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Welcome...



Welcome! It's amazing to think that we're already rounding up the year – but what a year it's been! For our cover feature this issue, we're taking a look back over the hottest new players, albums, tones and gear that 2019 had to offer.

Elsewhere in the mag, we sit down with slide master Martin Harley to pick his brains on some key slide guitar tips. We also take a tour of Live guitarists and check out Chad Taylor's drool-worthy stage rig, while

Mumford and Sons' Winston Marshall gives us the skinny on his approach to banjo in one of the biggest folk bands in the world!

As usual, our Learn To Play section is packed with songs for you to learn, from our shred version of the Tetris theme tune, to Queen's rock 'n' roll workout 'Now I'm Here', and Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper's mammoth hit 'Shallow' plus more!

Finally, we check out some amazing new gear, including Fender's spanking-new Ultra Stratocaster, adorned with slick modern features; and four brand-new modelling amps from Blackstar, Fender, Yamaha and Boss, which prove digital has never been better! We'll see you again next issue!

Stuart Williams

Stuart Williams Editor

MAKING THIS MONTH'S MAG



CHRIS BIRD

This month, Chris hotfooted it to the Big Apple for a date with the US Fender team and a look at some new products, including the new Ultra line of guitars, Tone Master amps and 'Songs', the company's new learning app. Although there's no UK launch for Songs until 2020, TG's intrepid tuition ed was mightily impressed. Keep your eyes peeled next year.



MICHAEL ASTLEY-BROWN

Mike Astley-Brown is the big dawg on *Guitar World's* website, but to us he'll always be a part of the TG family. Recent anti-meatman Mike put his foot down on Mooer's GE-150 multi-FX. "Impulse responses at such an affordable price?!" Mike says. "I wish I'd had this when I was recording my album recently."



ROB LAING

This month, recently departed editor Rob Laing sat down with Martin Harley to get some golden knowledge on slide playing. Check out the interview and lesson out on p38. Rob also found time to wrap his hands around a Fender Ultra Strat for our lead review: "It's a dream for anyone wanting to cover a lot of ground," Rob chirps.

#326

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MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

Photography: Olly Curtis

SWIMMIN' WITH THE DEVIL

Get your teeth into EVH's latest release



06

EVH's striped sensation with cutout teeth is modelled on Eddie's iconic 'Shark' guitar

W

hen it comes to his guitars, Eddie Van Halen is most often associated with his instantly recognisable Frankenstein or

Wolfgang body shapes. However, there are other models that have served their time under Ed's hands, not least the fan favourite 'Shark'. First seen on Van Halen's 1979 tour, then the following year on the cover of *Women And Children First*, this pointy, striped rock machine even played its part on Van Halen's debut album. Eddie's original started out life as an Ibanez Destroyer, before rock's most influential tinkerer took a saw to its hind quarters and readied the masking tape and spray paint to produce the silver/burgundy finish.

What we have here, then, is EVH's much-requested replica of the Shark. The eye-catching model apes the look of Eddie's with that striped finish (obviously), removed scratch plate (exposing the pickup switch wiring) and all-important cutout (bridged by a pair of turnbuckles). The body is ash, with a maple neck/pau ferro fingerboard featuring a compound radius. It comes loaded with a pair of EVH Wolfgang humbuckers, controlled by a pair of EVH Bourns pots (complete with low friction volume control for easy swells, treble bleed wiring to keep your high-end intact) and a 'harmonica' bridge. The Shark is available now, taking a bite of £1,299 from your bank account.

UP CLOSE



Body

Eddie's original offset body met the saw, creating the shark's mouth cutout that gives the guitar its name



Controls

As with the other Striped Series guitars, the Shark features EVH Bourns pots, with a low-friction volume control and treble bleed wiring



Pickups

EVH's Wolfgang humbuckers are renowned for a great mix of power and note definition, perfect for thick classic rock crunch

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

With a few warm-up gigs plus headlining at Coachella, Rage Against The Machine are set to make a mark in 2020





RATM's revival in what is sure to be a charged political climate is probably not by chance

RATM RETURN

There's an old British legend that, rather than dying, the mythical King Arthur and his knights are sleeping in a cave out there somewhere, waiting for the call in our hour of need to make their heroic return. Well imagine something like that but with knights wielding massive riffs, grooves and the message of revolution. And it's actually happening this summer: **Rage Against The Machine** are back.

If Tom Morello knew it was coming when TG spoke to him in Bristol back in June, he certainly didn't let on. Although he sounded more driven than ever as he prepared to support Muse with his solo project, and delivered a medley of Rage riffs plus a triumphant 'Killing In The Name Of' in his

set that night, it just wasn't the same as when he's taking the power back with one of the greatest live bands of all time. But now the four members of the maverick Los Angeles group have decided the time has come for their return in 2020.

The band will headline California's Coachella festival in Indio on 10 and 17 April over its two weekends, preceded by March dates in Phoenix, La Cruces and El Paso. Will there be more gigs? Very likely. Could there finally be the new music we didn't get between their sporadic 2007–2011 live returns? That's harder to say: while Morello has remained prolific – with his trusted 'Arm The Homeless' and 'Sendero Luminoso' guitars, recording and touring a solo album, and playing with RATM bandmates drummer Brad Wilk and bassist Tim Commerford in Prophets Of Rage – vocalist Zack de la Rocha

has been comparatively quiet. A long-mooted solo album is yet to surface.

But whatever RATM are back for, we wager it's much more about the current political climate than any financial payday. 2020 is an election year, after all. And we say that while reflecting on the mindset that Morello told us gave birth to the pioneering band in 1991. "I had already been in a band prior to Rage called Lock Up, that had great commercial aspirations," the guitarist explained. "We were signed to a label, and we were dropped. My career was done as far as I was concerned: at 27 years old, I'd had my grab at the brass ring, and I had failed to grasp it. So I made a solemn vow to myself that if I'm not going to be successful, I might as well play music that I just love. And that's when we formed Rage Against The Machine."

SIX OF THE BEST

Our favourite songs this month...



1. Bulls On Parade

Rage Against The Machine

Do we need an excuse to crank this riff? A surprise second RATM reunion is certainly a good one!

2. Diamond

Jimmy Eat World

New album *Surviving* is a 36-minute tour de force of all the band's strengths.

3. Pyramid Song

Astrosaur

This instrumental post-rock cover version is our favourite take on Radiohead ever – stunning guitar/bass interplay and righteous tones that have lead us all the way to their original material.

4. The Ghost Of You

My Chemical Romance

Another reunion calls for a timely revisit to the MCR back catalogue.



5. Crush With Eyeliner

REM

We're not sure if Scott Litt's 25th anniversary remix of *Monster* was necessary, especially as the album was already pleasingly guitar-heavy. But it does give a new slant on excellent songs.

6. Into Black

The Cold Stares

Bonamassa's favourite new band are a bluesy gem.

Cult Of Luna delivering their brand of drop-tuned post-metal



FIVE MINUTES ALONE

FREDRIK KIHMBERG

We catch up with Cult of Luna's guitarist ahead of their triple-guitar assault at the ArcTanGent Festival...

I got my first real six-string...

"My first guitar was a guitar my dad built me. He just made it out of pieces of wood he found in the garage. He tried to encourage me to play the guitar, so he gave it to me and I was like, 'yeah, but I don't really want to play,' so... I strummed it once in a while."

The kids are alright...

"It wasn't until I was 18 or something that I bought a guitar and started playing. So I started very late, and I bought a black

Epiphone Les Paul Junior, and then I started practising like, ten hours a day, listening to all my favourite records and playing along."

The times, they are a' changin'...

"I don't [own that guitar any longer] and I regret it; like many others say, y'know, 'you should never sell a guitar'. That was incredibly well-built and sounded fantastic. I didn't have any money back then and I was going for, I don't know, a real Gibson guitar. I

bought a Firebird from '91 and I still have it today. It's been cracked at the head three times but I keep repairing it."

We don't need no education...

"It's a bit weird because I'm a singer, I'm like a schooled singer from before I even started playing guitar, and I still have that. I usually don't like, write the theme or whatever on guitar, I usually sing it and then translate it, so usually I get these sort of patterns in my head and then I translate them to the guitar."

I can drop-C for miles...

"With Johannes, we play together in another band called Coma, and when I first started playing with Coma I was pretty new to the whole tuning down [thing]. He was working on a song and said, 'we need something here, another riff,' and I can still get the feeling, I still feel happy when I think back to when I wrote that riff, because it was just no effort at all, everything [came together] and he was like 'what the fuck was that?!'."

Kick out the jams...

"For the most part, Cult of Luna songs are drop-B, and since the *Vertikal* record came out in 2013 we drop it all the way down to G#, so it's really, really low. I never use baritone guitars, I use regular guitars and then I think the low E string is a .72, which is a baritone string. It works! Sometimes I tune it up to B, and since we're three guitarists I can play it in the B tuning while David and Johannes are using the G#, so I get different voicings."

We can be heroes...

"We're no shredders! I think my strength is to find melodic parts to like different voicings and arranging guitars and patterns to intertwine, or to layer. That's, when it comes to shredding at speed or, y'know, that's not my strong suit at all. I love it, but it's just not for me."

I'm gonna give you the keys to the Lamborghini...

"Try and find what it is you want to do; you can sit and work on scales or whatever and build up your speed, but ask the question, 'what is it I want to express with this?'. Find that, and I think that's key. In the beginning I spent so much time working on scales, or pentatonics or whatever, and you just get stuck in it. That's the risk I think - you're not playing freely, you're not listening to what you've got in your head. You know that this works with this, so you put them together, and it's, for me at least... it lacked imagination I guess."

Cult of Luna's new album, *A Dawn To Fear*, is out now on Metal Blade Records.

"ASK THE QUESTION, 'WHAT IS IT I WANT TO EXPRESS WITH THIS?'. FIND THAT, AND I THINK THAT'S KEY"



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Jakub Zytecki's laid-back new album, *Nothing Lasts*, *Nothing's Lost*, is out now

JAKUB ZYTECKI

Beauty, beats and sneaky techniques from the chilled Polish progressive

Jakub Zytecki uses a guitar like no one else we know. The guitarist and songwriter cut his teeth with proggers DispersE, but it's his laid-back new solo record *Nothing Lasts*, *Nothing's Lost* that feels positively box fresh.

"It's changed over the years," admits Jakub of his playing. "But I'm interested in making music that may be an easy listening experience at first, but if you give it a chance, you discover there's more to it – both in terms of arrangements and guitar parts."

His material is like a technical Trojan horse,

smuggling in astonishing fleet-fingered feats under broad strokes of melody. It's euphoric and dynamic, too, bottling a sort of sunshine-y warmth. In the ambient runs of *Sunflower* it's as if Jakub's myriad notes have been caught mid-air, flickering like sunlight through the trees.

"I often end up writing music that sounds uplifting, somehow nostalgic but also hopeful," he tells TG. "I love to use open strings and pull-offy riffing. I love the sound of the notes blending

into each other, the sustain you can get while using the open strings."

The closest comparison we can construct is the sort of gleefully mad tech-funk of Polyphia married with Plini's airy, Utopian compositions. Like the former, Zytecki is not averse to incorporating the unexpected. This is the first chill-out record we've heard to feature Meshuggah's master of brutality Frederik

Thordendal (who guests on *Creature Comfort*). Somehow, though, he makes it work. It makes sense of the mess and it's clear that *Nothing Lasts...* represents something of an epiphany for Zytecki – both as a player and a person.

"It's a love letter to my youth days, but I guess it also carries the hopeful feelings towards everything that hasn't happened yet," concludes Jakub.

FOR FANS OF Plini, Polyphia GEAR Mayones Legend, Line 6 Helix, AmpliTube 4, Neural DSP, Marshall JCM800

"IT MAY BE AN EASY LISTENING EXPERIENCE AT FIRST, BUT YOU DISCOVER THERE'S MORE TO IT"

Photo: Dominic Berthiaume, Kaja Sosnowska



HIGHER POWER

The hardcore band that could be your life

Higher Power's 2017 debut *Soul Structure* laid a quasi-spiritual positive message over a riveting stew of 90s-tinged rock tones and blissed-out psych vibes, summoned by guitarists Louis Hardy and Max Harper. "My bread and butter is hardcore and metal but I take a lot from noise, psychedelia, jazz, and hip-hop," explains Louis. "I like weird sounds amongst my riffs. Life is an ebb and flow of chaos and harmony. My playing style is the same."

