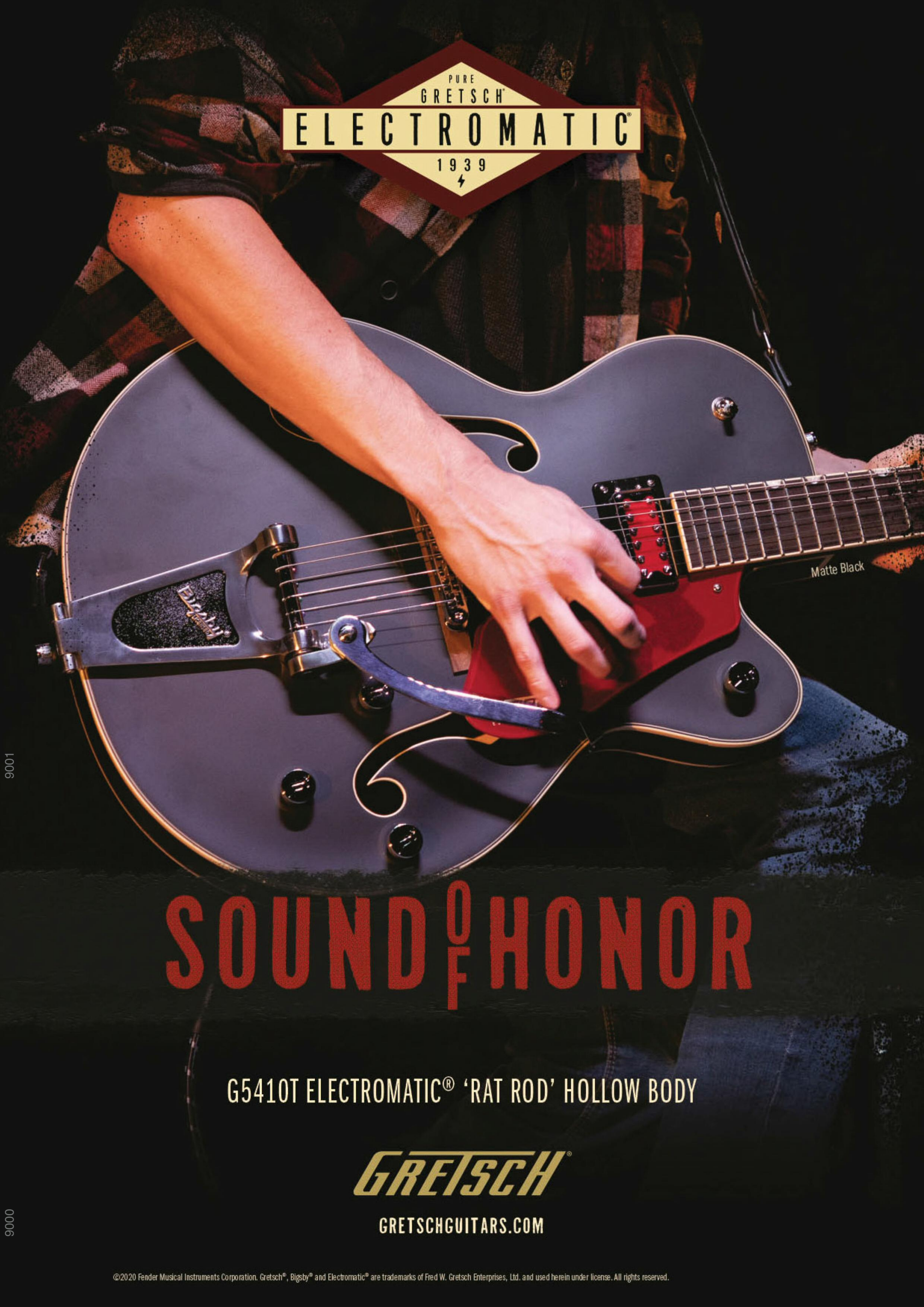




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FENDER ACOUSTASONIC
THE NEW STRAT IN TOWN

Guitarist

Issue 458

MAY 2020

★★★
FLEETWOOD MAC'S

PETER GREEN

**THE LEGEND WHO RAISED
THE BAR FOR BLUES GUITAR**

FEATURING

GREENY'S PICKUP MYSTERY
SOLVED AT LAST

STYLE ANALYSIS: GET THE TONE
& PLAY THE LICKS

KIRK HAMMETT: PLAYING AT
THE ALL-STAR TRIBUTE GIG



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REVIEWED

**MARTIN
X SERIES**

PATRICK JAMES
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**BALAGUER
ESPADA MODELS**

& Much More

BORN PLAY^{TO}

Sheeran
BY Lowden



SheeranGuitars.com

Keep Calm & Play Guitar



We live in interesting times. As is the case with many offices nationwide, *Guitarist* HQ is in lockdown and I'm writing to you from my living room. I've got one eye on this month's 'What's Goin' On' section fearing that much of it will be cancelled, but, like all of us, I'm hoping that the current crisis will abate soon and we will all get back to normal. For now, though, it's a very unfamiliar variation on 'business as usual'.

But enough about viruses and self-isolation, let's take a quick look at this month's issue. There has been a rash of 50th anniversaries so far this year. The dawn of the 1970s was an unbelievably rich time for music (I know, I was there) and these landmarks keep coming thick and fast. One such event is marked by our cover story in this issue. It's been 50 years since Peter Green left Fleetwood Mac and virtually disappeared from the music scene, leaving behind him an amazing legacy and a legion of blues guitar acolytes wondering what might have been if Peter's musical trajectory had continued. But it was not to be. Then there was his '59 Les Paul. Since that time, this particular instrument has taken on a mythology all its own, rivalling that of King Arthur's Excalibur. What was the cause of its unique tone? Theories abound, but at last the truth seems to have emerged and those details are examined during the course of our feature. We also hear from the current owner of the guitar, Kirk Hammett, on what it was like to play at February's tribute concert in London.

My own experience with Peter was when I was editor of our sister title *Guitar Techniques* when rumours of his return to music were circulating in the mid-90s. I happened to phone a PR consultant when, by complete coincidence, Peter was in their office and they handed him the phone. Sometimes the dice just roll in your favour! Stay safe, enjoy the issue and we'll see you next month.

David Mead **Acting Editor**

Editor's Highlights



Irish Tour

We travel to Downpatrick in Northern Ireland to take a look around George Lowden's workshops and talk to the man himself **p124**



Wooden Heart

Martin has revised its X Series acoustics and employed high pressure laminates for the bodywork – and we're convinced **p20**



Tube Travel

The Tube Screamer has been the heart of many a rig for decades. We take a look at the history and development of the pedal that changed the world **p86**



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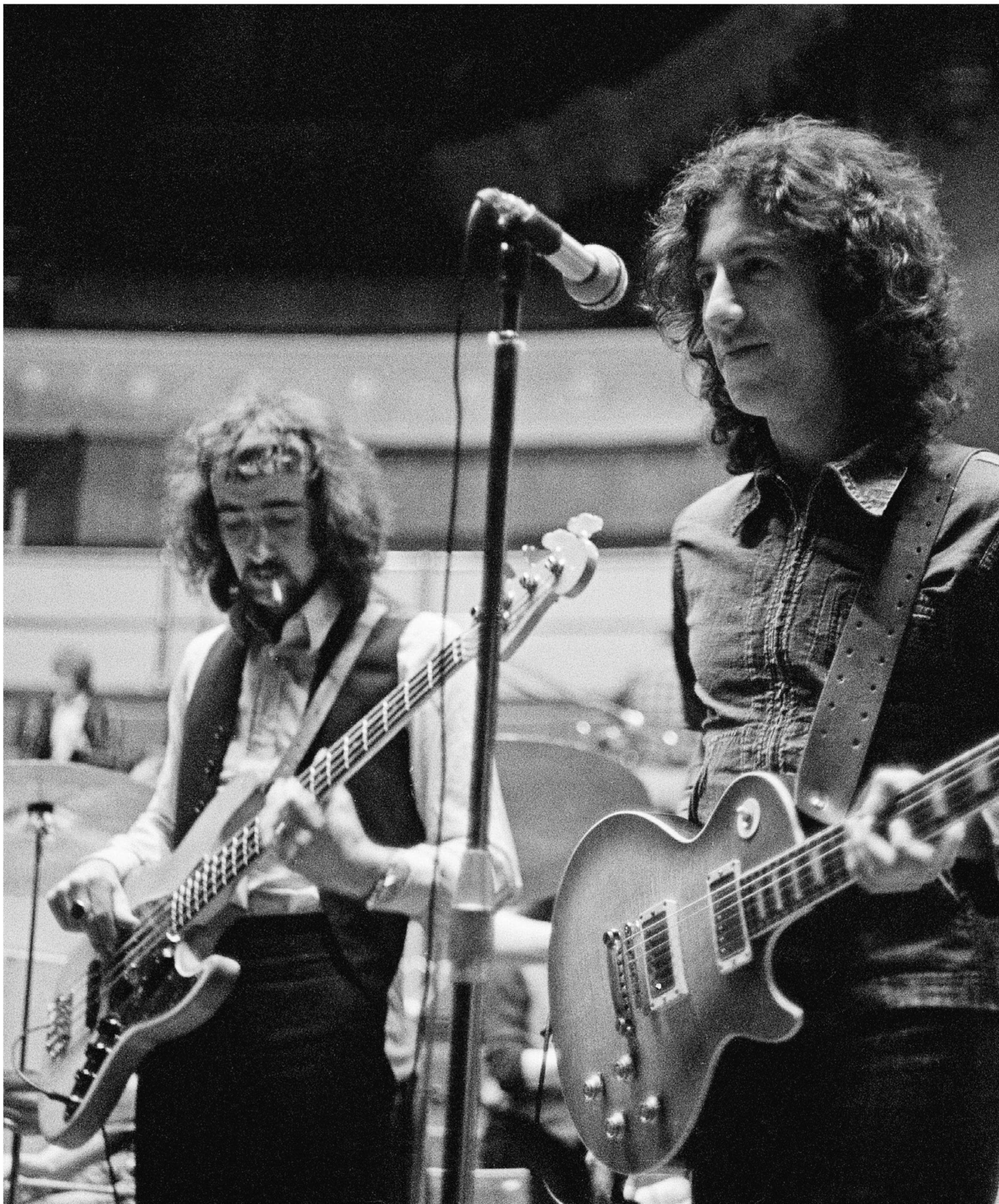
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COVER FEATURE
PETER GREEN



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50 Five decades have passed since Peter Green's famous departure from Fleetwood Mac. We look back at the story of one the most defining guitarists in history – and, of course, his legendary '59 Les Paul, Greeny

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To enjoy all of the video and audio content in this issue, type the following link into your browser and follow the instructions in the post entitled 'Guitarist video and audio':
<http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>





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FIRST PLAY



**BALAGUER STANDARD
SERIES ESPADA**
£699

.....
WHAT IS IT? Offset-inspired hardtail electric made in China with a pair of Feral humbuckers and quite an attitude



**BALAGUER SELECT SERIES
ESPADA T-BAR**
£1,199

.....
WHAT IS IT? Baritone signature model with whippet-thin neck and Truenobucker pickups, made in Korea

Hidden Depths

Decked out like surf classics, these new models from a well-respected US boutique brand are more about speed than Speedos. And one of them is packing an extra inch...

Words Ed Mitchell **Photography** Olly Curtis

No matter how lofty Leo's ambitions for his Jazzmaster were, the design was destined to become a cult classic. Yes, it owned the 60s surf scene, played second guit-fiddle to Johnny Cash sideman Luther Perkins' beloved Fender Esquire, and later found friends in the new wave, indie and avant garde cliques. But while the Telecaster and Stratocaster were masterpieces of functionality before form, the Jazzmaster was over-engineered at just about every turn.

In more recent years, that classic offset body shape has been embraced by the metal crowd. Stripped of its cumbersome vibrato and vintage-spec single coils, contemporary versions more likely feature hardtail bridges and anti-socially wound humbuckers. Which brings us neatly to





1. While the Standard Espada is well presented, the T-BAR is the looker here. The Metallic Cool Green paint is Kustom car kool, and we love the Gretsch-style thick gold scratchplate. This guitar has plenty of show *and go*...

1

the Balaguer Standard Series Espada and Select Series Espada T-BAR guitars you see before you.

Based in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Balaguer – pronounced ‘Bah-Lah-Ger’ – could be yet another boutique US brand with limited international reach. But via its Select (Korean) and new Standard (China) series we can cop a feel of its goodies at a much more affordable price.

So, the more affordable Standard Series model features a 46mm-thick alder body (three-piece from what we can see) with a small edge radius, not to mention a light forearm contour that’s more like a concave chamfer. Head round the back and you’ll encounter a tummy cut and palm-cutaway, the latter not unlike that seen on Fender’s recent Ultra model. The heel is nicely contoured, too, with the neck screws residing in recessed washers.

As we found when we dismantled the guitar, the 648mm (25.5-inch) bolt-on neck is very tight fitting – always a good sign – and although its Fano-esque head comes in a six-in-a-line format it’s back angled. That’s the sort of boutique feature you’ll see on Joe Knaggs’ guitars, for example.

Classed as a ‘Comfy C’ the neck profile is a little thinner back to front, especially in lower positions, than Fender’s ‘Modern C’ shape. That said, it fills out nicely as we

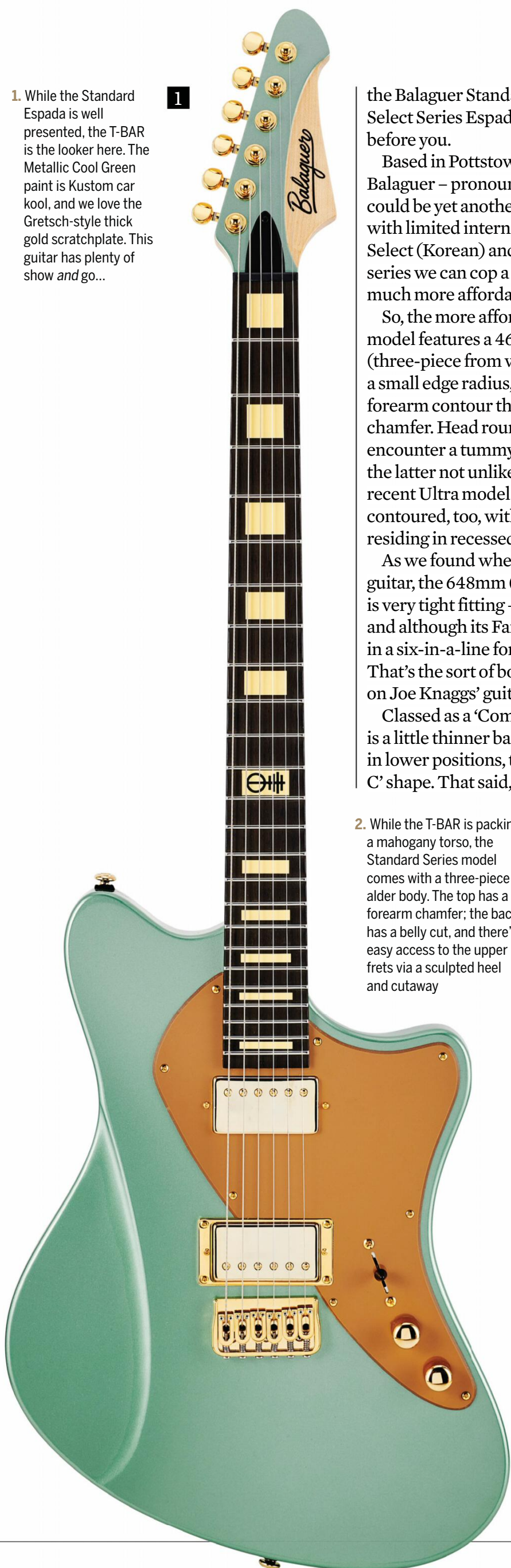
make our way towards the upper frets. Some may find the shredder-friendly 406mm (16-inch) fingerboard radius a little more problematic.

The black hardware is rather more generic than the higher-priced models. You get a chunky six-saddle bridge with through-body stringing and a set of locking tuners. The ominous vibe is broken up with a bit of gleam from the scuffed nickel covers of the twin Feral humbuckers. The bridge pickup is secured to the body via a standard mounting ring. The neck ‘bucker, like the master volume and push/pull tone controls, is mounted on the three-ply tortoiseshell scratchplate. A three-way pickup selector toggle switch is located, Les Paul style, on the guitar’s upper body.

As confidently presented as the Standard model appears, the Metallic Cool Green Select Series Espada T-BAR is really dressed to impress. Talk about pimped. It reminds us of Isaac Hayes’ Iceberg Slim-style Cadillac, currently garaged at the Stax Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. If you don’t believe us, look it up online.

While you’re at it, tap Tony Pizzuti of US Metalcore beat group The Word Alive into Google; the mahogany-body T-BAR is that guy’s signature model. If you like the miffed yet melodic heavy stuff, you might already know this fella. That heaviness suggested

2. While the T-BAR is packing a mahogany torso, the Standard Series model comes with a three-piece alder body. The top has a forearm chamfer; the back has a belly cut, and there’s easy access to the upper frets via a sculpted heel and cutaway

2



3

3

4

3. They might be aimed at the metal crowd, but these guitars are more versatile than that label suggests. The humbuckers loaded onto each guitar are hardly overwound monsters, so it's possible to get some cool old-school tones, especially when you engage the push/pull coil-splitter

4. Both guitars ship with ebony fingerboards and medium jumbo frets. You get 22 nickel frets on the Standard Series Espada and 24 stainless steel items on the Select Series T-BAR. The shared 406mm (16-inch) fingerboard radius makes these guitars fast enough for the shredder crowd

by the man's recorded output is fuelled via a 673mm (26.5-inch) scale length, a 'baritone' format designed for dropped or lowered tunings. Other spec details include Truenobucker pickups, an ebony fingerboard, 24 medium jumbo frets, cut a tad higher than those on the Standard, and Custard Cream coloured block inlays. You also get a set of locking tuners, gold-plated to match the rest of the hardware.

The super-thin neck profile would give a flatworm body image issues. The D shape offers very little shoulder to cry on, and the back of the neck is flat as a pancake. Like the Standard model, the neck here is quarter-sawn, which, bearing in mind the slim depth, is probably essential. That said, there's just enough flex for some Slash-style manual neck vibrato.

There's a bit more detail to the build of the Select T-BAR. The slightly higher stainless steel fretwire is mirror shiny, and there's

These guitars have a unique feel, quality presentation and a mix of classic and robustly modern tones

more shape to that stylish forearm body contour. The bridge, too, in this instance sourced from Hipshot, features a brass top plate and stainless steel saddles.

Feel & Sounds

Some guitars are as typecast as Steven Seagal. Rickenbackers jangle, Gretsches twang, and six-strings like our twosome with their super-thin necks, big frets and a fingerboard radius in the mid-teens are for shredders and metalheads. Here, of course, there's some mileage in the old 'there's no smoke without fire' adage. Balaguer's customer base predominantly features the hirsute of chin and fleet of finger.

Both guitars play perfectly from their padded gigbags. The Standard has a more conventional feel, the shallow C profile not a million miles away from some early 60s Strats. The 406mm (16-inch) radius makes for a brisk journey along the fingerboard, but the medium jumbo frets do allow for some digging in above the 12th fret. The shallowness of the neck makes it tempting to hang your left hand thumb over the fat strings, old-school. The Select T-BAR is different. The neck's flat back feels best when pivoting your thumb, shredder-style.

Time to get amplified. The Standard's Feral pups aren't quite as fearsome as the

name suggests. Set loose, the bridge pickup offers up a clean tone that's bright and punchy. That said, it takes on a lot more character when you apply some overdrive. It's no lightweight, but it's not some overwound monster, either. It allows for some welcome note separation, even when you go full bhoona on the gain knob.

The front pickup is quite bright, thanks in no small part to the twangy Fender scale length and alder body. Dialling back the tone knob pulls in some warmth, while splitting the coils in all positions on the toggle switch massively widens this guitar's appeal. The single-coil sounds take this modern-sounding guitar back to the seashore of 60s California. Bright and bell-like is the vibe here. Give it some welly, however, and you're in dirty blues and Ramones punk territory.

The T-BAR shares the retro single-coil delivery of its lower-priced brother, but you're dealing with way more bottom-end. That's your baritone for you. Slipping off the velvet glove for full 'bucker mode, we're convinced wrenching heavy riffs from the down-tuned strings will keep the heavy brigade happy. Switching to the neck pup adds a whopping dollop of girth, but we miss the razor-sharp delivery and focus of the bridge unit. The middle and neck



positions on the switch actually work best for retro-rock stuff. Add some reverb and tremolo and you're taking a trip with Glen Campbell, John Fogerty and Tony Joe White. Strange but true...

Verdict

Whenever we encounter a new guitar brand, we immediately search for its USP. That's the Unique Selling Point, natch. Brands like Fano – and Fender, too, of course – have been all over this modded Jazzmaster thing for years now. What makes these Balaguer guitars worth your time, effort and, ultimately, money is their unique feel, quality presentation and the mix of classic and robustly modern tones that are on offer.

The added range of the T-BAR might pigeonhole the thing as a sabre-toothed metal beast, but that bottom-string twang works just as well for swampy rock and *Wichita Lineman*-esque country. The Standard is more of an all-rounder. If you're feeling the thin neck thing, there's no limit to what you can play on this sensibly priced guitar. The message is, don't cross the street to avoid these guys just because you think they're skull-busting thugs. In reality, they're way more versatile than you'd think. Just like the guitar that inspired them. **G**

5. The Select Series Espada T-BAR is a baritone model with a 673mm (26.5-inch) scale length bolt-on maple neck. That makes it perfect for down-tuning for heavy duty riffs. That said, it also works great for old-school swampy rock stuff, too



BALAGUER STANDARD SERIES ESPADA

PRICE: £699 (inc gigbag)
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Offset double-cutaway solidbody electric
BODY: Alder
NECK: Maple, Comfy C profile, bolt-on
SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")
NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech friction reducing/42.8mm
FINGERBOARD: Ebony, pearloid dot inlays, 406mm (16") radius
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo nickel
HARDWARE: Hardtail bridge with rear-lock Balaguer tuners – black-plated
STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm
ELECTRICS: Balaguer Feral humbucker set, 3-way lever pickup selector, master volume and tone
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.6/8.3
OPTIONS: None
RANGE OPTIONS: Standard Series Archetype with Feral humbuckers and hard-rail bridge in various finishes (£699 to £799)
LEFT-HANDERS: No
FINISHES: Gloss Vintageburst (as reviewed), Gloss Shell Pink, Satin Black, Silverburst

GuitarGuitar
0800 456 1959
www.balaguerguitars.com

7/10

PROS This hot-rodded offset offers retro looks and shred-friendly performance; tonally versatile

CONS The neck might be a bit too slim for some



BALAGUER SELECT SERIES ESPADA T-BAR

PRICE: £1,199 (inc gigbag)
ORIGIN: Korea
TYPE: Offset double-cutaway baritone solidbody electric
BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, Thin D profile, bolt-on
SCALE LENGTH: 673mm (26.5")
NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech friction reducing/43mm
FINGERBOARD: Ebony, cream block inlays w/ Human logo at 12th fret, 406mm (16") radius
FRETS: 24, medium jumbo stainless steel
HARDWARE: Hipshot hardtail bridge with rear-lock Balaguer tuners – gold-plated
STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm
ELECTRICS: Balaguer Truenobucker humbuckers set, 3-way lever pickup selector, master volume and tone (w/ coil-split)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 4/8.15
OPTIONS: None
RANGE OPTIONS: Select Series Hyperion Standard with Feral and Evergreen humbuckers and tune-o-matic/stud tailpiece (£959)
LEFT-HANDERS: No
FINISHES: Metallic Cool Green (as reviewed)

8/10

PROS Great mix of vintage and modern tones; build quality and setup are excellent; it's so pretty!

CONS The baritone thing will obviously limit its appeal

**SE**

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FIRST PLAY



RAJANI VOD-50 112 COMBO
£1,495

WHAT IS IT? The first model from a new amplification brand founded by London-based professional guitarist and audio expert Ravi Rajani

Aiming High

This combo from new amp maker on the scene Rajani is a modern take on classic tone, comfortably familiar and with its origins in North London

Words Nick Guppy **Photography** Olly Curtis

There are more guitar amplifiers and amplification options today than ever before, yet even in a market that appears near saturation it seems there's always an opportunity for new brands and products – at least for those who are brave enough. Enter Rajani Audio Electronics, based in North London and the brainchild of founder Ravi Rajani, a pro guitarist and electronics engineer with experience that includes working for a major tech company in Silicon Valley. After years of doing repairs and modifications, Ravi has merged his passion for music and electronics to produce an amplifier that meets his own exacting requirements: the VOD-50.

It's a smartly turned out 112 combo, with neatly applied black vinyl and a black and silver sparkle grille cloth. Inside is a hybrid circuit with two preamp valves – a 12AX7 and a 12AU7 – coupled to a clever Class AB solid-state output stage that's been specially developed to flatter the electric guitar's dynamics. Featuring a high-quality optical compressor on its input, the power stage is supposed to stay clean and clear all the way up to 11, reproducing the VOD-50's preamp tones with perfect clarity.



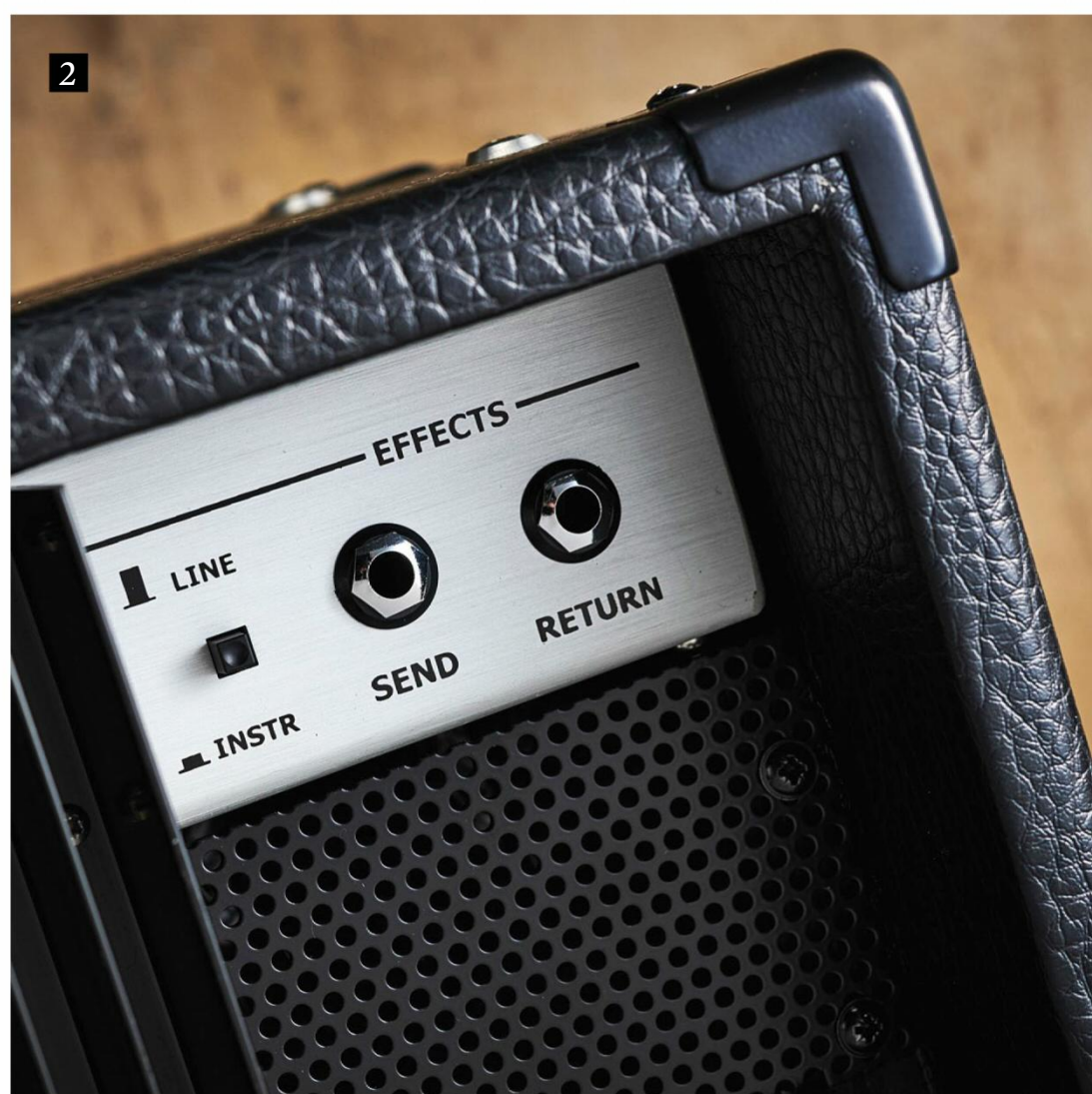


1. Rajani's choice of loudspeaker for the VOD-50 is the excellent Jensen Tornado, which features a weight-saving neodymium magnet
2. The VOD-50's series effects loop has a switchable level feature to accommodate regular stompboxes and semi-pro rack effects. Elsewhere, underneath the vinyl there's a solid pine cabinet, with dovetailed corners, for light weight and resonance. There are different cab/speaker vinyl options to suit all tastes

1



2



Under the vinyl of our sample, there's a solid pine cabinet with dovetailed corners for light weight, resonance and durability. The loudspeaker onboard is a Jensen Tornado Special Edition, which has a neodymium magnet to help keep the kilos away. Add in a smart aluminium chassis and the VOD-50 is very portable indeed; at just over 13 kilos (30lb), it's a comfortable one-handed lift for most people.

Inside the chassis, the electronics are PCB-based, with most components held on three boards: one for the front-panel controls, one for the effects loop and reverb, and a large main board for everything else, all hooked up with locking ribbon connectors. There's a mix of miniature and surface mount components, with metal film resistors everywhere to reduce hiss levels. Meanwhile, the mains transformer is a large toroidal type. Toroidal transformers have very tight hum fields, which significantly reduce noise pick-up, but they generate much higher current at switch-on, so the power supply circuit needs to accommodate that. While they're common in hi-fi equipment, there's only one other guitar amp manufacturer we know of using toroidal transformers as standard.

The VOD-50 is a single-channel design with a clean level control and a footswitchable lead section that has separate controls for drive and level. Both clean and lead sounds share the same EQ, which is an active modified Baxandall

This active Baxandall EQ is simple and easy to use: turning down treble and bass emphasises midrange and vice versa



3

design with controls for bass and treble. Both tone knobs have around 13dB of cut and boost, and the shelf frequencies have been carefully chosen to sound natural for the guitar.

Other features include a footswitchable boost that works in clean and lead modes, spring reverb and a simple series effects loop, which can be switched from instrument to line level operation. Overall, the Rajani looks well made inside and out, with robust high-quality electronics and clean layout. It's certainly capable of handling non-stop gigging at the pro level.

Feel & Sounds

The VOD-50's simple control panel requires a little explanation, because it doesn't follow the conventional gain, master volume and passive EQ arrangement most guitar amplifiers use. There are two footswitchable modes called Clean and Lead. The Clean control is actually a variable wide midrange boost that progressively adds more grit and bite to the sound. When turned down to zero with the master volume high, there's plenty of headroom for funk and jazz. Turning up adds a Tweed-influenced grunt that's great for blues and country. The Lead

The VOD-50's lead and boost functions are controlled by these two front-panel switches, and there's also a remote two-button footswitch supplied



RAJANI VOD-50 1X12 COMBO

PRICE: £1,495

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: Valve preamp, solid-state power amp

OUTPUT: 50W RMS

VALVES: 1x 12AX7, 1x 12AU7

DIMENSIONS: 490 (h) x 525 (w) x 255mm (d)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 13.5/30

CABINET: Pine

LOUDSPEAKERS: 1 x12" Jensen Tornado Special Edition

CHANNELS: 1

CONTROLS: Clean level, lead drive, lead level, bass, treble, reverb level, master volume

FOOTSWITCH: 2-button switch (supplied) toggles boost and clean/lead sounds

ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Series effects loop with switchable levels, spring reverb

OPTIONS: The amp can be ordered with various speaker configurations and vinyl colours; contact manufacturer for more details

RANGE OPTIONS: There's a head version, too, for £1,395

Rajani Audio Electronics Ltd
www.rajaniamps.com

8/10

PROS Quality tones, excellent reverb, very portable

CONS Slightly limited feature set compared with the competition; expensive, though the price is justified by the build quality and excellent noise performance

drive does a similar thing for the Lead mode, with a respectable Tweed crunch that turns into a smooth, singing sustain at higher levels with a hint of Dumble, although the preamp is completely different in design and operation. The footswitchable boost function operates in both modes, acting as a mid boost for the Clean mode and a treble boost for the Lead mode.

The bass and treble tone controls operate an active Baxandall-type EQ, with the neutral position at 12 o'clock, cutting frequencies when turned anti-clockwise and boosting them when turned clockwise. The easiest way to understand how it works is to imagine three shelves labelled bass, mid and treble. Although there's no mid control, lowering bass and treble creates a hump for midrange emphasis, while raising bass and treble up creates a mid-scoop effect. Unlike passive EQs, the VOD-50's tone controls aren't interactive, making the results smooth and predictable, with none of the nasal peaks that sometimes occur in passive EQs.

The VOD-50 flatters our '72 Les Paul Custom's humbuckers and the Seymour Duncan Alnico Pro single coils of our Strat-alike, and its excellent low-noise performance makes it a great tool for the studio as well as the stage, where there's volume to spare for live gigs. The reverb is excellent, too, with a warm, smooth decay and none of the crashiness that often affects spring circuits.

This exciting new amplifier is different yet sounds comfortingly familiar, with a contemporary vibe that works well for most genres

Verdict

It's far from easy to design, test and build a guitar amplifier if you want to bring it to the market as a commercial product. While there are many enthusiasts tinkering away in their sheds with 'roll your own' hand-wired projects based on classic designs, it takes a lot of skill, courage and money to make the next step and design something new, invest in printed circuit boards, custom chassis and all the other boxes that need to be ticked before you can see your product on a shop floor.

Ravi Rajani has taken this path to produce an exciting new amplifier that's different yet sounds comfortingly familiar, with a fresh, contemporary vibe that works well for most genres other than full-on metal and hard rock. Aimed at professionals and well-heeled amateurs, it's far from an impulse purchase. However, the superior build quality makes it good value in our book. If you're looking for a cool alternative to mass-produced, Rajani is definitely one to check out. **G**

FIRST PLAY



MARTIN D-X2E
£695

WHAT IS IT? Upgraded X Series dreadnought electro using solid Sitka spruce, X-braced top and koa pattern HPL back and sides



MARTIN O-X1E
£535

WHAT IS IT? Smaller style-0 electro with X-braced mahogany pattern HPL top, back and sides. Like the D-X2E it comes with a Fishman electro system

The X Files

For 2020, Martin brings sharper looks, improved playability, superior tone and a welcome slice of charm to its affordable X Series guitars

Words Neville Marten **Photography** Neil Godwin

You don't need to look far to find good-looking, great-playing and great-sounding acoustics in the affordable end of the market. Brands such as Sigma, Takamine, Guild, Crafter, Tanglewood, Fender, Gretsch, Simon & Patrick, Yamaha and indeed Martin have all impressed with well-made instruments that offer a rewarding playing experience. The company's own budget range, the X Series, has been around for a while now. Launched in 1998 with the goal of making more environmentally friendly instruments from composites like the resin-based faux ebony Richlite, and high-pressure laminate (HPL) bodies and necks – at a fraction of the cost of the company's premium lines – it was a runaway success.

But while the X Series did fulfil its intentions, the instruments looked spartan and some would say lacking in charm; the sound was okay but they weren't that inspiring to play. Also, as the years zipped by, they seemed a bit basic compared with







1. Check out how well the koa pattern HPL sides of the D-2XE match the 'select hardwood' (mahogany family) neck

some of the competition. But move on a couple of decades and Martin has upgraded its Cinderella range with better tones, improved playability and a dash more cosmetic flair.

We have two models to examine here: the dreadnought sized D-X2E (previously known as the DX1AE) with a solid Sitka spruce top and koa patterned HPL back and sides, and the parlour-bodied 0-X1E (previously OX2MAE) with figured mahogany HPL top, back and sides. The faux-grain pattern is printed on, but it takes a keen eye to suss this at first glance. Only on peering inside one notices no wood grain on the inner surfaces, which, of course, you wouldn't see with solid mahogany or koa. There's no finish on the bodies, and the necks are, according to Martin, "hand rubbed" with gun oil or some such.

Martin has taken a different approach to the necks of the two instruments. The D-X2E has "select hardwood", which in this case looks like a mahogany family member (usually Spanish cedar, sapele, or even mahogany itself, depending on availability). The 0-X1 is a multi-laminate of birch – it's not particularly pretty, and feels a bit heavy, but is ecologically sound and will be as stable as a rock. The D-X's bridge and fingerboard are of the Mexican hardwood katalox, whereas the 0-X



2

2. The D-2XE has a solid Sitka spruce top, faux tortoise pickguard and pearloid soundhole ring. Fingerboard is katalox

3. It would take a keen eye to tell the headstock veneer was not real mahogany but, in fact, high-pressure laminate



3

uses ebony-coloured Richlite. Both have modern D-28-style pearloid dot inlays. Tuners are enclosed Schaller-style, while both instruments have compensated Tusq saddles, Corian nuts and dotted white plastic bridge pins. The D has a 'tortoiseshell' pickguard and pearloid soundhole rosette, while the O is bereft of any guard but gains Martin's pretty herringbone soundhole purfling. There's no binding anywhere, so the guitars are quite plain, meaning these are welcome touches.

Fishman's ubiquitous MX electronics (essentially Sonitone rebadged) come as standard across the range, featuring mini volume and tone controls accessed via the soundhole's top inner edge. The guitars also now come with natty grey padded gigbags with blue piping, a big step up from before.

Feel & Sounds

Martin has clearly designed these instruments as grown-up guitars to be taken seriously. Necks are a fingerpicker-friendly 44.4mm (1.75 inches) at the nut, with a fairly shallow Performing Artist profile that tapers from 20mm at the 1st fret out to 22mm by the 12th fret. Although pretty much identical, the D-X's larger body size puts the neck a tad further away from the player, whereas the O-X tucks right in. Actions on both are set perfectly

and, whether it's our imagination or not, these necks seem much more comfy and welcoming than before, with beautifully cut nuts and manageable string-resistance. Their unfinished nature means they're pretty speedy, too. The factory fitted 0.012-gauge Martin Authentic Acoustic Lifespan strings feel right for everyday picking and strumming, but 11s would help if you're playing acoustic blues, for instance, with lots of bends.

As for their sound, frankly it comes as a revelation. The larger-bodied D-X is open-toned, with great string separation and clarity but none of the 'hardness' that we felt was there before: "fruity" is how acting editor and acoustic aficionado David Mead described it. It's equally at home as a fireside picker as it is being tickled or thrashed with a pick, and it would take a player with the ears of a bat to tell you that it

The D-X is open-toned, with great string separation and... the O-X's tighter, more focused sound projects really well

was not made from solid tonewoods, or the very best laminated timbers.

With its smaller body size the O-X is, of course, a tad more boxy in tone, but that tighter, more focused sound responds instantly and projects really well. We can see it working perfectly in a blues setting since it sounds great with a slide, too. Again, there's no hint that it's made from anything but tried-and-trusted materials.

Indeed, both instruments stand up well to others costing many times more. Almost in jest we pitted the D-X2E against an £8,000-plus Martin D-28 Authentic and a £3,650 Modern Deluxe D-18. And while the rosewood D-28 offered a more canon-like delivery and lasting 'bloom' on the notes, and the mahogany D-18 gave a typically sophisticated response, in no way did the laminated D-X let itself down. Sure, it has a Sitka-spruce top with scalloped bracing, but back and sides are essentially pressed paper with printed wood-grain. Yet it acquitted itself impressively in top-end company.

Plugged into the acoustic channel of our 30-watt Yamaha THR-II, both guitars sounded like amplified versions of themselves (Martin says the electronics have been specifically voiced for each guitar), the D-X being more open with extended bottom and top, and the O-X more middle-y and direct. The Fishman



The D-X1E and 0-X1E deliver with flying colours. And to that we can add some pretty good ecological credentials

4. The join between surfaces is chamfered, giving the impression of black binding, especially on the darker 0-X1E

preamp's jack socket is on a small plastic plate adjacent to the lower strap button; it doubles as easy-access battery compartment, so no fiddly endpin jacks or wrist-chafing forays into the soundhole to change battery. Although no LR Baggs Anthem, it's simple, sensible and sounds plenty good enough.

Verdict

Often, when this reviewer has been asked to check out guitars to which he's previously been a tad ambivalent, a sort of sinking feeling sets in. But just occasionally the smirk is wiped off the face when the instruments work so well that you can only sit back and applaud. And that's exactly what happened here.

As the owner of three very different Martins (a D-28 Authentic, an OM-28 Reimagined, and a Dreadnought Junior), this player is as familiar as any with how the company's guitars feel, play and sound. And the expectation here was one of 'meeting the poor relations'. Well, while that's true in strictly financial terms, it's anything but

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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as far as performance goes. These guitars are as individual in personality as any solid-timbered boutique jobs. The D-X2E does indeed look very plain, but its Sitka spruce top lends depth and authenticity to its tone, while the O-X has a dark, honky voice that we really liked.

The tweaks that Martin has made to the range mean that, in all other respects than materials and finishing, these low-enders compete favourably with models costing much more. In fact, were we contemplating the purchase of a mahogany-topped 000-15M at £1,350 or so, it would take a lot to persuade us not to save the £800 difference and opt for an O-X1E. That said, an all-solid-wood Dreadnought Junior at a similar price to the D-X2E offers a rather different dilemma, but in the end that's something for you to weigh up.

All this aside, in *Guitarist* we review instruments based on their quality, playability, sound, general fitness for purpose and, of course, value for money. On all those fronts the D-X2E and O-X1E deliver with flying colours. And to that we can add some pretty good ecological credentials. It seems that a great guitar maker can make a great guitar out of almost anything, and if anyone knows anything about making great guitars, it's Martin. Go and try one, and see if you agree. **G**

5. Here you can clearly see the neck's multi-laminate birch construction. Tuners are enclosed Schaller style



MARTIN D-X2E

PRICE: £695 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: Mexico

TYPE: Dreadnought electro-acoustic

TOP: Solid Sitka spruce, X-braced, scalloped bracing (non-scalloped tone bars)

BACK/SIDES: Koa pattern High Pressure Laminate (HPL)

MAX RIM DEPTH: 115mm

MAX BODY WIDTH: 400mm

NECK: 'Select hardwood' Performing Artist style with mortise and tenon joint, hand rubbed finish

SCALE LENGTH: 645mm (25.4")

TUNERS: Closed back Schaller style

NUT/WIDTH: Corian/44.4mm

FINGERBOARD: Katalox – a Mexican hardwood

FRETS: 20, medium fine

BRIDGE/SPACING: Katalox with Tusq saddle/56mm

ELECTRICS: Fishman MX system (was Sonitone) with soundhole volume and tone controls

RANGE OPTIONS: There are 30+ X-Series models in a variety of sizes, with HPL grain pattern, and in black and sunburst: D-X1E (£565) has a koa patterned top, back and sides; O-MCX1 (£575) OM-sized cutaway in black; D-X2AE (£649) dreadnought size with Macassar sunburst finish

LEFT-HANDERS: Yes

FINISH: None

Westside Distribution

0141 248 4812

www.martinguitar.com



9/10

PROS Great sound, playability and price; Martin legacy

CONS Plain looking; lots of competition at this price point



MARTIN O-X1E

PRICE: £535 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: Mexico

TYPE: O-style electro-acoustic

TOP: Mahogany pattern HPL, X-braced (non scalloped)

BACK/SIDES: Mahogany pattern High Pressure Laminate (HPL)

MAX RIM DEPTH: 100mm

MAX BODY WIDTH: 341mm

NECK: Multi-laminate birch, Performing Artist style with mortise and tenon joint, hand rubbed finish

SCALE LENGTH: 645mm (25.4")

TUNERS: Closed back Schaller style

NUT/WIDTH: Corian/44.4mm

FINGERBOARD: Richlite

FRETS: 20, medium fine

BRIDGE/SPACING: Richlite with Tusq saddle/56mm

ELECTRICS: Fishman MX with soundhole volume and tone controls

RANGE OPTIONS: See D-X2E

LEFT-HANDERS: Yes

FINISH: None



9/10

PROS Great sound, playability and price; Martin legacy

CONS Laminated neck isn't that pretty; also heavy

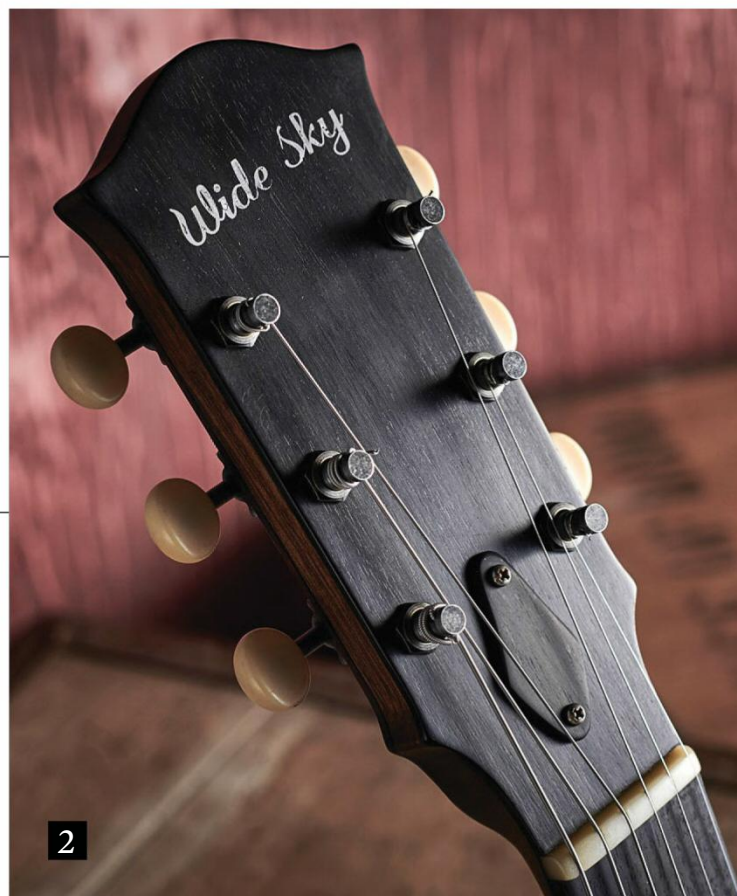
the Wishlist

Dream gear to beg, borrow and steal for...

Wide Sky P125 £3,995

CONTACT **World Guitars** PHONE **01453 824306** WEB **www.wideskyguitars.com**

Words Dave Burrluck Photography Phil Barker



4. The guitar is finished with Osmo PolyX, developed from natural oils and wax, which Patch prefers from his furniture-making days. It gives a silky satin, tactile feel

5. Emerson pots and bumblebee capacitors wired in 50s style give a vintage feel. The trapeze tailpiece adds its own response compared with a more usual stud tailpiece. The bridge is from Schroeder Hardware

1. The P125 is loaded with a pair of Arcane '57 Experience P-90-style single coils in distressed nickel covers. Arcane says they are "open and clear-sounding with a delicate top-end". Measuring the DCRs at output, we get 8.54kohms at the bridge and 7.65k at the neck

2. Part of the considered design is an original and tastefully old-looking ebony-faced headstock that's relatively narrow, with less string splay than many other three-a-side headstocks

3. In keeping with the vintage vibe, the Golden Age Restoration tuners by StewMac emulate those "with 'bent tab' worm supports, as supplied by Kluson to guitar manufacturers from the 1930s to the 70s", says StewMac. A bone nut and pretty small 'vintage' fretwire all add to the impression of age

A Wide Sky P125 electric guitar is shown leaning against a weathered wooden crate. The guitar has a dark, figured maple top with a sunburst finish, a dark fretboard with white dot inlays, and a black headstock with the 'Wide Sky' logo. It features two humbucker pickups, a bridge pickup, and a control plate with four knobs and a switch. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Patch Rubin only built his first Wide Sky electric in 2018, but the following year he got the chance to get a model into the hands of a pro. “I got a Wide Sky P125 to Gary Clark Jr when he came through Albuquerque,” Patch tells us. “He broke it out at the next show at the Rialto Theatre in Tucson, Arizona, and played most of the show on it. Same thing at his next show; most of his set was played on his P125. I was listening to nothing but Gary when this guitar was born.” Gary has since become a significant ambassador for Wide Sky also playing a cutaway P125 at high-profile events such as this year’s Grammy Awards.

Prior to building electric guitars, Patch – who has a background as a player and tech – had relocated to Taos, New Mexico, in 2010 where he found work as a custom furniture builder before making his first acoustic. He showed it to David Lindley who said, “This is a monster guitar, don’t change a thing.”

The furniture world’s loss is a big gain for guitar players who love a particular old-school Americana design. Indeed, everything about the P125, a “sort of a cross between the old Gibson ES-125 three-quarter size and a Les Paul”, says Patch, seems to come from a bygone age, particularly the original non-cutaway shape (also available as a cutaway), the one-piece mahogany set neck joining the body at the 16th fret. The sapele body, however, is chambered, leaving a solid centre section, which keeps the weight at bay (3.3kg/7.26lb). It’s not only quite a small body (very slightly narrower across the lower bouts than a Les Paul at 328mm) but relatively thin-depth’d, too: 35mm at the rim and 49mm overall. The arch to the figured maple top is nicely graduated, edge bound and stained, then waxed to create its particular almost weather-beaten beauty.

While the tuners and hardware are aged, even the Arcane pickup covers, this is not a bashed relic, and the playing experience is just as unique as the visual vibe. With a ringing, almost solidbody acoustic response, and despite the chambered wings, it’s the plugged-in experience that reinforces the guitar’s buzz, combining the woody heft of a good 50s single-cut Junior or Special with just enough clarity and a vocal midrange. That trapeze tailpiece adds to the far-from-modern response, too. A very stylish maker to watch.

The Lineup

What's Goin' On

All the best guitar events you need to put in the diary...

