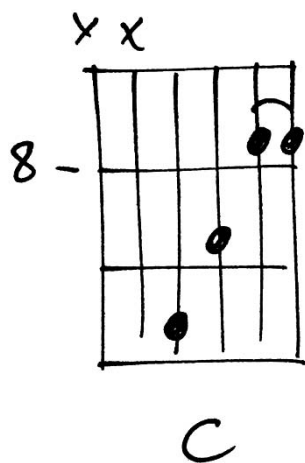
# Substitute

## *This Issue: Voice Control*

We're doing things a little bit differently this month, because we're not actually changing the type of chords in the progression. However, what we are doing is focusing on a hugely important concept in harmony, which you can apply to any type of music – voice leading.



**NOW**, take the first progression, using big old campfire chords. We guitarists tend to think of chords as blocks, as single musical units. But a chord is a collection of notes (called 'voices', harking back to choral music), each of which has a purpose. The technique of voice leading involves the movement of voices from one chord to another, finding the smoothest and most elegant routes. This is especially important in choral singing, where you don't want big unnecessary jumps making the individual lines difficult to sing. On the audio, we've included a version for lead-guitar harmonies, to demonstrate the effect.



**TO** keep things simple, we're using four-note chord shapes, but this is fairly arbitrary... the concept of voice leading can be applied to any size or type of chords. Most importantly, look at the notes we're using: C-E-G-C, from low to high.

**HERE'S** where the voice leading comes into practice. We know we're moving to a G major chord, and that means we'll be using the notes G-B-D (with the option of doubling notes). We already have a G on the second string, so that can remain static. The C notes drop to B and the E drops to D.

**THERE** are no common notes between G and A<sub>m</sub>, so it's simply a matter of moving to the nearest notes in all four voices. This just happens to be a single jump up through the scale for all notes.

**THIS** time, we're going from A minor (A-C-E) to F major (F-A-C). The only difference is the E-F change, so we have a smooth movement. That's a VERY basic intro to voice leading, but it's well worth understanding... seeing the linear relationship between chords, rather than clunking box shapes!





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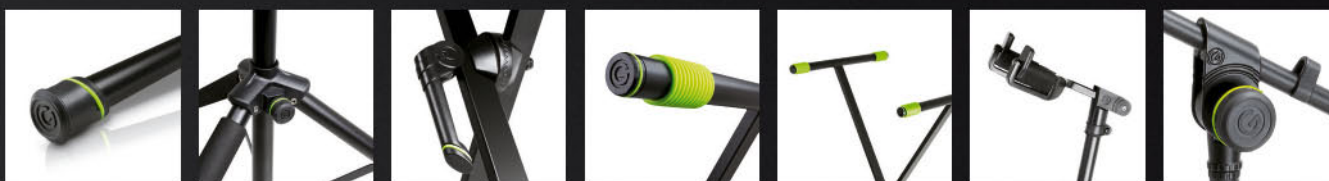


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# Erja Lyytinen

She's the Finnish queen of blues slide who numbers TV's Hairy Bikers among her fanbase – but what will happen when we cook up the 10 questions we ask everyone?

## 1 What was your first guitar and when did you get it?

"It was an Aria Pro II. It had a pretty fat neck and a fat tone, too. My father said to me one day, 'Okay, Erja, let's go to the music store and buy you a guitar...' so we went and bought the Aria. I was very keen on playing electric guitar from the beginning – I was a teenager and I wanted to rock!"

## 2 Supposing the building was burning down, what one guitar would you save?

"My G&L semi-hollow Z-3, it's my slide guitar. I've done almost every single gig that I've played abroad with that guitar. So it's very dear to me and it's very cool-looking, too. If I could grab something else as well, I would grab my Gibson Chet Atkins."

## 3 What's the oldest guitar that you own?

"It's a Supro from 1952. It's a very small, beautiful little piece I bought from Sweden when I was touring there and it's a very lovely looking little guitar. I don't tour with it because it feels a bit fragile, although I'm pretty sure it's seen a lot of life."

## 4 What plectrums do you use?

"I use Dunlop Jazz IIIs for playing standard guitar and when I play slide guitar, I like using fingerpicks. So I have a thumbpick and a pick for my middle finger for Travis-picking style, and for the slide as well."

## 5 When was the last time you practised and what was it?

"I was practising for the Hairy Bikers for the BBC. They asked me and my band to play one of their shows, so I was practising some of the songs they were asking us to do. I can't reveal what they were yet, you might have to watch the show."

## 6 When was the last time you changed your own strings?

"I'm not a big fan of changing guitar strings. But there comes a day when they just start to sound bad, you have to change them. When you play slide guitar it doesn't matter that much, but when you play standard guitar and they sound out of tune that's not cool!"



*"When I was playing in a band I didn't play loud, I was too shy. So I would say to my younger self, 'Come on, do it; turn it up, have fun!'"*

## 7 What are you doing five minutes before going on stage and five minutes afterwards?

"I warm up a little bit. I always try to hum a little and warm up my whole body, you know, because it's the whole-body experience. I always try to stretch and warm up my fingers and I might play a little, but just a little bit. Afterwards, I usually grab a sip of red wine and get among the people. People want to meet you and talk to you after the show."

## 8 What song would you play on an acoustic around a camp fire?

"When I started playing guitar I was playing a lot of covers and I really liked playing *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*; it's easy, everybody can do it. You can do it if you're a bit tipsy as well! The other is *Hotel California* by the Eagles. Both songs have a very catchy chorus, so if there's people around they can sing along, so it's not a one-girl show."

## 9 What's the closest you've come to quitting music?

"I don't think I could ever leave music; it has always been the essence of my life. My father plays guitar, my mother plays bass and they both sing, so I was raised in a very musical family and, for me, doing music is so natural. I'm really happy right now – I'm living the dream, in a way."

## 10 What advice would you give your younger self about the guitar if you had the chance?

"Play more with others, listen to more blues guitarists and try to play what they are playing. I was studying in school and they were always giving me lead sheets to play from – transcriptions and things like that – but I feel I should have gone out more and played more. I was born and raised in a small town and the music scene wasn't big, so it was hard to have jams. When I was playing in a band I didn't play loud, I was too shy. So I would say to that girl, 'Come on, do it; turn it up, have fun!'" [DM]



Erja Lyytinen's *Live In London* album is available now on Tuohi Records [www.erjalyytinen.com](http://www.erjalyytinen.com)





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Your letters to the *Guitarist* editor. Drop us a line at [guitarist@futurenet.com](mailto:guitarist@futurenet.com)

## Star Letter



### A LIFE LESSON

I really enjoyed issue 399, as Mr Gilmour was the guitarist who made me pick up the instrument in the mid-70s. But the reason for my email is the interview with Mark Tremonti, and what appears to be an almost-instant self-contradiction. In the interview Mark describes his feeling toward impromptu guest spots with fellow musicians as: "I never want to be in that position. I always want to be over-prepared."

But he soon counters it with: "If I miss a note onstage because I'm having a good time... then so be it. Live, I try to have fun."

A curious contradiction. The reason I pull this up is because I have just completed curating a season of music at a local venue, and was invited to play with both acts for the final event. First, with a trio of seasoned

session players including drummer Brendan O'Neill, playing the Robben Ford version of BB King's *Help The Poor*, and then an impromptu version of Herbie Hancock's *Chameleon* with jazz/Latin quintet Alice In Grooveland. With the latter, I quickly found the groove, and played a miraculous (for me) double-stopped solo that sounded like it should have always been in the song. I then supported the band with some extemporised funk-rhythm picking and chords. It almost felt like a 'bucket-list-seat-of-the-pants-out-of-body' moment.

Neither song was rehearsed. But the smiles and energy that both performances brought out in me, the other players and the audience was tangible. So I would advise anyone who wants to follow the 'over-preparation' route to throw that book away, because it will not stand you in good stead. You only live once, and sometimes, the best moments really are the most spontaneous and naturally creative.

Best regards, as always – really loving the improved mag design by the way.

**Brian Towell, via email**

**Congratulations on taking your leap of faith, Brian. When you throw caution to the wind, sometimes something that's near actual magic can happen. The editor of this magazine remembers playing a gig in his early 20s when, in the midst of an encore, the whole band – unrehearsed – suddenly changed key at once (it was the same key, too!) in a song that'd always been played by the book. Everyone sensed it was exactly the right place to go at exactly the same time. Having liberating moments like that is worth the occasional balls-up, so we salute your spirit of adventure.**

## ACOUSTIC REVELATION

I am a 15-year veteran of the six-stringed instrument we all love so much. As such, I feel compelled to share a recent experience with you and, hopefully, the readers of your fine publication. Having received my first guitar (the well-known classical starter pack available in all good catalogue stores) for my 15th birthday, I spent many a happy hour with the included beginners' guide, strumming out basic chords and scales.

A little over two years later, I graduated to an electric starter pack and, I am ashamed to say, my acoustic (and the practice routines associated with it) was largely ignored in favour of a variety of electrics, amps, effects and those rock standards we all learn for the next decade or so. It's fair to say I was stuck in something of a rut.

And so, we come to the back end of last year. In the midst of wedding preparations, it came to my attention that my little sister wished to take up the guitar and so, being the awesome big brother that I am, I let her take the classical guitar on permanent loan. It's true what they say, you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone. I really missed having it there, just to to mess around on. Fast forward to this year, and my 30th birthday, and the urge to once again own an acoustic had taken hold. My wife and some kind family members all chucked in a bob or two and I am now the proud owner of a mahogany-topped Taylor GS Mini which, never mind the occasional mess-around, I have a hard time putting down. It truly does inspire me to play a lot more.

The point, I hear you cry? As inspired as I was to pick up the Taylor, my acoustic playing, compared to my electric playing, was really quite sloppy. Years of hiding behind distortion, effects and little twiddly tricks to hide my flaws has not helped me to correct them. Now with the inspiration a new instrument has given me, I am not only playing more, but am working harder than ever to address the issues with my playing. So my ultimate point? First, keep up the practice on those basics. I know I'm preaching to the choir, but it really is a big deal.

Second, while I'm not suggesting that each and every time you get stuck in a rut you should run out and buy a new guitar, it is amazing how much doing so can make you



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## Feedback

want to play more and improve. I guess the ultimate message is, if you find yourself in a rut, try something new, be it a guitar, amplifier, pedal or even just changing your practice routine as I found myself wanting to do.

It might seem obvious, but I truly don't recall having this feeling with a new instrument for a long time. This is why I felt the need to share my experience and the overall effect it has had on me and my playing, in the hope that anyone else who has found themselves in a similar situation may take some inspiration from it.

**Chris Byrne, via email**

**Thanks, Chris. It's funny how the right new piece of gear can reconnect you with the instrument again. And while we joke about GAS a lot here at *Guitarist*, it's not really about buying flashy stuff. More often than not, a guitar that's compact, playable and hard to put down, such as the GS Mini,**

**relights certain fires simply because you can leave it propped up against a sofa, take it on holiday or just walk around the house strumming it, if that makes you feel good. In other words, it's handy to use, so it gets used. And like exercise, the more you do it, the easier it is to go a bit further, reach a little higher. The soul of guitar playing is really getting lost in playing the instrument, finding your musical horizons grow the more you get caught up in that spell. If a change of guitar or practice routine does that for you, we call it good.**

### ANALOGUE-ING A COMPLAINT

As a guitarist for many years and a reader of your magazine from day one, I find the resurgence in vinyl recordings (of which I have many originals) quite interesting. Most guitarists are well aware of the difference in

sound from a digital amp to a valve amp. But how many use digital recorders to record their sound? How many have an old four-track tape recorder sat in the attic (I do)?

And so to the point of my letter – are the latest flood of vinyl recordings actually analogue recordings, or are they digital recordings transferred onto a vinyl format? Are the reissue vinyl albums taken from the original analogue master tape or are they taken from a digital master? Not being familiar with the full capabilities of current recording studios, I would be interested to know if the desks used are analogue and if the recording medium is now back to the original tape format. If not, then are we being conned when buying a vinyl record and are the studios/record producers just using very high sample rates etc to try to recreate a format comparable to analogue?

On another note, I wonder how many readers are old enough to remember the old Dansette record players of years gone by, with their valves glowing deep in their cases? Compare this to the digital system that most people will play their new vinyl records through. Hmm.

**Eric Brown, via email**

**Hi Eric, I think more readers than would care to admit remember the much-loved Dansette. We also know of more than a few bands just starting out who have paid a premium (in both effort and money) to record to tape the old-fashioned way and release the resulting album only on vinyl. The truth is, nearly every piece of music gets digitised at some point these days, and the convenience of digital editing has made recording with DAW software and suchlike the near-universal norm. All the same, we can't help feeling that judicious placement of analogue gear (and valves) into the signal chain always tends to improve matters, but we're traditionalists at heart, I guess!**

### STARS' GUITARS

Dear *Guitarist*, I was talking with my son about guitars after going to see David Gilmour in Brighton recently, and we wondered which ex-celebrity guitars your readers would lust after the most, if given a choice.

We came up with a few, and some have already been sold and have had values attached – but which guitars would make it into the readers' top 10s? You could have three sections: Electric, Acoustic, Bass. Here are some potential contenders (in no particular order):

David Gilmour's Black Strat

Mark Knopfler's Red Strat

Jimmy Page's Les Paul

Rory Gallagher's Strat



**Send your letters to: [guitarist@futurenet.com](mailto:guitarist@futurenet.com)**





**Above: Star guitars to own? Bernie Marsden's '59 'Burst also gets our vote**

**Left: The Taylor GS Mini gave Chris Byrne fresh inspiration**

Paul Kossoff's Les Paul  
Eddie Van Halen's 'Frankenstrat'  
Joe Satriani's Ibanez [*Which one?* – Ed]  
BB King's Lucille [*As above!* – Ed]  
And so on... You get the idea. Maybe you could ask for suggestions from other readers and then list them for voting?  
**Ken Morton, via email**

**Good suggestion, Ken. We've just done a quick, informal survey in the *Guitarist* office and came up with these, too:**  
**Eric Clapton's 'Beano Album' 'Burst;**  
**Jimi Hendrix's 'Woodstock' Strat;**  
**Bob Dylan's 'Newport Festival' Strat ...**  
There are undoubtedly many more we could name. What are readers' suggestions indeed? If we get enough of a response, we might run a proper poll to find the all-time most desirable guitar. Thanks again for the great idea!



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# Music

The month's best guitar music, plus top players in the studio



## King Crimson

### *Thrak* (Panegyric)

9/10



#### The mighty Crims in double trio mode

Ask anyone if they like King Crimson and you'll quite possibly be answered

with a polite, "Which era?" It's probably true to say the music originating from the late-60s line-up bears little resemblance to that of the Crimson of the early 80s, for instance. Then there's the 70s; do you prefer the band who brought you *Larks' Tongues In Aspic* or do you hanker after the earlier *Islands* variety? Such choice could be as challenging as the band's music itself. But there is a constant throughout all the turmoil, and that's the presence of Robert Fripp, who holds both the key to *The Court Of The Crimson King* and the blueprint for the band's singular development over the past 47 years.

*Thrak* finds Crimson in the mid-1990s with a line-up comprising two drummers, two bass players and two guitarists. They were dubbed the 'double trio' for fairly obvious reasons. But this is no ordinary re-release (you wouldn't expect 'ordinary'

from King Crimson, would you?) as it forms part of the band's recent boxed set extravaganza that has already seen sumptuous multi-disc editions of *In The Court...*, *Larks' Tongues...*, *Red* and *Starless And Bible Black*. With the aforementioned, any archive material included had to be painstakingly restored and brought up to standard. However, *Thrak* was born into the digital age and so this 16-disc edition is full to the brim with 12 pristine CDs, one DVD, one DVD-A and two Blu-rays featuring the whole kit and caboodle in glorious high-def. The material ranges from the earliest rehearsals right through to live concert footage to the final rehearsals in 1997. Fripp has previously announced such exquisite attention to detail is probably best suited to "gentlemen who spend far too much time alone"; and so if the boxset is too rich a feast, you'll be glad to hear a two-disc summary is also available. [DM]

**Download:** *One Time*

**For fans of:** *Gentle Giant*, *Yes*, *National Health*

## Billy Gibbons

### *Perfectamundo*

Universal

9/10



#### ZZ Top man goes Latin

There's a possibility that

*Perfectamundo*, Billy Gibbons' first ever solo album, might take a few ZZ Top fans completely by surprise. For instance, if we were to tell you that long before the band's guitar man bent his first blue third, Gibbons studied with legendary percussionist Tito Puente, it might ease you into the 11 heavily Latin-inspired tracks on this CD. Put it this way, *Sharp Dressed Man* it ain't, but it works in a hotter-than-Tabasco, brilliantly inspired way. On the album, Gibbons contributes not only his regular smokin' guitar but also bass, Hammond organ, piano and percussion, including the timbales that he studied so meticulously in his youth. Then there's the vocal style – pure Texas gravel and husk, embellished with an audible sense of fun and mischief. Tracks such as *Hombre Sin Nombre*, *Sal Y Pimiento* and *Pickin' Up Chicks On Dowling Street* are prime examples of how the fusion between Texas rock and Cuban percussive sensibilities bond together to produce something that's truly joyful. We can only hope there's a tour imminent because this material is absolutely certain to ignite in the live arena. Ola!

[DM]

**Standout track:** *Quiero Mas Dinero*

**For fans of:** ZZ Top, Santana

## John McLaughlin

### *Black Light*

Abstract Logix

7/10



#### The Mahavishnu returns...

This is the third studio outing for John McLaughlin's band, The 4th Dimension,

a collection of virtuosos comprising drummer/vocalist Ranjit Barot, drummer/keyboardist Gary Husband and bass player Étienne M'Bappé. As you can imagine, the music is as demanding as it is pioneering – often complex and hard-edged, occasionally serenely beautiful. McLaughlin claims the genesis of this album began with his 2006 CD *Industrial Zen* where he worked with 'sound designs', which are "soundscapes or rhythmic elements that have the capacity to evoke feelings and visions..." Among these is a track called *El Hombre Que Sabia*, which McLaughlin originally wrote as a duet for himself and the late flamenco legend Paco de Lucía. This has now become a tribute to a fallen friend. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Being You Being Me*

**For fans of:** The Mahavishnu Orchestra, Shakti



**Benji Kirkpatrick**

Hendrix Songs

EDJ Records

8/10

**Hendrix – on a banjo?**

If someone said to you they were set to record an album of Jimi Hendrix's music on banjo, bouzouki and mandolin, the chances are you'd head for the nearest exit. But hang on, this is Benji Kirkpatrick from the acclaimed folksters Bellowhead we're talking about here, and you know what? It actually works! Apparently, Benji has been a lifelong fan of Hendrix and made the decision to reinterpret his songs through the folk medium and so tracks such as *Angel*, *The Wind Cries Mary* and *Stone Free* enjoy something of an acoustic-fuelled renaissance on this album. *Voodoo Chile* on banjo? Why not? Jimi would have probably loved it. [DM]

**Standout track:** *The Wind Cries Mary***For fans of:** The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Bellowhead**Taste**

Live At The Isle Of Wight

Eagle Records

8/10

**Rory rocks hard!**

On 28 August 1970, Taste took to the stage at the Isle Of Wight Festival at the peak of their career. The band were originally formed four years earlier in Cork and had gone on to enjoy considerable fame with their mix of high-energy blues-rock, not to mention the astounding guitar pyrotechnics of 22-year-old Rory Gallagher. Taste were to release only two studio albums during their time together and broke up shortly after the performance recorded here. As such, the album stands as a testament to one of rock's early power trios as they whip through classic tracks such as *Catfish Blues* and *Sugar Mama*. Simultaneously released as a CD and video, this is pure gold. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Sugar Mama***For fans of:** Cream, Rory Gallagher**Yes**

Fragile

Panegyric

9/10

**1971 prog classic reissued**

Still riding the wave created by the legendary *Yes Album*, the band's next studio recording was about to launch them further into the prog stratosphere. With Rick Wakeman joining them on keyboard duties, Yes were never stronger and set out to make an album that, according to vocalist Jon Anderson, was representative of the somewhat fragile state of rock 'n' roll at the time. Of course *Fragile* has since gone down in history as a classic and has now enjoyed a wash and brush-up courtesy of Steven Wilson. As such, the music has never sounded better, but that's not all, because there's a 5.1 Surround second disc and bags of extras, too. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Heart Of The Sunrise***For fans of:** Pink Floyd, Genesis**John Scofield**

Past Present

Impulse!

7/10

**Fusion reactor...**

For this album, jazz fusionist John Scofield has reassembled the core of his early 90s quartet that consisted of drummer Bill Stewart and saxophonist Joe Lovano, and has added the talents of Larry Grenadier on bass. And now, the assembly delivers a set of nine new tracks that find Scofield in a reflective mood. A few of the tracks are obviously personal, as Scofield lost his son to cancer a few years ago and several compositions reference his memory. But this is far from being a mournful elegy; on the contrary, much of the music is positive and uplifting with some serious grooves in evidence – and Scofield's guitar is, as usual, divine. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Mr Puffy***For fans of:** John McLaughlin, Chick Corea**Marc Bolan & T.Rex**

Unchained: Home Recordings &amp; Studio Outtakes

Edsel Records

7/10

**The White Swan rides again**

Bit of an odd one, this. Around 20 years ago, the Edsel label released a set of previously unissued recordings of Marc Bolan & T.Rex comprising demo material, unfinished songs and alternate takes from Bolan's personal archive. They then became something of a collectors favourite among the fanbase up until deletion in 2001. A reissue followed in 2010, but now all eight CDs have become available once again in a deluxe package, including some rarely seen photographs and other interesting extras. The period covered by the collection ranges from 1972-77 and consists of sketches and basic ideas right up to fully realised pieces that will doubtless be welcomed into the collections of the party faithful. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Shy Boy***For fans of:** Bolan, T.Rex, Glam Rock**Walter Trout**

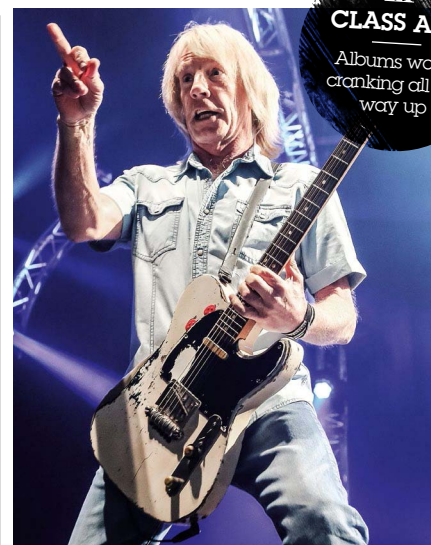
Battle Scars

Provogue

8/10

**Bluesman's triumphant homecoming**

Walter Trout's return to full health is possibly the best news of recent times in blues guitar circles. Better still, he is returning to where he belongs and performing the music he loves. So this new album is something of a celebration and a statement of intent for the future – he's back and he's playing better than ever, stating that whenever he picks up a guitar these days, he feels like he's 17 again. Needless to say, there's an exuberance on *Battle Scars* that's difficult to hide and tracks like *Omaha* and *Move On* find him playing at the top of his game. Watch out for a live tour this November, including several dates in the UK. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Haunted By The Night***For fans of:** John Lee Hooker, John Mayall

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**CLASS ACT**

Albums worth cranking all the way up

**Status Quo**

Deluxe Editions

UMC

9/10

**Rockin' all over your world...**

This release encompasses deluxe reissues of three Quo albums from the 1970s – *Hello* from '73, *Quo* from '74 and *Rockin' All Over The World* from '77. Each has been remastered by Andy Pearce and Bob Young and comes complete with a companion CD featuring specially selected archive material including alternative versions of Quo classics, plus unreleased and live tracks. So prepare to sit back and enjoy rarities such as several different versions of *Caroline*, a whole live show from the Paris L'Olympia and no fewer than 16 previously unreleased recordings sitting alongside some classic Quo material. If that wasn't enough, there are booklets with rare photos and new notes, too. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Caroline***For fans of:** The Who, ZZ Top, Leslie West**The Winery Dogs**

Hot Streak

Earmusic

7/10

**Rock triumvirate's second strike**

Anyone who has recently found themselves thinking that the day of the power trio is a thing of the past should allow themselves a dose of The Winery Dogs' latest CD. Billy Sheehan, Mike Portnoy and Richie Kotzen follow up their first eponymous release with a 13-track rockfest that promises to loosen a few tectonic plates on its way. The threesome are fiercely proud of this second outing, with Portnoy commenting: "The mission of this band is to write catchy songs and not have the musicianship overpower them..." As such, expect the guitar and bass excursions to be locked into overdriven, lightning-fast riffs and also for Richie Kotzen to be blazing a trail up his fretboard with some scorching solos. If that's your thing then this will push your buttons. [DM]

**Standout track:** *Captain Love***For fans of:** Mr Big, David Lee Roth





## Phil Hilborne

Avoid the Dauphinoise potatoes and check your DI box impedance are just two useful lessons learned by this seasoned guitar slinger after playing hundreds of gigs, including *We Will Rock You*

Words

David Mead



### *What was your very first gig?*

"We had this little bedroom band going and my friend's mum, who used to work for Social Services, said, 'Come along, you can play for the old people.' So we actually did an old people's home, playing Eric Clapton songs to a bunch of bemused old people. They seemed to like it."

### *Describe your current stage rig...*

"It's just my old Marshall Jubilees, any cab with Vintage 30s in, my pedal – the Phil Hilborne Fat Treble Booster – a bit of delay, wah-wah and a volume pedal. But I have got a small rack, which I use for any foreign stuff and for *Champions Of Rock*. We travel light on that because it's all fly gigs and stuff. So, for that, I just use a 40-a-side power amp and a Marshall JMP-1. Then there's my red PRS [Signature] and I'm using the blue [Signature] quite a lot, because it's big and fat. I've got a black one, as well. It's got 10s on it – really nice and loud! In the studio, it's a Two Notes Torpedo Studio and the Marshalls."

### *What piece of gear is essential to your live sound?*

"It's your fingers! I'm sorry, but it's right. I do think that's where it begins – it has to, doesn't it? But other than that, I guess it's got to be

the amps, the Jubilees. I love them. It was one of the best Marshalls ever made."

### *Name a non-musical item you couldn't do without...*

"My man bag. If that's not a good enough answer, then it's something to make you go to the loo and something to stop you from going to the loo. I carry both with me, I think every sensible person does. There's nothing worse than having the trots before a gig. The gig's got to go on, irrespective of your bowel movements."

### *What's the nearest you've come to a Spinal Tap moment on tour?*

"I went down to do the solo from *Bohemian Rhapsody* at The Dominion Theatre in front of 3,000 people – big entrance, smoke and lights – but the DI box had been set to the wrong impedance. So instead of it roaring with gain, it sounded like Hank Marvin. It was as clean as a clean thing could be. So I'm standing there and I wanted the ground to swallow me up!"

### *What's on your rider?*

"We're actually quite conservative, because I just want something to drink and something to eat. Quite boring, really. There's one thing

I wish wasn't on the rider in Sweden and that's Dauphinoise potatoes. You get them at every single catering and every single gig. I know it sounds bad, but it's not good for you and there's tons of it."

### *What's the best venue you've played in, from a musician's point of view and why?*

"One of the most recent venues I enjoyed was the Ericsson Globe in Stockholm. It was huge, just massive, amazing. All the people were holding their phones up and you feel loved. It's one of those times when you feel privileged to be doing what you're doing. You think, 'God, this is good...', you know. 'I want my friends to see me now!'"

### *What's the worst journey you've had to or from a gig?*

"Playing in Braintree and then going up to do the Scottish Guitar Show at the SECC in Glasgow, finishing that and then thinking it would be a good idea to go to dinner at a hotel by Loch Ness and drive home. So I'd driven to the gig in Essex, done the gig, driven to Scotland, got there in the morning, soundchecks and all that, did that gig, went off and had something to eat, drove all the way back to Carlisle and at that point,





**ABOVE** Phil's "big, fat" PRS, one of three go-to guitars from the Maryland brand

**LEFT** Phil in full flight during the Champions Of Rock Show

*"A lot of guitarists turn one side to the audience, like they're hiding. You've got to be, 'I'm here!'", especially when you're on massive screens each side of the stage"*

I couldn't do any more. So I said to [bass player] Andy Frost, 'Would you mind taking over?' I woke up some hours later and the van was pulled over to the side of the road and Andy was asleep. We'd only gone about 15 miles from when he took over!"

***Which airline, from a musician's point of view, do you find easiest to travel on?***

"My favourite airline is Air New Zealand because they're great, but I haven't actually had that much of a problem with airlines, generally. If you kick up enough fuss, then they'll generally let you on and find somewhere for your guitar, like a cupboard or something like that. But if there are overheads, they should let you take it on anyway. I think now they have to anyway, don't they? In America, anyway."