Now new album *27 Miles Underwater*, is lined up for late January, with Gil Norton producing. The Madball meets My Bloody Valentine of first taster *Seamless* sounds like they've tapped directly into the distortion godhead. "When I play, it's a total release," says Louis. "There's not really any other area of my life where I can express as freely without fear."

FOR FANS OF Turnstile, Madball
GEAR Gibson SG, EVH 5150



SWEDISH DEATH CANDY

London-dwellers serving up twin-guitar treats

It's appropriate, given their name came from some disappointing Scandinavian liquorice, that Swedish Death Candy offer a up a dark, sludgy sound that feels inspired by Black Sabbath riffs, the Beatles' shadier psychedelia and Josh Homme's meaty chops.

Guitarists Frank and Louis lie at the core of this sound and trade more licks than your labradors. "Our sounds are quite different from each other," says Frank. "Not just from the gear we use, but

from our fingers as well. [Yet] I feel our sounds blend really well."

"My sound is pretty heavy on the midrange whereas he's more scooped and bassy," adds Louis. "His sound wraps around mine like a hug." Their second album *Are You Nervous?*, released earlier this year, is full of these, err, aural cuddles. "There's no secret," says Louis. "We're best buds and we understand each other."

FOR FANS OF Uncle Acid, Temples
GEAR Gibson SG, Duesenberg



PIST

WHO? Bury-based guitarist John Nicholson
SOUNDS LIKE Heavy flippin' metal. Like a tower of blackened stoner riffs, falling, with style.

GEAR Jackson Pro Series King V, Blackstar Series One 1046L6, Maxon ST-9 Pro+ Overdrive, BOSS MS-3

FOR FANS OF Orange Goblin
HEAR Mind Rotter



CORRIDOR

WHO? Montreal guitarists Julian Perreault and Jonathan Robert

SOUNDS LIKE The airy vocals of Fleet Foxes meet The Futureheads' call and response chord work
GEAR Fender Mustang 1966, Roland Jazz chorus 60, EHX Holy Grail, Boss CE-3

FOR FANS OF The Futureheads, Grizzly Bear
HEAR Topographie



PHOEBE GREEN

WHO? Manchester guitarist/songwriter
SOUNDS LIKE Compellingly witty, acerbic and meaningful indie pop, channelling her home town's synth sounds over driving J-type jangle

GEAR Fender Duo Sonic, Fender Super Champ, EHX Holy Grail

FOR FANS OF Arctic Monkeys, Lauren Hibberd
HEAR Easy Peeler

1 "This is a Manson MA-1 that those kind folks there put together for me to keep over here in the UK. It's got the Fuzz Factory and the Sustainiac, and the Psycho PAF pickup. Yesterday they built me a new neck for it that I just put on. It's super-wide and fat; I love big fat necks, and I think it sounds even better with a big fat neck. It's a trip; you've got to play it to fully understand it, they're awesome. I first saw a Manson when we were in LA. We had some writing sessions and we'd just gotten in from Japan, and I needed a guitar for these sessions. Manson weren't on my radar; there was this old SG that I was going to look at but that was out of the shop. I looked at the wall and I was like 'What's going on with that guitar?! What are those knobs?!'"

Interview Rob Laing Photography: Oily Curtis

ME AND MY GUITAR

JOE HOTTINGER

HALESTORM

The Halestorm axe-slinger on his love for his tricked-out Manson guitar

2 "I looked at it and I flipped on the [Z.Vex] Fuzz Factory. When you have that on it's like travelling through space! Just the craziest sounds come out of it, this big fat awesome fuzz tone. I think two of the songs we wrote started out because of the sounds that came out of it. So I use that on a few songs, and if I'm soloing it can be fun to get weird."

3 "With these pickups, they're both powered – the Sustainiac and the PAF here. I love the [Manson] humbucker because it's balanced throughout. It's the only guitar I have that has anything powered in it, and you get the same volume from the top string and the low string. It's a ripper, you can get as dirty as you like with it."

4 "Then the Sustainiac, it's not just a one-trick pony. It's fun to flip it on and get weird and make all these sounds, but just as a neck pickup it sounds so good; it's super Strat-y or Tele almost. Spanky and fat, and for clean stuff it just cuts. It's two totally different worlds between the two of them, and I love being able to go between the two within a song."

5 "If you've never used [a Sustainiac] – it's like a built-in eBow. I don't know the science, but it just keeps it going, man! It can go until the battery runs out, probably for days. You turn it all the way up and it's like a harmonic, just instant feedback, and you can just start squealing on it. Then in the middle it's a blend of the two. It's just a fun guitar. You play differently, and approach solos and improv differently. It's just such a cool tool."

6 "When I first got it, it had one of the kind of killswitch knobs, so I requested some buttons because it's just a different [action]. I've written a few things using that but nothing that's been on a record yet. That's one of the plans though. There are so many ways to approach playing this guitar that you wouldn't normally do, and that's why I love it."



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Legendary jazz guitarist
Django Reinhardt brought
the guitar into the spotlight

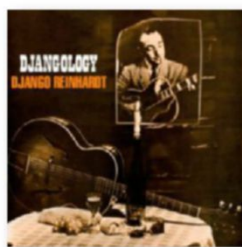


BACK TRACK

A GUITARIST'S GUIDE TO THE ARTISTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

JAZZ

Back in the days of big band jazz, guitar was simply an afterthought for bandleaders; guitarists were confined to the rhythm section, beneath serious consideration as solo performers. It wasn't until the innovations of all-string band players such as Django Reinhardt and later electrified axemen like Charlie Christian that jazz guitar became a creative force in its own right, developing a complex musical language that guitarists of all stripes should consider adding to their vocabulary.



START WITH DJANGO REINHARDT DJANGOLOGY (1961)

L Django Reinhardt's music was a creolisation of influences whose geography stretched from Romani camps to Parisian hotels and New Orleans' Bourbon Street, drawing into it French folk, Spanish flamenco and American jazz. *Minor Swing* and *Daphné* retain a European flavour akin to French-Italian *musette* waltzes, albeit sped up for a greater rhythm, but it's Reinhardt's two-fingered approach to fretting (due to an injury) and the compensating picking technique that makes these songs unique, with high-speed arpeggio soloing and octave runs. *I Saw Stars* and *Lover Man* showcase a fluid, conversational style of a performer who pushed guitar as a lead instrument to the forefront of popular music.

Download *Daphné*



THEN TRY JOE PASS VIRTUOSO (1973)

2 Although Joe Pass closed out the Sixties with a spate of disappointing releases, *Virtuoso* presents an artist shorn of accompaniment and gimmick, his considerable talent laid bare for the listener to admire. A stylistic shift from pick to fingerstyle results in a dizzying flurry of classical-tinged fretwork on *Stella By Starlight* and *My Old Flame*, with Pass layering the melody, basslines and complex chord phrasings of an entire band into one hydra-headed solo performance. This is decidedly technical stuff, but tracks like *All The Things You Are* and *How High The Moon* never lack for a sense of swing and even delight, reflecting their American Songbook origins.

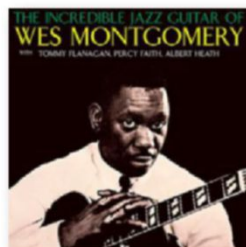
Download *All The Things You Are*



WORTH A SPIN MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA THE INNER MOUNTING FLAME (1971)

5 John McLaughlin had cemented his jazz credentials on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, but Mahavishnu Orchestra's debut is an altogether different beast. There's little elbow room on *Meeting Of The Spirits* and *The Noonward Race* as McLaughlin and his double neck Gibson shred through a blend of styles owing as much to classical, Spanish and Indian music as prog rock and the psychedelic badlands of Hendrix country. *A Lotus On Irish Streams* and *You Know You Know* offer a brief recess, but ultimately this album is a rush of blood to the head.

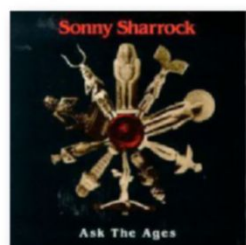
Download *You Know You Know*



DON'T MISS OUT WES MONTGOMERY INCREDIBLE JAZZ GUITAR (1960)

3 Ask someone to describe jazz guitar, and more than likely they'll describe Wes Montgomery: a fluid, thumb-picked bop with deep, bluesy roots often paired with his habit of progressing through single notes into octaves and then piano-style block chords. Opening with a skittish rendition of Sonny Rollins' *Airegin*, things settle into a groove as Montgomery and pianist Tommy Flanagan improvise solos across *D-Natural Blues* and *Four On Six*, before things get comfortable on the Dave Brubeck standard *In Your Own Sweet Way*. But it's on the effortlessly mellow classic *West Coast Blues* that Montgomery's playing achieves a perfect rhythmic and melodic equilibrium.

Download *West Coast Blues*



WILD CARD SONNY SHARROCK ASK THE AGES (1991)

6 Not one for the faint-hearted, Sonny Sharrock's final album is a brain-bending masterpiece of free jazz made somewhat inaccessible by the terrifying John Zorn-style sonic holocaust of its opening track, *Promises Kept*, which is a shame as there's a lot to love here. The languid soul of *Who Does She Hope To Be* is a welcome salve and at times reminiscent of Eddie Hazel's acid-steeped *Maggot Brain*, while *Little Rock* is a more conventional hard bop jam, Pharoah Sanders' sax contrasting against Sharrock's gritty rock fusion tone. *Once Upon A Time* serves as a fitting finale, imbued with some of Sharrock's most fiery, emotive playing.

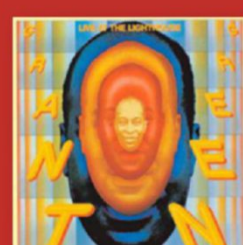
Download *Who Does She Hope To Be*



ALSO RECOMMENDED BILL FRISELL MUSIC IS (2018)

4 There are times when Bill Frisell's label as a jazz guitarist might raise an eyebrow (1991's *Where In The World* was pure Lynchian esoterica), but few other modern guitarists have done so much to deconstruct jazz guitar with such breathtaking results. This album is performed mostly solo and in a linear style, with only a whisper of electronic effects to add a little sustain to tender compositions like *Pretty Stars* and *Change In The Air*; and while Frisell only touches upon rock dissonance (*Kentucky Derby*), the fingerprints of other influences remain, including the avant-folk of John Fahey (*The Pioneers*) and the smoky, minor key noir of New American Cinema (*Ron Carter*).

Download *Ron Carter*



LIVE! GRANT GREEN LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO (1972)

7 A long-serving session man at Blue Note Records, the latter half of Grant Green's career was characterised by a move away from his signature laid-back bop into a more aggressive, funkified sound in evidence here: the band lay down a restless shuffle on *Windjammer*, Green's playing characterised by sharp, clean lines that borrow from sax players like John Coltrane and Charlie Parker, but his improvisations also turn to R&B on *Flood In Franklin Park* and *Jan Jan*. The lengthy run time of these leads to repetition, but Green and co. maintain a high level of energy and polish throughout.

Download *Windjammer*

HOW TO

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

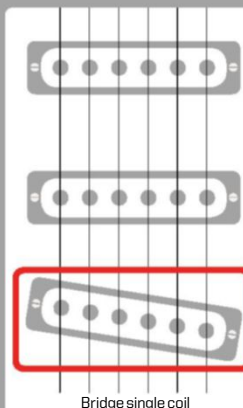
- ✓ Transpose with your capo
- ✓ Six open chord shapes
- ✓ Play chords as arpeggios



RIFF OF THE MONTH

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Though rich and lush sounding, this is a fairly generic guitar tone. Dial in a clean tone with a medium depth chorus effect. Roll off some treble (either on your guitar or amp) if you're using particularly bright single-coil pickups, or, alternatively, add a little treble if your guitar has humbuckers.