Eric Gales

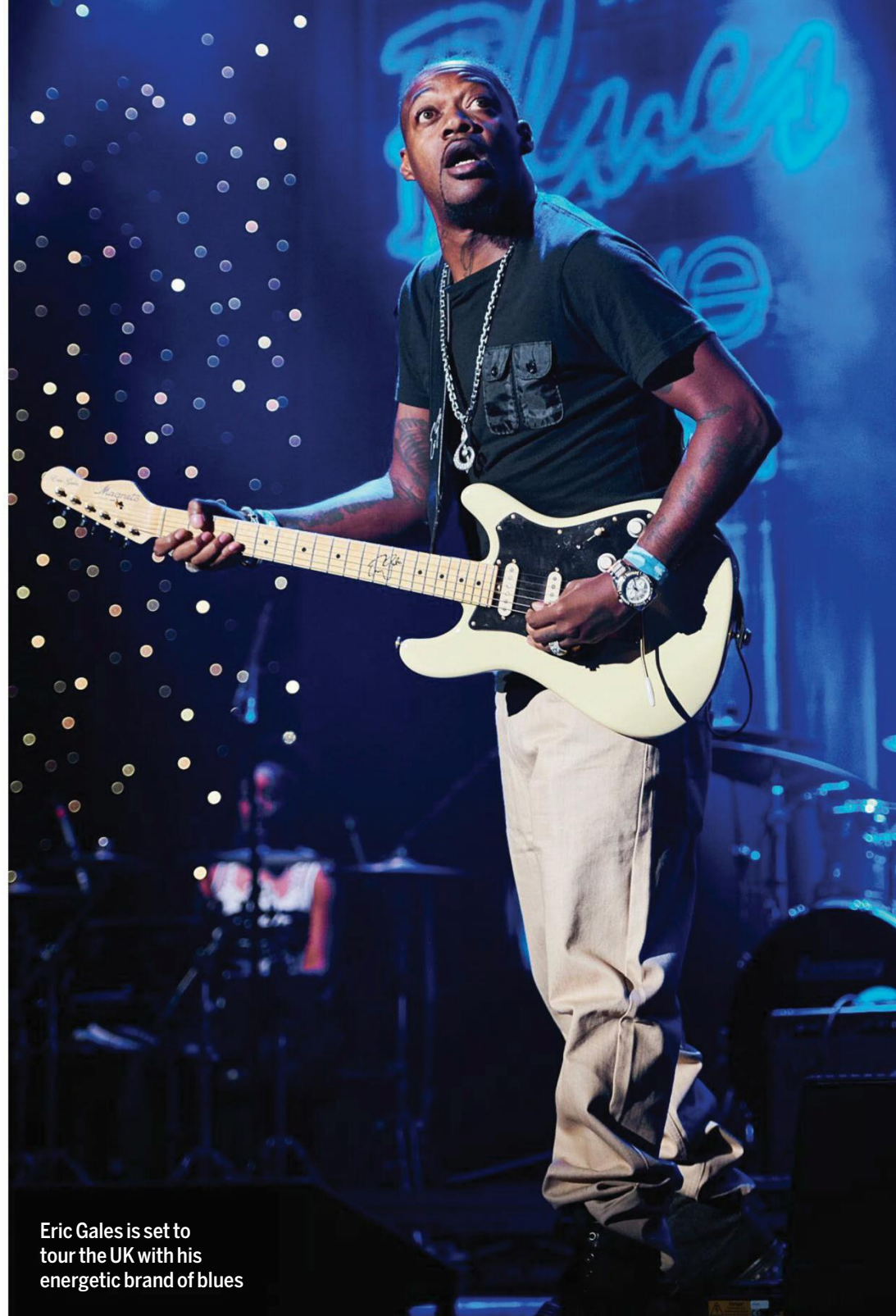
25 May to 3 June

Various UK venues

Miss this your at your peril, because all signs suggest this is going to be Eric Gales' year. "I love what I do," he says. "The hardest thing about it is all the travelling, and the easiest thing is the playing." It's not been an easy ride for the bluesman, but the road to redemption is part of what makes Gales' such a compelling blues story. "Things have happened gradually for me," he says of his journey, "so I feel like life is my biggest breakthrough. I managed to finally get clean... that was the biggest breakthrough in many ways."

An album produced by Joe Bonamassa is set to follow later in 2020, but, for now, fans can expect the usual high standards on stage. "I can't wait to come back to the UK and spread all the energy, passion and emotion around."

www.ericgalesband.com



Eric Gales is set to tour the UK with his energetic brand of blues

Ravi Shankar Centenary tribute

7 April

Royal Festival Hall, London

The late musician's daughters, Anoushka Shankar and Norah Jones, lead this special retrospective of Ravi Shankar's work to celebrate 100 years since his birth. Nitin Sawhney is a special guest alongside celebrated musicians, including sitar players Kartik Seshadri, Shubhendra Rao and Gaurav Mazumdar.

www.ravishankar.org

HRH Blues VI

11 to 12 April

O2 Academy Sheffield

The annual blues event never fails to attract a wealth of talent and this year has Bernie Marsden, Wilko Johnson and The Quireboys playing a blues-focused set. Mike Zito travels from the US and homegrown guitar talent Danny Bryant and Ben Poole feature, too.

www.hrhblues.com

Simple Minds

14 to 25 April

Various UK & Ireland venues

It's a given that this particular 40th anniversary has to be marked and the Scottish band will be celebrating through Europe this spring. Even though they actually formed 43 years ago, this is the celebration of *40 Years Of Hits* from founder members Jim Kerr (vocals) and Charlie Burchill (guitars).

www.simpleminds.com

Jeff Beck

17 to 27 May

Various UK venues

The maestro returns for nine UK shows, including two nights at the Royal Albert Hall. His band will feature drummer Vinnie Colaiuta, bassist Rhonda Smith and cellist Vanessa Freebairn-Smith. The follow-up to 2016's *Loud Hailer* is also in the works for release later this year. Watch this space!

www.jeffbeck.com

Yes

26 May to 7 June

Various UK & Ireland venues

The Howe-White-Downes-Davison-Sherwood line-up continues its series of tours playing albums in their entirety with 1974's *Relayer*. Their seventh record and first after Rick Wakeman's departure found Steve Howe switching from his ES-175 to a 1955 Telecaster in the studio.

www.yesworld.com

Whitesnake/ Foreigner/Europe

31 May to 10 June

Various UK dates

Between these titans of rock, there's a lot of road miles, hairspray and hits on the clock, and you're guaranteed an extended guitar solo section – and a drum one, too, if you're lucky. With Reb Beach, Joel Hoekstra, Mick Jones and John Norum involved, quality is assured. Prepare yourself for one hell of a show.

www.whitesnake.com

George Benson

21 June to 2 July

Various UK venues

The jazz-guitar icon will visit Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Cardiff, Bournemouth, Birmingham and Southend before ending his tour in London's Royal Albert Hall on 2 July. He's also playing as part of the Hampton Court Palace Festival series of gigs on 19 June.

www.georgebenson.com

Ramblin' Man Festival

17 to 19 July

Maidstone, Kent

This year's festival at Maidstone's Mote Park sees some special firsts: Clutch will play three sets across the weekend (favourites, semi-acoustic and a funk/blues set), while Rival Sons step up to festival headliner status, and Lynyrd Skynyrd play their only 2020 UK show as part of a farewell run.

www.ramblinmanfair.com

Photo by Joby Sessions

The Players

News and happenings from the world of your favourite guitarists



The C-03R-TE Custom 'Tommy Emmanuel' was created due to demand



Meet The New Boss

Larrivée announces launch of custom Tommy Emmanuel model

Larrivée has announced a model for Australian acoustic maestro Tommy Emmanuel. The C-03R-TE is a landmark in the Certified Guitar Player's 20-year history with the Canadian company that began with C-10 12-fret built by founder Jean Larrivée and his wife, Wendy.

That guitar, known as 'The Boss', has seen plenty of action on stage and in the studio since. John Larrivée Jr picks up the story: "A few years ago, as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, we built a replica of Tommy's C-10 custom and gave it away at a Tommy Emmanuel show in Santa Barbara. The feedback was overwhelming. Many Tommy fans and Larrivée players alike wanted to get their hands on one. But a C-10 custom with inlay can be unaffordable to most people. That's when Tommy and I started talking about replicating his C-10 on an O3 [Recording] Series and making it more accessible to players.

"Tommy loved the idea, so we took the key features of East Indian rosewood back and sides, BC Sitka spruce top, Florentine cutaway, and 12-fret neck joint and put them on one of our O3 series. What we came up with was the C-03R-TE Custom 'Tommy Emmanuel'. It's been lovely to have Tommy's full support and enthusiasm. What a great ride sharing his name with Larrivée. Of course, every label inside the guitar is hand-signed."

The C-03R-TE is set to cost £2,699 (\$2,898). For more details, visit the Larrivée website.

www.larrivee.com

Joe Bonamassa has announced a surprise new instrumental album with his new project, The Sleep Eazys. As well as paying tribute to friend and mentor Danny Gatton, he's tackling Sinatra, King, Curtis, a *Bond* theme and even Motörhead's *Ace Of Spades*. "To be honest, I have always wanted to do a record like this," says Bonamassa. "But, to be even more honest, I'm not sure I was ready both professionally and musically, until now."

KK Downing has formed KK's Priest with two other former members of Judas Priest. Vocalist Tim 'Ripper' Owens and drummer Les Binks will play festivals with the guitarist this year, as well working on new material. Bassist Tony Newton and guitarist AJ Mills will also join the line-up.

Professional musician, producer and long-term tinnitus sufferer Rupert Brown (Roy Ayers, Nigel Kennedy, Cher, The Lighthouse Family) has launched a free app to help the one-in-eight UK adults who suffer from tinnitus. Alongside Rupert, the **T-Minus app** has been developed by a team of hearing therapists, audiologists and ENT consultants. It's the first app designed to help alleviate the symptoms of tinnitus. Brown has spent his life collating a music library of what he calls 'Mind Environments' to help sufferers. As well as access to the T-Minus sound-therapy library, which users can tailor to their needs, you can also gain access to a community of professionals and daily news. For more information visit www.t-minus.info

The Cure's **Robert Smith** has confirmed the band are currently working on "two new albums and an hour of noise". In a chat with *NME*, he confirmed that the first of these new albums in 11 years had the working title *Live From The Moon* and had been shaped

by his "experience of life's darker side". The release date for the recordings are still TBC.

The Blues Podcast is a new interview series hosted by musician **Big Boy Bloater** and will feature a different guest for each episode. Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Beth Hart and Kris Barras have already featured. *The Blues Podcast* is available on various platforms, including Spotify, Apple Podcast/iTunes, Google Podcast, YouTube and PodBean.

Genesis trio Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks are reuniting for a tour after 13 years. The trio will play arena dates in November and December with Collins' son Nic on drums.

The 1975 Greil Marcus book, ***Mystery Train: Images Of American In Rock 'N' Roll Music***, which found fans including David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen, Nick Cave and Elvis Costello, is getting a special collector's edition release from the Folio Society. It's been newly updated by the author and is the first English language edition to include illustrations. For more information visit www.foliosociety.com

The Cure have announced two new albums in the pipeline



Photo by Gary Miller/Getty Images

The Lineup

Gas Supply

Our pick of the month's most delectable, wallet-bothering new gear

Vox Bobcat V90 & Bobcat S66 £1,199

CONTACT **Vox UK** PHONE **01908 304664** WEB **www.korguk.com**

BODY

Pickup format aside, these new Bobcats share the same spec. That includes a semi-acoustic body pressed from sheets of laminate maple, and a weight-relieved spruce centre block to help defeat feedback

PICKUPS

The Bobcat V90 (far left) comes with a pair of vintage-voiced P-90 single-coil pups with soapbar covers. The S66 is loaded with three Strat-style single coils with trademark Vox squared off covers

BRIDGE

In another departure from 60s spec, the new Bobcats feature anchored tune-o-matic bridges for more secure tuning and intonation. The original guitars had floating bridges

Q&A

Semis? When I think of classic Vox guitars, they're always solid-bodied models...

That's not surprising. Easily the best known Vox electric is the British-made Mark III 'Teardrop' solidbody played by Rolling Stone Brian Jones. The 'coffin-shaped' Phantom models loved by 60s garage bands and, later, guys like Tom Petty, run a close second in familiarity. Why the bonkers shapes? Vox wanted its designs to stand out from the crowd. Job done. It's the Teardrops and Phantoms that we remember best today.

Why get into the semi-acoustic market at all, then?

By 1966, John Lennon and George Harrison of The Beatles were playing hollowbody Epiphone Casinos. Many other artists used semis, too. That year, Vox released four new thinline semis to cash in on that trend: the V243 Super Lynx, vibrato-loaded V253 Super Lynx Deluxe, V245 New Orleans, and

the V219 Bobcat. These guitars were made in Italy by EKO and Crucianelli.

The new Vox Bobcat is a reissue model, then?

Think of it more as an 'inspired by' thing. You see, there are actually two new guitars making their debut this year: the Bobcat V90 and the S66. An original two single-coil pickup, trapeze tailpiece-loaded Bobcat was called the Super Lynx. The three single coil-fuelled model was called the Bobcat, and that guitar had a Bigsby-style vibrato. The new triple-pup S66 model is a hardtail.

What other liberties have been taken here?

The Vox semis from the 60s have bolt-on necks. The Bobcat V90 and S66 are spec'd with set necks. The S66 has three Strat-style single-coil pickups. That's vintage correct. The V90 substitutes a pair of soapbar-cover P-90 single coils for the

old-school items. Both guitars feature your textbook two-volume, two-tone and three-way pickup selector toggle switch format. While the 60s ancestors came with floating bridges, these reboots are fitted with anchored tune-o-matic jobs. That's good news for rock-steady tuning and intonation.

What about vintage details?

The bound f-holes, aluminium control knobs, not to mention the oversized headstock logo, those are your classic 60s Vox deets. Ditto, the model name etched into each guitar's scratchplate. Yet another trigger for vintage geeks here is the squared off pickup covers on the S66 model's single coils...

What else do I need to take onboard from the spec?

Taking a quick look through the spec sheets, the Bobcat V90 and S66 feature bodies formed from sheets of laminated maple, set mahogany necks, Indonesian



NECK

Unlike their bolt-on 60s ancestors, these Bobcats have set necks. In other news, you get a 635mm (25-inch) scale length, Indonesian ebony fingerboards, 22 frets and a 43mm nut width

ebony fingerboards, 22 frets, and a scale length of 635mm (25 inches). Finish options for both models are Black, Cherry Red and Sunburst.

Who are these guitars for?

To answer that question you really need to consider the competition. The obvious contenders here are the various Epiphone and Gibson ES-335 models. Then there's the shallow-bodied Gretsch Electromatic Center Block guitars, even the Fender Starcaster if you can find one. If you're in the market for any of those guitars, you need to try these Vox Bobcats before you swipe your card. Just remember this. Unlike the hollow Epiphone Casinos that inspired the creation of the original Vox models, the V90 and S66 have weight-relieved spruce centre blocks. That makes them more like a Gibson ES-335 retrofitted with single coils. That could be the best of both worlds for you. You could call even call them, ahem, the missing Lynx... **[EM]**

JARGON CRUNCHING Crucianelli

While most early Vox guitars were originally built in the UK, the amp legends turned to Italian manufacturers EKO and Crucianelli to build its semi-acoustics. The reason? Vox wasn't set up to build anything but solidbody instruments. Launched in 1888, Crucianelli is an accordion company that diversified into guitar production during the 'best boom' of the 1960s. Fellow Italian brand EKO was also called upon to produce guitars for Vox. EKO is probably best remembered for the seemingly indestructible EKO Ranger acoustic with its bolt-on neck and toffee apple thick finish.

ALSO OUT NOW...

ERNIE BALL 3" FLAT RIBBON PATCH CABLES 3-PACK

£22.49



If your pedalboard looks like a worm orgy, Ernie Ball has some tonal tagliatelle to solve your sonic spaghetti. The company's

brand-new Flat Ribbon Patch Cables feature high-quality components including small connectors and posable ribbon wires. Designed to utilise the space in your pedalboard more effectively than traditional cables, these ultra-flexible patch leads can be bent and twisted into any shape you like. They're robust, too, thanks to all metal connectors, and you can get them in various lengths from three to 24 inches.

www.ernieball.co.uk

DANELECTRO 3699 FUZZ

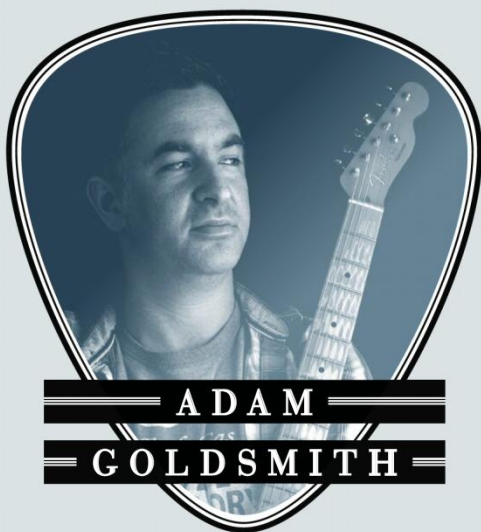
£TBC



In the last issue's Winter NAMM report we mentioned Danelectro's reissue of the classic FOXX Tone Machine. As its release is made official, here are some more details. Featuring a distressed finish and knobs, this welcome reboot

of the iconic fuzz box (launched back in 1971) was designed by Steve Ridinger, the man who invented the thing in the first place. Features include volume, fuzz and tone controls, plus a stock/midrange boost switch and oversized orange on/off status indicator. We're also excited by the switchable octave function. Why is it called the 3699, you wonder? Well, the digits correspond to the letters on an American telephone keypad. So, now you know.

www.danelectro.com



SESSION DIARY

World Wide Working

Now that remote sessions make up almost a quarter of his workload, Adam has had to make his own rules

These days, most session musicians are required to have home-recording setups to facilitate sending tracks to clients over the internet. Over the past 10 years or so, I'd say this kind of work has increased from five per cent of my total workload to closer to 20, as technology improves and clients from all over the world become more aware of the possibilities of working in this manner. This week I've been recording some Spanish-guitar tracks for a client in Switzerland. He was super-efficient – all the sheet music, audio files, click tracks, etc, were very professionally presented – and he was happy with what he received.

Internet sessions have definitely been a learning curve, and for me to say yes to a session they have to fall into one of two opposing categories, the first being that the client knows exactly what they want, provides detailed sheet music and instrumentation requests, with accurate audio files and/or some sort of demo track.

This typically might be an advertising jingle or TV theme tune. The second scenario would be where the client wants me to be completely creative and is happy for me to do my own thing on a track. For example, this might be a guitar solo on a pop record, and I'll send two or three takes and they can choose which they like best.

I find any problems usually occur in the middle ground, when clients are not sure exactly what they want but have a rough idea, which they may not necessarily be able to accurately describe to you. It's usual to get an email asking something along the lines of 'I've got a couple of tracks I'd like you to play acoustic guitar on – how much would you charge for this?' You reply with a figure, they send the tracks, which you duly play on and return. They then reply saying it's not exactly what they were after and you redo everything, including any possible extra requests that they've thought of in the meantime. You're then faced with the

unenviable task of having to renegotiate the financial end of things, because what started out as a simple acoustic-guitar track has now taken two days involving the sending back and forth of tracks and also some potential email miscommunications.

In a traditional studio environment, most of these problems or ideas can be ironed out in seconds with a face-to-face conversation. There's also, fairly obviously, a large degree of musical vibe and creativity that's missing from the internet process, which can be a touch clinical occasionally.

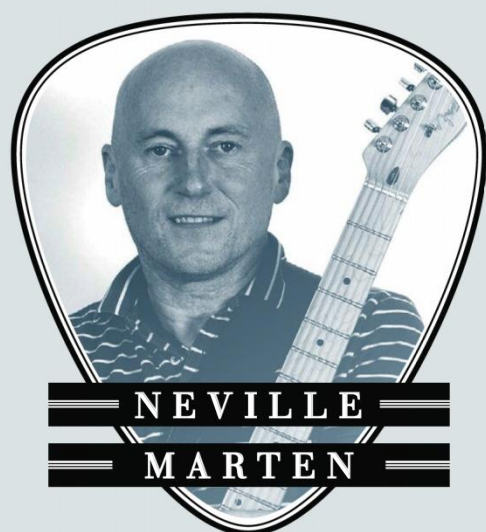
For those of you who are interested in the gear side of things, my home setup consists of a Universal Audio Apollo interface into Logic Pro X. My microphones of choice are usually a pair of AKG C414s for acoustic guitar, and a mix of a Royer R-121 and a Shure SM57 seems to get the job done for amps. I'll also regularly use my Line 6 Helix directly into the interface for a lot of projects. **G**



Adam records remotely in his home studio and sends the tracks to his clients, ready for mixing



Just some of Adam's collection of instruments, ready to be put to work



NEVILLE'S ADVOCATE

With this issue's focus on Peter Green, **Nev** looks back on his own memories of the man, his playing, and that iconic guitar

One of the cool things about being a 'certain age' is I was there when so much great music emerged. At 13 years old I heard The Beatles' *She Loves You*, at 14 The Who's *My Generation* and The Kinks' *You Really Got Me*. At 15 it was *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, at 16 it was Mayall, Cream and Hendrix; at 17 *Sergeant Pepper*; at 18 Led Zep's first radio broadcast; at 19 it was James and Joni... and so on.

Luckily for me, my sister's boyfriend at the time was a fine musician who played drums in a blues and soul band. He brought round the John Mayall albums *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton*, and *A Hard Road* (with Peter Green). As a budding guitarist those albums floored me. When I heard Clapton play like that, I thought he was doing the impossible.

Gary Moore and I discussed the impact of these albums many times. And while we both adored what Eric did, and tried our best to emulate him (Gary perhaps a little better than me!), Peter's rather more laconic playing on *A Hard Road* had a certain something else. Was it more authentic? More heartfelt? More attainable? Neither Gary nor I could ever answer that question, but while Eric was our

number one, in his own way Peter always held a special place for me, and I believe I can speak for Gary here, too.

Of course the late, great Mr Moore had a unique connection to Green. Peter all but gifted his original Bluesbreakers/Fleetwood Mac Les Paul to his 'protégé', who used it throughout his career. I remember Gary telling me how a truck had gone into the back of his car with the Les Paul in the boot; it broke the headstock, so it was repaired by Chandler Guitars in Kew. Gary later bought another 'Burst in order to take 'Greeny' off the road, although he still used it on record when he needed *that* sound.

During one of my early interviews with Gary I did briefly play it. I recall it felt light in weight compared with my own Les Paul at the time. And the neck was huge – as Peter also confirmed in one of my interviews with him.

But on my first meeting with Gary, he was rather cool and aloof. It was to talk about his *After The War* album, in January 1989. On it I'd noticed a few licks played on the out-of-phase Greeny Les Paul, and mentioned it in one of my questions. He instantly changed. It was suddenly like we were talking on the same

level, and he realised I wasn't some spotty oik who knew nothing about him, his history, influences, guitars and music. We hit it off from then on. And all because of Peter Green.

But going back 20 years... In 1969 I worked as a kitchen porter in a hotel in Cornwall. I was headlong into blues guitar by then, and still trying to learn the licks of Clapton and Green on those two albums. I used to stand at my sink, washing these huge aluminium porridge saucepans and greasy egg, bacon and sausage trays after breakfast, all the while working out in my head where these licks were being played on the neck.

I'd go back to my staff accommodation hovel when the shift was over, and try what I'd worked out in my head. If I was right, brilliant; if not, it was back to the drawing board – or perhaps make a slight adjustment if I'd just gone a bit wobbly. I got pretty good at it, and actually learned more about intervals, fretboard positions, scale shapes and so on, away from the guitar than when playing it. It was the best ear training I could have asked for.

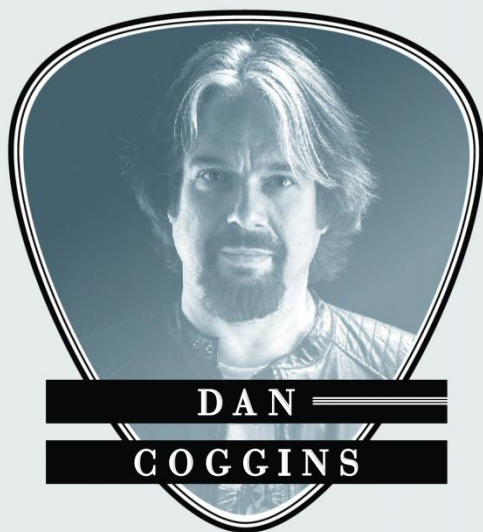
I hope you enjoy all the Greeny stuff in this issue and learn as much new info as I did. And I'll see you next month. **G**



NEV'S GAS OF THE MONTH

Bluesy Orange!

What? Orange Tremlord **Where seen?** Several online retailers **Price?** £759 **Description?** When Richard Barrett and I recently did a Tone Lounge on Orange's fantastic new Tremlord, which aims to recapture the best clean tones of the 60s with a beautiful reverb and tremolo circuit, we both commented on how it could produce those clean and mildly driving tones that Peter Green did so well (often through Orange/Matamp gear). Orange has been on fire of late, really nailing it with amps like this and the amazing Rockerverb we also recently loved. The Tremlord is as simple as you like to use, and we couldn't find a single unusable sound on it. Gary Moore also loved Orange, and, on one of my last meetings with him (when he played the infamous *Fire Alarm Blues*), he was playing through an Orange Tiny Terror. But back to the Tremlord, then, and it's brilliant with pedals too, plus it's extremely reasonably priced. I think you 'need one so bad'!



RAISING THE TONE

The Perfect Partner

Guest writer Dan Coggins explains how speaker choice, and efficiency thereof, can affect your sound – and your hearing

It might be a matter of personal preference and taste, but there can be no denying how profound an effect the combination of amp and speaker have on one another. In last issue's article, I pointed out that in some designs the speaker affects the amp's behaviour more than others – and that it is, to a lesser or greater degree, a synergistic relationship. In other words, some speakers and amps go together sonically like peaches and cream, while other combinations, frankly, sound awful. Guitar amps rarely sound good into full-range PA speakers, for example. It's really a matter of experimentation, especially if you have any misgivings about the overall tone of your rig.

While it's important to look at the construction and materials when selecting a speaker, here we'll explain some other factors that give specific brands and types their distinct voices, much like a particular and somewhat extreme fixed EQ setting.

Think about PA systems and keyboard amps and they have historically used full-range, almost hi-fi speakers. Guitar amps, however (and, to a lesser extent over time, bass amps), tend to use lower-bandwidth speakers. If we consider the classic valve amps that are still popular today, we can see that Vox and Marshall used Celestion, for example, and in the States, Fender and Gibson amps often used Jensen. These were

Alnico units in the 60s, moving to ceramic-magnet variations into the 70s. What most of these speakers have in common is a limited bandwidth that rolls off in the upper midrange around 4kHz to 5kHz, and a self-resonance around 75Hz, along with a non-linear response across the audible frequencies in between.

Alnico- (and more recently neodymium-) magnet speakers are among the most efficient, whereas some ceramic-magnet speakers can have lower efficiency and might sound half as loud as their more efficient counterparts. This means that ceramic-magnet speakers are a better choice for amps with 'watts to burn', unless

If you feel something is lacking from your tone, the speaker in your cab may just hold the answer



A ceramic Jensen C10N loudspeaker as found inside a vintage 1966 Fender Princeton Reverb combo



•
“For maximum headroom, pairing very efficient loudspeakers with a decently high-powered amp is the answer”
•

you want to use them deliberately to ‘waste’ power and get distorted tones at lower sound-pressure levels.

For maximum headroom (for pedal platforms or ‘king of kleen’ sounds, for example), pairing very efficient loudspeakers with a decently high-powered amp is the answer. Consider the stellar combination of the 1970s 135-watt Fender Twin Reverb model when fitted out with a pair of super-efficient JBL D120F speakers. For distortion, lower-wattage or master volume amps (perhaps with power soaks/attenuators) are another opposite approach.

As anyone who has used a power soak, as well as ear plugs for that matter, will have noticed, the original sound and attenuated sound are noticeably unlike tonally. Why could this be, you ask? In short, this is due to the Fletcher-Munson loudness curves that characterise the human hearing frequency response at differing sound-pressure levels. A quick internet search of the above hyphenated moniker will reveal a diagram that shows a range of wavy lines demonstrating how the frequency response of our hearing mechanism approaches being ‘flat’ only at relatively high sound-pressure levels; at lower levels there is a tendency to emphasise the midrange over the bass and

treble frequencies. This is believed to be a historic evolutionary mechanism by which our ancestors needed to hear voices and sounds of predators first and foremost – at night, possibly from a distance, for survival. This is why passing partygoers’ voices in the night might wake you up from your slumber. When listening to music, the loudness control on your hi-fi sound system artificially boosts the bass and treble frequencies relative to the midrange to compensate for this discrepancy at lower volumes.

Further things to consider are the positioning of loudspeakers and cabinets relative to the floor space, whether to select closed-back or open-back (the latter has less bass; those frequencies cancel out somewhat from front-to-back), and whether or not series- or parallel-wired will affect the resulting tonal response. The diameter of the speaker also determines its frequency response and it is worth hearing a 10-, 12- and 15-inch driver, preferably of the same type, to hear the relative differences. Broadly speaking, the 10s will have a more ‘vocal’; midrange sound with less low and high frequencies, the 15s will likely have a relatively scooped midrange because of their extended bass and treble response, and 12-inch driver usually represents a good balance and compromise between the two extremes.

Finally, hearing loss. The tendency to hear increasingly fewer high frequencies, tinnitus and masking are all casualties of either age and/or the rock ‘n’ roll lifestyle – though the health and safety considerations of present times have probably mitigated this to an extent (good luck cranking up your 4x12 cabinets anywhere nowadays!). Exposure time and sound pressure levels are the co-factors for hearing damage: the bottom line is to either play loudly and briefly, or play quietly for longer. Hearing protection is optional but recommended! **G**

THREE TOGET READY

Classic speakers to check out



Celestion Blue £179

Originally intended for use in radio, this Alnico-magnet speaker became associated with Vox’s AC15 and AC30 from 1960 in the form of the G12 T.530, getting its Azure Blue colour in ‘61. Its sensitivity rating is 100dB and as such it’s very efficient – one reason AC30s appear to be impressively loud amps.



Celestion G12M-65 Creamback £95

While Marshall built cabs using Celestion G12 Alnico speakers in the early days, it switched to ceramic-magnet G12s in the mid-60s; they became known as ‘greenbacks’ on account of their green plastic magnet cover. The G12M-65 recreates the sound and feel of vintage G12Ms, with increased power handling.



Jensen P12N £169

Jensen speakers are associated with the clean, full-bodied tones of vintage Fender amps. Found in classic designs like the late-50s tweed Twin, the P12N Alnico is characterised by its sparkling top-end and firm bottom-end, with a colourful yet edgy midrange bite when working with overdrive.

Substitute

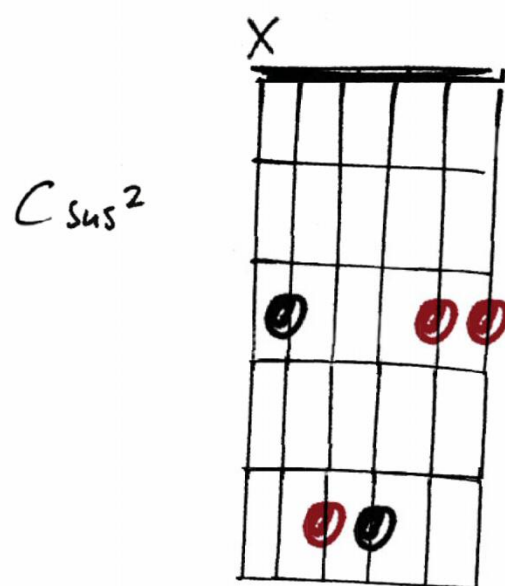
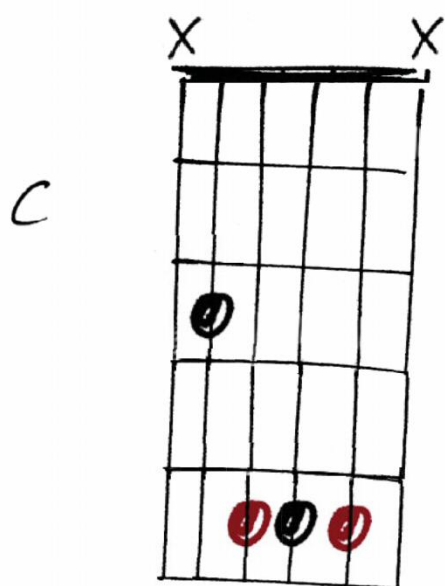
This Issue: Different Voicings

Usually, we'll look at groups of related chords, or a particular type of chord extension here, but this time we're going to turn this approach on its head and look at some of the various ways a C major chord can be voiced to fit with different styles and moods. Though you may not use these all together in any one song, knowing them

will expand your vocabulary enough to add some interesting twists to songs you already play – and maybe inspire you to write something new, who knows?

We need a baseline to start from, so that is the 3rd position barre chord version, also known as the 'A' shape if you're into the CAGED chord approach.

From there, we get into pop/rock, blues and jazz, with hints of Crowded House, Steely Dan and Tal Farlow. The point being demonstrated here is the sheer stylistic variety available by changing – even removing – selected notes in a chord. And it's always fun to learn some new shapes in any case!

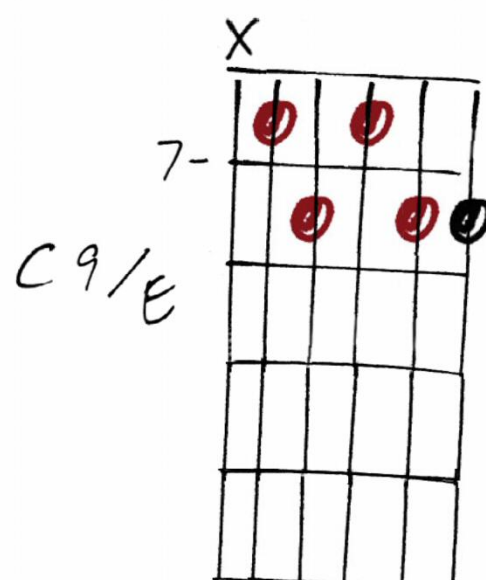
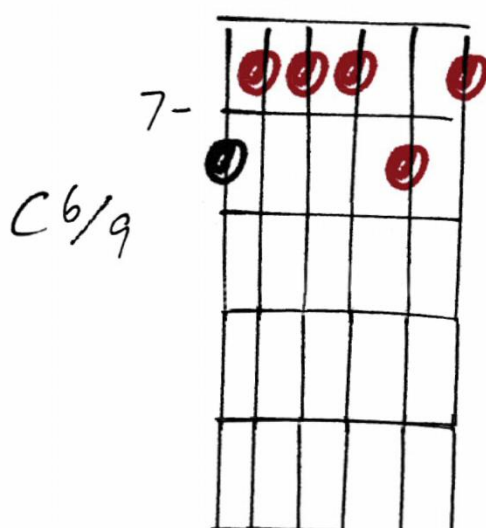
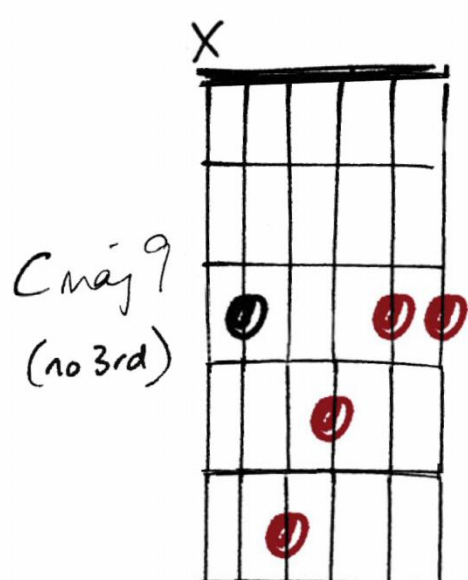


Example 1

Here is our 'baseline' – a C major barre chord in the 3rd position. As you can see, it takes the form of an A chord, shifted up a couple of positions with the first finger serving as a temporary capo.

Example 2

A popular voicing, often used in a major context, but on closer examination there is no 3rd because this is a 'sus' chord. This means it is equally happy to sit among minor chords. You'll hear it in the music of artists as diverse as Crowded House and Rush.



Example 3

Shifting just one note on the third string gives us this C major 9. There is no E, therefore no major 3rd, but that doesn't change things as much as you may think. The major 7th and 9th give a strongly major feel, though context is everything!

Example 4

We'll call this C6/9, though you may spot the major 7th lurking on the first string. This is a nice way to top off the chord, but not an essential ingredient – if we included the major 7th in the name, it would start to read like a sentence...

Example 5

This C9/E works beautifully with a C bass note from another instrument such as the bass guitar. It's a movable shape, though the lack of obvious root means you'll need to be thinking on your feet to add this in at a jazzy blues jam!



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Feedback

Your letters to the *Guitarist* editor. Drop us a line at guitarist@futurenet.com

Star Letter



STRINGS ATTACHED

Your magazine is both good and dangerous to readers' bank accounts. I shall explain why. In issue 449 you included a review of the renewed Guild Starfire IV ST-12 electric 12-string guitar. I found this review very interesting, as did a former pupil of mine, so we decided I should enquire about the purchase of one of these new instruments and see later which of us would keep it. I have now done this, so I currently have two 12-string guitars, which leads me to a problem that I shall outline to you. Issue 453 includes an accessory guide and there are two sections about guitar strings, electric and acoustic. The acoustic strings are mostly listed in sets between 0.012 and 0.053, which, as mainly an acoustic guitarist, I am

used to. I am sure I am far from being alone in that I also play electric guitars and like to string them in similar gauges. Not all players of electric guitars are 0.009 weaklings.

For years I have struggled to obtain strings for my acoustic 12-string as most music shops only sell bronze wound strings in sets of six. This means in order to restring my 12 I have to buy three sets, as I need three firsts, three seconds, two thirds, two fourths and one each of fifth and sixth. A consequence of this is that I now have dozens of spare heavy strings. I have double the problem as the Starfire was supplied with strings beginning at 0.010.

I contacted several music shops to see if they could help, two of whom suggested that increasing the gauge might bend the neck of the guitar. Huh! 40 years of doing this with my acoustic Guild has not affected the neck, so I am sure the same will be true of the Starfire. I suggested to these people that Guild perhaps fit their guitars with good torsion bars. Only one shop, Steven James in Saltburn, was able to provide individual strings for the electric 12, so I've been able to refit it as I want. It now plays admirably and sounds better than it did with the light strings. I shall continue to read your excellent magazine and just hope that you do not cause me any more expensive problems!

Roger, via email

The answer to your prayers may lie online, as many web retailers sell individual strings so you can fill your shopping cart with your preferred selection in one visit – and order multiples of your selection easily if you wish, so you can stock up. If you register your details, they may even provide the option of renewing a previous order from your history of purchases, again making restocking easy. Finally, some brands, such as Curt Mangan, will allow you to create a custom set personalised to your exact preferences. Again, once on their books you can order more as necessary. Meanwhile, have a Korg tuner to keep those 12-strings harmonious!



KORG

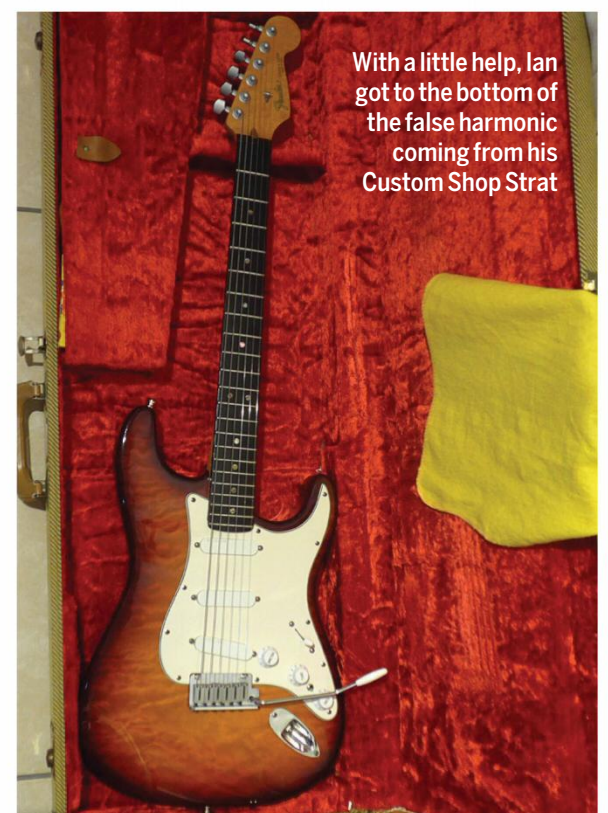
Each issue's Star Letter wins a Korg Pitchblack Custom – a smart pedal tuner with ultra-high +/-0.1 precision for sharp visibility and pinpoint accuracy right at your feet.
www.korg.co.uk

BRIDGE OF SIGHS

If I had to save one guitar from the proverbial burning building it would be my CS 35th Anniversary Strat. Purchased many years ago from the original Vintage 'n' Rare shop in Bath, it still plays beautifully and looks amazing, but, until recently, it had a fault that I simply could not rectify. Whenever I slightly damped the strings I would hear a false harmonic. It was never loud enough to be a problem when playing live, but it bugged me, particularly when I was practising. Damping the trem springs with rubber or adding weight to the block, adjusting the bridge or the nut... over the years I tried everything, but the noise was still there.

Recently, the problem came up in conversation with Paul and Alex when I was in Vintage 'n' Rare and after a lot of head scratching, Paul suggested that I swapped the bridge pieces around the next time that I changed strings. So, a couple of days later, I fitted a new set of 10s and swapped the bridge pieces for the third and fourth strings. The sound had completely gone! When I told the guys in the shop they were astonished. Our conclusion was that all the bridge pieces on your guitar might look the same but they may not have been created equal, as my experience clearly shows.

Ian Cowie, via email

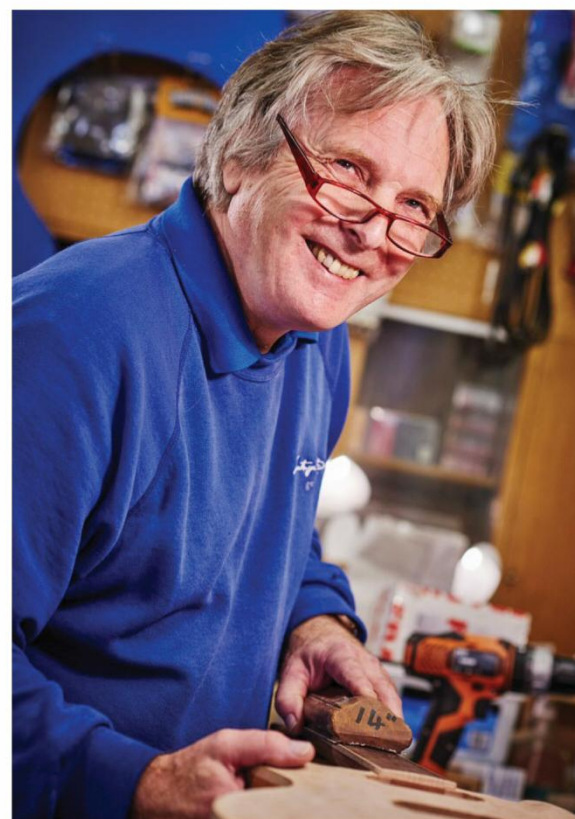


With a little help, Ian got to the bottom of the false harmonic coming from his Custom Shop Strat



Left: Calling PRS electric players! What clip-on tuner have you found success with, asks reader Adam D

Below: Renowned maker Martyn Booth used to share a workshop with Robbie Gladwell, or 'Dr Robert' as veteran *Guitarist* readers may remember him



Hi Ian, several of our associates have experienced similar unfathomable problems with our guitars that have been put right by unlikely remedies. Wolf tones, weird harmonics and other extraneous noises are nearly always caused by the strings ringing and setting up a sympathetic vibration at some other point in the body – sometimes it's just not where you would expect to find it. We're glad that the team at Vintage 'n' Rare were able to sort you out. Beautiful guitar, incidentally [pictured below left].

FRESH TUNER

I'm new to the electric guitar world and have recently purchased a PRS Custom 24 SE in Whale Blue, which I absolutely love. However, I have an issue that I'm sure other PRS users have faced in the past, which is: what tuner should I use?

I've bought two clip-on tuners that fit fine on my acoustics, but because of the shape of the PRS's headstock the clips just ping off. So I bought a different type of tuner that sits in front of me on my music stand and is supposed to pick up the sound, but that is completely useless.

I would like to use a clip-on type tuner again. Do you have any suggestions which one would be best suited for my new guitar?

Adam Dunkley, via email

This is a strange one, Adam, because we have a PRS in our studio with a standard headstock and have never had difficulty attaching a clip-on tuner – and we've generally got a variety on hand. You don't say which tuners you've tried as yet and so our advice would be to venture out to a PRS dealer and either seek their advice on the subject or ask if you can try a few different tuner models on your own guitar at your local store. Failing that, we'll throw the question open to the *Guitarist* reader hive mind and ask if ever anyone has experienced the same problem, how did they solve it?

STAR TURN

Just wanted to say how thrilled I was to see that I'd been awarded Star Letter in the current issue of the magazine. It really cheered up my Tuesday morning when I bought my copy from the local Sainsbury's and spotted it on p36!

I've written in to the magazine several times over the years and had almost given up hope of ever achieving publication, so you've made this 71 year old very happy. I've still got the very first *Guitarist* magazine that I bought: September 1990. Neville Marten was the editor in that era and the regular Dr Robert (Robbie Gladwell) 'surgery' pages first caught my interest in learning how to work on guitars.

Robbie lives in the same locale as me and I actually became acquainted with him back in 1999 when, during a career break, I was fortunate in being able to spend three months as an intern in the Sudbury premises of Martyn Booth, who shared workshop space at that time with Robbie. It was a fantastic time for me, being able to watch Martyn and Robbie at work, and I look back very fondly on those three months that I was lucky enough to work there.

Stephen Davies, via email

You're most welcome, Stephen. Both Robbie and Martyn have featured in these pages often in the past. Both are craftsmen of the highest standard and we envy you the time you spent watching that craft in action.

Your letters to the *Guitarist* editor. Drop us a line at guitarist@futurenet.com

Music

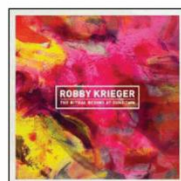
The month's best guitar music, plus top players in the studio



Robby Krieger *The Ritual Begins At Sundown*

The Players Club/Mascot Label Group

9/10



The Doors' legend releases first new solo album in 10 years

This latest solo offering from Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame inductee Robby Krieger follows up on 2010's Grammy Award-nominated album, *Singularity*, and was recorded at The Doors' guitarist's Horse Latitudes Studios in Glendale, Los Angeles. Featuring 10 instrumental tracks, including a cover of the Frank Zappa classic *Chunga's Revenge*, *The Ritual Begins At Sundown* was conceived by Robby along with veteran collaborator and co-producer Arthur Barrow, a multi-instrumentalist who played bass for Frank Zappa in the late 70s and early 80s.

Alongside a host of other ex-Zappa musicians including keyboardist Tommy Mars, trumpeter Sal Marquez, and trombonist Jock Ellis, Robby pays tribute to the late great man himself in his own

inimitable style while ripping it up in places with some distinctly Zappa-esque lead guitar tones.

Being a contemporary instrumental jazz-rock record, *The Ritual...* is a world away from Robby's darker 60s-era psychedelic rock days, as existing fans of his solo work will appreciate. "After The Doors, I started becoming interested in jazz and started hanging out with a guy called Sal Marquez," says Robby. "So we put this band together and that was the first Robby Krieger band... We decided to put Arthur [Barrow] in charge of the mixing at the Whiskey for our shows, that's when I first met him in the 70s." Having rekindled the magic of his first solo album, *Robbie Krieger & Friends*, with his old buddies, *The Ritual Begins At Sundown* sees Robby returning full circle in fine jazz-rock form. **[RB]**

Standout track: *The Drift*

For fans of: Frank Zappa, The Doors



Gordon Giltrap

Woman

Angel Air

8/10



Acoustic master releases album dedicated to remarkable women

Armed with rich-sounding acoustic guitars and his trademark pick and fourth finger picking technique, Gordon Giltrap presents *Woman*, an emotional and endearing journey of mainly solo guitar. *The Anna Fantasia* features guitar and a cathedral organ playing in harmony, evoking long ago times. *Rachel's Reflections* swirls with fingerpicking patterns, arpeggio melodic movement and chord shifts that evoke an almost pianistic sound. *Fiona's Smile* is akin to a lilting jig, brimming with rich chords and a warm tone, while *The Stars Look Down On Linda* features ringing strings, cascading lines, sonorous low notes and chiming harmonics. If you think today's acoustic guitar music is overly biased towards bashing and tapping virtuosity, Gordon reminds us all of the joys of pretty polyphonic picking. **[JS]**

Standout track: *Fiona's Smile*

For fans of: Bert Jansch, John Renbourn



Joe Satriani
Shapeshifting
 Provogue **8/10**



Guitar hero drops blisteringly diverse new record

Whenever we receive a new Joe Satriani album, we know we'll hear killer guitar, great tones, stimulating music and the high probability of WTF moments. 13 tracks are featured on *Shapeshifting* and Joe is super-savvy on how to keep a listener glued while channelling a broad gamut of styles from Link Wray and Chuck Berry through The Rolling Stones and all the way out to modern technical and timbral pyrotechnics. The title-track opener sets the scene with gusto; waltz may be the time signature but the tone and octaves are proudly rock as his guitar sings and harmonises with pickups blazing. **[JS]**
Standout track: *Nineteen Eighty*
For fans of: Steve Vai, Eddie Van Halen



King Solomon Hicks
Harlem
 Provogue **10/10**



Soulful sounds from prodigious New York City blues talent

This 11-track debut brims with soulful, biting guitar work that crackles with energy and taste. Imagine blending Robert Cray with BB King – smooth and savvy when riding sweet melodic lines over a good groove – but he can also dig in like Chuck Berry, as heard on *Every Day I Have The Blues* when his guitar barks out lead licks graced with a rich vibrato. Hicks is quoted as wanting people to feel like they're in a juke joint, listening to his take on the blues, but what makes this album notable is that it's all of the 'good stuff' – the zone where blues, R&B, jazz and gospel meet. King Solomon Hicks is one to watch. **[JS]**
Standout track: *Every Day I Have The Blues*
For fans of: Robert Cray, BB King

Janus Stark
Angel In The Flames
 Time & Matter Recordings **8/10**



Hard-hitting melodic punk-metal fusion from Gizz Butt

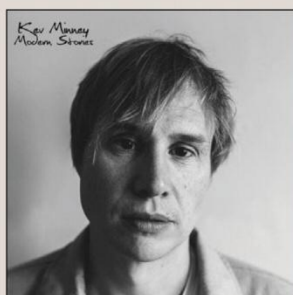
Perhaps better known for ripping up the fretboard as The Prodigy's touring guitarist in the 90s, Graham 'Gizz' Butt has an impressive punk-rock roster that stretches back to the 80s and includes the likes of English Dogs, The Destructors, UK Subs and The Stupids. Honing decades worth of chops in more recent projects with goth rockers Fields Of The Nephilim and German metallers Pyogenesis, Gizz's innovative style has been flawlessly captured here – a virtuosic punk-metal masterpiece you can even hum along to (or as Dave Grohl recently put it, "a great melodic kick up the arse"). **[RB]**
Standout track: *Crucify All The Leaders*
For fans of: Foo Fighters, The Wildhearts

Start me up

On-the-rise guitar acts to look out for

Kev Minney
Modern Stories
 Independent Release

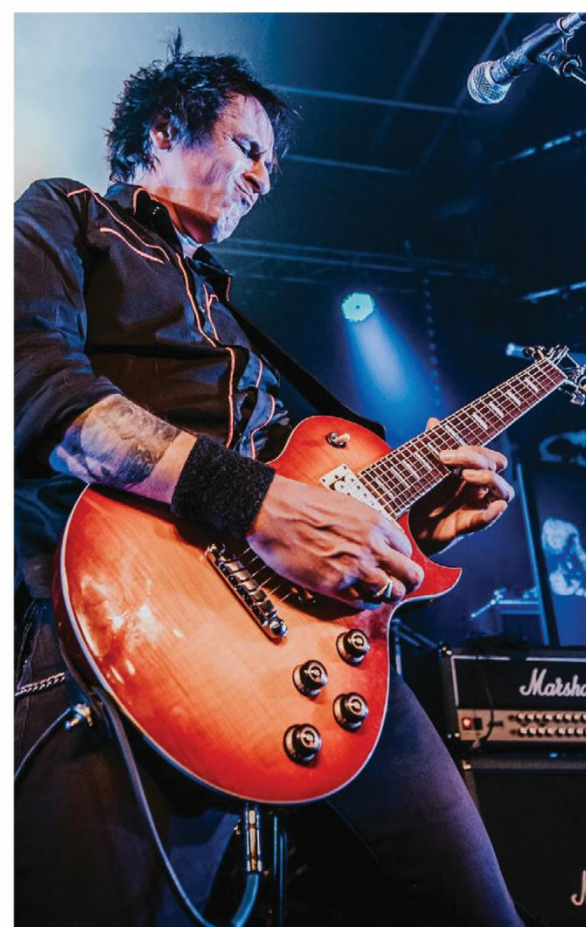
8/10



Second release from impressive singer-songwriter

Since the release of his first album, 2017's *Stories Of The Sky*, Kev Minney has toured relentlessly and thrown himself into promoting his music via every means available to an independent artist. *Modern Stories* represents a step forward in that the songwriting here is altogether more crafted and the arrangements – many of which employ a string section to excellent effect – show a fresh maturity in approach. "Pure hard work made this album," Kev told us. "Multiple tours, practising my craft and writing almost every day helped me make something of which I'm deeply proud." The result is a contrasting collection of songs and, if he can maintain this kind of impetus in his work, a very promising future. **[DM]**

Standout track: *A Way Out*
For fans of: Nick Drake, Gordon Lightfoot



« BACKTRACKING »

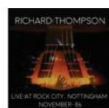
Our pick of recently reissued classic albums, essential compilations and vintage guitar recordings you must hear



Richard Thompson

Live At Rock City, Nottingham: November – 86
Angel Air

9/10



Folk-rock hero features in archival treasure

There are two sides to Richard Thompson's music – his solo acoustic work and the band work we find here. The ensemble that accompanies RT on this previously unreleased double-CD live set comprises Christine Collister (guitar/vocal), Clive Gregson (guitar, organ, vocal), John Kirkpatrick (accordion), Rory McFarlane (bass) and Gerry Conway (drums). The material draws in part from Thompson's 1986 *Daring Adventures* album with *A Bone Through Her Nose*, *Jennie*, *Nearly In Love* and *Al Bowlly's In Heaven* included. Those who favoured his work with Linda Thompson don't go away empty-handed as *Shoot Out The Lights* gets an airing, too. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Shoot Out The Lights*

For fans of: Fairport Convention, John Martyn



DEEP CUTS

Nigel Pulsford on lost-classic guitar albums you must hear

Little Feat

Dixie Chicken
Warner Bros 1973



Little Feat were the band that should have been huge but sadly remained merely cool and influential. They supplemented their meagre rewards by guesting on other people's albums and played on some of the most successful records of the 70s. Listening to their records now, it's hard to figure out why Little Feat weren't as successful as the Eagles.