***What's the best tip for getting the audience on your side at a live gig?***

"Engage them. I think people know if you are for real and doing it for the right reasons. If you're playing well and it looks good and it's vibe-y, and there's eye contact... I see a lot of guitarists who turn one side to the audience, like they're hiding. You've got to be, 'I'm here!', especially when you're on massive screens each side of the stage – you can't hide. It's got to look good and sound good."

***What do you do to warm up?***

"I just play things that are going to be tricky on the gig for me, just go over them repetitively and get a connection between me and the guitar. I used to be able to wake up in the morning and go straight at it, but I've got to warm up a bit now." **G**

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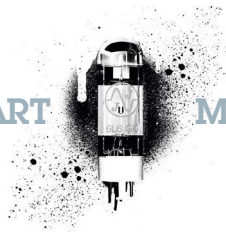
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# TASH NEAL

New and notable guitarists you need to hear

## Who Is He?

The formidable lead guitarist with The London Souls, Tash Neal, was born into a musical household. His mother was a pianist and his father a multi-instrumentalist jazz musician. Fortunately for young Tash, both parents had a high regard for music education and so, at the tender age of eight, when his father asked him which instrument he wanted to learn, Tash nominated the guitar. "I picked guitar almost randomly – it didn't really jump out at me, but fortunately I showed an affinity for it."

## Who Has He Listened To?

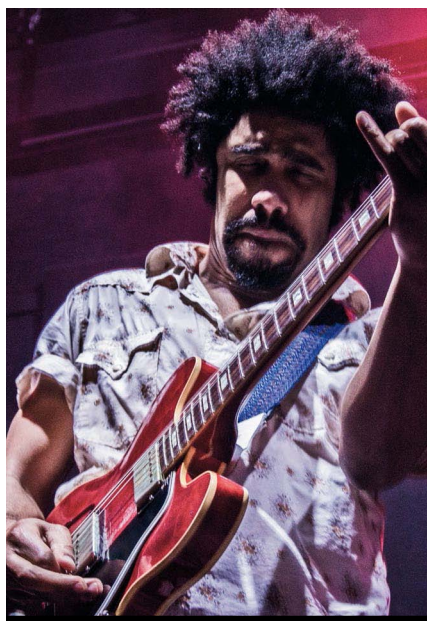
Initially, Tash's learning focused on classical guitar and he soon showed some skill on the instrument. He was drawn to the power and intensity of rock music, deciding to dedicate himself wholly to becoming a professional player. "I heard David Gilmour from Pink Floyd – the guitar solo on *Time* changed my life – then I heard Hendrix, Clapton's *Crossroads* solo, Prince – all that kind of mind-blowing stuff happened to me at the same time."

## What's So Great About His Playing?

You'd have to go a long way to find a guitarist who puts more passion into his playing. Tash's apprenticeship began while he was still at high school in New York, his prodigious ability on the guitar enabling him to play in the many bars and clubs in the city, despite being too young to legally be there. When he met bandmate Chris St Hilaire, their shared influences acted as a considerable catalyst in his music career. "We realised what we wanted to do musically: everyone else was more concerned with what was going on around them, they didn't have a voice or something to say, some kind of unique songwriting sensibility, but we recognised it in each other straight away."

## Why Do You Need To Hear Him?

Imagine a mix of bands such as Led Zeppelin, Humble Pie, The Kinks and the Small Faces, add a contemporary edge and bags of attitude and you're just about there. When they met, both Tash and Chris had a very wide range of influences and a refreshing view on how music works. "We thought James Brown was rock 'n' roll, we thought Miles Davis was rock 'n' roll – anybody that was badass! That freedom brought us together."



*"I heard David Gilmour from Pink Floyd – and the guitar solo on 'Time' changed my life"*

## What Gear Does He Use?

For a long time, Tash was using a Vox AC30, but a recent tour of Europe that saw The London Souls playing larger venues meant that he needed some additional firepower in the backline. So he's added a Fender Bassman into the mix, using an A/B switcher to bring out the different tonal colours inherent in the different amps. Sometimes, he'll use a Bassman 100-watt head with a cabinet on its own, depending on the size of venue and whatever happens to be available to him on the road.

As far as guitars are concerned, Tash is practically inseparable from his Gibson ES-335, but recently, he's been spotted playing a hybrid Tele. "We were playing a show with Jim Oblon, who actually drums with Paul Simon and who is one of the greatest guitar players I've seen in his own right. I broke a string and he let me play his Telecaster and he said, 'That thing looks good on you...' He ended up giving it to Chris to put in the van, because he knew I wouldn't take it. So I ended up with that guitar – he just gave it to me."

## Where Should I Start?

The new album, *Here Come The Girls*, is a virtual manifesto of everything The London Souls are about, with some powerful songs and great performances throughout. "Making records is where it's at for us. We want to make the best records we can – and we're getting better and better at that."

For a brief summary of The London Souls' output, check out our hand-picked recommendations below. **[DM]**

**Crimson Revival:** It's like they put some of the very best songwriting from the 60s and 70s into a blender and pressed 'start'!

**Honey:** The band shows its bluesier edge; check out the guitar tone on the introduction

**Isabel:** As a complete contrast, here is an acoustic ballad from the band that displays some rather fine songwriting



*Here Come The Girls* is out now on Feel Music. Catch the band on tour in the UK this October/November [www.thelondon Souls.com](http://www.thelondon Souls.com)



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## Headstock

# TOMMY EMMANUEL

He's one of the most gifted guitarists on Earth and one of only five people to earn Chet Atkins' 'Certified Guitar Player' title. But Australian acoustic wizard Tommy Emmanuel says forget flashy technique, it's all about the emotion

Words David Mead Photography Adam Gasson

**T**ommy Emmanuel is one of those rare pickers who can dazzle you, seemingly effortlessly, when he plays guitar. Aside from being a great entertainer and showman, he's also the guy you wish you could be when someone passes a guitar round the campfire; the guy who knows a seemingly endless supply of beautiful songs by heart and plays them with astonishing technical flair and flourish. And although he's undoubtedly one of the most dextrous players in the world, Tommy insists the stories and emotions that are the soul of music must be a guitarist's first priority, otherwise your technique is talking loud but saying nothing.

Here, we join Tommy to find out what abilities he thinks matters most when it comes to playing guitar well, and what you should focus on in order to connect with your audience on a musical level.

### Early Experience Is Important

"I got my first guitar when I was four and my mother showed me D, G and A7 and then she sang the song *Little Green Valley* and said, 'You count these bars,' and she showed me how a song was constructed: here's the introduction, here's the first

verse, here's the second verse; it's the same pattern as the first verse then the chorus goes like this and you piece it together and there's the song. And she taught me right from the beginning to see the big picture, to see the whole song right."

### Learn What Makes Songs Tick

"My mum started playing music with other local guitar players who would come by and they would sit and play and I would sit at their feet and look up and watch and know that's what I wanted to do. I wasn't really interested in anything else and it was the same for my brother, Phil. We would hear a song on the radio like Marty Robbins' *El Paso* or something like that and my brother would go, 'That's E, F# minor, B, E and same thing again, then the bridge goes A back to E...' and he was like a computer! He'd be spitting the chords out and saying what they were and in five minutes, we had an arrangement and he played the melody and I played the backing."

### Aim To Evoke Emotion

"Guitar players in general are fascinated by what is possible on this instrument and just the basic fact that I play and you feel

good is an incredible thing in itself. I play and something happens to you! Wow, what a concept. So the better I get at it, the better I'm in tune with what I know touches people. And so I try to think in that way: if it really moves me, I think it's going to move you, and if I get it, I think you'll get it. Because I'm a real simple guy: I wanna hear the melody, I wanna be told a story, I wanna be taken somewhere."

### Guitars Are Storytelling Tools

"I first heard Django Reinhardt when I was 16 and I was touring. I was way out in the middle of nowhere and I found a Django record and I'd heard all about him. But when I put it on, I just didn't get it. It sounded stupid to me – it sounded like circus music. And I thought, 'What's the big deal about this guy?'"

"And it wasn't until I'd grown up a bit more and I went back and listened and I went, 'Oh, God, this is unbelievable!' So I think there's a lot of people out there at that stage. First of all, they're not as good as they think they are and they don't have a handle on telling a story using their music. They're actually just playing the instrument. They're 'doing the guitar', rather than using the instrument as their





Tommy with his TE Series acoustic, made by Australian maker, Maton

tool to tell you something.”  
**Technique Is Not Enough**

“Some people will settle for mediocrity: here’s a bunch of chords and I’m going to do a few tapping things, hit some harmonics, play some groove and that’s going to really impress people.

“And it does. It does impress some people – but it doesn’t impress me if they’re not telling me something. It’s like, ‘I don’t want to watch you in the gym, I want an emotional experience when someone plays an instrument.’ It’s really all about: how good is the song and what does it say?”

**Practise Hard, Play Easy**

“I think you should take your time and do things properly. Don’t skim over it because you want to get to the bit where you’re impressing people, playing this song in front of them. Learn the thing properly, start out slowly. Use a metronome. I absolutely come back to this – it’s the best way to do it that I know, to get this thing right. Learn the melody right, practise it a million times, practise with a metronome then start

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Take your time, do things properly. Don’t skim over it because you want to get to the bit where you’re impressing people  
”

playing it in front of people.”  
**Be Immersed In Performance**

“A guy wrote to me on Facebook and he said, ‘What do you think of when you are playing a song?’ And I said, ‘All my attention is on the melody. I want the melody to tell a story and to have a life of its own. I know the song works because I meticulously put

it together right, but when I play the song, now I’ve practised it enough, I don’t have to focus on all these moves and all I have to focus on is the melody. Can I play the melody as if I was singing it?”

“I guess the underlying message is, there are no short cuts. You’ve got to do things properly if you want to play the music with all the feeling you can put into it.”

**Follow Your Instincts**

“Chet [Atkins] used to talk to me about the mystery of the guitar, the secrets within the fretboard and how do we unlock all these mysteries, and he was so fascinated by it in exactly the same way. He just grew up in a different generation and a different time, but it’s the same thing, I think. I think I’m just a guy who is fulfilling what nature intended for him somehow and, lucky for me, people like what I do and I only do it



The tour-de-force instrumental album, *It’s Never Too Late*, by Tommy Emmanuel, is available now on Thirty Tigers

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# ERNIE ISLEY

As guitarist with psychedelic soul pioneers The Isley Brothers, Ernie Isley's solos on tracks such as *Summer Breeze* seemed to shimmer like heat haze, amid blissed-out waves of phaser and fuzz. Ernie grew up in the same house as Jimi Hendrix and says he owes his success on guitar to Jimi's early guidance. Nonetheless, Ernie's style on Strat is inimitable and effortlessly cool. We joined him to talk about hanging with Jimi, the legendary 'lost' first solo on *Who's That Lady* and the surreal Strat that came to him in a dream...

Words Jeff Slate Portrait Don Hunstein

## Hendrix At Home

"In 1963, when I was 11 and Jimi Hendrix was about 21, he played with The Isley Brothers. He was with us and lived in our home for two years. In fact, his first recording session was with the Isley brothers in '64 on a song called *Testify*. I was a kid and when I'd hear him playing, I'd take my homework or whatever and I'd go hang out where Jimi was.

"He wasn't the Jimi Hendrix we all know now, he was just Jimmy. He was already an amazing player, but I think of Jimi Hendrix as a person I knew, rather than the icon. That's how I knew him, even though I was just a kid. I really liked hanging out with him, and I could tell he really liked me, probably because I was really curious about what he was up to. I mean, he already had that signature E chord that he used later in *Purple Haze*. I've said this before, but I know that if he'd been around when *That Lady* came out, he would have given me a bear hug and asked me, 'Where in the hell did you learn that?' Of course, I would have said, 'From listening to you.'"

## Family Man

"After Jimi went to England and became 'Jimi Hendrix' I remember my buddies coming up to me in school and asking me, 'You know Jimi Hendrix?' And I'd tell them that if they'd come by my house a year and a half or so before they would have seen him just about any old day. My mom used to yell at him and make him breakfast! He was part of our household as much as he was part of the Isley Brothers band."

## Drum Major

"I was drawn to the drums at first. The kit was a nice-looking ensemble. It's a visual instrument. You can see drummers in parades, so that's what attracted me at first. I started playing at around 12 years old and I played my first live gig on drums with my brothers when I was 14 in Philadelphia, because the drummer that they had had suddenly quit. My oldest brother [Kelly] was asking the guys, 'We gotta find a drummer ASAP – do you all know anybody?' They said, 'Yeah, Ernie.' 'Ernie? Get out of here.' 'Yeah, Ernie plays better

than the guy who was playing with us!' So they asked if I wanted to play drums behind them! I was like, 'Are you kidding me? *Heat Wave*? *Dancing In The Street*?' This was 1966. These were huge stars with big hits."

## Not Just A Stage

"After we did the Isleys set, in between acts, everybody was saying how well I played. Kelly handed me \$50 and said, 'Go get a hot dog.' I was like, 'Man, \$50!' I had this \$50 bill, and I went to the backstage doors with my stage clothes still on, and as I came through the backstage doors, all these girls turned around and screamed at me like I was Justin Bieber. 'Hey look, it's him! He was just up there!' Girls at my school didn't act like that. I wanted to move to Philly!"

## Fire Lighter

"I first picked up the guitar after hearing José Feliciano's version of *Light My Fire*. Then I got a 12-string because I wanted to learn *Classical Gas* and *Love Is Blue*. And so the group was just going along, and as we got to the *Givin' It Back* album [1971], all of



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*“My brother Ronald called and said, ‘I’ve got a blank cheque for you to go to Manny’s Music in New York and get yourself a Stratocaster.’ Man, that was a very memorable day”*

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a sudden I was playing 12-string acoustic on *Love The One You’re With*. On *Nothing To Do [But Today]* I was playing six- and 12-string acoustics, and electric guitar, too. We didn’t have a particular roadmap, plan or grand scheme to what we were doing. We were just going along with what we felt.”

### Digging Pitt

“Charles Pitts, the guy who played the wah-wah part on Isaac Hayes’ *Shaft*, was another big inspiration. He played the guitar part on *It’s Your Thing*, which I played the bass part on. I was 16 years old and I think I learned a lot by watching him. He was a really rhythmic and funky player.”

### Eclectic Ladyland

“Eric Clapton and Carlos [Santana] are guys I admire. They can play and they had hits. That’s not as easy to do as people might think. You know, I don’t usually listen to guitar players, though. I listen for a great song. Then I listen to players who elevate that song. Curtis Mayfield is another one of those players. Wes Montgomery is another player that I really love. Jimi introduced me to those guys. And I loved José Feliciano when I was starting out. *Light My Fire*, man. Like I said, I picked up the acoustic guitar first because of him. I remember hanging out with my musician friends in study hall when I was learning the guitar and we’d

argue because they didn’t like what I was playing or listening to. My thing was, you need to listen to a lot of different music – a really broad spectrum of styles – because then you can draw on all that in your playing. Jimi was like that and that’s why he’s hard to categorise. It’s what made him so unique.”

### Super Strat

“I was an acoustic guy for a long time while I was learning. Then I got a Fender Strat on Christmas Eve 1971. I did have a Guild before that, but I’ve been a Strat guy all along, pretty much from the age of 19, from that day when I got that Strat. My brother Ronald – because I was working really hard at developing my chops – called and said, ‘I’ve got a blank cheque for you to go to Manny’s Music in New York and get yourself a Stratocaster.’ Man, that was a very memorable day. The Strat is the perfect guitar as far as I’m concerned. It’s not locked into one particular tone. It lets you speak through it any way you want.”

### Leading Lady

“When we came in with the 3 + 3 album to CBS, and they heard everything for the first time, we said, ‘This is going to be the single, *That Lady*.’ And they said, ‘Well, it doesn’t sound like it’s your thing, like what you’ve been doing. It doesn’t have saxophones or trumpets.’ And if you think about it, it doesn’t sound anything like it’s our thing. It sounds like a brand new group, because the lead guitar sound and all that, for them, was like ‘Whoa, is it R&B? It has R&B elements. Is it rock? It certainly has rock elements. What kind of categories do we put it in?’ And we said, ‘Look, it defies categorisation. It goes everywhere.’

“And it was one of those records that was just like that. It surprised a lot of folks. ‘That’s the Isleys? Wow!’ Because it was a whole other kind of sound, a whole other kind of musical palette we were working with. At the time we were just creating, and trying to do something new and different that could be a hit up against our contemporaries. But I guess, at the same time, that’s how we created something that’s turned out to be timeless.”

### Lost Take

“There are two takes of *That Lady*. The first take, I was all over the place, and it changed the whole song. The lead guitar changed the whole track from what it was. I lost it, and the engineers lost it. Everybody else was dumbfounded. My oldest brother, Kelly, was staring at me through the studio glass for, like, 45 minutes without blinking. ‘Play it again!’ I was everywhere. He came out and said, ‘You know, you have to cut back

## Dream Machine

Ernie Isley on the surreal birth of his ornate Fender Custom Shop ‘Zeal’ Stratocaster

“Zeal is a long and involved story, but essentially I loved the Strats that are from the Fender Custom Shop,” Isley begins. “I’d had this dream where I was walking in a garden and there were instruments, all the instruments were growing out of the ground like trees. Trumpets, drums, violins, pianos, everything was growing out of the ground like trees, and you could play them automatically, without practice. You were instantly a virtuoso. I came to place where there were guitars, a clearing with guitars around it, and I was going to pull one of the guitars out of the ground, but before I could, there was a hand that reached into the tree and pulled out a guitar that looked like it had ‘ZEAL’ on it with a real lightning bolt. It had real roses on it that grew. You could smell them and they were fragrant. It had real white birds of peace, flying, and you could feel them when you got to the 12th fret. It was a very ethereal experience.

“So I went to the Custom folks and told them I wanted a guitar that looked like what I’d dreamed, with the roses on the guitar. They said, ‘Yeah, we do hand carvings and stuff all the time.’ When they finished the two prototypes for me I called a friend of mine who works at a guitar store and I said, ‘When I show you this guitar, this Stratocaster, Fender will never be the same again.’ When I showed him at the store later everybody who was there gasped. Like, ‘My God, that’s beautiful.’ Anyone who’s got one says it’s the best guitar they’ve ever played. And there are more on the way. One I call the Black Diamond Zeal. You know in *Goldfinger*, James Bond’s car, the Aston Martin? This guitar would have been in the trunk of that car. That’s what it’s going to look like. They’re gonna be outta here. Yeah.”





Ernie's fantasy Zeal guitar became a reality thanks to the Fender Custom Shop





PHOTOGRAPH BY DON HUNSTEIN

for the vocals.' I was like, 'What? Cut back? You're crazy. Put it out as an instrumental.' But I did a second take. And I was really pissed off when I did that second take. I didn't want them to keep it, but they kept it. The second take is what's on the record. The first take was better. It doesn't exist anywhere now but in the air around the kingdom of heaven. That's the next time I can hope to hear it, I guess. I remember the engineer's face when I did that lead. For the sound? Hmm. I used a fuzz box and a phase shifter by Maestro; that was pretty much it.'

### Slave To The Rhythm

"I know the solo on *That Lady* is something people talk a lot about, but I think the best things I do are rhythmic, because when people hear it, they say to themselves, 'That sounds like Ernie Isley.' It's hard to have your own identifiable sound, and I worked hard to find mine, but it's the kind of thing I think comes from God."

### Solo Slot

"CBS listened to the record without seeing the photo – the album cover – and they were like, 'Man, how can we get that guitar player? He's a monster.' When they found out it was me they wanted me to do a solo album. That was overwhelming for me, emotionally. Mentally, I was not ready to take that on. I think even now, looking back at it, it would have been a leap. Not

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*"Jimi was part of our household as much as he was part of the Isley Brothers band. My mom used to yell at him and make him breakfast!"*

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that I couldn't do it, but you know, I wasn't mature enough. Now I know I could have said, 'Okay yeah, I'll talk to my professors, take a day off from college, come down to New York with my Strat and talk to these label guys about some song ideas I've got and we can take it from there.'"

### Voice Of Experience

"When I did the Experience Hendrix tour much later, in 2011, I did *Manic Depression*, which apparently no-one had ever even tried to do before that. But I remember when I heard *Are You Experienced?* and I heard *Manic Depression*, I remember

thinking that that was the way Jimi used to play around our house. I knew how he did it, so that was definitely a song I wanted to do. People would tell me they were blown away and I'd just ask them, 'Haven't you heard *Summer Breeze* or *Hope You Feel Better Love*? Because if you listen to those you'll know where I'm coming from.'"

### Mesa Man

On the Experience Hendrix tour I believe the amp I used was a recent Fender Twin. But I'm all over the place, so it didn't matter to me what it was, really. If you look at everything I've done there's no one signature sound – just like there's no Isley's sound – because it was always changing. But nowadays I usually use a Mesa/Boogie and a Marshall. That's the two tones that I try to get, pretty much. I use one for straight rhythm tone, like you hear on *That Lady*, and I use the other for my leads. But I don't play with either tone exclusively."

### Big Macca

"I ran into Paul McCartney recently. We'd performed and after I'd come off the stage, my wife said, 'Paul McCartney's sitting over there.' He was about three tables away. I went to his table and tapped him on the shoulder. He stood up and gave me a bear hug and he said in my ear, 'Man, if it weren't for the Isleys, The Beatles would still be in Liverpool.' That's a very gracious dude." **G**



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# MARTIN BARRE

A brand-new solo album celebrating half a century in the business seemed like the perfect excuse to chew the fat with Jethro Tull's legendary guitarist – and reminisce about the guitars and amps that helped him cut classic albums

Words David Mead Photography Joby Sessions

**M**artin Barre's new solo album, *Back To Steel*, is a celebration of 50 years in the music business. Some of the tracks reference career highlights, such as an arrangement of The Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby* in honour of the week he spent working with Paul McCartney, while others hit the home turf with new renderings of classic Jethro Tull tracks *Skating Away* and *Slow Marching Band*. It's been 46 years since Martin joined Tull, but we wanted to go even further back to find out more about his life with the guitar...

**What was it that inspired you to pick the guitar up in the first place?**

"I was a shy young lad and I never went along with the crowd, but when I first saw a band play in what must have been 1960 or '61, it had such an impact on me. It was such an incredible experience and I just knew that's what I wanted to do. It was a moment of clarity – I thought, 'I'm going to be a guitarist...'"

**Can you remember which band it was?**

"Yes, it was Mike Sheridan and The Nightriders in Birmingham. A couple of the guys went on to be in The Moody Blues and I think one of them went into Roy Wood's Idle Race. Birmingham was quite a close-knit community of musicians and everybody knew everybody else. All these guys were doing the circuit in Birmingham

playing covers and they all grew up together. It was quite an exciting time."

**How soon afterwards did you start to play?**

"It was a while, probably a year. I found a terrible Spanish guitar and got myself a couple of lessons, which were pretty disastrous because it was this really boring old guy who lived round the corner who was a big-band guitar player. He tried to put me off playing guitar and so, after about half a dozen lessons, I realised I was better off on my own. My first electric guitar was a Dallas Tuxedo – the only other one I've seen was when a reader wrote in to *Guitarist*, probably three or four years ago, and he said there were only two he'd ever heard of and mine was the other one. I bought it because it looked cool. There was no other reason to buy a guitar at that age other than it looks cool."

**Were you still at school at this time?**

"Yeah, by the time I left school, I'd saved up and bought myself a Gibson ES-330. I wanted a 335, a Cherry one, that was in a music shop in Birmingham but I couldn't afford it, so I got a 330. I was having a clear out the other day and I saw the receipt in a box – £175. But, of course, that was a lot of money whenever that was, '61, '62 maybe."

**Worth appreciatively more now...**

"Yeah, they are. But it was an inherently





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1. Martin says that, back in the day, you were either a Gibson or a Fender man. Martin was resolutely Gibson, until he came across this 1969 Telecaster during a visit to the USA
2. The story behind this little Gibson LG from the 1950s would make most guitar collectors weep – owing to a repair to the headstock, Martin picked it up for \$17!
3. The three-quarter-size ES-140 was introduced into the Gibson catalogue at the beginning of the 1950s. Seen by many as a companion piece to the slightly more illustrious ES-175, construction is similarly all laminate with a single P-90 pickup in the neck position. These are both ES-140Ts, with the 'T' denoting the thinline version

faulted guitar because it was a hollowbody and as soon as the blues started rearing its head and people turned their amps up, it just didn't work. It howled!"

#### What kind of music were you listening to around this time?

"I listened to everything there was: essentially The Shadows, The Ventures... you just learned every instrumental you came across. I'd been listening to Scotty Moore and Gene Vincent, anything with guitar on and in particular stuff that came from America. But it was just a trickle and so the learning process was slow, but maybe that wasn't such a bad thing, because I spent a lot of time on basics, whereas nowadays the basics are over and done with in a couple of weeks."

#### So, was there sort of a light-bulb moment when you heard something that actually crystallised what you wanted to do?

"Probably not, as I had to play saxophone when I turned professional. I couldn't get a gig as a guitar player because it was all

soul music that you had to play to make a living, so, because I played flute, I picked up saxophone pretty quickly. Then I heard John Mayall's *Blues Breakers...* album and I loved all the stuff, but it wasn't a light-bulb moment – I was quite slow on the uptake. The point in time where everything changed in England, particularly for me, was when the Blues Festival Tours came over: Buddy Guy, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Freddy King, BB King, Albert King... The band I was with got booked into a blues club by mistake and two hours before we were supposed to go on stage, we were backstage, frantically learning some 12-bar blues to play... and that was the point at which I never picked up the saxophone again."

#### But you kept up with the flute?

"I was always fond of the flute and I'd had lessons at school. Then again, there weren't many flute players; a lot of them were just playing pure jazz, but Roland Kirk inspired me – and coincidentally Ian Anderson at the same time – to bring flute into the blues

arena. I was playing flute with a sort of Roland Kirk influence before I'd even heard of Jethro Tull, an amazing coincidence."

#### When did you come across Jethro Tull?

"I was playing flute and guitar in a band called Gethsemane and we were doing the clubs in London. I'd heard of Jethro Tull through other musicians but I'd never seen them play. They said, 'The guy plays the flute like you and there's a great guitar player, he's a bit like Eric Clapton...' and I thought, 'Wow, this is the kind of group we should be.' We were struggling to be good enough, really. Then we had a gig in Plymouth at the Van Dike Club where we supported Jethro Tull and we got on really well, chatting away backstage. I think that may have been August '68 and in November '68, the adverts appeared in *Melody Maker* saying Jethro Tull were looking for a new guitar player. I'm like, 'Whoa!' But I never called the number; I was too scared. They remembered me from the Van Dike Club but they didn't know my name or the name of the band and so it took them two or three









4. We couldn't find a maker's name on this little amplifier, but Martin told us that it was used on *Cross Eyed Mary* from the album *Aqualung* – and hasn't been plugged in for nearly 40 years!

5. Martin commissioned this custom pair from Hugh Manson – on the left, a H/S/S solidbody and on the right, an electric mandola

6. On the left is a Gibson F4 mandolin from 1917, still perfectly playable and sounding wonderful. On the right is an EM-150 from 1952

*“I had this horrible treble booster. It was very, very prone to picking up radio stations, particularly in America. Sometimes the radio signal was louder than the guitar!”*

weeks to trace me to a gig in London where Terry Ellis [Tull's manager at the time] handed me his business card and said, ‘Call me tomorrow.’”

**With the early Tull material, you seemed to be a resolutely ‘no pedals and straight into an amp’-type player...**

“In the very early days, I used Hiwatt and they didn't drive very readily and so I had this horrible treble booster. It pushed things at the front end but unfortunately, it was very, very prone to picking up radio stations, particularly in America. It was a nightmare. Sometimes the radio signal was louder than the guitar! When I started using Marshall amps, I found that I could ditch the treble boosters but I think it put me off for life, really. I thought all those things are more trouble than they're worth. On this new album, the engineer persuaded me to get my wah-wah pedal out and now I'm really angry because I have to take it to gigs and I don't really want to. I can't be bothered with all that stuff. Straight in the amp and off you go! I'll have to find a way round that.”

**Which guitar were you playing in the early Tull days?**

“I did the audition on my 330 and it was squealing and howling as it always did, so I thought, ‘I've just got to get a solid-bodied guitar...’ so I went into Orange in London and got a really beat-up old SG Special. It was pretty awful, but it worked and I probably had that the first year with Jethro Tull – and then I met Leslie West. Mountain were our support band in America and they were a powerhouse. They were such a great band in every way; stage rapport was incredible, but they were an object lesson in how to be a group of musicians and make it work. So I loved them and I learned a lot from Leslie, his gorgeous tone and lovely vibrato. So, of course, I bought a Les Paul Junior, same as he played. I played that for a few years and then I got my first Sunburst Les Paul.”