Chorus
Rate: 5
Depth: 5

SAM FENDER

The Borders

2

2019 has been a breakthrough year for the North Shields singer-songwriter, winning the prestigious Critics' Choice Brit Award and hitting the top of the UK album chart with his triumphant debut, *Hypersonic Missiles*. It must be good – Sam's released a full seven singles from the album so far. We're looking at the most recent release here. *The Borders* features chiming cleans

courtesy of Sam's, er, Fender American Pro Jazzmaster. The JM single coils don't quite have the bright top-end of, say, a Strat, so even if your guitar has humbuckers you may still get a suitable tone with just a tweak of your amp's treble.

If your guitar is in standard tuning place a capo on the 3rd fret to play in key with the recording. Sam sometimes downtunes to make the song easier to sing; he'll even move the

capo too – but 3rd fret allows you to play the right shapes in standard tuning. We've played the intro line slowly for you in our video on your Guitar Skills CD.

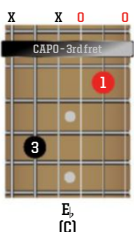
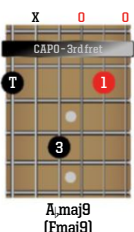
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:06–0:32

Tempo: 160bpm

Key: E, major (C major with capo on 3rd fret)

Main techniques: Chords/arpeggios



Notice that we've given each chord two names. The first name is the true pitch of the chord and assumes you're playing with a capo on the 3rd fret. The second is the name of the shape if you were playing capo-less! Why bother? Well, it's probably easier to remember the open shapes without working out a new name when you put a capo on.

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John McVie - Fleetwood Mac

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GETTING STARTED WITH...

MINOR PENTATONIC RIFFS

Use this essential scale shape in your riffs

"What's the minor pentatonic scale?"

This is a sequence of notes which guitarists use a lot. And we mean *a lot*! It appears extensively in blues, metal, jazz and almost any pop- and rock-based styles for that matter. Greats like Angus Young and BB King as well as more contemporary rockers like Scott Holiday, Jake Kiszka and Joel O'Keefe base loads of riffs and solos around it.

"Interesting. Tell me more."

Well, the minor pentatonic scale gets its name from 'penta-' meaning 'five' and '-tonic' meaning 'tones', or, more simply, 'notes'. Obviously, what we're telling you is that it's a five-note scale. And, just like a minor chord, there's a dark, moody vibe – that's what minor means, if you remember.

"It's a moody five-note scale. I get it! How can I use it in my playing?"

The easiest way to use the scale is to play one note at a time – so that means you'll be playing simple solos or riffs. We've looked at pentatonic solos before so let's look at riffs here.

"Okay. What exactly is a riff?"

It's a fairly loose term but generally it refers to a short repeating line of music. Think of tracks



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ How to use the minor pentatonic scale
- ✓ Two hard rock riff tabs
- ✓ Two minor pentatonic scale shapes

like *Layla* by Derek And The Dominos, *Seven Nation Army* by The White Stripes or *BLOW* by Ed Sheeran, Chris Stapleton and Bruno Mars. They are not all 100 per cent strictly pentatonic (close though!) but they're solid examples of riffs.

"I get it. Show me the scale!"

Sure! In *Shape Up Your Playing* (right) we've given you two shapes of the E minor pentatonic scale.

"Not sure I understand the second shape..."

It's still the E minor pentatonic scale, but we've added some notes below the E. Try ignoring the low notes and just playing from E to E – you'll start to get a feel for the low notes soon.

"Okay. How do I start playing my own riffs?"

Try playing our first tab example below to get the idea. We took a handful of notes from the first shape and just, well, played around! Improvising like this is a great way to write riffs. Just aim for something simple that sticks in your mind, rather than playing a solo.

"The second tab example seems harder..."

There's a quick flurry of notes at the start, admittedly, but it's all taken from the scale shapes we've looked at. Play through the scales again and it should start to feel familiar.

SHAPE UP YOUR PLAYING...

Two essential minor pentatonic scale shapes

There are two shapes to learn here. Spend most of your time on the first one – it's the easiest one to remember because it starts and ends on a root note. It's also played in open position, which makes it a bit easier. The second shape moves the scale up the fretboard and includes three notes *below* its root note but we can explain that!

1 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE IN OPEN POSITION

The dots tell you where to put your fingers on the fretboard. You'll be playing one note at a time, so, if you start on the lowest note and work your way up you'll have E, G, A, B, D and another E note.



E minor pentatonic scale

2 FARTHER UP THE FRETBOARD

This is the same scale but starting on a higher E. They might be in a different part of the fretboard but these are still the same five notes (E, G, A, B and D). It doesn't matter where you play them – these five notes always form the E minor pentatonic scale.



E minor pentatonic scale

1 EASY OPEN POSITION RIFF

TRACKS 07-08



Take a look at the first scale shape then play this riff where we've used every note from the E minor pentatonic scale. Try reordering them to make up your own riff.

2 SAME SCALE, DIFFERENT POSITION

TRACKS 09-10



This one's a bit harder. Just remember it's still the E minor pentatonic scale because the notes are the same (E G A B D).



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- ✓ Five barre chord shapes
- ✓ Easy ways to play tough barre chords
- ✓ Play chord sequences across the fretboard

WHAT THE F?

CAGED CHORDS

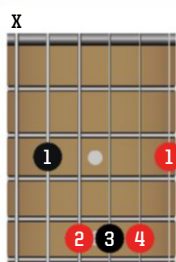
Here's a simple chord system that'll transform your rhythm playing and get you playing across the fretboard

It may sound like one of those dubious internet guitar tuition scams promising instant god-like shredding abilities, but the CAGED system is actually essential learning for every player. The name refers to five vital open chords: C, A, G, E and D obviously! Let's face it, most guitarists know these chords – so that's a great starting point. The question is, 'what comes next?'. Well, try playing an open C chord, followed by an 'A shape' C barre chord, then a 'G shape' C barre chord, and, well, you get it, C barre chords using all five shapes. We'll explain more below – suffice to say the benefit to you as a guitarist is that you can build sophisticated chord runs covering the entire fretboard.

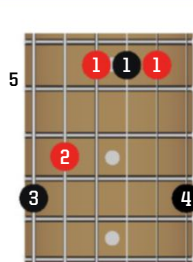
1 CAGED CHORD SHAPES



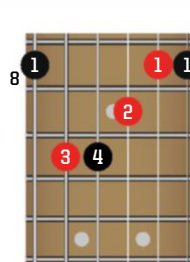
C (C shape)



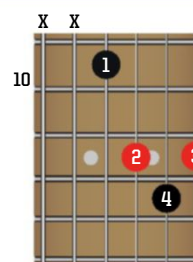
C (A shape)



C (G shape)



C (E shape)



C (D shape)

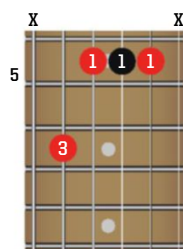
These are all C chords. The first one is an open C chord; then the others are barre chords based on one of the five easy CAGED shapes that

everyone knows. Try playing these chords one after another and see if you can spot where they overlap – where the shapes

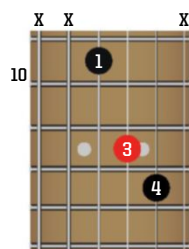
share notes, we mean. Try to see this as a joined-up sequence, rather than as five unrelated shapes.

2 MAKING IT EASIER

TRACK 11



C (G shape)



C5

Yes, we know, some of those barre chords are almost impossible to play. Experienced players leave out one or two strings from tricky shapes – it's easier to remember the full shapes but to play partial shapes. For example, C/E is based on a 'G shape' barre chord; C5 is essentially a 'D shape'.

♩=95

String	C	C/E	C/G	C5
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	5	8	13
3	0	5	9	12
4	0	3	10	10
5	0	7	10	10
6	0	0	0	0

Try playing through this run of simplified partial chords. As you do so, try to spot which CAGED shape each chord is based on.

3 SOUL/FUNK RHYTHM LINE

TRACKS 12-13

♩=95

String	C/G	C/E	Csus4/F	C/E	C	Csus4	C
1	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
2	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
3	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
4	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
5	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
6	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Here we're taking a big leap forward to show you how transformational the CAGED system can be to your rhythm playing. Our riff covers a few of the five shapes and it's way more creative than chopping away on one shape. Of course, it does take time to see how the shapes link together but that's all good. Your journey starts here!

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PATCH

The DL4 has 16 patches, and they're accessed by this rotary control.

DELAY TIME

This control sets the gap between the repeats that are played back by the delay.

REPEATS

The repeats control, often referred to as 'feedback' on other delay units, governs the number of delay repeats, as expected.

TWEAK & TWEZ

The 'tweak' and 'tweez' controls offer patch-specific parameters. The range of options was hard enough to

remember that Line 6 shipped the DL4 with a pair of handy stickers to affix to the front panel, with explanations for

the effect of these controls in each patch.

MIX

This control allows you to blend your wet and dry signals.

LINE 6 DL4 DELAY

Despite being one of the first big-box delay modellers on the market, the Line 6 DL4 remains popular and in production. It's probably the most loved pedal in Line 6's product line

In production since 2000, the Line 6 DL4 not only brought a huge variety of high-quality stereo delays to the hands of ordinary players, but had a powerful looper. So deeply tied to the growth in instrumental looping was the DL4 that it's featured in pop culture beyond guitar circles, with Pitchfork even publishing a long-form think piece on the musical legacy of the unit. Other pedals like the Akai Headrush could probably claim to

have been as influential for looping, but the additional features of the DL4, accessed by footswitch, like overdub, double time and one-shot triggers, put it far ahead in terms of functionality. Even today, there aren't many loopers as fun or intuitive.

Despite sounding excellent, they're legendarily unreliable. Several famous users, like Dave

Knudson of Minus The Bear used more than one on their pedalboards to have redundancy, and went through several a year when touring heavily. The sounds are what make it worth it, warts and all. Besides the looper, there are reverse and filter delays, ping-pongs, and of course a tape emulation. Not all of these are of the same quality as modern delays,

but for a 19-year-old unit, they're still perfectly serviceable.

Finally, it's worth saying that the DL4 has been disassembled in a multitude of ways, circuit bent and modded to death, and the results posted online. So if you're a dab hand at DIY electronics, it's a modder's heaven, which can't be said for many of the complex big-box delays that followed.

IT'S FEATURED IN POP CULTURE BEYOND GUITAR CIRCLES... THERE AREN'T MANY LOOPERS AS FUN OR INTUITIVE

UNDER THE INFLUENCE



LINE 6 HX STOMP

FROM £409

With 300 effects, including most of those that are found in the larger Helix unit, the Line 6 HX Stomp has more than enough delays for most players, as well as featuring a built-in looper. The Stomp's looper might not spark joy in the same way as the wonderfully intuitive DL4 looper, but it's functional, and the core delay sounds are excellent.



BOSS DD-500

FROM £289

Like most modern big-box delays, the brilliant BOSS DD-500 sports a powerful looper as well as an army of delay patches and parameters. The DD-500 can't quite go toe-to-toe with the excellent user interface of the modern Line 6 units, but in terms of tweaking patches and additional functionality like parallel delays, it has the edge, especially with recent firmware patches.



STRYMON TIMELINE

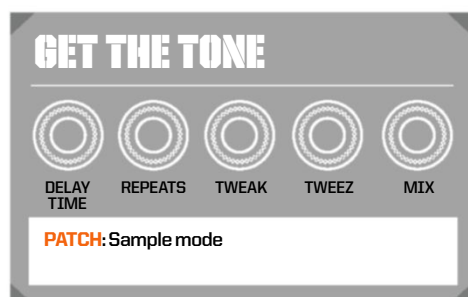
FROM £399

With a collection of excellent patches from their series of digital modelling units, the Timeline was revolutionary in terms of sound quality when it first came out, although it has been matched or surpassed by many of the units that have followed. However, if you want a smorgasbord of Strymon delays with a looper and MIDI control, you can't go far wrong.