Founded by Lowell George in 1969, they had already been through a few line-up changes when they added Paul Barrere on second guitar and entered Hollywood's Clover Records, in late 1972, to record *Dixie Chicken*. The work regime became: lay down a basic track, revise and re-record it, do yet more revision and overdubbing until producer George's vision was achieved. It was a lengthy and apparently frustrating process.

It was worth it, though! This album is a fusion of 70s LA sophistication and New Orleans musical history. It stars George's yearning vocals, outrageous slide guitar playing and the ensemble, pushing and squeezing that beat, creating a brew of exuberant musicianship and funky Meters-esque grooves. This, of all the Little Feat albums, is Lowell's baby. If you want to sample some Little Feat, this is the perfect starting point.

Further Listening: *Sailin' Shoes* ('72), *Feats Don't Fail Me Now* ('74), *The Last Record Album* ('75), *Waiting For Columbus* ('78)

Gentle Giant

Gentle Giant
Alucard Music

10/10



Influential progsters re-release early 70s chronicles

Spurred on no doubt by the huge response to last December's 30-disc boxset, *Unburied Treasure* (it sold out in a matter of days), Gentle Giant are re-releasing their first four albums on vinyl. These consist of their eponymous 1970 debut, *Acquiring The Taste* (1971), *Three Friends* (April 1972) and *Octopus* (December 1972). There's a wealth of prog gold to discover here: *Three Friends* is, without doubt, one of the great concept albums of its time and if you want to experience Mellotron-enriched heaven, then you need look no further than the album's stunning title track finale. Lesser known than the prog behemoths Floyd, Yes and Genesis, Gentle Giant are nevertheless the real deal. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Three Friends*

For fans of: Yes, Crimson, Genesis

Marillion

Script For A Jester's Tear
(Deluxe Reissue) Rhino

8/10



Deluxe repackaging for band's 80s platinum seller

Hot on the heels of last year's *Afraid Of Sunlight* boxset comes another impressive package from Marillion, this time with original vocalist Fish at the forefront. Released in March 1983 when punk's offensive was tailing off and the new romantics and one-finger synth players had taken a firm hold on the pop charts, *Script For A Jester's Tear* spawned two hit singles, *He Knows You Know* and *Garden Party*. The re-release sees a new mix of the album, a previously unheard live recording that was made at London's Marquee Club in December 1982, plus a revisit to the band's October '82 EP, *Market Square Heroes*. There's a Blu-ray 5.1 mix and a 'making of' documentary, too. **[DM]**

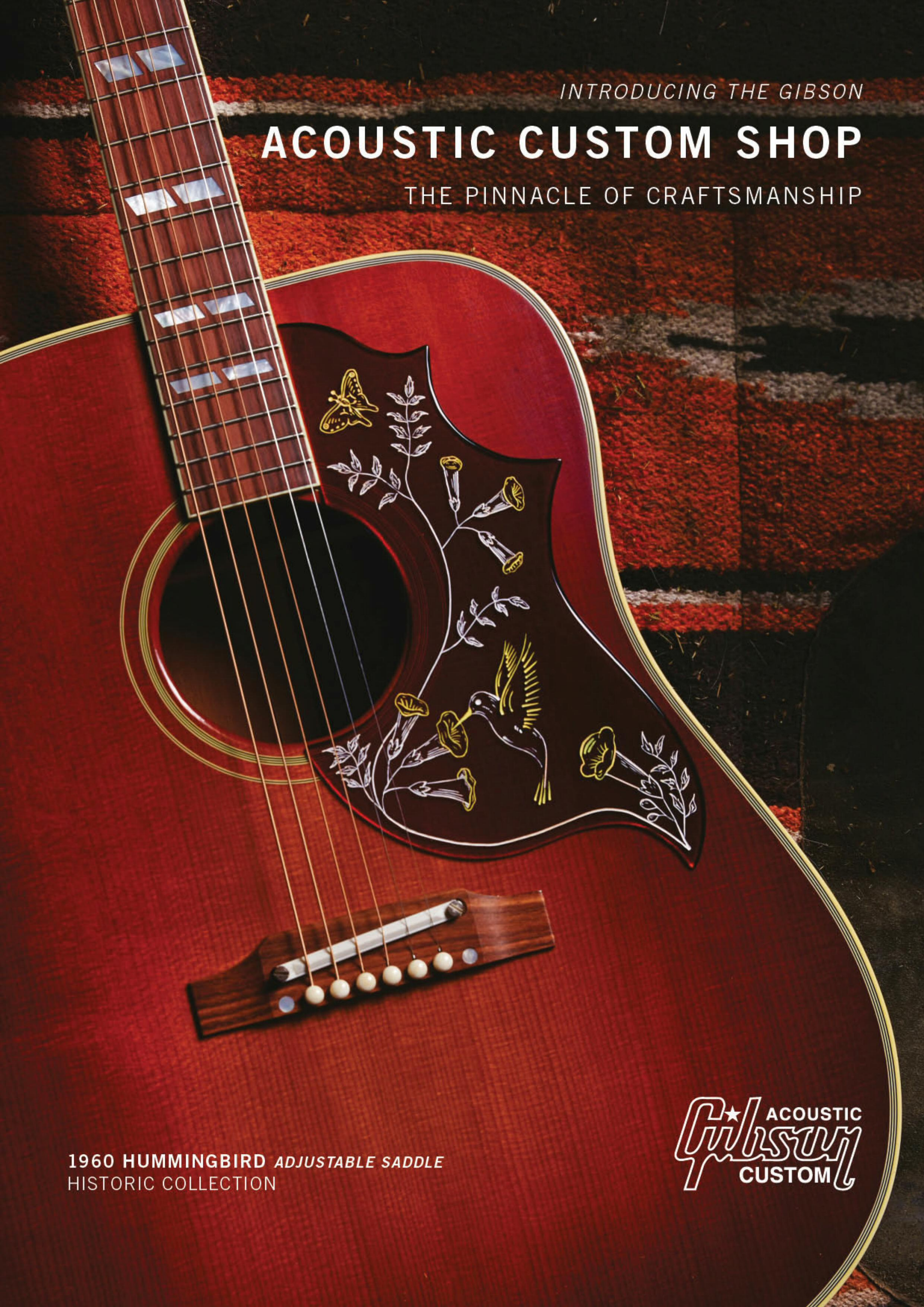
Standout track: *Grendel*

For fans of: Genesis, Yes

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FAT O U M A T A D I A W A R A

Guitarist, singer, actor, mother and survivor – we catch up with the Malian phenomenon mid-tour prior to yet another sold-out show as she continues to wow audiences across the globe with her sensational live performances

Words Rod Brakes Photography Adam Gasson

“**B**lues is the base of everything,” begins Fatoumata Diawara. “Blues is the heartbeat. It comes from your soul. And from this soul and from this one heartbeat, you can do anything – any type of music.”

A prolific collaborator, the Grammy Award nominee has indeed cast her creative net far and wide while featuring on numerous studio recordings alongside the likes of Flea, Herbie Hancock and Bobby Womack, and sharing the stage with such luminaries as Paul McCartney, John Paul Jones and Damon Albarn.

“When I started to play guitar, it resolved everything,” she tells us prior to her Bristol show. “It was like healing my soul. Being able to express myself through the guitar was more important than I could have imagined. It totally changed my life. There were no more questions about who I was supposed to be.”

How did the Malian music scene shape you as a musician?

“I grew up in Mali and, naturally, I grew up with traditional music. Malian music is diverse – we’ve got lots of different types. You can have 10 artists from Mali at the same festival and each of them will bring something different. And this is because of our traditional instruments. Compared with many countries in Africa, we’re still using them.”

What traditional instruments are commonly used in Mali?

“The kora, bolon, balafon, soku, ngoni, kamalengoni... There are many, many instruments, but each of them speaks a different language. Each one will give you a different taste or flavour of music. Depending on the instrument, you naturally change the way you sing – the EQ and sonority of the vocal. Each instrument speaks a language and you have to adapt to it. After that kind of schooling, you can adapt to any kind of music.”

What makes Malian guitar music unique?

“We have artists like Tinariwen and Ali Farka Touré who have a certain sound. People recognise the sound of Malian guitar players. We transpose the ngoni – an instrument from this area – to the electric guitar. The ngoni is like the guitar.

“I’m the first solo female electric guitar player in Mali. I’ve never seen it before”

If you can play this instrument, you can easily adapt to playing guitar. We don’t learn music at school in Mali. It’s all about the ear. You listen to it and when you get your guitar, you transpose your traditional instrument to the guitar. It’s a typical Malian thing.

“It’s very natural for us, because those instruments – the ngoni, kamalengoni and kora – are already blues. The sound is already blues. You feel it. You listen to it and you know how to do it. It’s like talking. It’s like speaking a language. It’s a natural thing. You don’t have to go to school to learn how to play.”

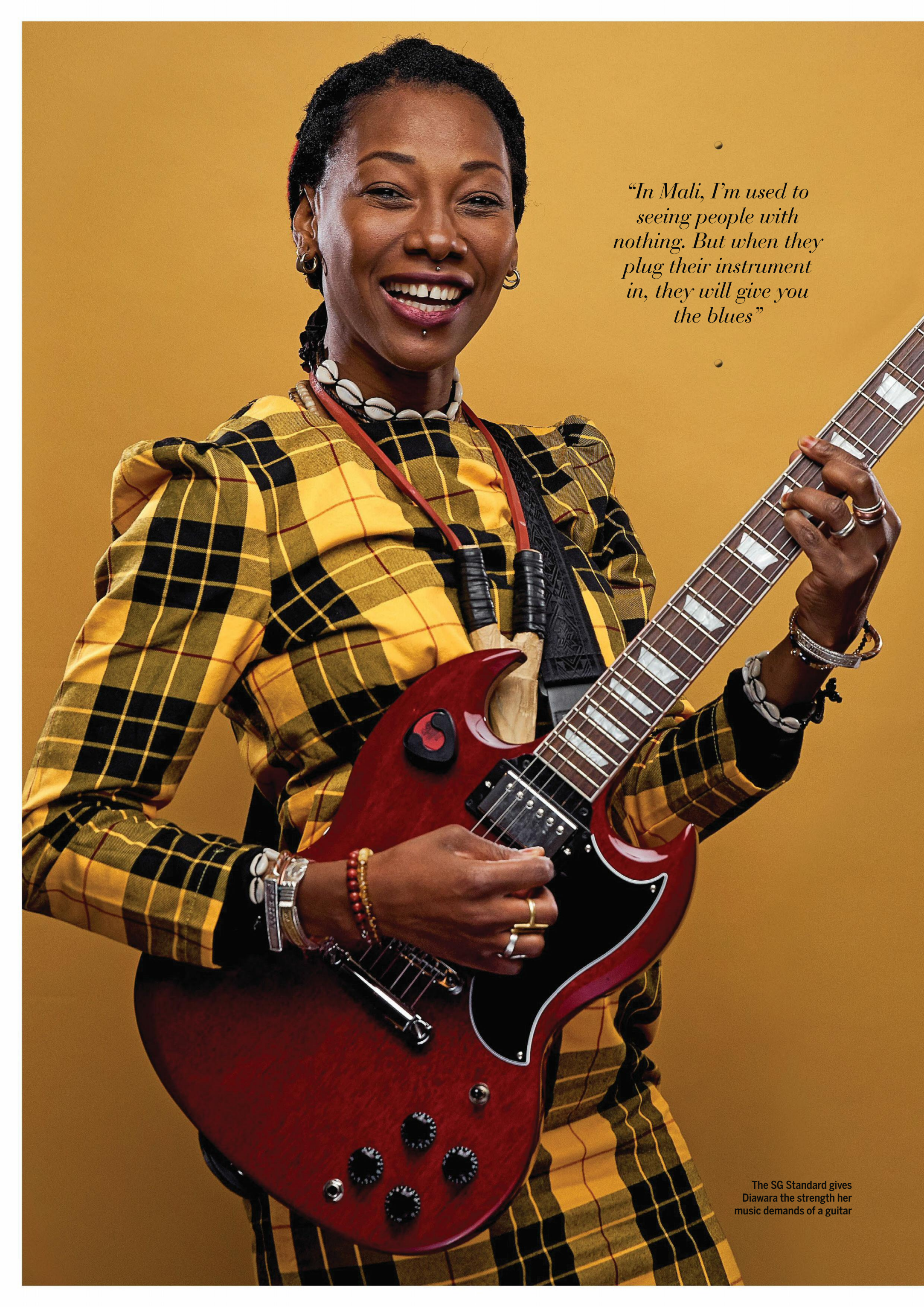
What prompted you to play the guitar?

“I’m the first solo female electric guitar player in Mali; I’ve never seen it before. I know of some artists who touch on the acoustic guitar but not electric guitar. I was wondering to myself, ‘If we are so rich culturally, why are there so many instruments being played just by men?’ It seemed natural for me to ask, ‘If men can do it, why can’t [women] try?’ I was asking myself a lot of questions.”

Do you feel as if you’ve helped Malian music evolve in some way?

“A little bit, in an up-to-date unique way. My generation are a little bit different to the generation before, because we had access to the new pop sound. We have one foot in the modern and one foot in the traditional.”



A full-page photograph of a woman with short dark hair, smiling and playing a red electric guitar. She is wearing a yellow and black plaid shirt and a necklace of white cowrie shells. Her hands are adorned with multiple rings and bracelets. The background is a solid warm tan color.

“In Mali, I’m used to seeing people with nothing. But when they plug their instrument in, they will give you the blues”

The SG Standard gives Diawara the strength her music demands of a guitar

How did your journey as a guitarist begin?

“I went to live in Paris in 2002 when I was 19 years old, and I started to collaborate with other musicians in this small coffee shop where I met lots of different artists. I said to myself, ‘If you really want to be an artist, and if you want your independence, you should not be just a singer. You have to learn an instrument so you can perform without [relying] on anybody else.’ So I bought a traditional instrument – a kamalengoni – and later, in 2007, I bought my first guitar. I started to play the kamalengoni on the guitar after I realised that you can just switch over.”

How did you begin writing songs on the guitar?

“I just went to the market, bought a guitar book to study the basic things and started composing. *Voilà!* I looked at the book and started to connect things from the images. I cannot read music and many people don’t want me to. Damon Albarn told me, ‘Don’t go there – your instinct is very strong.’ Many of my artist friends told me, ‘Keep working on your instinct – it’s where you have your own style of playing.’ I’m working on this first and maybe later I’ll try to learn more theory. Music is natural and sometimes we lose this aspect by thinking too technically. It’s a blues thing. Everything is physical.”

What was the first guitar you bought?

“The first electric I got was a cheap Gibson-style guitar, which I bought for €200 in Paris. I had it for about two years. I’m still using my first [nylon-string] acoustic guitar. In the studio, I always compose with an acoustic guitar, but not that one. At home, I have about 15 guitars. I love buying guitars. Every time I go America, the first thing I do is go to the Guitar Center. Women like shopping and I love to buy guitars! I don’t know why. I’m crazy about that.”

What’s your favourite guitar?

“We’re working with Gibson at the moment, we have an endorsement, but I don’t have a favourite guitar. It’s more about the qualities of who is playing. It’s in the fingers. In Mali, I’m used to seeing people with nothing. But when they plug their instrument in, they will give you the blues.”

What guitars do you have with you now?

“Just the Gibson SG Standards. We have two – a black one and a [Cherry] Red one. Before I started working with Gibson, I was pregnant and I couldn’t use something heavy. I was trying many guitars, but the SG is light and sounds so strong and powerful.”



PHOTO BY ANDREA FRIEDRICH/REDFERNS

What’s it like being a working mother on the road?

“It’s my job [laughs]! When you’re a mum, sometimes you have more responsibility, because the baby needs you for the feeding. I’m not sleeping throughout the whole night at the moment, because he’s feeding. It’s hard work, but it’s possible. It is possible. You can be a woman and you can have the same label as a man, if you want, but you have to work. You have to be hard-working. When I go to Mali, I like to react and show them we can change things. If we don’t try, we will never know.”

“When I go to [Malian capital] Bamako and I go to the bars in the night, the sound is huge, but you never see a woman playing there. So, one day, I’m going to go out there for three weeks and I’m going to play the clubs every night to inspire some females. You know, ‘Join me, let’s go!’ I don’t want to be the only one. It’s beautiful to see a woman with a guitar. You don’t see it so much and it’s a nice image. Also, we have a different feeling that people need to know about. We need to hear more female artists, especially in Mali.”

1. The image of a female guitar player is a powerful one for Diawara, and something she is keen to promote to other women

2. Fatoumata brings all the musicality of traditional Malian instruments into her guitar playing

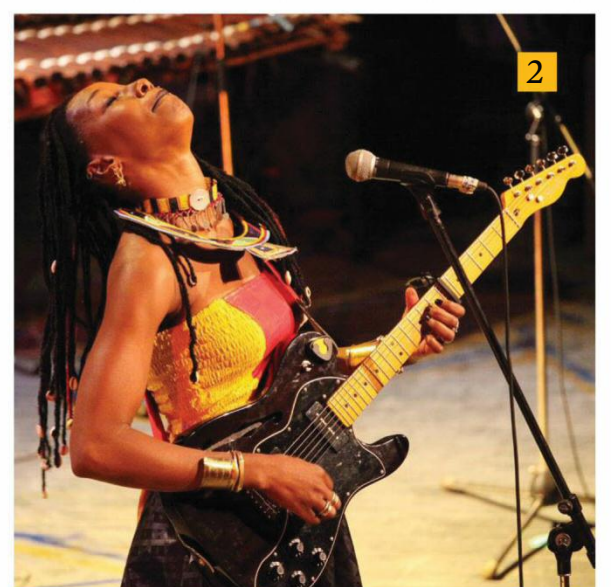


PHOTO BY SEBASTIEN REUSSE/AFAP VIA GETTY IMAGES

“I often write about people being themselves... Those who are closer to themselves are closer to their instruments”

“I’m doing it my way and hopefully other female artists will come along and do it their way. I think there’s a big hop coming. That’s why I don’t want to stop.”

What themes and ideas do you explore in your lyrics?

“I speak in Bambara, the national language of Mali. It’s the best way to connect with people there. I like to talk to my generation about how to save the next generation. The subject is all about problems in society: women and how we can be ourselves; how to stop bleaching our skin; how to stop arranged marriage; and how to stop female genital mutilation. We still have many issues to talk about. It’s my way to talk about love. There is always something strong and heavy behind my lyrics: reality.”

How do you go about composing songs?

“I always compose on guitar. The guitar is an amazing way to express yourself. I cry a lot when I’m writing, because I associate my own life with what I’m talking about. Then things are lighter, and I let go and fly like a bird. The melodies come and, very soon, there is a song. It’s very fast and very deep at the same time, but free and simple. There’s me and my voice, and the guitar is in the middle to give the balance. The voice is the questions and the guitar is the answers. It’s about putting the emotions first. I let my arms, heart and mouth connect with my soul. When this comes, it’s like crying. I cry and I feel better. Then I’ll listen to it. I let the song cry first. I don’t write songs to cry to afterwards. I cry first, then the song comes. It’s the blues.”

Are you constantly writing music?

“Yes. I’m always with my guitar. I have 100 songs ready now. I work all the time and anticipate things – I don’t need to wait for somebody else to be able to compose. Before I learned guitar, I was always doing things twice: on my own and then with someone else. But as a guitarist, I can say, ‘This is me.’ You either like it or you don’t



Fatoumata's dedication to her music came with sacrifices: “I’ve had to run away from my family, otherwise playing guitar would be impossible”

PHOTO BY DIMITRI HAKKE / REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES

like it. If you don’t like it, I’ll move, but this is me. I don’t need anyone else to discuss whether they like it or not. It makes you very strong.”

How do you see the future of the guitar as an instrument?

“I want to keep on playing the guitar. I love the guitar. People, especially women, must learn to love the instrument – that could mean a big change for the future. I would like to help people focus more on the instruments and on being themselves. In my songs, I often write about people being themselves, and this is what I want – this is my future. I’m going to keep fighting for those values. Those who are closer to themselves are closer to their instruments.”

What does playing the guitar mean to you, personally?

“I need my guitar for everything. I didn’t know what type of music I was supposed to play when I first started writing. I had my lyrics and could compose with the voice, but I wanted to make music where there were no boundaries or rules. It’s strange when you have to fight to know how you are supposed to be or who you are. You have to find the answer for yourself – nobody will do it for you. This is the spiritual part of playing the guitar. I’ve had to run away from my family, otherwise playing guitar would be impossible. I’ve broken something between me and my family to be who I am today. I’m a survivor.” 

<http://fatoumatadiawara.com>

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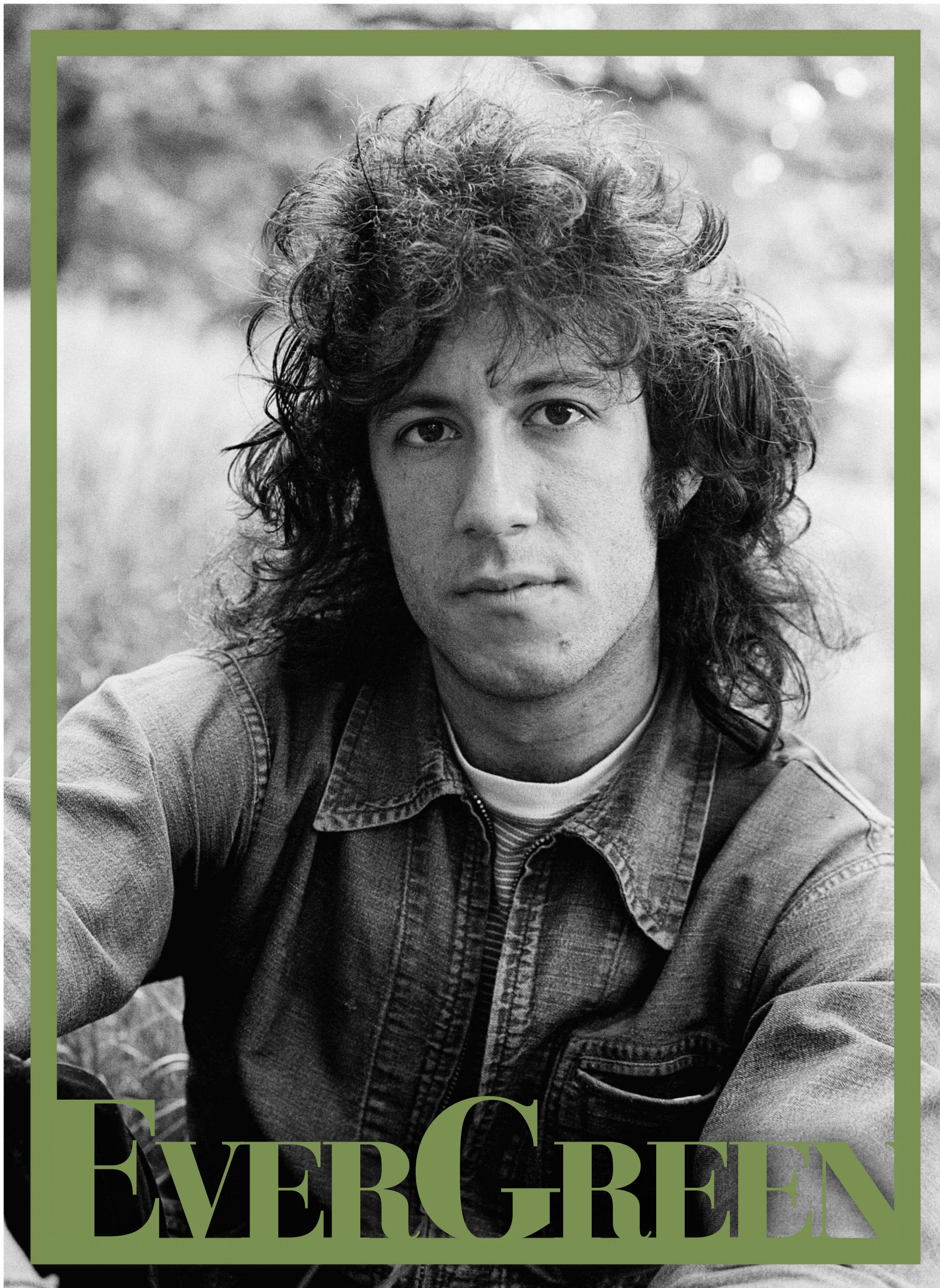


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FIFTY YEARS SINCE HE LEFT FLEETWOOD MAC IN THE GRIP OF DRUGS AND MADNESS, PETER GREEN IS STILL THE MOST MYTHOLOGISED FIGURE FROM THE 60S BLUES BOOM. WE LOOK BACK AT HIS TRAILBLAZING TENURES IN THE BLUESBREAKERS AND THE MAC...

Words Henry Yates

It was October 1966, and God had gone missing. Scanning the Decca Studios in North London as John Mayall's Bluesbreakers set up to record *A Hard Road*, producer Mike Vernon felt a sense of rising panic. "I said to John, 'Where's Eric Clapton?' Mayall says: 'He's not with us any more, but don't worry, we've got someone better.' I said, 'You've got someone better – than Eric Clapton?' John said, 'He might not be better now, but in a couple of years, he's going to be the best.' Then he introduced me to Peter Green."

"TO MY MIND, A BLUES DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A 12-BAR PROGRESSION. TO ME, THE BLUES IS AN EMOTIONAL THING. IF A SONG HAS THE RIGHT EMOTION THEN I ACCEPT IT AS A BLUES" – PETER GREEN

Vernon's incredulity made sense. After all, this was Eric Clapton: pack-leader of London's fretting classes, proclaimed as 'God' in graffiti all across town, whose precocious fingers had shot molten soul over Bluesbreakers cuts like *Hideaway* and *Little Girl* from that summer's scene-igniting 'Beano' album.

The fact that Beano's official title gave him top billing – *Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton* – spoke volumes about the hotshot guitarist's pulling power. Now he was gone, replaced by a spring-haired cockney interloper. The swap seemed absurd, like a Sunday league nonentity pulling on George Best's hallowed number seven shirt and running out for United. Only Mayall was unruffled, showing the quiet confidence of a man with an ace up his sleeve. Bringing in Green, he reflected, decades later, "was a no-brainer".

Born in working-class Bethnal Green on 29 October 1946, Peter Allen Greenbaum's

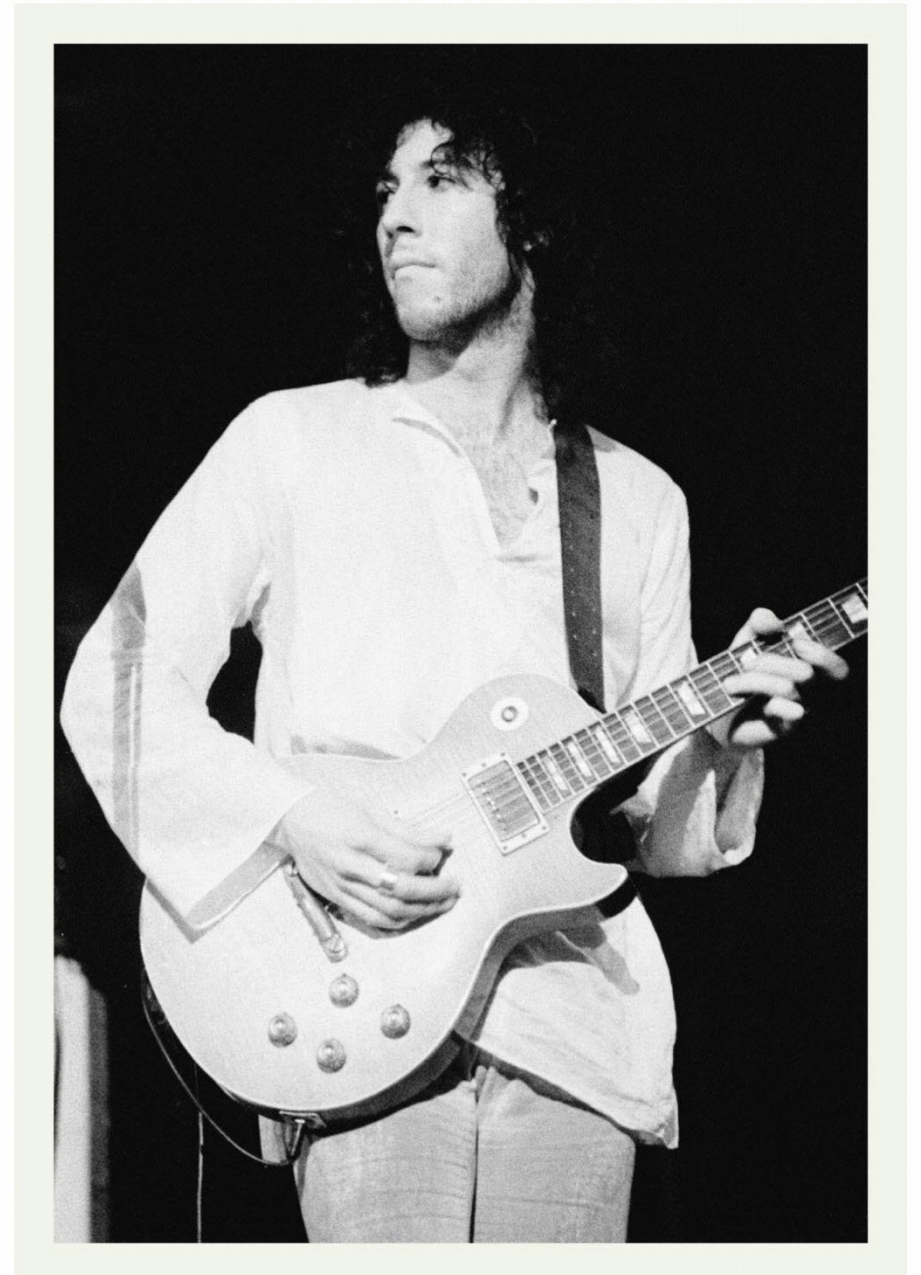


PHOTO BY STATE OF KEITH MORRIS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

early life echoed that of his fellow British Invaders. Like his peers from that golden generation, he devoured the import vinyl that trickled over from the States, thrilling to the primal touch of US titans like Freddie King, Otis Rush, John Lee Hooker, Buddy Guy and – perhaps most palpable in his own playing – the one-note master, BB King.

Green had tried guitar, but ended up slogging across London, bass in hand, keeping his head down in also-ran acts like Peter B's Looners. It was Clapton, he recalled, who changed his trajectory. "I decided to go back on lead guitar after seeing him with the Bluesbreakers. He had a Les Paul, his fingers were marvellous. The guy knew how to do a bit of evil, I guess."

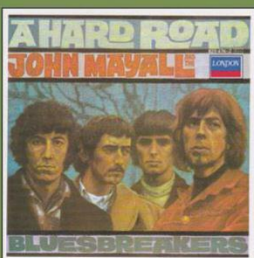
By his own admission, Clapton was a flake who regularly ducked shows, and when Mayall recruited deps, Green showed them no mercy. "Peter had pestered John to employ him," noted Clapton, "often turning up at gigs and shouting that he was better than whoever was playing that night. I got the impression he was a confident person who knew exactly what he wanted."

When Clapton took a booze-soaked holiday in Greece in August 1965, Green got his chance, only to be left fuming when the prodigal son returned to reclaim his gig. But by summer 1966, when Clapton

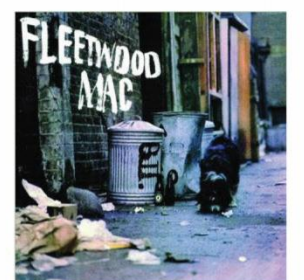
Peter Green performing with Fleetwood Mac at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 22 April 1969

BLUESBREAKERS

A Hard Road



Released on 17 February 1967, this album gave the music world its first opportunity to hear Peter Green in full flight. Tracks such as *The Stumble* and the glorious reverb-drenched *The Supernatural* became instant classics, leaving little doubt among Bluesbreakers fans that Peter Green was a worthy replacement for Eric Clapton in the band.



FLEETWOOD MAC

Fleetwood Mac
(1968)

Just a year after Peter's recording debut with The Bluesbreakers, Fleetwood Mac released their first album in February 1968. It went on to reach No 4 in the UK album charts

quit for Cream, Green became a permanent fixture, quickly silencing the early catcalls – “Where’s Eric?” – with his magic touch. “What I remember about those concerts is that nobody was calling for Eric,” remembers Tom Huissen, the Dutch fan who released an album of Green-era bootlegs in 2015. “They accepted Peter straightaway. The way he played – it was just phenomenal.”

Green’s mastery of mood meant he could shine on live material spanning from Otis Rush cuts like *So Many Roads*, through R&B floor-shakers like Johnny ‘Guitar’ Watson’s *Looking Back*, to T-Bone Walker’s languorous *Call It Stormy Monday*. He could certainly play blazing, visceral flurries of notes, but to Green, doing so was an admission of defeat. “Playing fast is something I used to do with John when things weren’t going very well,” he reflected. “But it isn’t any good. I like to play slowly and feel every note.”

Speaking to Christopher Hjort for the notes of last year’s *Fleetwood Mac: Before The Beginning* boxset, Vernon also noted that Green resisted the era’s growing vogue for overdrive. “He loved the sound of the guitar pure, without too much distortion, and made the notes sing, rather like BB did.”

It was this same ethos that Green brought to *A Hard Road*’s sessions, which alternately groans with some of his most

fiery and sensuous playing. Back in 1998, he would give a characteristically modest interview to *Guitarist*, shrugging that “I didn’t really know what I was doing. I used to dash around on stepping stones. ‘Safe’ notes, y’know?”

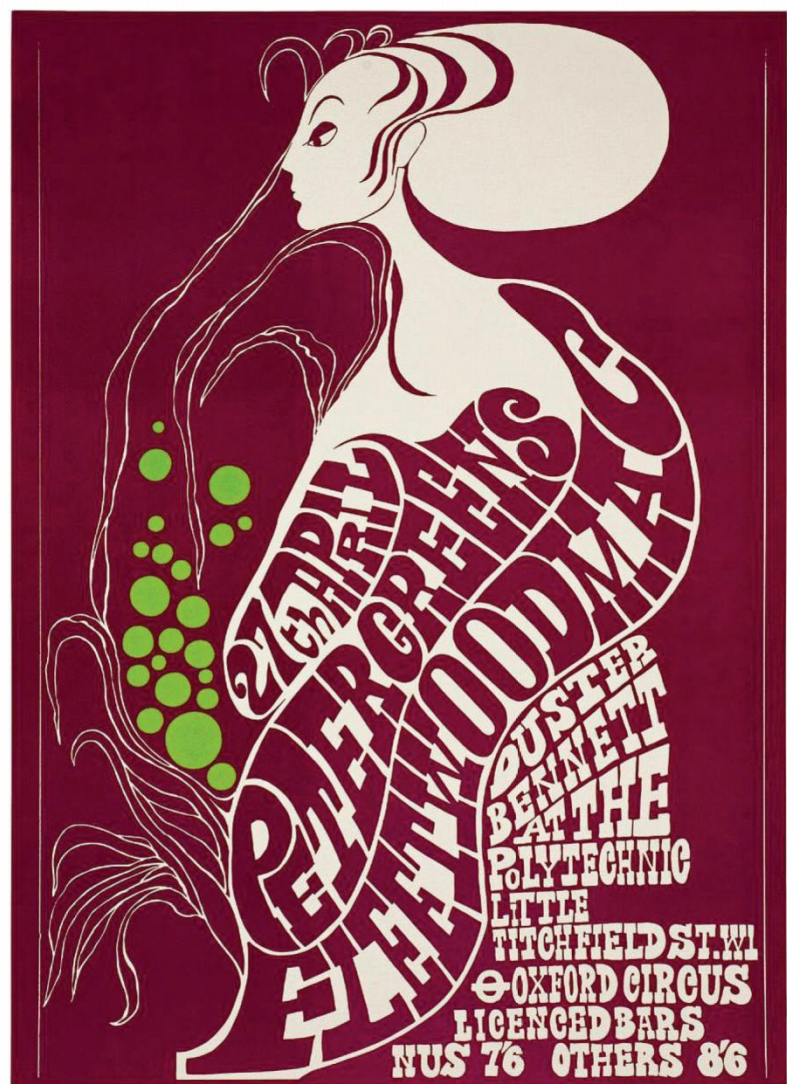
Yet Green’s towering performances on that 1967 album beg to differ, whether on the weeping bends of *Someday After A While (You’ll Be Sorry)* or the intense sustained notes of *The Supernatural*. And even if speed wasn’t his style, the guitarist would sometimes relax his principles, as on showboat instrumental *The Stumble*: less-lauded than Clapton’s *Hideaway*, perhaps, but easily its equal for chills.

Two giants of the 1960s British blues scene: Peter Green (left) and Alexis Korner



PHOTO BY PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The poster for Peter Green’s Fleetwood Mac at the London Polytechnic in 1968. A recording of this concert is available, entitled *London Live ’68*



“THESE FUNNY LITTLE ENGLISH DUDES RECONSTITUTED AN ARTFORM THAT WAS ALL BUT DEAD... WE HELPED SAVE SOMETHING THAT WAS ALL BUT THROWN IN THE DUSTBIN” – **MIKE FLEETWOOD**

The Bluesbreakers seemed the perfect home for a player of Green’s persuasion. But even as *A Hard Road* reached UK No 8 in February 1967, the guitarist was restless. As he told Norman Jopling: “It was becoming less and less of the blues. We’d do the same thing night after night. John would say something to the audience and count us in, and I’d groan inwardly.”

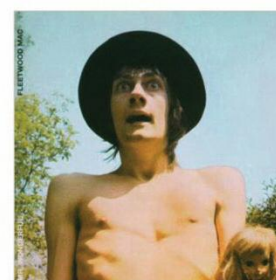
According to then-girlfriend Sandra Elsdon, Green was even chewing over a move to the motherland (“He was into Chicago blues and just wanted to be immersed in it”), until the plan was killed by Mayall’s flatmate Marsha Hunt. “I could only imagine this small temperate London boy getting his ass kicked in Chicago,” she remembered. “I put him off in no uncertain terms.”

Even so, Green was not long for the Bluesbreakers line-up. The original members of Fleetwood Mac remember his approach as being tantamount to a press

PHOTO BY M&N / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

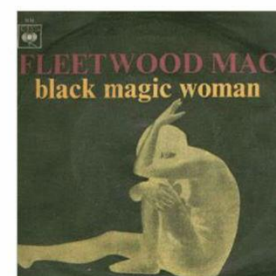


PHOTO BY GEORGE WILKES/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



FLEETWOOD MAC
Mr Wonderful
(1968)

Fleetwood Mac's second release came just six months after the first, in August 1968, and was augmented by a horn section



FLEETWOOD MAC
Black Magic Woman
(1968)

Allegedly Peter wrote *Black Magic Woman* about his girlfriend at the time. Santana's cover was a bigger hit two years later

Peter in the late 60s with his legendary '59 Les Paul that would later become known simply as 'Greeny'

gang ("Peter asked if I wanted a drink," recalled guitarist Jeremy Spencer, "and as we stood by the bar, he talked as though I was already in it") and in late-summer 1967, Vernon unlocked Decca Studios under cover of darkness for a secret session by the nascent line-up, completed by drummer Mick Fleetwood and original bassist Bob Brunning (shortly replaced by John McVie). "Fleetwood Mac was a bit of an experiment to start with," Green noted. "I wouldn't have been surprised if it had failed."

Given Green's profile, the subterfuge couldn't last. Soon enough, the music press was buzzing (*Melody Maker*: "A new Cream-type group is being formed by ex-John Mayall guitarist Peter Green") and Mayall graciously accepted the loss of a second guitar god in as many years. In truth, *Melody Maker* was off the mark. Unlike the psych-tinged and jazz-inflected Cream, Fleetwood Mac's dedication to the

"PLAYING FAST IS SOMETHING I USED TO DO WITH JOHN WHEN THINGS WEREN'T GOING VERY WELL. BUT IT ISN'T ANY GOOD. I LIKE TO PLAY SLOWLY AND FEEL EVERY NOTE" — PETER GREEN

true, deep blues was unwavering – even if they did occasionally give the stage to Spencer's 50s rock 'n' roll pastiches. "The irony is that these funny little English dudes reconstituted an artform that was all but dead – nobody gave a shit about it in America – and served it back to them," wrote Fleetwood in his *Love That Burns* book. "We helped save something that was all but thrown in the dustbin."

For purists, the band's self-titled debut – recorded live and informally christened 'dog and dustbin' after its sleeve art – was a treasure trove, with Green originals



PHOTO BY CHRIS WALTER/GETTY IMAGES

Fleetwood Mac, class of '69 (L-R): John McVie, Danny Kirwan, Peter Green, Jeremy Spencer and Mick Fleetwood

jostling with standards by Robert Johnson and Elmore James. Revisit the enigmatic, echo-clad guitar leads of *I Loved Another Woman*, for example, where Green had rarely sounded so supple and emotive. “It really holds up, when you listen to some of that early stuff,” writes Fleetwood. “I mean, Peter was such an extraordinary player, so sensitive and mature.”

As the debut album reached UK No 4, a less questing bandleader might have been satisfied to stick to the formula and ride the prevailing appetite for electric blues. But, as ever, Green was thinking bigger. After an underwhelming follow-up album in August 1968’s *Mr Wonderful*, the recruitment of cherubic guitarist Danny Kirwan was a catalyst, prodding Green from tired 12-bars towards offbeat textural work, more like that year’s earlier single, *Black Magic Woman*. “That was the song,” noted Vernon, “that proved that Peter was

not only just a really good songwriter, he was an exceptionally good songwriter.”

Green didn’t share that opinion: he had confidence in his playing, but writing was uncharted territory (“I was forced into songwriting,” he told us in 1998. “I’m not really a songwriter”). But a breakthrough came when he shook off the prescriptive influence of the blues pioneers and accepted the genre was defined more by feel than formula. “To my mind,” Green told journalist Ian Middleton, “a blues doesn’t have to be a 12-bar progression. It can cover any musical chord sequence. To me, the blues is an emotional thing. If a song has the right emotion then I accept it as a blues.”

With his antennae up, and attuned to the more experimental writing of bands like The Beatles, the early Mac’s most iconic song was born. *Albatross* was a swooning, swooping, pulsing instrumental, with Green draping stately guitar lines over a tapestry of overdubs. “It was a brand-new Strat,” Green told David Mead in 1995. “We hired two for the recording and that was one of them. There’s a Les Paul on there as well, though. But the chords and the main melody are on a Strat with the high melody parts on the Les Paul. Danny plays the harmony parts. There are two bass guitars on there, too.”

“[BLACK MAGIC WOMAN] WAS THE SONG THAT PROVED THAT PETER WAS NOT ONLY JUST A REALLY GOOD SONGWRITER, HE WAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD SONGWRITER” — MIKE VERNON



FLEETWOOD MAC *Then Play On* (1969)

Danny Kirwan joins the Fleetwood Mac line-up for their third recording. It was to be Peter’s last with the band



PHOTO BY MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Such ambition was lost on CBS executives, while even Fleetwood fretted that *Albatross* was “a little light in the loafers” for their blues hardcore. But Green persisted, and when the song sailed to UK No 1 in December 1968, it set in motion a career-best run of creativity. In 1969 alone, Green delivered the glistening *Man Of The World* and schizophrenic folk-rocker *Oh Well* (both UK No 2 singles), before third album, *Then Play On*, made UK No 6 and announced a musical mind fusing everything from tape

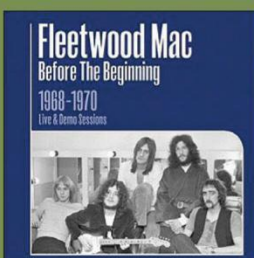
echo to the classical influences of Vaughan Williams’ *The Lark Ascending*. “One can only imagine,” mused Fleetwood, “what he’d have created if he had continued on that track.”

And yet, if you peered a little closer, it was clear the first incarnation of Fleetwood Mac had already peaked. Green was unravelling, leaving lyrical clues to his state of mind (‘I just wish I’d never been born,’ runs *Man Of The World*, while *Love That Burns* begs: ‘Please leave me now in my room to cry’). Then there was his

Fleetwood Mac on stage during rehearsals at the Royal Albert Hall in London, 22 April 1969

FLEETWOOD MAC

Before The Beginning 1968-1970



A collection of early live performances and sessions, this is a fantastic insight into the early days of Fleetwood Mac; it’s clear why players such as Gary Moore and BB King loved Peter’s playing so much. Particular highlights

are *Worried Dream*, *Instrumental* and a live version of *Albatross*. There are plenty more tracks on here to check out, but these are a great place to start.

“ONE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT HE’D HAVE CREATED... I’VE JUST LEARNT THAT PETER’S JOURNEY TOOK HIM WHERE HE IS. AFTER A WHILE, YOU JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT IT...” – **MICK FLEETWOOD**

final composition, *The Green Manalishi (With The Two-Prong Crown)*, examining Green’s struggles with fame, fortune and imposter syndrome, his spooky guitar tone signposting a man on the brink. “The burden of our success haunted him,” noted Fleetwood. “Peter thought it was all bullshit and was convinced that people never really liked him.”



PHOTO BY ESTATE OF KEITH MORRIS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

In April 1970, an *NME* interview revealed the extent of Green's burnout. "I feel it is time for a change. I want to change my whole life, really, because I don't want to be at all a part of the conditioned world, and as much as possible, I am getting out of it."

Get out of it he would, in both senses. In early 1970, after a disastrous LSD dose at a Munich hippie enclave, Green's fragile headspace shattered entirely, leading the guitarist to quit the band and tumble into an existence mostly chronicled by

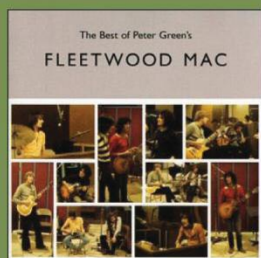
troubling newspaper headlines. Decades later, when mercifully recovered enough to play with his underrated Splinter Group, Green couldn't form a cogent argument for his actions in those last chaotic days of Fleetwood Mac. "I don't really know why I left the group in the end. I think it was just because I wanted to do things for free. I knew that people looked at me like I was in a dream. I could tell that, even at the time..."

Green's fall from the top table of British blues is often viewed by connoisseurs as a

Peter in a London recording studio with BB King in June 1971, working on the album *BB King In London*. The harmonica player (centre) is possibly Duster Bennett

FLEETWOOD MAC

The Best Of Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac



Here is a convenient way to go through some highlights without having to pick through lots of albums. Additionally, some tracks were only released as singles. From the original *Black Magic Woman* to *Albatross*, *Need Your Love So Bad* and the blistering *Oh Well*, you'll hear Peter's distinctive playing in a variety of contexts. Notice that he is no slouch as a rhythm player, either!