**What was your main rig when you were with Tull back then?**

“I was a Marshall endorsee and I just used their 50-watt heads and 4x12s and



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they were perfect for me. At that point, I'd bought my '59 Sunburst and it was just a perfect combination. I used those amps for maybe 10 years and nothing changed. I went from Marshalls to Soldanos and I've been using Soldanos for 20 or more years – the same amp."

#### **When was the switch-over to Paul Reed Smith guitars?**

"I used the Gibsons for years and years and then they became too valuable. I met Paul Hamer, who had started building guitars and, basically, I was looking for a guitar that, if one got lost on a flight or got smashed, I could pick up the phone and get another one and it would be the same instrument in every way. Paul's guitars fitted this criterion and they also sounded really, really good. So I worked with Paul Hamer for quite a few years until he stopped making guitars and then I tried Ibanez for a while, I tried Tom Andersons..."

"Again, they're all really good but then, in Mansons guitar shop, there was a Paul Reed Smith. I always thought they were

too pretty, you know; they always struck me as something you bought to put on the wall and admire. Finally, I took one home and played it for a few days and I realised it was a great guitar. A real guitar-player's guitar. I was in America, near their factory, so I thought I'd give them a call because I'd just like to tell them how good I think their instruments are – and I was probably on the phone for three hours! It was because these guys are so into what they do and they were so delighted to talk to a musician and get his point of view. They have a great relationship with the end market and I really respect that, and that's why they're great instruments, because they're built by people who really understand what guitar players need and what a guitar has to do."

#### **Do you have any sort of special requirements in terms of pickups or neck width, profile and so on?**

"You know, guitars are tools and I'm so unspecific about what I want. I like a very mellow, nice mid, not too much low end and not too much high end, but I couldn't write

down on a piece of paper what that means. I just pick up a guitar and plug it in and it's either going to sound great or it's not. If it doesn't sound great, then I try another one. But I've got a Telecaster and I've got a Strat and they both sound a bit different, but I like the little differences. I think the Soldano is the one constant that makes it happen. I can have a bit of flexibility in the guitars."

#### **So, the PRS and Soldano combination is perhaps the modern equivalent of what you were using in the 70s?**

"I think it is. I listen to the guitar sounds I was getting back then and it really hasn't changed that much. Essentially, there wasn't anything wrong with it then and there isn't now. No, I completely agree, it's sort of gone around in big circles. It's back where it started!" 🎸



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# TUBULAR BELLE

Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* is one of the biggest-selling albums of all time, rumoured to have sold in excess of 17 million copies worldwide – and the only electric guitar that features on the album is this 1966 Fender Telecaster

Words David Mead Photography Joe Branston

**T**he making of *Tubular Bells* is the stuff of legend. Originally released in May 1973, it saw 19-year-old Mike Oldfield playing most of the instruments himself, painstakingly overdubbed one by one, a process that was seen at the time as being wholly unique. Expertly timed to coincide with the launch of Richard Branson's Virgin Records label – *Tubular Bells* carries the catalogue number V2001 – the album initially enjoyed a slow-burn word of mouth success, but the public's attention was

further drawn to the album through the use of the piece's opening piano sequence in William Friedkin's film *The Exorcist*, which had its debut a few months after the album release. *Tubular Bells* then took up semi-permanent residence in the album charts, staying there for a record-breaking 279 weeks.

Among the many instruments used on the album was a single electric guitar: a 1966 Fender Telecaster that came into Oldfield's possession via Marc Bolan. The story goes that Bolan bought the Telecaster at a point where he wanted to start exploring a more electric personality



•

*In any other hands, Oldfield's modifications would have devalued the Tele considerably, but its history and provenance have worked to establish its collectability*

•

for the fledgling T.Rex. At this point in time, though, the experiment didn't work and the guitar came into the keeping of Bolan's management. Thanks to a series of circuitous coincidences, the Telecaster subsequently found its way into the hands of Mike Oldfield at the very point that *Tubular Bells* was forming in his mind.

### **An unlikely collectable**

The guitar has a neck date of November 1966 and bears the serial number 180728. As is evident from the photographs here, the Telecaster enjoyed quite a bit of modification in Oldfield's hands. The first thing he did was to strip it – legend has it that the guitar was originally Olympic White – and he even went to the extent of removing the Fender decal from the headstock, too. In any other hands, this would have devalued it considerably, but fortunately for its present owner, the history and provenance attached to this guitar have worked to establish its collectability.

Another immediately noticeable diversion away from the Telecaster norm is the presence of a Bill Lawrence pickup in the middle position. Apparently, the pickup had featured on one of Oldfield's previous instruments and he had liked the sound so much that he spent an afternoon with his father in the Oldfield homestead's garden shed modifying the scratchplate and controls to accommodate it. As such, the volume and tone controls have been repositioned and Fender's three-way toggle





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1. The Bill Lawrence pickup in the centre was added because it had been present on one of Oldfield's previous guitars and he liked the sound
2. The Fender's original controls were radically changed to accommodate an extra switch for the Bill Lawrence pickup
3. Nothing to see here! Oldfield removed the Fender decal, creating his very own Nocaster

switch abandoned in favour of a rather homespun-looking chrome alternative. The red toggle switch in the centre of the control panel powers up the Bill Lawrence pickup. The modifications may not be the prettiest we've seen, but they carry a certain air of functionality about them – it may not look beautiful, but it works!

### Off the radar

When the dust had settled after the release of *Tubular Bells*, very little was heard about the now famous Telecaster. In those days, of course, the collectors market hadn't really taken off, and even a 1966 Tele was still considered to be, well, just a second-hand guitar. It wasn't until 2007 that the guitar began to register on the radar of collectors once again. It was put up for auction that year with a guide price of £25,000 to £30,000, but it failed to sell. Subsequently, many collectors revealed that they didn't know about the sale – and yet when it came up for auction again a couple of years later,

it failed to sell once again. In fact, it was only when a guitar collector, historian and fan of *Tubular Bells* named Keith Smart put 'Mike Oldfield Telecaster' into an online search engine that details of the second auction began to emerge.

Keith found out that Mike Oldfield was selling the guitar in order to raise funds for the charity SANE, a mental health organisation. He immediately contacted them and made an offer for the instrument and waited to hear back. After what must have seemed like an eternity, the charity got back to him and said that they would accept the offer and he took possession of the Telecaster on the 13 January 2010. It came with no documentation at all, just the guitar itself in a battered old case. But a couple of days later, Keith was delighted to receive a communication from Oldfield himself saying that he was glad that the guitar had found its way into the hands of someone who would appreciate it – and that it had raised money for his nominated charity.

In 2013, Keith was contacted by Oldfield's personal assistant, Caroline Monk, because Virgin Records was celebrating its 40th year in the business with a special exhibition in London and was eager to feature the guitar. So the Telecaster was put on public display for a limited period in a case alongside the Grammy Award that Oldfield won for his 1973 masterpiece, before being returned to Keith's safe-keeping once again.

These days, the Oldfield Telecaster isn't kept in a glass case to be viewed only by a select few. On the contrary, Keith is determined that it should be used and enjoyed, and so he often features it on gigs with his own band. And how does it sound? Well, we had to ask and Keith's reply was simply, "Fantastic!" 🎸



The soundtrack to *The Space Movie* features music by Mike Oldfield, with excerpts from *Tubular Bells*

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RETROSPECTIVE

# The Humbler

Danny Gatton was a blue-collar virtuoso who made the Telecaster sing as few others ever have. With a new film on his extraordinary life and tragic death in the making, we caught up with tech Jay Monterose, who was one of the guitarist's closest friends, to hear about the hot-rod Teles they built and learn why his suicide may have been improperly understood for decades

Words Jamie Dickson

“**T**here are so many things about Danny that I have never seen another person on this earth exhibit,” Jay Monterose reflects. Jay is well-placed to make the observation. For 20 years, he was a close friend, tech and musical sparring partner to Danny Gatton – one of the most sublimely talented players ever to wear a Telecaster. For many, especially those who saw him play live, Gatton was simply the greatest player there’s ever been. Les Paul and Roy Buchanan both regarded him as uniquely gifted – and they weren’t alone.

“If you were sitting in the audience in the 70s and this guy was in your face, ripping it off and feeding it back to you, you were having an experience that was *otherworldly*. You never saw any other musician on any instrument play like this,” Jay recalls.

Gatton’s sudden death, by suicide, in 1994 was all the more tragic because he never quite received the public recognition his extraordinary talents warranted – but also in some measure because, for the past two decades, the guitarist’s motives for taking his own life have been inadequately reported, Jay argues.

“The way the press makes it out is that Electra dropped us and Danny got all depressed and he decided one day just to take his life. It’s just the biggest bunch of bullshit ever. And that has never been straightened out,” he adds, with finality.

Now, with a feature-length documentary about Gatton’s life, *Anacostia Delta*, poised for release, Jay hopes the record will be



corrected for good. And that's important, because Gatton's achievements – from innovations in guitar design to his matchless talent on the instrument – warrant a better-lit place in posterity.

### Rare Gifts

Born in Washington DC in 1945 to a musical family, Danny Gatton spent his childhood immersed in the music of Les Paul, Chet Atkins, Lefty Frizzell and other greats of post-War American guitar. Consequently, his style was a mercurial blend of country, jazz, blues, fused together with breathtaking deftness. “He put all these musical styles together – but he was a notch above everybody else,” Jay recalls. “He was keeping all that old music alive: he was still playing Merle Travis, he was still playing Chet Atkins, he was still playing Django Reinhardt stuff, He was playing Hank Garland stuff – he was playing everybody's stuff. And especially Les Paul. And Les started coming down to the clubs and seeing us, when Les could still drive.”

But it wasn't just a deep appreciation of the roots of American guitar that made his playing special. Licks that were beyond the talents of most guitarists tumbled from Gatton's fingers as easily as water flows over a weir. “The stuff just flowed through him like a conduit. Sometimes he would finish a gig and I'd say, ‘I never knew you knew that tune: when did you learn to play that thing?’ And he'd laugh and say, ‘I hadn't thought about that tune in 25 years’. And yet it came out like he had practised it every night for weeks. And

later he'd say, ‘You know, I don't even remember how to play that anymore’. How he channelled things was very curious.”

But there was another side to Gatton's character, too. A born engineer, he had a precise, enquiring mind that meant he couldn't look at a piece of hardware – from a Telecaster bridgeplate to a vintage car – without wondering how it could be improved. And that was how Jay and Danny first became friends around 1978, falling into a post-gig discussion of how Danny's old '32 Ford could be modified with suspension parts from a Jaguar.

An expert engineer who made flight hardware for NASA, among other things, Jay's spare time from that point on was spent working on cars and guitars with Danny Gatton. Together, they refined the timeless Fender Telecaster design until Gatton's stage guitars were as far evolved beyond stock Teles as Le Mans racers are from workaday hatchbacks. But Danny wasn't always a devotee of Leo Fender's firstborn, as Jay explains.

“Previous to '70 or '71, Danny was a pretty staunch Gibson kind of guy. He liked the beautiful instruments, the way they were put together, the attention to detail, the bindings, the attention to detail, the incredible woods. But he was under a lot of pressure from his peers about playing the Telecaster, because Roy Buchanan had been in the area for a couple of years and really started to make a big sound in town.”

### Tele Master

Fate granted Danny the opportunity to get better acquainted with the Telecaster not long after, Jay says.

“Danny was doing a session one day for Bob Berman, and Bob was a friend of Roy's who used to run around down the Carolinas and pick up a lot of Butterscotch Teles. Back in the day, you could get those things for \$175 or \$200 all day long and Bob had one in the studio – serial number 1980, of all things. It was a '52 and Bob said, ‘If you blow my socks off in this solo, I'll give you this guitar’. So Danny used this guitar, and naturally he blew his socks off in the solo and the rest was history.”

Gatton then began an exploration of the Tele's capabilities, waxing a few tracks and making his own mods to the instrument as he went along.

“He came out with a little version of *Harlem Nocturne* for the Telecaster and that kind of became his signature theme,” Jay recalls. “I remember the first time I heard that on the local college or AM radio station in the early 70s; I thought it was Roy [Buchanan] and that it must have been some new record he'd come out with. You could see that Danny had really grabbed a hold of that style, for that tune, and he was trying to take that Telecaster and go full blown with it – to figure out how Roy was getting all that energy out of it.”

The question revolved around how to unlock more solid, sustaining power from the Tele, granting it the ability to cut through even the swampiest Hammond and horn backing. “One of the reasons why Danny was reluctant to pick up the Telecaster in the beginning was that I don't think he thought it was versatile enough, I think he thought it got that tremendous







Danny [left] with friend and bandmate Billy Windsor. Note Barden pickups with dual stainless blades

sound that Roy used to crank out of that thing, and there were also various people who had used the Tele and kind of got a stinging sound: you know, a kind of Albert Collins tone. But Danny saw that as being a kind of one-trick pony,” Jay explains.

“In fact, Danny’s [ideal] concept of any guitar was to be Wes Montgomery on the neck pickup and then ‘Roy’ on the bridge pickup. So you could go from Wes Montgomery playing the straight, sweet solo rolled down about an eighth of a turn on the tone and a little off the volume, playing with his pick in his mouth and his thumb, just like Wes – but then immediately flip that switch back and roll those two knobs wide open and be able to cut through any B3 organ on stage. He wanted to have that extra horsepower built in.”

That was the Holy Grail of tone, as far as Gatton was concerned. But his initial Tele mods began with the neck.

“Danny wasn’t crazy about that Tele’s neck, after a while, because it was a skinny-neck ’52, not one of the very few fat-neck ’52s that are more like the ’53s. So he swapped necks with his friend who had a ’55 Tele and put the ’55 neck on there, which was a little chunkier – and that’s the one he used to record with Danny And The Fatboys in the 70s.”

### Take It To The Bridge

The bridge pickup tone was, of course, the main attraction of the Telecaster for Gatton. But, ever-

“ Danny’s ideal concept of any guitar was to be Wes Montgomery on the neck pickup, and then ‘Roy’ on the bridge pickup ”

inquisitive, he decided to lift the hood and see if things could be improved.

“Danny decided that he’d build himself a pickup winder, which I still own, and in the beginning he did what Seymour Duncan and everybody else did – he just took the things apart and unwound it a little bit at a time, trying to see what was going on. Eventually, he figured out these things were wrapped a little too tight to sound real sweet and they don’t have enough beans when you turn the volume knob all the way up.”

Next, he turned his attention to the neck pickup, since – like others before and since – he wanted more warmth and girth from its tone than the stock Tele pup could provide. The alterations here would have to be more radical, he decided. By this point he had joined forces with Jay and together, they began looking for the ideal replacement neck pickup to suit Gatton’s needs.

“We started plugging every other kind of pickup into the guitar that you can think of, from a Johnny Smith





A rare pic of Danny with Fred Stuart's lavish, pearloid Fender Custom Shop Telecaster

## Blackface Boogie

"Danny had always favoured Fender clean amps and when Danny played with the Fat Boys for some number of years, he played with a Tweed Bassman – it wasn't a narrow-panel but it was a '58. And he later acquired a '59, which is somewhere still in the collection. And in '65, a friend of his gave him a Tweed Twin with two Altec SROs in it. And that amp, all the way to the very end, was his absolute favourite amplifier. We couldn't use that on every gig, but we did use it on a lot of gigs and certainly whenever we played a big room or outside, the Twin was on stage, even if we had the Bassman or a number of 'blackface' Supers.

"But really the most-used amp, because of club settings and size around town, were the many 'blackface' Vibroluxes Danny had. I modified a number of those. He acquired a really beautiful one from a young man that had seen us play on a PBS show called the Mountain Stage that was aired out of Charleston, West Virginia. There was a young guy on the set who said, 'My dad's got an amplifier just like that at home,' – and sure enough, he went home and got a '64 'blackface' Vibrolux that was almost brand new. So Danny and him ended up working out a deal and then I took the thing apart and upgraded it, modified it and delivered it in the morning to Big Mo's studio, the morning that Joey DeFrancesco and him cut that record, *Relentless*. That amp stayed with us all the way to the very end – and ended up being the best of all of the dozens of the other 'blackface' Vibroluxes."

“If it was Sunday afternoon and he really wanted that pickup putting in there, he'd get the hammer and chisel out”

suspended pickup to creating a 'swimming pool' under the pickguard to fit a full bar-magnet Charlie Christian pickup in there, which is what he did in that '52 guitar!" Jay recalls, noting how impetuous Gatton could be in pursuit of an idea.

"Danny didn't have a router, so if it was Sunday afternoon and he really wanted that pickup putting in there, he'd get the hammer and chisel out and make a swimming pool – and never thought twice about it."

Despite all this experimentation, they didn't arrive at the perfect solution until Danny received an unexpected clue from pedal-steel guitar legend Buddy Emmons.

"Danny came back from Nashville after playing with Buddy down there doing a couple of Redneck Jazz Explosion gigs and he noticed these really interesting pickups in Buddy's guitar, with two long blades on them," Jay recalls. "Basically, Bill Lawrence had been working with Ron Lashley Sr at the Emmons Steel Guitar Company to try to come up with some great humbucking pickups for Emmons guitars."

The result was an unusual humbucker utilising rails instead of screws and polepieces, which offered noise reduction and power in a compact format plus a more even response across the strings. Gatton filed the idea away as a possible solution to his neck-pickup dilemma.

The chance to make that hunch a reality came when a teen-aged Joe Barden – whose father played vibes with Danny – asked Gatton about how he could get started in music technology.

"Joe kept asking Danny for years, 'What can I do to be involved with the guitar business?' And Danny said, 'Why don't you figure out how to make good pickups and make me some good pickups?' And that's where all that stuff started. So we went from single-coil pickups to a stainless blade, to the double blades of later Barden pickups. But it was based on the fact that Danny had seen that Bill Lawrence design and told Joe that if you put two skinny bars down next to each other real close, you can make a humbucker that fits in a single-coil hole."

Jay adds he'd thought the idea of using magnetic stainless steel for the pickups' blades to deter rust was new, but later found Bill Lawrence had considered it 20 years before. Nonetheless, they realised that the kind of articulation that Gatton's rapid, fluent playing demanded





Danny during his Gibson-playing years with The American Music Company Band, including [from left to right] Ernie Gorospe, Jerry Wallmark, John Broadus, Danny himself and Billy Windsor

was now possible. “When the Barden pickups [first] came along, we were using a big ceramic magnet and the last eighth of a turn on the volume control could stand your amplifier on its ear.

“And we would have the amplifier set up absolutely screamingly perfect: I mean perfect caps, everything balanced with the best gear inside there: the best tubes, the best speakers, nice new filter caps... everything had to be perfect, so when it finally pushed that Fender amp into overdrive with a little punch in the nose from the output from the pickups going straight in, the thing broke up and sounded really sweet and really vintage and nice.

“But obviously, it was not just down to the pickups, because those things were so squeaky, glassy clean. Some people don’t care for them – but they have a very fast reaction time and they’re very good at responding on the bottom end. Danny played a lot of notes fast down on the bottom strings and with the amp turned up real loud, a lot of times with flat polepiece pickups and all that stuff, it started getting kind of mushy.”

### Artist In Resonance

With Gatton’s pickup problems on their way to being solved, Danny and Jay turned their attention to the structural design of the Telecaster itself. With aerospace engineering skills and access to machine shops capable of making satellite parts, Jay was perfectly placed to help. Fender’s Telecaster uses screws and bolts to secure key components, and it was

here that Jay and Danny saw potential for some high-performance mods.

“We realised that mechanical connection was the most important aspect of the guitar,” he recalls. “And if the thing wasn’t like a baby Martin in your lap, it wasn’t going to sound good plugged in. So you wanted to be able to hold notes up in the high register and bend them, and have the thing just sustain away all day long.”

First up, Jay was keen to secure the neck in such a way as to permit daily maintenance while keeping the connection between body rock-solid and resonant.

“One day you’re in Texas, and the next you’re in Oregon, and we’re pulling the neck off that ’53 to make adjustments. But if you take the neck screws out of those old guitars more than once or twice, they never go back in really tight. The neck is shifting back and forth in the pocket. Also, you have two dissimilar pieces of material: you got hard rock maple on the neck and alder or ash in the body and they both resonate at different frequencies. And you want them to speak together – you don’t want them to fight each other.

“So we said, ‘How the hell are we going to solve this?’ So I came up with some carbon-steel threaded inserts that were threaded on the outside *and* the insides. Hard rock maple has the kind of end-grain structure that will allow you to machine it like aluminum. So you thread those inserts in, then you slap a heavy stainless neck plate on that won’t bend



when you tighten it. Now your neck is on the guitar like the cylinder head on your car's engine."

Another innovation that gave Gatton extra tonal clarity was Jay's suggestion that they try using stainless steel for the Tele's bridge plate, which helped focus the pickup's magnetic field on the strings. Close to the bridge the strings can't vibrate as freely as at the neck, so the bridge pickup needs all the help it can get to produce a powerful, focused tone, he argues.

"A [regular steel] bridge plate stretches the pickup's magnetic flux field out because it's trying to stick itself to the bridge. In other words, it's not 'looking' directly at the strings anymore. So we found that if you took the same pickup and threw it in a stainless bridge, it was louder and brighter and clearer instantly. So we said, 'Hmm, there's an advantage'."

### Pursuit Of Perfection

Clearly, many players love the tone generated by a Telecaster's bridge and pickups just as they are. But Gatton's playing required very specific upgrades because what he was asking of the instrument was beyond the commonplace.

"It was all because Danny needed these things – and necessity is the mother of invention," Jay adds. The relentless quest for incremental modifications on an already great design was also typical of Danny's perfectionist side.

"It was the same with cars," Jay said. "If there was a weld way up under the chassis on his '32 Ford, that nobody would ever see, I'd be under there with my fancy Heliarc welder that you don't normally use for that kind of thing... and I'd be like, 'Danny, I could

just weld this with a regular welder, no one's ever gonna know'. And he would sit there with a cigarette with an ash about two-thirds long ready to drop off and he'd say, 'Yeah, but I know'. He was always thinking about the unseen."

This desire to follow the trail of ingenuity wherever it led was what made Danny a uniquely

inspiring person to be around, Jay says. "He took all of us around him up to his level of understanding in whatever it was: if you were going to be involved with him then you needed to start thinking a little bit different. So he was a tremendous friend and influence – and that obviously goes way beyond the music"

Over two decades of collaboration, the pair became great friends, and Jay came to know Gatton's character as well as any man alive. Significantly, Jay rejects the oft-repeated theory that Danny shot himself, on 4 October 1994, because he suffered from depression. Jay argues that although Danny could have bleak moods, he does not believe clinical depression per se was the reason for his death.

“The guy could endlessly solo over anything, forever, and never repeat himself... There was no bottom to his bag”



Danny Gatton [right] and good friend and tech Jay Monterose [centre] pose for the camera

"There's all this speculation about the suicide. But he didn't shoot himself because of depression," Jay argues. Instead, he believes that the guitarist's decision to take his own life was prompted by troubling signs that his physical health was in decline.

"Danny was having strokes," Jay recalls, flatly. "He had a stroke one day where he was numb the whole side of his body for 11 hours. He said, 'You could have driven a nail through me on my left side and I wouldn't have felt it'. If you had that happen for 30 seconds or three minutes you'd probably think it was a small eternity – but this went on for a day."

"He came to a gig the next day and he told us that this weird thing had happened the day before. But over the next couple of weeks, this stuff would come and go at random. It would show up, it would be there for two hours and then it would go away."

Jay adds that Danny had seen debilitating health problems cast a shadow over the lives of people close to him – illnesses that forced friends to become long-term carers for their loved ones. He says that Danny found these things deeply affecting and understood how difficult situations of that kind were. Today, Jay's personal conviction is that Danny was determined not to lose his faculties to what he feared was a grave, advancing illness.

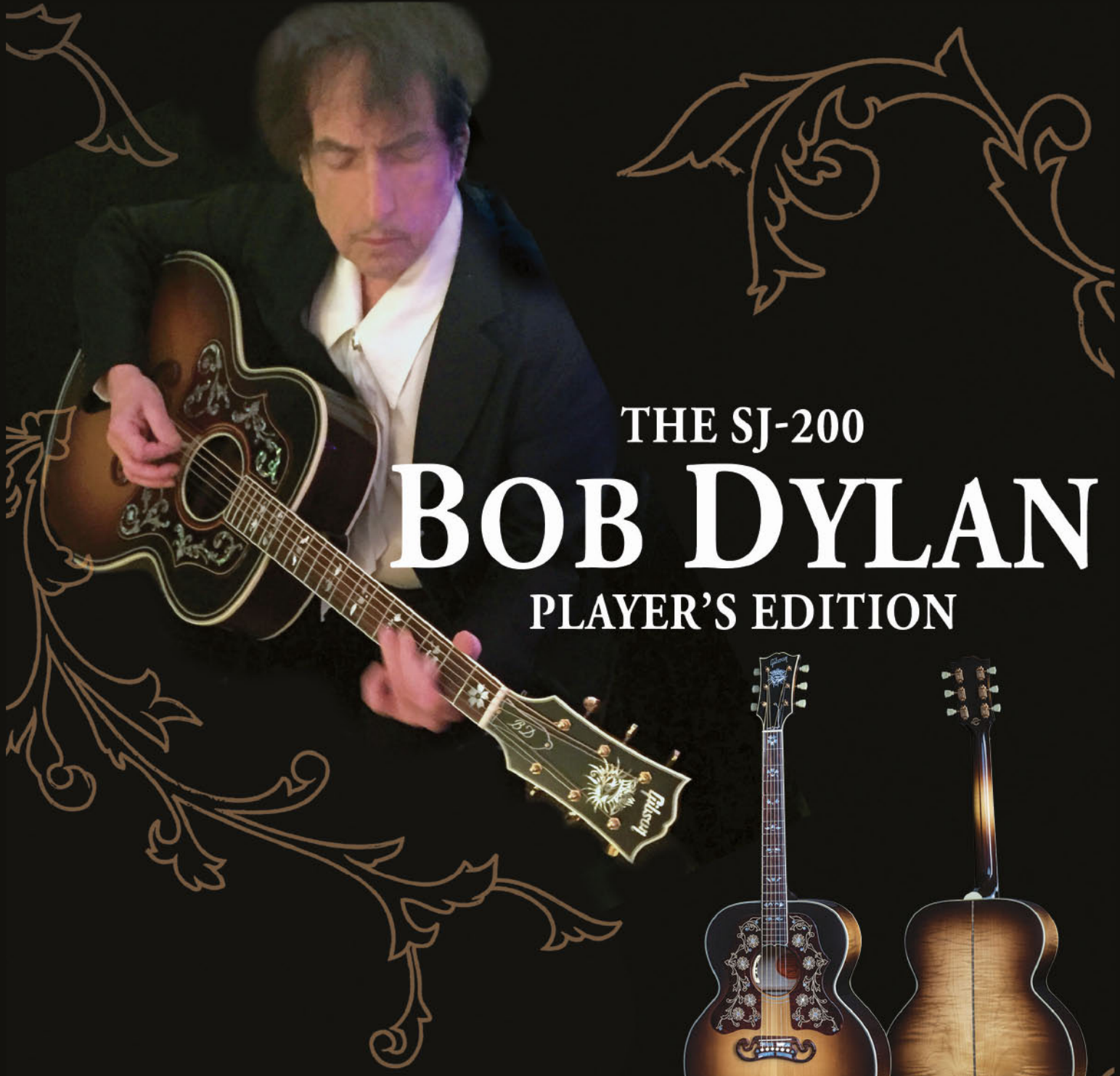
"I think that he made a very bad decision where he thought he was going to release himself from all of that experience," Jay explains.

The point is striking, and adds to our picture of the extraordinary life and saddening death of a player who was without question one of the best and most dazzling guitarists ever to grace a stage – a fact which deserves to occupy the foreground of his story.

"The guy could endlessly solo over anything, forever, and never repeat himself," Jay recalls, with the pride of an old friend. "And that was just one of the things that puts a musician like him in a class by themselves. There was no bottom to his bag." ■

For more on the forthcoming Danny Gatton documentary, *Anacostia Delta*, see [www.anacostiadelta.com](http://www.anacostiadelta.com)





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# Flying Colours







Marshall goes boutique! Just how do the company's new Astoria heads and combos match up to the best in the world? We plug in to find out

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Words Nick Guppy Photography Joby Sessions





## MARSHALL ASTORIA CUSTOM HEAD & 1X12 COMBO £1,899 & £2,199

CONTACT **Marshall Amplification** PHONE **01908 375411** WEB **marshallamps.com**

### What You Need To Know

#### 1 Marshall goes boutique?

The Astoria range is based on the short-lived KT66-era amps such as the 1962 Bluesbreaker, used by Clapton with John Mayall, but with modern features and design cues that are typical of many so-called 'boutique' amp makers.