CLASSIC TONES

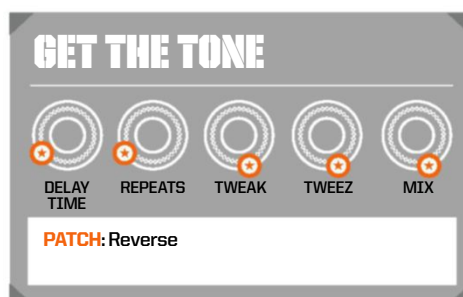
GET THE TONE #1 BRONTIDE LOOP HEAVEN

Though we could have chosen any number of tracks that use the acrobatic looping capabilities of the DL4, we instantly think of the now-defunct band Brontide. On the track *Arioso*, guitarist Tim Hancock builds up a number of loops, eventually looping his main lead line. When the climax of the song hits, he triggers the loop at double speed, bringing the house down and blowing the minds of every guitarist listening.



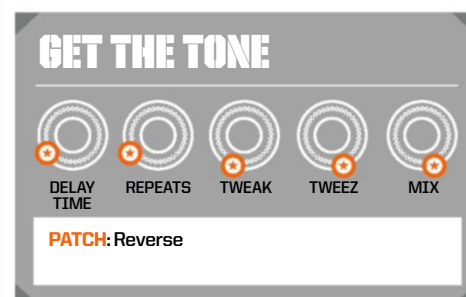
GET THE TONE #2 WIDE STEREO DELAY

For some early Verve-style shoegazing sounds, run this stereo combination into two amplifiers with their reverb turned up to give a bit more ambience. Tweaking on this patch adjusts the right delay as a percentage of the left, so small variations can result in chorus sounds, while different note intervals can also be dialled in by ear for exciting 'duelling stereo' effects.



GET THE TONE #3 POST-ROCK DELAY

Reverse delays work particularly well with post-rock style tremolo picking, and the reverse delays on the DL4 are no different, resulting in overlapping, mesmerising melody lines. By reducing the modulation depth and slowing down the speed, you can tighten up the sound of the delay, while a deeper modulation with a slightly quicker rate can be an excellent counterpoint for letting chords ring out.





Chad bought his Gibson ES-335 from Tom Petty's guitar tech and says it is "dead-on" to Keith Richards' one

Words Jonathan Horsley Photography Will Ireland



CHAD TAYLOR (LIVE)

Chad Taylor from Live explains why Jazzmasters are like family and the Marshall JCM800 is his desert island amp

guitar by any means. Those off-set guitars hadn't become popular. Y'know, you'd see Les Pauls, Stratocasters and Telecasters, but there's just something odd about the shape of it and the look of it. I flew over this 1961 Jazzmaster, which is Fiesta Red, which is aptly named Scarlett, after my second daughter, and then back at home there is a black 1961 Jazzmaster named Delilah, which is named after my youngest daughter. It's really funny because all the girls get jealous over which guitar I am touring with. I'll have Scarlett onstage tonight and what's kind of cool about that guitar is that it always tours as the backup and people really haven't seen that one so much, so it will be a cool one. And it will be cool that you guys get photographs of it."

GIBSON LES PAUL 1959 BURST REISSUE

2 "There are two Les Pauls in the boat. The two models are '59 reissues. I probably bought them in 1996. What's interesting is how different those guitars feel now from when I bought them. When I bought them I solely bought them as touring instruments, like maybe not the greatest-sounding Les Pauls, but now, after touring and playing with them for so long, they sound really so much better than most of the other Les Pauls I pick up. I think it just has to do with the blood, sweat and tears of being onstage."

GIBSON LES PAUL 1959 REISSUE GOLD TOP

3 "Both of those Les Pauls have recently been refinished. I would say that both of those guitars are more than 20 years old now, and I was never really happy with the lacquer finish on them originally. I had a gentlemen – I wish I could remember his name right now but he is based in New York – refinish both guitars. The lacquer that

As you might expect from a man who owns a guitar shop, Chad Taylor has got more than a few beauties.

Before we get to his rig he shares the story behind some of his favourite guitars back home, such as his 1961 "Mary Lou" Fender Jazzmaster, named after his eldest daughter. He bought it from César Díaz, Stevie Ray Vaughan's former tech, who applied the Mary Lou decal from the same

pack of stickers that the famous SRV decal came from.

He tells us of the '56 Les Paul he smashed on *Saturday Night Live* after too many green room martinis. "I would not do that now," he says. "I want to make that clear!" His tech Matt Gracey recovered the guitar – it plays better than ever. "It's a strange thing," says Taylor, "Les Pauls only get better with road miles in them, and tonight's have been refinished, repaired, and only now have found their voice after 20 years of touring."

GUITARS

FENDER 1961 "SCARLETT" JAZZMASTER IN FIESTA RED

1 "I had been a big Elvis Costello guy, and I can remember the first time I had ever seen a Jazzmaster; Elvis Costello holding one and I remember thinking to myself, 'Well, what kind of a guitar is that?'. So if you think about my childhood, when I was growing up, I mean, the Jazzmaster in particular wouldn't have been a popular

4



5



6



they've put on is so much better. We've got a snappiness to the guitar that had never been there – new saddles, new tuners. They have seen the world, been beat up a few times. I swear the Les Pauls that I have broken and then fixed sound better!”

GIBSON ES-335

4 “I bought that guitar from Tom Petty’s guitar tech. We played one of the very last shows with Tom Petty before he passed away and Tom wasn’t looking too good, but the show was amazing. And I stood over and watched the show with his guitar tech. Unfortunately his guitar tech, because he wasn’t touring he needed money, so he had this 335 that I liked so much and bought that guitar from him. The Gibson Custom Shop actually had built that guitar and it is dead-on to Keith Richards’ ES-335. I had to have it. I bought one other guitar from that guy. There were 10 prototypes of Dave Grohl’s Trini

Lopez made and I bought one of the 10. The colour is called Pink Champagne; it’s like a sparkle [finish]. I bought them both from the same guy and they are incredible guitars. I am so grateful that the guy thought of me and called me. I don’t want to spoil the setlist for you but we’re going to do *Paint It Black* so I have got to play this guitar on that song!”

FENDER BILL NASH STRATOCASTER IN SUNBURST

5 “Those are both made by Nash Guitars, by Bill Nash. They are all built out of Fender, licensed products, he just takes them through a relic’ing process, and I have to tell you I just love them. They are not inexpensive guitars; they are not 150-dollar guitars, but for what they are and how they play it is a great instrument to keep on tour and play on the road. They stay in tune great. I can really beat on them hard. I am a super-

bombastic, hard player – super-hard right hand. To me, that’s where the tone comes from. I mean I guess the left hand has something to do with it but a lot of it is how I strike with the pick.”

FENDER BILL NASH STRATOCASTER IN OFF-WHITE

6 “Those Strats have particularly high action. Everybody always laughs about my action, because if you pick up my guitars they are not very smooth feeling; they’re almost rugged and rough. We spend a lot of time adjusting two things on the guitars. One, the action. Two, really sorting through the gauges of guitar strings to make sure that we have the right gauge of strings. I like heavy strings, but, funnily enough, the older I get, I’ve lowered the gauges. But the gauge of string coupled with the action really means so much. And the third priority is setting up the pickup





height compared with the strings. I do not like high-gain guitars. I usually really like low-impedance guitars.”

AMPS

MARSHALL JCM800

7 “I always say that the desert island amplifier is a JCM800. I mean, to me, it is the epitome of rock ‘n’ roll. It’s the holy grail. Tonight I’ll have tons of fun, especially in a smaller venue. I’ll have tons of fun getting my guitars super-crunchy. Yeah, you can’t beat it. Soundmen love to run drums loud and vocals loud and the easiest way to fix that and have the audience hear your guitar is to play a JCM800, ‘cos it’s got so

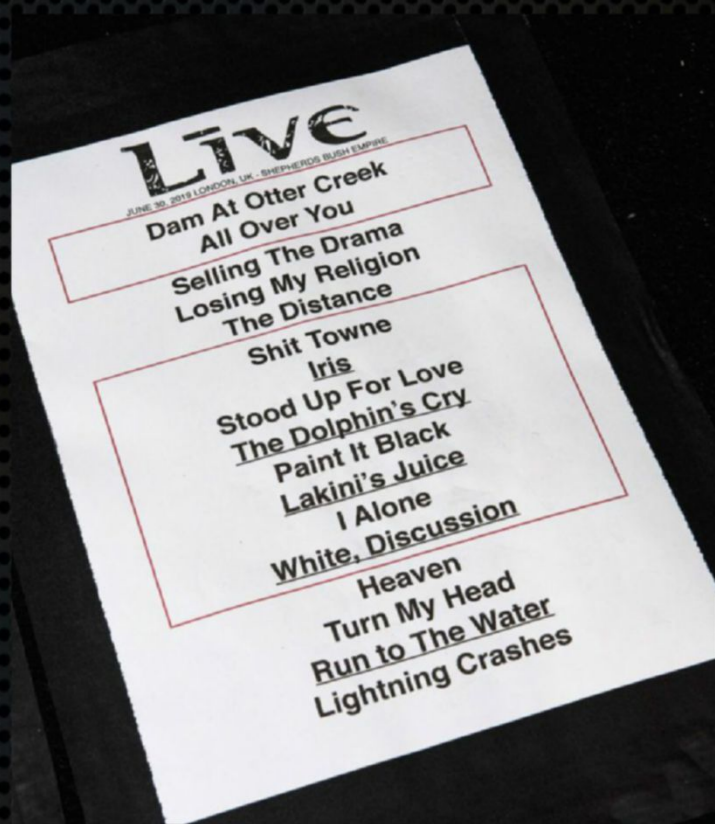
much mid in it the soundman can’t really turn it down.”