"I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY I LEFT THE GROUP IN THE END. I THINK I JUST WANTED TO DO THINGS FOR FREE... PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME AS IF I WAS IN A DREAM..." – PETER GREEN

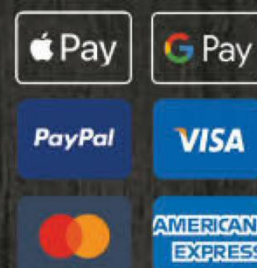
maddening waste of talent, his early promise only half-fulfilled at best. Perhaps, but rather than pine for what might have been, it's surely better to treasure his output from that magical era and celebrate the genius that fired the world's imagination, however briefly. As Fleetwood once told this writer: "I've just learnt that Peter's journey took him where he is. After a while, you just have to accept it..." **G**

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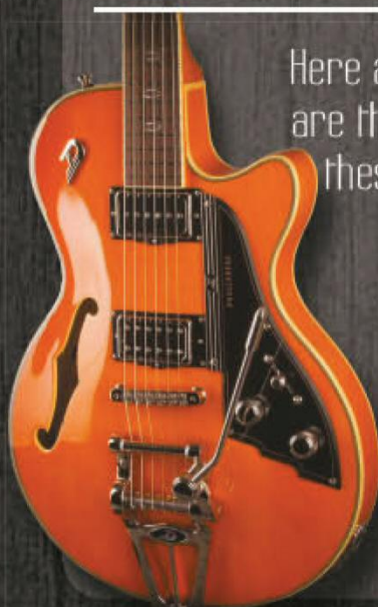


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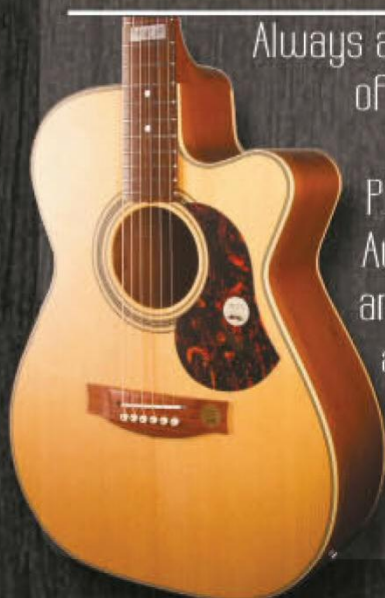
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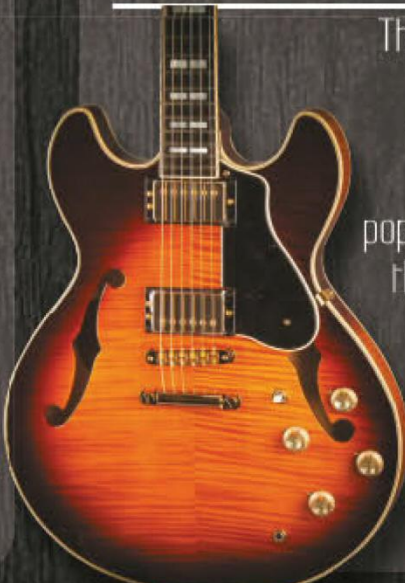


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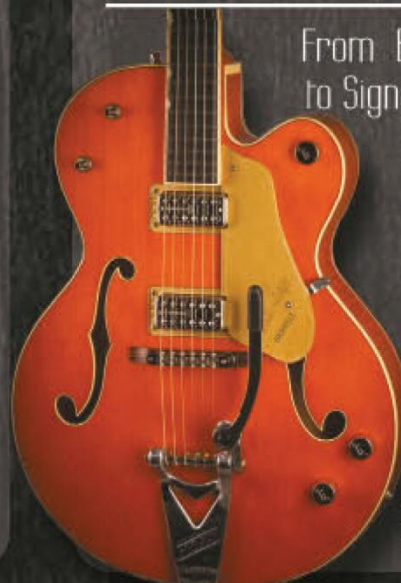


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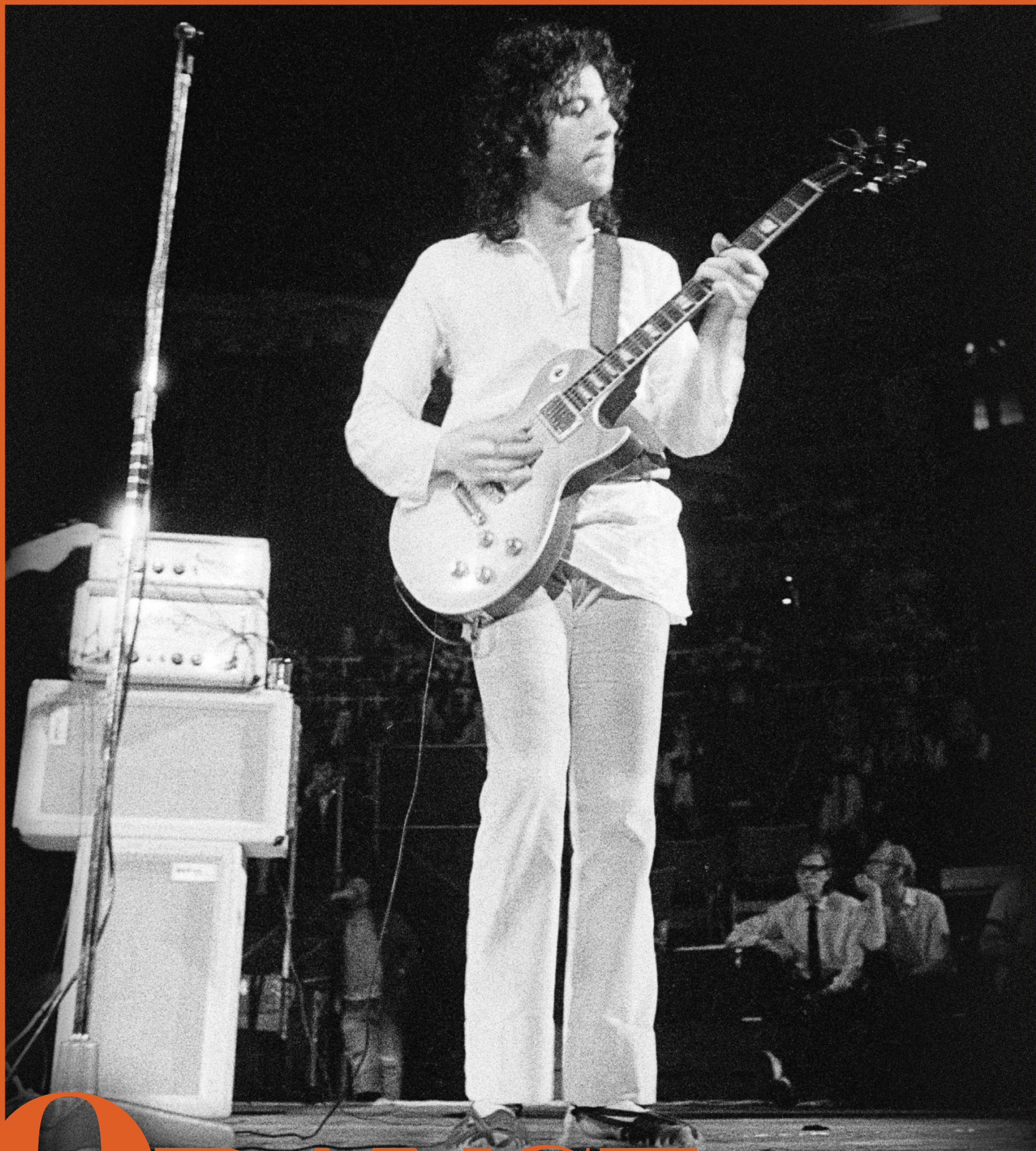
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ORANGE & GREEN

ORANGE FOUNDER CLIFF COOPER RECALLS THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF HIS BUSTLING WEST END MUSIC SHOP DURING THE LATE 60S, WHEN FLEETWOOD MAC ASCENDED TO GLOBAL STARDOM – AND TOOK HIS AMPS ALONG FOR THE RIDE...

Words Rod Brakes

Opposite: Peter Green at the Royal Albert Hall, April 1969. Around six months before this photo was taken, in early October '68, Peter Green and Fleetwood Mac tour manager, Dinky Dawson, ordered the first ever Orange PA from Cliff – six 100-watt amps and 16 speaker cabs. One month later, with the help of Matamp's Mat Mathias, the amps were with the band

What was the Orange shop like in the early days?

"I opened our shop on New Compton Street in 1968, and I built a studio underneath. We were sort of long-haired hippie types [laughs], which was conducive to what was happening back then in London. Guys like Marc Bolan, Eric Clapton and Paul Kossoff would sit in the shop chatting and jamming all day long. It was part of the whole thing that was happening. They'd come in, take a guitar off the wall and plug in. It was all happening back then."

"PETER USED TO LIVE FAIRLY NEAR TO THE [ORANGE] SHOP; HE USED TO COME IN AND HANG OUT AND PLAY GUITAR... HE WAS A MAN OF FEW WORDS, BUT HE COULD REALLY TALK WITH HIS GUITAR" – CLIFF COOPER

What kind of gear did you sell?

"When I first started, nobody would supply us, so we had to deal in secondhand equipment, which made us popular, because none of those guys would be seen dead with a brand-new shiny guitar! They liked the older, more beaten-up guitars and we had things like '59 Les Pauls on the wall – I wish I had even one of them now. Gibson Les Pauls weren't worth a lot of money in those days, and they weren't everybody's cup of tea to begin with. The Les Paul was a heavy guitar and a lot of people would go for something else, like a 335, especially blues guitarists. Peter definitely was one of the first to popularise the Les Paul for his kind of blues."

Did you see Peter Green gigging locally?

"Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac were one of my favourite acts. I used to go and see them everywhere. I loved them. Peter Green was an incredible guitarist. You could see he felt every note that he played. I saw him



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ORANGE

in large pubs and small halls. There were so many little clubs in London where big bands would play. You'd get these famous bands who wanted to play these little clubs, because it was the in-thing to do. A lot of careers were launched in those clubs. Magazine writers would always hang out there and a buzz would go around if they were really good."

Was Peter a regular in the Orange shop?

"In those days, Peter used to live fairly near to the shop; he used to come in and hang out and play guitar. If he was sat in the shop and somebody wanted to sit down and play, he'd sit down and play with them. He'd talk to people, but he would never talk a lot. He was very quiet – a man of few words, you might say, but he could really talk with his guitar. I got the impression he was always thinking. Obviously, music was his life and he was always looking and listening for sounds.

"If he liked something, he wouldn't always say, 'I love it!' He'd just say, 'Yeah, that's all right.' And, 'That's okay.' When we started making Orange equipment, I said, 'Would you like to try it?' so he tried it and said, 'Yeah, I like it, Cliff.' He never really talked that much, but with regards to music, he really knew what he was doing. He was a great guitarist. He was a natural and he had his own style."

How did you go about designing the gear for Fleetwood Mac's backline?

"Mat Mathias [of Matamp] was alive then and in the very early days he used to build our amplifiers. Peter liked sustain, but he also liked a clean sound. He didn't

In 1968, Cliff got the keys to rent the premises at 3 New Compton Street, in close proximity to Shaftesbury Avenue and Denmark Street, an area known as 'the music walk'. The Orange shop was just that – painted a vibrant shade inside and out

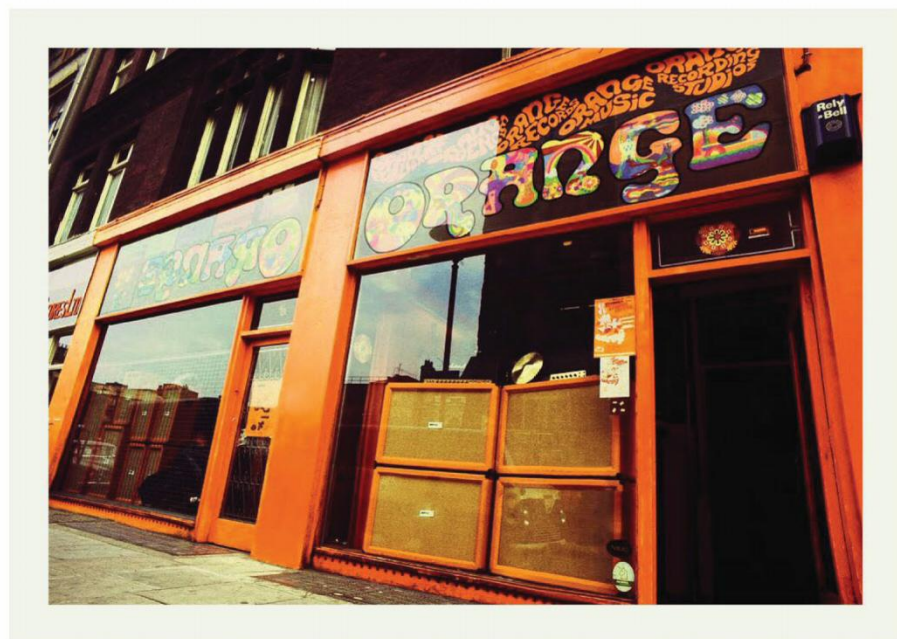


PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ORANGE



PHOTO BY MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

On stage at the Royal Albert Hall, 1969 (L-R): Danny Kirwan, Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Peter Green – and the famous Orange backline

want it too distorted. Marshall had a fairly distorted sound, because the output transformer, I believe, was a mismatch. You can get more sustain with distortion, but we worked hard to get a sound that he wanted. We got it right and he loved the sound of it. Eventually, we built him a set of OR200 amps and speakers. Boy, those amps were loud! I don't think there was a louder amp around. They were 200 watts each. And, of course, there were the OA Reverb units. They were one of Mat's designs. He worked with Keith Emerson on that spring reverb unit using Hammond springs. We modified it slightly to make it sound sweeter."

To your knowledge, did Peter ever record using Orange equipment?

"They recorded *Albatross* just down the road from our shop at the CBS studios. Mike Vernon produced it. I don't know whether the reverb came from the Orange reverb unit or the desk, but I'm almost certain they used an Orange amp, because I remember we sent one over to CBS studios when Fleetwood Mac were in there. I wasn't there at the recording, so I can't say for sure, but it sounds like it to me."

Is it fair to say Fleetwood Mac were responsible for popularising Orange amps, initially?

"Fleetwood Mac were really the first band to ever use Orange equipment. We were lucky. When Peter Green and Fleetwood Mac took our gear to America, it launched

us in the States, and soon after Stevie Wonder used Orange to record *Superstition* [in 1972]. That launched us all over the world.

"We'd kitted the Fleetwood Mac band out with a complete set of equipment, but their management hadn't paid us for it, and I was living from hand to mouth back then. They'd had a No 1 with *Albatross* and they were just about to go to the States when their management said, 'If you would like us to take the Orange gear with us' – rather than hire other amp brands out there

"FLEETWOOD MAC WERE REALLY THE FIRST BAND TO EVER USE ORANGE EQUIPMENT. WHEN THEY TOOK OUR GEAR TO AMERICA, IT LAUNCHED US IN THE STATES" – CLIFF COOPER

– 'then can you cover the cost of the air freight?' I said, 'I don't know, because I've got bills to pay.'

"In the end, it came down to us spinning a coin. They said, 'If we win, you let us off the price of the gear. If you win, you just pay for the air freight.' We spun the coin and I lost, so I let them off the cost of the equipment. I was almost in tears walking home, and the truth is I had to resort to cleaning cars to pay the wages. But, as it turned out, the air freight ended up being about three times the cost of the gear! If I'd have won the toss, I'd have been bankrupt!" **G**

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Still Got The Blues

AFTER THE DUST HAD SETTLED FROM PETER GREEN LEAVING FLEETWOOD MAC UNDER SOMEWHAT MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, HIS '59 LES PAUL FOUND ITS WAY INTO THE HANDS OF ANOTHER LEGENDARY PLAYER...

Words David Mead

Gary tears out another solo on Peter's '59 Les Paul at the Shepherd's Bush Empire launch of his *Blues For Greeny* album in 1995

It's not every day that you find yourself being offered a Les Paul for next to nothing, but that's exactly what happened to Gary Moore at the dawn of the 1970s. "Peter was such a generous person," Gary told *Guitarist* back in 1995. "If you admired something, he'd give it to you. He had this amazing coat you may have seen in photographs: full length wool coat with a very faint red check through it. I don't think I ever said anything about it, but he said, 'Do you like my long coat?' It's like he read my mind. He said, 'I'm getting rid of all this stuff...' and he gave me this beautiful coat."

"PETER CALLED ME UP AND SAID, 'WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE GUITAR?' AND I SAID, 'WELL, IT'S FANTASTIC.' HE SAID, 'DO YOU WANT TO BUY IT?' HE WANTED IT TO HAVE A GOOD HOME" – GARY MOORE

Gary also claimed that he was the first person to hear about Peter's intention to leave Fleetwood Mac. "One day I went round his house and he said, 'Oh, let's go for a drive,'" Gary continued. "We were driving along and he said, 'I'm leaving the band; I've had enough.' I was amazed that he was telling me, because no-one knew at the time."

Little did Gary know that there was another revelation headed his way. "He asked me if I wanted to borrow the guitar. I mean, he was tremendously supportive,

you know? And I said, 'Fuck, yeah!' I mean, what are you going to say? So I went down and picked the guitar up at his parents' place. I had it for a few days and I couldn't believe I had it in my hands. I was so scared that anything might happen to it, because I lived in this bedsit in Belsize Park and I had to take the guitar everywhere because there was no lock on my door. He called me up and said, 'What do you think of the guitar?' And I said, 'Well, it's fantastic.' He said, 'Do you want to buy it?'"

Gary told Peter that he didn't think he could afford it, but Peter remained insistent that he wanted Gary to be Greeny's new owner. "He said it wasn't the money he was interested in, he just wanted it to have a good home," says Gary. "So he told me to take my main guitar and sell it and whatever I got for it I could give to him, so it would be like swapping guitars."

"I had an SG at the time and so I took it into town and I sold it for £160 or something and he came up to my flat for the money and gave me 40 or 50 quid back! He said, 'I'll tell you what, I'll just take what I paid for it, which was 120 quid.' But then he said he wouldn't even do that and so I think I ended up giving him £100 or £110. I said to him if he ever wanted it back I'd give it to him, but he said, 'No, I'll never ask for it back...'"

Subsequently, the guitar was involved in a car accident when a lorry went into the back of Gary's car at Chiswick Flyover. "I just opened the boot and although the guitar was in a flight case, its neck was completely broken. But we got it repaired amazingly well, we put a steel bolt in the neck – it was in a terrible state, though. The car was written off, so you can imagine." **G**

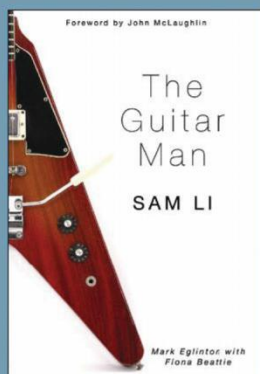
Gary Moore got to know Peter during the late 60s and early 70s, as his band Skid Row often opened Fleetwood Mac shows



PHOTO BY PHOTO BY PATRICK FORD/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

THE GUITAR MAN

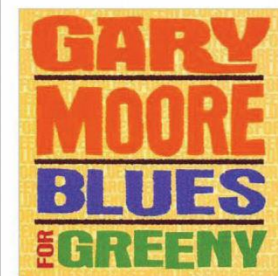
Sam Li



In Mark Eglinton and Fiona Beattie's book about the legendary guitar repairman Sam Li (*The Guitar Man: Sam Li* – Rudling House Publishing Ltd) it's revealed that it was Sam who originally carried out the repair to Greeny's troubled neck pickup. Despite being a highly skilled craftsman, electronics were not Sam's forte

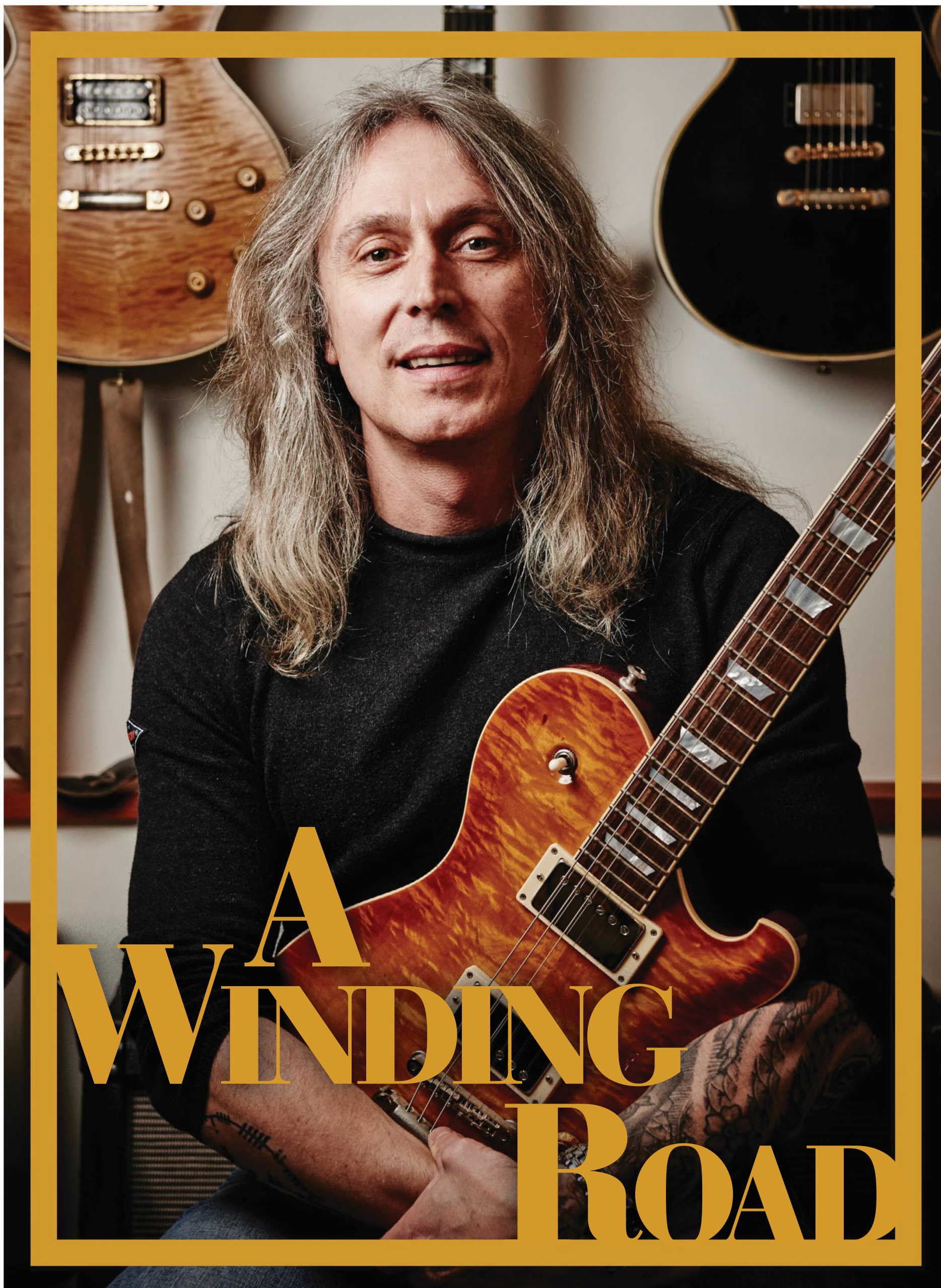
and the pickup was rewound using Formvar wire as opposed to the more correct plain enamel variety. It's thought that Sam also replaced the magnet upside down, reversing its polarity – a theory that was proved later on by placing a compass against both the bridge and neck pickups.

The book covers the repair – and that of many other well known instruments – in greater detail, making it an essential read for guitar enthusiasts everywhere.



GARY MOORE
Blues For Greeny
(1995)

Gary said of this tribute to Peter: "Thank you so much for everything that you've given not just me but to everyone... for all your help and for all the inspiration you've provided me with over the years"



BARE KNUCKLE PICKUPS' FOUNDER, TIM MILLS, SHARES SOME INSIDER KNOWLEDGE SURROUNDING GREENY'S HALLOWED OUT-OF-PHASE TONE AND REVEALS HOW HE MANAGED TO NAIL THAT ELUSIVE SOUND WITH HIS PG BLUES SET OF HUMBUCKERS...

Words Rod Brakes

What is it that makes Greeny unique?

“A great deal of what constitutes tone is in the fingers, of course. But ’59 Les Pauls like Greeny do have a reputation for being bright, lively, resonant guitars – certainly the ones I’ve played have all been pretty consistent in that respect.”

To what extent do an electric guitar’s acoustic properties affect its amplified sound, do you think?

“The way a guitar resonates has more of an effect on the harmonics that come off the string than anything else. A guitar pickup is an electromagnetic transducer. It has to have something ferrous moving in the magnetic field to create a current, so it can’t ‘listen’ to the wood, but it will listen to the overtones that come off the string. And in my experience, the main thing that

“I CAME TO MY OWN CONCLUSIONS AND NAILED MY COLOURS TO THE MAST. AS FAR AS BUILDING PICKUPS GO, IT’S FAR MORE INTERESTING THAN JUST FLIPPING A MAGNET” – TIM MILLS

affects what comes off the string is how the neck resonates in relation to the body. The whole construction of the guitar affects how the string resonates – particularly the type of neck joint, but also the type of timbers that are used to strengthen, or not strengthen, the neck; the bridge; the layout of the machineheads; the nut material; the fret material. It all goes into the pot to alter the way that the string will resonate, and that is what the pickup will then be able to listen to.”

How did you go about nailing that classic Greeny tone?

“I tend to wind by ear. After a great deal of R&D and playing around with a lot of Les Pauls, I was quite happy that I’d got it. In the end, I settled for just slightly underneath 8kohms for the bridge and just under 7.5kohms for the neck pickup. With that, I found that when the two were paired in the middle position with both volumes flat out, I wasn’t getting a massive volume drop like you get with a fully out-of-phase pickup. I thought, ‘Right, that’s usable,’ and it also sounded like what I was hearing. It was backing up the stories I’d been told.”

There have been a lot of stories about Greeny over the years...

“There are plenty of stories going around about the neck pickup. Some people say that the magnet was fitted the wrong way around, meaning it has reverse polarity



PHOTO BY STEVE CATLIN/REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES

in relation to the bridge pickup – that would give you an out-of-phase sound in the middle position. I’ve spoken to people who are 100 per cent adamant that it’s magnetically out of phase, because they’ve tested it. And fair enough; I wouldn’t contest that. All I would say is, that’s always assuming the guitar has the same pickups in that it did originally. As with a lot of these guitars, they do get tinkered with, and Greeny is no exception. It’s certainly ‘been to the repair shop’, shall we say, on several occasions. Gary [Moore] had it for the longest time and he lent it out to several people who had it for quite a long while and did all sorts of things to it. It’s changed hands several times.”

It certainly looks like it’s been worked on...

“I don’t want to go into too much detail, because it’s highly contentious and you just get into all these silly arguments, but the story I was told was that Peter took out the neck pickup – that’s well documented, and you can see plenty of pictures online of Peter playing without that neck pickup

While there are many theories around how Greeny’s neck pickup got its distinctive sound, a likely answer is to be found in its wiring

installed – and when he went to put it back in, he found it didn't work properly. So he got a repairer to look at it and it was subsequently fixed by rewinding the coils on a record player. Therefore, rather than winding the coil counterclockwise like Gibson had historically done, they were wound clockwise."

All of which is different from simply wiring the pickups out of phase...

"Absolutely. The above is about polarity, which is different from being electrically out of phase."

"I WAS TOLD THAT PETER TOOK OUT THE NECK PICKUP... AND FOUND IT DIDN'T WORK PROPERLY. SO A REPAIRER FIXED IT BY REWINDING THE COILS ON A RECORD PLAYER – CLOCKWISE" – TIM MILLS

Allegedly, what kind of wire was used in the rewind?

"One of the people who worked on it told me that when he had to repair the neck pickup, he saw that it was Formvar wire. Getting hold of plain enamel wire in the UK probably wouldn't have been that easy around that time, whereas Formvar wire was readily available."

And simply turning the pickup 180 degrees like Peter did won't affect phase...

"You can turn a pickup backwards and forwards, but you won't change the polarity. The polarity is fixed by the pickup itself."

Spinning a neck pickup around so that the screws are closer to the bridge will make it marginally brighter, but it won't correct phase."

Greeny has certainly had a colourful life...

"Whatever story's right, at the end of the day, none of it really matters, because we'll never know the real truth. Sometimes you just have to go, 'Right, I'm going to have a play with this and see what I actually think.' I came to my own conclusions and decided to nail my colours to the mast. As far as building pickups go, it's far more interesting than just flipping a magnet."

What were your conclusions?

"I started experimenting with flipping the magnet in a PAF-style pair of pickups, winding the neck pickup with Heavy Formvar, and winding the coils the wrong way around. Not just switching the wires. You could switch the wires, but I thought, 'Let's go the whole kit and caboodle, regardless of whether these things actually happened or not.' To my ears, that gave me the sound."

How did you know for sure you'd got it right with the PG Blues?

"I was fortunate enough to make a couple of sets for Gary [Moore]; they went into a couple of prototype Custom Shop signature model Les Pauls Gibson had sent to him. Gary reported that it completely nailed the tone, and he used those on tour for the Greeny numbers in the set. I thought, 'Well, that's good enough for me!'" **G**

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COMPETITION

If your blues playing could benefit from the occasional shade of green, read on...

As you've read in our interview with Tim Mills, Bare Knuckle's PG Blues humbucker set gets you as close as possible to the sound of Peter Green's infamous '59 Les Paul. Let's face it, you can't do better than have Gary Moore say that Tim had nailed the sound of Greeny!

To enter, all you have to do is answer the ridiculously easy question below and a whole new world of blues tone could be at your fingertips...

Q. Who is the current owner of Peter Green's Les Paul?

- A) Kirk Hammett
- B) James T Kirk
- C) Kirk Fletcher

Once you've decided on your answer, simply head to the web page below and follow the instructions. Good luck!

<http://bit.ly/git458bareknuckle>

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A photograph of Kirk Hammett, the lead guitarist of Metallica, performing on stage. He is wearing a black shirt with a leopard-print collar and a chain necklace. He is playing a Gibson Les Paul guitar. The background is a bright blue stage backdrop. The title "BURST OF INSPIRATION" is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom of the image.

BURST OF INSPIRATION

WE CAUGHT UP WITH GREENY'S CURRENT OWNER, METALLICA GUITARIST KIRK HAMMETT, FOR AN IN-DEPTH CHAT ABOUT THIS LEGENDARY 'BURST FOLLOWING HIS RECENT PERFORMANCE AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM'S ALL-STAR PETER GREEN TRIBUTE CONCERT

Words Rod Brakes

From the moment Kirk laid his hands on the guitar, he felt a connection: “I put it in the middle position and started playing and all of a sudden, I was like, ‘Holy... Lord!’”

How did you manage to acquire Greeny?
 “[Guitarist specialist] Richard Henry and I have had a long-standing relationship with me buying guitars from him. About five or six years ago, I rolled into London and I called him up and said, ‘Hey, Rich. What have you got for me? Anything interesting?’ He goes, ‘I have a guitar you might want to see.’ I asked him, ‘What would that guitar be?’ He said, ‘Well, I have the Gary Moore/Peter Green Les Paul.’ I said, ‘Whoa! Wait a second. I’m not going to pay \$2 million,’ because that was the rumour going around at the time – that it was on sale for \$2 million. He said, ‘Don’t worry, Kirk. It’s all poppycock. It’s very reasonably priced. Let me bring it over.’ I thought, ‘This might be a nice opportunity to spend an afternoon playing a cool 1959 Les Paul Standard...’ I can think of worse things to do!

“RIFFS JUST FALL OUT OF THIS GUITAR... ALL OF A SUDDEN, A BEAUTIFUL CHORD PROGRESSION WILL COME OUT OF IT. IT LEADS ME TO OTHER NEW THINGS AND PIECES OF MUSIC” – KIRK HAMMETT

“So he brought it over about 45 minutes later. I plugged it in and I checked the bridge pickup. It sounded nice, bright, full. Great tone. The tonal spectrum was very, very smooth from low to high. I checked the neck pickup. I thought, ‘Oh my God. This is so nice.’ It has that full-on *Still Got The Blues* sound; I recognised it instantly. Then, you know, I put it in the middle position and started playing and all of a sudden, I was like, ‘Holy... Lord!’ I looked up at Richard and I said, ‘I’m not giving this guitar back to you guys.’”

Kirk Hammett moments after meeting Greeny for the first time one rainy afternoon in London

What were your first impressions of the middle-position sound?

“I instantly thought, ‘This is like a Strat through a 100-watt Marshall.’ I thought to myself, ‘Les Pauls aren’t supposed to sound like that, especially 1959 Les Pauls.’ I was so blown away by that aspect. I mean, it didn’t even sound like a traditional sort of out-of-phase sound, like the typical middle toggle position Jimmy Page has been known to use a lot. It sounded completely different – its own characteristic, its own tone.”

Sometimes people have an immediate gut feeling about guitars...

“I felt it in my gut, but I also felt it in my heart and I felt it in my brain. I felt it in my hands. I’d go so far as to say it had an aura about it. It was just unmistakable and undeniable. I had never experienced a guitar with that much mojo, so to speak.”

Do you feel inspired creatively when you pick it up?

“Riffs just fall out of this guitar. When I’m playing at a low volume with a slightly distorted sound or high volume through a Fender amp, all of a sudden, a beautiful chord progression will come out of it. It doesn’t matter really what the situation is, sonically, it leads me to other new things and pieces of music. It has so much tone. I can make the slightest tweak and it will sing in a different way.”

What amps and pedals does Greeny pair well with?

“Greeny likes Tube Screamers. And Marshall amps. Just recently, I was recording at Abbey Road using an old Marshall Bluesbreaker – the same model [1962] Eric Clapton used on the ‘Beano’ album. The Bluesbreaker, Greeny, a Pete

Greeny’s infamous neck PAF pickup with non-original grey lead wire

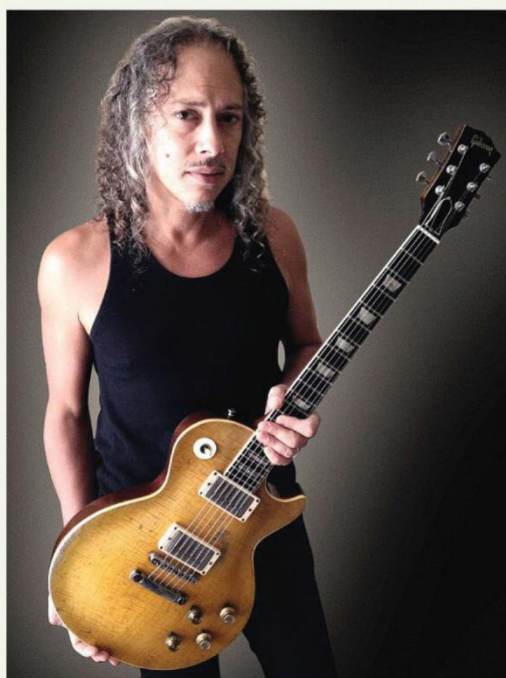


PHOTO BY RICHARD HENRY

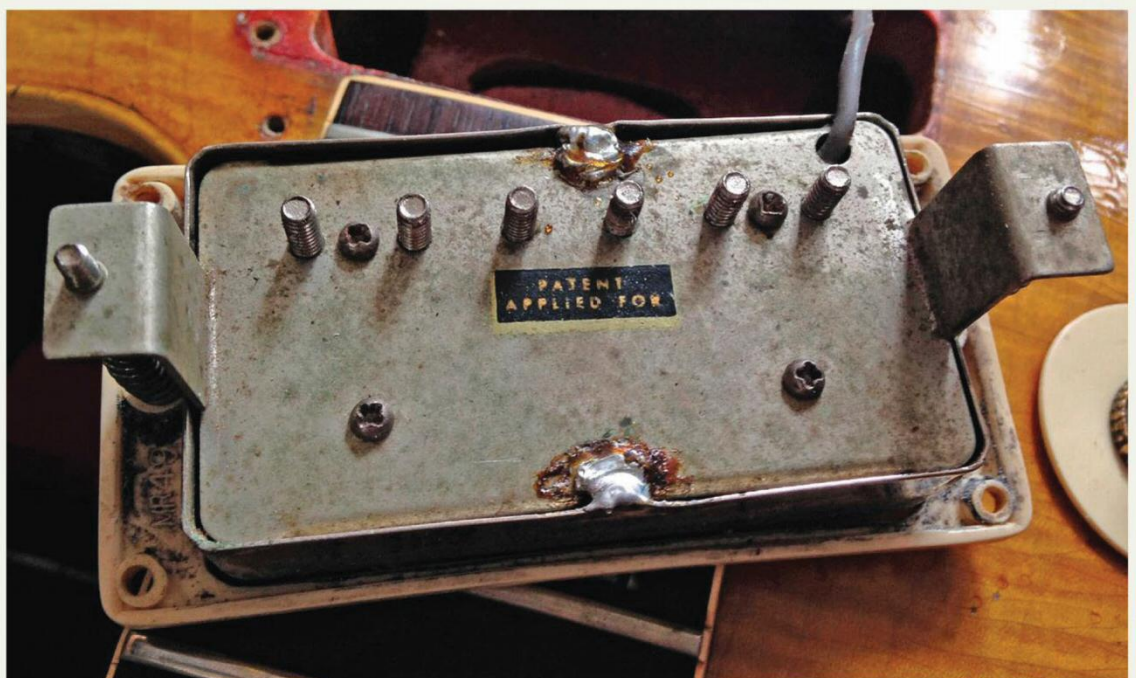
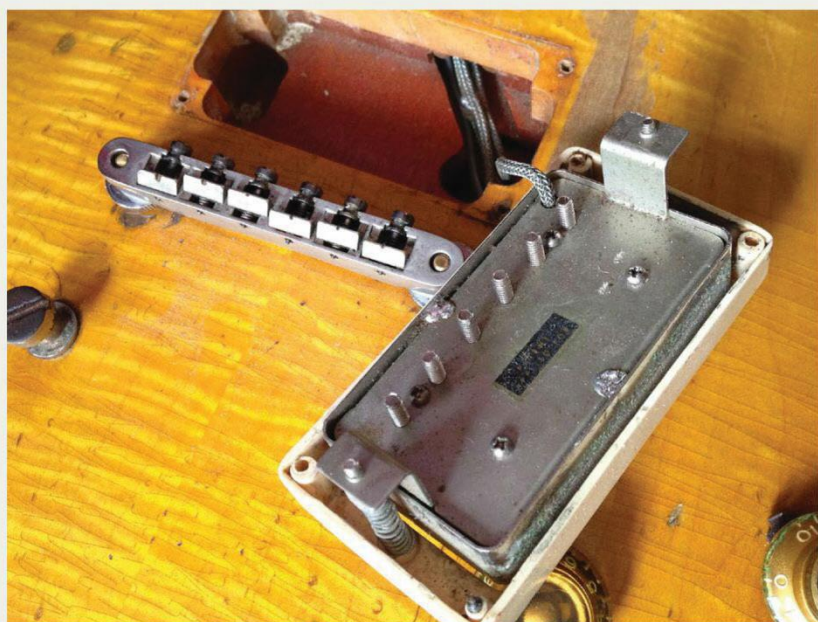


PHOTO BY RICHARD HENRY



This image shows the bridge PAF pickup with typical silver braided lead wire and 'Patent Applied For' sticker

Cornish Treble Boost and a cord was all the tone I needed for that particular song. I was in heaven. There are some guitars that you can plug into any amp and they will make it sound great. And Greeny is that kind of guitar.”

Are the pickup DCR readings unique in any way?

“They’re really not that high compared with other Les Pauls that I’ve got a reading out of. With most Les Pauls, the neck pickup seems to be slightly louder than the bridge pickup, but with Greeny, the neck pickup is significantly louder than the bridge. I think that has a lot to do with why the middle pickup position sounds like it does. That middle pickup sound is so unique. I call it my ‘Dragon Tone.’”

“I WANT TO SHARE THE MAGIC OF THIS GUITAR, BECAUSE IT GIVES SO MUCH. IT GIVES MORE THAN ANY OTHER GUITAR I’VE EVER PLAYED IN MY LIFE. IT SEEMS TO GET BETTER, TOO” – KIRK HAMMETT

How heavy does Greeny feel?

“For a Les Paul, it’s about average. It’s not too heavy, but it’s definitely not light, either. I would say it’s somewhere in between.”

What does Greeny feel like to play?

“It’s definitely a player type of guitar. The neck has been broken twice, but there’s something about the way it’s been worn in. There is something about its components. There is something about the wood. It’s magical. Over the years, it’s become astonishingly unique. It’s been touched so much. I’m looking at it now and I can see the wear marks that Gary Moore’s fingers put in it. Just looking at the wear is inspiring to me, because I’m such a big Gary Moore fan.”



(Top right) Greeny’s control cavity shows how various work has been carried out over the years. Note the ‘bumble bee’ tone caps and unfaded Cherry Red finish

(Above) Here, on the rear of Greeny’s headstock, you can see replacement tuners along with some serious headstock fracture repair work

(Opposite) The red pigment in Greeny’s original Cherry Sunburst finish has faded to reveal a predominantly yellow ‘Lemon Burst’



PHOTOS BY RICHARD HENRY

How much of an inspiration was Gary Moore to you as a guitarist?

“He was such a big influence on me, in so many different ways. When I was 16 years old, I remember going to the record store and seeing Gary Moore’s very first solo album that came out in ’78 [*Back On The Streets*]. I remember seeing this really cool live shot of Gary and thinking, ‘Oh, man. What a cool-looking Les Paul. Wow! That’s what I want to do.’ I was aspiring to be a musician, and now I have the very same guitar. It’s one of those full circle things.”

You recently performed at the Mick Fleetwood & Friends Peter Green tribute concert. Tell us about it...

“It was amazing. Again, it was a full circle thing for me having Peter Green’s guitar and playing *The Green Manalishi*. That song has been with me for a very, very long time. And to be able to play it with Mick Fleetwood and a bunch of other players who just understand that era of Fleetwood Mac was an amazing thing. Greeny was so at home with that song, and all the tones were just sitting there waiting to be



PHOTO BY STEVE CATLIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



PHOTO BY ROSS HALFIN

Performing at the London Palladium on 25 February this year (L-R): Billy Gibbons, Mick Fleetwood and Kirk Hammett (and Greeny!)

used inside of her. It was a transcendental experience. When it came time to do the solo, I dug deep. I didn't know what I was going to play, but having Greeny in my hands and with that Marshall Bluesbreaker and with that band, I knew I was going to be okay."

And how was it meeting Peter Green when you visited him at home?

"It was a real honour. He was very, very cool. He was a gentleman. I found him just to be really, really nice. He was very attentive. Once we broke the ice we started talking about fishing and we talked a little bit about guitars. He still likes to collect guitars. He still plays guitar.

"Yet again, it was one of those full circle things, because he had not seen that guitar since the early 70s when Gary Moore acquired it, so it was a homecoming for Greeny of some sort. He said, 'That's not my guitar. My guitar had more red in it.' But afterwards he held it and he kind of acknowledged it in his own way."

Do you feel like Greeny's owner or more of a custodian for the guitar?

"I am definitely the custodian. I tend to see it as the people's guitar, only because, obviously, this guitar's professional life just refuses to end. This guitar wants to be

heard. I'm doing all I can to make sure it's still being heard by playing it live, recording with it, and having people see it and hear it in real-time. I am not particularly precious with this guitar. I mean, if people come up to me and say, 'Hey, can I play it?' I'm like, 'Sure. Plug it in. Get a feel for it.' I want to share the magic of this guitar, because it gives so much. It gives more than any other guitar I've ever played in my life. It seems to get better, too."

"I FELT IT IN MY GUT, MY HEART, MY BRAIN, MY HANDS... IT HAD AN AURA ABOUT IT. UNMISTAKABLE, UNDENIABLE. I'D NEVER EXPERIENCED A GUITAR WITH THAT MUCH MOJO" – KIRK HAMMETT

What would you like to see happen to Greeny in future?

"All great instruments tend to outlast their owners, or their custodians, or their players. Whoever ends up with it after I do – and I've got no fucking idea who will at this point – I'd hope that it continues to be played, because I think that people will always want to see and hear this guitar." **G**

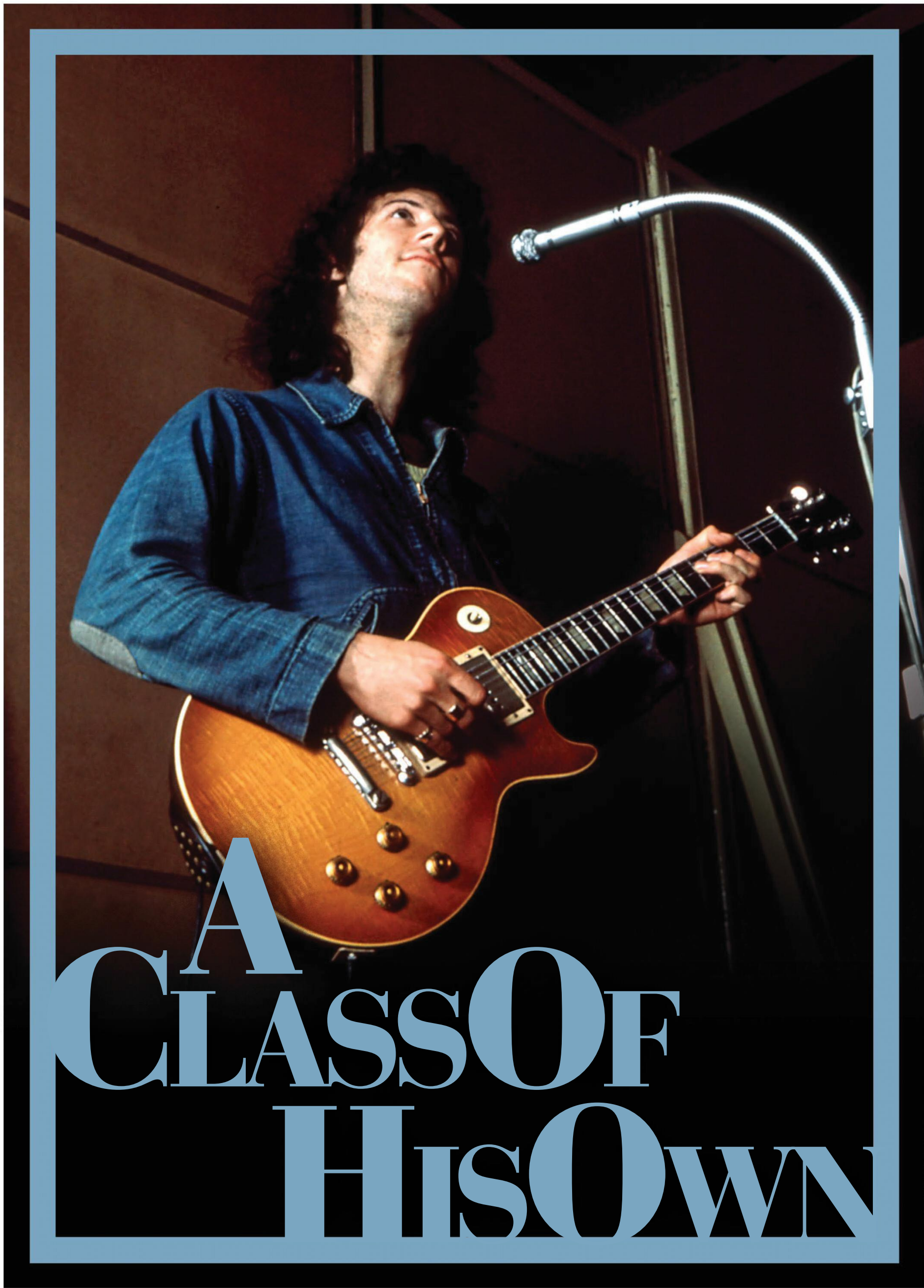
Guitarist would like to thank Richard Henry



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THIS ISSUE, BLUES HEADLINES TURNS A CERTAIN SHADE OF GREEN AS RICHARD BARRETT DEMONSTRATES HOW YOU CAN CAPTURE SOME OF PETER'S FLAVOUR IN YOUR OWN PLAYING

Difficulty ★★★★★

10 mins

Tutor: Richard Barrett | Gear used: Knaggs SSC, Vox AC15 C1



HOWEVER TEMPTING it may be to call this Headlines ‘How To Play Like Peter Green’, such a promise would likely disappoint. The subtleties of Peter’s exquisite phrasing are renowned, and were praised by none other than BB King, who said they gave him “chills”. Nevertheless, there is actually no reason why we can’t learn a great deal from listening and emulating, hopefully imbuing our own playing with a little extra class and panache along the way.

Rather than sitting down to practise alternate picking or learn exotic scales and

arpeggios, this Headlines is all about the phrasing – which is no less sophisticated but requires a more cerebral approach. Peter always makes each and every note count, giving the impression that he is always fully conscious of what he is playing, as opposed to reeling off licks and adding vibrato by default on held notes. You get the idea! This doesn’t mean he won’t add flurries of notes now and again; it’s just that these are most often the way he would begin or end a phrase, almost like a sax player. You can certainly hear how Gary Moore, to whom Peter was a significant mentor, took this

approach further when playing pentatonic runs across the strings.

Having steered the conversation away from the technical side of playing, you’ll find that a lot of the details it’s so easy to take for granted as a listener are where the hardest work will be needed: when (and when not) to add vibrato; quarter-tone bends, long slow bends and pre-bends all need to be as perfectly pitched as possible; and occasional staccato hits and triplets sometimes purposefully pull back against the tempo, too. I’ll get more into all that as we look at each specific example.

Example 1

AS YOU CAN SEE, there are no long complicated runs to learn, but there is plenty to work on in terms of phrasing, vibrato, pitching of string bends, and so on. Watch for the contrasting staccato and held notes – all the things that make this kind of playing interesting to listen to but might escape the attention of the casual listener. In other words, the devil is in the detail!

♩ = 121

Am

BU

PB 7

E B G D A E

Example 2

THIS EXAMPLE SHOWCASES the importance of the quarter-tone bends in this style. If in doubt, try this phrase without them. It loses so much and that alone exemplifies how important the apparently small details are. Also, try pulling back with the tempo of the phrasing – not enough to be out of time, but see how far you can go before that happens. The results will surprise you!

rake...

Dm

Am

BU

PB 8

E B G D A E

Example 3

PICKING UP THE PACE A LITTLE, we're starting to deviate from the theme that was developing in the first part of the solo and stretching out a bit. As per the previous examples, stay conscious of the small details: there are lots of little staccato hits, slow and fast bends, plus a cheeky little semiquaver with a quarter-tone bend in bar 3!

Example 3 musical notation. The guitar staff (treble clef, 4/4 time) shows a melodic line with staccato hits and bends. The bass staff (bass clef) shows a supporting line with fret numbers and bends. Chords are indicated as Am. Bends are marked as BU (bend up) with a 1/4 note bend. Fret numbers include 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Example 4

THIS IS PROBABLY the most demanding example here from a technical standpoint. The initial semiquaver run across the strings needs to be treated merely as a precursor to the held bend in the next bar. Try pulling back on the tempo selectively during this phrase to make it more expressive. The final note is a pre-bend; these can be tricky, but practice makes perfect.

Example 4 musical notation. The guitar staff (treble clef, 4/4 time) shows a melodic line with staccato hits and bends. The bass staff (bass clef) shows a supporting line with fret numbers and bends. Chords are indicated as Dm and Am. Bends are marked as BU (bend up) and PB (pre-bend) with a 1/4 note bend. Fret numbers include 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Example 5

TO FINISH OFF THE SOLO, this phrase recaps a few of the melodic and rhythmic elements before landing on the root note in the final bar. As with the previous examples, keep an eye on the details. Though this may not be technically difficult in the traditional sense, there is a real skill to delivering these lines in a way that sounds compelling.