#### 2 Is it just one amp?

No, there are actually three heads and combos, all with the same KT66-powered output stage but different preamp feature sets: from the stripped-down Astoria Classic to the single-channel Custom, with its footswitchable boost and effects loop, to the twin-channel Dual. You tell them apart by their colours.

#### 3 What is the KT66 valve?

The 'Kinkless Tetrode' KT66 is an equivalent to the 6L6 – the world's best-selling power valve of all time – and has a unique sonic character that's been largely preserved in today's Eastern European and Chinese equivalents.

**M**arshall's new Astoria range represents a significant change of direction from the legendary Bletchley-based amp giant. Excluding reissues and signature models, it's the first new Marshall range without the company's traditional livery: aimed squarely at the so-called boutique market, the Astoria range is named for the iconic London music venue that was sadly demolished in 2009 to make way for the Crossrail project. There are three different models: the Dual, Custom and Classic, identified by blue, red or green vinyl respectively. All three amps use the same KT66 output stage, while offering slightly different preamp features.

The Astoria Custom's distinctive-looking red-and-cream vinyl cabinet is very much in line with most people's expectations of a high-end boutique product, while remaining undeniably Marshall. The speaker cabinets have small chevrons to the top and bottom of the loudspeaker grille, which is echoed on the head box by a silver string accent. Combined with a colour-coded Marshall block logo and brushed aluminium control panels, old-style toggle switches and neon indicators, there are plenty of nods to Marshall's past, yet the overall look is refreshingly new without appearing contrived or gimmicky. The finish quality on the range couldn't be better: the vinyl application together with the tricky silver string detail work is perfectly executed and stands up to the closest examination.

Inside the powder-coated steel chassis, the electronics are an interesting mix of old and new, with a hybrid PCB that carries turrets as well as conventional PCB tracks. Non-audio components, such as relays, are conventionally soldered to the tracks, while those items in the signal path are hand-wired to the turrets for the highest integrity and reliability. All of the front- and rear-panel components are connected by flying leads, along with all the valve bases.

The Custom is a single-channel design with a footswitchable effects loop and boost. There are other distinctly boutique features, including switchable power reduction, a valve rectifier and a post-phase inverter master volume, with a tone control called Edge, which acts on the output stage and functions such as a Presence control, in the absence of a negative feedback loop. Other front-panel controls include gain, volume, bass mid and treble. There's a power-reduction push/pull-switch built into the master volume control, which drops the Astoria Custom's output from 30 watts to roughly five watts, and a bright switch on the treble control. A third push/pull on the gain control, Body, adds extra low-end punch.

On the back panel, there's a set of five loudspeaker outlets to cover most impedance needs, together with a send level control and a pair of send/return jacks for the effects loop. There's also a loop on/off switch for occasions when the supplied two-button footswitch isn't in use.



1. The Astoria range is based on the KT66 valve, used in some of Marshall's most influential early designs, in particular the 1962 'Bluesbreaker' combo, as heard on the 'Beano' album
2. Five speaker outlets cater for all common cab setups, from four to 16ohms impedance
3. The Astoria Custom has a classic passive tone network, with smooth interactive controls and a useful pull-switch to enhance the treble on dark-toned guitars





Mayall-era Clapton and Fleetwood-era Peter Green are almost too easy to conjure, with a singing, vocal sustain that clings to each note and refuses to let go

### Sounds

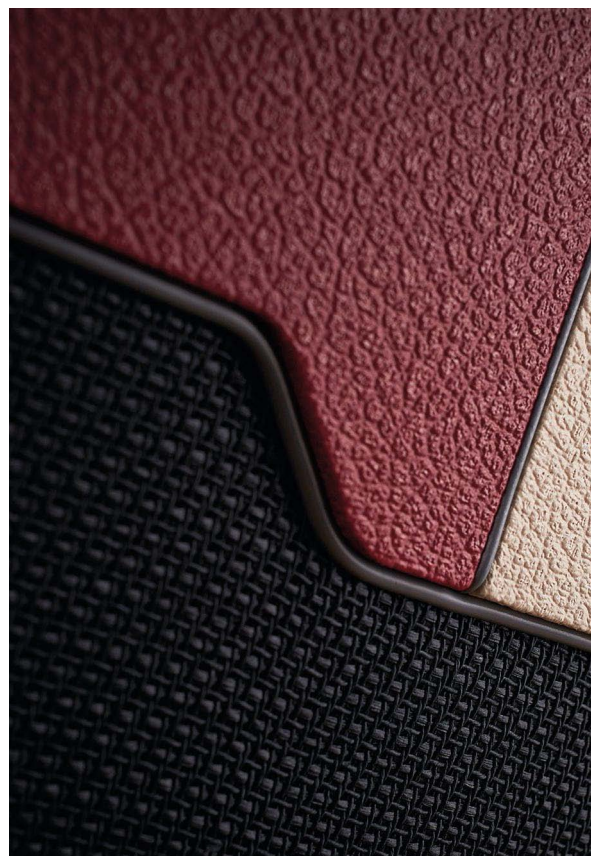
Like all amps that have a valve rectifier, it takes a few minutes for the internal voltages to ramp up and stabilise. Once this has happened, the Astoria is remarkably noise-free; hum and hiss are practically inaudible, a sign of a well-sorted circuit. With both combo and head/cabinet options available, we tried out a wide range of guitars and, used at lower gain levels, the Astoria Custom has the glassy, slightly edgy highs typically associated with KT66s, together with a very dynamic response, courtesy of the GZ34 rectifier valve. Steely Dan fans take note: the Custom nails Walt Becker's acclaimed Strat tone referenced on the tracks *Cousin Dupree* and *Jack Of Speed*.

Turn up the gain, and the Custom obviously gets more aggressive. However, the rectifier tames the dynamic response to some extent, so it isn't as vicious as you might expect. There is a slight loss of definition at high-gain settings, accentuated

if you hit the footswitchable boost or use the power reduction feature. However, this is probably taking the Custom outside of its normal operation zone. On-the-edge to medium overdrive tones are where the Astoria Custom excels, delivering superb blues and classic rock or pop sounds that easily evoke the golden years of the early 1970s. We ran the gain and master volume around halfway, using the guitar's volume control for rhythm/solo selection. Set like this, Mayall-era Clapton and Fleetwood-era Peter Green are almost too easy to conjure, with a singing, vocal sustain that clings to each note and refuses to let go.

The footswitchable effects loop works well with all kinds of pedals and rack effects – we used a decent digital-reverb stompbox and achieved very good results with the loop in parallel mode. We're particularly impressed with the Astoria's customised Celestion Creamback loudspeaker, which delivers plenty of volume with no nasty peaks and a consistently great tone over a wide listening angle.

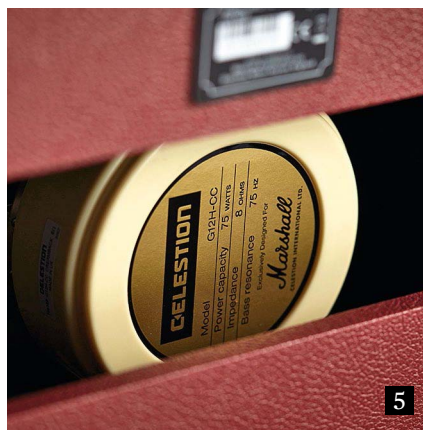
There's practically no sonic difference between the combo and the head/cab outfit: the separate cabinet delivers a slightly more focused sound to our ears, with a touch more bass, but the chief differences are cost and portability. We'd pay the extra for the separates – yes, the combo is one box, but it's heavier and awkward to carry on its single handle.



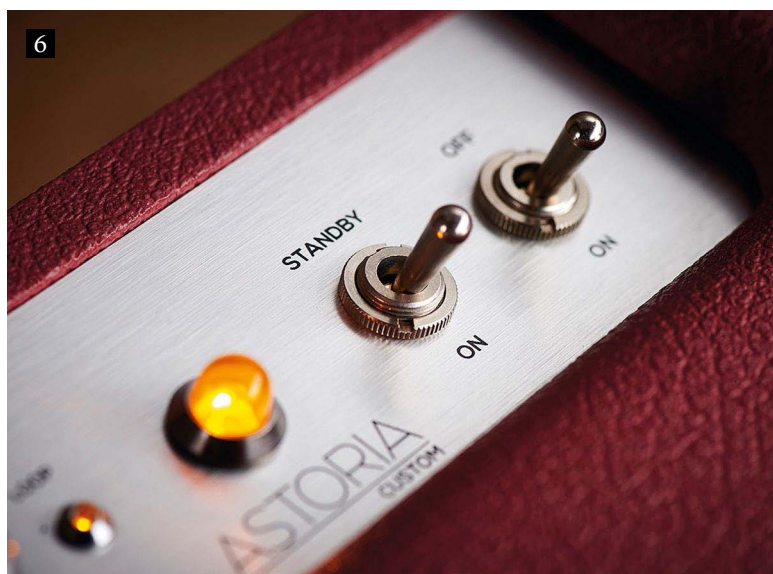




4



5



6



7



8

4. A pull-switch on the master volume reduces the output down to roughly five watts, great for home and studio use

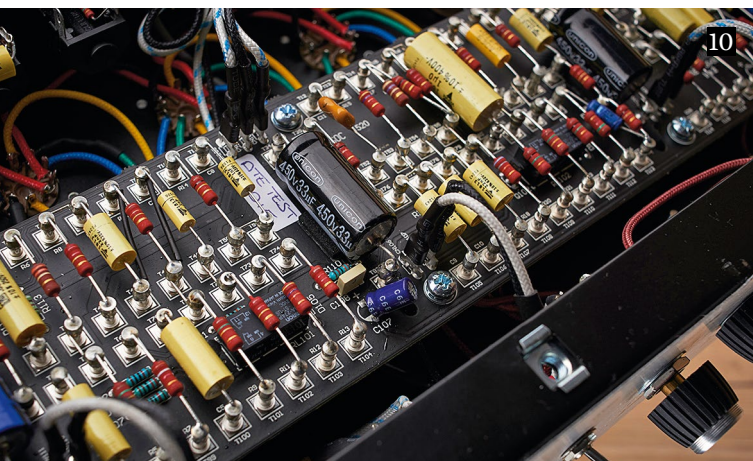
5. The Astoria amps use a specially-voiced version of Celestion's Creamback loudspeaker for authentic British classic rock tone

6. Proper old-style toggle switches such as those found on early JMP amps add to the vintage appeal

7. Impeccable cabinet work and a colour-co-ordinated early Marshall block logo add to the Astoria's boutique appeal

8. A pull-switch on the gain control activates the Body function, which adds extra midrange drive for a heavier sound that's great for cranked up solos – at the expense of some dynamic range, however





**9.** The Astoria's heavy duty welded steel chassis is built in traditional Marshall fashion and should easily stand up to abuse, night after night

**10.** Hand wired to perfection, the internals use a clever hybrid printed circuit board with turrets, combining point-to-point purity and reliability with PCB consistency – the best of both worlds, we think

## Verdict

For a first entry into the crowded boutique sector, the Astoria takes some beating in the sound and build-quality departments, though it's far from cheap. While there's some stiff competition from some of the more established names, one thing they can't compete with is the badge on the front. Handmade in Bletchley and leveraging half-a-century of design and fabrication skill, it is a serious contender that deserves to be heard alongside the world's top boutique brands. If, like us, you've wondered what a Marshall boutique amp might be like, the Astoria could very well have your name on it. **G**



## MARSHALL ASTORIA CUSTOM HEAD

**PRICE:** £1,899

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** All-valve preamp and power amp with valve rectifier

**OUTPUT:** Maximum 30W RMS, switchable to approx 5W RMS

**VALVES:** 4x 12AX7, 2 x KT66, 1 x GZ34

**DIMENSIONS:** 600 (w) x 290 (h) x 230mm (d)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 17/37

**CABINET:** Ply

**CHANNELS:** 1

**CONTROLS:** Gain, volume, bass, mid, treble, edge. Power-reduction switch, bright switch, body switch, loop and boost select switches, loop send level

**FOOTSWITCH:** 2-button LED footswitch (supplied) toggles boost and effects loop

**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:**

Footswitchable valve-driven series effects loop with send level and true bypass

**OPTIONS:** The Astoria 1x12 matching speaker cabinet costs £519. The Astoria Custom combo is £2,199

**RANGE OPTIONS:** The Astoria Classic head and combo are £1,799 and £2,099; the Astoria Dual head and combo are £1,999 and £2,299

**Marshall Amplification**  
**01908 375411**  
**[marshallamps.com](http://marshallamps.com)**

8/10

**PROS** Legendary build quality and great tone; the head/cab format is also very portable

**CONS** The only downside of the head/cabinet format is the price, not as competitive as the combo



## MARSHALL ASTORIA CUSTOM 1X12 COMBO

**PRICE:** £2,199

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** All-valve preamp and power amp with valve rectifier

**OUTPUT:** Maximum 30W RMS

**VALVES:** 4x 12AX7, 2 x KT66, 1 x GZ34

**DIMENSIONS:** 600 (w) x 540 (h) x 260mm (d)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 27/57

**CABINET:** Ply

**CHANNELS:** 1

**CONTROLS:** Gain, volume, bass, mid, treble and edge. Power-reduction switch, bright switch, body switch, loop and boost select switches, loop send level

**FOOTSWITCH:** 2-button LED footswitch supplied, toggles boost and effects loop

**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:**

Footswitchable valve-driven series effects loop with send level and true bypass

**OPTIONS:** See Astoria head

**RANGE OPTIONS:** See Astoria head

8/10

**PROS** The same great build and tone as the head/cab, but in one single cabinet, at a fair price

**CONS** It's a heavy box to lug around; some might find the higher gain sounds aren't quite as well defined



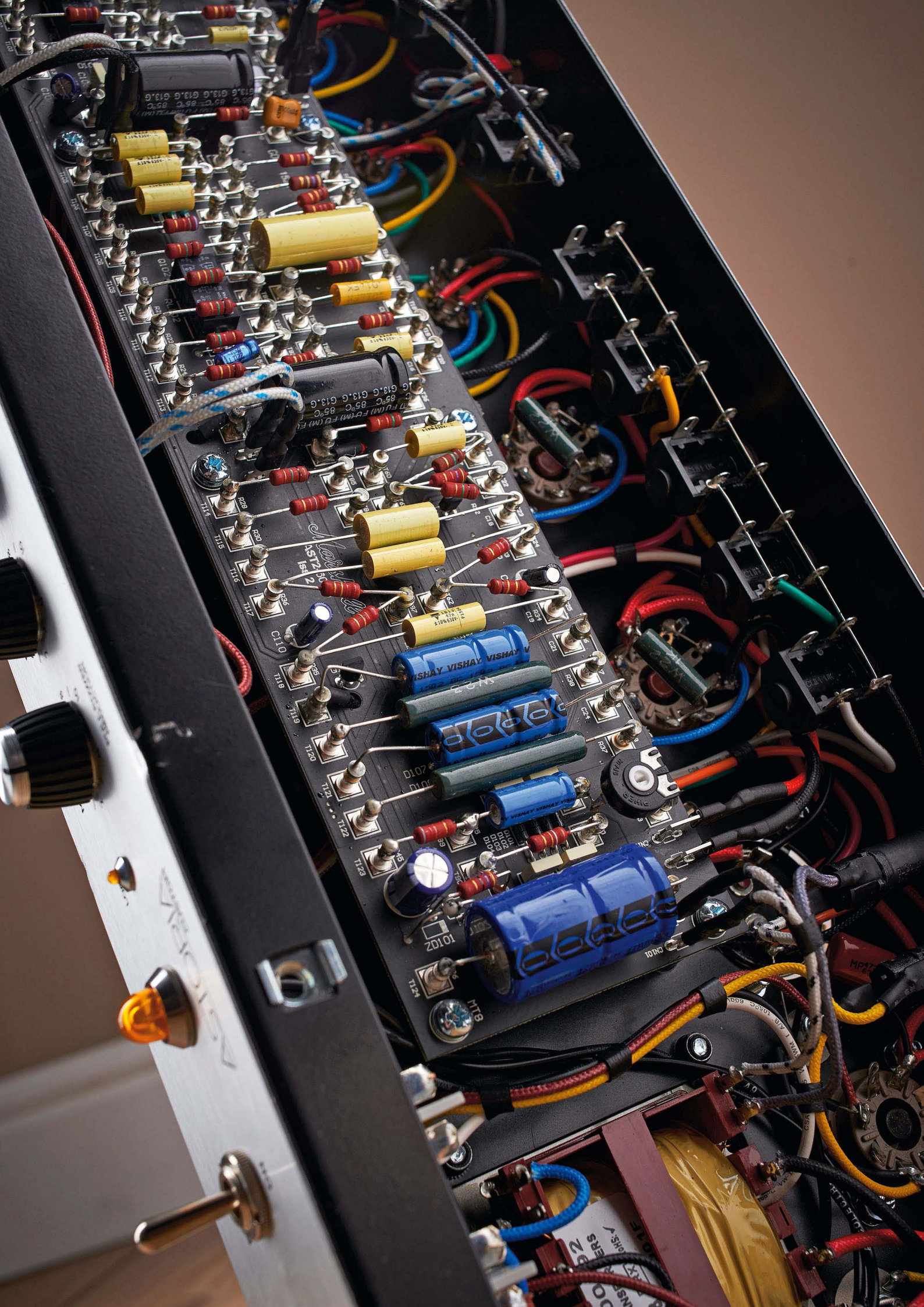
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# Point Taken

One argument has sparked heated debate among toneheads for decades: which amps sound best? Hand-wired exotica or amps with precision-made printed circuit boards for maximum tonal consistency? We join three amp design gurus to thrash it out

Words Nick Guppy Photography Joby Sessions

**S**ome purists argue that amplifiers whose circuits are hand-built by means of point-to-point construction will always sound better than amps built using mass-produced circuit boards, known as PCBs. It certainly appeals to our sense of craftsmanship to think that the human touch must always yield a better sound than machine-made circuits. But PCB-based amps, if carefully designed and built, can actually perform better than hand-wired amps. Marshall's new Astoria (see preceding review), meanwhile, uses a hybrid of both construction techniques. So which should you go for? As always, it pays to understand the factors that make for great tone and roadworthiness, then make a genuinely informed decision.

## Point-To-Point Construction

Let's start with point-to-point. So, what exactly is it? Point-to-point actually covers a variety of different construction methods. Fullerton-era (pre-1986) Fenders used an eyelet board: a flat piece of fibreboard with rivets punched into it and the components soldered into the rivets. However, the valve bases and front- and rear-panel components were all wired by hand. In contrast, many early British amps used turret or tag-boards, thin strips of Bakelite with a row of solder lugs or turrets running down both sides, which the components were soldered to.

These methods are often called point-to-point, although there's a school of thought that says proper point-to-point actually does away with tag boards and eyelet boards – each component is literally soldered to the next. This is the purest method of building, but also the most time-consuming. Not only does everything have to be manually fitted and soldered, but each unit has to be tweaked to ensure it matches the prototype for tone and noise performance. Early examples of Hiwatts and the original Matchless amps were point-to-point. Today, very few commercially available amps are built using proper point-to-point, although Carr is one notable example.

Other builders, such as Divided By 13's Fred Taccone, use uprated versions of Fender's eyelet board.

## Printed Circuit Boards

The original idea of printing copper tracks onto an insulating baseboard dates back to the 1920s, but it wasn't until after the end of WWII that printed circuit boards were manufactured in high volumes. There are dozens of different kinds of printed circuit board, from very simple single-sided ones with copper tracks glued to a base of GRP or similar material, to complex multi-layer types used in computers and aerospace. The most common types you'll see in a guitar amp are single-sided or double-sided and through-plated, where at each hole for a component lead there's a tiny metal tube that connects one side of the board to the other, with a track on one side and a solder pad on the other. When a component is soldered, the solder passes through the tube by capillary action, securely locking the component in place on both sides of the board. This gives an added resistance to failure when a circuit board is flexed – for example, when a valve is replaced.

The most important point for manufacturers, however, is that using printed circuit boards allows automation of

the soldering process. Instead of soldering each joint one at a time, you can fit all the components and then pass the board over a bath of molten solder, soldering everything in one pass – a big timesaver.

It's not all plain sailing, however. Some types of PCB don't like repeated heating and cooling. Repeated heating from valve bases and pins and subsequent cooling can cause copper tracks to work-harden, and, over time, tiny fissures appear, slowly changing tracks from conductors into resistors. In high-current locations, the increased resistance eventually results in a burnt-out track. Additionally, the heat from a valve base is not far off the melting point of some solders, making dry joints more likely. Factors like these are part of the reason why printed circuit boards in some guitar amplifiers had such a bad press in the early days. Today, however, better materials make PCBs more resistant to heat and far less likely to fail.

Also, high-gain valve audio circuits are very sensitive: a change in wire or component placing of as little as one millimetre can sometimes make an audible difference in the overall quality of an amp's tone. This is, of course, where PCBs shine: once you have the perfect layout, a printed circuit board can reproduce it again and again, with an accuracy that's impossible to achieve with hand wiring. For this reason, many high-end amp makers such as Reinhold Bogner and Mike Soldano use very high-grade PCBs, with extra-thick base material and double- or triple-thickness copper tracks.

As well as these two distinct routes, you'll also sometimes see a blend of both technologies side by side. High-end products such as Tone King's Royalist or Marshall's Astoria use quality printed circuit boards for consistency, with hand-wired valve bases and switches for enhanced reliability. In our experience, the best results often happen when these different methods are combined in an intelligent, appropriate way.

In our experience,  
the best results often  
happen when these  
different methods  
are combined  
in an intelligent,  
appropriate way





Matchless amps have an enviable reputation for expert point-to-point construction

### Ask The Experts

That's the general outline of the debate. But what do the pros think? We asked three highly regarded amplifier and audio electronics designers for their thoughts...

**Adrian Emsley** is the designer behind all Orange products, from its highly successful budget Crush line, to the hand-wired Custom Shop limited editions, which are often wired by Emsley himself. "Printed circuit board and point-to-point amps have several main differences," he says. "One good thing about point-to-point is that you can use big polyester caps and decent-sized resistors. These components also have a big influence on the sound of the particular amp you are trying to make. Point-to-point is normally very easy to service, as well. I tend to use it for the more simple designs as that's where it really works the best."

"But there's nothing wrong with a good PCB design if it's done right," he continues. "A good sorted layout can perform better in some ways than point-to-point, especially in more complex circuits because things tend to be more localised, not to mention easier to fit in. Two-ounce copper for the tracks is definitely the way to go when making tube amps using a PCB. This sounds better, is more reliable and is also more serviceable. I always use curved tracks with no corners or cut corners, as it winds up sounding more musical and with less noise. We tend to use PCB track eyelets with any cables being hard soldered to them. We still call this PCB though, not 'hybrid'."

**Mark Bartel** is the founder and designer for Tone King, one of the world's most coveted boutique brands, and well known for the exhaustive research and development that goes into its products.

"I've designed scores of amps over the past 25 years using both PC boards and various forms of hand-wiring. I prefer to use a combination of PC boards and hand-wiring to achieve the best layout in terms of sound quality plus reliability and serviceability. Proper use of well-designed PC boards can offer real, quantifiable advantages over hand-wiring schemes in terms of component placement, wiring length, and wire routing, which translate to improvements in both sound quality and serviceability."

"An important goal of proper design is to minimise wire length and to optimise relative positioning of the components. Many hand-wiring schemes may look beautiful, with the components all in a row, long runs of parallel wires, and nice right-angle bends, but these aesthetic conceits are often the opposite of what good design would dictate from an engineering perspective. We've built thousands of amplifiers with PCB construction over the past 23 years, many of which have been in constant touring use all over the world. To date, we have seen exactly zero problems with the boards in any of these amps."

**Phil Taylor** is a noted authority on the history of the Mullard Valve Company, and the founder and designer for Effectrode, whose unique valve-based pedals are found in the pedalboards of artists including David Gilmour, Peter Frampton and Billy Corgan to name but three.

"If you've ever looked inside a vintage Hiwatt amp, you'll see a fine example of point-to-point wiring where the small components – resistors and capacitors – are mounted on tag or turret boards. A well-laid-out point-to-point circuit is

"A well-laid-out point-to-point circuit is a thing of beauty; however, it's also labour-intensive and skilled work"

a thing of beauty; however, it's labour-intensive and skilled work. Each component must be soldered in position by hand and care has to be taken when bending and forming component leads to prevent stressing and damaging them. Contrast this with printed circuit boards, where the wiring patterns are chemically etched into copper foil laminated to epoxy impregnated fibreglass board. The PCB is designed so that the components can be precisely placed in position with minimal or no bending of component leads. This not only prevents component damage, but it also simplifies and speeds up assembly, making it possible to automate the process using machines.

"There are a couple more advantages when using a PCB: they can be designed with additional copper layers for ground and power, allowing the circuit layout to be optimised for low-noise performance and reduce its size. Secondly, component lead lengths are kept to a minimum – sometimes there are no leads at all – reducing the number of solder connections, ensuring highest signal integrity and reliability." **G**





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NANCY'S SEVERE STUTTER CAUSED ANXIETY EVERY TIME SHE SPOKE. BUT WHEN SHE LEARNED TO PLAY GUITAR, NANCY DEVELOPED SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN MUSICAL TALENT—SHE DEVELOPED CONFIDENCE. KNOWING FULL WELL THE STAGE IS NO PLACE FOR A STUTTERER, SHE STEPPED ONTO IT ANYWAY. AND WHEN NANCY BEGAN TO SING, SOMETHING ASTONISHING HAPPENED: HER STUTTER COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED. SINCE THEN, NANCY HAS WRITTEN OVER 100 SONGS AND PERFORMED BEFORE AUDIENCES OF MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE. IT'S THE KIND OF STORY THAT INSPIRES US AT TAYLOR, AND REMINDS US THAT THE WORLD NEEDS MORE PEOPLE LIKE NANCY. *For more about Nancy and others with the courage to step forward, visit [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com).*



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# Sonic Thrillers

Marshall has company: here are six of the very best-voiced boutique heads and small combos that money can buy

## **MESA/BOOGIE** RECTO-VERB 25 COMBO **£1,349**

Let's not forget that Mesa started life as one of the first true 'boutique' names and it has never lost its mojo. The stunning Recto-Verb 25 pulls off the impossible – a Rectifier in a small, very portable and competitively priced combo. Featuring Mesa's typically perfect finish and great build quality, the Recto-Verb 25 is huge value for money.

[www.mesaboogie.com](http://www.mesaboogie.com)

## **CARR AMPS** 'THE BLOKE' **£2,299**

Steve Carr's Bloke is another immaculately built amp that provides nothing less than totally killer Plexi tone. More aggressive perhaps, with an attitude reinforced by motorcycle-inspired styling, but wicked fun and impossible to unplug. The Bloke has incredible touch response that puts a full spectrum of overdrive under your fingertips.

[www.carramps.com](http://www.carramps.com)

## **LANEY** L50H HEAD **£1,082**

Okay, perhaps not the first name you'd think of for boutique tone, but listen to this: it has no fewer than five EL34 output valves, in parallel single-ended configuration for stunning class A tone. It's a unique design that nobody else does, and it sounds incredible when wound up. Real multi-layered overdrive and superb touch response set the L50H apart and provide world-class boutique tone, at a price that's practically bargain basement.

[www.laney.co.uk](http://www.laney.co.uk)

## **FARGEN** OLDE 800 HEAD **£1,999**

Fargen's Olde 800 is more of a classic Marshall tribute, with a clever 'decade switch' that changes the amp's character from 60s (JTM45), to 70s (1959), to 80s (JCM800). It's impeccably built, with staggering attention to detail, and about as close as anyone has come to building the perfect Plexi.

[www.fargenamps.com](http://www.fargenamps.com)

## **TONE KING** ROYALIST 45 COMBO **£2,099**

Mark Bartel's painstaking attention to detail provides some of the most dialled-in amps out there, and the Royalist 45 nails the 'Plexi' experience, with a built-in specially-voiced Ironman attenuator for incredible tone at any volume. It's available as a 1x12 combo or a head.

[www.toneking.com](http://www.toneking.com)

## **BRUNETTI** SINGLEMAN 35 COMBO **£1,919**

Available in a range of power ratings and head/combo formats, the Singleman is Marco Brunetti's 'less is more' masterpiece, with perfectly sculpted tones that sound instantly alive in a mix. A sound engineer's dream, the lower power versions are perfect for the studio, but if you need extra punch live, the 35-watt 6L6 version is just the ticket.

[www.brunettiamps.com](http://www.brunettiamps.com)





Artist: Jamie O'Gorman - Scouting for Girls

Photo Courtesy of: Ben Gibson Photo.com



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# Tribute To A Master







What appeared to be a return to vintage in 1994 when the McCarty Model first arrived, today seems like just another PRS. So, what's changed 21 years on?