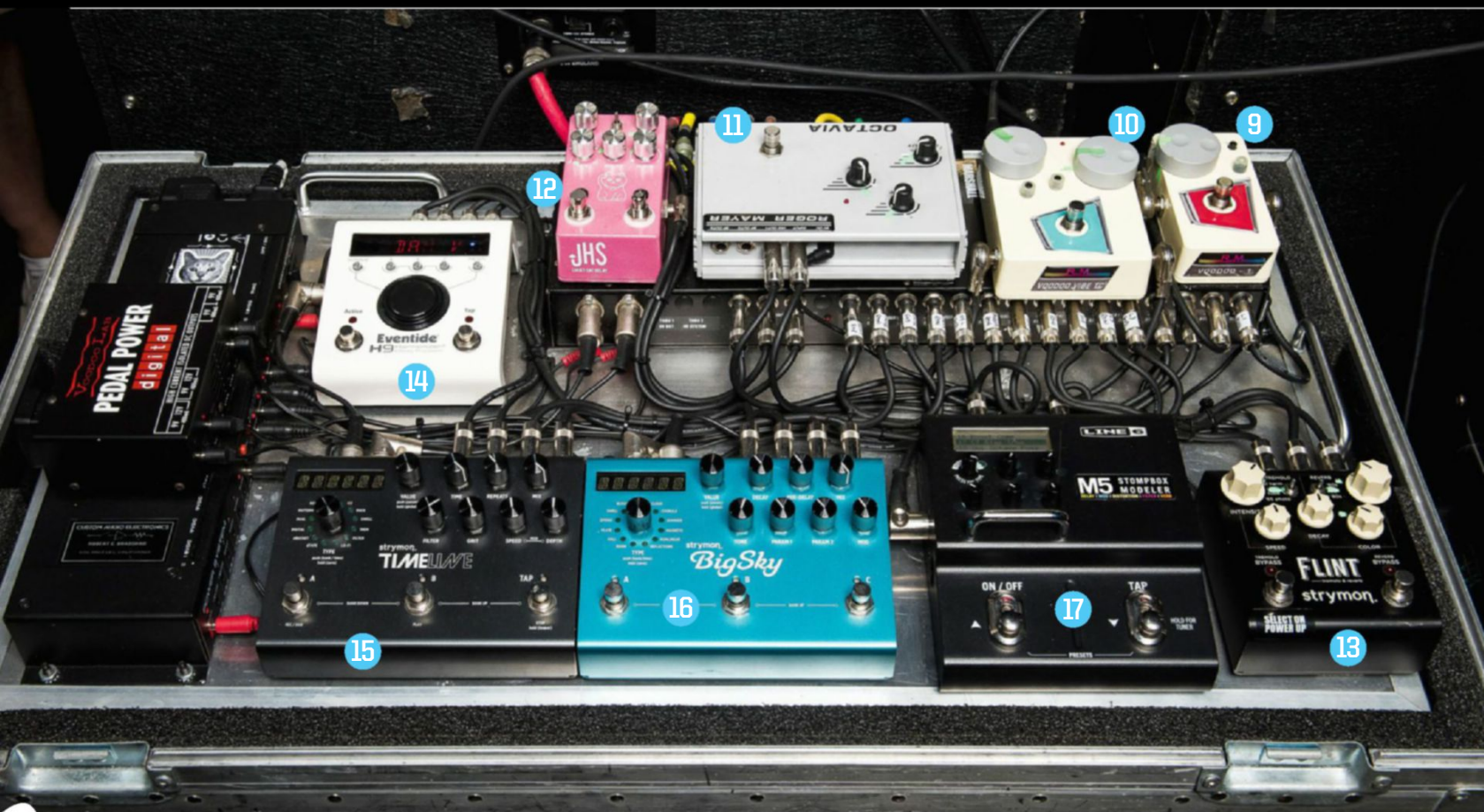
EFFECTS

CUSTOM AUDIO ELECTRONICS MIDI SWITCHING SYSTEM

8 “That was built by a guy named Bob Bradshaw of Custom Audio Electronics, and I actually convinced Bob to move from Los Angeles to Lititz, PA, and he is now a part of our shop [Tone Tailors] which is pretty awesome. He has worked with everyone – from Eddie Van Halen to the Edge, and, of course, building my rigs, too. I’ll have two mono signals onstage. All gain stages affect all amps, if that makes sense; if I step

“THE DESERT ISLAND AMPLIFIER IS A JCM800. TO ME, IT IS THE EPITOME OF ROCK ‘N’ ROLL. IT’S THE HOLY GRAIL”





on a distortion pedal it goes through both. I split the main guitar head off into stereo effects that only send the effects – stereo reverb, stereo delay, stereo modulation effects – and those are fed via DI into my in-ears. This small board, with a small footprint, is really three distinct guitar signals: Guitar Head A, Guitar Head B, Stereo Effects. I can do so much with this, so many different layers. And the programming is all handled by the Custom Audio Electronics foot controller. All the switching is done live, it's done in real time"

ROGER MAYER VOODOO FUZZ

9 "I am a fuzz junkie. This just happens to be the fuzz pedal of the moment. I've probably got another five or six that are getting swapped in and out of there some of the time, just for fun. But I love fuzz."

ROGER MAYER VOODOO VIBE

10 "The second one there is the Roger Mayer Voodoo

Vibe, which is essentially a Uni-Vibe, a more functional version of a Uni-Vibe."

ROGER MAYER OCTAVIA CLASSIC

11 "You can hear that in – for anyone that doesn't know – *Foxy Lady*, that famous sound, but that is used heavily on *Dolphin's Cry*. So each of those [Roger Mayer effects] are gain stage pedals that only go up to the amp heads."

JHS PINK PANTHER ANALOG DELAY

12 "It's one of the only modulation pedals that goes into the front of the heads. JHS is a great little manufacturer. Josh [Scott] who owns the company makes awesome pedals. It's just a good analogue-sounding delay."

"I'M A FUZZ JUNKIE. I'VE GOT ANOTHER FIVE OR SIX THAT ARE GETTING SWAPPED IN AND OUT, JUST FOR FUN"

STRYMON FLINT REVERB AND TREMOLO

13 "There is a Strymon Flint, which does, very simply, reverb and tremolo, and that does go into the front of the amps."

EVENTIDE H9 HARMONISER

14 "Now I'll jump into the stereo section. An Eventide H9 is doing almost any sound you are hearing from *Throwing Copper* because we used the Eventide 3000 [rackmount], tons of it. I don't use the harmoniser function too much unless I am harmonising it with a reverb, which is a little trickery."

STRYMON TIMELINE DELAY

15 "The primary delay, and again, those are for stereo delays, so somebody listening might say, 'What the hell is the difference between the Pink Panther and the Timeline?'. Well

the Pink Panther I have a really long quarter-note, or whole-note delays going on. So, if I am playing a guitar solo, and I want the delay to come back one-to-one with the guitar amps, I will turn on the pink guy. If I want more subtle stereo effects, slap-backs or anything like that, I'm going to the TimeLine because that is not going to make the front of the amp mushy."

STRYMON BIG SKY

16 "Essentially just like the TimeLine except that it is reverb. I can feed my signal into a reverb and delay the reverb. Or, I can have reverbs then add delay. The original signal is always pure."

LINE 6 M5 MODELLER

17 "It does the most basic modulations. This modulation only goes into the second guitar amp onstage. In *Run To The Water*, I have an octave up on this so my guitar onstage actually sounds like a 12-string guitar. One amp is playing the unmodulated original signal and the second amp is playing an octave up, and I am careful with the blend."

BREAKNECK BOOM



Introducing the new Jackson Spectra Bass – an array of assertive instruments featuring a sleek offset poplar Spectra body shape with large upper horn for precise balance and playing. Perfectly voiced Jackson pickups provide full depth and power, with volume, blend and flexible active EQ controls for fully customizable tone.

Jackson

JACKSONGUITARS.COM/SPECTRABASS

Words Grant Moon

WINSTON MARSHALL'S DUELLING BANJOS

As he puts his name to two new Deering banjos, the **Mumford & Sons** star introduces us to the guitar's plucky little cousin...

A black and white photograph of Winston Marshall performing on stage. He is wearing a dark suit and has long hair. He is playing a five-string banjo and looking upwards. In the background, a large crowd is visible in a stadium setting. Stage equipment, including a microphone stand and a keyboard, is in the foreground.

Since forming in 2007 London's hugely successful Mumford & Sons have had No.1 albums on both sides of the Atlantic, won Brit Awards and earned Grammy nods, and they've become poster boys for the 'neo-folk' revival. Winston Marshall's powerful five-string banjo playing has been a trademark on hit records like *Sigh No More* and *Babel*, and it's there amid the more electronic textures of *Wilder Mind* and current album, *Delta*. Marshall has now teamed up with leading US banjo company Deering to produce two new models. The Winston Marshall Signature model is a high-end instrument aimed at similar, top-level professionals, and comes with a price tag to match. Then there's the GOTR Goodtime Banjo, a more affordable model produced with the aim of encouraging more people to give the banjo a go. We caught up with Marshall to talk to him about these, the Mumfords, and to get his view on what TG readers might get out of this wonderful little instrument...

PLUCKY FELLA

Winston Marshall's five-string banjo playing is a trademark of the hugely successful Mumford & Sons' sound

Give us a little background on your association with Deering.

"We've been working closely with Deering for eight years now. They're a hands-on family business and they get stuck into everything with us. Jamie Deering is the daughter of the founders, she runs the business now, and she's been building charity banjos specific to gigs we do around the world. She'll find local charities and raise money for them through the auction of banjos made specifically for that location. So if the gig's in a certain state it'll have that state's outline engraved into it; they're really detailed. I genuinely believe Deering are making the highest-quality banjos today. They're all made by hand, unlike almost every other major banjo maker, and their value for money is pretty amazing."

And when did the idea for your signature model come up?

"Around the end of 2017. Two things came up in the conversation: the idea of a banjo that I can use – the very best, high-spec banjo for the top level. But inevitably that's unaffordable for many, because it has to be. I mean, I bought my first banjo for 150 quid at a shop called Ritz Music in Putney in 2005. It was a total piece of shit, factory-built thing, and it was brilliant for that reason. It was fun, it did the job and I got to grips with what a banjo is without spending a fortune. Most guitarists do the same, they start with an affordable guitar. I've got a cheap-as-chips bouzouki and mandolin, but if you enjoy the instrument you can go past that. And that's the idea with the GOTR Goodtime Banjo – you can try it out, it's fun to play, and even if you end up not liking it or not getting too deep into it, they're still pretty things. The idea was to make the cheapest banjo we could so people can give it a try and, hopefully, get a taste for it."

It can be daunting trying to choose your first instrument, whether it's guitar, bass, banjo...

"Yeah, it can get a little too complicated sometimes. I took my auntie guitar shopping for her daughter. We were walking down Denmark Street in London and it was completely overwhelming for her. And it was for me when I was a teenager – you see these labels and these prices, and there are pros picking away in the corner, and you



"IF YOU'RE A FINGERPICKER ON GUITAR YOU'LL HAVE AN ENJOYABLE TIME ON BANJO"

ABOVE
Winston mainly plays three-finger style – Scruggs style – and occasionally clawhammer

don't know where to start! It doesn't need to be complicated. Start with something cheap and cheerful, like I did. It's about getting the maximum amount of people to have a go and have fun. That's what music should be, after all. That said, I think the Goodtimes really stand up – you could use them on recordings to a pretty high level and it would take a very good ear, certainly one better than mine, to distinguish it."

You mention GOTR. That stands for Gentlemen Of The Road, right?

"Yes. It's really an umbrella for all Mumford & Sons activity that isn't immediately in the realm of making music and playing gigs. We host our Gentlemen Of The Road festivals, and the GOTR name also relates to the charity banjos."

Your Goodtime Banjo has an open back, whereas your signature

model's body is enclosed. What difference does that make?

"With the banjo there are no rules, just traditions. A resonator banjo is one that has a back, and it's just louder. Traditional bluegrass players would want it loud and punchy. But in clawhammer or mountain style – that more Appalachian, old-time way of playing [see *Finger-Pickin' Good*] – you want a warmer sound, so you'd use an open back. And the simple reality is, not having a resonator is much cheaper. But it doesn't really matter – they're both five-string banjos and you can still play everything you would on a resonator on an open back."

But you started out as a guitarist yourself, didn't you?

"Yes. Blues that was my first love on the guitar. I listened to a lot of old-time stuff, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters. But I got quickly into rock like AC/DC, and there's a link there. A Robert

Johnson lick becomes an Angus Young lick when played on an electric guitar, almost. My first band was called Gobbler's Knob! We did covers of AC/DC, ZZ Top, Audioslave, all the teenage classics."

And what prompted your move towards banjo?

"It was a combination of things. The first banjo I heard was on the *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* soundtrack, which T-Bone Burnett did. Before then there was an album called *New Favorite* by Alison Krauss and Union Station hanging around at home. Their banjo player Ron Block is still one of my favourite pickers, and I think that was the start of it. I'd heard banjo on Neil Young and Grateful Dead records but didn't appreciate what it was I was hearing. I went to school with Charlie Fink from Noah And The Whale. He's a few years older than me and I saw him playing a banjo in school once and thought, 'Oh that's interesting, what's that?'. Eventually I started a nine-piece country rap band – fiddle, mandolin, banjo, a rapper, a lot of singers and even more hangers-on! That became my passion, and I got deeper into folk and rootsy instruments. I bought an Ozark dobro for 150 quid from Denmark Street, which I played for over 10 years, well into Mumford & Sons' career. Only recently have I got a new one. Those cheap instruments might be made of plywood, but they really can sound great!"

When it comes to banjo, who's the Hendrix?

"That would be Béla Fleck. Probably 80 per cent of the banjo you'll hear is him. But my personal favourite is Matt Menefee, who plays for the band Cadillac Sky. If there's one album to listen to it's their first record [*Blind Man Walking*, 2007]. The banjo on that is bananas, especially on *Insomniac Blues For Matthew*. His playing's in the Scruggs tradition. If Béla Fleck is the Hendrix then Earl Scruggs is the Muddy Waters. It all starts with Scruggs, who pioneered the three-finger style."

What playing style do you prefer?