Example 5 musical notation. The guitar staff (treble clef, 4/4 time) shows a melodic line with staccato hits and bends. The bass staff (bass clef) shows a supporting line with fret numbers and bends. Chords are indicated as Em, Dm, Am, E, and Am. Bends are marked as BU (bend up) and PB (pre-bend) with a 1/4 note bend. Fret numbers include 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

6 String Acoustics



19453 - Art & Lutherie Roadhouse Parlour, T. Red
19128 - Asturias by Kodaira 3340 Classical, Used
18341 - Atkin Essential D Dreadnought Acoustic
18281 - Atkin Essential OOO Handmade in England
18340 - Atkin The Forty-Three J43, Aged Finish
19361 - Bedell OH-12-G Parlour Guitar Secondhand
19360 - Bluebridge BR-63 000 Contemporary GF52035
18269 - Breedlove Guitar Acoustic Strings
15233 - Faith FKN Naked Neptune Acoustic Guitar
19662 - Faith FKNCD - Naked Neptune
18898 - Faith FKR Naked Mars FKR, Natural
18240 - Faith FN Natural Neptune
16877 - Fender FA125 Acoustic Guitar
14615 - Gibson Dobro, circa 1961, Original Vintage
19120 - Gibson Vintage Ultimate J45 Ltd Ed, Used
19720 - Gretsch G9500 Jim Dandy 2-Color Sunburst
15900 - Lakewood A22 Custom Made, Secondhand
18169 - Larrivee 03 Parlour Sized Mahogany, Used
13824 - Martin 00028EC Eric Clapton, Natural
15310 - Martin 00015M Mahogany Acoustic, Used
6009 - Martin 00018 standard Series Acoustic
13064 - Martin D18 Dreadnought, Secondhand
5702 - Martin D28 Dreadnought, Natural
16760 - Martin D28 Re-Imagined Version
6008 - Martin D35 Dreadnought, Natural
5835 - Martin Backpacker Acoustic Travel Guitar
19681 - Martin LX1 Little Martin, Secondhand
19459 - Martin LX1RE Acoustic Guitar
6007 - Martin OM21 Orchestra, Natural
19126 - Martin OM28 Reimagined
9185 - Seagull S6 Acoustic Guitar
16585 - Stonebridge G23CR, Outaway
15491 - Tanglewood TW40PD Sundance Delta Parlour
14947 - Tanglewood TWCR O Crossroads
19462 - Tanglewood TWJPS Parlour Acoustic Guitar
17056 - Tanglewood TWU D Union Dreadnought
12316 - Taylor Big Baby Taylor
13910 - The Cort AF510OP Acoustic Folk Guitar
18104 - Vintage V2000MGG Giltap Mahog Acoustic
18602 - Vintage LHV3000FT Acoustic Left Hand, Nat
13271 - Vintage VTG100 Travel Guitar in Natural
13128 - Vintage VTR800PB Viator Travel Guitar
12437 - Yairi FY84 OM Folk Acoustic Guitar
18948 - Yairi NY-65V NT Acoustic Parlour Guitar
18950 - Yairi YBR2 Baritone Acoustic Guitar
18705 - Yamaha LL6 Acoustic Guitar, Natural

6 String Electro Acoustics



19673 - Art & Lutherie Legacy HG Q-DISCRI Burst
19446 - Art & Lutherie Roadhouse Indigo Burst HG
18366 - Breedlove Pursuit Exotic CE 12-String
19661 - Breedlove Pursuit Exotic Concert CEAB
18895 - Breedlove Pursuit Exotic Concert CE
10285 - Breedlove Pursuit Concert AB SB
15887 - Breedlove Stage Dreadnought, Natural
10068 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Cherry
13911 - Cort AF510EOP Electro Acoustic Guitar
18875 - D'Angelico Excel Tammany OM Electro
18886 - D'Angelico Premier Gramercy Acoustic
19448 - Eastman AC508CE Electro Acoustic, Used
19542 - Faith FNBCEHG HiGloss Baritone Neptune
19136 - Faith FPNCOG Nexus Neptune Cognac
18899 - Faith FRESB45L Dreadnought Electro Lefty
16783 - Faith FVBMB Blood Moon Venus Outaway
18798 - Faith FVBMB Blood Moon Venus L-HAND
18897 - Faith Neptune Classic Burst FNCESB45
19573 - Fender Am. Acoustasonic Strat, Sunburst
19574 - Fender American Acoustasonic Strat Black
19572 - Fender American Acoustasonic Strat, Red
19575 - Fender American Acoustasonic Strat, Nat.
19576 - Fender Am Acoustasonic Strat, TS Blue
18564 - Fender American Acoustasonic Tele, Black
18565 - Fender American Acoustasonic Tele, Nat
18566 - Fender American Acoustasonic Tele, Green
18568 - Fender American Acoustasonic Tele Stburst
16861 - Fender CP140SE, Natural
16862 - Fender CP140SE Electro-Acoustic Sunburst
19260 - Fender Malibu Player, Burgandy Satin
16889 - Fender PM1 E Ltd Adirondack Dreadnought
18939 - Godin A6 Ultra A6 Natural SG
4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature
5602 - K Yairi WY1 Natural
19069 - Klos F_DAE Deluxe Electro Acoustic

6 String Electro Acoustics



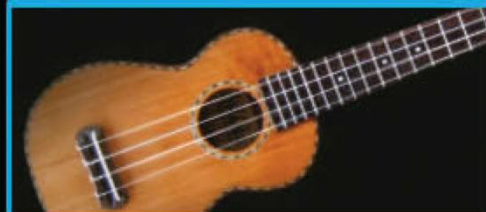
19065 - Klos T_AE Electro Acoustic Travel
19064 - Klos F_AE Electro Acoustic
19070 - Klos T_AAcoustic Travel
19691 - Larrivee D03 Dreadnought ElectroAcoustic
19524 - Maestro Custom Series LE Pailles KOC SBAU
19523 - Maestro Custom Series Singa KO CSB K
19528 - Maestro Double Top Series Pailles ICSBD
18258 - Maestro OO-IR Traditional Series Guitar
19525 - Maestro Original Series Singa WE CSB C
19530 - Maestro Private Coll. Victoria PH CSB AX
18265 - Maestro Singa FM-CSB-A Custom Series
19531 - Maestro Special Build Trad. Series D-CO
12225 - Martin & Co 000X1AE Electro Acoustic
12222 - Martin & Co DX1AE Electro Acoustic
12418 - Martin & Co DX1AEL Acoustic Guitar
19244 - Martin 000-10E Guitar
19714 - Martin 000CJR10E, Cherry Stain B&S
15592 - Martin 0015E Retro Non-Cutaway Electro
19403 - Martin 00X1AE Guitar
19716 - Martin D-X1E Koa Guitar
19715 - Martin D-X2E 12 String Guitar
19390 - Martin D10E Electro Acoustic Guitar
16760 - Martin D28 Re-Imagined Version
19489 - Martin DJR-10E Jnr Electro-Acoustic
16139 - Martin Ed Sheeran 3 + Signature Edition
19717 - Martin GPC-X2E Rosewood Guitar
19050 - Martin GPC11E Electro Acoustic
15591 - Martin GPC18E Electro Acoustic Guitar
15486 - Martin GPCPA4 Electro Acoustic Shaded
8039 - Martin GPCPA4 Electro Acoustic, Natural
16116 - Martin GPCX1AE Electro Acoustic Guitar
7320 - Martin LX1 E, Electro Travel Guitar
19458 - Martin LX1RE Electro Acoustic Guitar
18517 - Martin OMC15ME Electro-Acoustic Guitar
19497 - Maton EBG808L in Satin Natural
12438 - Northwood Custom Myrtle 80 Dreadnought
18167 - Northwood M80 OMV Outaway
17418 - Northwood Auditorium Electro With Hard Case
0000 - Ovation - Models in Stock Now
14913 - PJ Eggle Linville Outaway Elec/Acoustic
14914 - PJ Eggle Linville Electro Acoustic
14927 - PJ Eggle Saulda Elec/Acoustic
19554 - RainSong APSE
10094 - RainSong BI-OM1000N2 Black Ice Graphite
10038 - RainSong BI-WS1000N2 Black Ice Graphite
17657 - RainSong CHPA1000NS Concert Hybrid
17659 - RainSong CO-DF1000N2 Concert Series
9821 - RainSong CO-JM1000N2
9819 - RainSong CO-OM1000N2
9818 - RainSong CO-WS1000N2
19557 - RainSong Co-WS1005NSM
17663 - RainSong HWS1000N2 Hybrid Series
19555 - RainSong N-JM1000N2X
19556 - RainSong V-DR1000N2X
7974 - RainSong WS1000N2 Graphite Guitar
18051 - RainSong WS1000N2 Graphite Guitar, USED
18316 - Seagull Entourage Autumn Burst CW QIT
18504 - Seagull Entourage Folk Burst Umber QIT
19672 - Seagull Performer Mini Jumbo Flame Maple
19671 - Seagull S6 Cedar Original Slim QIT
19676 - Simon & Patrick Trek SG Dreadnought
19571 - Simon & Patrick Woodland Parlour, Used
15832 - Tanglewood TW40PD Sundance Delta Parlour
15376 - Takamine EP360GF Glen Frey Model
15481 - Tanglewood Crossroads TWCR D E
19547 - Tanglewood DBT PE HR
15494 - Tanglewood DBT SFCE PW
15869 - Tanglewood Discovery DBT SFCE OV
14952 - Tanglewood TSFCE Black
19099 - Tanglewood TSP 15 CE
15866 - Tanglewood TSR 2 Masterdesign Electro
18366 - Tanglewood TW E Mini Koa
19461 - Tanglewood TW4 E VC Koa Electro Acoustic
19114 - Tanglewood TW4 E WB LH, Left handed
15582 - Tanglewood TW4 Winterleaf Super Folk CE
18214 - Tanglewood TW4ER, Electro Acoustic, Red
8293 - Tanglewood TW55NS, Nat, Secondhand
16524 - Tanglewood TWCR OE Crossroads
12305 - Tanglewood TWJF E
19548 - Tanglewood TWR2 SFCE Electro Acoustic
15979 - Tanglewood Sundance Perf. Pro X47E
19660 - Taylor 220ce K DLX Guitar, Used
12317 - Taylor GC8 Grand Concert Acoustic Guitar
18789 - Vintage LVEC501N Dreadnought, Satin Nat.
18786 - Vintage VE300N Electro-Acoustic, Natural
14397 - Vintage VE8000PB Paul Brett 6-String
18788 - Vintage VEC501N Dreadnought, Satin Nat.
18791 - Vintage VGA900N Electro-Acoustic, Nat.
18790 - Vintage VGB00N Gemini P. Brett Baritone
14439 - Yamaha APXT2 Mini Electro Acoustic, Blk
14436 - Yamaha APXT2 Mini Electro Acoustic, Nat
15575 - Yamaha FGX720SC, Black
19602 - Yamaha LLTA TransAcoustic Vintage Tint
19165 - Yamaha SLG200NW Silent Guitar, Nylon
15619 - Yamaha SLG200S Steel Silent Guitar Nat

Classical Guitars



19128 - Asturias by Kodaira 3340 Classical, Used
13864 - Breedlove Pursuit Nylon Electro Acoustic
15547 - David Pelter Handmade Classical Guitar
19210 - Hanika 50 KF-N Studio Line, Secondhand
0000 - Mendieta - 17 Models in Stock Now
9482 - Ovation 1616 Electro Acoustic Nylon, Nat
19346 - Ovation CS24-4 Celebrity Standard, Nat
12178 - Protection Racket Class Gtr Case Dk
5360 - Ramirez 130 Year Anniversary Classical
6029 - Ramirez 1NE Classical Guitar
15239 - Ramirez 2NCWE Classical Guitar
18906 - Ramirez 2NE Classical Guitar
15236 - Ramirez 4NE Classical Guitar
5644 - Ramirez George Harrison Model Classical
15237 - Ramirez RA Classical Guitar
15238 - Ramirez RB Classical Guitar
6027 - Ramirez S1 Classical Guitar
12761 - Ramirez SP Classical Guitar
16060 - Stagg C410 1/2 Size Classical Guitar
15290 - Stagg C430 3/4 Classical Guitar, Black
15291 - Stagg C430 3/4 Classical Guitar Blue
15289 - Stagg C430 3/4 Size Classical Guitar
15292 - Stagg C430 3/4 Size Classical Guitar Red
17107 - Stagg C440M Classical Guitar
17106 - Stagg C440M Classical Guitar
17109 - Stagg C440M Classical Guitar
19470 - Stagg SCL50 3/4N Pack, Natural
19471 - Stagg SCL50 4/4N Pack, Natural
8352 - Westcoast Student 4/4 Classical, Natural
0000 - Yairi - 3 Models in Stock Now
14720 - Yamaha C40II Full Size Classical Guitar
14698 - Yamaha CS40 3/4 Size Classical Guitar
14721 - Yamaha CX40 Mark II Electro-Classical Guitar
15296 - Yamaha GL1 Guitalele & Gig Bag, Used

Ukuleles



16390 - Baton Rouge UR11S Soprano Ukulele
18054 - Baton Rouge UR3S Soprano Ukulele
16227 - Baton Rouge UR4S Soprano Ukulele
18052 - Baton Rouge UR51S Soprano Ukulele
16458 - Iberica SC Classic Sop Uke, Solid Acacia
19306 - Kai KS11010 Series Soprano, Mahogany
16794 - Kala KA-15S-S Satin Spruce Soprano
15833 - Korala UKS32 Soprano Ukulele
19464 - Mahab Halloween Soprano Ukulele Pumpkin
18223 - Mahab Java Soprano Ukulele, Sunburst
18195 - Mahab MK1 Kahiko Soprano Ukulele, Blue
18196 - Mahab MK1 Kahiko Soprano Ukulele, Brown
18197 - Mahab MK1 Kahiko Sop Uke, Butterscotch
18198 - Mahab MK1 Kahiko Soprano Ukulele, Red
15691 - Mahab MR1 Soprano Ukulele, Black
19480 - Mahab Snowflake Soprano Ukulele
18199 - Mahab Union Jack Soprano Uke
10909 - Martin OXK Soprano Ukulele
8128 - Martin S1 Soprano Ukulele with Gig Bag
13679 - Nukulele "Abbots Digil" Bottle Ukulele
13684 - Nukulele Autumn Gold Bottle Ukulele
13680 - Nukulele "Brown Ale" Bottle Ukulele
13683 - Nukulele Lemonade Bottle Ukulele
13682 - Nukulele Slainte Bottle Ukulele
8508 - Ohana FK10S Soprano Ukulele Pineapple
8516 - Ohana FK25G Soprano Ukulele Pineapple
19007 - Ohana Pequeno All-Solid Soprano Uke
4711 - Ohana SK20 Soprano Ukulele Uke
14210 - Ohana SK21 Premium Mahogany Soprano
4710 - Ohana SK25 Soprano Ukulele
15957 - Ohana SK28 Soprano Uke
9052 - Ohana SK38 Soprano Uke, Mahogany
9051 - Ohana SK50 Soprano Uke
7108 - Ohana SK70MG Soprano Ukulele
12390 - Ohana Soprano Uke Gig Bag
16017 - Ohana Ukuleles SK-30M Large Neck Soprano
19008 - Ohana Ukuleles SK39 Mahogany Soprano
12740 - ResoVile Weeki Wachee Resonator Ukulele
16199 - Risa Electric Soprano Ukulele, Black
17059 - Tanglewood TWT1 Tiare Soprano Uke in Satin
17063 - Tanglewood TWT11 Concert Uke
17068 - Tanglewood TWT14E Tenor Uke
17062 - Tanglewood TWT4 Soprano Ukulele
17090 - Tanglewood Tiare TWT SP Soprano Ukulele
16454 - Uluru Koa I All Solid Koa Soprano Uke
15296 - Yamaha GL1 Guitalele & Gig Bag, Used
19697 - B&M Electro Acoustic Concert BMUK7CE
19695 - Barnes & Mullins Concert Uke, BMUK8C
19693 - B&M BMUK5C Concert Uke (Acoustic)
19664 - B&M BMUK5CE Concert Electro Uke
15931 - Baton Rouge UR21C Concert Ukulele
15557 - Baton Rouge V4C Concert Ukulele
19711 - Baton Rouge Vx2 Concert Uke, Fire Red
19706 - Baton Rouge Vx2C-NWO Concert, White
19709 - Baton Rouge Vx2C-OR Concert Uke Orange
19708 - Baton Rouge Vx2C-OR Concert Uke Royal Burst
19707 - Baton Rouge Vx2C-SR Concert Uke Sunrise
19710 - Baton Rouge Vx2C-SW Concert Uke, White
18975 - Breedlove Lu'au Concert Nat Shadow E Uke
18973 - Lu'au Concert Uke Ghost Burst Myrtlewood
18166 - Kai KCI 100M Concert Ukulele
18833 - Kwaya KSU1 Mahogany Student Soprano
18524 - Kwaya KSU1L Long Neck Soprano Uke
16835 - AAMAestro UC-IR-SB-C Concert With Case
13086 - Magic Fluke M40 Mango Concert Uke, USED
18221 - Mahab Java Concert Ukulele, 2515C
18203 - Mahab MH2CE Electro Acoustic Concert Uke
12224 - Martin & Co C1K Koa Concert Ukulele
7102 - Ohana CK10 Concert Ukulele in Mahogany
19016 - Ohana CK14E Electro Mahogany Concert
9050 - Ohana CK20CE Concert Uke
13639 - Ohana CK22Z Concert Ukulele, Zebra wood
15958 - Ohana CK28 Concert Ukulele
12604 - Ohana CK35 Concert Ukulele
12603 - Ohana CK38 Concert Ukulele
19020 - Ohana CK70 A6
19021 - Ohana CK70M Solid Spruce Concert Ukulele
19022 - Ohana CK70R Spruce/Rosewood Concert
19023 - Ohana CK70M Solid Spruce Concert Ukulele
16022 - Ohana CK75CG Concert Uke
10385 - Risa UKS385MP Solid Concert Electro Uke
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17066 - Tanglewood TWT12E Electro Acoustic Uke
17954 - Tanglewood TWT3 Concert Ukulele
19029 - Tanglewood TWT3 Sunburst Concert Ukulele
19030 - Tanglewood TWT3 Red Stain Concert Uke
18217 - Tanglewood TWT9 Concert Ukulele
19694 - Barnes & Mullins Ukulele Tenor BMUK8T
19699 - B&M Tenor Ukulele, Koa, BMUK7T
19700 - Barnes & Mullins Uke Tenor Wahut BMUK5T
19698 - B&M Uke Bass Mahogany BMUKB1
19705 - Baton Rouge V2B Sun Baritone Ukulele
14821 - Baton Rouge V2 Sun 8 String Tenor Uke
15553 - Baton Rouge V2T Sun Tenor Ukulele
19713 - Kai KTI-5000 Solid Acacia Tenor Ukulele
19071 - KLOS Acoustic Ukulele (UKE_A)
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Acoustic Amplification



5712 - AER Alpha - 40W, 1x8"
5193 - AER Alpha Plus - 50W, 1x8"
18514 - AER Compact 60 Mk 4
5710 - AER Compact 60 Mk2 Hardwood - 60W, 1x8"
14504 - AER Compact 60 SLOPE
15913 - AER Tommy Emmanuel Sig. Compact 60
5707 - AER Compact Classic Pro - 60W, 1x8"
5708 - AER Compact 60 Mk2 Mobile - 60W, 1x8"
4945 - AER Compact XL - 200W, 2x8"
9028 - AER Domino 3 200w Watt Acoustic Amp
15917 - Boss Acoustic Singer Live Acoustic Amp
15918 - Boss Acoustic Singer Pro Acoustic Amp
10496 - Fender Acoustasonic 15 Acoustic Amp
18243 - Fender Acoustasonic 40
15775 - Fishman SA220 - 220w, 6x4", Ex-Demo
6770 - Marshall AS100D - 50W+50W, 2x8"
13956 - Marshall AS50D - 50W, 2x8"
19483 - Orange Crush Acoustic 30, Black
4976 - Roland AC33 30W - 1x5"
9358 - Roland AC33, Rosewood
11129 - Roland AC40 Acoustic Guitar Amplifier
6505 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Amp - 30w, 2x6.5
9383 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Guitar Combo, RW
5597 - Roland AC90 - 90W, 2x8"
16903 - Roland Cube Street 25+2.5W, 6.5
13029 - Roland Cube Street EX Stereo Amplifier
14371 - MOBILEAC Acoustic Chorus, Portable Amp
5618 - Roland Mobile Cube (2.5W+2.5W, 4x2)
13018 - Tanglewood T3 30W Acoustic Amplifier
10937 - Yamaha THR5A Acoustic Amp

12 Strings



18336 - Breedlove Pursuit Exotic CE 12-String
18730 - Cort Natural Glossy MR710F, 12-String
18792 - Vintage V5000SB 12 Statesboro 12 String
18807 - Vintage VE5000SB12 Electro 12 String
14349 - Vintage VE8000PB-12 Paul Brett 12-String

AN AMERICAN STANDARD

When the original singer-songwriter-guitarist records an American Songbook album expect no lush orchestras, just beautifully played arrangements that sound like they were composed by the man himself

Words Neville Marten Photograph Norman Seeff

If we exclude the insightful protest songs of Bob Dylan, mostly played over simplistic backings, the pithy words and harmonically sophisticated arrangements of Paul Simon, or the often wistful, sometimes jazzy but always poetically sublime meanderings of Joni Mitchell, then James Taylor is the archetypal singer-songwriter-guitarist.

An often troubled intellectual, Taylor's masterstroke was in putting deeply personal lyrics, sometimes clear but often cryptic, onto a country-folk musical backdrop with deft and hooky acoustic guitar picking at its core.

In a way, he's the stealth bomber of the music world. A bona-fide superstar with 100 million album sales to his credit (every release from *JT* in 1977 to 2006's *James Taylor At Christmas* has gone Platinum), Taylor has a self-effacing demeanour that still sends women swooning and men trotting off to the guitar shop – and vice versa, we're sure.

His latest release, *American Standard*, takes a formula first laid down by Willie Nelson with *Somewhere Over The Rainbow*

in 1981, then Linda Ronstadt's *What's New* in 1983, and taken up by everyone from Robbie Williams (*Swing When You're Winning*, 2001) to Rod Stewart, who's built a second career out of it, and created an album of American Songbook classics.

Of course, as with everything he does, Taylor has gently but powerfully laid his stamp all over it. As his producer Dave O'Donnell says, "When James covers a song it sounds like he wrote it." O'Donnell couldn't be more right. James uses his tried-and-trusted chord voicings and fretboard moves, and weaves them around tunes that could have been written for his milestone *JT* album of 1977, the Grammy-winning *Hourglass* that came two decades later, or his No 1 release *Before This World* in 2015.

"It is a guitar album," states James in typically clipped fashion. "I purposefully didn't iterate it with a keyboard. We were very careful to keep the guitar as the centre of each arrangement, because these are arrangements of my own. I've had some of these since I started playing the guitar. I learnt to play playing these songs that I knew from childhood.



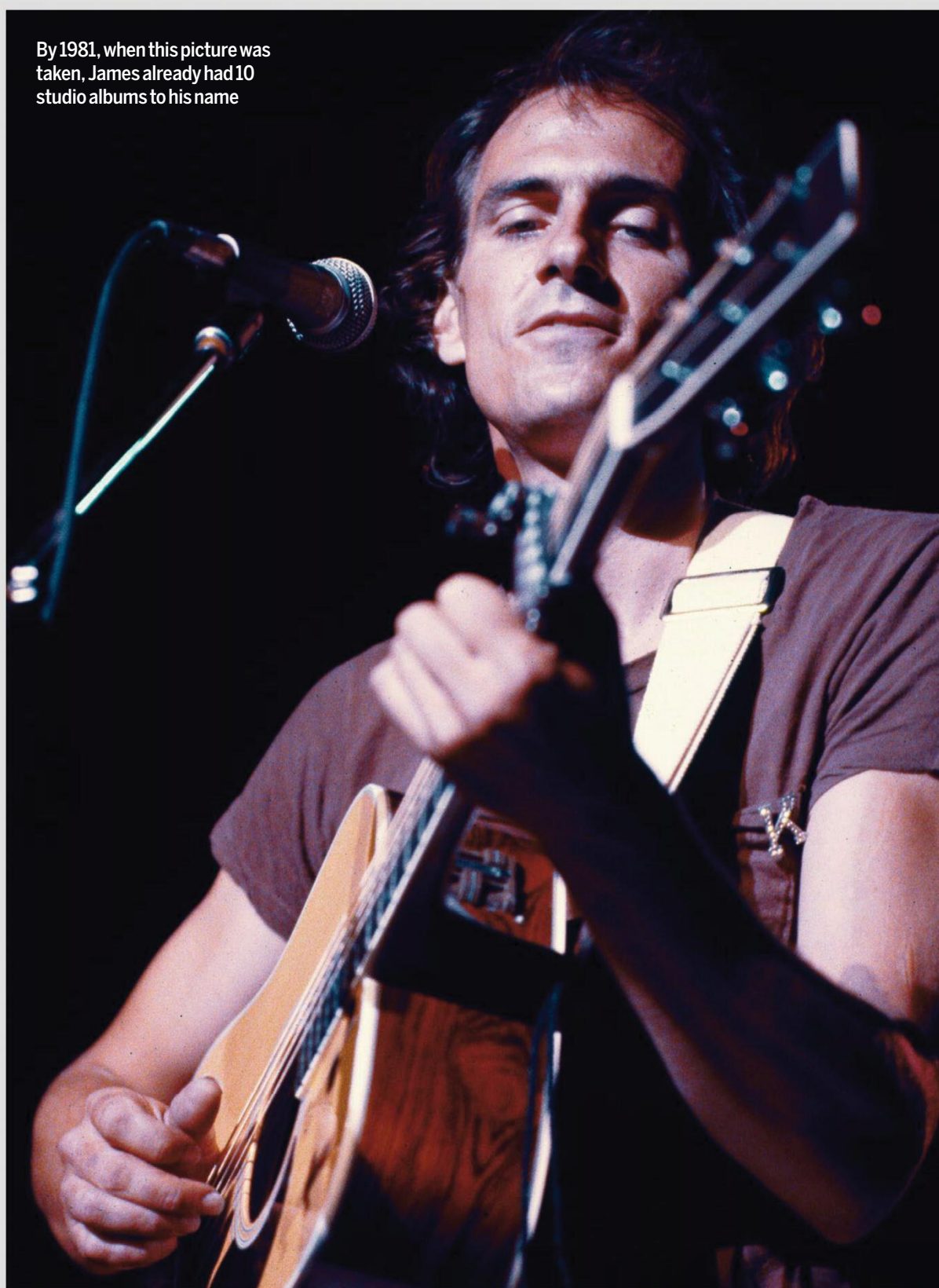
“But it’s interesting. When my generation stepped out and were making themselves known, we drew a distinct line between ourselves and what sounded to us like Vegas or in any way ‘lounge-y’. It’s like folk music was okay and Celtic music was okay, but Sinatra was not. We were unkind and unaccepting of that music. We distanced ourselves from it. And, in fact, it’s so fabulous. We did them a disservice. People like Bobby Darin tried to change his stripes and become Bob Darin, and found himself on the wrong side of the generational divide. But that changed when Willie Nelson made his standards album. And Linda Ronstadt, who actually worked with Nelson Riddle. That changed things. It made it possible for Rod Stewart. And now Natalie Cole, of course – she’s the real deal; she actually is a jazz singer [Natalie passed away in 2015].

“But on each album I tend to have a cover of some sort. And I recorded an album of covers [*Covers*, 2008] which had *Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin’* on. So I’ve done a number of these tunes, what are thought of as American Songbook. They are songs of the 1920s, 30s and 40s, with a

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*“These were written
 as songs to be done by
 anyone... they are the
 high watermark of
 popular music”*
 — — — — —

couple from the 50s in there. They are the previous generation’s music. But this is the music that informed Lennon-McCartney, Paul Simon, Randy Newman, Joni Mitchell. The people of our generation listened to this stuff when they were kids, and I think that it really informed their harmonic sense. It’s much more sophisticated than music has become.

“I think the difference is that these were written as songs to be done by anyone. These days what we listen to are performances. In other words, we are listening to a specific person, a specific voice, and you wouldn’t think of them being covered by other people, generally speaking. [Back then], they didn’t have production values that would dazzle us, and they didn’t know who would be performing the song, so it had to exist as a set of changes, a lyric and a melody. So, in my opinion, they are the high watermark of popular music.”



By 1981, when this picture was taken, James already had 10 studio albums to his name

Taylor and the brilliant jazz guitarist John Pizzarelli worked out the core of the guitar arrangements for the album, which must have been an interesting challenge.

“Yes, we did work them out together,” Taylor concurs. “I’m playing my Olson guitars and Pizzarelli is mostly playing a seven-string. So there’s some bass notes that are coming out of the guitars that are outside of the usual range. But they’re my arrangements. With my limited guitar technique I’ve managed to interpret these tunes. It works for John to augment those. It doesn’t work for John to give me changes and to have me play them. He’s much more suited to accommodating me than I am suited to accommodating him. And, fortunately for me, I’m calling the shots.

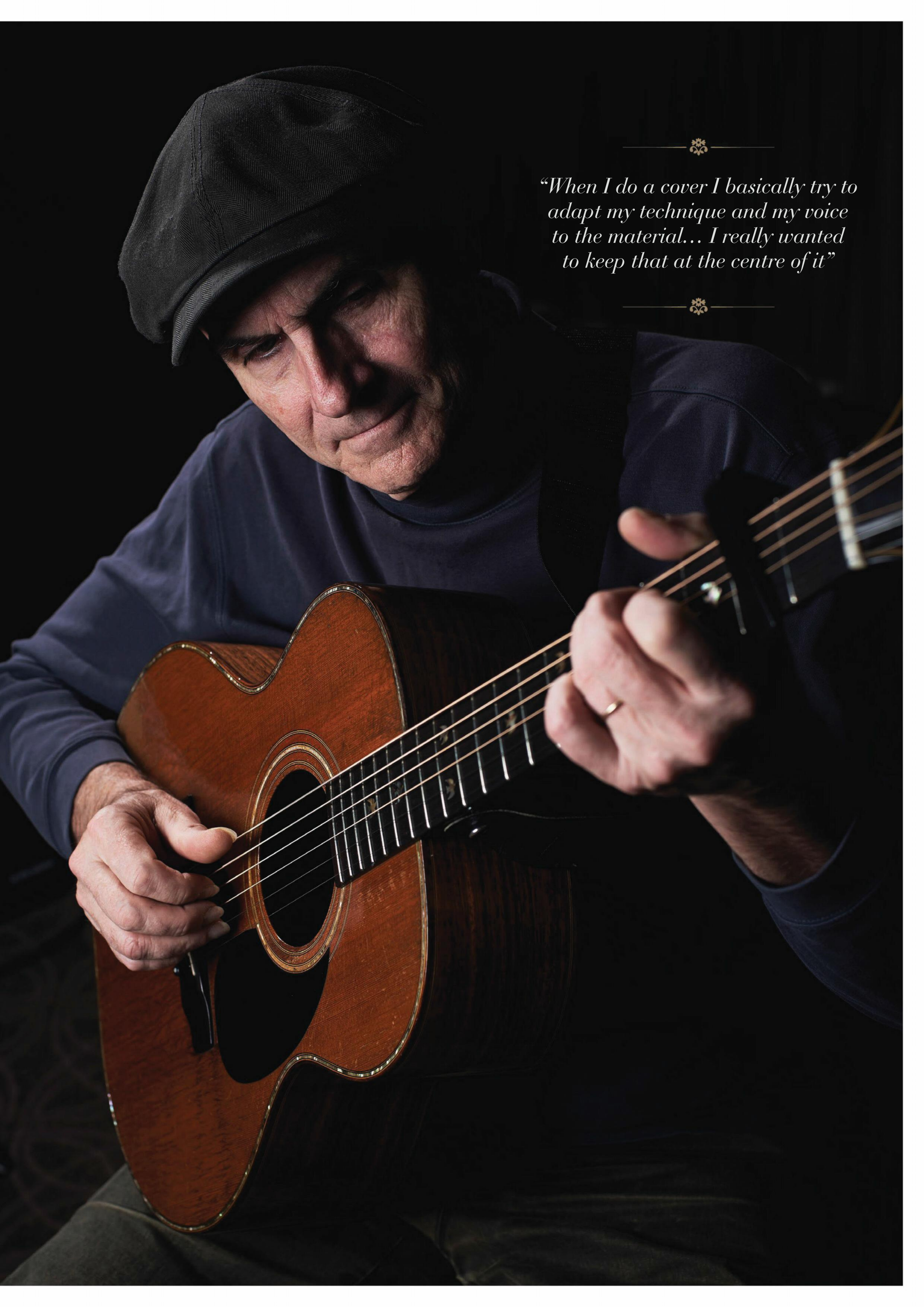
“But, yes, it was a very interesting process. I thought we were doing demos to start with. Then the idea occurred to me, ‘Let’s make this into a guitar project.’ Because

you can tend to have a kind of cookie-cutter experience when making this kind of album. You can get a great rhythm section and a really strong arranger, but it can sound like these songs often tend to sound. When I do a cover I basically try to adapt my technique and my voice to the material, and when it works it does. I really wanted to keep that at the centre of it. If we’d asked a piano player to interpret these changes then had an arranger orchestrate them, it would have somehow obscured what is actually happening here. Which is that I’m running these songs through my process. There are some that it works with and some that it doesn’t – these are the ones that work.”

To keep an essentially acoustic album from sounding samey, Taylor and his team added instruments from outside the main band. Things like saxophone, melodica, Dobro, violin, and harmony vocals lend colour and interest.

PHOTO BY LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS/VOG VIA GETTY IMAGES

OPPOSITE: PHOTO BY JOBY SESSIONS



— ❁ —

“When I do a cover I basically try to adapt my technique and my voice to the material... I really wanted to keep that at the centre of it”

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PHOTO BY NORMAN SEEFF

In *American Standard*, James has reinterpreted the songs of his formative years, arranging tracks that were found in his family record collection to suit his sound and style

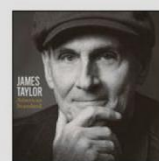
“We were very careful to keep the guitar as the centre of each arrangement. I learnt to play [guitar] playing these songs that I knew from childhood”

“After John and I cut these basic tracks we took them to my musical community, and that’s basically the guys that I tour with and record with [James’s band comprises Jimmy Johnson, bass; Steve Gadd, drums; Larry Goldings, keys; Lou Marini, clarinet, sax]. I also have a relationship with Jerry Douglas [Dobro] and Stuart Duncan [violin], and for the first time I worked with Viktor Krauss [upright bass]. We worked for an awfully long time, getting the arrangements down. And I took it to my vocalists [Arnold McCuller, Kate Markovitz, Dorian Holley, Andrea Zonn] and we found parts for them on three of the songs to sing. So, yes, I sort of took it through the garden.”

When two guitarists arrange songs on acoustics one imagines capos at various positions on each instrument, with each player adopting different inversions of the chords. Not so in this case, apparently.

“John is a proper guitar player,” Taylor states, modestly. “He very seldomly uses a capo. He is free on the neck with all of the inversions. I’m pretty much stuck in the first position, so I use a capo a lot. My guitar tech, Jon Prince, wrote down all of the capo positions, so that tells you what the fingering is. Often it’s either G [shape], many of them are A, there’s a couple in E and a number in D. And there are actually some where I change capo position for the bridge. I’ll get JP to send them to you.”

James kindly did this and the key and capo position are listed beside each song in the track-by-track interview that follows over the page... **G**



American Standard by James Taylor is available now on Fantasy Records

www.jamestaylor.com

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SINGING THE SONGBOOK

James talks us through the album, track by track

1. *My Blue Heaven*

KEY C, CAPO 3RD FRET

This opening track on *American Standard* begins with a separate verse, a typical songwriting device of that time that we seem to have lost...

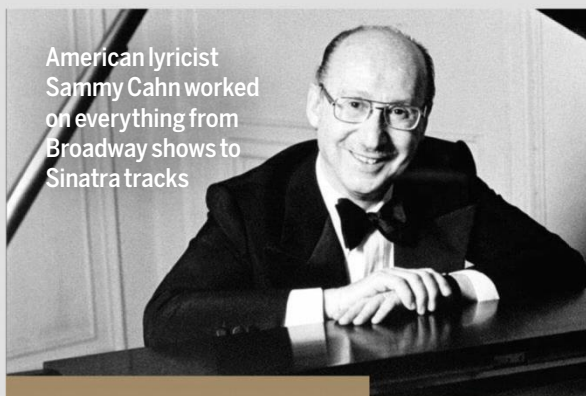
"It was the way the song was introduced into the action of a musical, or a little way of setting it up. A bit of conversation that's not yet the body of the song. They're great; some of them are really smart. It basically sets the stage a little bit. A number of the songs that I play, I go from the swung thing to a straight eight thing, and it's the straight eight that sounds like Latin. We actually brought in Luis Conte on percussion to make that clear."

2. *Moon River*

(KEY B $\flat$, CAPO 1ST FRET)

James hasn't exactly reharmonised this, but there are some interesting things going on – he seems to have twisted it a little bit. There's a Stevie Wonder-esque solo that sounds like a harmonica, but isn't...

"This particular track is just the two guitars, there's no rhythm. So the only other thing aside from my voice is a six-string guitar, a seven-string guitar, and a solo that Larry Goldings is playing. It sounds like a harmonica, but actually it's a melodica. Actually, in many cases I wrote these solos. I gave the players lines to play, and Larry starts with my melody and then goes off on his own and that's when it rises up and breaks free of it. If it sounds like Stevie Wonder, I think it's probably more likely that Stevie and I have the same source, which is Ray Charles. That informs Stevie's music – at least I think it does."



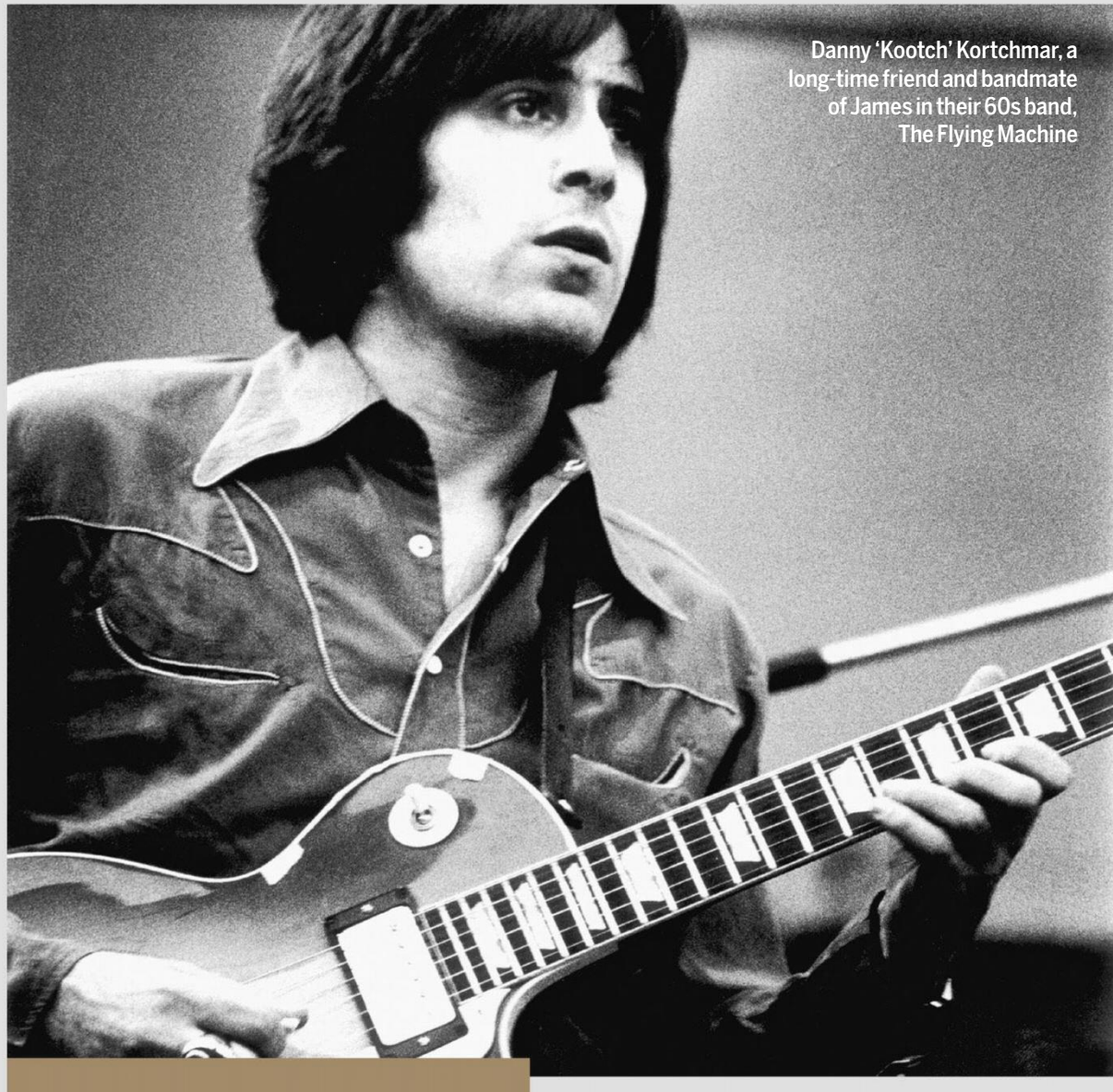
American lyricist Sammy Cahn worked on everything from Broadway shows to Sinatra tracks

3. *Teach Me Tonight*

(KEY B, CAPO 2ND FRET)

This song has lyrics by the incomparable Sammy Cahn, with music by Gene De Paul and was published in 1953. Five different versions charted in 1954 and 1955 alone.

"Yes, Sammy Cahn and Gene De Paul. We've cast this with something of a Latin feel and, again, got Luis Conte to play maracas and congas on it. Walt Fowler plays some beautiful trumpet on it, too. It's a simple piece and it's essentially a simple album."



Danny 'Kootch' Kortchmar, a long-time friend and bandmate of James in their 60s band, The Flying Machine

4. *As Easy As Rolling Off A Log*

KEY A, CAPO 2ND FRET

There's an almost Django-esque swing to this song, which James first heard on the kids' cartoon *Katnip Kollege*. The tasty guitar fills are also by James, but he has a confession...

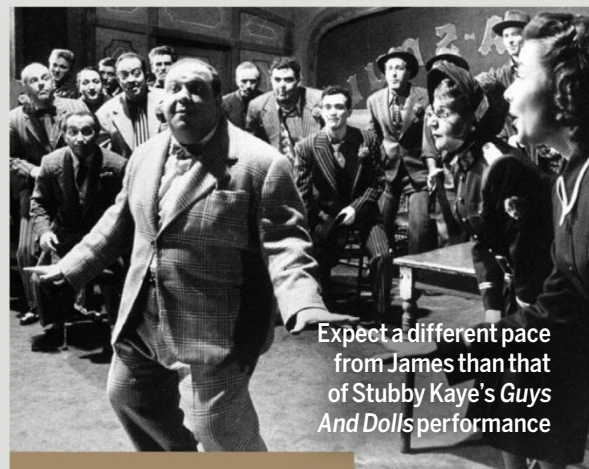
"I play that introduction into the clarinet on the guitar. But it's a studio artefact. I couldn't play it in real-time. I jumped in and constructed it, edited it together really. This song came from a cartoon that I remember from when I was a kid. When I told Kootch [old friend and collaborator Danny Kortchmar] that I'd cut that song, he said, 'Yes, you were always going on about that song.'"

5. *Almost Like Being In Love*

KEY G, CAPO 3RD FRET

Here the harmony vocals come in, lifting both the song and the album. Typical JT chords such as major 9ths and #5ths show that songs like this clearly informed his own writing.

"Yes, they definitely did. Nat King Cole's version of this song was my favourite, but I knew it from the musical *Brigadoon*. It was one of those ones that I learnt early on and basically taught me the chords that are in it."



Expect a different pace from James than that of Stubby Kaye's *Guys And Dolls* performance

6. *Sit Down, You're Rocking The Boat*

CHORUS: KEY B, CAPO 1ST FRET; INTRO: KEY A $\flat$ m, CAPO 2ND FRET

Readers may remember Stubby Kaye's brilliant original from *Guys And Dolls*. The fabulous Jerry Douglas guests on Dobro here, which works a treat.

"This doesn't have the energy that Stubby Kaye's version had, and that's because that's a cast album version. It's live and the tempo is way up and he's singing it like he's got a trumpet in his throat. So our approach was to get intricate with it and the harmonies, and we spent a lot of time writing these harmony parts that are in there. It was a lot of fun, that tune."

7. *Nearness Of You*

KEY E, CAPO 2ND FRET

There's a kind of Herb Alpert feel to this, with James's favourite chord moves the perfect bed for some succinct trumpet solo and fills.

"That's Walt Fowler, who tours with me. He popped it into double time and he did lift it, did a great job on it. The same thing with Lou Marini on *Almost Like Being In Love*; that's a line that I asked him to play, a line I've heard for years as something I've wanted to hear in that place. That really opens it up, too. It's a song that I'd already recorded with Pat Metheny and Michael Brecker. It's a Hoagy Carmichael, so it was probably written on the guitar. My favourite chord changes do fall right into it. It was part of my DNA and part of my vocabulary."



Renowned jazz guitarist John Pizzarelli played on and co-produced the album

8. *You've Got To Be Carefully Taught*

KEY D, NO CAPO

This song from the 1958 musical *South Pacific* is powerfully anti-racist. Coming from that time it must have been an incredibly brave song to write.

"I think so. The lyric is angry. It's cynical and talking about making children hate, teaching them when they're young and innocent. So it is a pretty brutal thing when you get right down to it. That's a song that John Pizzarelli brought to the project. He said, 'You know this one.' I said, 'You bet I do,' and played it immediately on the guitar for him."

9. *God Bless The Child*

KEY C, CAPO 3RD FRET; NO CAPO ON SECOND HALF OF BRIDGE

This Billie Holiday classic is really a sophisticated blues. And she made a fantastic version of it.

"Absolutely right, it is. I played the song with Kootch and Joel O'Brien and Zach Wiesner in our band The Flying Machine in 1966. This was part of our repertoire. I've lived with the tune for a long time, so it's been a long time coming."



Keys player Larry Goldings has been with James's band since 2002

10. *Pennies From Heaven*

KEY A, CAPO 2ND FRET

The organ sound on this is reminiscent of Nat King Cole's solo on *Let's Face The Music And Dance*.

"It's the only keyboard on the album that is actually comping, playing along with the chords. Larry Goldings plays a sort of a solo in that tune, and then comes back in the coda, in the fade, and plays the changes with us."

11. *My Heart Stood Still*

(KEY E, CAPO 2ND FRET)

The chord structure on this song, sung by Frank Sinatra and many others, lends itself perfectly to Taylor's lyrical style, and is one of those that definitely sounds like he might have written it.

"Yes, this one fell right into place. Lyrics by Lorenz Hart. I think that Hart was a closeted gay guy. A lot of his lyrics have this kind of heartbreak behind them, a kind of a furtiveness, and a 'dare not speak its name' kind of thing that you can feel. This song explicitly is not definitely homosexual love, but you can feel that doomed energy to it, that sort of 'this will never happen'. Because the musical theatre was so tolerant of gay people it has such a strong energy to it because of its denial."

12. *Ol' Man River*

(KEY B $\flat$, CAPO 1ST FRET)

This Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein song from *Show Boat* was made famous by legendary singer Paul Robeson.

"That's the definitive version of it, and has connected to it all of that political energy. It's a very dicey thing for a white guy to sing this song and some of the lyrics. This is an abbreviated version of what's actually a very long song, but I've played it for so many years and loved it so much. It's also amazingly range-y, so I'll never be able to do it live. It starts with an F, because it's in B $\flat$. And of course at the end of it, it goes up two and a half octaves. It's a very difficult song to sing. Also, it walks a line for someone such as me to sing it, but I love the song so much I just couldn't leave it alone. We put very little on top of this tune; it lives with my guitar and voice."

13. *It's Only A Paper Moon*

(KEY A, CAPO 2ND FRET)

Those who know Taylor's 1997 album, *Hourglass*, will recognise some of the chord moves here, particularly in the track *Line 'Em Up*.

"I did cut *Paper Moon* before with Don Grolnick for a movie called *A League Of Their Own*, so I had become familiar with the tune. Kootch and I used to talk about doing the song in kind of a straight eight blues kind of way. But it's one of those things that fell into the Latin-leaning side of my stuff. And it's very much the same place as *Line 'Em Up*."



James says the late pianist Bill Evans "really opened these American Songbook songs up"

14. *The Surrey With The Fringe On Top*

(KEY G TUNED DOWN A HALF-STEP, CAPO 1ST FRET)

This Rodgers and Hammerstein song from the hit musical *Oklahoma!* (1943) can seem rather throwaway, but harmonically it's surprisingly sophisticated.

"Yes, it can be. The person who really opened these American Songbook songs up, chordally and harmonically, was Bill Evans. Bill just had that touch of gold. He looked at things and saw harmonies and chord changes in them that have become the standard versions of a lot of songs. *The Surrey With The Fringe On Top* is an old-fashioned song. It's not a beat that has been in pop music since. It's got that foxtrot kind of rhythm that's not a current song. And I actually found it very difficult to sing, because it's not in any way modern or contemporary."



CLIP ART

We take an in-depth look at one of the guitar world's most popular and influential overdrives with *That Pedal Show* co-host Mick Taylor, Analog Man's founder Mike Piera, and the Tube Screamer's original circuit designer Susumu Tamara

Words Rod Brakes **Photography** Phil Barker

In the hard-rock era of the 70s, the sound of overdriven Marshall stacks filled stadiums around the globe – and terrified the parents and neighbours of bedroom guitarists everywhere. These were the good old days of LOUD, when tone equalled eardrum-splitting volume and hard-rocking guitar players were, for better or worse, anti-social by nature.

Hot on the trail of a more practical and less quarrelsome solution, amp designers on both sides of the Atlantic increasingly looked towards providing rock guitarists with the option of valve distortion at lower volume. In the US, during the early 70s, Mesa Engineering's Randall Smith provided his answer with the Boogie/Mark I amp's cascading preamp gain, while in England, Marshall's Steve Grindrod developed the company's first 'master volume' model, the 2203, in 1975.

Meanwhile in Japan, the first of Roland's Boss pedals, the CE-1 Chorus Ensemble hit the effects market in 1976, and by the following year the term 'overdrive' had well and truly been coined by Boss with the OD-1 Over Drive. Boasting valve-like asymmetrical clipping, it was an immediate success as guitar players suddenly found they had the world of overdrive placed conveniently at their feet, regardless of which amplifier they happened to be plugged into.

With a circuit closely resembling the Boss OD-1 (albeit featuring symmetrical clipping and a tone control), the Maxon OD-808/Ibanez TS-808 originated from the Nisshin Onpa firm – an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of guitar pickups and electronics – and was the brainchild of engineer Susumu Tamura. The design was unveiled in 1979 and was aimed at the domestic Japanese market under its own Maxon brand as the OD-808 Overdrive, while Nisshin's customer, the Hoshino Gakki company, cornered the overseas market with the circuit in the guise of its Ibanez-branded TS-808 Tube Screamer Overdrive Pro.

Available from 1979 to 1981, this first incarnation of the Tube Screamer is considered by many to be the Holy Grail of overdrive pedals, with prices on today's vintage market easily fetching several hundred pounds. During 1979, a rare

variation of the TS-808 with a narrower enclosure was made for a short while. This pedal originally utilised a pair of 1458 chips and was reissued by Ibanez in 2014 as the TS-808 35th Anniversary featuring the fabled JRC4558D chip. JRC4558Ds were commonplace in the wider-enclosure TS-808s, with rarer versions employing RC4558P and TL4558P chips in the circuit. All TS-808s can be distinguished by their small rectangular metal footswitches.

In 1982, the design was revamped for the 9 Series Maxon/Ibanez compact effects pedal ranges. Repackaged as the Maxon OD-9 Overdrive and Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamer, the schematic remained relatively unchanged, with the notable exception of output resistor values (to reduce unwanted noise). Although the unit retained its distinctive green colour, the small 808-style switch was replaced by a large rectangular type. By 1985, the 9 Series was discontinued, and the circuit temporarily fell out of production.