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**Words** Dave Burrluck **Photography** Joby Sessions





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CONTACT **PRS Europe** PHONE **01223 874301** WEB **[www.prsguitars.com](http://www.prsguitars.com)**

### What You Need To Know

#### 1 What American metal band does McCarty play for then?

Tut, tut. Theodore 'Ted' McCarty was Gibson's president during the company's 'golden era' (1950 to 1966) and was befriended by Paul Reed Smith in the mid-80s as a mentor and consultant.

#### 2 It looks like a Custom, doesn't it?

It's the same outline, yes, with all the PRS hallmarks – bird inlays, natural body edge, and so on – but back in the day, it introduced numerous features to PRS guitars, such as a thicker body, covered humbuckers and the three-way toggle and pull/push coil-splits from the tone control.

#### 3 Why would we be interested?

Well, the new McCarty is one of a select few 'core' models – including the P254 – that uses the new 58/15 covered humbuckers: the latest and best-yet 'date' series pickups.

**T**urn the clock back to the early 90s and Paul Reed Smith – who had started his production factory in 1985 – frankly, was looking for clues. While his 24-fret guitars, such as the Custom, had certainly grabbed the attention of serious guitar players, not all of them were taken by its sound. So Smith re-designed his soon-to-be-calling card with a shorter 22-fret neck, introduced the intonated wrapover Stoptail bridge and re-evaluated the key ingredients of his build. The first fruits of this 'new' PRS were the ultra high-end limited Dragon I in '92, followed by the regular production Custom 22 in '93, hinting at a more 'vintage' or classic-sounding and feeling PRS.

The McCarty Model, however, took the redesign further when it arrived the following year. And with it, the players who appreciated the classic Gibsons of yesteryear and had maybe found the Custom 24 a little too different seemed to have found *their* PRS. It was little surprise that the McCarty's design had substantial input from Texas-based guitarist David Grissom, who'd been an early adoptee of PRS, and whom, after playing the 24-fret guitars for some time, had his own ideas for a slightly more vintage-y recipe.

In truth, the McCarty signalled a gateway to the past that Paul Reed Smith would hungrily absorb over the following years. But it also got right up the nose of a certain guitar company based in Nashville: it was the most 'Gibson-like' PRS to date and, of course, took its name from the mentoring of that ex-Gibson president.

Today, things are very different. PRS Guitars is 30 years old and makes plenty of highly vintage-informed guitars: David Grissom finally got his own McCarty-based PRS signature, the DGT; the SC245 is aimed at 'burst lovers'; and a string of new 'date' pickup designs, from the 57/08s to the current 58/15s featured here, all aim to capture a classic PAF-alike flavour. Even the best-selling Custom got a classic makeover this year with the uncovered 85/15 humbuckers producing what we believe is the most classic-sounding Custom to date. So, then, what's the deal with this new 'revamped' McCarty?

While we compare an early McCarty with this new version elsewhere in this feature, the majority of the original McCarty's features have been absorbed into many of PRS's other designs. At the time, its slightly thicker body was new to PRS. Today, only





Paul Reed Smith's tone quest has been continuous... The pickup voice is so much more alive than PRS's older guitars: Smith's tinkering is not without purpose

the Custom has the thinner original-depth body – the other 'core' double-cuts are 'McCarty thickness' (in current PRS terminology, known as 'fat backs'). Not quite originally, the McCarty added a coil-splitting pull/push switch to the tone control that, in combination with the three-way toggle switch – as opposed to the five-way rotary pickup selector of the early Customs – gave a more classic 'drive' to the PRS guitar. This setup, used on numerous subsequent models, became known as the 'McCarty electronics'.

What was once a unique model for PRS, today seems a little homogenised: there really is nothing new here that we haven't seen before. Its closest predecessor is virtually the last McCarty model, the Ted McCarty DC 245, which shares its bound fingerboard but featured a 622mm (24.5-inch) scale and pre-factory 'Santana' headstock shape. Our new McCarty has both the regular PRS 635mm (25-inch) scale and headstock.

Of the 22-fret double-cut guitars in the current 'core' range – the McCarty, Custom 22, Paul's Guitar, P22, 408, 513 and the DGT – all are thick body (52.2mm), except the Custom 22 (49mm). With the

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### CAPARISON ANGELUS M3B £1,875

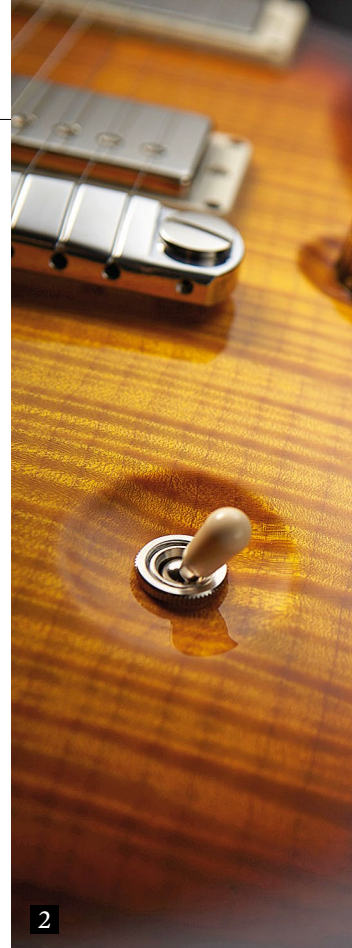
A new, progressive range of Japanese-made rock-aimed axes includes this offset double-cut with maple/mahogany construction and dual Caparison humbuckers. [www.caparisonguitars.com](http://www.caparisonguitars.com)



### PRS DGT £2,825

David Grissom's own signature guitar is based on the McCarty but with vibrato, signature pickups and additional volume control. It's still one of our favourite PRS guitars. [www.prsguitars.com](http://www.prsguitars.com)





## Ted who?

"I found out about Ted in the patent office," says Paul Reed Smith. "His patents were the ones that had made it to market. I thought, 'Who's Theodore McCarty?' Then I realised he's the one who did the Gibson thing."

"Paul called me on the phone," remembered Ted in 1998 (he passed away in 2001). "He wanted me to come to Annapolis [in Maryland]; he wanted to discuss [guitar making] for a consultancy fee. Why he chose me, I don't know. But I said, no, I couldn't come so Paul said he'd come [to me]. He came down to Kalamazoo. We spent the whole day discussing his problems at the plant."

"So we hired him as a consultant," says Paul, "and he downloaded the hard disk. I spent a week with him, in Maui, just picking his brain. He told me how PAFs were wound, not by hand but by machine. In their research, they tried every kind of magnet; they tried everything. When they made the Les Paul they tried every combination of everything and they found that a mahogany back with a maple top, mahogany neck and Brazilian rosewood fingerboard sounded the best – that's why they did that."

"It was to verify what they did back at Gibson with what we were doing at PRS," remembers Paul today. "Back then I was only guessing but now I had proof. How did you glue the tops on? How did you glue the fingerboard on? How did you glue the frets in? I was guessing, but all of a sudden I knew because Ted told me. We finally figured out what Seth Lover did. He put the hum-cancelling coil in there and put it in a mu-metal can – which is what you do with transformers – that's what a cover is. People have been doing that forever. He did what electrical engineers do and the sound of the humbucking pickup was invented that day."

Not all of Ted's advice was utilised by PRS, though. "He said we should put the frets in with fish glue. I tried that. It smelled awful – I wanted nothing to do with it, it smelled like fish. So we didn't end up doing that," laughs Paul.

1. Paul Reed Smith shows Ted McCarty his eponymous model in the PRS factory in the early 90s

2. The original McCarty Model introduced the three-way toggle pickup selector to PRS guitars. Players considered it a faster drive than the five-way rotary switch of the original PRSes

3. The McCarty wasn't the first guitar to use the PRS-designed Stoptail bridge but this pre-intonated wrapover bridge is essential to the vibe

4. On the modern McCarty, the pickups are the latest 'date' series 58/15s. The same pickups, uncovered and called 85/15s, are used on this year's 30th Anniversary Custom

5. The fingerboard here is bound and features PRS's hallmark bird inlays. It's a shame the original's moon inlays aren't an option

6. While the original used classic Gibson-style speed knobs, today's PRSes have the proprietary design 'lampshade' knobs. The tone control has a pull switch to engage the partial coil-splits



exception of the 641mm (25.25-inch) scale 513, all the others use PRS's standard scale length. Which leaves the new McCarty as the only 22-fret double-cut guitar to feature the new 58/15 covered humbuckers, and the only one that has a bound fingerboard. It's also the only one of these 22-fret models to use the non-adjustable Stoptail bridge – the only other is the P22, but that comes with the piezo-loaded adjustable Stoptail, with a vibrato option.

Of course, the way PRS blends its ingredients is second to none, honed over 30 years and with numerous improvements, such as the hybrid V12 ultra thin finish, the 'pattern' profile neck with its slightly V'd lower position shape, the perfect fretwork (with slightly larger than standard wire) and setup, the proprietary pickup rings and lampshade knobs, even the special blend composite nut, low-mass open





4

## McCarty Timeline

Since 1994, the McCarty has appeared in numerous guises. Here are the main production versions:

- **McCarty Model** 1994-2007, 2010
- **McCarty Standard** 1994-2006
- **McCarty Soapbar** 1998-2008
- **McCarty Soapbar Standard** 2000-2006
- **McCarty Brazilian** 2003
- **McCarty Korina** 2008-2009
- **McCarty II** 2008-2009, 2011
- **Smokeburst McCarty** 2009-2010
- **Ted McCarty DC 245** 2010
- **25th Anniversary Narrowfield** 2010
- **McCarty 58 Model** 2011-2012
- **McCarty** 2015

**NB:** The various Archtop and Hollowbody guitars were originally prefixed with 'McCarty', which was also on the truss rod covers until 2006. To match the double-cut version, the Singlecut Ted McCarty SC 245 appeared in 2010.

back Phase III tuners and that beautifully machined aluminium Stoptail with its unplated brass posts. There's tweak after tweak to maximise the ring, resonance and musicality. Even the weight is just the right side of 3.6kg (8lbs). It might not be that unique to PRS, but it's great guitar-making.

### Sounds

Paul Reed Smith's tone quest has been continuous and the humbucker has certainly seen plenty of his attention in recent years. We first encountered a set of prototype 58/15s at the end of last year and, after listening to various 57/08s, 59/09 and 53/10s, we had to conclude that there's a balance, clarity and musicality to these pickups that certainly enhances the clear, ringing acoustic sound of the modern PRS guitar. The uncovered 58/15s, the 85/15s, used on the 30th Anniversary Custom 24 were equally impressive, giving a more nuanced tone, with numerous classic references to the 30-year-old design.

This new McCarty, much like the original model, is a very grown-up guitar. If you think the unplugged ring is impressive, then just wait until you plug in. Unlike the pre-configured pickup selections of the Custom, you have an open canvas here. With the partial coil-splits selected there's beautiful resonance and a balanced tonality that moves through very Fender-y chime and jangle to (with a little gain boost) P90-like 'throat'. There's a clearly defined neck pickup voice that's jazzy, bluesy but never too thick with a harmonic bloom when you dig in that sounds almost like an internal reverb. It's so much more alive than PRS's



5

older guitars: Smith's tinkering is not without purpose.

Switching to full-coil mode we're greeted with a classic rock grunt from the bridge pickup, soup-y solo blues from the neck, but without that midrange-heavy voice that perhaps polarised some of the earlier PRS sound. This sounds clear but not over-bright, mellow but not dark. There's a definite nod to earlier Les Paul voices, but it's the coil-splits that again wave at Fender, mixing up some very classic benchmarks into something that retains its own voice.

As ever, both the tone and volume controls add tonal shade – if that's how you



6



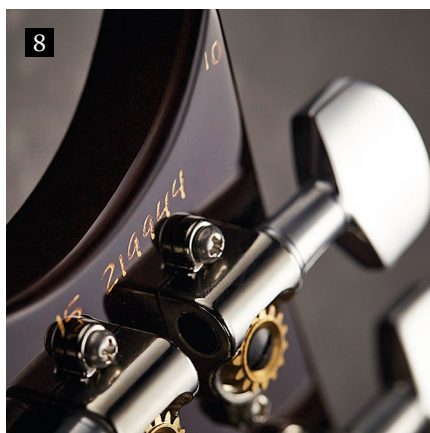


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7. On the original's 22-fret wide fat neck, the neck heel was extended compared to the heels used on the 24-fretters. It's all part of the guitar's shorter, stiffer neck design.

8. The serial numbers on the 'core' USA guitars are always hand-written with the year, 15 for 2015, appearing first. The '10' indicates our review guitar's maple 10-top grade

9. Although the original McCarty introduced non-locking Kluson-style 'vintage' tuners, the modern design uses the open-backed, lightweight Phase III locking tuners (designed by PRS and made by Gotoh), exclusive to PRS



8



9

The McCarty is about a lot more than LP-style rock. There's an organic, musical voice that just allows you to play

like to play – illustrating that the McCarty is about a lot more than LP-style rock. Switch to the coil-splits, pull the volume back, then apply your boost and it's like you have a completely different guitar in your hands. However you use it, there's an organic, musical voice that just allows you to play.

### Verdict

There's a vintage-like delicacy to this guitar that's very endearing. PRS isn't about the hot chilli sauce or garlic mayonnaise – it's about much more subtle, sophisticated

flavours. And very rarely, as a musical instrument, does a PRS disappoint. But, as good as this is, we wonder whether what was once a milestone instrument for an emerging brand is now just a subtle, vintage-y shade of the all-conquering Custom. The thing is, if you like the style, appreciate PRS's hard-earned reputation for consummate quality and your musical tastes lie in classic rock and what came before it, then this is simply a no-brainer for the serious player. The McCarty has just gotten better – and then some. **G**



### PRS McCARTY

**PRICE:** £3,079 (inc. case)

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** Double-cutaway, carved-top solidbody electric

**BODY:** Mahogany with flame maple carved top

**NECK:** 1-piece mahogany, pattern profile, glued-in

**SCALE LENGTH:** 635mm (25")

**NUT/WIDTH:** Friction reducing/43.7mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Bound rosewood, bird inlays, 254mm (10") radius

**FRETS:** 22, medium

**HARDWARE:** PRS Stop-Tail, PRS Phase III locking tuners (w/ brass posts) – nickel plated

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 52.5mm

**ELECTRICS:** PRS 58/15 Treble and Bass covered humbuckers, 3-way selector switch, master volume, tone control (w/ pull/push coil-split switch)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 3.52/7.74

**OPTIONS:** 10-top figured maple, as reviewed, adds £549. Artist pack version (£4,620) adds Artist-grade flame maple top, select mahogany back, Artist-grade Gaboon ebony fretboard & headstock veneer w/ green abalone signature, green ripple outline/green abalone center Artist bird inlays, Artist case

**LEFT-HANDERS:** No

**FINISHES:** Vintage Sunburst (as reviewed) from choice of 18 colours

**PRS Europe**

**01223 874301**

**[www.prsguitars.com](http://www.prsguitars.com)**



9/10

**PROS** Superb, build, feel and sound. This McCarty is up there with the very best money can buy

**CONS** £3,000 is a lot of cash; there's unfortunately no moon inlay option



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David Grissom played an important role in the McCarty Model's story

# McCarty's Origin

The genesis of the original PRS McCarty Model was a combination of input and acquired experience. We investigate...

**T**he original McCarty Model's advance product information document, dated 21 January 1994, paid tribute to Theodore 'Ted' McCarty and his landmark contributions to designs – such as Gibson's Les Paul, the Jr, the Special, the ES-335, the SG, the Flying V, Explorer, the Firebird, the stopbar and tune-o-matic tailpiece and the humbucking PAF. The document stated that one aim of the new guitar was “to pay tribute to Ted McCarty with a guitar bearing his name” and how its different specification to, for example, the 24-fret Custom gave “the McCarty Model the sound and feel that exemplifies the magic conjured during his [Ted's] tenure at Gibson”, from 1948 to 1966.

Yet the release made no mention of guitarist David Grissom. “The McCarty is literally the guitar I special ordered when I was working with John Mellencamp,” says David. “I wanted more bottom end; I wanted more PAF tone. Really, I was going for Duane Allman's sound on *Live At The*

*Fillmore*, so I asked them to add an 1/8th of an inch more mahogany on the back of the body, to change the ratio of mahogany to maple, and to work on some different pickups and put covers on them and put Kluson-style tuners on. Beyond that, there wasn't a whole lot that changed... When I got the guitar at NAMM – I want to say it was '91 or '92 – it was fantastic! Doug Chandler [who worked at PRS at the time] told me, ‘This is the best PRS, ever!’

“So that was the genesis of it. We talked about it and [PRS] said, ‘Do you want it to be the David Grissom model?’ It wasn't modesty, they'd really been generous to me and I said, ‘Do whatever.’ At the time, I'll admit, Paul was reticent about some of the suggestions. Bonnie Lloyd, who was the artist rep at PRS, was really instrumental in helping to get the guitar made.”

If Grissom's request came from his experiences with a 24-fret PRS Standard used on countless gigs and recording dates, Paul Reed Smith – as we outline in

our review of the new McCarty – was also re-evaluating his original 24-fret design, and the McCarty Model's launch was pre-dated by the shorter-necked Dragon I and the Custom 22. “Basically, all the things Ted McCarty had been talking about, all the things we were aiming for and all the things that David wanted were basically the same things,” said Paul some years later. “Bonnie Lloyd and I had a list of what David wanted. I went through each detail with David and said which ones would make a difference to the tone and which ones wouldn't. [The McCarty Model] was basically a Dragon I with a thicker body, thinner headstock, lighter tuners, different pickups. Many of the guitar's features we'd already been toying with – and some were already in production – like the steeper headstock angle, the Wide-Fat necks, longer heels, 22 frets, thicker bodies. David's request helped put that combination together.”

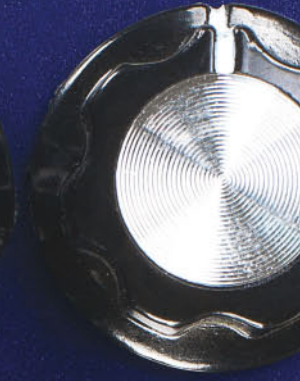
Had Ted McCarty himself had any specific design input? “I didn't contribute



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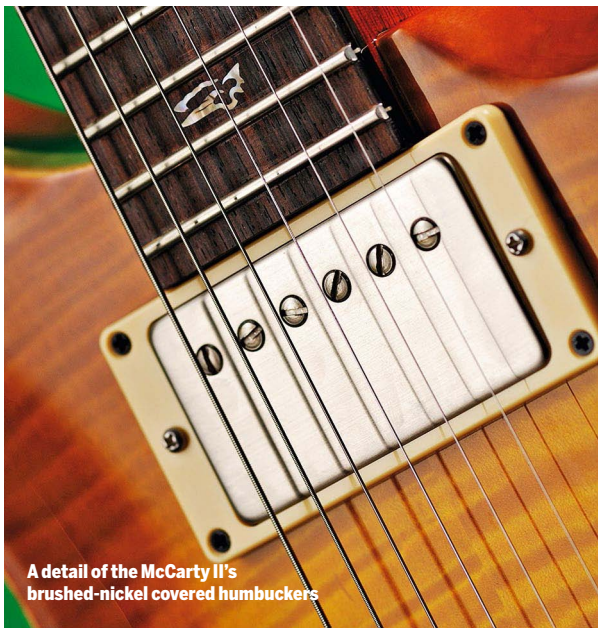
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2008's PRS McCarty Korina (left) side-by-side with the PRS DGT



A detail of the McCarty II's brushed-nickel covered humbuckers



2012's limited-edition PRS DGT Standard with 'hybrid' acrylic/nitro V12 finish

any specific designs," said Ted back in 1998. "By that time, my sight was so poor I couldn't do it. Anyway, Paul was perfectly capable of doing that. The PRS McCarty is Paul's design."

On its launch, the McCarty Model was some \$700 more expensive than the Custom and, aside from the limited-edition Artist and Dragon I, it was the highest-priced PRS you could buy. Both Grissom and Smith were after a different-sounding PRS guitar. "PRS guitars at that point had always been about midrange in that they didn't have a lot of bottom end," says David. "Up to that time, it had suited me really well because I was looking for a supercharged Telecaster sound and I was able to get it. I was also using vintage 100-watt Marshall heads with a 4x12 which has tons of low end. So, the combination worked great."

"But, yes, some of the thoughts I was having, Paul was having at the same time," David continues. "I think he definitely really wanted to appeal to a broader range of players, with more lows and a little more vintage tone. The reissue thing hadn't kicked in compared to what it is now... the attention to detail."

But why, we wonder, didn't David just go and buy a really good Les Paul, since that was the original sonic template he'd had in mind when spec'ing the guitar? Innovation as well as familiarity were key. "A Les Paul is a Les Paul. Great, you kinda know what's going to happen, but for me, the PRS was like an empty canvas and I liked the idea of that. I felt I could coax something out of it that hadn't necessarily been said before. I could pull what I might play on a Fender and what I could play on a Gibson out of it, but ultimately, it'd be its own unique thing."

Of course, Grissom eventually got his own signature model, the DGT, which perhaps creates a difficult choice for the modern player. Of the two current 'Grissom' models, the DGT and the new McCarty, which would you choose? "I'm not going near that," laughs Paul Reed Smith today. "If you want the pickups David relies on every single day, with a vibrato, buy a DGT. If you're looking for a Stoptail guitar with clearer pickups, buy a new McCarty. I love David and he did a great job on those guitars and they work day in and day out."

Not for the first time, us guitar players might well be spoiled for choice. **G**

"For me, the PRS was like an empty canvas and I liked the idea of that. I felt I could coax something out of it that hadn't necessarily been said before"

**David Grissom**



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# Old versus New

We compare an early McCarty with today's 'revamped' model and find a very different guitar

**O**n its launch in 1994, the McCarty Model featured two Dragon Bass humbuckers, used in the neck position of the Dragon I and Custom 22, but with added covers – a first for PRS – along with the Gibson-style toggle pickup selector switch. It took a little while for the electrics to settle, but by 1996, a standard coil-split switch was added to the tone control, the pickups had been re-voiced (becoming the McCarty Treble and Bass) and the material of the covers altered to plated nickel. The new McCarty swaps these for the recently released 58/15 humbuckers.

“We got our hands on some really interesting old pickups,” muses Paul Reed Smith today on the new design. “We have this machine that can tell us what a pickup is going to sound like before we plug it in, but I couldn’t match them. I finally had to get a half physicist, half electrical engineer on the phone. He told me what was going on and my jaw was on the floor. What you’re hearing with the 58/15s is the results of

those conversations. So, everything is a little different. We’re still using wire made on the same old machine that Fender and Gibson used back in the 50s, but it has a different coating. Breaking that code has been the hardest thing I’ve ever done... apart from raising kids!” he laughs.

Geoff Whitehorn had been using a 24-fret PRS Signature and Signature Studio since the early 90s and felt, on playing the McCarty initially in 1997, that it was a “step back... it had 22 frets for a start. The whole guitar had more of a Les Paul vibe to it. Once I’d got used to it, there was no going back.”

Earlier this year, Whitehorn got to try the new 85/15 pickups, the same as the 58/15s but without covers.

“A friend of mine brought a 30th Anniversary Custom 24 to a gig for me to try,” he explains. “I thought the uncovered 85/15s sounded like we thought old PAFs sounded: smoother and, dare I say, ‘browner’ – the separation and clarity I got was amazing.

“This latest McCarty is probably the finest version of the guitar he’s ever done,” observes Geoff today. “They’ve just evolved over the past 21 years. It is the most vintage-sounding guitar he’s ever done. Any Les Paul player would be more than happy to use this guitar: the weight’s great, the frets are slightly bigger. These 58/15s are probably the most musical pickup Paul has come out with, I think. More rounded. Phenomenal: like everyone’s idea of what a really good PAF should sound like. Compared to the original McCarty pickups, these are a little more powerful, rounder-sounding, more articulate, more musical.”

Some of the McCarty’s original design features have been lost along the way. Initially, it advertised ‘Michigan’ or ‘Red’ maple from the East Coast of the USA, similar to that used by Gibson. “We buy a lot of East Coast maple and we buy a lot of West Coast maple but it’s getting to the point that we’re getting exactly the same results regardless of species. It’s the same



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The original McCarty's steeper back angle and thinner headstock are now back to standard PRS spec



PRS devotee Geoff Whitehorn discusses the PRS McCarty in our accompanying video

with mahogany: we're getting pretty much the same results with African or South American mahoganies," he says.

The original's steeper headstock back angle and thinner head thickness are now the same as standard PRS guitars, too.

"Yeah, well, does it really make that much difference?" questions Paul. "Look, I think the new McCarty is a wonderful guitar. I think the decisions we've made are fine."

Many of the other changes are simply in line with processes, such as the V12 finish, and the redesigned 'pattern' neck profile, as opposed to the original's admittedly similar 'Wide Fat' neck. Then there are hardware changes from the Kluson-style tuners to the modern Phase III locking tuners, the proprietary design pickup rings and lampshade control knobs.

We've seen a few more PRS guitars featuring a bound fingerboard, too – the original McCarty was unbound and, of course, came with 'moon' inlays as standard. It's birds-only on the new model, however, with vintage ivory acrylic outlines and an inner filling of green abalone. Along with slightly bigger frets, even the blend of the friction-reducing top nut has altered to help squeeze every ounce of resonance from the guitar.

"Everything about it is progress in the right direction," concludes Geoff. We can't argue with that. **G**



The covers on original McCarty's humbuckers were a first for PRS



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A drop-tuned baritone and a shimmery dreadnought 12-string from Taylor's 300 Series – much alike in livery but worlds apart in range and use

Words David Mead Photograph Joby Sessions

### What You Need To Know

- 1 Mahogany topped – but is that a good thing?**  
It certainly can be. A mahogany top on an acoustic can add a note of warmth and sometimes even huskiness to guitar's voice when compared to a similar model sporting spruce or cedar.
- 2 Isn't sapele really the same thing as mahogany?**  
It's similar, but thinking of it as 'African mahogany', as it's sometimes called, is barking up the wrong tree – literally! It's a different genus entirely. Where things get confusing is that sapele's tone can be very similar to mahogany, but it's definitely not the same thing.
- 3 How's a baritone guitar tuned?**  
You've opened a can of worms, now. The fact is, there's no standard tuning for a baritone. For more on this, leap forward to our mini-interview with Thomas Leeb.

**P**lucked from Taylor's 300 Series, these two new 'special edition' models obviously share a lot when it comes down to appearance – the edge burst delivering vintage chic in spades, for instance. There's quite a lot more in common between these stablemates, too; both have mahogany tops and sapele backs and sides. But apart from the general handsome good looks, the roles they fulfil really couldn't be more different. The 12-string is standard tuned and, as is common among all 12s, renowned for shimmering highs and full-bodied lows. The baritone, on the other hand, plunges right down to a much lower musical register – Taylor tells us that these beasts are designed to be tuned down to B, giving a tuning, bass to treble, B, E, A, D, F#, B, making it sound positively subterranean when compared to a standard six-string.

In view of their different natures, we're going to look at each as individuals and where they share body woods and general attributes, we'll point them out as we go.

### The Low Down

Baritone guitars seem to be enjoying a new surge in popularity, particularly among the instrumental acoustic brigade. They really can be considered as being almost a completely different instrument, when compared with a standard acoustic and have a history of popping up from time to time – anybody remember Fender Squier's

Subsonic electric from around 10 years ago? But there does seem to be considerable enthusiasm for them this time around.

The Taylor 326e is essentially a Grand Symphony body shape, but whereas you might think that accommodating all that extra low end might make for a large or even bloated-looking instrument, it actually comes across as being perfectly proportioned. If you look at it closely, you might detect the slightly longer scale length – just shy of 686mm as opposed to the more familiar 648mm – but the overall appearance is far from being ungainly. It's not particularly heavy when compared to a standard six-string, either, and so it sounds like Taylor has gone all out to make the transfer from straight acoustic to baritone as easy as possible for curious novices.

Naturally, the string gauge is altogether a different matter. Anyone who has tried to drop-tune a regular acoustic's bass string much below D will appreciate the need for a heavier alternative. The Taylor comes fitted with Elixir baritone strings and so we find a 0.016 on the top string going down to a mighty 0.070 in the bass. So it's possible to tell from the offset that the 326e is going to feel different straight away. Whether it's 'good different' or not remains to be seen.