"On the majority of Mumford & Sons tracks I play three-finger style – Scruggs style – and occasionally clawhammer [see *Finger-Pickin' Good*]. I use picks on my thumb and index and middle fingers. If you're picking fast you don't

BELOW

Winston's Deering signature banjo is he says, "the very best, high-spec banjo for the top level"



want the strings getting caught by your fingers, so they make your playing smoother, and that can be a jump for guitarists. Some use thumbpicks but few use fingerpicks, but it's like riding a bicycle – if you put the hours in you'll get it."

So fingerpicking would be the immediate challenge for a guitarist trying out the banjo?

"Yes, so if you're a fingerpicker on guitar then you'll have a satisfying and enjoyable time moving over. But if you're not rolling and picking you're going to need to put the hours in. You can just strum it and you'll have fun just boshing out the tunes, but if you want to get into the more traditional style then you're going to have to put the time in."

What about the fretting hand?

"It's the same, a guitarist will be comfortable with the left hand. The standard tuning for a five-string banjo is open G [G-D-G-B-D] and that's where I recommend you start. The great thing about that is that you can just capo it up so you can play any key, bish bash bosh! Anything to reduce thinking, and the capo does precisely that."

But the fifth string, that G, is the highest-pitched – that'll be weird for a guitarist!

"It is a bit of an upside-down sensation, but again you get used to it. You actually don't tend to play that string much, it's just used as a drone string, so it's quite practical that it's out the way. You don't fret it – you tune it to whatever note you want and play it with the right hand. It starts out being a bit annoying but after a while you're glad it's there."

And once you're comfortable with that, where next?

"There's a really nice drop-C, where you drop that D string down to the C. That gives you a lower, warmer sound which is nice. I bounce between those. Another thing I do is go into tunings where I don't know what they are. Joni Mitchell did a lot of that on guitar and she got inversions that nobody had ever found before. That attitude is really helpful because you can get weird sounds."

Thinking of the Mumfords, is *I Will Wait* a tricky banjo line?

"Well, a lot of our songs happen to be in D, so that'll be an open G tuning with the high drone string tuned to A. Await



FINGER-PICKIN' GOOD

The two dominant picking techniques for banjo: three-finger style and 'clawhammer'

The principal picking style for bluegrass music is the three-finger style or Scruggs-style, named after pioneering banjo player Earl Scruggs. Here, the right hand thumb, index and middle finger alternate to pick the strings using either a forward roll (thumb-index-middle), backward roll (middle-index-thumb) or combinations of the two. Along with the banjo's open tuning this technique allows for fast, smooth arpeggios. Note that in fingerstyle guitar the thumb note is usually the lowest of the chord – often the root – and is played on the on-beat. On banjo however, your thumb hits the top G string, which is the *highest* open note, and typically played on the off-beat. This inversion adds to the distinctive rhythmic sound of banjo arps.

An older picking method, 'clawhammer' style is associated with North American folk music, often called 'old-time' or 'mountain music'. Just two digits needed here – the thumb and either the index or middle finger – to get up and running with that classic 2/4 banjo rhythm, which legendary folk plucker Pete Seeger called the 'bum-ditty' rhythm. In an open-G tuning, the index/middle finger hits the D or middle G string (bum!), then strums across all the strings except the high G [dit!], with the thumb then playing that high G (ty!) to complete the bar.

My Soul is like that too. It's not a complicated arpeggio but it is quite fast. Most of the stuff I've done with the band I can whittle down to four or five different arps [arpeggios], in varying speeds and tunings. *The Cave* is a fun place to start. It's a very simple arp with a tiny hammer-on and very simple chord changes. That's in E – that D tuning capo'd up. Most pickers will be able to work that out by ear."

Do you find that changing up instruments can inspire your songwriting?

"Yes. A new guitar, a new pedal can spark a new idea, and even having time away from the banjo can make it feel like a new instrument. I just got an amazing new dobro that Gill Landry sold to me; he was playing it with Old Crow Medicine Show. No two instruments are the same, and this one got my mind ticking in a different way. New gear does bring out new ideas for songs, but I guess it's an expensive way to write!"

The Mumfords' last two albums, *Wilder Mind* and *Delta*, took a more electronic/synth turn. Was that a positive change for you?

"I think so. With *Wilder Mind* we'd been glued to our instruments for six or seven years, writing and touring the first two records. So when we came back together we were dying to play other things and that burst out of us. We were just excited about electronic instruments and synths. *Delta* was exciting for me personally because Ben [Lovett, from the band] had come up with a framework in which we'd use traditional instruments but make them sound a way they hadn't sounded before, with a lot of filters, manipulating the sound in different ways. That was a really good challenge, it invigorated me. In *Picture You and Woman* there's tons of banjos layered on top of each other. You don't realise you're listening to banjo, and that's exciting. The banjo's pretty dynamic, maybe not as dynamic as the guitar, but with a pickup in it you can put it through all sorts of pedals. My signature model has two outputs, and two different pickups. So there's no reason, say, Tom Morello couldn't make a great noise with it!"

Both the Winston Marshall signature model and *GOTR Goodtime Banjo* are currently available on import from www.deeringbanjos.com

OUIJA



Photo by
Jeff Yeager

AN ICON RETURNS

Introducing the newest collaboration by Kirk Hammett and the ESP Guitar Company. The Sparkle Ouija collection is available in both red and purple metal flake, featuring the classic Ouija Board graphic in gold. Production will be limited on both ESP Custom and LTD versions of these instruments. Available worldwide through authorized ESP dealers and distributors.

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FEATURE

SLIDING OVER

Martin's new album has seen him bring what he knows from lap steel playing over to electric bottleneck slide



Words Chris Bird / Stuart Williams Photography Olly Curtis / Joby Sessions

MARTIN HARLEY'S GUIDE TO SLIDE

As the lapstyle virtuoso switches to a strapped electric, we quiz him on exactly how to get to grips with a bottleneck

CHOOSING YOUR WEAPONS
Not all slides are created equal...
“When you’re playing slide guitar, obviously you need one of

these. The slide you use and the finger you use it on is really personal. I’ve come to slide guitar from playing lap steel, so traditionally I’m comfortable playing that way with a heavy tonebar. But for this new record, this instrument is much better. So it’s very much a learning curve for me. I’ve been through glass, ceramic, short, fat, heavy, and all kinds of slides. I’ve settled on this fairly heavy brass slide at the moment. I’m not sure how much it weighs, but it’s quite thick, so heavier than the regular Jim Dunlop slide that you’d just walk into a store and buy. It’s a bit more cumbersome, but the advantage of a heavier slide is better sustain. What you lose in maneuverability I think you gain in tone and sustain. The one thing I would say is that it just takes time to get comfortable, and everyone’s approach is going to be different. So try a bunch of stuff until you find something you’re happy with. You’ll find metal slides have a different sound to ceramic or glass slides which are smoother and have a less bright or aggressive sound to them.”

DIGIT-AL PICKING

Get your fingers used to slides and picks

“When I first started playing slide, I was much more

comfortable on the third finger, and I don’t think that’s unusual. Your little finger is not really your pointing digit, so I felt that I got

better tone on my third finger. But over time, the notion of having these three fingers to work independently on the fret has created more voicings and more





OPENING UP

Martin says that open E and open D tunings are best for playing slide

take the slide and barre across the third fret – you’re not looking to put your finger where you’d normally fret the notes, you need to be directly over the fret to create your G – and the reason I like those open tunings is that you have the main parts of a 12-bar blues. You’ve got your [open] I chord, then if you put the slide over the fifth fret, you’ve got your IV, then the V up there at the seventh fret. Obviously at the 12th fret you have your octave. So as a beginner with a simple slide and an open tuning you can get started. I’m sliding up to the notes, approaching the notes as opposed to just placing the slide on the strings which will create a noise. Sliding up to the notes from a couple of frets below will give you that lush sound that we all associate with slide. Those are the building blocks of a lot of songs. What you should be concentrating on is getting everything in tune; try not to push too hard on the slide. If you do, it’ll bump into the frets, so aim for just the right amount of pressure to make that note clean with no bumps, no clicks. It’s aided by having a slightly higher action than you might normally have. What you’re really trying to achieve is getting the slide right over that fret to get the note you’re after. Once you’ve nailed the accuracy for those basic chords and approaches you can start looking at isolating single notes.”

FIND INSPIRATION

How Ralph Macchio inspired him

“I first started playing slide guitar after hearing the soundtrack to a movie called *Paris, Texas*. I discovered that the soundtrack was by Ry Cooder, and I’ve been a huge fan of his ever since; it’s pretty hard to ignore him as a voice in the development of electric slide guitar playing. If like me you were a young, interested musician when the movie *Crossroads* came out, there’s a great section where Ry Cooder is playing his music sat behind The Karate Kid (Ralph Macchio) sitting in a room mourning the loss of his girlfriend. I think it’s called *Feeling Bad Blues*, and that has a very indicative Ry Cooder sound to it. This is not it, this is a very vague version of it by me, but it demonstrates tremolo bottleneck playing in an open tuning.

“They’re some of the aspects you’ll hear in Ry Cooder’s playing: beautiful vibrato, it’s not completely clean and it’s not completely distorted. The pickup selection is a mixture of the front and back pickups, and you can hear from the

“TRY NOT TO PUSH TOO HARD ON THE SLIDE OR IT’LL BUMP INTO THE FRET”

tonal opportunities than having a slide on the third. So my little finger has become the natural choice.

“Again, I’m a lap steel player, so traditionally I keep a rhythm by pedalling two open notes – I’m tuned to open E – so a lot of my technique involves keeping this consistent bassline going, and I’ve found the thumbpick has been really helpful in that department.

“Having moved over to electric fairly recently, it’s not as necessary to create volume. On an acoustic instrument it really helps locate those bass notes and make them really prominent in solo playing. But it has other advantages in that you can do things you can do with a guitar pick, that you can’t necessarily do with your hands. Little sweeps, and you’ve always got the alternate picking advantage at hand. But yeah, when I’m

playing electric, I swap between using them and not using them. It’s a really personal, tonal preference thing. You certainly can hit the guitar a lot harder and rock out more. But yeah, I picked the thumbpick initially to isolate these basslines so I could play lead lines on top. You can still do that with your thumb, and you’ll get a different kind of sound. Some people just like that personal connection of your thumb hitting the strings.”

SLIDE 101

Get started with playing slide

“I would say there’s a few key factors for learning to play slide guitar. I tune to open E or open D, generally speaking. I find these two to be the most simple. When you play all the strings open, you’ve got an open E chord. If you just

lap steel pickup at the back that there's elements of lap steel/pedal steel sound to that style of playing."

MUTE POINTS

Keeping your notes clean

"I'm playing here in an open-E tuning, which means you've got an open-E major chord, then your A and B. I think the temptation when you first start [playing slide] is to play big open chords: they sound fun, and why the hell not? But what I've found over time is that I want to have cleaner single-note runs when I'm playing, so the techniques I'm employing to single out certain notes, is on the high E string, for example, I angle the slide out. As opposed to having the slide covering all the strings, tip it out, just a little bit. That way I'm avoiding getting all these other notes that I don't want in there. So, dampening a little bit with [your picking] hand, you can cover the strings with your palm [at the bridge] if you want to, angle the slide out just a little bit to isolate single notes on the high E string.

"Now, you can obviously isolate strings elsewhere, but you need to think about how you're going to keep those other strings quiet. So if we move down to the B string, I'm kind of pinching the E and the G here. From the back of my thumb to the tip is muting these bottom strings, and I can use my first finger to play these notes on the B string without any of the other notes ringing out. As you move further down the fretboard, I'm really continuing to just pinch the strings that I'm trying to isolate. It also means you have your thumb rested on the string below ready to go to help facilitate multi-note runs."