In 1986, a new variation closely resembling the original circuit was introduced in the form of the TS10 Tube Screamer Classic as part of Ibanez's extensive Power Series aka 10-series. Although TS10s are sought after by some, for others, their cheaper and less sturdy construction sets them apart from earlier varieties – although this didn't appear to stop Stevie Ray Vaughan making good use of them!

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It was an immediate success as guitar players suddenly found they had the world of overdrive placed at their feet
•



1. Ibanez TS10 Tube Screamer Classic 2. Ibanez TS9DX Turbo Tube Screamer 3. Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer 4. Ibanez Tube Screamer Mini
5. Keeley-modded Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer 6. Analog Man-modded Maxon OD-9 Overdrive 7. Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamer



MIKE PIERA *On The Trail Of Tone*

THE ANALOG MAN FOUNDER AND ALL-ROUND PEDAL GURU EXPLAINS WHY THE TUBE SCREAMER WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE EARLY DAYS OF BOUTIQUE PEDAL BUILDING AND MODDING

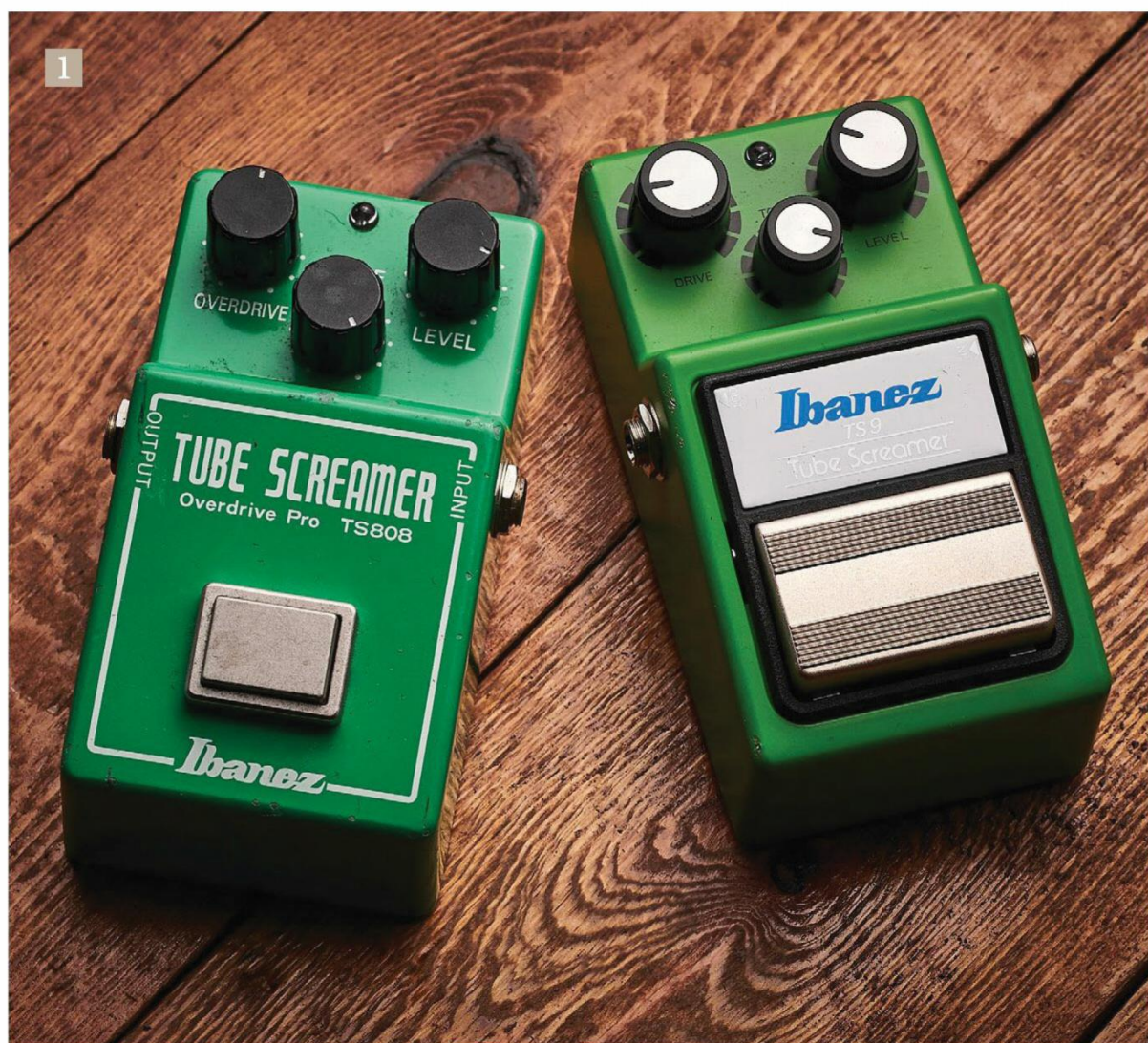
I started out selling vintage guitars and effects in Japan. In the 90s, a lot of effects were constructed poorly, and the sound wasn't very good, so people were looking to vintage effects to get the best sound. Analog Man started out by modifying Tube Screamers using TS-808 specs with parts that I got when I was over in Japan. Before the internet you couldn't just go online and find parts – you had to go and actually search them out. Ultimately, I was able to find those parts in Japan and start modding Tube Screamers properly.

"Tube Screamers have been popular for quite some time and they were one of the most popular pedals when I got into the business. I was able to buy them pretty cheap back in the 90s before people realised how valuable they were getting, but then even the pawnshops caught on! There were no reissues available back then, so the TS9s were pretty valuable, too.

"The Tube Screamer was a fairly unique design, although I do believe the Boss OD-1 Over Drive came out before it [in 1977] and it's a very similar circuit. The Tube Screamer gives you a nice boost and a nice warm midrange, which works especially well in Fender amps. They have a good amount of compression and they also tighten up a lot of amps. A lot of amps, especially when they're loud, will have excessive low-end and it really doesn't sound good with a band – a Tube Screamer will tighten up that low-end really nicely, so it sits well in the mix.

"A lot of people think that they want a pedal with a lot of bottom-end, and when you're playing on your own at home at low volume that might sound okay, but when you start getting the amp louder and you're playing in a band situation, it's probably not something that you want."

www.buyanalogman.com



1. Ibanez's first Tube Screamer, the TS-808, was unveiled in 1979 and was superseded by the TS9 in 1982

2. This rare Ibanez ST9 Super Tube Screamer and Ibanez TS10 Tube Screamer Classic belonged to Gary Moore



MICK TAYLOR *I Scream Therefore I Am*

FORMER GUITARIST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND CO-HOST OF 'THAT PEDAL SHOW' MICK TAYLOR RECALLS HOW THE TUBE SCREAMER BECAME AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF HIS SIGNATURE SOUND

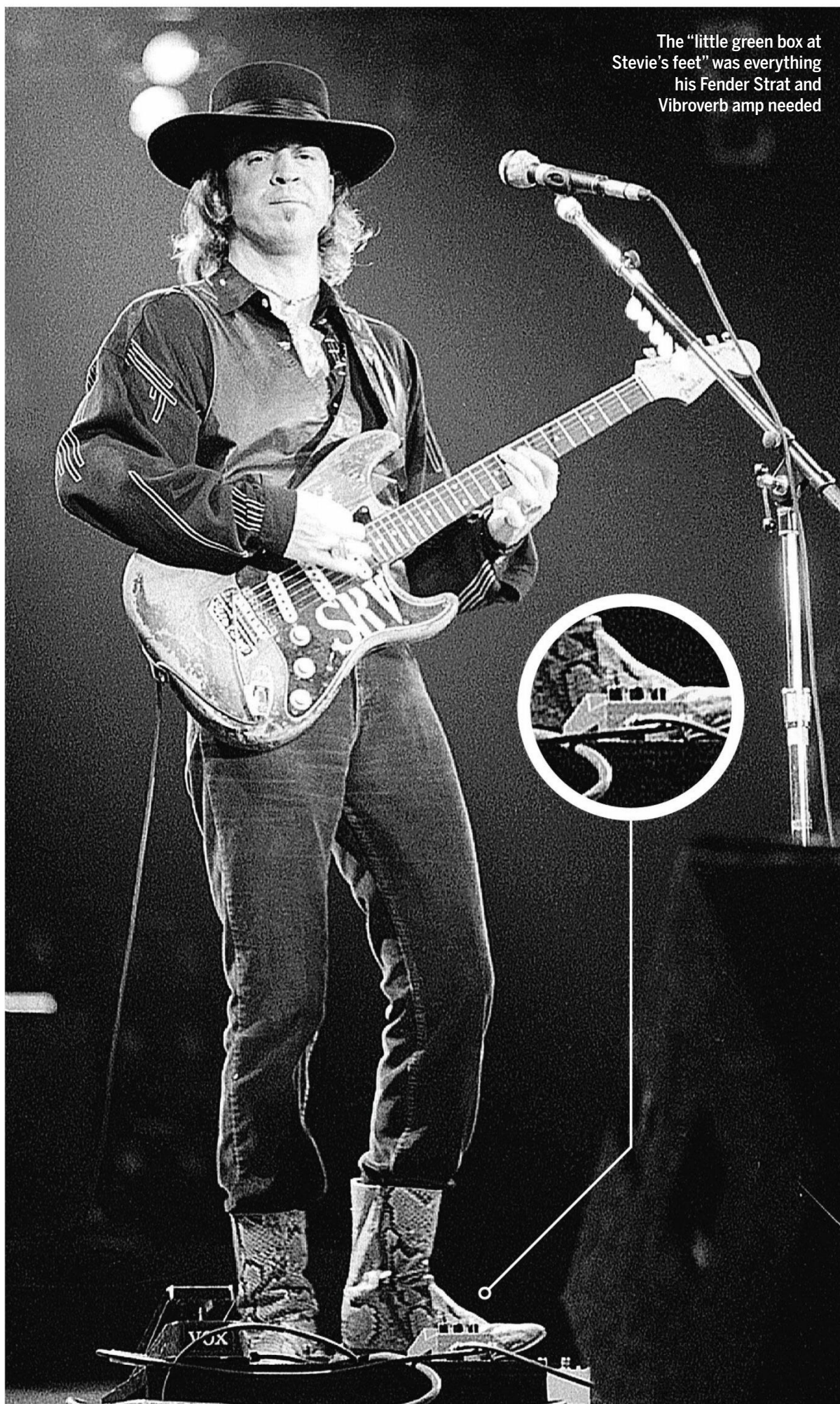
Honestly, I had no idea what I was doing to begin with. It probably started with the 'Silverface' Twins I stumbled upon aged about 16. I'd seen pictures of SRV with Fender amps that looked similar and – given that I was 16 and 'knew everything' – I thought it was all down to these behemoth 70s clean monsters, as opposed to a beautiful 60s Vibroverb! Nevertheless, I plugged the Strat into the Vibrato channel, flicked the Bright switch on, turned it up and... Ouch! One trip to the music store later, a used Boss OD-1 and a new SD-1 improved things no end. Until somebody finally pointed out the little green box at Stevie's feet.

"Since then I've become accustomed to 50 per cent of guitar players telling me they hate Tube Screamers, while the other 50 per cent would never be without one. If you live in my world of vintage-style Strats and predominantly black-panel-derived amps, something TS-flavoured is basically essential. That characteristic 500 to 800Hz hump fattens things where a Strat loves it, but the bass roll-off and lack of drive in the lowest frequencies keeps it all clear and defined – which is what you need when your amp starts to flub out in the low-end.

"At the opposite end, a marked treble roll off meant the old Twin's Bright switch was rendered less unpleasant while the pedal's compression – that simply doesn't work for a lot of humbucker-and-crunchy-amp people – is exactly what the clean, strident Fender amp needed to make it feel a bit more forgiving. All I had to do now was tune to E $\flat$ and that weak-sounding Strat was transformed into a sledgehammer. Placed as a boost after a decent Fuzz Face, the TS made it borderline god-like.

"Years later, I've often wondered if what I was actually chasing was simply the sound and feel of a Strat plugged into a semi-dimed Plexi. Either way, the Tube Screamer was, is and hopefully always will be a rite of passage: an essential piece of the tonal tool kit as you learn what lights you up and what leaves you cold. Thank you, Mr Tamura, and thank you, Tube Screamer. You have truly helped to make me who I am."

www.thatpedalshow.com



The "little green box at Stevie's feet" was everything his Fender Strat and Vibroverb amp needed



Meet The Designer **SUSUMU TAMURA**

THE BRAINS BEHIND MAXON AND IBANEZ'S LEGENDARY DESIGN
REVEALS THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF OVERDRIVE

What was the first pedal you built and how did the design come about?

"The first pedal I designed was a phase shifter – it was sold as the Phase Tone PT-999 under both the Maxon and Ibanez brands. The PT-999 circuit design was inspired by the MXR Phase 90 and consisted of only three operational amplifiers so that many players could use it at a reasonable price."

What's your best-selling pedal and why do you think that is?

"The best-selling pedals I've designed are overdrives such as the Maxon OD-808 Overdrive and the Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer. To say that the Tube Screamer is synonymous with the term 'overdrive' would not be an exaggeration."

"You could also say that a majority of overdrive pedals on the market are based on the Tube Screamer/Overdrive circuit. Regardless of the genre of music, though, I think that the overdrive sound expected by both the player and the audience can be easily attained with these pedals."



This very early example of an Ibanez TS-808 belongs to Portishead guitarist Adrian Utley. "It's my trusted old friend," says Adrian

Which notable guitarists have used Tube Screammers?

"The most famous user would be the genius blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, who used the TS-808 and TS10 [and TS9]. I listen to Stevie Ray Vaughan's *Texas Flood* a lot while working on pedal mods. Besides SRV, lots of guitarists have used a Tube Screamer, including Eric Johnson, Trey Anastasio, Brad Paisley, The Edge, Joe Bonamassa, Kirk Hammett, John Mayer, Buddy Guy, Michael Schenker, Gary Moore, George Lynch, Gary Clarke Jr and many more."

What do you think makes your OD-808/TS-808 design unique?

"Before the release of the OD-808/TS-808, distortion circuits had a separate clipping stage that came after the amplifier stage of the circuit. OD-808/TS-808 was the first circuit to incorporate the clipping stage in the negative feedback loop of the operational amplifier. This configuration yields a smoother distortion that retains the original guitar tone. After more than 40 years since its release, many clones of Ibanez Tube Screamer and Maxon Overdrive and many overdrives derived from the Tube Screamer have been released and sold. It is undoubted that the original design was unique yet also simple."

What's your favourite vintage pedal? And can you explain why?

"My favourite vintage pedal is the OD-808/TS-808 with the 'caramel' switch manufactured in 1980/1981. It has a simple circuit configuration, which consisted of easily available parts. The OD-808/TS-808 has been used by musicians across various musical genres for over 40 years since its release, and many reissue models have been released over the years. There have also been many TS-cloned products and derivative products released by different companies over the years. It is one of the most copied pedal designs of all time."

If you had a three-pedal 'desert island' pedalboard what would be on it?

"The Maxon AD-900 Analog Delay, the

Maxon OD-9 Overdrive, and the Maxon OD-820 Over Drive Pro."

Is there anything new on the horizon?

"I am very excited about my most recent design modifications, the Ibanez TS808 1980 '#1' Cloning mod and Maxon OD-820 Secede from T.S. mod pedals. These products are sold in Japan. Also, the Maxon Apex808 that will be sold overseas this year."

"To say that the Tube Screamer is synonymous with the term 'overdrive' would not be an exaggeration"

Are there any long-lost Maxon gems that you think would be worth reissuing?

"I would like to reissue a version of the [1980s] Maxon DCP series vintage pedals – DCP stands for Digitally Controlled Processor. The Maxon DCP series was expensive at the time and did not sell well. I see original DCP pedals on social networks and markets these days, but I definitely want to reissue the [POD1] Overdrive/Distortion and [PDS1] Distortion DCP models. The DCP series was a wonderful product that controlled 100 per cent analogue audio with digital circuits instead of using DSP to simulate analogue circuits. Furthermore, multiple control settings could be stored and instantly recalled. Basically, these products offered the best of both worlds with analogue audio and digital control."

"I think that the concept of a hybrid pedal where a simple analogue circuit is controlled digitally still needs to be perfected. There are currently hybrid pedals on the market, but the concept still needs to be refined and improved upon." 📷

<https://maxonfx.com> / www.ibanez.com



Designed by Susumu Tamura,
the new Maxon Apex808 was
developed after meticulous analysis
of over 100 vintage and modern
Tube Screamer/808 variants

High Flyer

Exactly a year after launching the American Acoustasonic Telecaster, Fender took the wraps off the Stratocaster version. The same guitar with a different shape or a new voice? We find out...

Words Dave Burrluck Photography Olly Curtis



FENDER AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC STRATOCASTER £1,749

CONTACT **Fender Musical Instruments EMEA** PHONE **01342 331700** WEB **www.fender.com**

What You Need To Know

1 **That Acoustasonic Telecaster got a lot of stick from the forumites, didn't it?**

It did, but in the real world Fender exceeded its expectations in terms of sales and this Stratocaster is number two in the Acoustasonic series.

2 **But it's the same thing, just with a different shape, isn't it?**

Fair comment, but no. The physics of the body meant that the innovative and patented 'doughnut' soundhole had to be redesigned to maximise its acoustic voice. We have different sounds onboard, plus there are three electric settings: clean, a little bit of hair... and downright hairy.

3 **It's not vintage. Why should we be interested?**

Well, head over to YouTube and you'll find Tyler Bryant showing off the Acoustasonic Stratocaster head-to-head with Daniel Donato and his Acoustasonic Telecaster. Jack White, too, has his own Fender Custom Shop version. C'mon, it's 2020!

Call it shock of the new, but just a year after Fender launched its American Acoustasonic Telecaster, doesn't it look less radical now and more a part of the furniture? That familiarity certainly informs this new 2020 Stratocaster version. With its natural or coloured inset spruce top, it initially appears far less modern than its original sibling, albeit far from our vintage friends. Whatever your thoughts are on that, there's little to dispute the fact that the Acoustasonic platform suits the once pioneering Stratocaster style. Even before you plug in to explore the different acoustic and electric voices, it has a surprisingly strong and full voice, and while it obviously won't challenge even the smallest of acoustic steel-strings for volume and depth, it's roomy and resonant, an inviting playing experience. A very good start.

First and foremost it is an acoustic guitar, albeit with a relatively small soundbox chamber and that central soundhole colloquially referred to as the 'doughnut', which is officially called the patented Stringed Instrument Resonance System (SIRS). It's more a soundport than a simple hole in the top to let the air out and, as Fender's Tim Shaw discusses elsewhere in this feature, it was the key to kicking off this Stratocaster version.

Shape aside, there is little difference in its construction from the Telecaster version. Both mahogany neck and body have quite a textured feel that will benefit from playing and probably burnish the seemingly near bare wood. Like the Tele, it's a full Fender-scale bolt-on but with acoustic strings, including a wound third string, acoustic-style bridge and compensated saddle – very much an acoustic/electric hybrid. And that's exactly what it is and it leans almost as heavily as the Telecaster on those amplified acoustic voices. So, like the Telecaster, we get a master volume and a five-position lever Voice Selector switch, which offers five pairs of voices (A and B) that can be voiced individually or as a blend of the two via the Mod control.

Even before you plug in to explore the different acoustic and electric voices, it has a surprisingly strong and full voice... It's roomy and resonant





THE SOUND ENGINE

A breakdown of the Voices onboard

The key to the Acoustasonic platform is simply the number of sounds, or 'Voices', that we're provided with, 10 in total, but each of the five pairs can also be blended together. Starting in what is normally neck pickup position on a standard Strat, position 5 on the Voice Selector, we have what Fender calls the 'Core Acoustics': a Sitka spruce-topped dreadnought with mahogany back and sides (A); turn the Mod control clockwise and we voice sound B, a smaller slot-head Sitka spruce-topped concert with rosewood back and sides. Position 4 voices the 'Alternative Acoustics': a short-scale guitar with Sitka spruce top and walnut back and sides (A) and a Sitka spruce/mahogany 'Americana' dreadnought (B). Position 3 is 'Percussion and Enhanced Harmonics' where a single voice, a Sitka spruce-topped Auditorium size with rosewood back and sides (A), can be blended with that top pickup (B). Position 2, 'Acoustic and Electric Blend', has an Englemann spruce-topped dreadnought with rosewood back and sides (A) and the magnetic Fender electric clean pickup (B). Finally, position 1 is fully electric: that same magnetic pickup classed as 'Fat/Semi Clean' with a little extra crunch (A) and then the same with more gain, Fender Electric Dirty (B).

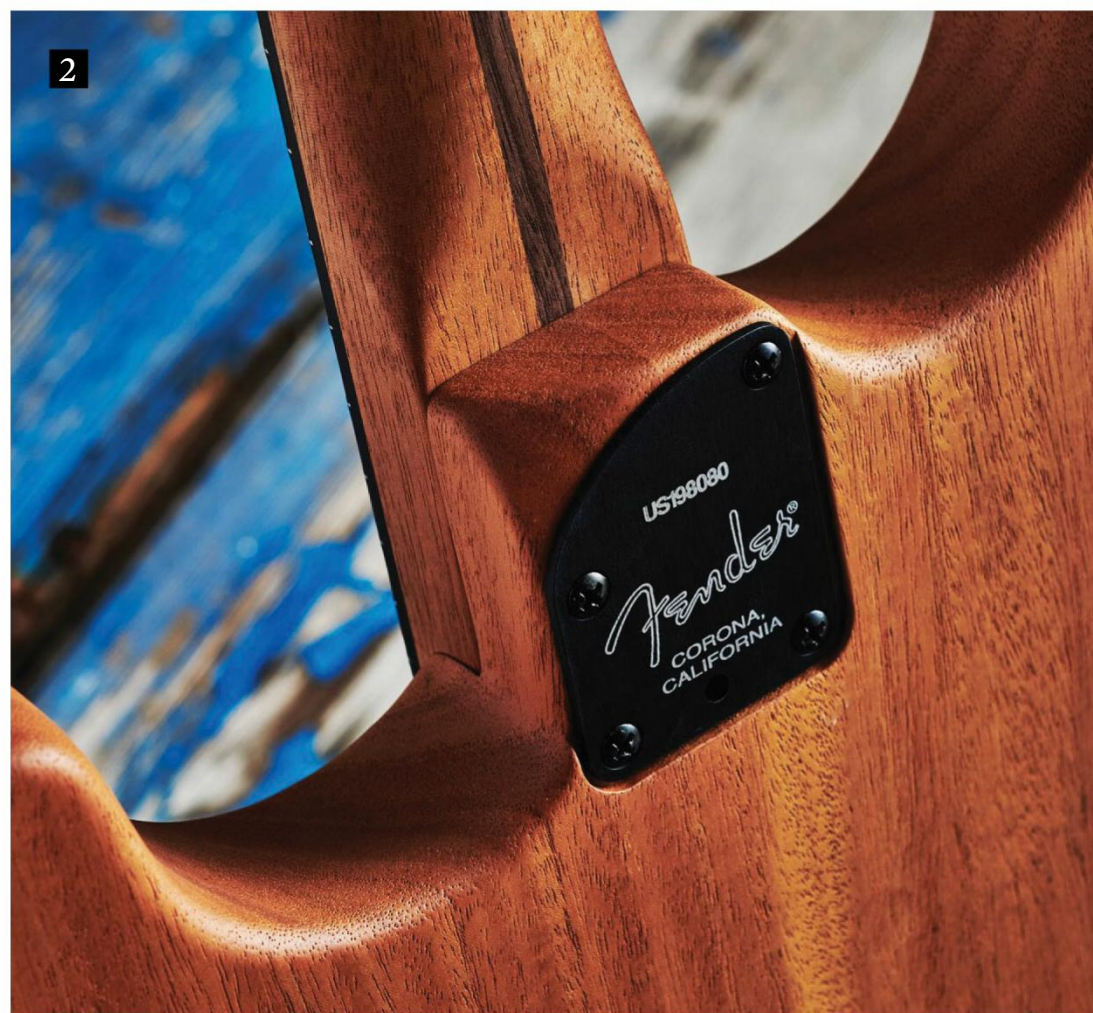
1. Just like its electric cousin, you get the familiar Strat headstock, here tastefully etched with the Fender logo

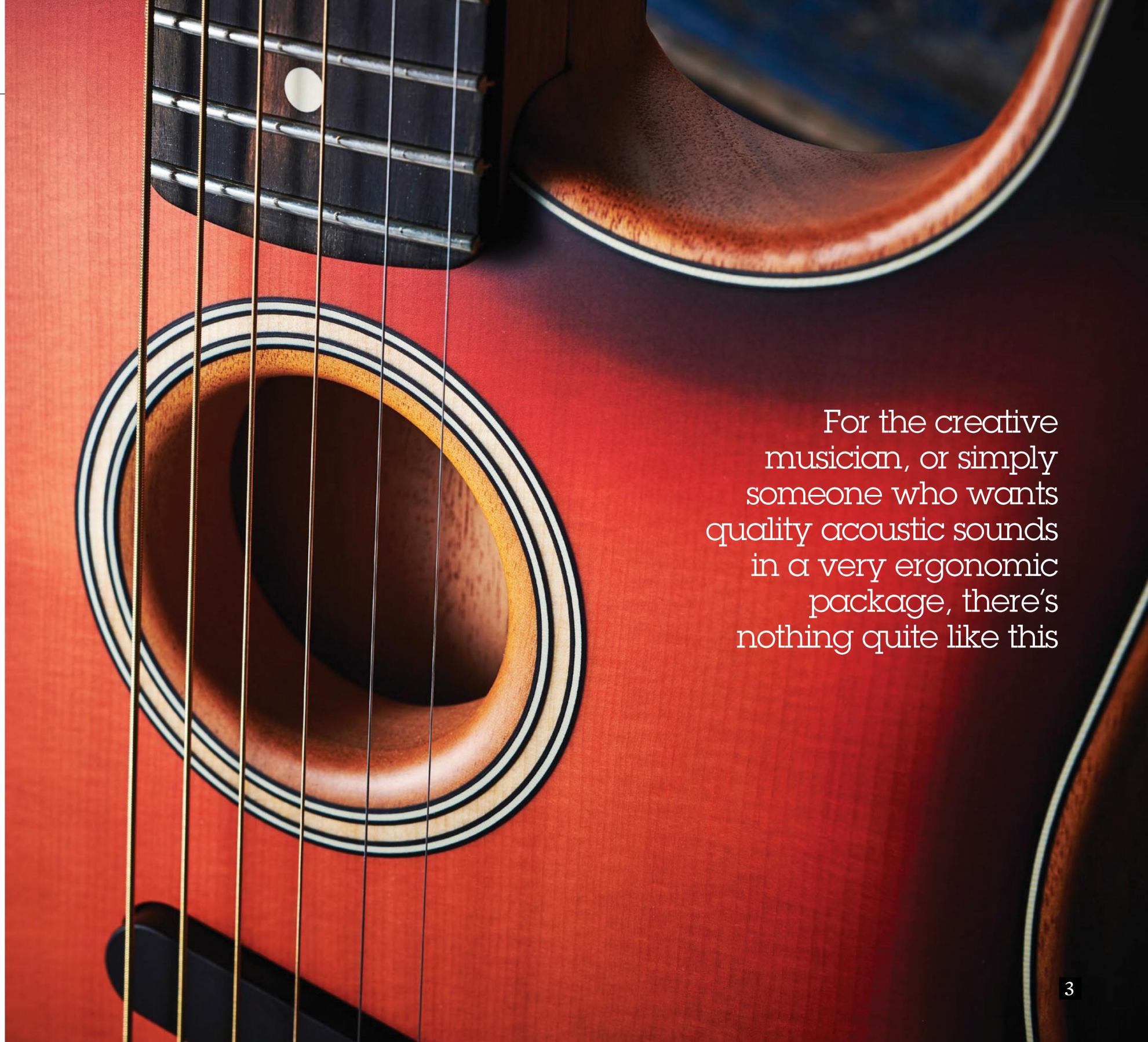
2. Like any classic Fender, the neck is held in place with four screws. The heelplate here is contoured and inset, plus we have the Micro-Tilt adjustment to precisely set neck pitch – very handy with the acoustic-style bridge

Powering for the extensive onboard electronics comes not from a conventional battery but a simple USB plug on the circular output jack dish. And, yes, just as you would your phone, you'll need to charge it before it'll work.

Feel & Sounds

It'll probably be the lightest Strat in your collection, and even though it's very slightly heavier than the Tele we reviewed last year, at 2.32kg (5.1lb) it's light in anyone's book. As we mentioned in our introduction, however, it's the unplugged acoustic sound that initially impresses with surprising volume and a strong mid-flavoured voice that you could probably put a mic in front of and capture quite an accurate acoustic archtop or even Selmer Maccaferri-ish voice. The response is balanced across the range, too, from big and vibrant first position chords up to strong-sounding high-fret lead lines, which, of course, this Strat excels at; for an electro-acoustic electric guitar, the fingerboard access is stupidly good.





For the creative musician, or simply someone who wants quality acoustic sounds in a very ergonomic package, there's nothing quite like this

3



4

We initially plug in via our acoustic pedalboard to an AER combo and from the off it's game on. In terms of playability, you'll have to get used to a tougher feel if you're coming from your regular Strat, because it ships with Fender Dura-Tone coated phosphor bronze 0.011 to 0.052-gauge strings. But the 'deep C' neck profile is exactly the same as Fender's Professional series, except it has a slightly flatter fingerboard radius. Setup on our sample was pretty much bang on 1.6mm on treble and bass sides. Gauge and string type aside, you're playing an electric guitar here.

Plugged in, it's a different, mainly acoustic world. In positions 5 and 4 you really should be able to find a sound whether you're strumming hard where those dreadnoughts do their thing or losing your pick for some mellower fingerstyle on the smaller-body voicings, which don't sound 'small' at all if we're honest. The addition of the top pickup in position 3 adds a touch of ambience to the sound as well as making the top livelier if percussion is part of your style; simple rhythm taps sound very natural. Okay, the

3. More like a sound port, the patented Stringed Instrument Resonance System (SIRS), aka the 'doughnut', is key to the acoustic sound of the Acoustasonic Strat

4. It might be mahogany rather than maple, but the modern 'deep C' profile is the same as the American Professional range. Another change is that the fingerboard is ebony with a 305mm (12-inch) radius, slightly flatter than the Professional's 241mm (9.5-inch) radius

THE RIVALS

This Strat's obvious competitor is the Acoustasonic Telecaster, which is priced the same. Shape aside, it has less crunch for the electric voice and the acoustic sounds are slightly different from those on the Stratocaster. Conventional acoustic/electrics typically stay in the analogue world, mixing an under-saddle piezo or body/neck sensors with one or more magnetic electric pickups. Taylor's T5z Classic (which has a dealer price of around £1,900 with gigbag) is a recommended example. In many cases, via dual outputs, you can use two amps – one for the acoustic side, the other for the magnetic. PRS's Hollowbody II Piezo allows you to do exactly that with its PRS/LR Baggs piezo pickup system, but it's a more serious investment with full retail from £4,749.

5. The acoustic-style bridge uses Graph Tech Tusq bridge pins and a saddle compensated for the wound third of the acoustic strings
6. This dished Tele-style output jack plate also houses the power-in socket for the rechargeable Lithium-ion battery (a full charge should give you around 20 hours of playing). The small LED will flash red when you're down to about two hours of charge



electric sounds are tighter and maybe don't work quite as well in this environment, but the acoustic/electric mix in position 2 is a very usable acoustic/electric hybrid.

By design, the Acoustasonic platform is about much more than simply giving you some pretty impressive acoustic sounds. Swap over to your electric rig and the three shades of that clean magnetic pickup are equally impressive. There's a bit more body and output to the sound compared with our reference Strat, albeit with a shorter note decay, and there's a lot of fun to be had kicking in various boosts and overdrives. You could pretty much find a place for this in anything from old blues to modern country, or more classic Americana or alt-rock. We were surprised just how good a rhythm guitar this is with more crunch and gain than we'd considered, and that's before we add some dirty fuzz or ambient delays and reverbs. This thing loves effects! It also sounds great as a really swampy slide guitar.

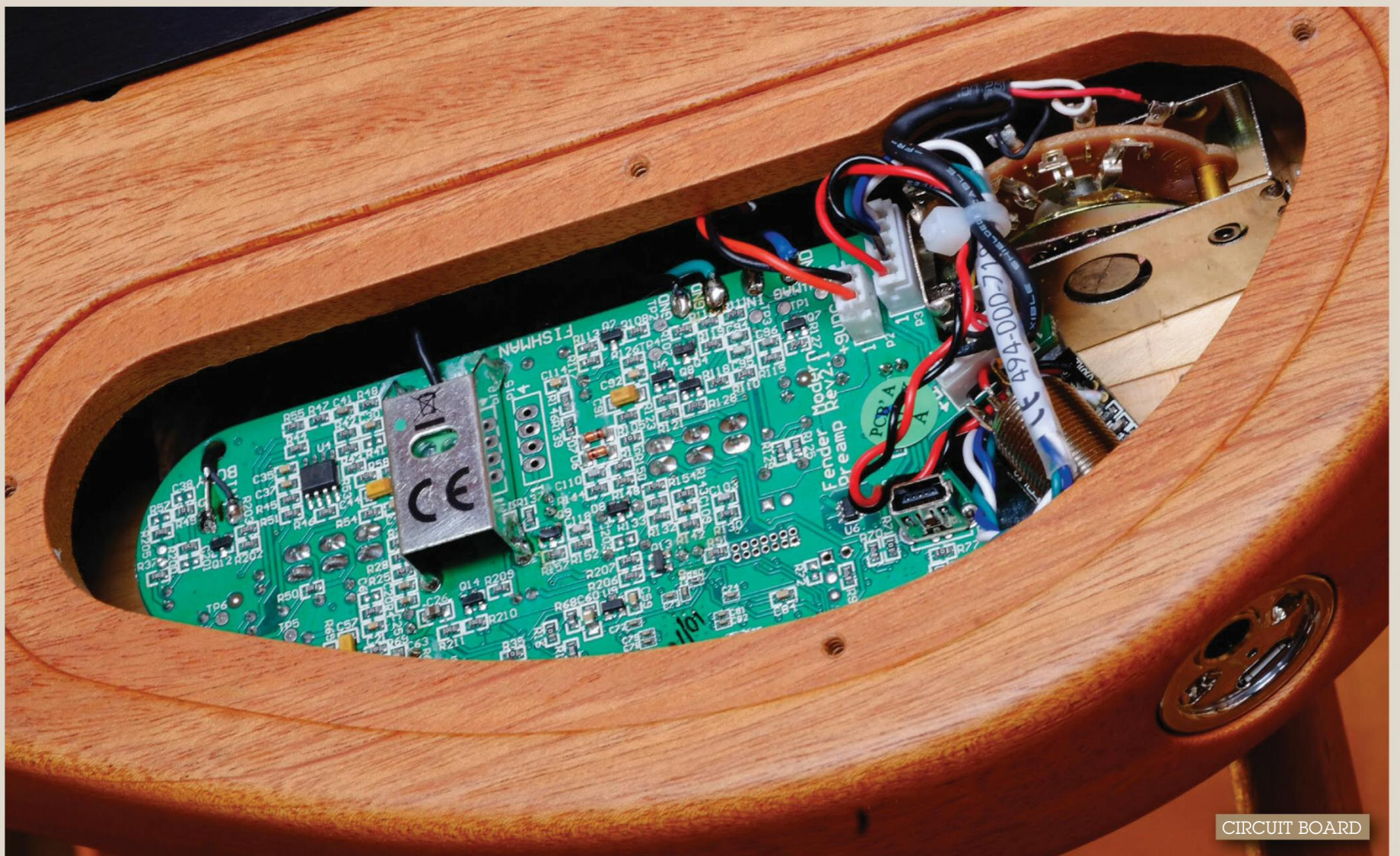
UNDER THE HOOD

The innovative insides of the Acoustasonic Stratocaster

Exactly like the Acoustasonic Telecaster that preceded it, when you remove the controls' rear backplate you get some idea of the considerable technology at play here. The big PCB, which has over 380 components, we're told, is a very alien sight – about the only 'normal' thing is the five-way lever switch!

Remove the central backplate (which holds the battery pack) and where you would expect to see springs and vibrato block, it's equally unusual: there's the Fender N4 MVT magnetic Noiseless pickup, and between that and the string anchor point is the rectangular top/body sensor, the Fishman Acoustasonic

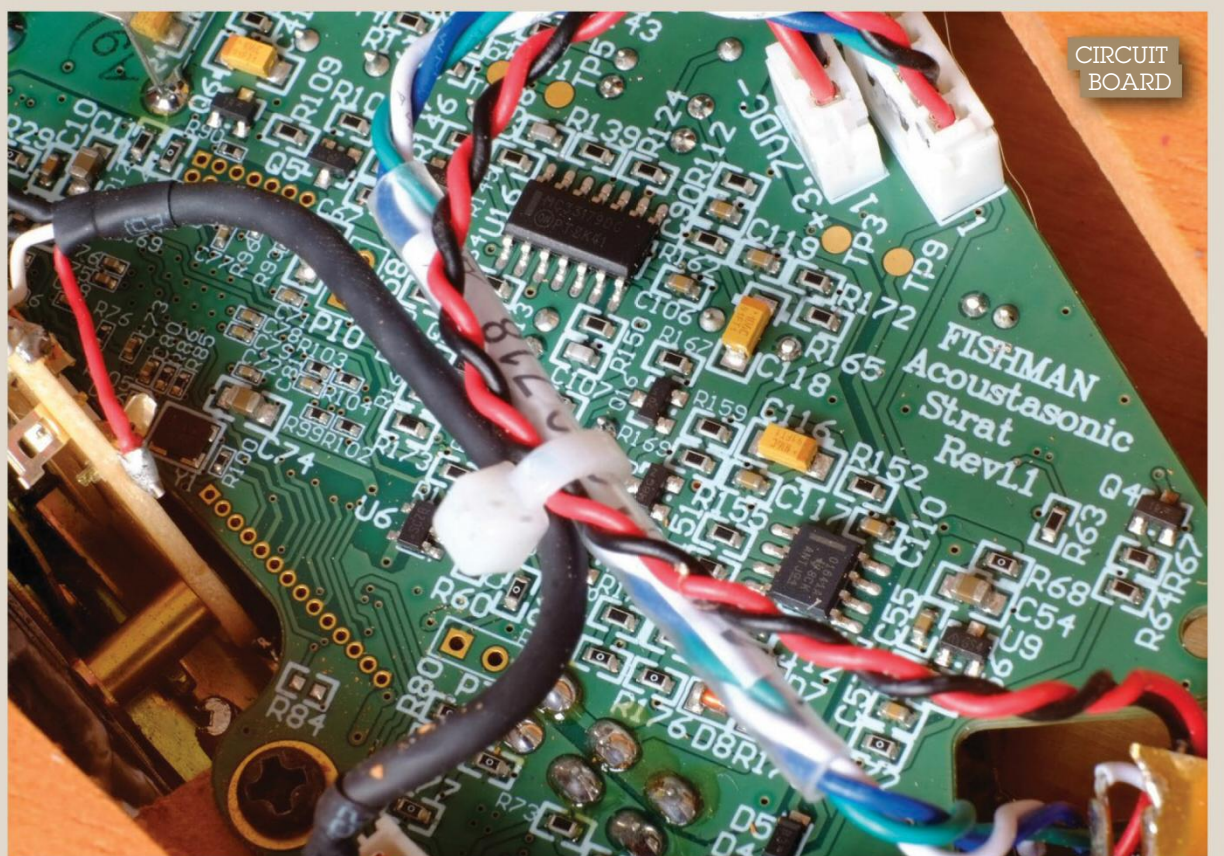
Enhancer. You can't, of course, see the third pickup, a Fishman piezo transducer, under the compensated saddle within the bridge. But what's clearly visible is the hollow nature of the guitar and the two small longitudinal top braces running either side of that doughnut soundhole. [DB]



CIRCUIT BOARD



PICKUPS



CIRCUIT BOARD



As with the Acoustasonic Tele, we get a master volume and a Mod knob, which blends between the A and B voices, selected by the five-way lever Voice Selector switch

Verdict

Clearly, new guitar design is alive and well. There's a very 'open book' vibe here. On one level it's a lightweight electric-sized electro-acoustic with some highly credible acoustic voices without the big body – and feedback potential – of the real thing. If you used it for solo function gigs alone it'd soon pay you back, but that's missing so much of the instrument's potential that can begin to be realised once you plug into your electric rig and pedalboard. The voicing of that bridge pickup is superb and the clean, hair and hairier crunch will soon have you rocking out. While there's only one sound pair where you can blend acoustic and electric, it's extremely well voiced. Our test time only scratches the surface of the instrument's potential.

We were surprised just how good a rhythm guitar this is with more crunch and gain than we'd considered

Yes, Fender could (should?) provide us with an optional saddle that's compensated for a plain third string, and we can only hope that sometime soon a version with a neck pickup surfaces for those of us with jazzier tastes. But until then, for the creative musician, or simply someone who wants quality acoustic sounds in a very easy and ergonomic package, there's nothing quite like this. And if push comes to shove, we prefer it to the original Telecaster. Superb innovation. **G**



FENDER AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC STRATOCASTER

PRICE: £1,749 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Double-cutaway, solidbody-sized electro-acoustic

BODY: Mahogany (hollow) with inset Sitka spruce top

NECK: Mahogany, modern 'deep C' profile, bolt-on

SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")

TUNERS: Fender standard cast/sealed staggered tuners

NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech Black Tusq/42.8mm

FINGERBOARD: Ebony, white dot markers, 305mm (12") radius

FRETS: 22, narrow/tall

BRIDGE/SPACING: Ebony w/compensated Black Tusq saddle/53.5mm

ELECTRICS: 3-pickup configuration: Fishman under-saddle transducer and bridge plate body sensor, Fender Noiseless N4 magnetic. master volume, Mod knob, 5-way Voice Selector lever switch. Single mono output with USB battery charge

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 2.32/5.1

OPTIONS: Colour only

RANGE OPTIONS: The American Acoustasonic Telecaster (£1,749)

LEFT-HANDERS: No

FINISHES: 3-Color Sunburst (as reviewed), Black, Dakota Red, Natural, Transparent Sonic Blue – satin matt polyester to body; satin urethane to neck and headstock



PROS Innovative design with sharp, lightweight build; very credible plugged-in acoustic voices; expanded electric sounds over the Telecaster version

CONS We wish Fender had supplied another saddle, compensated for an unwound third string; left-handers are ignored



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Super Sonic

One of the boldest guitar launches in recent times, Fender's Acoustasonic Telecaster got many in a lather. But its sales were strong enough to warrant this new Stratocaster version. We talk innovation with co-designer Tim Shaw

Words Dave Burrluck

If the soothsayers and experts of the social media world had their way, Fender's 2019 launch of the Acoustasonic Telecaster would be erased from history, consigned to the 'What Were They Thinking?' lists. It was quickly dismissed as 'ugly', 'too expensive'... 'just plain wrong!' Thankfully, that snapshot is not the real world, and 12 months on a Stratocaster joins the Acoustasonic ranks.

"The Acoustasonic Telecaster vastly exceeded our expectations," beams Tim Shaw, one of the Fender design team responsible for the Tele model and the new Strat version, at this year's NAMM Show. "I think one thing is that you give the Acoustasonic Tele to three players and they'll all approach it differently. There are plenty of online user videos that illustrate that. I think that's when we realised it was – it is! – a legitimate platform: it's its own thing. So, no, this is not a D-28 perfectly amplified in a studio with a \$700 microphone. But this is a really good tool. You can take it on a bar gig and get more than enough sounds. You can sit at your computer and play through songs, write. Some of the looper people, it's amazing how

much stuff they put on there. But I'll agree, initially *nobody* knew what it was.

"I think one of the things that surprised us was Jack White," Tim adds. "He's taken his Acoustasonic Tele, which he customised the heck out of, and we helped, and he's using that thing with a Big Muff. He's totally embraced it. To watch people take this thing and abuse it, in the classic sense, is great."

But then there was the price, which (bearing in mind we're talking about a lot of costly R&D and a USA build) seemed pretty bang-on to us when we reviewed the Tele back in issue 445.

"Well, I've never understood that," says Tim. "Just look at that PCB!"

Indeed, the Acoustasonic platform itself involves all sorts of trickery, which Fender prefers to downplay.

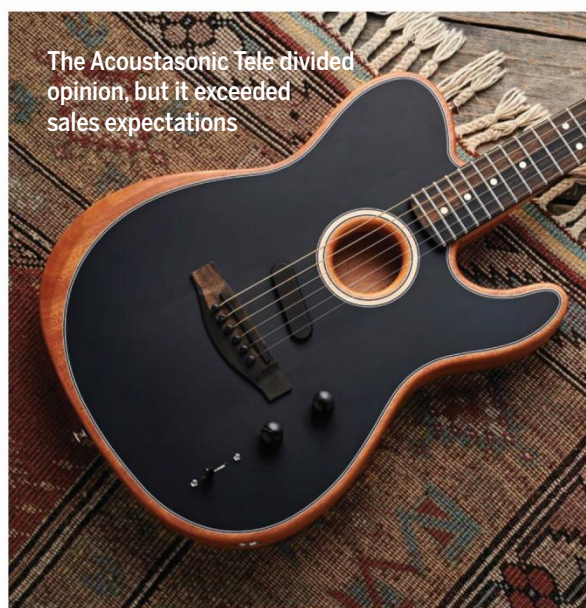
"What you hear from the output jack is 55 per cent from the guitar and analogue circuit, and 45 per cent shaped by the electronics," we were told of the original Acoustasonic Telecaster by co-designer Brian Swerdfeger. "There are no 'simulations' or 'models' – just the real guitar being voiced by powerful filters to achieve the different performance experiences.

The tones we crafted are informed by our collective musical experience but not targeted to any specific instruments."

You might imagine doing this second version would be straightforward, but the key to both designs is how the small hollowbody guitar sounds acoustically.

"So, yes, the body shapes are different, but we're still trying to optimise what Brian and myself refer to as the 'OLE': the on-lap-experience," continues Tim. "So much of this thing – the playing experience – is actually dependent on what the guitar sounds like: the guitar has to work as efficiently and pleasantly as it can.

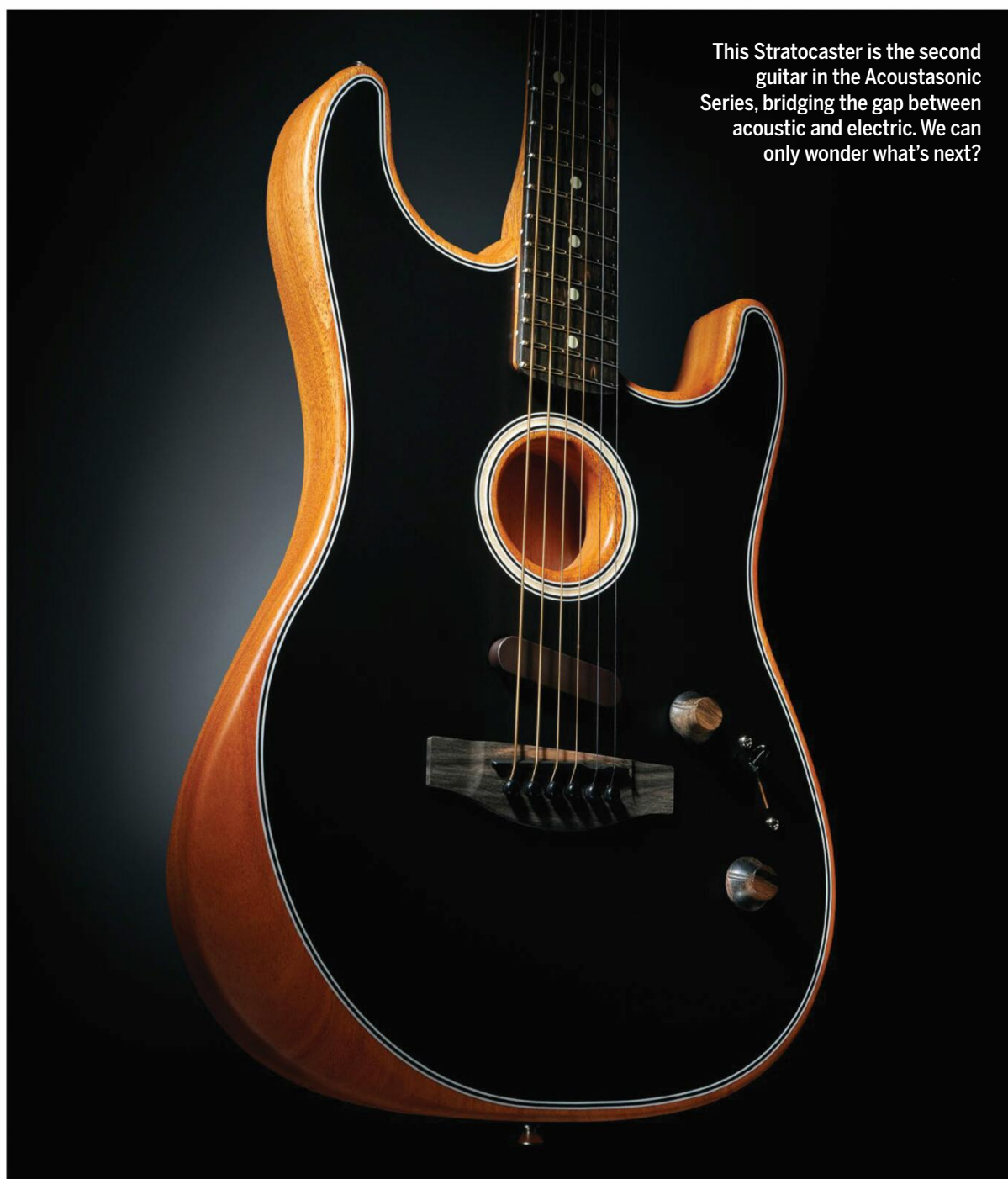
"So, although the body is actually slightly bigger than the Telecaster, internally," Tim explains, "because of the belly cut and the fact that the cut-out in the body doesn't go up the horns, we actually have *less* airspace in the body than on the Telecaster version. It's a smaller chamber, which means we had to tune the sound port – the 'doughnut' – differently. I went through three different iterations of that before I got something I wanted to play. Until the structure was correct we couldn't do anything else, and getting that right took a little while.



The Acoustasonic Tele divided opinion, but it exceeded sales expectations



Tim Shaw admits that voicing this Stratocaster "was very intense and in its own way harder than the Telecaster"



This Stratocaster is the second guitar in the Acoustasonic Series, bridging the gap between acoustic and electric. We can only wonder what's next?

"That said, the bracing [of the Sitka spruce top] is pretty much the same [as the Tele]. In fact, the raw bracing pieces are the same parts. See, the Strat and Tele are pretty much the same length."

Along with more electric voices on this new Strat, the placement of the magnetic bridge pickup was crucial.

"The placement of the bridge pickup here is exactly the same as it is on a Stratocaster – same angle and same distance from the nut, nominally 95 per cent of the scale length. That's where people expect to hear things on a Strat, and if I'm trying to get something that electrically will function like a Strat – not withstanding the fact that everything else is very different! – I'll take what I can get and I'll put things where they should be as much as I possibly can," Tim explains.