As far as basic construction details are concerned, the top here is mahogany with what Taylor refer to as an 'edge burst', which is reminiscent of the old mahogany-topped guitars from the days of yore – well,





## Your instrumental endeavours are rewarded with a rich, muscular sound palette

pre-war, anyway. A satin finish completes the illusion that you might be dealing with something that has seen a good many years go rolling past, too, although here, of course, it's just an illusion. Back and sides are sapele, which can be much like mahogany in terms of tonal coloration, although it's much cheaper, less controversial and in good supply. Here, the two woods sit happily side by side to the extent you could easily mistake them for twins. The Taylor's neck is mahogany, once again, and is scarf-jointed at the headstock in such a way that you'd really have to look closely to notice it.

The tuners are Taylor-branded nickel and, flipping the guitar over, the headstock faceplate has the Taylor logo in the accustomed place, plus a rosewood truss rod cover.

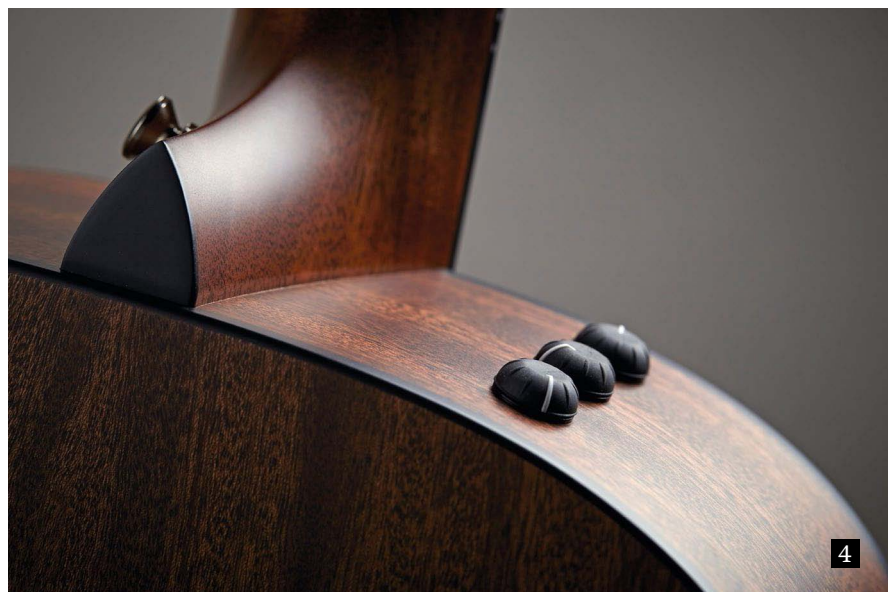
Next in line is the Tusq nut, which looks perfectly cut to bear the transit of the somewhat larger strings. The Taylor's fingerboard is ebony with 19 medium frets and pearl dot inlays in all the usual places.

The 'e' in 326e means that there's a pickup onboard, in the shape of Taylor's famed Expression 2 system – the piezo transducer sitting behind the bridge as opposed to under it.

### Sounds

The most immediate difference that you notice when first playing the baritone is, as previously mentioned, the hike in string gauge that has the effect of making the fingers of both hands a little





disorientated. For the left hand, this is due to a straightforward difference in basic feel, particularly on the bass strings. But the right hand also detects a change in tension – there's an added resistance to everything you do that takes a short while to get used to. Once you're over that hurdle, though, you have to negotiate the next, which is down to tuning. Taylor recommends low B–B, but realistically, you can do virtually anything that pleases you. Think of Pat Metheny, who chooses to tune his baritone so that the middle two strings are tuned up an octave (with the appropriate sympathetic string change, obviously!). But we'll leave the more adventurous side of things alone and stick with what we're given and so, after a bit of experimentation, we settled on C–C, as this felt – and sounded – good to hands and ears. After a bit more settling in, we dropped the bass down to A at one point and the guitar still responded perfectly. So it's very much the player's choice.

As far as response is concerned, the baritone is bags of fun. It's necessary to adjust your style – open-string chords sometimes tend to sound a little too muddy, for instance – but all of your instrumental endeavours are rewarded with a rich, muscular sound palette that really is a blank canvas for your creativity.

When put through a recording set-up, the Expression 2 system copes well, although we're wondering if the addition of a magnetic soundhole pickup might pep the electric sound of the 326e a little. However, what's already present is more than adequate, making this instrument a

potential force to be reckoned with in your acoustic armoury.

### High Times

When it comes to 12-string guitars, of course, both hands and ears are in far more familiar territory and so approaching the Taylor 360e was arguably a little more straightforward than its low-frequency sibling. As stated above, the actual building materials in use on both these models are very similar – although we suspect that the bracing under the soundboards might be a completely different story. So the 360e has the same mahogany top with sapele back and sides, mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard as before.

1. The baritone's string gauge is a mighty .016 – .070, to accommodate the low tuning

2. The 326e's scale length is noticeably longer than a standard acoustic at 685.8mm

3. Taylor's Expression 2 pickup is placed behind the bridge rather than under it, as would be the case with other systems

4. Subtly placed volume, treble and bass controls are all you need to shape the Taylor's sound



## The Rivals

As far as 12-string guitars are concerned, the world is pretty much your oyster; the governing factor is how much you want to pay. Vintage has a V400 that retails at below £150, rising to Martin's D12-28 at around £2,000 and beyond into the bespoke range where there literally isn't a top price.

Baritones are a different matter, although there are more on the market now than there were a few years ago. A good budget-price model is Vintage's Gemini that comes in around £399, or the higher-end Lowden at around £3.5k, depending on spec

The expertly cut nut means the six pairs of strings aren't too crowded, allowing room to manoeuvre



5



6

5. The mahogany and sapele combo has the effect of offering a huskier voice to the 360e, with shimmering highs and fulsome lows

6. Thanks to some expert string spacing, even fingerstyle is an easy ride on Taylor's 360e 12-string

The body shape is dreadnought, which represents a slight change of tack for Taylor as most of its 12-string range opts for the Grand Symphony body style, and this is because it's thought that the slight increase in fullness will add somewhat to the bass response. Indeed, the story behind the tonewoods in use here is that the mahogany/sapele combo will produce a drier, more woody midrange, while retaining the shimmering high end characteristic of 12-string guitars.

Casting an eye over the guitar in general, workmanship is top class, as you would expect from one of the world's foremost manufacturers and the finish is very easy on the eye, too. The 47.6mm expertly cut nut means that the six pairs of strings aren't too crowded on the fretboard, allowing the fingers a good amount of room to manoeuvre – a common complaint regarding 12s is that the fingers of the left hand can become easily confused because of the density of strings, particularly for chordal accompaniment down near the headstock. Happily, that's not the case here.

### Sounds

To begin with, it has to be said that many 12-strings that have come under scrutiny within these pages suffer from a marked resistance to any attempt at fingerstyle playing. So, in many ways, this can be seen as the acid test for a 12: can you fingerpick



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7

or not? The 360e takes this completely in its stride – both straight fingerstyle and hybrid pick-and-fingers are relatively easy, with none of that unnecessary inaccurate faffing about that you sometimes encounter.

As for sounds, the 360e has a slightly darker timbre than you would perhaps find on a spruce-topped 12; the mahogany acting like a tone control with some of the high treble rolled off. As for the robustness of the bass, we couldn't detect much of an increase here. Some 12-strings have a bass on them that seems to burst out of the soundhole, but on the Taylor, it's altogether more subtle and nuanced. There's a store of power there, for sure, but it seems to be more evenly distributed across the range.

## Verdict

These two guitars are both pitched at £1,731 – something that actually came as a surprise, because we were expecting a much higher price. That alone must say something for the quality on offer here. Of the two, we found that the baritone – the only one currently offered by Taylor – is a veritable playground, its unfamiliarity adding considerably to its cachet. But the 12-string is bags of fun, too, meaning that these limited-run guitars from Taylor's 300 Series should certainly be explored. **G**

7. The quality of workmanship combined with the general good looks of the 360e mean that it's eminently worthy of topping your 12-string shopping list!



## TAYLOR 326E BARITONE

**PRICE:** £1,731 (inc case)  
**ORIGIN:** USA  
**TYPE:** Grand Symphony baritone  
**TOP:** Solid mahogany  
**BACK/SIDES:** Solid sapele  
**MAX RIM DEPTH:** 117.5mm  
**MAX BODY WIDTH:** 412.7mm  
**NECK:** Mahogany  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 685.8mm [27"]  
**TUNERS:** Taylor-branded nickel  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Graph Tech  
 Tusq/44.5mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, 381mm (15-inches) radius  
**FRETS:** 19, medium  
**BRIDGE/SPACING:** Ebony/60mm  
**ELECTRICS:** Taylor Expression 2 with volume, treble and bass rotary controls. Battery LED and body sensor on/off slide switch on preamp circuit board  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 2.1/4.6  
**OPTIONS:** Short-scale, gold tuners, smaller/larger nut width, abalone dot bridge pins  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No extra charge  
**FINISHES:** Satin

Taylor Guitars  
 +31 (0) 20 667 6033  
[www.taylorguitars.com](http://www.taylorguitars.com)

8/10

**PROS** A totally new experience for the hands and ears where your creativity can run free!

**CONS** Not for everyone; the feel and response are different to a regular acoustic



## TAYLOR 360E 12-STRING

**PRICE:** £1,731 (inc case)  
**ORIGIN:** USA  
**TYPE:** Dreadnought  
**TOP:** Solid mahogany  
**BACK/SIDES:** Solid sapele  
**MAX RIM DEPTH:** 117.5mm  
**MAX BODY WIDTH:** 406.4mm  
**NECK:** Mahogany  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm [25.5"]  
**TUNERS:** Taylor-branded nickel  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Graph Tech  
 Tusq/47.6mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, 381mm (15-inches) radius  
**FRETS:** 20  
**BRIDGE/SPACING:** Ebony with compensated Tusq saddle/62mm  
**ELECTRICS:** Taylor Expression 2 with volume, treble and bass rotary controls. Battery LED and body sensor on/off slide switch on preamp circuit board  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 2.1/4.6  
**OPTIONS:** Gold tuners, abalone dot bridge pins, short-scale neck  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No extra charge  
**FINISHES:** Satin

7/10

**PROS** Good price point for a quality 12-string, distinctive good looks and a full range of useable sounds

**CONS** Perhaps a bit lacking in bass response, could do with a little more oomph – though treble sparkles





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LOWDEN, LOWDOWN  
Thomas has a variety of different acoustics for his stage show, including this signature Lowden and baritone models

©JONNAUGLE

# All About That Bass

Thomas Leeb shares his experiences of recording and performing with baritone acoustic guitars

**A**claimed internationally as a virtuoso on the acoustic guitar, Thomas Leeb has never lost the urge to experiment with the instruments he's playing in order to find the perfect fit for the music he has in his head. These days, his touring guitar ensemble includes a couple of baritone guitars, including the first Lowden baritone ever made.

We asked him what it was that attracted him to the instrument in the first place. "I was already tuning down halfway there, and in some cases all the way there, so it seemed only natural. It's just a little deeper – I'm a closet bass player anyway," he laughs. "Whenever I had the chance to pick one up, I'd be curious..."

The scale length on a baritone tends to vary between manufacturers, but it's generally longer than that of a standard acoustic and so a little bit of recalibration is always necessary when transferring pieces from a straight acoustic. "One baritone I played had a ridiculously long scale length," Thomas recalls. "Stuff that would otherwise be no problem in regular tuning ended up being difficult, in that I had to refit what I was doing. There'll always be some of that, of course, but if you really have to restructure what you're doing with the left hand, then it gets tricky."

The other marked difference is string gauge. With tunings that drop down to B or even lower, it's obvious that bigger is better.

"The strings that work best for me on a baritone are John Pearse 0.017 to .070s," says Thomas. "The second string is wound and I don't know why that is important, but to me, it really is." Having a .070 as your bass string is going to allow some considerable flexibility with tunings. We wondered which Thomas has experimented with. "I tried DADGAD in a bunch of keys – well, DADGAD but it's with A, or sometimes A#, in the bass," Thomas remembers.

So that would give you A E A B, E A? "Yes, but to me it's still DADGAD – that's just how I think," he concludes. "Then – relatively speaking – there's open D and open D with E on top, D A D F# A E. The Bach Prelude that I did on my album was on baritone and it would have been CGDGAD taken down to A."

The next question is that of amplification and EQ for live performance – if you're going down as far as A, you need something quite robust. "I use one of those soundboard transducers on my guitars. I'm actually debating whether to go back to piezos under the saddle, maybe," muses Thomas. "Everything I do goes through a ridiculous amount of EQ. I go through a Motu UltraLite-mk3 at the moment, which has a five- or seven-band EQ. I don't use all of those, but they are fully parametric and can home in exactly on the trouble spots. If you cut it too much, you'll lose some of the true voice of the guitar, therefore you have to find a good measure of how much to cut and how much not to cut. I've done this for many years and have learned a lot, but I still have a hard time speaking about it because I feel like I don't know anything at all!"

So if someone was considering a switch to baritone, what would Thomas say is the first thing they should look at? "Maybe their mental health!" he jokes. "In a way, it's a different instrument. It's like 12-string guitar; nobody switches to 12-string and then says, 'I'm going to burn my six-string and I'm only going to play 12-string now.' But I think everyone should have a baritone at home. I mean, that would be wonderful."

It's arguable that the baritone is enjoying another bout of popularity, but there haven't been any signs of a universal uptake so far. Usually, trends begin with an iconic recording or performance – so has Thomas found any pieces that encapsulate everything that's good about owning a baritone? "Andy McKee has a song that I love on the baritone," he says. "It's actually from his first record. I know *Drifting* is the big song, but I initially fell in love with a tune called *Heather's Song* before he got famous. It's just that Cadd9 chord he plays around with. It's in [dropped] standard tuning, as well." **G**





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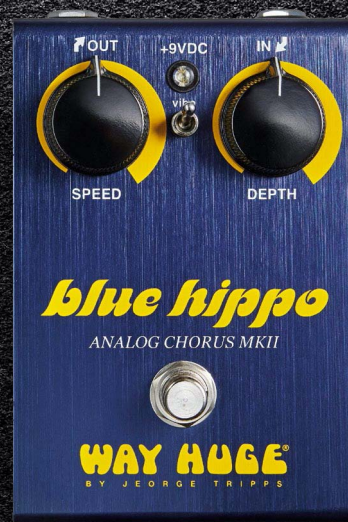
From upper-crust compressors to warm, viscous chorus pedals, we test the effects that matter in our pedal reviews section



p132



p138



p136



p138

**Y**ou can squeeze a lot into a little box these days, we were musing while trying out **Electro-Harmonix's** compact but capable looper (p130) this month. In terms of on-board sampling power, what you can buy for £200 today would have made you stare back in the 90s. That's a big advance for the solo musician who wants to summon up big arrangements on stage – though the key is to find a unit you gel with that you can use instinctively and easily, to keep the spontaneity flowing and the loops nice and tight. But there's always a place for the fundamental basics of effects ambience. This month, **T-Rex's** Fat Shuga (p138) and **BOSS's** RV-6 pedals offer two contrasting takes on that classic effect, reverb. There's something

appealing about the pragmatic stage-friendly simplicity of the Fat Shuga but for covering all the bases in a compact, reliable format, it's hard to fault the typically sorted multi-'verb offering from **BOSS**. Meanwhile, the various high-quality takes on the pedal compressor concept from **Origin Effects** (p132) impressed us with their tank-like build quality and singing sustain of various kinds. **Way Huge** also served up another tasty portion of compression this month, with its spicily named Saffron Squeeze compressor (p136). Finally, don't deride it as a tool for po-faced 80s jazzers and indie kids alone: chorus can be cool and warm at the same time as Way Huge has proven with its Blue Hippo unit, which was our liquid lunch this month. 





# ELECTRO-HARMONIX

## 22500 DUAL STEREO LOOPER £199

If the 45000's four loops were more than you needed, EHX's latest effort puts two loops in a smaller, less-expensive package

**Words** Trevor Curwen **Photography** Joby Sessions

Anyone who has used a basic looping pedal will know how enjoyable and creative it can be and may soon want to take things further with a larger, more complex pedal that expands the basic functionality, perhaps with multiple loops. The 22500, recently launched by Electro-Harmonix, could fall into that category, as it's capable of two simultaneous stereo loops, loop A and loop B, which can be totally independent of each other or linked in a variety of ways. The pedal will accept a normal mono guitar signal or a stereo input and is also equipped with an XLR input (with switchable phantom power) so you can plug a microphone in.

The 22500 records its high-quality 16-bit/44.1kHz audio in wav format directly to a removable SDHC card slotted into its rear panel. Cards from 4GB to 32GB capacity are supported, each having the capacity

for 100 banks of two loops each, but the pedal comes supplied with an 8GB card that's good for 12 hours of recording. On that card, you'll find a choice of 16 rhythm loops for use as a rhythmic reference when recording your playing. A USB connection allows the transfer of files between the 22500's memory card and computer, so you can back up any loops that you record and maybe transfer them to a DAW. Conversely, you can also load wav files from your computer into the memory banks and designate them as loop A or loop B in the bank. You can also load new rhythm loops to supplement or replace the factory ones.

For a three-footswitch pedal, the 22500 is actually relatively compact, but those three switches are still practically spread out. Two footswitches take care of functions for loops A and B respectively, while the third stops and starts playback and also operates as

**ABOVE** The 22500's dual loops can be manipulated in a variety of ways, in either 'freeform' or 'locked together' modes





a tap tempo switch. You can add a dedicated dual Loop Controller footswitch (£65), which offers loop selection – the loop up and loop down footswitches move through the 100 loop banks either 1 or 10 banks at a time. As well as loop recording being initiated by footswitches, there is also a Trigger function, with a user-set threshold, initiating recording the instant you start playing. Once loops are recorded, there are manipulations for each, taken care of with a pair of backlit functions above each loop's footswitch. One button reverses the loop for backwards audio while the other, the Octave button, plays the loop at either half speed and pitched one octave down or double speed and pitched one octave up. Tap tempo retains the loops' pitch, time-stretching them to fit the new speed.

### In Use

While there are straightforward knobs for input gain and the levels of each loop, setting up is done by a turn-and-push knob that scrolls through a set of eight modes and edits the parameters in each, which are laid out in the display. That turn-and-push knob and small display have their work cut out engaging and indicating the many functions of the pedal. Consequently, the 22500 isn't very intuitive and studying the manual is essential to set it up for how you want the looping to work. The first step is to set up the loops to be freeform (totally independent) or locked together. If you choose the latter, you can then set the length of loop B as a multiple of loop A (in whole numbers to a maximum

of nine times longer). The third step is whether you want to quantize the loops (in beats-per-bar related to the onboard rhythms), while the fourth step sets whether you want the loops to play in parallel (playing simultaneously) or sequential mode (only one loop plays at a time). You can also set loops A and B to play as one-shots rather than looping continually.

Another useful parameter is like a delay's feedback parameter, but sets how fast (from 0 to 100) each loop cycle fades away when overdubbing onto a loop: a setting of 100 ensures that the previous version of a loop remains at the same volume during an overdub.

### Verdict

The 22500 offers a creative environment for recording, layering and playing back loops for a reasonable price. Once you get the hang of it, operating footswitches is second nature and the 22500 becomes a potent tool for home practice, songwriting (not least because of that file transfer) and live performance, where you can choose to layer the two loops or play them sequentially for a verse/chorus structure to make music over. Not the most intuitive, but a lot of looper for the money. **A**

**PROS** Powerful, puts the creative possibilities of having two independent or linked loops into a compact, affordable box

**CONS** The menu navigation is fiddly and requires careful study of the manual, and there's no MIDI sync on this unit

### Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** Looper pedal

**FEATURES:** Dual stereo, drum loops, optional recall, USB

**CONTROLS:** Loop A, loop B, Input Gain, phantom power, L input mic/instrument, Mic Trim knob, loop A, loop B and Stop/Tap footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:** L (mono) and R, XLR mic, foot controller input, USB, SDHC card slot

**POWER:** 9V 500mA DC adaptor (supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 146 (w) x 121 (d) x 64mm (h)

**Electro-Harmonix**  
[www.ehx.com](http://www.ehx.com)



1



2



3



4





## 1 ORIGIN EFFECTS CALI76 COMPACT £199

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** Compressor

**FEATURES:** Jewel-lamp metering, compression status, signal-conditioning bypass mode

**CONTROLS:** Out, In, Attack/Release, High/Low switch, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, output

**POWER:** 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied, £20 extra)

**DIMENSIONS:** 66 (w) x 140 (d) x 58mm (h)

**Origin Effects**

0800 810 1070

[www.origineffects.com](http://www.origineffects.com)

**Origin Effects** compressor pedals are well-respected and used by many famous players, but their large footprint doesn't exactly make them pedalboard-friendly, so the company has shoehorned the circuitry into a new range of compact pedals about one third of the size.

The original Cali76 is based on an all-time great studio compressor, the Urei 1176, and, likewise, this version retains the low-noise circuitry and Class A signal path while simplifying the control surface. Besides the input and output knobs common to all the pedals, there's a high/low ratio switch for lighter and heavier compression. The single combined Attack/Release knob has a completely useful range from slow attack/fast release, which works well for percussive playing with equally weighted notes, to fast attack/slow release for smooth overall feel. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** One of the best compressors around now fits on your 'board, with ease of control. Excellent

8/10

## 2 ORIGIN EFFECTS CALI76 COMPACT DELUXE £279

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** Compressor

**FEATURES:** Signal-conditioning bypass mode

**CONTROLS:** Dry, Out, In, Ratio, Attack, Release, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, output

**POWER:** 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied, £20 extra)

**DIMENSIONS:** 66 (w) x 140 (d) x 58mm (h)



For an extra £80, the Cali76 Compact Deluxe offers the same compression circuitry but adds more hands-on control. You get a continuously variable compression ratio, plus separate attack and release knobs, which adds more flexibility in shaping the envelope.

That's not too different from the original large version, but what is new is a Dry knob (only previously seen on some of the company's limited-edition pedals) that can blend your input signal into the compressed sound for some parallel compression. A common gripe about compression is that it affects your whole signal, taking away too much dynamic control, but by incorporating your dry signal you can have a proportional amount of your overall sound compressed. The advantage is a more natural sound but with the compressor's qualities of fattening and increasing sustain built in. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** If you can handle the extra knobs, the Deluxe's added versatility is worth the coin

9/10

## 3 ORIGIN EFFECTS SLIDERIG COMPACT £219

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** Compressor

**FEATURES:** Signal-conditioning bypass mode

**CONTROLS:** Out, In, Blend, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, output

**POWER:** 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied, £20 extra)

**DIMENSIONS:** 66 (w) x 140 (d) x 58 mm (h)

A **compressor** can be a really functional component of the signal chain when playing slide or steel guitar, both for smoothing out the level for a thicker perceived sound and keeping the notes sustaining. The original SlideRIG was designed specifically for slide players and based on Lowell George's studio rig with Little Feat, which involved feeding the signal through two 1176 compressors. This pedal takes that cascaded compressor concept and offers two identical Cali76 blocks chained together for double-stage compression: plug in a guitar and you'll feel the responsive sustain.

It works great for slide and lap steel with a sound that's fat and clean and rings without having to rev the overdrive. The Cali76's single-stage compression is fully anti-clockwise on the Blend knob, while in-between, you'll find cool combos of the two. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** A no-brainer for slide players, especially Little Feat fans, but plenty for conventional guitar, too

8/10

## 4 ORIGIN EFFECTS SLIDERIG COMPACT DELUXE £279

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** Compressor

**FEATURES:** Signal-conditioning bypass mode

**CONTROLS:** Out, In, Blend Dry, Blend Stage 1, Blend Stage 2, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, output

**POWER:** 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied, £20 extra)

**DIMENSIONS:** 66 (w) x 140 (d) x 58 mm (h)



**Taking the SlideRIG** concept further, this version offers more comprehensive control of the signal blending. Separate knobs are provided for the dual and single compression stages, while a third knob mixes in the dry signal for parallel compression. There are all of the sounds from the standard version available, plus plenty of blends where compression sits with your dry signal for enhancement and increased sustain, and there's no mystery to dialling them up. If you like fine control over note envelopes, you may gravitate towards the Cali76 models and their attack/release options – in both the SlideRIGs there is a 'snap' to the start of a note on some settings, but then we found this percussive nature worked perfectly for our electric 12-string and blended particularly nicely with the dry sound on conventional six-string. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** More options than the standard version; still great for slide but blending offers more universal use

9/10





# ORANGE BAX BANGEETAR £279

It's an Orange pedal... available in black or white

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Joby Sessions

Orange is obviously known for its amps, but its latest venture is a pedal: the Bax Bangeetar. Described as a 'Guitar Pre-EQ pedal' it offers extensive EQ, coupled with a gain structure that can deliver a huge range of distortion. The pedal is designed to fulfil a range of roles: it can be used as a traditional stompbox or as a direct-recording tool, courtesy of a second output with cab simulation. It can run from a nine-volt battery or a nine- to 12-volt power supply. An internal charge pump doubles its voltage for more clean headroom and clarity.

There are knobs for output level and gain, plus five knobs to tweak the EQ. So single knobs control the bass and treble but the midrange has a massive amount of flexibility courtesy of a three-knob, fully-parametric Baxandall circuit, where the midrange can be precision-sculpted with knobs for cut/boost, Q (bandwidth) and frequency. In addition to the bypass footswitch, a second footswitch adds a set 5dB boost to the sonic equation.

## Sounds

Orange says that the pedal is loosely based on the gain structure of the Rockerverb amp but has a bit more gain, which is a bit of an understatement: the sound is typical of an Orange amp, but the gain range is massive and maxing the Gain knob takes you to insane levels of distortion. While the Top and Bottom EQ do all you'd expect, it's the Mid EQ section that controls the meat

and potatoes of guitar tone, and here you can cut or boost a notch or broad sweep of the frequency range to completely focus the character of the sound.

## Verdict

In front of an amp, this offers a load of options from a clean-ish boost with EQ shift, through characterful overdrive to screaming distortion. While it may be a bit bulky for some pedalboards, you'd be hard-pushed to find a pedal built this ruggedly, and that Boost footswitch gives you two levels to take to the stage. What's more, the Cab Sim output imparts the flavour of a 4x12 working hard, and could function as a feed to the front-of-house sound system if you used the pedal without an amp.

When you're not on stage, the output is ideal for direct recording – if the sound of an Orange amp coupled to a 4x12 is what you need – and, as all of the knobs have notched settings, it's easy to recall exact settings if you need to go back and patch things up.

While it's not cheap, this is a pedal with massive functionality on stage and in the studio. **G**

**PROS** It's a great direct-recording tool and a sophisticated distortion and EQ stompbox

**CONS** While this is a rugged, road-ready unit, it may be a little bit too hefty for some pedalboards

## Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** UK

**TYPE:** Guitar Pre-EQ

**FEATURES:** Parametric midrange, cabinet simulation, clean boost, buffered bypass, cloth carrying bag

**CONTROLS:** Volume, Frequency, Q, Mid, Gain, Bottom, Top, Bypass and Boost footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input and output, CabSim output

**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V-12V adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 128 (l) x 198 (w) x 92mm (h)

**Orange Amplification**  
020 8905 2828

[www.orangeamps.com](http://www.orangeamps.com)

8/10





# Attention! Your guitar is not a fridge

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## 1 WAY HUGE BLUE HIPPO ANALOG CHORUS MKII £149

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** Chorus

**FEATURES:** True hardwire relay bypass, BBD circuitry, pulsing LED

**CONTROLS:** Speed, Depth, Vibe switch

**CONNECTIONS:** Standard input, standard output

**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 81 (w) x 124 (d) x 60mm (h)

**Westside Distribution**  
0844 326 2000  
[t-rex-effects.com](http://t-rex-effects.com)

Available in a limited-worldwide edition of 900, the Blue Hippo Analog Chorus MkII adds a toggle switch to the original version to offer vibrato as an alternative to its standard chorus mode. Speed and Depth knobs dial in the sound, which, in chorus mode, offers a similar rich warmth to a vintage Boss CE-2 – we preferred the Blue Hippo in an A/B test on certain settings, which is saying something!

In vibrato mode, the pitch modulation is lush with a range of useful tones, as the depth knob's maximum warble remains musical rather than nausea-inducing. With inspired juxtaposition of the two knobs, there's a lot of subtle shading here in both modes, delivering not just classic chorus and vibrato, but blurring boundaries for sounds reminiscent of milder phasing, Uni-Vibe or rotary speaker. This is a creative hands-on pedal that beckons you to dial in your very own modulation textures, from the obvious to subliminal, otherworldly ear candy. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** If you've been sceptical of the merits of a chorus pedal, this could change your mind

8/10

## 2 WAY HUGE SAFFRON SQUEEZE COMPRESSOR MKII £135

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** Compressor

**FEATURES:** True hardwire relay bypass

**CONTROLS:** Volume, Sustain, Gain, Tone, Attack

**CONNECTIONS:** Standard input, standard output

**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 81 (w) x 124 (d) x 60mm (h)

The original Saffron Squeeze compressor featured just large volume and sustain knobs, but Way Huge has brought it back with extra control in the form of three tiny knobs sitting in a row below the original array. While the type of natural squash and sustain you get here, like many guitar compressors, is derived from the Ross/Dynacomp design, those small knobs let you tweak that sound further.