LOOK OUT FOR HACKS

Simple slide-playing tricks

"My new album is an interesting transition because traditionally I've been an acoustic player, or a lap-style player. So there are a lot of traits in my playing that come from that style: alternate picking, pedalling bass notes. But I wanted to get on electric guitar, have a band and be in a musical experience that involved communication with other people. So this album has been a lot about that. And the cornerstone of that has been to combine what I know from lap steel playing and what I have in the arsenal from playing acoustic, and trying to put those together on the electric guitar. So I'm not picking super-heavy distorted



A WEISS MAN
The Weissenborn and acoustic specialist opts for a more electric approach on 2019's *Roll With The Punches*

sounds, because I'm applying finger picking techniques and if the gain is too high you lose all the definition. An example of the sort of sounds I'm heading for on the new record are a combination of fingerpicking and slide.

"One of the great advantages I've found from moving over to electric bottleneck slide over lap slide is I'm finding it easier to create different voicings. One trick I've learnt recently is how to go from a major chord, just pressing the string behind where your major note is with the slide, you can create a minor. If you're light enough with the slide and press down just a semitone below, the string will drop below the contact point of the slide and create the minor chord. That was quite a revelation for me – I'm sure there's lots of other people out there doing it, who I've stolen it from – but lap slide can be quite limiting."

BEYOND THE BLUES

There's more to slide than pentatonics

"I think at the beginning of my journey with slide guitar, I always associated it

with the American South and the Mississippi Delta and all the amazing players that I grew up listening to, and the people they listened to. Way, way back with Robert Johnson, Blind Willie Johnson, super-vocal sounds. Then ending up with glorious players like Kelly Joe Phelps, who if you haven't heard you really should. He's one of the great masters of slide guitar as well as people like Ry Cooder and Derek Trucks.

"But, over time I realised that the delineation of notes from using a slide and always being connected with the blues, that there's also Indian and Eastern influences that really suit the slide guitar because it's such a vocal instrument. Because you're not fretting, and you're sort of in-between notes with a vibrato that in my opinion acts more like a human voice, you can do more interesting sounds that draw on world music influences.

"Sacred steels were pedal steel players who played in church bands playing lap steel, and they had this wonderful vocal quality to them as well – Aubrey Ghent was a great player – where they'd use the swell of the volume control. I'm wrapping my finger round the volume pot, almost like a pedal steel player would be using a volume pedal. You've probably seen people like Jeff Beck use that technique as well, but I just love the human voice aspect that it adds to your note choices."

SLIDE EFFECTS

Enhance your slide licks

"I do use some effects when I'm playing slide, but really they're quite minimal. I'm playing through a Fender amp with fairly low gain. In a gig situation, I'd be turned up with a bit more gain. Today I'm adding a little bit of overdrive from an Electro-Harmonix Soul Food because I'm at low volume. It just fattens up the sound, which is what I want from slide.

"Reverb is a personal choice. I use a Strymon Flint; reverb helps with slower slide phrasing, and the Flint's perfectly versatile. There are plenty of reverbs out there that do that job. The main key for the slide sound that I want to make is a short delay. I have it on a very short regeneration; it's a subtle difference; almost sounds like I'm playing in a boxy room. It's just a little slapback echo dialled in subtly to help the voice sing.

"That's pretty much all I use. I've got a compressor on here today, but in a live setting I find that the volume of the amp naturally compresses enough."

SLIDE RULES

Learn slide guitar from one of the best

Although Martin plays with the slide on his fourth finger, you'll find it's generally easier to control when worn on your third, especially if you're a slide newbie. Keep your first finger just behind the slide and resting on the strings for additional damping.



The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part and a bass part, both with standard notation and tablature. The guitar part is in E major, 4/4 time, with a tempo of 95. The bass part is in E major, 4/4 time, with a tempo of 95. The score is divided into two systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff includes a key signature of E major (three sharps) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff includes a key signature of E major (three sharps) and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part features a melodic line with a slide in the first measure of the first system. The bass part features a rhythmic line with a slide in the first measure of the first system. The score is written for a guitar and a bass, with the guitar part in E major and the bass part in E major. The tempo is 95. The score is divided into two systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff includes a key signature of E major (three sharps) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff includes a key signature of E major (three sharps) and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part features a melodic line with a slide in the first measure of the first system. The bass part features a rhythmic line with a slide in the first measure of the first system.

Keep your thumb playing the alternating bassline while your first and second fingers pick out the melody. Start slowly and build tempo gradually. Too much string noise? Try angling your slide outwards so that it only makes contact with the first string.

♩=70 Freetime

E⁵

w/slide

let ring - - -

TAB

0 2 3 2 0 0 2 4 0 3 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 4 2 0

0 p p i m i m p i m i p i m m p p i p i p i p i p

A⁵

3 5 5 3 5 3 0 3 5

2 RY COODER INFLUENCE (CONT'D)

3 i p i p p p i p m i m p m

The influence of slide great Ry Cooder is in evidence here. Keep the low E5 chords and open fourth string ringing while adding the melody on the first string. Add vibrato by oscillating the slide along the string, using micro-movements either side of your target fret.

3 STRING MUTING

0 2 4 5 7 7/9 7/9 7 5 5/7 5 4 4 5 4 2 4 5 2/4 2

Here you can pick up one of the most crucial slide techniques: muting out idle strings with your picking hand. Martin's doing this with the melody line here but the same principle applies for bass strings too. The idea is to pinch a couple of strings to keep them quiet as you move your slide.

4 EASTERN INFLUENCES

0 3 0 4 4 [4] 5 4 0 4 4 5 7 8 7 0 5/7 11 7 8 7 0 5 11 11 7

0 4 5 4 0 2/4 2 0 2 0 0 0 2 5 4 4 5/7 5/7 5 4 5 4 2 4 2 0

0 0 0 2 5 4 7 5 9 7 0 0 11 0 0 NH 12 2 12

Martin demonstrated some Eastern influenced licks for us too. Let the low notes ring as long as possible when indicated in the tab. In the final bar tap the 2nd fret with your slide (you don't need to pick the string) to play the F#, then slide up to the 12th fret.

Words: Jonathan Horsley
Photography: Will Ireland

MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE

Emily Wolfe talks pop hooks, the untamed spirit of rock 'n' roll, and why she is addicted to layering gain

WOLFE AT THE DOOR

Blues-rock guitarist, singer and songwriter, Emily Wolfe released her self-titled debut album this year



As you would expect of any blues-rock player out of Austin, Texas, Emily Wolfe's tone has a whole heap of sizzle. But don't expect her self-titled debut album to ease into a 12/8 shuffle. Wolfe laces the blues with a pop sensibility gleaned from the Billboard Top 100. It's a heady combination, a sound that saw her at home sharing stages with the likes of Heart, Gary Clark Jr and the Pretenders following the release of her 2014 EP *Roulette*.

A couple of singles followed, but her debut album is a long time coming. It saw her head into Portside Sound in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, to record with producer Ben Tanner (Alabama Shakes) before finishing the recording in Austin. Evan Nicholson on bass and Clellan Hyatt on drums rounds out her lineup, the power trio format affording her guitar plenty of space to fill, which she does courtesy of a cornucopia of gain pedals and an Epiphone Sheraton, and one of the most effervescent rhythm tones around today.

EYES RIGHT

"If I want to do a longer solo I'll just turn round and give him one of these [raises eyebrow]," Emily says



"IN THE LIVE SHOW I LIKE TO EXTEND GUITAR SOLOS... IT'S MOSTLY ABOUT JAMMING"

➔ It sounds like you make room in your arrangements for improv. Do your songs change much when you play them live?

"They do. In the live show I like to extend guitar solos. The live show is mostly about jamming. There are some songs that will stay true to the arrangement from the record but a lot of them it's, y'know, just playing guitar solos – it's great fun. I love pop arrangements so much, and I like for my songs to be arranged that way, then live they are there to do whatever I want with on the guitar."

What is the essence of the authentic rock 'n' roll experience? Does it lie in that freedom to break the structure of the song in the moment?

"Yeah, I think that is what's exciting about playing live for me. I don't know where I am going to go

with it. If I get there, that's like the best feeling, and then if I miss a note it's like losing a level in a videogame. I come back. I can make something else up. Something else that sounds kinda weird. So that is an adrenaline rush for sure. But the rock 'n' roll experience to me is just making stuff up on the spot and seeing how cool you can make it."

Exactly! Embrace mistakes and happy accidents alike. Do you have a visual shorthand with the band?

"We've been playing together for about four years and my drummer and I give each other a look. If I want to do a longer solo I'll just turn round and give him one of these [raises eyebrow] and then my bass player and I are so musically locked in together that we just know where the other is going to go inherently, so it is a lot

of fun to play with those guys because we are very keyed into each other and listen to each other."

So much of playing in a band is about body language and listening...

"Yeah it's body language and eye contact; that is the thing. It's the key to keeping my live show where I want it to be. The guys just know what a certain level of eye contact looks like and what it means. If I'm like that [cocks head]... A lot of times I'll go in and I'll accidentally 'mess up' and then I'll look over at my drummer and he'll give me a look and we'll get back on the same page and that's fun too. That's fun in itself, just figuring out what the other person is thinking."

It's fun for the audience. No one wants house-trained rock 'n' roll
"I hope so. Oh, yeah. I think

that's something I love, too. I've got an outline of what I want the show to be and then having solos made up on the spot, and if they are really cool then that is the best feeling. It's like, 'Oh my god! I landed this!' It's not planning a lot. That's what I like about the Grateful Dead and a lot of 70s prog-rock bands. They just go off the rails a lot in their live shows. Thin Lizzy has got the hits, y'know, but then they'll do whatever they want live."

The process for recording your album sounded similar. You had a plan, worked on it, then played around with it...

"Yeah we did a lot of pre-production. I did a whole bunch of studying about what mics I wanted to use and the acoustics of different rooms, and the sound of different woods in rooms, 'cos like I guess you would call it environmental acoustics but the studio that I recorded in – there were a couple of them – there were wood ceilings, and in the taller ceilings I felt the drums should go there. I just played with my surroundings and made a couple of my own mics."

UNTAMED MELODIES

Some players get freaked out by semi-hollow feedback but for Emily Wolfe it's part of the appeal

For a player who daisy-chains overdrive pedals and operates at high volume, Emily Wolfe's weapon of choice is a little unconventional. She plays an Epiphone Sheraton, and the thing with semi-hollows is that high gain and loud stages can make them squeal. Is that a problem? No, Wolfe explains.

"A lot of it has to do with that I love BB King so much," she says. "He played semi-hollows. But something I love about playing with these is that the feedback gets kinda crazy onstage. I can use that to my advantage to fill up a soundscape. With the power trio, there's a lot of empty space."

Wolfe runs the controls on her guitar wide open but is always tweaking the volume to harness the feedback. Tonight she'll play an ES-335 but that's cool. It's a similar deal.

"I didn't bring my guitar overseas because I've never been over here before and I didn't know how the airlines would treat it," she says. "It's so important to me that I couldn't take it out with me. But this is a [Gibson] ES-335, though, which I love. I love 335s, all models of them, and this is the 2018 Memphis ES-335."

ON THE WHITE TRACK

Emily's songwriting heroes include Motown, Smokey Robinson and contemporary pop producers like Max Martin



You made your own mics?

"Yeah, it's actually not that difficult if you know how to solder. You take a speaker out of whatever you want, and then you take an XLR cable and strip the wires, and then you just solder the ends to the speaker and instead of pushing messages out, it receives messages. It's really good. I had a really horrible speaker out of this record player, and I took that out and I made a mic out of that. And then I had a really bad amplifier that I took the speaker out and made a mic of that – and it ended up sounding like a [Yamaha] SubKick or something like that. I just got really deep into making sure I had the tones that were in my head no matter what it took, even if it took a week of

studying a certain mic or figuring out which guitar pickup would go the best with what effects pedal and amp."

You're a massive fan of effects pedals. Have you tried making one?

"I have tried to make my own. I'm not [there yet]. I hope so. I want to learn really bad how to make my own because I know what I would make. But I don't know how to do that yet. I'm not sure what resistors and transistors and capacitors look like and totally what they do yet. But I am super-interested."

Tell us about overdrive and gain
"Oh yeah! Love it! I love stacking

gain pedals, figuring out the perfect blend between two or three of them – it's like cooking! Y'know? If you have too much of this gain it's like having too much oregano. I used to be a huge fuzz fan, and I love the sound of fuzz, but at this point I prefer to just stack a bunch of overdrive pedals."