As we explain in our review, this Strat has some different voices – acoustic and electric – compared with its Tele sibling.

"There's no reason whatsoever to make the same set of voices in just a different box," Tim tells us. "The world doesn't need that. If the main pretext we have in playing different instruments is because they make us play different stuff, expand us as

musicians, then we might as well have a set of voices here that are valid but different. As we were pretty happy with what we did on the Telecaster version, it was incumbent on us not to screw this up and still create something that people wanted to play: 'Okay, I thought I knew everything about this,' or 'I was played out. I was wrong: there's something cool I can do with this.'"

So this revoicing was presumably easier than voicing the first Telecaster version?

"No, this was worse! Let's just say we'd learned a bunch, so there were things we knew how to do and doing the Telecaster collectively taught us a tremendous amount. But, again, we had that looking over our shoulder. Larry Fishman is a very focused and very gifted guy sonically.

"It's a smaller chamber [than the Tele], so we had to tune the 'doughnut' differently" **Tim Shaw**

I think we did four trips up to Fishman HQ to voice this guitar. They were two day trips, and when you're spending most of each day in the studio listening very intently, it's really hard work. Then we'd go away and play with some stuff and then we'd go back. It was very intense and in its own way harder than the Telecaster."

It's like you've had a hit first album and now you've got to follow it up, we offer.

"Yes, that's a perfect analogy, because a lot of times you've had all your life to experience and write that first album... and now to only have a year of experience to follow that up. Oh, and you've been on tour the whole time...!"

"One thing we learned on this journey, just in general terms, now that I've had nearly three years experimenting with the platform and we as a group have had about two years experimenting with the 'engine', so to speak, it's a far subtler thing that you'd think just looking at it. There are a lot of little subtleties, and because you don't have a lot to work with, everything really matters. So it's really sharpened our focus as designers, as sound engineers, in terms of saying, 'Okay, this really *does* matter.'" **G**





Cream Of The Crop

Combine one of the UK's top guitar makers with a pickup maker who has an enviable address book and what do we get? A very fine electric guitar

Words Dave Burrluck **Photography** Jesse Wild



PATRICK JAMES EGGLE OZ CREAM T £2,999

CONTACT **Patrick James Eggle** PHONE **01691 661777** WEB **www.eggle.co.uk**

What You Need To Know

- 1 Well, that's a Telecaster if ever I saw one!**
Patrick James Eggle is not the first guitar maker to use this 70-year-old blueprint, is he? He's been building his Oz models (named after the location of Eggle HQ in Oswestry) for the past couple of years alongside his better known Macon single-cuts.
- 2 So, what does it bring to the table?**
It's actually quite a modern build with roasted maple neck, contoured heel join, Patrick's 'worn-through' neck finish, and aged but not reliced style.
- 3 What's with that neck pickup. Am I seeing double?**
No need to go to Specsavers – it's the 'Banger and Mash' by Thomas Nilsen at Cream T Pickups, requested and used by Keith Richards. Thomas has now relocated to the UK from Norway and has set up shop at Sound Affects in Ormskirk.

This Oz Cream T is the very first guitar produced in a three-way tie-up between Patrick James Eggle, Norwegian pickup maker Thomas Nilsen and Sound Affects' owner, Tim Lobley, who's not only given Thomas the space to build his pickups in the UK but is the motivating force behind this new direction. "A nice little meeting of English minds... with a Norwegian thrown in," he quips.

"This is the first instrument I've used Cream T pickups on," adds Patrick, "so this is very much the beginning. I'm quite excited about it: to have pickups that have that added value and pedigree."

Concept aside, you don't need us to tell you that the biggest trend, or direction, for guitar makers large and small is the 'inspired-by' design. Many have taken the Telecaster, off-set its body, changed its pickups, even mixed it up a bit with elements of other designs. But Eggle's Oz simply pays homage, albeit in a thoroughly modern fashion. As you'd expect, it's exceeding well done, retaining the original simplicity and modular design, while giving virtually every facet a contemporary artisan-quality makeover. But even though it's not reliced in any bashed-up fashion, its artfully aged patina looks and feels old.

The beautifully light weight and neck feel hit you right away. The deeply flamed quarter-sawn roasted maple neck has a gloriously smooth feel to its 'worn-through'

finish – achieved with Tung oil and wax. The darker burnished colouration, as we've said before in reviews on Patrick's craft, apes an old Italian master violin or cello. It feels like it's already been played for years.

The body finish, however, is relatively new for Patrick. Coined '58 formula', it's a nitro finish that "we get from a real old-school company who told me it really hasn't changed since the late 50s", says Patrick. "They told me that it doesn't use modern plasticisers, and it smells different, too, like peardrops. It's completely different; it behaves differently. And one thing you can



The result of a frantic night's work to satisfy Sir Keef, the Banger and Mash are two of the relatively few Cream T pickups available for sale in the UK. A single is £199; a set is £349

"It's a new instrument, but it's not all squeaky and perfect so you're scared to leave fingerprints on it" **Patrick James Eggle**



Gotoh's 'modern' Tele-style bridge features partial sides and In-Tune compensated saddles, but still manages to look old thanks to that aged finish

do is to age it with extreme cold. Basically, we let the finish cure for around 10 days, polish it then give it some gentle heat and pop it into a chest freezer for about four hours. When you take it out it looks like one of those frosted beer glasses, but when it dries out you've got the checking.

"It's not a relic'd guitar, but it is an aged finish," reinforces Patrick. "It's a new instrument, but it's not all squeaky and perfect so you're scared to leave fingerprints on it. We're basically trying to create a nice new and desirable instrument but without that brand-new-ness. That's all it is: along with our worn-through neck finish it, for me, makes the instrument seem more familiar."

The resulting rich, deep translucent Butterscotch is cleanly crazed – not everyone is going to get that, but don't forget you can choose your own uncracked nitro finish if you'd prefer. Us? We love it.

But it's not just about the finish. There's plenty of care seen here in the rounded heel with its inset neck plate, the slightly larger

edge radius of the body, and the perfect invisible jointing of the body's two pieces. Strap buttons are classic old-Gibson style, plus we get a rectangular metal jack socket plate. All the metal parts are aged, including the standard Kluson-style Gotoh split-post tuners and the Gotoh bridge, even though the bridge has modern flourishes like its partial sides and In-Tune compensated brass saddles. Great care is taken to ensure the saddles' height adjustment screws sit within the rod material. Not a hair is out of place, and the cutting and shaping of the bone nut falls into the 'is this art?' category.

Feel & Sounds

The feel of this Oz is everything. Classed as having a 'Soft-V' profile, the 'V' itself is subtle, the trimmed shoulder disguising the heft. Though at 22.35mm at the 1st fret and 23mm at the 12th in depth, there's not only less taper but less bulk in higher positions than a more vintage-spec guitar of this type. In short, it's immensely playable, the fretwire choice considerably taller than

THE RIVALS

There is no shortage of guitars based on the great granddaddy of the original production electric solidbody. Fender itself makes quite a few. If you're on a budget, head off to the period-specific Vintera range (from £779), move up into the American Original (from £1,699) if you crave a USA build, then look into the Custom Shop (from approx. £3.5k up) for your dream Tele.

In the small 'shop world of Patrick James Eggle there is likewise no shortage of T styles with the 'wrong' headstocks. Suhr's Classic Antique T (approx. £2,799) in Butterscotch with a swamp ash body, maple neck with stainless steel frets, nitro finish and noise-cancelling SSCII circuit certainly fits the old-looking modern vibe. More original takes on the Tele come in the form of designs such as the Joe Knaggs Choptank (from approx. £3,700), a three-pickup Tele-meets-Strat. Just the tip of the Tele-inspired iceberg!



1. The nitro finish is cracked to create an older illusion. There's no relicing, though

2. Look at the flame on that! It's roasted maple with a soft V profile and Patrick's 'worn-through' oil-and-wax finish

a more vintage-spec fret without feeling 'jumbo', helped by the Gibson-like 305mm (12-inch) radius: a very different feel from an early 50s guitar of this ilk. And despite the slab body, seated or strapped on, the light (3kg/6.6lb) guitar completely disappears.

There's a noticeable, almost throaty acoustic ring that has a wonderful bloom to the sustain, but as we begin our plugged-in comparisons there's no doubt what you're playing. This one definitely veers on the steelier, brighter side at the bridge, with the neck pickup coming across as a fuller version of the Tele's neck with a detailed high-end crispness that seems to sit between a more classic neck single coil and the smoother highs of a classic PAF-alike. It's a very different sound to the

The combination of the weight and neck feel did it for us before we'd even plugged in



TIME FOR T

Thomas Nilsen tells the story of the Banger & Mash

This Oz's distinctive 'Banger and Mash' neck pickup came about "through Billy Gibbons back in 2014 when The Rolling Stones had a big gig in Oslo", says Thomas Nilsen. "Billy is a good friend of Keith and Ronnie and he asked me if I'd make a special set of pickups for them as a gift from him. They were loading in on the Saturday, the soundcheck was on Sunday, and the gig was on the Monday. I got a call from Keith's tech, Pierre de Beauport, on the Saturday and he asked if I could come down. So I bought the gifts from Billy and talked with Pierre, and that's when he said they'd been trying to have this special pickup made for many years – are you up for it?"

"I went back to my 'shop and worked the whole night to build a pickup from scratch, by hand, using sandpaper to cut back the bobbin as it won't fit on a humbucking baseplate. It had to be wound in a completely different way – you have two coils, so they need less wire – then you have to make sure the polarity of the [rod] magnets is correct.

"I went back on the Sunday and they thought it was good and put it in Keith's 'Gloria' Telecaster. Pierre said, 'You already have this pickup with Billy, the Banger.' He spoke to Keith and thought it would be a good idea, as it was a collaboration with Billy, to call it 'Banger and Mash.'"



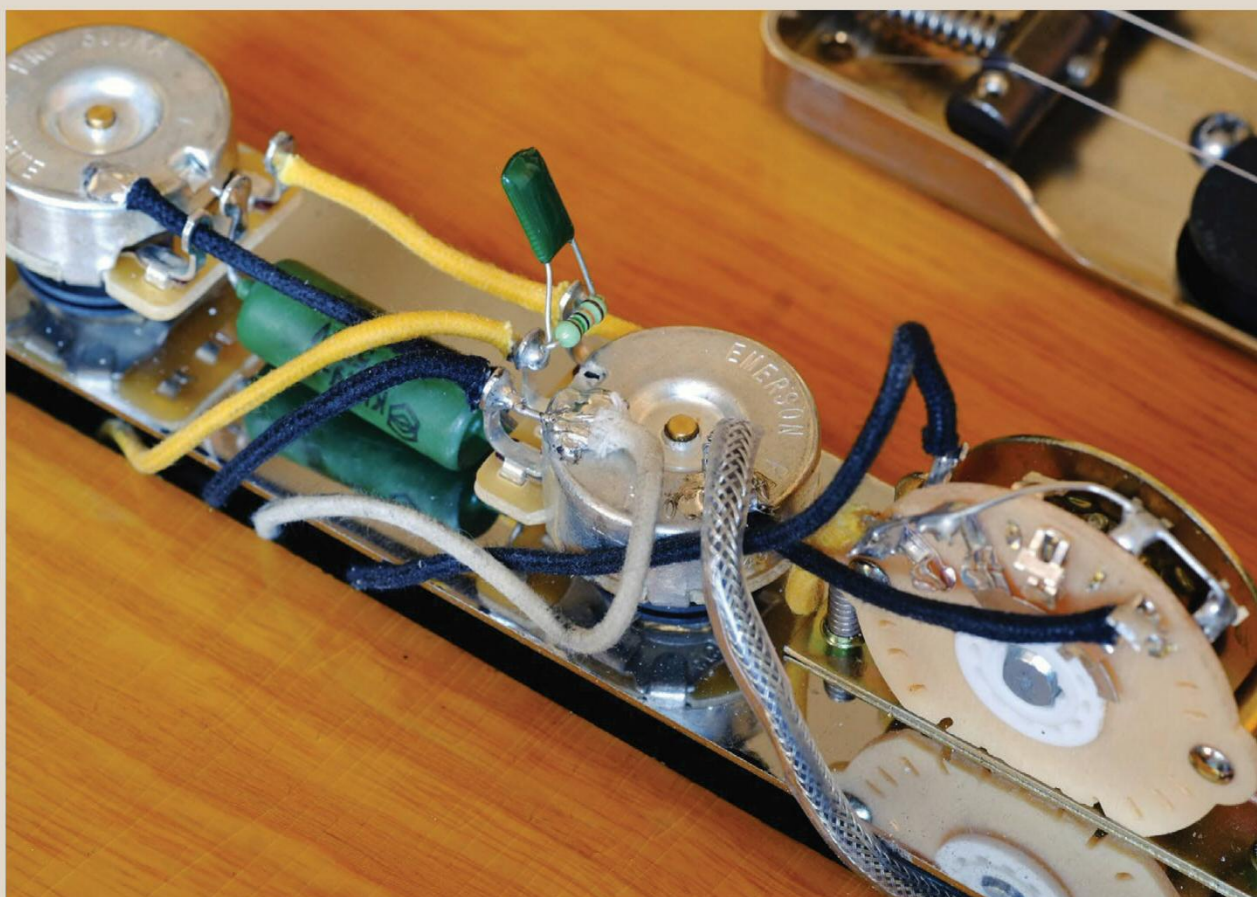
No surprises here, just the classic 'modern' Tele circuit. Perfectly good, but we'd love to hear this pickup set with dual volumes and tone or even the original 1950 to '52 blend circuit

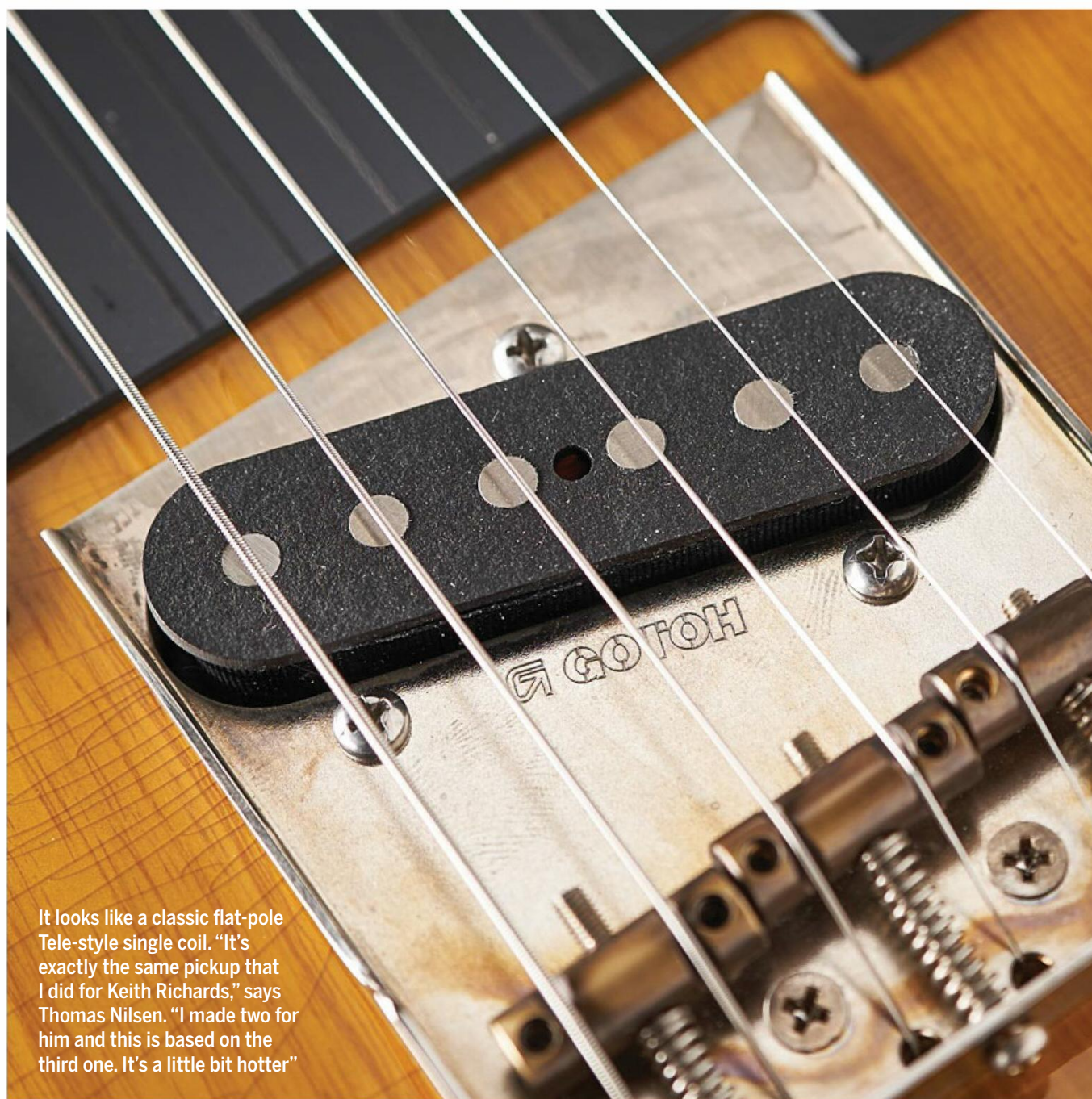
UNDER THE HOOD

Patrick's T-style keeps the circuit simple

Along with that distinctive-looking Cream T neck humbucker and a more classic-looking single coil at the bridge, the actual control circuit is in keeping with the simplistic style of the Telecaster. It might be simple but it's very tidily done and uses quality parts such as the pair of Emerson Pro 500kohm audio pots, a Russian .033 microfarad (K4 2Y2) tone cap, plus a treble bleed circuit (.001 microfarads cap and 150kohm resistor in parallel). All typical of Patrick's electric builds.

There's no visible ID on the neck pickup save for a stamped 'S' in one corner of the generic-looking nickel baseplate. The bridge pickup's base is covered by its copper-plated steel baseplate, of course, so even if there was any ID on the pickup base you wouldn't see it. Both pickups have a similar measured DCR: 7.1kohms at the bridge and 7.18k for the neck. [DB]





It looks like a classic flat-pole Tele-style single coil. "It's exactly the same pickup that I did for Keith Richards," says Thomas Nilsen. "I made two for him and this is based on the third one. It's a little bit hotter"

Shawbucker of a contemporary American Professional Tele Deluxe, for example. One obvious modernism, then, is that both the neck and mix positions are hum-cancelling, and while we'd wager that both pickups are very lightly potted, they are actually fully potted with Cream T's special sauce.

We'd love to hear this pickup set up on a Tele Custom with a volume and tone for *each* pickup, for example. Not only is there considerable contrast here between the bridge and neck, but, obviously, the mix is preset. We also found a little tone roll-on on the bridge preferable, whereas fully open seems to enhance the almost acoustic-y clarity of the neck. With a dual volume/tone setup those subtle shades are easily catered for. Another option, of course, would be that early blend circuit.

Oh, and does it do a Keef? We'd say so: set up a clean Fender combo with a little crunch, and you're there. Open G (five- or six-string) is optional.

Verdict

Let's face it, as we illustrate in The Rivals towards the start of this review, there's no shortage of guitars based on the Telecaster. So why should we be so interested here?

The neck is a very useful, clearly voiced 'bucker-meets-single-coil that many could stay on all night

Well, the combination of the weight and neck feel did it for us before we'd even plugged in. It's not aiming to be a vintage clone and yet with its aged parts and that finish it doesn't look or feel new. Along with the subtle modernisations, this Oz is quite possibly in the top five best guitars of this type – vintage or contemporary – that this writer has ever had his hands on. It's guitar making at its finest level.

The Oz's voice, too, while firmly rooted in the early years of its inspiration, covers considerable ground: the neck humbucker especially is a very useful, clearly voiced humbucker-meets-single-coil pickup that many could stay on all night. As we said, with a Tele Custom-like control setup the potential could be fully realised, but even in this classic setup it's a guitar that is hugely inspirational, plays like butter and is beautifully in tune. **G**



PATRICK JAMES EGGLE OZ CREAM T

PRICE: £2,999 (inc case)

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: Single-cutaway solidbody electric

BODY: 2-piece lightweight swamp ash

NECK: Roasted figured maple w/ 'Soft V' profile, bolt-on

SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")

NUT/WIDTH: Bone/42.36mm

FINGERBOARD: Roasted figured maple, black dot inlays, 305mm (12") radius

FRETS: 22, medium tall (Jescar 55090)

HARDWARE: Gotoh BS-TC1S 'low profile' bridge with brass In-Tune compensated saddles, Gotoh SD91 tuners – aged nickel plating

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 54.5mm

ELECTRICS: Cream T single coil (bridge), Cream T Banger and Mash humbucker (neck). 3-way lever pickup selector switch, master volume and tone controls

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3/6.6

OPTIONS: The standard Oz starts at £2,800 with Mojo single coils. Options include a contemporary neck shape, slimmer in depth with 254-406mm (10-16") compound radius fingerboard and Jescar jumbo frets plus fretboard material and finish

RANGE OPTIONS: Macon Single Cut (from £4,200), Macon Junior (from £2,800), The 96 (from £2,800)

LEFT-HANDERS: Yes, to order

FINISHES: Butterscotch (as reviewed) – '58' Nitro aged finish to body; worn-through oil-finish neck

NB: This actual guitar is for sale at Sound Affects: 01695 570023 www.soundaffects.com

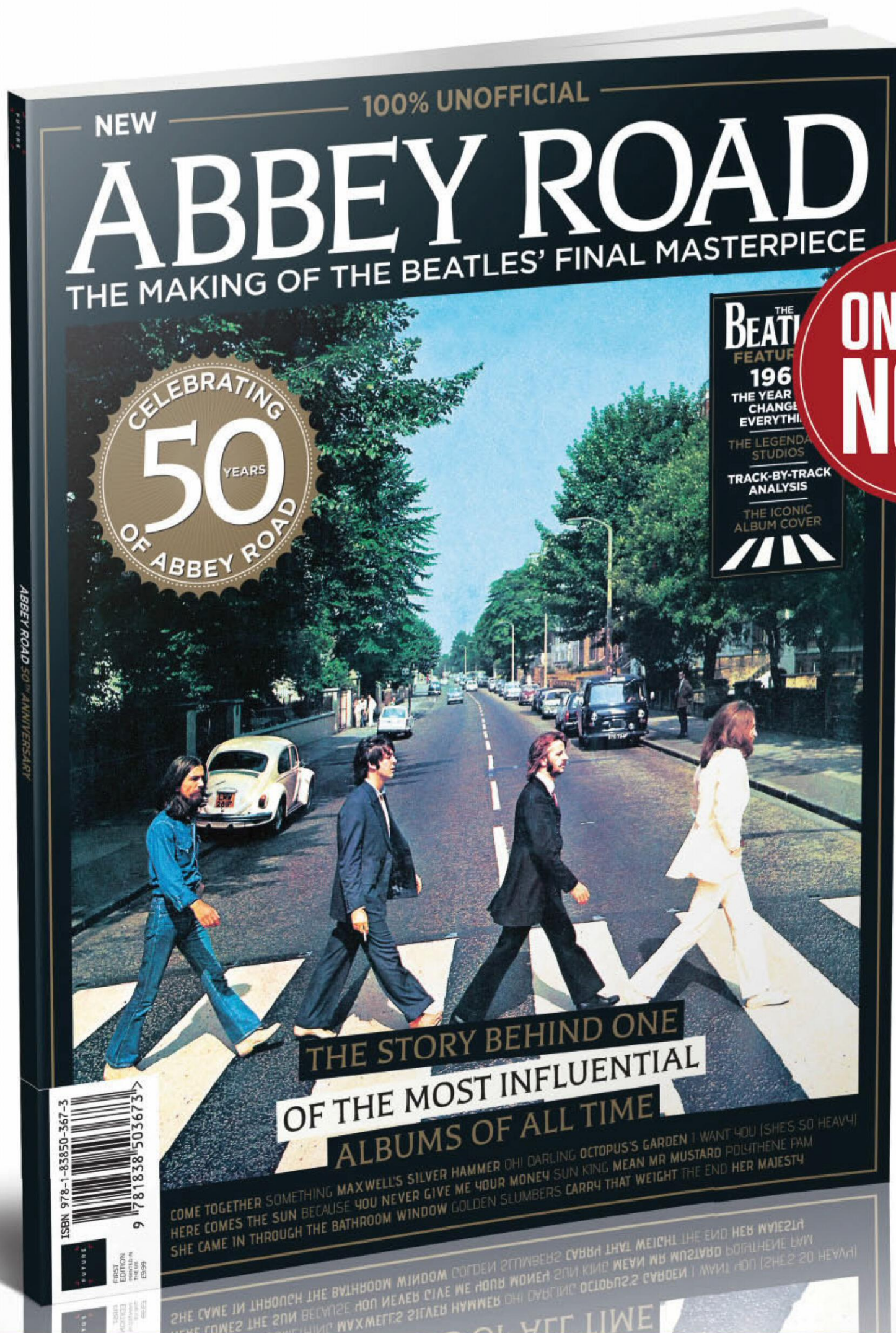


PROS Superb neck feel, aged finish, light weight and vintage voicing, along with that new neck humbucker. Stellar!

CONS It's £3k, but that won't even get you into the Fender Custom Shop

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Seeing Stars

Cream T founder, Thomas Nilsen, is no stranger to our pages, and with pickups that are used by plenty of big names, including Billy F Gibbons, he must be doing something right. What's his secret?

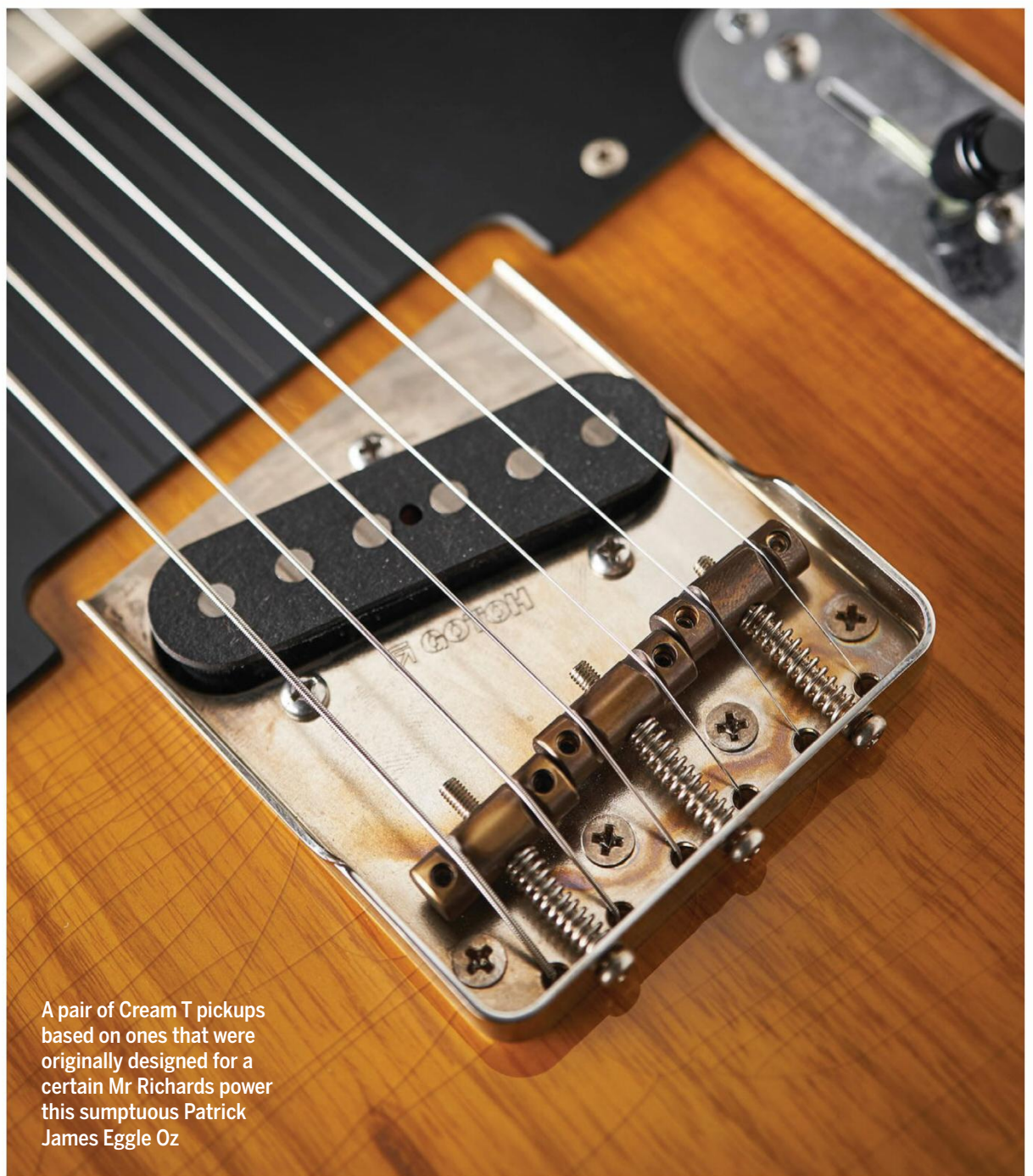
Words Dave Burrluck

Thomas Nilsen made his first electric guitar pickup around 2007, although he'd previously been making a variety of acoustic pickups for a music store in Oslo. He formed Cream T in 2013 in the UK, and finally relocated here just last year. "I needed to expand, and I'd been getting a lot of attention in Norway because of my work with Billy," he says. "I was working on a lot of new stuff and I couldn't do that in Norway because of the expense of taxes, import/export, and everything in Norway is so expensive – that was another factor in the whole thing. A major factor, though, was that I'd starting working with players like Derek Trucks and Lenny Kravitz, not to mention Billy, and to meet all these artists it's much easier to be in the UK."

Thomas's Pickup Oracle Machine is a device that measures numerous parameters of a pickup

Central to the way Thomas works is his so-called Pickup Oracle Machine, a self-made device that comprehensively measures the parameters of a pickup, giving him the correct information to 'clone' or replicate an actual pickup from an artist or a significant historical guitar.

"It was Billy Gibbons who gave me the idea to make such a machine, because he told me how he tries to recreate the sound of his Pearly Gates Les Paul into other guitars he uses. I said, 'Hey, let me look at it and see if I can do it in a more scientific way, and make sure we are able to get the whole frequency of the pickups from A to B, so I can read how fast the signal is travelling from A to B on the coil of each and every pickup.' It will measure the whole frequency from around 120 up to 9,500Hz. That covers the whole thing like how the wire is put on the coil, how fast the signal is travelling through [the coil],



A pair of Cream T pickups based on ones that were originally designed for a certain Mr Richards power this sumptuous Patrick James Eggle Oz

and that will give me very complete details about how the winding pattern is done on the coils of the pickups.

"We will measure the exact frequency peak of the pickup: we measure the whole curve of the EQ regarding the frequencies of the bass, middle and the treble levels. I'm able to read all the details of what the human ear can hear regarding the frequency and the dynamic of the pickup."

Armed with this information, Thomas has learned that matching these responses, not the materials themselves, is the key to 'cloning' a pickup. Thomas performed

an experiment with a certain artist and his original Les Paul.

"I recorded and analysed the pickups from the guitar," says Thomas. "I made a prototype from the readings. Today, what we get are not the butyrate bobbins of the classic pickups from the 50s; we used the polepieces and magnets you can buy today. I sourced the magnets to be exactly the same gauss readings as the original, because I'd measured that. The cover is the same type you get today. But I wound the coil in a specific winding pattern that I got from the readings of the original guitar's

1. Now based at Sound Affects, Cream T founder Thomas Nilsen (right) discusses pickups and guitars with Patrick James Eggle

2. Thomas begins the all-important coil winding fuelled by the detailed information he gleanes from his extensive measurements

pickups. I put them in a Gibson Custom Shop Les Paul and, basically, the artist couldn't tell the difference.

"That proved to me it has nothing to do with the type of plastic bobbin you use, the polepieces you get today or the cover. To be honest, the material of the pickup doesn't have that much to say; I disproved the statement regarding the materials and how important they are. It's all about how the wire is put on the coil, the winding pattern, and how that signal travels and how fast it goes through the coil. That was my proof."

Potting is another topic that Thomas believes is crucial to the pickup's performance: "Yes, I pot my pickups, but it took me almost two years to come up with a special mixture. If you use too much wax, or only wax, you dampen and kill the

"The material doesn't have that much to say... It's all about how the wire is put on the coil" **Thomas Nilsen**

open frequency in the pickup; the pickup doesn't breathe at all. The worst thing you can do is pot the pickup in paraffin wax. That is a no-go. So, eventually, I came up with a mixture where you can pot them but not kill the tone – and it actually sounds like they are not potted at all."

What else has he learned about old pickups? "First of all, not one of the pickups that are in original '59 Bursts are the same. Not one regarding the midrange, the treble, the bass frequencies and the output. I've tested 14 or 15 original '59s now and no one sounds the same. I have tried an original '59 that sounded more like a guitar made in China, from that to amazing-sounding ones."

Another Gibson Les Paul actually helped in housing Thomas at Sound Affects in Ormskirk, as company owner, Tim Lobley, explains: "I had a Gibson Pearly Gates VOS Artist Proof #5 Les Paul for sale



and Thomas contacted me and asked if he could come and see it. While he was looking at it he questioned a detail and actually called Billy to see if it was okay. He put a deposit down and when he came back to collect the guitar he brought me some pickups. As we talked more I eventually said, 'Why don't you come and make pickups here?' But it all started with the sale of that guitar.

"There will be various options available," adds Tim, noting that it's still early days for the new venture, "pickups based on those he's made in the past for the likes of Derek

Trucks, Jeff Beck and Billy F Gibbons or the Banger and Mash set you have there. There will also be signature pickups, too, in the near future. Then we'll have the True Clone pickups based on the pickups in famous or significant guitars. And we also plan to offer that service to anyone: if they want to bring us their guitar, we can clone its pickups."

While the new website is under construction (www.creamtpickupsdirect.com), contact Sound Affects on 01695 570023 or www.soundaffects.com for more info on Cream T pickups. **G**

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BOSS

RC-10R Rhythm Loop Station

This compact looper with complex rhythms provides a creative platform

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Phil Barker

The latest in Boss's Loop Stations earns its 'R' suffix by having a built-in rhythm generator. Now, while it's true that the RC-3 and RC-30 both have onboard rhythm patterns, too, what you have here is altogether more sophisticated in the rhythm department, making it almost a hybrid unit – a looper crossed with a drum machine.

There are 280 preset rhythms covering a host of musical genres and each includes two unique sections (Pattern 1 and Pattern 2) with transition fills and an intro and ending. What's more, there's onboard storage space for 50 imported user rhythms in SMF (Standard MIDI File) format that you can create on your computer. All of the rhythms are played back by your choice of 16 onboard drum

kits with sounds from the Boss and Roland rhythm libraries. For your actual looping (with or without the drums) there's a stereo looper with two independent tracks, six hours' recording time and 99 onboard memories for storing phrases.

IN USE

The RC-10R is built into the same chassis as the Boss 200 series pedals, so it has two easily accessible footswitches – one for looping and one for rhythm. Besides standard pedalboard mono operation there's true stereo in/out operation if you want it, and you can also utilise the L and R outputs to send loops and rhythm to separate destinations – typically loops to your guitar amp and rhythms to a PA or similar. If you're sending the rhythms

to your guitar amp alongside your guitar then there are some very useful output filtering/EQ options available to apply to the rhythm tracks, likewise for tweaking your sound if it's not going to a guitar amp.

The front panel is a model of simplicity with separate volume knobs and excellent rotary LED displays for loops and rhythm. Besides these, there's just a pair of buttons and a press-and-turn encoder knob to take care of adjusting parameters in the small but very clear display panel.

To use rhythm patterns you select a genre (funk, rock, and so on), choose a named rhythm pattern in that category and set the tempo in bpm. Hitting the footswitch will play an intro then the basic pattern, but you can hold the footswitch down to move to the second (usually

01. LOOP FOOTSWITCH

Footswitch for looping functions: single presses for recording, overdubbing and playback; two presses to stop playback; hold for undo/redo

02. RHYTHM FOOTSWITCH

Press once to start the rhythm; hold to change to the next pattern. Pressing once during playing will bring in a fill, while pressing twice will stop the rhythm with an ending fill

03. CIRCULAR DISPLAY (RHYTHM)

This displays your rhythm as it progresses, one LED per beat. A contrasting coloured LED indicates the first beat of each bar

04. CIRCULAR DISPLAY (LOOP)

The LEDs here change colour to indicate the status: green for playback, red for recording, orange for overdubbing

05. DISPLAY & VALUE ENCODER

The Value encoder in conjunction with the display lets you select your rhythm patterns and phrases as well as taking care of housekeeping tasks



Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Malaysia

TYPE: Looper pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass, maximum recording time: approx. 6hrs (stereo), 99 phrase memory slots

DRUM KITS: Studio, Live, Light, Heavy, Rock, Metal, Jazz, Brushes, Cajon, Drum&Bs, R&B, Dance, Techno, Dance Beats, Hiphop, 808+909

CONTROLS: Value, Loop Level, Rhythm Level, Menu switch, Exit switch, Loop footswitch, Rhythm footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (A/Mono, B), standard outputs (A/Mono, B), CTL 1, 2/EXP, MIDI In, MIDI Out, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 250mA

DIMENSIONS: 101 (w) x 138 (d) x 65mm (h)

Guitarist
CHOICE
9/10

slightly busier) variation on it (Pattern 2). Fills are automatically inserted when transitioning between the two patterns and you can chuck in a fill at any time by hitting the footswitch once. There are some great patterns here that will really entice you to play along: excellent for creativity and sparking new musical ideas, but also extremely practical if you need to hone your timing. If you don't like the sound of the kit that comes as the default with a particular pattern, it's easily changed for another and you can adjust the reverb on it, too.

For looping you choose a free memory slot and get started, with single presses taking you through either a record/overdub/play cycle or a record/play/overdub cycle. You can hold the switch

to undo and redo loops and press it twice to stop. With two tracks available you can record two different song sections, and these can play serially with switching between Track 1 and Track 2 carried out by holding down the Rhythm switch and hitting the Loop switch.

All of that is with rhythm and loops operating separately, but using them simultaneously is facilitated by the very practical SYNC mode that lets you initiate loop recording by setting the rhythm going and having the looper change to Track 2 when the rhythm changes to Pattern 2. It's all very intuitive and great for looping newbies. If you wish to expand your control options then external footswitches and expression pedal can take on a number of roles, or you can use MIDI.

VERDICT

An inspirational tool for songwriting and practice: its rhythms can feed creativity and stretch your playing. Of course, the RC-10R is also perfectly capable for live use, too, and if you don't choose to use the rhythms, you still have a looper that works like the Boss compact models. That's not to say the rhythms aren't useful live: a solo act may find them invaluable for a bigger sound, especially as the facility to load your own enables ready access to tailor-made backing tracks. Impressive. **G**

PROS Ease of use; large variety of usable rhythms; instantly switchable between two song sections; visual loop indicators

CONS A headphone output would have been useful; no battery power for buskers



ROUND-UP

MXR & Cry Baby pedals

Three fresh-from-NAMM pedals from the Jim Dunlop stable

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Phil Barker

VIDEO DEMO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

MXR and Cry Baby are both brands that come under the Jim Dunlop umbrella and are represented here effectively as three MXR pedals. Okay, the Q Zone might be branded as Cry Baby, but it's housed in a classic MXR enclosure with MXR stamped on the baseplate, so that'll do for us. That MXR pedal shape – seen here in the Octavio and the Q Zone – has been around since the early 70s days of the Phase 90 et al and it hasn't changed much. You get the necessary modern

inclusions of a bypass LED and a nine-volt input, but you still have to take the four-screw baseplate off to get at the battery. By contrast, the MXR Custom Shop Timmy makes space-saving concessions to the modern pedalboard as a micro pedal with offset jacks and a nine-volt adaptor connection at the top end. One characteristic that these three pedals share (other than all debuting at January's NAMM Show) is that they are new iterations of older pedals that have been around for some time. Let's take a closer look...



MXR

M267 Octavio Fuzz £139

This is not the only Octavio pedal in Jim Dunlop's roster – there's currently a mini-sized Jimi Hendrix Octavio fuzz with selectable octave – but it is the only one available as a standard two-knob MXR pedal without any artist connection. And while there are no Hendrix graphics as seen in a previous same-sized MXR version, the lineage can be traced back to the vintage pedal used by Jimi to full effect on *Purple Haze*.

This is silicon fuzz with a gritty edge and that upper octave harmonic bedded into it. If you turn up the fuzz and try playing standard chords it can sound messy, but doublestops come out sounding really powerful and single-note playing can really take advantage of the singing quality of that upper harmonic overtone, especially in the upper reaches of the neck. This is pretty much a pedal you can 'play' and there's plenty there (sitar-like sounds, for example) that will reward experimentation with technique. **G**

VERDICT Classic Octavio noises in standard MXR pedal form – you now have a choice if you opt for Dunlop



JIM DUNLOP

Cry Baby QZ1 Q Zone £159

Back in original three-knob guise after the four-knob CSP030 Custom Shop version, the Q Zone mimics a 'cocked wah' – the sound of a wah pedal held in a fixed position, a favoured technique of many players to give a tonal shift to their sound, typically a resonant treble boost for enhanced harmonic content. The volume knob has plenty extra to drive your amp if you want to incorporate a boost, while the Peak control has the same function as the rocker pot of a wah pedal, setting the centre frequency and essentially mimicking the treadle position. The Q Zone knob sets the bandpass shape (broad or narrow) and effectively dials in the intensity for more throatiness or quack.

Here's an extra dimension to your sound that you wouldn't get with basic EQ, and while it's perhaps not as versatile as having a full wah pedal on your 'board, it takes up much less space and lets you instantly hit that sweet spot every time. **G**

VERDICT A niche pedal maybe, but one that does its job perfectly with no worries about treadle positioning



MXR

Custom Shop CSP027 Timmy £139

The Timmy pedal, feted as a great transparent overdrive, has been around for quite a few years, but this iteration sees it transition from the boutique world to mainstream manufacturer, with original designer Paul Cochrane still involved. The knobs and toggle switch on this mini version are tightly packed together but still easily adjustable. It offers overdrive with three clipping options and, besides standard Volume and Gain knobs, there are two cut-only EQ knobs: Bass is pre-OD, useful for tightening up the bottom-end before it hits the drive section, while the post-OD Treble can tailor the top-end to your amp.

The clipping options are sufficiently different, offering increasing amounts of saturation that can get full-on raunchy, but we particularly like the middle position's symmetrical clipping and high headroom for dialling in a clean boost or a touch of break-up as a very natural extension of our amp's core tone. **G**

VERDICT So much variety in so little pedalboard space makes the tiny Timmy a bit special

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Octave fuzz pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Output, Fuzz, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output,

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 5mA

DIMENSIONS: 64 (w) x 110 (d) x 48mm (h)

8/10

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Fixed wah pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Volume, Q Zone, Peak, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 64 (w) x 110 (d) x 50mm (h)

8/10

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Gain, Volume, Bass, Treble, Clip switch, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 2.2mA

DIMENSIONS: 42 (w) x 90 (d) x 55mm (h)

Guitarist
CHOICE

9/10





HAMSTEAD SOUNDWORKS

Subspace Intergalactic Driver

Optimised for low frequencies, this drive takes versatility to the next level

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Phil Barker

VIDEO DEMO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

Hamstead's Odyssey is one of those supremely versatile drive pedals that can provide you with a whole range of tones from clean boost to fuzz. The company has now followed that with a similar chameleon-like pedal that's been optimised for low frequencies and expands on the Odyssey's control surface with a sixth knob that allows a parallel blend of dry and effected tone. Such a feature set seems aimed at bass players, but it has attributes that will endear it to guitar players who are looking to shape fulsome drive sounds, too.

A three-way clipping switch defines the basic character of the dirt here and works in conjunction with Gain and Tone (high-frequency) controls. There are also three switchable options for increasing amounts (up to five-fold) of input gain level. While the USP of the Subspace is that it does not lose any low frequencies when engaged, you can roll off bottom-end if you wish; Treble and Bass EQ with 18dB of cut or boost can be placed either pre- or post- the drive circuit. There's also a Clean Boost setting that bypasses the drive circuitry, so you're just using the EQ, input gain level and volume knob. That clean boost

demonstrates the utter tonal transparency of the pedal with the bottom-end remaining completely unmolested, and there's a shedload of boost available – transparent or tonally-targeted.

Moving on to the dirt sounds, the clipping options give you three different flavours as starting points with a massive range of gain delivering everything from early stage valve break-up to thick distortion and some fuzz-like variations. Constructive use of the Treble and Bass knobs in the pre setting can shape the midrange to focus your dirt frequencies, and that parallel facility completely opens up your range of options. Basically a volume knob for your unadulterated input signal, it can be juxtaposed with the drive and EQ circuit's volume knob to allow the creation of many sonic blends, such as adding some extra string clarity to a driven sound or tacking on just a touch of saturation to a clean sound.

VERDICT

We described the Odyssey as versatile, but this takes things further, particularly with that Parallel knob expanding the possibilities. It's a complete drive workhorse with now't taken out. **G**



PROS Rock-solid build quality; retains bottom-end; huge variety of dirt sounds available; Parallel knob for blending in clean sound; clean boost option
CONS Nothing

ALSO TRY...



Odyssey £219

Slightly more affordable and the original platform on which the Subspace builds its own take on the genre, the Odyssey is Hamstead's first all-analogue attempt to push the boundaries of what a drive pedal can be.



RevivalDRIVE Compact £315

Putting the essence of its original RevivalDRIVE into a more practical format for pedalboard use, Origin Effects' Compact pedal offers a versatile range of authentic-sounding vintage amp tones and overdrive.



Brothers £349

Two independent JFET/IC analogue channels comprise a total of six unique boost, drive or fuzz circuits that can be combined for a comprehensive collection of dirt tones. 33 routings are possible, and it supports presets.

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: Drive pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass, optokick footswitch, input pad switch (0dB/-10dB)

CONTROLS: Tone, Bass, Treble, Gain, Parallel, Level, EQ pre/post switch, Clipping switch (C1/C2/C3), Input Gain switch (X2/X1/X5), Input Pad switch, internal dip-switch for power up mode, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 60mA

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 130 (d) x 65mm (h)

**Guitarist
CHOICE**

9/10





Søren Jongberg

Carl Martin effects innovator reveals how the brand is taking its “analogue sound machines” forward in the era of digital modelling...

1 What was the first pedal you built and how did the design come about?

“The first one was the Hot Drive’n Boost [released in 1993]. It’s become a bit of a classic now. It came about by coincidence. Our company [East Sound Research; Søren is CEO] was playing around with all sorts of gear in our studio workshop – noise gates, speakers, amplifiers, you name it. We were learning by doing and through that came our first pedal. The idea was to use LEDs to make the sound more tube-like, and we were looking at different chips and high- and low-cut filters. We were experimenting with noise gates when we suddenly found a really open and transparent sound. We’ve since used that as the basis for designing other pedals.”

2 What’s your best-selling pedal and why do you think that is?

“The single-[channel] PlexiTone. The Octa-Switch is also extremely popular. Every pedal has its time. Years ago, it was the Carl Martin Compressor-Limiter.”

3 Which notable players have used Carl Martin pedals?

“Johnny Marr [Headroom, Compressor-Limiter, PlexiTone, Hot Drive’n Boost MK3]; Greg Howe [PlexiTone, Headroom, 2Wah, Chorus XII, EchoTone]; Brian Ray from Paul McCartney’s band [Compressor-Limiter, Contour’n Boost, Purple Moon]; and Joe Bonamassa [Hot Drive’n Boost MKII and MK3 and Chorus XII].”

4 Is there anything new on the horizon at Carl Martin?

“We’re currently working on a tube preamp DI as an alternative to digital modelling for people that want to keep their signal pure and not spend time running through menus. It’s called the Ampster. It’s all-analogue and has a speaker simulator with open/closed cab and voicing options. We’re also working on a new pedal called the PlexiRanger. The idea came from treble boosters. You can enhance certain frequencies and get it sounding really sweet, along with that well-known PlexiTone sound.”

5 Which new pedals triggers your GAS the most?

“Not to sound arrogant, but I tend to focus more on what we’re doing. The bottom line is: how many different coloured Tube Screemers do you really need? My main focus right now is to give people a solid alternative to digital modelling with the Ampster.”

6 What’s your favourite vintage pedal and why?

“The Tube Screamer. But I’ve only recently realised why they’re so popular! It really helps with a Fender amp having so much top- and low-end, and it fattens up the sound of a Strat bridge pickup with a lower-mid emphasis. It was also a great alternative to using a Marshall amp with a treble booster. The same thinking was behind it.”

7 What’s your best tone tip?

“Your sound needs to sit right in the mix and that’s all about the midrange. Find your place. Don’t fight with the bass and kick drum. You need to find the right spot. There are two products that can help with that: compressors and EQs. They may not be the sexiest pedals, but compressors can help you kick out of the speaker, and I think people are missing out by not using an EQ to really dial in their tone.”

8 Name some common mistakes guitarists make with effects...

“Not trying out effects in the right context. Always try out new pedals with your own equipment. Take it to the shop. It can be completely different when you’re using another amp and guitar.”

9 If you had a three-pedal desert island pedalboard, what would be on it and why?

“The Carl Martin Compressor-Limiter, a PlexiTone and a Hot Drive’n Boost MK3, which is a little bit like a Tube Screamer. Stacking those, you have the typical Marshall thing going on, along with a Tube Screamer-style mid boost. You get multiple levels of gain, and with the Compressor-Limiter you get more sustain... If you added in the AC-Tone you could get most classic guitar sounds.”

10 What problems have effects designers yet to crack?

“Nowadays, things are so good I don’t see what could be done very differently. There are different flavours, of course, but in technical terms, I don’t think there are many problems. Maybe some pedals could have more depth in the sound with more headroom [ie, voltage], but we don’t really tend to have that issue because we design our pedals differently.”

“One of our priorities is having a three-dimensional sound – pedals that are really open and transparent-sounding. They don’t cover up anything. You can really hear your playing. They won’t make you sound like a better player than you actually are. A high-quality product will do that – you’ll need to be a good player to actually sound like one!”

<https://carlmartin.com>



The forthcoming Ampster is a valve preamp DI that will give players an alternative to digital modelling



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Mod Behaviour

What can you get out of modding classic pedals? And is it really worth it? Adrian Thorpe helps you decide...

THE BACKGROUND

GERALD BUTCHER, [Via Email](#)

I often hear about classic effects pedal designs like the DS-1 by Boss being ‘modded’ by boutique makers. Why are these mods necessary? What are some mods that are typically done to established pedals and is it worth having them done to my own classic pedals? I have a Boss CE-1, Boss CE-2, Ibanez Tube Screamer and a Boss DS-1 (original silverscrew variant). Finally, are there any other options instead of modding what I have?

THE ANSWERS

A very interesting question, Gerald, and one that goes back to the advent of guitar pedals as we know them. When pedals became mainstream in the 60s, guitarists used them for a specific sound to stand out from the crowd. The originals are now very much linked to players such as Hendrix, Clapton and The Rolling Stones. Ultimately, though, these pedals were tools for the musicians who used them, so if they needed modifying to suit their needs then they did so without thinking about it. Pedal gurus such as Roger Mayer and Pete Cornish were pioneers in this regard, modifying and improving designs (as well as creating their own) to meet the artists’ needs.