Perhaps most useful is the tone knob, which lets you dial in some top end to counteract any dullness brought on by heavy compression and to give your guitar some presence in a band mix. Alternatively, you can turn it down to reduce hiss.

The gain knob sets the input level to match how your particular guitar's output hits the compressor's input to give you flexibility, whereas the attack control governs how quickly the compression kicks in so you can choose to keep the front end of your note relatively natural, or give it a nice pop. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** Familiar vintage, smooth guitar compression at the core, with added extra control for versatility

7/10



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1



2



## 1 T-REX FATSHUGA £170

**ORIGIN:** Taiwan

**TYPE:** Boost and reverb

**FEATURES:** FET buffered bypass

**CONTROLS:** Cream, Reverb, Room/Hall switch, internal, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, standard output

**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 70 (w) x 115 (d) x 50mm (h)

**Westside Distribution**

0844 326 2000

[www.t-rex-effects.com](http://www.t-rex-effects.com)

The latest pedal from famed Danish manufacturer T-Rex, the Fatshuga is a boost pedal with optional reverb that promises to deliver “everything that’s best about the pre-digital world”. When you engage it, you’ll get boost from the ‘Cream’ knob plus a choice of room or hall reverb if you’ve dialled any in with the reverb knob, which you can set and push into the side of the pedal body.

At minimum, the Cream knob offers just a slight sound-enhancing clean boost, allowing the Fatshuga to be used as an always-on reverb pedal. Turning it up offers a useful range of transparent boost and low-level overdrive that sounds great in front of an amp. Used as a pure boost, it can add grit to an amp at any volume level, but we particularly liked it with an already driven amp to bring in a lead tone with added ambience from the refreshingly simple reverb section: there’s no unnecessary mind-boggling array of options when a dash of ambience is all that’s required. So overall, like many a pedal in the T-Rex pedal range, the Fatshuga offers a cool combination of effects that works really well. **[TC]**

## 2 BOSS RV-6 £119

**ORIGIN:** Taiwan

**TYPE:** Reverb pedal

**FEATURES:** 8 reverb modes (Modulate, Spring, Plate, Hall, Room, Dynamic, Shimmer, Reverb + Delay), buffered bypass

**CONTROLS:** Effect Level, Tone, Time, Mode, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:** Standard inputs/ outputs A (mono) and B, expression pedal in

**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 73 (w) x 129 (d) x 59mm (h)

**Roland UK**

01792 702701

[www.roland.co.uk](http://www.roland.co.uk)

The RV-6 joins Boss’s range of compact pedals, and is all about giving you several different types of reverb in mono or stereo. The eight reverb types offered up here are selected via a rotary switch, with fine adjustment of parameters taken care of by three knobs that set the effect level (which can alternatively be controlled by an expression pedal), tweak its treble content and adjust how long the reverb trail lingers. Between those three, there’s plenty of adjustment to get the exact sound you want.

Alongside those tried-and-trusted plate, hall and room reverbs, there’s also a pretty realistic spring reverb here, plus more esoteric stuff in the form of reverb with modulation, a dynamic reverb that increases as you play softer and a ‘shimmer’ reverb with plenty of lingering pitched-up sparkle hanging in the air behind your sound.

You also have a useful reverb-plus-delay mode, with the amount of repeats increased via the tone knob. While there are loads more options than just a simple splash of ambience, they are delivered in a totally uncomplicated manner. **[TC]**

**VERDICT** Separate pedals present more options, but this one offers killer utility and hands-on simplicity

8/10

**VERDICT** Possibly all the reverb options you’ll ever need in a cost-effective, pedalboard-friendly form

8/10





"Musicians love the JDX in their IEMs. That's a great compliment when you realize just how demanding these guys are about their sound."

~ **Kevin Madigan**  
FOH - Lucinda Williams.



"Fans don't care about the technology... long as the bass and guitars make Godzilla weep and hide. The JDX works."

~ **Doug Short**  
FOH - Megadeth, Judas Priest, Van Halen, Iron Maiden.



"With the JDX, I get consistent, coherent tone night after night and the guitarists love the sound in their in-ears. It simply rocks!"

~ **Eddie Mapp**  
FOH - Evanescence, Papa Roach, Stone Temple Pilots.



"The JDX is almost too good to be true. The artists hear the sound they are playing and I'm not fighting mic coloration. Plug it in & turn it up."

~ **Jon Garber**  
FOH - Rascal Flatts, Brad Paisley.



"The JDX captures my sound with previously unobtainable control and clarity, offering our soundman a direct injection of sonic rage!"

~ **Kerry King**  
Guitarist - Slayer.



"The JDX is nothing short of revolutionary! I can't believe the clarity and dynamics, yet it still retains the grind of my bass amp. It breathes!"

~ **Danny Miranda**  
Bassist - Queen, Blue Oyster Cult, Meat Loaf.



"The Radial JDX captures the distortion from the bass amp without any loss of low end. And with such a loud band, it also helps eliminate spill."

~ **Jon Burton**  
FOH - The Prodigy.



"Folks don't realize how hard it is to make multiple guitar channels live happily together. With a JDX, mic placement is no longer an issue."

~ **Bradley Johnson**  
FOH - Aerosmith, Whitesnake.



"The JDX gives character without the worries of bleed and feedback. I was so surprised how close it sounded to a SM57, I had to double-check."

~ **Jim Warren**  
FOH - Radiohead, Arcade Fire, Nine Inch Nails.



"I was looking to make the bass 'poke' through in my mix so I tried the JDX. It's a great alternative to mic'ing a dirty cab. I've been using it ever since."

~ **Russ Giroux**  
FOH - Chickenfoot.



"The Radial JDX eliminates bleed and potential feedback while producing a familiar sound. The day to day consistency lets me bring the faders up with confidence."

~ **Kenneth H. Williams**  
FOH - Erykah Badu.

# Meet the new box!

The Radial JDX Reactor™ amp DI box has been upgraded with 48-Volt phantom powering and some great new features!



Sound engineers have long been fighting to get guitar amps to sound good through the FOH and monitor systems. Room acoustics, phase, resonance from the stage floor and bleed from other instruments all play havoc — and that's just the start... you still have to make the amp sound good with a mic placed right in front of the speaker. To make matters worse, those pesky guitar players are all using in-ear monitors so they are hearing the sound straight off the mic... and they're not very happy with it.

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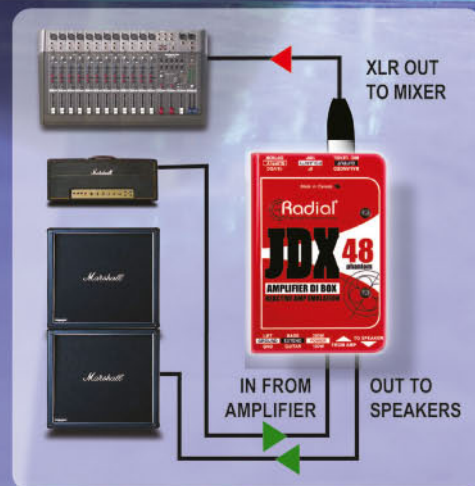
The new JDX 48™ now ups the ante by adding phantom powering, a 100/300 watt amp power selector and a low-end extender to make it work even better on bass guitar.

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|||||

# Audition

We test the best of the rest  
of the month's new gear

Photography Neil Godwin





## VINTAGE VIATOR USB PAUL BRETT SIGNATURE TRAVEL GUITAR £259

CONTACT JHS PHONE 0113 2865 381 WEB [www.jhs.co.uk](http://www.jhs.co.uk)

**Yes, you've** seen the acoustic Viator before, but this new version in Paul Brett's signature Vintage range is an electro with USB output.

To recap, it's small. Centred around a 546mm (21.5-inch) scale length with diminutive body that's 279mm (11-inches) wide and 392mm (15.4-inches) long with a more conventional depth of 91mm and an overall length of 825mm (32.5-inches). In other words, we wouldn't have a problem sticking it in an overhead compartment of a plane or, more likely, a crammed-for-space car with the kids and the camping gear. For the price, you can't complain about the build, although all the wood is hidden under an 'antique' brown satin finish that's extremely thin, allowing the grain texture of the laminated sapele back and sides – less so the solid Sitka spruce's top – to show through. Edges are maple bound and the top has oversized wood purfling, mirrored in the rosette decoration; internal bracing is spruce, including the top's 'custom scalloped' X bracing.

As we've remarked before, the nato neck's profile, a pronounced 'V', won't be to everyone's taste. But the nut width, at 43.4mm with 37.5mm string spacing, and a string spacing at the bridge of just a shade under 54mm are definitely full size and we get medium-gauge frets, not small vintage wire, a nicely cut Graph Tech NuBone nut and compensated saddle. There are two strap buttons if you need them and the slot head has good-looking open-backed Grover tuners, although they have plenty of backlash; perhaps more to do with the relatively low tension of the strings which, as supplied, are tuned G to G which makes perfect sense as the scale length compared to, for example, the shorter of Martin's scale lengths means the nut falls midway between the 2nd and 3rd frets.

### Sounds

Capo'd, even a small-bodied parlour or 00 is a hugely appealing sound either on its own or tracked with uncapo'd guitars, but the thing we don't have here is the body size to kick out anything near 'full range': the basses are tight, the highs a little soft, leaving us with a middly voice that has its own quite narrow character. It

certainly falls short compared to Taylor's albeit more expensive GS Mini. But Paul Brett likes things different, and so long as you understand what the Viator can't do, you can begin to enjoy what it can. Certainly, that midrange sits nicely with a conventional dreadnought, and picked jazzier lines have a sort of tight-bassed, almost acoustic arch-top like tonality.

The Fishman Sonicore system uses a soundhole-placed volume and treble roll-off tone control, although because of the small diameter of the aperture, they're not the easiest to get to. Plugged in, the system brightens things a little and, as ever, some mid-cut edges us towards a more regular sound, although the lows sound a little waffly and, at any volume, might cause some feedback issues unless they're trimmed. The USB certainly adds immediacy for recording into a DAW; level seems fine and it sounds more like the amp'd sound rather than the acoustic voice, which, if we're honest, is an improvement. Intonation, despite the compensated saddle, is a little off kilter, however, as the octaves are noticeably flat to the 12th fret harmonic or open strings.

### Verdict

For the most part, this is a nicely made and well-executed electro 'travel' guitar. The pickup, with its USB upgrade, certainly warrants the price hike from the existing acoustic version (which costs £209) and it's fun to play, with a pretty much full-size nut and bridge string spacing. Its acoustic sound is hardly full range, with a very tight low end, but amp'd or recorded, it takes a leap up, adding 'capo'd' tonality that's easy enough to EQ to sit nicely in a denser ensemble recording although the actual intonation on our sample was a little flat of perfect and those tuners feel a little sloppy and cheap. So, not an essential purchase, but like so much of Paul Brett's signature range, its character is undeniable. **[DB]**

7/10



## LR BAGGS SESSION ACOUSTIC DI £279

CONTACT **Strings & Things** PHONE **01273 440442** WEB **www.lrbaggs.com**

**The Session** Acoustic DI shares much DNA with the Venue DI, which retails at £315 and features four-band EQ, notch filter, phase switch, onboard tuner with large LED display, mute and adjustable boost functions, effects loop and various jack and XLR connection possibilities. The Acoustic DI also has a similar bronze/brown metal-shrouded design, yet is under half the footprint. The gently curved lower section houses the sturdy metal on/mute footswitch (there is no bypass) with power-supply input on the right-hand side, although it'll also run on a nine-volt block battery or phantom power.

The top half mounts the controls, all with those tactile rubber knobs with clear

position markers: volume (output), gain (input level with LED VU display and battery check), notch filter, saturate and comp EQ. There's a phase switch, too, which can alter the low-end characteristic and is also the first stage of feedback rejection, plus XLR balanced output and standard jack in and out. On the upper left side is a ground-lift slide switch. On the right side is a four-position high-pass filter switch, which attenuates your low end with a choice of four shelving points: 40, 80, 120 and 200Hz.

### Sounds

Unlike the Swiss Army knife concept of the Venue DI, however, the Session Acoustic

DI's role is more specifically aimed.

"Inspired by the LR Baggs Handcrafted Video Sessions and our experience in some of Nashville's great studios," says LR Baggs, "the Session Acoustic DI brings our signature studio sound to your live rig."

So, while the volume, gain and notch controls are all straightforward, the 'tricks' lie with the saturate and comp EQ controls. The former aims to emulate the sort of analogue saturation, which, as LR Baggs explains, is "often used by studio engineers in post-production: saturation adds warmth, dimension, and pleasing harmonics while smoothing the signal for an enhanced mix." Comp EQ, meanwhile, "features three narrowly focused bands of compression that tame common problematic frequencies: the low, mid, and high frequency compressors are essentially 'touch-sensitive' EQs that respond in real-time to your dynamics. The harder you strum, the more they compress and vice versa." Okay?

Using a variety of both steel- and nylon-string guitars (although we don't think this is designed specially for the latter type), the Session DI initially seems to provide quite a subtle effect. Starting with the saturate control, you definitely hear an increase in the thickness right across the frequency range, but centred, seemingly, on quite a wide midrange.

It might seem at odds with a typical mid-scooped modern electro sound, but we'd favour a less-is-more use of this control unless you do want to evoke some almost tape-like saturated distortion, which we certainly managed. The comp EQ alone might be a reason to buy this pedal. Introducing it from the off position, it's subtle, but you notice a progressive swell to the decay and a softening of the attack that's certainly an enhancement.

### Verdict

For many, this is going to prove simply too expensive and too subtle, but when it's not there, you miss it. It's easily the best single-knob compressor for acoustic guitar we've encountered: the notch filter is superb and the saturate control, used sparingly, adds just the right kind of colour. Quality mastering in a pedal with feedback rejection? That's about the size of it. Niche, but very nice. **[DB]**



8/10





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## Swart

AMPLIFIER COMPANY

We always carry a great selection of Swart amps, from the Atomic Junior, Space Tone Tremolo and AST Master, and we will shortly be receiving our first delivery of the new Mod84 combo.



## Effects

Our pedal range includes the usual suspects such as Boss, Electro Harmonix, Ibanez, Jim Dunlop, Joyo, Line 6, Mesa Boogie, Mooer, MXR, Strymon, T-Rex, TC Electronic, Visual Sound, Voodoo Lab, Wampler, Way Huge, Xotic. .... we also have a huge selection of the less ordinary suspects like Bad Cat, Death By Audio, Earthquaker Devices, EWS, Fairfield Electronic, Free The Tone, Fulltone Custom Shop, Jetter Gear, Keeley, Mad Professor, Providence, Rothwell and Sonic Edge!!!

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# Longtermers

A few months' gigging, recording and everything that goes with it – welcome to *Guitarist's* longterm test reports

## Martin 00X1AE

with David Mead



### Writer

DAVID MEAD  
Deputy Editor, *Guitarist*



This month, David Mead takes the ecologically friendly Martin 00X1AE and sets a course towards writing and recording an original piece of music using the guitar's onboard USB outlet and some not-too-scary recording software

Originally reviewed in issue 398 of *Guitarist*, the Martin 00X1AE is a made-in-Mexico, small-bodied acoustic that follows Martin's ecological route to the extent that the only 'real' wood on the instrument is the solid Sitka spruce top. The back and sides are formed from high-pressure laminate and the neck comprises multiple strips of birch that have been stained to resemble the hue of mahogany. The fretboard and bridge are Richlite, a composite of paper and phenolic resin, that bears an uncanny resemblance to ebony. The 00X1AE has one other trick up its sleeve, in the form of a USB output so you can record directly to your choice of computer-bound recording device. There's a standard jack output for stage work and everyday amplified use, but the USB is something rather new. Does it work? Can you simply plug in direct to your PC or Mac and record your latest acoustic masterpiece without the need for preamps and other electronic complexities getting in your way? Well, that's what this long-term test is all about. Over the course of the next few weeks, my mission is to write an instrumental





acoustic track and record it using only what I immediately have to hand – and, by that, I mean a couple of modest examples of free recording software and very little else. I don't run a home studio or have access to any of the sophisticated hardware used in pro recording setups today. It will be just me and the Martin, head-to-head with some basic technology, in order to create something I'd be happy to share with the world.

So what about this guitar, then? I'll admit straight away I'm a bit of a traditionalist at heart when it comes to acoustics. Years of experience either reviewing them or playing live have taught me the best tones come from solid woods and so I was naturally a little sceptical when I first approached this little Martin. In fact, my first encounter with it was over at *Guitarist's* studio when I did our video demo, and you know what? In view of the fact this little fella costs a modest £559, it sounds remarkably good – I'm actually convinced Martin could make a guitar out of strawberry jelly and it would still sound great.

The neck feels really good in the hand, it's an easy instrument to play straight out of

the box – good setup, nice action, etc – and the sound might not be comparable with one of its top-of-the-range stablemates, but everything you need is right there and available. The only thing to do now is allow myself a couple of tweaks to make myself feel more settled in with the instrument, and find a suitable USB lead because Martin doesn't supply one with the guitar. No matter, as anyone who owns a digital camera will have a mini-to-regular USB cable to hand. My only concern is they're not always long enough and I want to avoid having to adopt a comedy posture while recording. Luckily, Apple have supplied a USB extension cable with my computer and so, while it might still not add up to the length of a standard jack lead, it's good enough for my purposes here.

They say preparation is everything, so my next job is to change the strings on the 00X1AE to a brand and gauge I'm more familiar with. Nothing wrong with the Martin strings already fitted, of course, it's just that I like my fingers to feel at home on the fretboard. Now all I have to do is summon my muse and write a piece of music... 

*"I'm actually convinced Martin could make a guitar out of strawberry jelly and it would still sound great"*





## Yamaha SLG200S Silent Guitar

with Jamie Dickson

### Writer

JAMIE DICKSON  
EDITOR, *Guitarist*



Having seen the Silent Guitar cope well on stage, for its final outing, our Editor takes the skeletal soldibody Yamaha SLG200S and its emulated acoustic tones to accompany a bride's entrance at her wedding ceremony. Will everything go to plan?

Everyone's dressed in their Sunday best and we're all waiting for the bride, Claire, to make her entrance. When she does I, and my fellow guitarist Paddy, will need to strike up our two-guitar rendition of *Mardy Bum* by The Arctic Monkeys, as requested by Claire and her husband-to-be, Ryan. Paddy's got a Gretsch and a little valve combo and I've got the Yamaha Silent Guitar, so we've got a blend of rock 'n' roll and genteel 'unplugged' tone on tap. Earlier in the day, Paddy and I rehearsed all the eventualities, from the bridesmaids and the bride taking longer than expected to make their way down the aisle (requiring a complete reprise of the song), to everyone getting into place in record time.

We reckon it'll take a while for everyone to get to their seats, though, and so doing a second lap of the song is the most likely scenario. Whichever way things go, everything needs to be brought smoothly to its conclusion.

While I avoided using the Yamaha for an acoustic gig a couple of weeks ago, it feels like the right choice here, with its smart, minimalist looks. I've made sure to put a fresh set of batteries in, though. One of the guitar's only obvious weak points is it drains two AA batteries relatively quickly. It does give some warning when this is about to happen, however – the built-in tuner begins flashing when they are minutes away from giving out, then the guitar's sound becomes a bit 'pixelated' for a few seconds before conking out completely. By and large, if you get much more than three hours of continuous play from the Yamaha, with reverb and volume dined, you're doing okay. That's fair but not brilliant performance, and means you can't absolutely guarantee it's not going to cut out unless you've put a fresh set in before a gig. The only other thing that irks is the fact the detachable upper frame of the guitar's skeletal body doesn't always lock securely into place. The two knurled bolts that hold

it in place are designed to be done up easily with your fingers – but have a tendency to work loose, too. It's no biggie if they do, since nothing awful happens, but you just notice it from time to time. Otherwise the Yamaha has proved to have impeccable handling.

No time to worry about that now, though, as here comes the bride. Paddy and I nod to each other and begin our rendition of the Arctics' track, sans vocals. We don't even make it to the first chorus – the bridesmaids are seated and the bride arrives gracefully in place next to the adoring groom within a few seconds. So much for planning! I touch the switch that noiselessly turns off the guitar and the service begins.

This is also the last long-term test I'm putting the Yamaha through, too. So what are my final thoughts? First, it's a must-try guitar. It's somewhere between an irresistibly playable practice tool that emulates acoustic tone with eerie fidelity and an ultra-portable stage guitar with pleasant, feedback-free manners. No other guitar I know of occupies this oddly useful niche and, two minor gripes aside, it's beautifully made and well priced. Silent? No, I think I'll be telling quite a few people about it...

Reviewed 369 Price £515 On Test Since June 2015 Studio Sessions Yes, one Gigged Yes, twice Mods N/A

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Ashbury have developed many new lines at their luthiery workshop in Vietnam. These hand crafted instruments have been brought to life by concert guitarist and factory manager John Jiang in consultation with Ashbury's British designers.

Phil Davidson is a well established and highly experienced luthier, Ashbury's Pete McClelland and Chris Rudd are also involved in the design process.

All three are experienced mandolinists and frets players.

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# ANDERWOOD

Down in the wilds of Dorset, two luthiers have embarked on a journey into the past, deciphering the design secrets of the famous Weissenborn lap-steel guitars to bring their golden tone to the modern era. To kick off a new series on guitar-makers and tone-techs, we join them in the workshop to lap it up...

Words Jamie Dickson Photography John Wilde

**T**he backstory of most established guitar makers is that they emerged from a formative era where they hand-built instruments in small workshops before ending up making guitars en masse all over the world (especially in the Far East). But, clearly, no one's told Edward Greenfield and Thomas Buchanan of Anderwood guitars this is how it works. Their company, Anderwood Guitars, started off making quality instruments for lap-steel players in the Far East. But now, five years and a lot of obsessive detective work later, they're poised to unveil a new range of historically accurate reproductions of the hourglass-shaped guitars of 1920s maker Weissenborn, all hand-built by the duo in their Dorset workshop.

Fewer than 5,000 of Hermann Weissenborn's original instruments are thought to have been made. So what was it about them that caught Edward and Tom's imagination?

"The sound," replies Edward, instantly. "Just the shimmer and the sweeter mids that I don't think you get on resonators like Nationals. You don't get the twangy Southern sound of resonators, and the Weissenborns have a really haunting sound that's unique."

"When we first got underway importing the original [offshore-built] Anderwoods, they were essentially generic Weissenborn-style guitars, at first built with laminates then moving up to all-solid tonewoods

and so on. But then I happened across an original Weissenborn and decided the best we could get would be to work from the pattern of an original guitar like that in every single detail, but do it here in the UK."

It was no easy feat to reverse-craft an instrument whose every dimension had to be painstakingly researched from scratch. Their task was complicated by the knowledge that the timbers of the original Weissenborn Style 1 in their keeping had settled and subtly deformed since it was built in the late-1920s.

Tom Buchanan's background in traditional mandolin-building helped them figure out what aspects of the design needed to be tweaked to get the Dorset-made guitars as close as possible to the character of a fresh-built Weissenborn, as it might have been completed 90 years ago.

"I set about building one a couple of years ago with another luthier I used to work with in Christchurch – and I got to grips with a lot of the aspects of it," Edward says. "But then I wanted to push forward, which is how I started working with Tom. When I first approached him, having built one and discovering a lot of the struggles involved, we talked about how a lot of the tops [of original Weissenborns] have changed shape throughout the years. And so we needed to establish what the original arch on the top was, among other things. As we've gone on with the project, we discovered so many things that we missed in the very early

stages but became revelations later on, when we went 'Ah, that's how *that* works...' So it has involved unlocking a lot of secrets through building various stages of prototypes. But that's the joy of using hide glues – you just heat it back up and it pops off and you can reset stuff. Because the way that Hermann Weissenborn put them together originally involved a lot of genius techniques that we had to work out."

The proud result of the duo's labours, Anderwood's Authentic Series instruments, will launch on 1 November and will start at around £1,650 for a plain koa model with no binding and will likely range to over £2,500 for highly figured koa guitars with full rope binding – although prices are still to be confirmed. If that's a bit salty for players who are just starting out on slide, the duo still offer affordable offshore-built guitars that are set up in Dorset, from £180 for a laminate guitar with no pickup. These are a good way to get into lap steel before moving on to a more serious vintage-style, solid-wood guitar, Edward argues.

"We've been going for five years now and we find that a lot of our customers have come on the journey with us," he says. And with that we move through to the workshop (see following page) to have a gander at the tools and techniques he and Tom rely on to turn out their modern vision of Weissenborn tone. 

[www.anderwoodguitars.com](http://www.anderwoodguitars.com)



## 01 Pillar Drill

"This is one of the shop's many pillar drills. Unlike hand-held drills, the pillar drill is bolted to the bench, making it far more accurate, and is used for all precision work, like fret inlays, machinehead fixings, etc. We also use a larger pillar drill for cutting the rosettes, where you are cutting grooves of less than 1mm into very figured and expensive hardwoods and where exactness is crucial."

## 02 Hide Glue

"In our custom shop we exclusively use animal hide glue all across our Authentic Series builds. This is the correct glue for the period and would have been used in instrument construction throughout the century right up until the 50s and 60s."

## 03 Thomas Buchanan

Tom has been building stringed and fretted instruments for more than 25 years and has made a name for himself in the folk scene with his world-class mandolins, mandolas, bouzoukis and, more recently, Weissenborns. He is renowned for high standards and finishing, together with an innate understanding of timber and its relationship to tone.

## 04 Anderwood Authentic Series Circa 1927

"This model from the range is an exact copy of a circa 1927 Style 1 Weissenborn patterned from the instrument shown on the right. Built in the old style using hide glue, the finest air-dried koa wood and finished in nitrocellulose, every detail has been measured, cross-matched and then recreated."

## 05 Hand Plane

"This plane is quite a small one, used mostly in the shaping of the sides, profiling, or any sort of detailing work where a level of flexibility is required. The workshop is home to a number of different hand planes that all have their jobs."

## 06 Japanese Fret Saw

"This is a super-accurate and sharp saw that cuts on the pull stroke (instead of the standard push). The traditional design reduces jamming and blade flex when we're cutting the slots for the holly fret inlays. Unlike standard guitars, Weissenborns don't have frets as such, but because of the unforgiving koa-wood fretboard, a clean and precise cut is still important."

## 07 Original Style 1 Weissenborn

"This is a pristine example of a Weissenborn Style 1 Circa 1927. The Weissenborns built between 1927 and 1930 have always been held in very high esteem by players and luthiers. We have taken patterns from a number of original instruments, but this is the supreme model we've used for all of our Style 1s from this period."

## 08 Ed Greenfield

Ed is the man behind Anderwood – the owner and driving force of the company's innovative approach to business. Ed says he always places the emphasis on the music, and he has a real passion for quality and making something great.

## 09 Jig For The Kerf Cut

"The jig you see here is for measuring and cutting each kerf cut in the linings for the instruments. On the original 1927 instrument each kerf cut in the lining is exactly 11mm apart from the next. Each saw-cut is an exact thickness and the depth of each cut has also been recorded and replicated. Though a tedious job, this jig helps speed up the process of cutting our own period-correct kerfed linings."

## 10 Mould For Sides

"This mould has been taken from the pristine original Style 1 in the picture. The sides of each of our Style 1 models will be formed with the aid of this template. Throughout the build, many templates taken from the original are used... the shape and profile of the original Weissenborns are so important, so iconic and beautiful to look at, a real work of art!"







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# Q&A

**This issue:** Thoughts on placement, replacement and defacement

## Expert Panel



### Jamie Dickson

*Guitarist* editor Jamie is as happy with steel wool in his hand as he is with Steely Dan in his headphones, and loves vintage-gear restoration and ambitious signal chains.



### Dave Burrluck

*Guitarist*'s assiduous reviews editor is also the author of numerous guitar books. Very handy with a fret file and indeed any aspect of a finely fettled six-string.



### Mick Taylor

Ex-editor of *Guitarist*, Mick has wielded Allen keys, screwdrivers and sandpaper from an early age; he also has a worrying obsession with pedalboards.



### Neville Marten

Edited *Guitarist* for 13 years, after working for both Fender and Gibson as a repairer. From desirable Les Pauls to dream Strats, he's owned and worked on the lot.



### Nick Guppy

*Guitarist*'s amplifier specialist has built up a wealth of experience gained from collecting, repairing and restoring all kinds of guitar-related audio.

**Email us your questions:** [guitarist@futurenet.com](mailto:guitarist@futurenet.com)

or write in to  
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## DO I HAVE CLAP

I have a Fender Stratocaster with ID (serial number N1006776), which says it was made in 1991/2. I've owned it for more than 20 years, and recently decided to do a quick modification to it, which meant taking the scratchplate off.