Rolling forward to the late 90s and pedals began to make a comeback after a near demise during the 80s rack boom. A new wave of ‘boutique’ effects brands appeared, making some of the established brands seem stuffy and old hat. However, it also made pedals such as the venerable Boss DS-1 easier and cheaper to get hold of. As a result of these two driving forces, people like Robert Keeley and Brian Wampler began offering modifications to these cheap and readily available pedals.

01 Mods aren’t necessary to get the best out of a pedal, but some pedals’ tonality and functionality are very

THE QUESTIONS

- 1 WHY ARE MODIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO EXISTING PEDALS?**
- 2 WHAT MODS ARE DONE TO ESTABLISHED PEDALS AND ARE THEY WORTH IT?**
- 3 ARE THERE ANY OTHER OPTIONS INSTEAD OF MODDING WHAT I HAVE?**



Original pedals, such as Boss's CE-1 and DS-1, have been modified over the years for different effects

much linked to the musical era they were released in. For instance, a lot of the early ‘heavy metal’ pedals produce a fizzy and nasal sound that was useful for the shred music of the time, but they’re not voiced correctly if you want to create a chugging heavy rhythm track now. Therefore mods are only necessary if you want to retain the pedal you have, change the way it sounds or improve it in other ways.

02 Generally, mods that aim to ‘improve’ a pedal are based around making it true bypass, lowering its noise floor, improving its range of EQ, and adjusting its character – very much like having a car customised to suit your personal needs. With regards to your selection of pedals, it would probably be wise to retain

their originality because they are very sought after in unmolested form.

03 There are loads of options now that can give you a modified/enhanced version of what you have. Any of the Keeley-modded DS-1 units are ace, as are his CE-2 mods. As for the CE-1, the only necessary mod might be to change the volume potentiometer to 500k (versus the stock 50k) so that the signal isn’t as attenuated and dull for guitar. As for the Ibanez, there are a million and one takes on the modified Tube Screamer circuit. Choose the one you like best for your rig.

One last thing: don’t attempt any modifications to your prized pedals without learning how to solder first. Fixing broken pedals is a lot harder than modifying working ones!

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LOWDEN GUITARS

Our travels this month take us to Downpatrick in Northern Ireland and the workshops of George Lowden, who has been building high-quality, innovative acoustic guitars since 1974...

Words David Mead Photography Olly Curtis

Deep at the heart of his company's busy complex is George Lowden's private workshop where he builds very special acoustic guitars – although, these days, time constraints mean the waiting list for a Lowden hand-built by the man himself is an optimistic two to three years. On our visit to this hallowed enclave we were shown some works in progress where rare woods were being combined into beautiful, singular instruments, the headstocks of which bear a single 'L' – the mark of the master.

Elsewhere, an array of skilled luthiers are busy at work attending to the various stages of building customers' orders from Lowden's extensive range of instruments. Some installing the logo into the headstocks, some attending to binding, others fretting, testing, stringing up and finessing before the guitars are cased, packaged and sent off to their new owners. Soon everyone will be moving to a freshly built larger facility nearby, but, for now, it's business as usual.

During the afternoon, we manage to find a window in George Lowden's hectic schedule to sit down and talk guitars...

How do you find time to implement new ideas and designs into the catalogue?

"Every year, I take a design retreat somewhere and go away on my own for

a week or 10 days to think up some new models or ideas that I've had during the course of the year. I put those down on paper, first of all, and then I come back here and make the prototypes or have the prototypes made. It's like a new model testbed process.

"In the last couple of years, we have introduced some new woods, which don't require much design work from me. When we introduce a new wood, it's more like me specifying how that wood should be treated, the thickness of the wood and the model that it might be best to be used on. When it comes to other design features, like introducing a guitar where the neck is joined at the 12th fret rather than the 14th fret, there are a lot of changes that have to take place there. The bridge position has changed in relation to the soundbox, so you have to change the bracing and then we have to experiment with the position of the

"As a guitar maker, I'm not only relying on my own ears but the players' ears as well and asking them for their viewpoints"

braces, as well as the way they're carved. The first one of those that I designed about two years ago, I actually designed two different bracing systems for the same guitar and we made prototypes up using both systems, and then made a judgement call on which we considered to be the best."

Sounds like an interesting process...

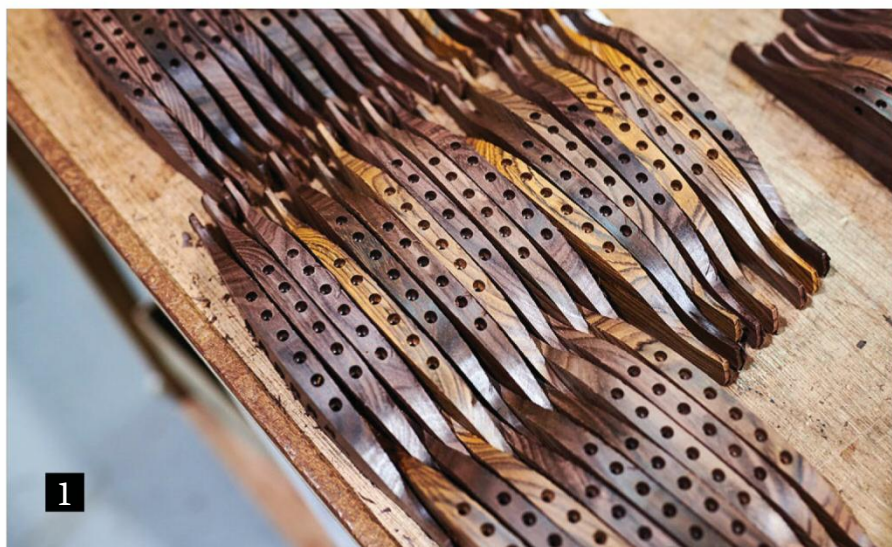
"That process is incredibly interesting to me, because, when you play the new guitar, whether it be with a new wood or a new position for the bridge or new voicing or the bracing being changed, you will get a difference in tone and it's often very subtle. For me, as a guitar maker, I'm not only relying on my own ears but I'm relying on the players' ears as well and asking them for their viewpoints. When players come in to visit us we would ask them to test. The feedback on the 12th-fret neck joint models, which we've now done on the F, the S and the Wee, has been very good. It seems to produce a smoother, slightly warmer tone."

So you would be moving the bridge to the widest point on the soundboard?

"Exactly. Of course, acoustically, that's a good thing. You can imagine a speaker where the cone was off-centre. It wouldn't be ideal. Although, there's a thought. You could have a speaker with the cone being off-centre and it might actually work better."



George Lowden in his
Downpatrick workshop



1



2

1. Rows of Lowden's distinctive 'top loading' bridges wait in line
2. Headstock inlays are all individually carved
3. Traditional methods abound in the workshops: braces held in place while the glue is drying
4. Much of the work at Lowden is still done by hand at the workbench



3



4

Who knows? Test those things. It might produce treble response better because it was closer to one side and better bass response because it's further away from the other side. Who knows?"

Have you found that customers are now requesting certain features that they weren't a few years ago? If so, what seems to be popular?

"When I design a new feature, people see it and if they really like it then they start requesting it. For example, I believe we were the first company – as in a company rather than an individual luthier – to introduce a soundbox bevel. People seem to really like that. It's just a nice-looking feature but also it is more comfortable.

"As a generalisation, what I've noticed is that the smaller guitar, particularly the S, has become more sought after in the last few years. Of course, the F, being our mid-sized model, is still our most popular model I would say, but certainly the S is coming up there now. The Wee has been very steady now in demand, partly probably because of Ed [Sheeran], I would say."

Would you say it's also a result of more efficient sound reinforcement where acoustic amplifiers and smaller PA systems are concerned?

"What I've discovered is if you're designing a guitar, which is going to be used predominantly on stage with a medium-volume PA system or even a very loud sound system, as in big stadiums and so on, you shouldn't really make the guitar the same way as if you were making one to be used mostly for recording or mostly at home. Getting that balance right, knowing what the guitar is for, changing the voicing so the guitar doesn't overreact when it's being used through a loud PA but also allowing it to respond enough so that it still sounds very acoustic. It's a bit of an art, but I'm continually experimenting with that."

"If you're designing a guitar for stadiums, you shouldn't make it the same way as for recording use"

What sort of feedback do you typically get from artists on what they need from their instruments?

"A certain player's manager said to me one time, 'The problem with your guitars, for stages, is that they're just too good.' I was thinking, 'What does he mean by that?' I went away and thought about it and realised what he meant and talked to the sound man involved and redesigned the voicing on our Wee Lowden, in this case, and the results were so much better on stage. Equally, in the studio, that same guitar wouldn't be the ultimate. It would still work quite well, but it wouldn't be the ultimate. If you're looking for the ultimate then you've got to voice the two guitars for different purposes."

In layman's terms, what sorts of differences would they be in terms of build?

"I reduced the depth of the body and I stiffened up the soundboard quite a lot, and the result was surprisingly good. I wasn't expecting it to be as good as it was. I thought I had possibly overdone it. I suppose the ultimate is if all players could



REGATTA
GREAT OUTDOORS



The bracing on a guitar top being hand-carved



Customer orders line up for the next stages of construction

afford to have different guitars for different purposes; they would be able to get a real benefit from that.”

Over the last few years we’ve seen the rise of percussive acoustic players. Have you found you get requests for specially reinforced sections of top and suchlike?

“I’m not sure that anybody’s actually requested us to design or make a guitar a lot thicker so that it wouldn’t crack when it was being treated like a drum. In the case of Thomas Leeb, he actually did ask me to design a little guard, if you like, for part of the front of the soundboard, not so that it would protect the soundboard but rather so that he would be able to get a nice scratchy sound from it.”

What can you tell us about Jon Gomm’s signature model?

“Jon’s very much a case in point – although I did design the signature model for him with a two-piece top with a different wood on the inside than on the outside. It seemed to work very well, because the way of laminating the two pieces together meant that there was extra strength and stiffness through the joint itself. Yes, it seemed to work.”

So it was laminated for strength?

“Yes. Actually, laminating wood is not a bad thing. It used to be considered that solid wood is the way to go completely for everything. I’ve changed my mind about that a little bit in that, yes, it is the best way to go sound-wise. That’s a generalisation, but we also have to think about the conservation of really rare woods as well, and you do use an awful lot less wood if you use a laminated construction. We have to think about conserving rare wood stocks. In the case of Jon Gomm’s guitar, I used Sitka spruce on the outside and cedar on the inside. It was an interesting experiment and it seemed to work very well.”

What about other trends, like fan-fretting, for instance?

“When I considered the fan-fret option, for instance – designing a fan-fret never having

“Laminating wood is not a bad thing... I’ve changed my mind in that it is the best way to go sound-wise”

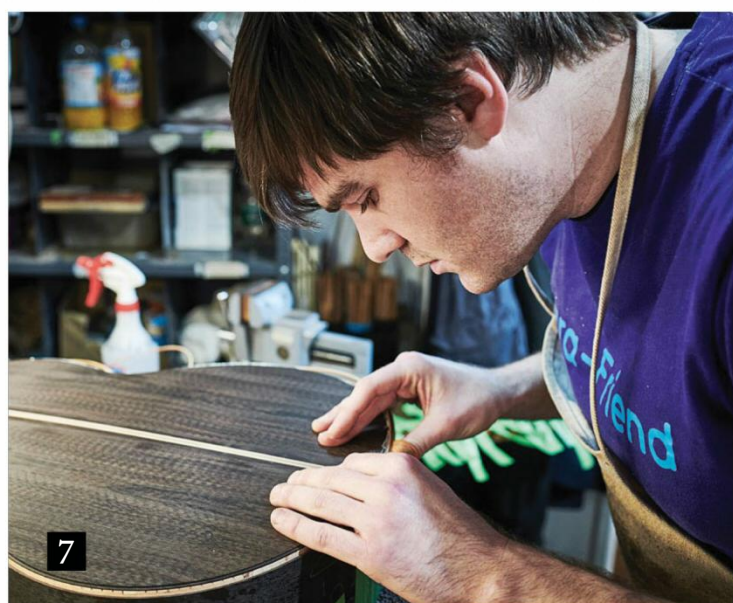
played one – I had the view that, ‘Gosh, you’d have to learn how to play the guitar all over again, because the places where you put your fingers are different.’ In fact, what surprised me most [about fan-frets] when I did finish the first one was the fact that, within a couple of minutes, even for a very bad player like me, you didn’t have to think about it.”

It’s easier to play an F barre chord, we find, because your finger is naturally slanted in line with the fret...

“Exactly. It really does work. From the tonal point of view, I was very interested to see what it would do, because, in theory, having a longer string-length at the bass side would deepen the bass. With the slightly shorter scale on the treble side, you should actually get a slightly more bell-like treble response. In fact, in my opinion, that’s what happened with the fan-fret. There are benefits tone-wise, I believe.”

There seem to be various degrees of fan-fretting, from the slight to the extreme...

“That’s to do with where you set what you might call the parallel fret. If you place it at the 9th fret then what you’re going to get is a bridge that isn’t slanted quite so much but



- 5. A guitar neck receives some fine adjustment before fitting
- 6. Attaching the binding around the rim of a guitar top
- 7. Fitting the back of a guitar in place
- 8. Part of the final assembly process immediately prior to stringing up

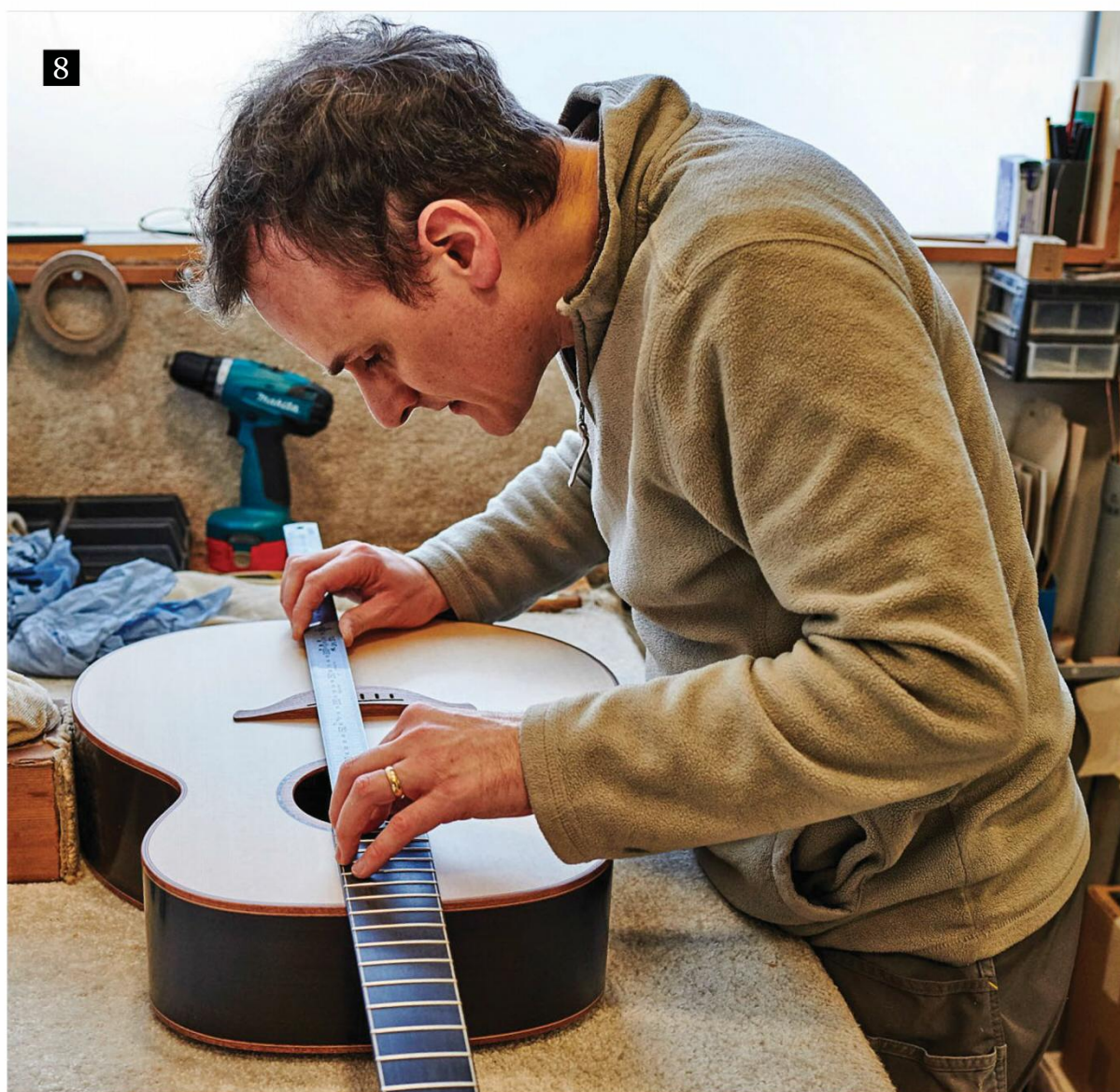
you're going to get a top nut that's slanted a lot. If you move it to a position where the parallel fret is laid at, say, the 6th fret or the 5th fret, then the top nut is not slanted as much but the bridge is slanted a little bit more.

"That choice governs the playability of the guitar as well as the look, to some extent. If the top nut is slanted too much, it's too difficult for people to play barre chords. If it's not slanted at all then you either have to make the guitar not very fan fretted, ie, not a big difference in scale length between the bass and the treble, or you have to actually slant the bridge an awful lot. There are all those choices that have to be made."

Do you feel that acoustic guitar design is still very much a work in progress?

"I feel, personally, that there are advances we, as guitar makers, can make and there are experiments that we can carry out. I have a whole lot of ideas, for example, that I would like to test out and, over the next few years, God willing, hopefully I will be able to test them out. I think there are ways in which we can improve what we've already got." 

www.lowdenguitars.com



Longtermers

A few months' gigging, recording and everything that goes with it – welcome to *Guitarist's* longterm test report



**Knaggs Choptank &
Fret-King Country**
Squire Semitone Special
with Dave Burruck

Writer

DAVE BURRLUCK
Guitarist, Gear Reviews Editor



Continuing our Longtermers special on two guitars not one, our reviews editor heads to the home studio...

Back in issue 455, along with reviewing both of these guitars, we looked at the whole relic topic. In this exploration of the merits of two very differently priced instruments, relicing plays an important part. Personally, I'm a relic fan. Okay, some of the heavy relic stuff might just be a bit too tattered-looking, but the huge advantage of having a guitar with an aged or reliced finish is that should you ding it, it's not going to affect its value. But more often it's the lived-in feel that's more important to me: I just prefer the feel of an instrument that's been played in... even if it's brand-new. The Knaggs Choptank fits that bill. Not only does it look like it's been around the houses, it feels like it's been a guitar for some time. "What's that?" asks my bandmate, and before I can reply: "Something you made back in the 70s?" Once again, appearance informs an instant opinion.

I know I'll have to return both instruments, but simply due to its already bashed finish I've been pretty care-free with the aged Knaggs over the past weeks. I bung it into a gigbag and head off to a gig without thinking... Hang on a minute, this is £4k's worth of guitar! But it means that during my test time I didn't think twice about gigging the Knaggs. It's a remarkably unshowy guitar; it drops under the radar. Conversely, the brand-new-looking Fret-King, although a fraction of the price, is more coveted and cosseted.



The thick steel baseplate of the Knaggs is made in Baltimore by Excel who originally crafted hardware, like the Stoptail bridge, for PRS



Reflecting the Telecaster inspiration of the Fret-King, the bridge here was designed by Trev Wilkinson and features compensated brass saddles

That said, during a slow start to the year on the live music front, I found most of my play time was on the Fret-King. Hooking up with a couple of mates I hadn't played with for (unbelievably) over three decades, the subject of new songs and recording was high on the agenda. Back in the day, like any band we'd hunker down in some flea-bitten rehearsal studio and try to turn some rough ideas into something our management and record label thought had some legs. With our bassist now living in Germany and no drummer on the horizon, any regular rehearsals or gigs are out of the question, so we turn our rusty creative minds to a bit of remote demo recording.

As the months passed the main songwriter and nifty guitarist sent a stream of tunes over. Our European bassist added some ideas and I noodled around whenever time permitted to add some additional bits and pieces.

The lowly Fret-King has to be a virtually perfect writing/recording guitar when you're working in this fashion. It's lightweight, first and foremost, and has surprising tonal width. Adding heft to the bridge single coil is easy with something like a Line 6 Helix LT's selections of compressors, overdrives – and fuzzes, which I'd rarely use, but with such easy control I soon find I'm coming up with sounds that normally I'd never access.

But as this is a two-guitar test I made the 'mistake' of pulling out the Knaggs, which, of course, sounds different. It also sounds more authentic. What do I mean? It sounds more Strat-y and its bridge pickup in that extended

"The lowly Fret-King has to be a virtually perfect writing/recording guitar for remote recording"

bridge plate sounds twanging and bright, yes, but with added body. Overall, there's that lifting bloom or sustain to the note tail...

Still, different guitars make you play differently, correct? That's a little more complex. There's one song on which the writer suggests I try a funk part. I work it up on the Fret-King and it's sounding okay. Then I pick up up the Knaggs and bingo! It's perfect. I seem to relax a little more, too, and whatever the psychology is at play, the exact same part sits better in the track. I go back over the various songs or snippets of songs that I'd recorded with the Fret-King and try the same parts pretty much with identical patches on the Helix and, give or take, it's the same result. If I'm honest, I'm not sure at this stage in the process that my ol' bandmates would notice the specific sound *quality*, because virtually all the parts have some kind of processing on them. But I notice the Knaggs makes me sound better, to me. It's nothing to do with where it's made or any bragging rights about its 'boutique' quality. Even if the guitars cost the same, I'd choose the Knaggs. Life's too short not to play a good guitar. **G**

Fret-King Black Label Country Squire Semitone Special Reviewed 455 Price £599 (inc gigbag) On Test Since November 2019 Studio Sessions Yes Gigged No Mods No
Knaggs Chesapeake Choptank Joe's Guitar Reviewed 455 Price £4,100 (inc case) On Test Since November 2019 Studio Sessions Yes Gigged Yes Mods No



JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

Joanne reveals how going shopping with Joe Bonamassa can sometimes work out in your favour...

What was the first guitar you bought with your own money?

"The first guitar I bought myself was a red American Stratocaster from a guitar shop I was working in called Fair Deal Music in Birmingham. I'd been working there Saturdays and Sundays, plus I was gigging, so I probably earned more money as a 15 year old than I do now as a 35 year old.

"My grandmother, bless her, had said, 'Because you're working so hard, whatever money you earn I will match,' because she knew I wanted a nice proper American guitar. So, yes, a red American Strat that I guess would have been about the year 1997, because it had been there for a few years."

What was the last guitar you bought and why?

"I just bought a little Fender acoustic three days ago. I can't remember the model, but the main thing for me is a small neck and a parlour sort of body, being a tiny-fingered female – makes things easier than the big jumbos. It was because I was gifted a 1960s Gibson acoustic for my birthday a couple of weeks ago, but couldn't get a case in time to fly it over for this tour. So

I had to panic and go into a guitar shop in Brighton and buy a little £350 Fender jobbie.

"I don't not enjoy playing acoustic, I just think it's almost its own instrument. You know, everyone assumes because you play electric... I mean, the amount of times I get, 'Can you do this gig? But we can't fly your band in, so can you just do the whole thing acoustic?' It's like, 'Yes, I'll just redo everything I've ever done and make it a completely different genre.' I don't like doing things if I don't do them well."

What's your best guitar-buying tip?

"Firstly, my advice would be to go to America, because everything's far cheaper there than it is when you add on the import tax over here... No, I think for me, I don't really worry about what it is or how much it costs; I'm not looking for something boutique, you know? If a guitar feels good to you and it sounds good and you can play it well, I think that's the only thing that matters. Sometimes people seem to be more concerned with whether rosewood's better or maple's better, if Gibson's better than Epiphone... If it feels good and you play it well, it's fair game."

"I don't think I've ever sold any guitars, but I have gifted some – I don't like guitars not being

What's been your most incredible guitar find?

"Probably the Albert Collins Signature Tele. That was the next guitar I wanted, being a huge Albert Collins nut. I found one in New York that was signed by Albert, and I think it was up for about \$5,000, which I couldn't afford. I was there with Joe Bonamassa. He was like, 'I'll come with you, because you might be able to get some money knocked off.' And he did, he got it knocked down to \$3,000, which I could afford... but he kept it. So I told his dad. I don't think Joe was being mean, I think it was the excitement of buying it, because he's such an avid collector. But his dad had a go at him, and the next thing I know I got a text going, 'What's your address?' and he sent it to me. So that was probably my best buy, because it was one of my dream guitars, and all I had to do was moan to Joe that he was a crap friend for a few weeks."

What's your worst case of buyer's remorse?

"I lived in Houston, Texas, for a while, so going to secondhand shops – thrift shops – where they sell guitars and guns, basically. There were a few things like Teles, homemade jobbies that I kind of thought, '\$600 for an American Tele – great,' and then you get it home and it's like, 'No, this is a piece of crap.' So there's a few of those that I've kind of ditched along the way."

"If a guitar feels good to you and it sounds good and you can play it well, I think that's the only thing that matters"

PHOTO BY DAVID MCCLUSTER





PHOTO BY DAVID MCCLISTER



Have you ever regretted selling a guitar?

"There's a couple. I don't think I've ever sold any guitars, but I have gifted some, because I don't like guitars not being played. I gifted one of those weird hybrid guitars Fender made with a Tele neck and a Strat body that they sold really cheap because they were Squiers. They were about \$100, but people were buying them and modding them out, so then Fender stopped making them and redid them and charged a ridiculous amount of money for them. I gave one of those away, which I wish I hadn't, but it was to a 12-year-old girl that wanted to learn. So good karma points, I guess."

Are there any design features on electric guitars that are an instant turn-off for you?

"Anything that's too heavy. You don't realise how bad standing with a guitar is for your posture. You know, it's all the weight on one side – my pelvis has moved in a direction it shouldn't be in because of longterm playing. Heavy Les Pauls are a thing of the past for me."

Would you rather have a great guitar and a cheap amp, or a cheap guitar and a pricey amp?

"I'm probably going to say cheap amp, because I tend to like the vintage stuff as well, when it comes to guitars, because it's well worn in and grips better and just feels and sounds better. It's hard to get vintage cheap nowadays."

If you could only use humbuckers or single coils, which would you choose and why?

"I'm going to say single coils, because I like a very bright sound. Also, I realised I only ever play Telecasters that have a humbucker at the neck, but I also never play the

neck pickup. I realised recently I will play a whole show on the bridge pickup. So I'm going single coil. Twangy."

What's your favourite guitar shop and why?

"Reverb.com [laughs]. Actually, I will go with my favourite music shop ever, which is The Berkley Music Company in Michigan, where I live. I live in Royal Oaks, so [Berkley] is the next town over. They have great consignment stuff, so I've actually bought quite a few amps from there. I bought a Fender Vibro-King from there recently. But they're great guys and they always have nice stuff. They don't have much stuff, but they have nice stuff, and it's always reasonably priced. It's one of those places you can go in and there's always some local guitar player in there, like Jackson Smith, who's Patti Smith's son and plays for Elton John. He was in there the other day and we ended up jamming and stuff. So it's kind of a nice creative place, too."

When was the last time you stopped to stare in a guitar shop window and what were you looking at?

"I actually went today. Vintage 'n' Rare [in Bath]. That's just a beautiful guitar shop. Bath is obviously a beautiful city, so that was a kind of Dickensian experience. I was like a little kid in the shop, but I very much doubt there's anything in there I can afford, but they've got some beautiful stuff. So yes, that was a nice window-shopping experience." **[DM]**



Joanne's latest EP, *Reckless Blues*, is out now via the Silvertone label.

Discover more by visiting:

www.joanneshawtaylor.com

Top: The Fender Custom Shop Albert Collins Signature Tele, as temporarily owned by Joe Bonamassa...

Above left: A guitar's neck size and weight are crucial to Joanne's playing

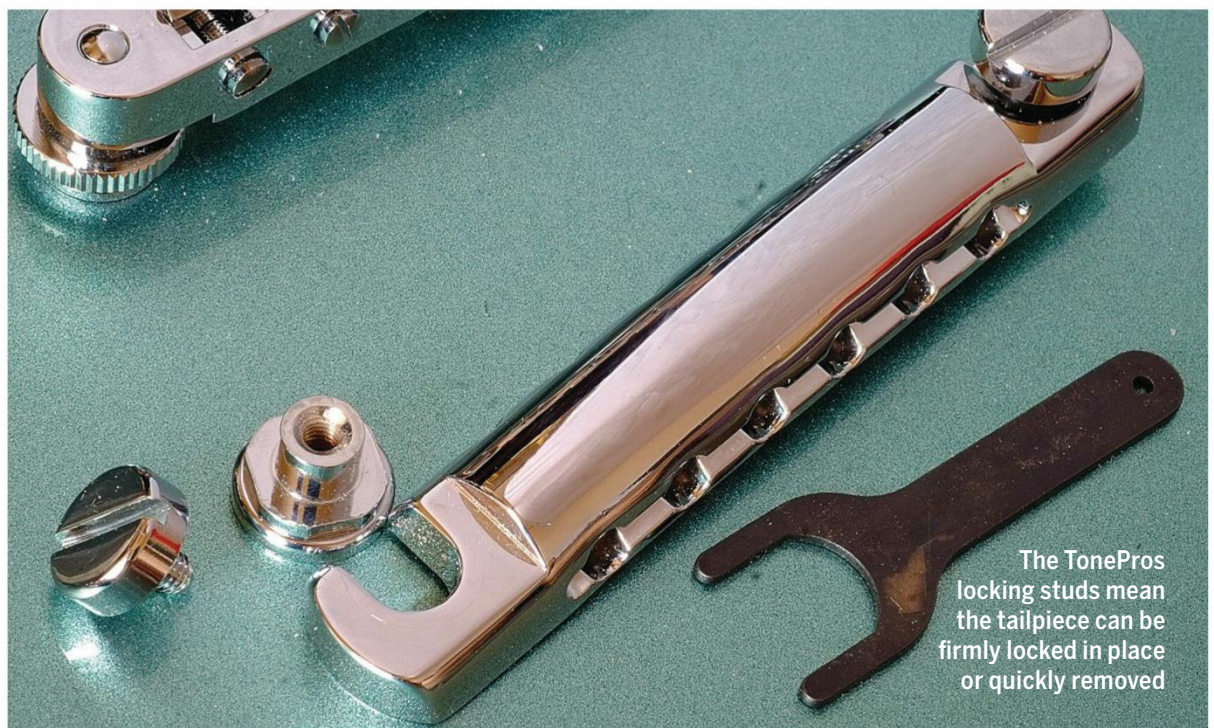
Above right: Inside the fine establishment of Vintage 'n' Rare Guitars in Bath, as endorsed by Joanne herself

DOUBLE VISION

Faced with a near-perfect PRS SE, Dave Burrluck comes up with a way to double its sounds – quickly

It's been a busy few weeks, so I had to shelve any improvements to our loaned PRS SE Starla Stoptail. To be honest, a bit of a break like that doesn't do most modding projects any harm – like a new song or arrangement you're writing, you sort of come back to it with fresh ears and ideas. I had already installed new SE locking tuners and those neat TonePros locking studs – which meant I could quickly remove and reinstall the stud tailpiece without restringing, making it easier to initially investigate the scratchplate-mounted electrics. Aside from that, I'd spent most of my time just tweaking the intonation and making sure the strings sat properly over the bridge saddles. Subtle, yes, but with a relatively low-end guitar like this, it's all about maximising the potential before we start thinking about sound... or different sounds.

One reason I'd had to put the project on hiatus was covering the NAMM Show in Los Angeles, but it's a great place for getting some inspiration. The guys at Relish Guitars were keen to show me their new Indonesian-made guitar with its push-in/pull-out pickup swapping system, which, for us sonic tinkerers, is rather smart, not least how it enables a quick listen to a new pickup or the ability to completely revoice a guitar in a few



The TonePros locking studs mean the tailpiece can be firmly locked in place or quickly removed

“Unlike a Strat or Tele, where you can buy trillions of replacement scratchplates, the Starla is pretty niche”

seconds. It gave me an idea for the Starla: if I could get another scratchplate, not only would it give me an easy way to change the guitar's look but I could load that with completely different pickups and swap them over relatively quickly.

Okay, what's the problem? Well, unlike a Strat or Tele, for example, where you can buy trillions of replacement scratchplates, the Starla is pretty niche. However, I didn't have to resort to getting a custom 'plate made, because while I was chatting with the guys at the PRS booth about the project, they told me I should be able to buy a scratchplate for the Starla, left over from the previous S2 version. My plan began to take a little more shape.

Quite coincidentally, I bumped into Dwight Devereaux, the founder of TonePros, who I hadn't chatted to for a few years. I explained what I was up to and he immediately suggested that I also fit a TonePros Nashville-style bridge, which locks to the posts and means it'll stay put when I'm swapping scratchplates. I should have thought of that earlier!

But the dual-voicing idea of the two scratchplates still means I'd have to get the soldering iron out. Hmm. Could I go solderless instead? We looked at solderless pickup installation back in issue 451, but I don't want to limit myself to any proprietary plug-in pickup/electronics system. I then remembered our Mod Squad buddies at Radioshop Pickups advertise a solderless install for their Strat scratchplates. A few emails later we had an idea sorted. I purchased two volume



The tailpiece removed, our new loaded scratchplate is fitted to the Starla



The Starla in its new
guise, now with USA
PRS 58/15 humbuckers

“When it comes to sound, ask yourself: what is ‘wrong’ with what you have and how can you narrow the choice before you spend your cash”

controls with the push-in-and-screw connections for the hot and ground wires (from the output jack) and a third push-in slot for the all important bridge ground. Radioshop supplied me with a pre-wired output jack, with the solderless connectors already fitted, so firstly I could wire in the new volume pot and try out the install. Which was straightforward and, yes, the idea works!

The next part of my dual vision is to create the new scratchplate. Before I consider a pair of pickups that would enhance the Starla, or take it way off in another direction, I really wanted to see what difference a pair of PRS USA humbuckers had to offer. Are they really that good compared with the PRS-designed, made-in-Indonesian DS-02 ‘buckers of the Starla? A pair of 58/15s with a single a white ‘split’ wire were going begging, so I thought that would be the place to start. I have the (Radioshop) 500k volume and added a CRL three-way lever switch, and a push-push switched tone control, so I can split both the pickups simultaneously. I replicated the partial resistors, treble bleed cap and tone cap value that PRS uses – pretty much a replica of the Starla’s setup, then, but with different pickups.

The new black scratchplate with amber lampshade knobs gives a very different aesthetic, which I kind of liked, but how does the revoiced Starla sound? Different and a little more classic, certainly on the neck pickup, and a little more open-sounding, too. Again, the hotter bridge has clarity, bite and thump with seemingly less ‘honk’. The coil-splits sound slightly less thin, too (though here they voice the screw coil, not the slug coil of the Starla’s original setup) – more usable in the context



The secret to our quick scratchplate-swap is this solderless volume control from Radioshop

of the guitar, perhaps? There’s still the undercurrent of the Starla’s quite brash attack, a little punkier, less big and woody, compared with our reference 2001 PRS Singlecut. Throw in a third spanner, a CE 24 with USA 85/15 humbuckers, again with pretty much the same circuit as the Starla, and you have a slightly different, marginally woodier voice that sounds ‘hotter’, despite having lower DCRs than the 58/15. Proof, once again, that even with a similar style of pickup, resistance readings are just that – not an indication of sound or output.

As far as the SE Starla is concerned, not only do I have an alternative sound, the potential to try more dramatically different pickups is appealing, and, once the alternative ‘plate is all wired up, actually swapping between the two, without rushing, takes around five minutes to being back in tune. It’s also an interesting comparison between a pair of pre-TCI USA 58/15s and the latest-spec DS-02s from Indonesia. I’d need to do a little more

listening and perhaps a gig or two, but, in terms of sound quality, I’m not sure there’s as much difference as you might be led to believe. The USA pickups might win on clarity, but there’s quite a character to the DS-02s that, personally, I wouldn’t dismiss.

Basically, any standard humbucker-sized pickup will fit here and, with so much choice out there, there’s plenty to consider. As with any mod, when it comes to sound, you need to ask yourself the following questions: what is ‘wrong’ with what you have and how can you narrow the immense choice down before you spend your cash. Another way to use this dual-scratchplate idea is when it comes to component types and values: fitting the same set of pickups on both then swapping components would really begin to let you hear the effect. Above all, it’s a rather good way to quickly hear and compare a different set of pickups, with or without the same circuit, on the same guitar without having to warm up the soldering iron. **G**

*That should give you something to think about till our next issue.
In the meantime, if you have any modding questions, or suggestions, drop us a line – The Mod Squad.*

Love to play guitar?



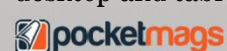
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PICKUP LINES

Too Hot To Handle

Amp designer and founder of Bulldog Pickups, Hayden Minett, cleans up the fuzzy picture of preamp distortion...

In the formative years of the electric guitar amplifier, manufacturers began settling on designs that, although technically flawed, would ultimately prove indispensable to the instrument's trademark tones and the evolution of popular music. "They got things wrong in terms of how sensitive the inputs are to guitar pickup signals," Hayden Minett tells us. Having spent the best part of two decades building pickups and designing amps, he's been able to draw his own conclusions as to why people aren't rushing to correct these so-called mistakes. "I'm not entirely sure that things have been refined over the years," he says. "All these mistakes that happened in the 50s and before have become part of the sound of what we expect to happen when we plug a guitar into an amplifier – we expect it to become a little bit crunchy and a little bit dirty."

"That distortion stems from the fact that ultimately there's too much power from the pickup going into the amplifier circuitry

"A lot of pickup and amp designers are looking back to how things were done in the 50s and 60s"

to create a clean sound. The mismatch between the two is where that sound comes from. You've got a pickup coil, which is basically a generator, and it's generating a small AC signal – a voltage. So you have to think about how you're going to amplify that tiny signal, and you have to think about the amount of signal going into the amp. One of the most critical parts of the amp's circuit is the input stage.

"A lot of amps will give their full output power with only a 20mV to 40mV of input signal. Some even less than that. A modern high-power humbucker will happily deliver 400mV, which is about 10 times the signal needed to produce full power from, say, a Fender Twin. And that's why the amplifier



This Gibson R9 '59 reissue 'Burst, fitted with Bulldog Cool PAF pickups, and the late-60s Matamp Series 2000 amp make the perfect Peter Green-style setup

overdrives. Ultimately, it's got too much gain in the early stages of the amplifier than is needed. If you plug a vintage PAF-style humbucker into, say, a Fender Twin and set it to '2' or '3', you'll probably start to hear it crunch up a little bit. By comparison, if you plug a vintage Fender-style single coil in, it's going to be a little more open-sounding and clean. That's the most obvious way of listening to the output power difference between different types of pickup. It's purely down to the amount of power generated.

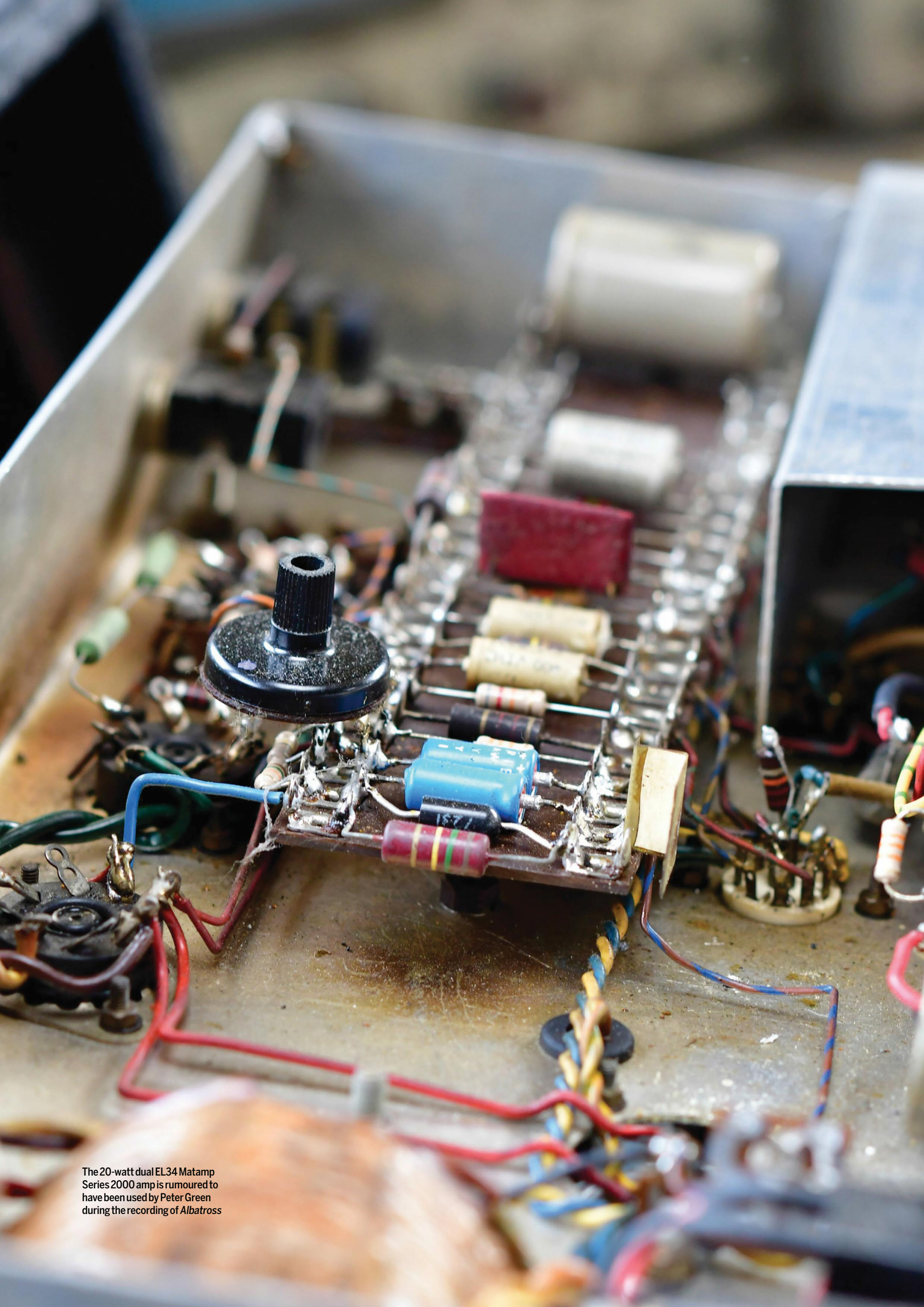
"One of the interesting traits of break-up in a valve amplifier is that before it gets to the point of really clipping and really distorting and sounding like what we call overdrive, it goes through a stage of soft clipping and compressing. You can see it on an oscilloscope starting to round off at the top [of the waveform] and that's kind of where the fun starts to happen in terms of playing response. You will find the onset of that happens a lot sooner with a higher-output pickup (or if you hit the strings harder on a lower-output pickup),

but if you've got a really high-output guitar pickup, you just don't have any headroom at all on some amp designs.

"If you've got an amplifier that's designed to work with higher-output pickups, with all that extra headroom, the clean sound can sometimes be overly bright and almost brittle. If you go for the more metal-orientated amps, they sound great with humbuckers, but sometimes regular single-coil pickups are a bit too bright and you can struggle a little bit – the clean channel can be quite glassy, because they're more or less expecting you to be hitting it with a high-output pickup. You can often hear the target market of some modern amp designs. But a lot of pickup and amplifier designers are now looking back to how things were done in the 50s and 60s. In fact, that's probably about 90 per cent of what I do. People increasingly want that original pickup output level. It's these accidental guitar tones from the early days of rock 'n' roll that people just keep on returning to." **[RB]**

<http://bulldogpickups.6.ekm.shop>

PHOTOS BY HAYDEN MINETT



The 20-watt dual EL34 Matamp Series 2000 amp is rumoured to have been used by Peter Green during the recording of *Albatross*

classicGear

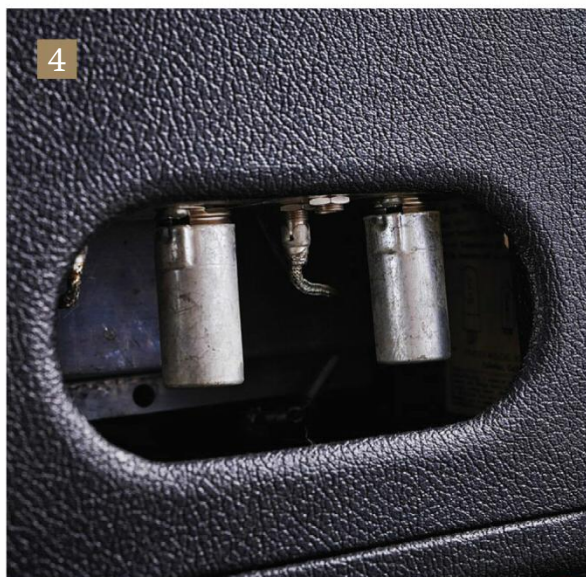
A new sound springs to life and makes a splash in the surf rock scene...

Fender Reverb

During the 1950s, as the electric guitar boomed in popularity and fresh musical styles emerged, engineers and musicians increasingly experimented with various technologies to find new and exciting ways of livening up the sound of the instrument. Gibson's leading guitarist, Les Paul, wowed listeners with his revolutionary tape techniques, while Gretsch man Chet Atkins was quick to jump onboard in 1954 with Ray Butt's tape-echo-equipped EchoSonic amp. Both were leading electric guitarists of their time and were influential in establishing electric guitar effects as a crucial factor in the evolution of popular music.

Taking inspiration from tremolo-equipped amps such as the Multivox Premier 66 and Gibson GA-50T (released in 1947 and 1948 respectively) Fender released its first tremolo-equipped amplifier, the Tremolux, in 1955. Although this marked a new direction in the company's amp designs, it wasn't until 1963 with the arrival of the Vibroverb that the "expanded sound" of reverb first appeared in a Fender amp. Prior to this watershed design, Fender reverb came in the form of a standalone unit simply labelled the 'Reverb'.

Developed in collaboration with the 'king of surf rock', Dick Dale, and released in 1961, the Fender Reverb sported the Hammond Type IV spring reverberation unit at the heart of its design. Originally intended for a wide variety of applications including "guitar, accordion, microphone, phonograph" and "tape recorded program material" it became very popular among surf-rock guitarists in the early 60s, with its distinctive splashy character helping to define the sound of an era.



Spring reverb is an effect that approximates the sound of reverberations in an acoustic space, in order to add a greater sense of dimension and depth to the instrument signal. In essence, it is a form of delay, although rather than producing relatively long distinct repeats à la tape echo, a spacious wash of much smaller 'reflections' is gleaned from one or more springs with transducers at either end before being blended back in with the dry signal.

Whereas most amplifiers with onboard spring reverb tend to offer just one reverb level control, Fender Reverbs feature three parameter control knobs, namely Dwell,

Spring reverb
is an effect that
approximates
the sound of
reverberations in an
acoustic space

Mixer and Tone. By turning up the amount of Dwell, more signal is sent to the reverb tank/springs and a more pronounced effect is achieved, with a distinctive 'drip' sound becoming audible at higher settings. The Tone knob increasingly brightens up the affected portion of the signal (which can be very useful to help the reverb either sit back or come forward in a mix), while the Mixer knob allows control over the wet/dry balance, namely reverb level.

Originally released in brown Tolex with a wheat-coloured grille cloth, Fender later added other options to colour co-ordinate with their various amp designs including blonde/wheat, blonde/oxblood and black/silver. The Reverb unit (circuit/model 6G15) was available until 1966 and was superseded by the Solid State Series FR-1000 Reverb. In 1976, a silver-panelled version called the Tube Reverb briefly appeared before being discontinued in 1978. It wasn't until 1994 that Fender revisited the original Reverb design in its Reissue Series with the '63 Fender Reverb. Available in various finishes including brown/tan, black/silver, blonde/oxblood and lacquered tweed, it was renamed the '63 Fender Tube Reverb in 2008 and eventually fell out of production in 2016. [RB]

The Evolution of the Fender Reverb

1961

Reverb model 6G15 released;
6K6GT, 12AT7 & 7025 valves;
blonde & brown Tolex

1963

Black Tolex; black plastic strap
replaces leather type

1966

Reverb model 6G15 discontinued

1968

Solid State Series FT-1000 Reverb unit
released (discontinued in 1973)

1976

Silver-panel Tube Reverb unit
released; 6V6GTA & 3x 7025 valves
(discontinued in 1978)

1994

'63 Fender Reverb released;
6V6GTA, 12AT7 &
12AX7/7025 valves

2008

Renamed '63 Fender Tube Reverb
(discontinued in 2016)



1966 Fender Reverb

1. CODES

Tube chart ink stamped 'PE' denoting 1966 (P) and May (E)

2. CABINET

19 inches wide by 10 tall by 7½ deep; vented one-piece back; control panel cutaway; four metal glide feet; one black plastic handle with two metal end caps

3. ORNAMENTATION

Black control panel with white font; 'Fender Reverb' script model logo; black Tolex covering; silver grille cloth; silver/black plastic Fender script motif

4. CIRCUIT

Model 6G15; valves: 6K6GT, 12AT7 and 7025; Hammond Type IV spring reverberation unit

5. POWER & CONNECTIONS

From left to right: power on/off switch labelled 'ON/OFF'; 750mA fuse labelled 'FUSE/¾ AMP'; red pilot light jewel; standard (¼-inch TS) input labelled 'INPUT'; standard (¼-inch TS) output labelled 'OUTPUT'

6. CONTROLS

Three white plastic barrel knobs labelled 1-10 (from left to right): 'DWELL, MIXER & TONE'; footswitch (reverb on/off)



Guitarist would like to thank
ATB Guitars of Cheltenham

ReverbRarities

A hollow-bodied electric that offered acoustic-like sounds

1953 Gibson ES-295



Today's featured instrument in our Reverb Rarities series comes from a singular time and place in the annals of vintage guitar history: the 1950s at the Gibson factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This decade saw the birth and early evolution of the Les Paul, and the advent of the thinline hollowbody electric guitar epitomised by the ES-335. In the realm of full-depth hollowbody guitars, though, Gibson was just as forward-thinking, releasing guitars such as the ES-295.

Often associated with Scotty Moore as 'The Guitar that Changed the World', the story goes that the initial inspiration for

the ES-295 came from Les Paul himself who had Gibson paint an ES-175 gold as a gift for an ailing WWII veteran. By the time of the Les Paul model's development, Gibson opted to build on the concept with a souped-up hollowbody and all the latest tech to serve as a counterpart to its inaugural solidbody effort.

This featured 295 comes from 12th Fret Guitar Sales of Cross In Hand, East Sussex. This '53 edition is all original and, like gold-finished Gibsons of this era, exhibits fine checking throughout the body.

To find the full listing, head to: <http://bit.ly/ReverbGibson295>



Dan Orkin is director of content at Reverb, a leading website and app for buying and selling new, used and vintage music gear. A go-to for gear history, sales trends and pricing data, Dan edits the *Reverb Price Guide* and leads the Reverb team that produces daily videos and articles

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