I discovered one tone pot has a double pot. It would seem it could be an Eric Clapton model. However, the EC models did not have 'Lace Sensor' pickups as mine does, so I'm now not sure what it is. My friend also tells me it has a TBX system? I have no idea – can you help?

**John Payne, via email**

From the images you sent (too small to publish, sorry), we can tell you your guitar is a Fender Strat Plus. Clapton's signature model bore his signature on the headstock and was derived from the Plus in part, including the Gold Lace Sensor pickups, but really had more in common with a Vintage Reissue series Strat. It featured a six-screw, vintage-style vibrato (yours has the two-point floating vibrato), spaghetti-style logo and vintage-style tuners (yours has a blocky logo and locking Sperzel machineheads). More modern were the TBX tone control and a 25dB boost option (yours has just the TBX). A quick scout around online will give you a price range.

Back to that dual pot; Fender has used dual pots for various functions such as push-pull switching and the TBX tone system, as you mention. They've also appeared in amps. The TBX system in a guitar will look like two pot bodies on one shaft, whereas a push-pull is more commonly one pot body/shaft on top of a square/rectangular switch.

The BluGuitar Amp 1 is a compact amp-in-a-box



## FULLY FUNCTIONAL

I am looking for advice regarding a setup for playing weddings and hopefully function/restaurant gigs. I play instrumental music, mainly soul, jazz and some smooth rock over good-quality backing tracks using a Music Man Axis Super Sport. To date, I have used my trusty Roland Cube-80X, plugging in my iPod. Though not ideal tonally, it gives me portability, but I've experienced difficulty regarding balancing the level of the tracks with my guitar, it being a little too loud for the front (diners) and the quality of the backing tracks is not ideal. It's time to invest in my setup. I'm considering the following and would really appreciate your advice: a PA such as a Yamaha Stagepas 400i or a system such as an LD Systems Maui 11, which may offer a smoother sound for the kind of music I play and would obviously improve the sound of the backing tracks; or possibly a modeller to go direct, to negate the need for an amp – perhaps a Tech 21 Fly Rig, BluGuitar Amp 1 or Boss GT-100. Would this sound too sterile, as I do depend on a warm lead sound?

**Dave O'Donnell, via email**

Upgrading that Cube-80X is a good idea, Dave. However good it might sound, it's still pretty small and directional, so having a wider dispersion of sound from something designed specifically for the job will make a marked improvement. Also, having more power on tap will help with sound quality, without necessarily having to be louder. The Yamaha system you mention is a standard, popular two-cab mini PA, that includes a well-equipped mixer with EQ and plenty of inputs, whereas the LD is a vertical-line array with a very basic mixer – you'd need to check whether its inputs meet your needs. We'd say they don't, which means adding a separate mixer.

As for sound dispersal, the vertical-line arrays are preconception changers – the Bose L1 Model II system is the best of the bunch.

On to guitar sounds, we'd choose the BluGuitar Amp 1 over the Fly Rig and of course, that's reflected in price. Your mindset is important here, though; the BluGuitar Amp 1 is a more 'traditional amp' approach in our opinion, in that it has its own power section and a fairly limited (but good-sounding)

**Email us your questions:** [guitarist@futurenet.com](mailto:guitarist@futurenet.com)



# What Should I Buy?

## Singlecuts for southpaws

**Q** I want to buy a single-cutaway, LP-esque shaped guitar. I'm leaning towards modern spec/classic look, such as ESP Eclipses and the like. I'd like a mahogany body and set mahogany neck, flame-maple top and double humbuckers. As a gigging player, I need something versatile. My budget is £400 and I plan on pimping my guitar with new parts, but I still want the body/neck/build to be decent quality. Oh, and I'm a lefty. I've seen the ESP LTD EC-256 and I've been impressed with online demos. *Jack Towers, via email*

**A** It sounds like you're a long way down the decision-making process, Jack, and in our experience, you can save a lot of head scratching and wasted time by just buying the thing that first appeals to you. You don't say what kind of music you play, so we're assuming that you're more blues/rock than jazz/prog/metal, hence the instrument style. Being a lefty limits your choice considerably, as you know too well. We struggled to find three UK-available guitars that meet your criteria, but here they are, in a mix of righty and lefty formats...



### 2. Epiphone Les Paul Standard Plus Top £529

This looks like it's over your budget, but what with the craziness of SRPs, we've found them for much less. You get a solid mahogany neck and body with veneer flame-maple top; Epiphone's Pro-Bucker PAF-style pickups with coil taps and, of course, that classic look.



### 3. Vintage LV100AFD Paradise £349

No doubt inspired by a certain behatted, curly-haired Les Paul-toting rock god, this cheeky LP-alike nevertheless has all the right bits: solid mahogany body and neck, flame-maple top and Wilkinson zebra-coil humbuckers, albeit with no coil splits or taps.



### 1. ESP LTD EC-256 £365

Great looking, exceptional value for money, you're also getting huge jumbo frets and powerful LH-150 humbuckers. Solid mahogany body and neck, rosewood fingerboard... Yes, they can be on the physically heavy side, but goodness knows how they make them for the money.

**Email us your questions:** [guitarist@futurenet.com](mailto:guitarist@futurenet.com)





David Gilmour is just one star player who likes EMG pickups in his Strat

direct speaker simulated output. We think of it more like a super-compact amp, rather than an all-in-box one-tone solution. If you want that, something such as the Line 6 Firehawk is recommended for its in-built effects, power amp and speaker modelling.

## A LIFE LESS STRATTY

I have a '79 hardtail Strat that I bought new way back in '79. It's great to play and I'd never sell it. However... I'm getting really hacked off with the sound. It's got very dull and lifeless, without any Strat sparkle. I'm playing through a Marshall JCM2000 and a Fender Blues Junior (with the treble almost flat out on both) and it still sounds flat – I was planning on a pickup replacement. I play mostly blues/rock using 'on the edge' clean tones and then some higher gained lead sounds. I love that 'Gilmour' sound.

What pickups would you suggest? Would it be better to replace the pots, five-way and jack, basically completely rewire it as well? I'd like to fit a treble-bleed cap, too, so I retain the highs when I roll off the volume.

**Mark Kiernan, via email**

We've got alarm bells going off, Mark. To be using that much treble in the amps and it still sounds flat? We'd start with a quick process of elimination before any jumping to any mods. First of all, disconnect all

your pedals and just plug the guitar into one of the amps. If it's suddenly much brighter, I think we can say the problem lies elsewhere.

If it still sounds lifeless, however, let's move on to the guitar. You might want to eliminate the pots, switch and other wiring as potential causes by replacing or testing them.

Also, if it's a physically heavy guitar that has cast saddles on a cheap and nasty trem block and plate (as many of them did), all of that will be robbing your clarity. Get high-quality steel replacements – or just saddles at the very least (from Callaham, for example). Brass nut by any chance? Get it replaced with bone. Over-heavy tuners? Try some high-quality slot-head vintage types. Moving on to new pickups, yes, it makes sense to replace the whole shooting match with components that best match your pickup choice. And here openeth the colossal can of worms. The most vintage-correct offerings from Bare Knuckle pickups, Seymour Duncan Antiquity, Jason Lollar, The Creamery, Fatboy et al will keep you happy, previous observations on hardware notwithstanding. Also, fit them with high-quality 250k pots and the treble bleed mod you mention.

If you do like glassy, present, clear and clean Strat sounds, you might want to consider Gilmour's signature EMG active set.



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# Board Games

## Pedalboard problems solved

### The background

**James Greaves, Guitarist reader:** I've been reading/watching a lot about so-called 'gain stacking' – i.e. using more than one distortion or overdrive pedal turned on at the same time. I would have thought this just results in a fizzy indistinct mess, but it turns out everyone's at it! My dirt pedals are a TC Electronic Spark Mini Booster and an Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamer. I use a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe amp (version 2) with a Fender Classic Series Strat and Epiphone Dot. I play bluesy rock music; Brit-inspired blues, Floyd, Clapton...

### The answers

**You're about to have a lot of fun, James, and discover a whole plethora of sounds you never even knew were there. So, without further ado...**

**1.** Sometimes it does. Especially if you're pushing a fuzz into a distortion or similar. It's really all about keeping the gain levels appropriate to what you're trying to achieve. Some people want that really squashed, 'broken' kind of sound; others want more clarity and definition.

**2.** Three things for you to try: **i)** Set the Tube Screamer up into a clean amp. Put all the controls in the middle. You should have a mid-humped, mild OD sound. Now put the Spark before the Tube Screamer and put its Boost knob somewhere around 12 o'clock. Kick it on. What you'll hear is a slight kick in volume, more bass, more treble and more compressed overdrive. It's squashier; more overdriven, and the more you increase the boost, the more overdrive it gets, as it's really hitting the front end of that Tube Screamer.

**ii)** Now, using exactly the same settings, put the Spark after the Tube Screamer, remembering that your amp needs to be set clean. Now when you kick the Booster on, you'll notice a more dramatic hike in volume but barely any increase in overdrive or compression. It's much louder and more punchy, because it's not affecting the Tube Screamer at all, just increasing the level into the front end of your amp. The amp is set clean so it has the headroom to deal with the level increase. The result is minimal extra OD, but plenty of extra level. Now do all that again, but this time set the amp to a more overdriven tone. What you'll notice with the Spark before the Tube Screamer is you're veering into



**Add more drive by increasing the boost level**



**Try this setup, first with a clean then a dirty amp setting**



**Place the spark in the effects loop for pure volume boost**

ever changing shades of drive texture and compression, depending on where the knobs are set. The Spark is driving the Screamer into an already overdriving amp. With the Spark after the TS, the effect on the front end of the amp will be different. The Tube Screamer is generating the initial distorted tone that's being boosted by the Spark into the already overdriving amp. It's all about balance.

**iii)** Now take the Spark and put it in the effects loop of the amp. This isn't gain stacking as

such, but it is a good way to ensure your boost always gives you a volume boost, not a gain boost. A word of caution though: start with the boost level low!

**3.** Nope. As long as you remain sensible about your volume levels. You'll have a job blowing a speaker, but your eardrums are another matter! Take care when experimenting – boosting clean amps can deliver some very high sound-pressure levels. **G**

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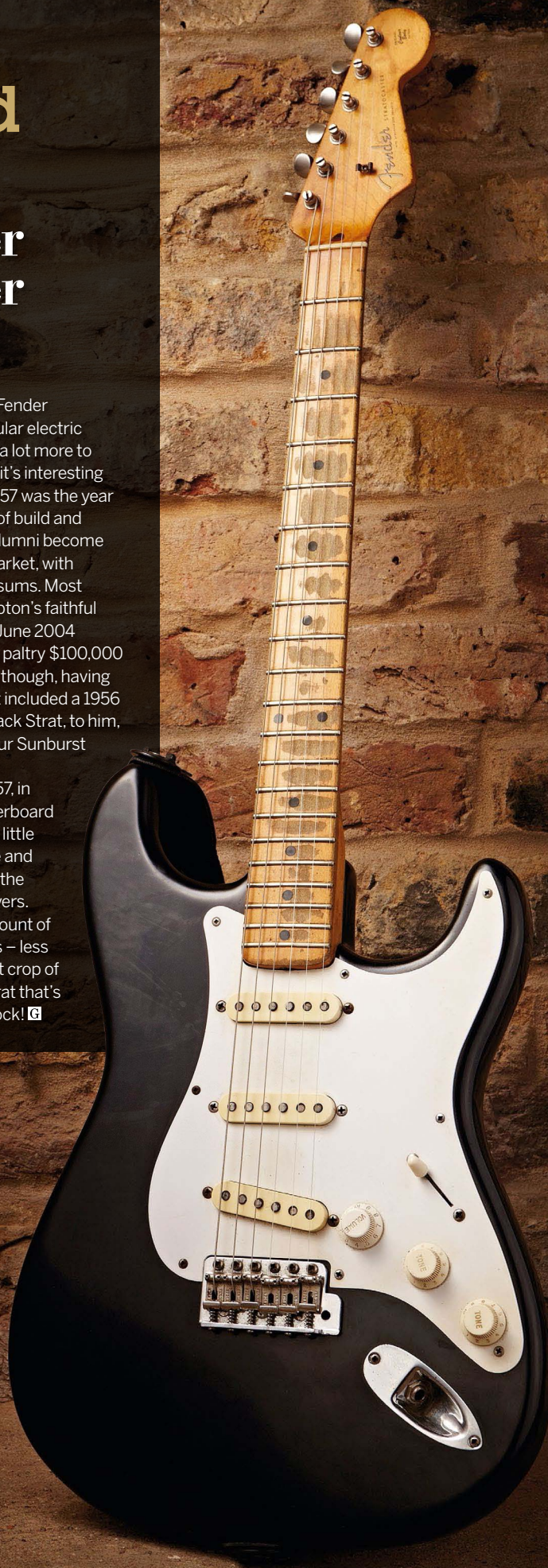
# Old Gold

## 1957 Fender Stratocaster

*Photography by Neil Godwin*

What is there left to say about a 1957 Fender Stratocaster? One of the most popular electric guitars in history, surely there's not a lot more to add to its illustrious life story? Well, to begin with, it's interesting to note that Fender itself is on record as saying 1957 was the year the Stratocaster finally came into focus in terms of build and electronics; a benchmark year that has seen its alumni become the subject of frenzied activity on the collector market, with instruments exchanging hands for astronomical sums. Most noteworthy among these, of course, was Eric Clapton's faithful companion 'Blackie', which sold at auction on 24 June 2004 for \$959,500, shattering the official estimate of a paltry \$100,000 to \$150,000. Blackie was not a thoroughbred '57, though, having been made up by Clapton himself from parts that included a 1956 Strat. But Clapton has stated in the past that a black Strat, to him, sums up a '57, whereas possibly it's the Two-Colour Sunburst model that first comes to mind for many.

The guitar pictured here is a fine example of a '57, in remarkable condition for its age. Despite the fingerboard showing signs of use, the bodywork displays very little in the way of dings or blemishes. Even the volume and tone controls appear clean and tidy – and look at the subtle discolouration of the crack-free pickup covers. Close-up inspection reveals only the slightest amount of oxidation to the string saddles and fixing screws – less extreme than you might find on one of the current crop of relics, for instance. In other words, here's a '57 Strat that's still in fine fettle – totally match-fit and ready to rock! 





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# Bending Rules Part 3

## *Major Scale Bends*

*In the previous two instalments of this column, we applied a systematic approach to locate all the possible bending options within any pentatonic or seven-note scale shape. But wait – there's more...*

**THE** systematic approach from our previous two columns worked on the premise that any melodic bend should connect two adjacent notes of a scale. In practice, most of the bends you hear in conventional playing (microtonal inflections excepted) will indeed prove to be consistent with this theory. But rules are made to be broken and you can expand your vocabulary considerably by attempting to connect non-adjacent scale tones within a single bending motion.

The accompanying video lesson is predominantly based around the E Dorian mode, which means that the 'right' notes are E, F#, G, A, B, C# and D. Over the page is a neck diagram (**Ex. 1**) illustrating where to find all the possible instances of those notes.

Let's start with a little trick that should look and sound familiar to most readers. **Ex. 2** illustrates the concept of the unison bend – a very popular device among the blues/rock contingent! Essentially, you're playing the same pitch on two adjacent strings, but while one string remains static, the other bends up to the target note from a tone below: you can hear the two pitches 'fighting' each other as their pitches are about to converge, creating a 'screaming' effect, which sounds thicker and more powerful than any single-string rendition of the same note.

**Ex. 3** shows how you can get more mileage out of that basic 'unison bend' fretting-hand position, firstly by separating the two strings of the bend and picking them individually (as in the first bar) and then by over-bending the B-string note to a target pitch not one but two scale tones higher than your starting point (as in the second bar.) Steve Vai fans will certainly recognise the effect! Having introduced the idea of a bend connecting non-adjacent scale tones, let's now add a little David Gilmour-esque twist. The first four

notes of **Ex. 4** basically outline the opening motif from *Frère Jacques*, and they're all played at the 15th fret. You could describe this as a 'stepped' bend: the pitch is bent up a tone and then rests there before continuing the journey up to its next destination, two whole tones above its starting position, and finally returning to its original unbent pitch.

It's important to pause at that mid-point during the upward bend, so the listener perceives a distinct melodic event halfway between the D and the F#, rather than simply hearing a single wide bend: you might even choose to release your bend slightly after visiting the E note but before continuing to push all the way up to F#, to create more of a 'swooping' effect as you approach the highest note of the phrase. For the full *Another Brick In The Wall* effect, you might even try to incorporate a G note after that whole D-E-F# movement... it'll only hurt slightly more!

**Ex. 4** illustrates how to apply this idea diatonically all along a single string, starting on each note in turn from the D major/E Dorian pool of notes shown in **Ex. 1**. Needless to say, the same principle applies to any other seven-note scale you can think of... and indeed to any other string (though you should perhaps exercise caution when trying this on the highest string: if there's any finer way to break a top E string, I have yet to encounter it!). Weirdly enough, the above example becomes much more challenging if you attempt to revisit the 'mid-point' pitch on the way down, during the release of your big bend.

Executing that fourth note in **Ex. 5** might feel confusing at first: at that point, your wrist is aiming to release the bend down to the halfway point, but your fingers still think they're bending the string upwards! As is so often the case, perseverance is the key here: aim to use a twisting wrist motion

to determine the actual degree of string bend at any given point, while allowing your fingers to lock in position and focus on simply maintaining their grip on the string.

Now, let's make things even harder! **Ex. 6** is essentially the same as its predecessor, but with one major difference: now we're trying to disguise the bends altogether, and make all of the notes sound like they're being fretted conventionally. In a sense, monitoring the pitching in **Ex. 5** probably felt rather like singing, in the sense that the amount of force you were applying to the bent string could be fine-tuned in response to what you were hearing. **Ex. 6**, in contrast, is more of a test for your muscle memory: your goal is to make each pre-bent pitch sound 'in tune', using the pick to silence the string whenever it's actually being bent from one pitch to the next.

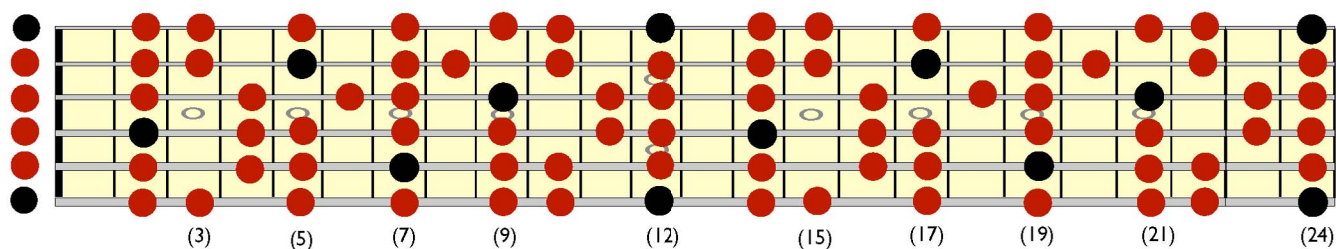
**Ex. 7** introduces the chromatic scale, the one which features all 12 notes, so all the most basic melodic bends are a mere semitone wide. **Ex. 7** suggests an incremental approach, adding one additional target pitch in each bar. In the first half of each bar, you're playing a series of chromatic notes in the conventional fashion, to provide a sonic reference point, and in the second half of each bar, you're aiming to replicate those notes without leaving the 12th fret. Incidentally, don't be distracted by the rhythmic values in the music; play each bar as *rubato* as you like...

Just to round things off for this issue, **Ex. 8** is an excerpt from one of the improvised demonstration licks in the video lesson and it illustrates how you might apply some of those **Ex. 7** chromatic bending ideas in a 'real-life' situation. Hopefully, you'll be able to come up with all kinds of stuff like this if you've gained some familiarity with all the bending approaches and variations we've covered over the last three months!



## Example 1

A **FRETBOARD** chock-full of the E Dorian mode. Plan your journey from here!



## Example 2

**ESSENTIALLY**, you're playing the same pitch on two adjacent strings, but while one string remains static, the other bends up to the target note from a tone below.

8va -

2:03

BU BU BU BU

15-12 (17) 18-15 (20) 20-17 (22) 22-19 (24)

2:17

BU BU BU BU

14-12 (16) 17-15 (19) 16-14 (17) 14-12 (16)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

## Example 3

**HERE**, you're separating the two strings of the bend, picking them individually (as in the first bar) and then over-bending the second string.

8va -

2:59

BU BU BU

15-12 (17) 12-12-12 15-12 (17) 12-12-12 15-12 (17)

15-12 (17) 12-12-12 15-12 (17) 12-12-12 15-12 (17)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

## Example 4

**THE** first four notes basically outline the opening motif from *Frère Jacques*, and they're all played at the 15th fret.

6:40

BU BU RP BU BU RP BU BU RP BU BU RP

15 (17) (19) (15) 14 (15) (17) (14) 12 (14) (15) (12) 10 (12) (14) (10)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

1



BU BU RP BU BU RP BU BU RP BU BU RP

8 (10) (12) (8) 7 (8) (10) (7) 5 (7) (8) (5) 3 (5) (7) (3)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

2

## Example 5

**EXECUTING** that fourth note might feel confusing at first: your wrist is aiming to release the bend down to the halfway point, but your fingers still think they're bending the string upwards!

7:58 BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP

15 (17) (19) (17) (15) 14 (15) (17) (15) (14) 12 (14) (15) (14) (12) 10 (12) (14) (12) (10)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

1

BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP BU BU RP RP

8 (10)(12)(10) 8 7 (8)(10)(8)(7) 5 (7)(8)(7)(5) 3 (5)(7)(5)(3)

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E

3

## Example 6

**NOW**, we're trying to disguise the bends altogether and make all of the notes sound like they're being fretted conventionally.

PB15 - - - - ' PB14 - - - - ' PB12 - - - - ' PB10 - - - - ' etc

15 (17) (19) (17) 15 14 (15) (17) (15) 14 12 (14) (15) (14) 12 10 (12) (14) (12) 10

E  
B  
G  
D  
A  
E



## Example 7

**THE** chromatic scale – an invitation for us to take things to extremes in terms of how many scale tones we can coax from a single fret!

11:05

*S<sub>va</sub>* -----

1

12 13 12 12 (13) 12 PB12 PB12 -----

12 13 14 13 12 12 (13) (14) (13) 12

2

6 6 PB12 ----- PB12 -----

12 13 14 15 14 13 12 12 (13) (14) (15) (14) (13) 12 12 13 14 15 16 15 14 13 12 12 13 14 15 16 15 14 13 12

3

5 5 5 5 PB12 -----

12 13 14 15 16 17 16 15 14 13 12 12 (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (16) (15) (14) (13) 12

5

## Example 8

**THIS** example illustrates how you might apply some of those chromatic bending ideas in a 'real-life' situation.

12:06

BD RP RP RP BD RP BD RP RP 1/4 1/4

9 (12) (11) (10) (9) 7 9 7 (8) (7) 5 7 5 (7) (6) (5) (5) 2 4 2 2 2

1

3 3 BU BU BU BU RP BU

7 9 7 9 12 12 9 12 (13) (14) (15) (16) (12) 9 9 12 16 (21)

3





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# Blues Headlines

*Neville Marten is on a mission to make you a better blues player – with full audio examples and backing tracks*



Learn these licks for an insight into Peter Green's soloing over an uptempo shuffle

## Greeny Shuffle

Difficulty ★★★★★

20 mins per example

Tutor: Neville Marten | Gear used: Gibson 1960 Les Paul True Historic, Marshall Astoria



**WE** received some nice YouTube comments on last issue's British-themed slow blues, so I thought it might be fun to do an uptempo version in the style of a *Guitarist* reader favourite, Peter Green. Over a generic blues shuffle, I've gathered together some typical Greeny licks to create a good rocking solo that should be fun to try.

One of Peter's great strengths as a player is his ability to play in distinct phrases, using the well-worn but incredibly effective question-and-answer technique. Because of that,

almost every lick in this month's solo could stand up on its own, and be borrowed to suit all manner of other musical situations.

It's my view that guitarists who play with melody, rather than technique as the primary aim, stay in the public's consciousness far longer. Just think how melodists Hank Marvin, Mark Knopfler and Jeff Beck are revered after decades, while others – often from the shred community – are long forgotten. In blues, the same is true, with BB and Albert King, Robert Cray and, of course, our own Greeny remaining firm favourites.

I've played 24 bars of solo this time, the first half being a typical blues shuffle and the second 12 bars using stops. When playing over stops, the trick is to hold a mental metronome in your head and not make the typical guitarist's mistake of rushing ahead. We can all be guilty of it at times, especially when nerves kick in – even the great laid-back Hendrix had his moments!

I hope you enjoy it – and do keep posting those YouTube comments as they help us to give you more of what you want and less of what you don't! Have fun. See you next time.



## Example 1

**THIS** lick uses Peter's lovely trait of letting down and bending the same note back up again. It's only done once here (over the intro-turnaround), but in the main solo's opening line you'll hear it repeatedly – it's a simple  $\flat 7$  to root bend (C to D in our key of D) but it's very effective. When Aerosmith and Gary Moore covered *Stop Messin' Round*, they both adopted the lick, as it's just so catchy.

## Example 2

A very typical Greeny lick, this. One could think of it as being Dorian, since it contains both the 6th (B) and 9th (E), or simply as D minor pentatonic with those extra tones added. The final landing note of B is the 6th of our I chord of D, but the major 3rd of the IV chord (G) over which it's played. Finding each scale tone's relation to the underlying chords is vital to creative soloing.

## Example 3

**HERE'S** a great question-and-answer phrase. These don't need to be echoes, or even mirrors of one another; if they work as rhythmic counterparts, or even the same thing an octave apart, one can still be an answer to the other's question provided they are timed to be so. Thus the two licks put together here are clearly a pair, one answering the other, even though they're not remotely the same shape.



## Example 4

**THIS** one's over the stops in the second chorus, and it has to be said, veers somewhat into Gary Moore territory. Still, there's a clear relationship between them as players and it's nice to beef things up a bit. This uses the classic ploy of beginning a phrase in minor pentatonic shape 2 and using a third-string slide to deftly move into shape 3. Notice the final bend targets that 6th again (B), which helps to keep the overall voice of the solo coherent.

Example 4 is a guitar solo in D major/G minor. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The solo is divided into two systems. The first system starts with a D chord and a 8va (octave) marking. The second system starts with a G chord. The notation includes various guitar techniques: BU (bend up), PB (pitch bend), BD (bend down), and BU (bend up). The fretboard is shown with strings E, B, G, D, A, E. The solo begins with a 15th fret slide on the B string, moving to the 13th and then the 15th fret. The notation includes various bends and slides, with specific fret numbers and bend directions indicated.

## Hear It Here

### Fleetwood Mac

*Mr Wonderful*



Although this was a rather bitty album, with some Peter Green vocals and a few Jeremy Spencer tracks where he's in full-on Elmore James *Dust My Broom* territory (and it gets a tad tiresome), the brilliant *Stop Messin' Round* finds Green in top form vocally and delivering a completely mesmerising performance on guitar. And it's that track that inspired this month's solo.

### Gary Moore

*Still Got The Blues*



Here's the album that set Gary up a few notches in the UK and Europe, and finally established him as a force to be reckoned with across the Atlantic. The title track's incredible first-take solo is still a marvel, but I list it here because Gary also covered *Stop Messin' Round*. He pays direct homage to Peter with many of the licks, though, and, of course, is playing the same guitar!

### Aerosmith

*Honkin' On Bobo*



We don't often feature Aerosmith albums in Blues Headlines (in fact, this is a first) and we do so only because it also features *Stop Messin' Around*. Guitarist Joe Perry was clearly a Peter Green fan, as he not only chose to sing the number, but also aped its catchy signature lick. Tonally, too, Joe is very much in the ballpark, hitting the drive level somewhere between that of Peter and Gary.



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| Fender Tele Custom - black - circa 1974.....                                  | £2,775 |
| Fender Telebation Modern Thinline - olympic white - 2011.....                 | £1,169 |
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| Gibson Custom ES335 1960 Dot Reissue - VOS sunburst - 2010.....               | £2,399 |
| Gibson Custom Shop '59' ES335 Dot Reissue - 2008 - cherry.....                | £2,979 |
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Active Mid Boost unit – top  
condition, £675. Call Barry –  
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e-mail bondbj@  
transitionpartners.co.uk,  
Rickmansworth, Herts

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50s Stratocaster, Fiesta Red  
with tweed case: £850. Call  
Steve on 0750 2291137

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01380813625, Wiltshire

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Ltd Edition Natural maple top  
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hardware inc. original 70s  
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com

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clark@gmail.com Somerset

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