How did you go about finding your rhythm tone?

"I was looking for the way the strings felt, the vibrations in my hand. I wanted it to feel really good to play, and I wanted it to be really responsive, and so it took a year to find the perfect response from my overdrive, and it ended up being the Fulltone OCD, which is my favourite ever drive. That's the main pedal that I use. Everything on my pedalboard is affecting that pedal. I am either pushing gain into it or EQing it after. The signal chain is a Fulltone 2B boost, so I'll have the gain all the way up and that gain is pushing into the OCD pedal, and then I'll have a Klon KTR to add clarity to it – because the pickups in my guitar are a bit dull, but with the clarity on the Klon I'll bring that up and then I'll EQ it. I'll take down the lows a little bit and I'll boost the mids so it feels good to play, and you can hear it in a band context."

It must sound really aggressive on its own? Do you dial it back when you are writing or practising?

"It does, yeah. But I kind of just trained my ear to enjoy that honky midrange, 'cos this is what I need to sound like live, so I might as well achieve that in my ear and make sure that it sounds that way live."

What about amps?

"Honestly, I get my tones from my pedals. But on the record I used a bunch of different amps. I used an AC30 and a bunch of different Fender practice amps. I play a 4x10 Fender Concert Reverb. That is my main amp. I love it because it's open-backed, 50-watts, and moves a lot of air. And then a DeVille, a Fender DeVille."

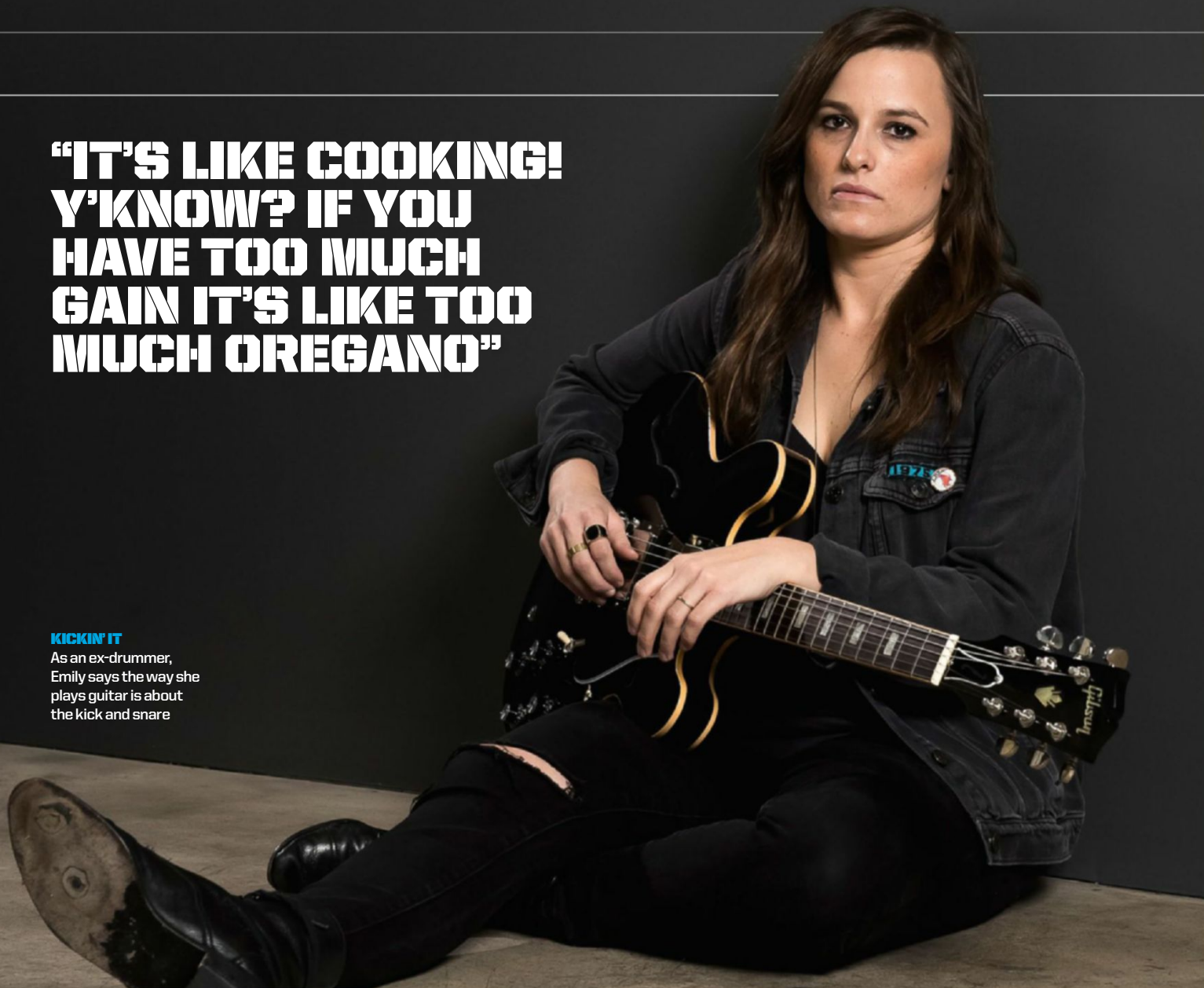


BB'S INFLUENCE
Blues legend BB King inspires Emily to play Gibson's semi-hollow guitars

"IT'S LIKE COOKING! Y'KNOW? IF YOU HAVE TOO MUCH GAIN IT'S LIKE TOO MUCH OREGANO"

KICKIN' IT

As an ex-drummer, Emily says the way she plays guitar is about the kick and snare



Do you run them clean and just let the pedals handle the dirt?

"Yeah. I like that. Y'know, I wish I could be old-school and have the amp do the work but I just love pedals too much."

You use volume like an extra effect...

"Volume, yeah! It's crazy. One of the reasons I love playing with pedals is because I can control the volume, and nowadays sound people always want the stage volume low, so with my Klon I can use it as a master volume. I'll have the same tone but if they are like, 'Can you turn it down?' I'll just turn it down a little bit and it'll bring it down but with the same tone."

You've got to keep the sound engineer happy. Have

you considered using in-ear monitors?

"Oh, man! I want to. I want to, yeah, just to protect my hearing. But I do love the monitor thing, though, coming back at me. And it does help with the feedback."

Who are your guitar heroes?

"Guitar heroes? Definitely Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimmy Page, Jack White, BB King, Albert King, Barney Kessel – who was a jazz player from way back when – and Bonnie Raitt. Let's see... It's interesting, because guitar heroes are far removed from my songwriting heroes. My songwriting heroes are Motown, Smokey Robinson, and the pop producers of today. Max Martin [Britney Spears, The Backstreet Boys], I think he is a genius when it comes to writing songs, because

the lyrics make sense if you read them. They're hooky. I just love the pop sensibility of his writing. And then Motown, too, the hook is so quick at the top of the song. I guess I love trying to combine that with guitar heroes, because I love both those things so much."

What's your writing process like?

"Sometimes I'll think of a really cool word, or like a cool phrase, and then try and write around that, but mostly it's something that will just pop inside my head, like a phrase or a riff, and then I'll have to sit down and flesh that out. A lot of times the chorus is written first and then I'll go back to the verse and then I'll think, 'How do I get to that chorus? How will I come out of that chorus? How will I make the chorus pop at the end?' That's pretty much it."

You played drums before the guitar. That must give you such an advantage...

"I did, yeah. I think it does. A lot of the way I play has got to do with the kick and snare. Like if the kick and the snare is [plays a riff on an open E] like *ka-boom boom ka!* It makes it easier to want to explain drum parts to my drummer, because of the drum language. If you are like '*ka-boom boom ka, ka-boom-boom ka*' they understand it! I know where a cue is going to go, too, because I would go there, so I feel like I speak that language. It's been really helpful for sure."

Lastly, but all importantly: can you tell us what pick gauge you use?

"Which what!? Ah, 0.88mm, Jim Dunlop Jazz III Tortex. Yeah!"

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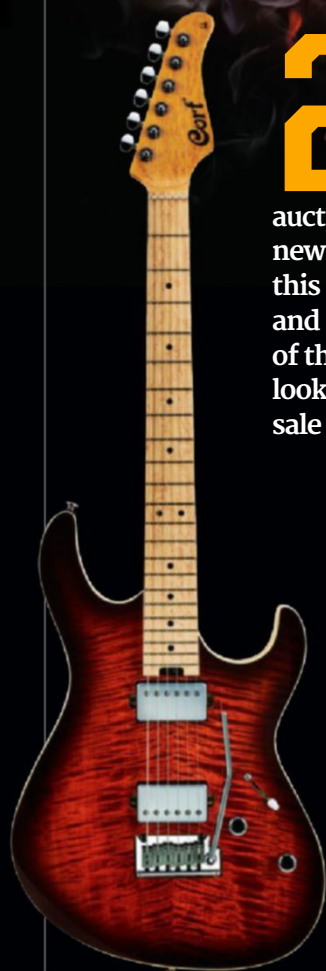
GUITARS AND BACKING
JON BISHOP

The Hot List

Get inspired to play better with TG's round-up
of all things guitar-related in 2019

2019

has been an amazing year for all things guitar-related. We've seen countless amazing albums including long-awaited comebacks from Tool and Rammstein, legendary instruments being sold at auction for record figures, a raft of new players breaking through, and loads of new and innovative gear to get creative with. With all that in mind, we designed this month's retrospective to both inspire and inform. Get a handle on the sounds and styles of 2019 with our tab lessons. Play along with three of our favourite riffs of the year, complete with slowed down video play throughs. And, finally, take a look at TG's gear of the year – our round-up of the finest new equipment on sale now. Plug in, switch on and let's get started!



01 FERAL TONES ON RIVAL SONS' NEW ALBUM

We loved the scuzzy roots-rock fuzz tones on January's *Feral Roots*. Scott Holiday used Doug Kauer

Super Chief and master-built Gretsch Blue Penguin guitars through a 50-watt Supro Statesman. For tonal experimentation it's worth

following Scott's two-pronged approach if you can. Dial in a fuzz distortion on one channel and use a fairly clean sound on a second channel – crucially, *at the same*

time. To do this you'll either need to play with a second guitarist or use a multi-fx such as Line 6's HX Effects to split your signal into two paths then feed it back to your amp.

TRACK 14

[illegible]

We're looking at Holiday's riffing style here, a typically retro approach in the vein of Scott's own heroes, Led Zeppelin, Free and The Who with a slightly funkier slant. You'll hear our primarily pentatonic approach on 2019 Rival Sons tracks such as *Do Your Worst* and *Sugar On The Bone*.

02 TEDESCHI TRUCKS PROVE OLD-SCHOOL IS STILL COOL

And we mean it when we say old-school. The 11 tracks of soulful Southern rock on 2019's *Signs* were recorded on analogue tape via a suitably veteran Neve desk. Of course, Derek heads the

current crop of slide guitarists and *Signs* sees him on fine form, delivering stratospheric solos, both with and without bottleneck alongside Tedeschi. We're looking at some of his trademark slide style here.



TRACK 15

G7

w/slide

15 \ 12 \ 11 11 15 \ 14 15 15 \ 14 14 15 18 \ 15 10 \ 12 15 12 \ 10 10 \ 12 15 12 \ 10 8

Play 4 times

Get Trucks' signature phrasing down by tuning to open E (E B E G# B E) and placing your slide on your third finger. One of Derek's tricks is to press down on the string with the slide – effectively fretting like normal, but with his slide. It sounds cool – just don't overdo it.

03 DREAM THEATER'S 14TH ALBUM

With 2016's *The Astonishing* having split the DT faithful with marmite-like appeal, this year's

Distance Over Time sets the record straight with a more cohesive offering reaffirming the band's status as kings of prog-metal. Want to get a bit of the DT dream in

your own playing? Time to get to grips with time signature changes. Here we're looking at shifting between 4/4 (the easiest time signature) and 7/8 (not so easy!).



PROGGY TIME CHANGES

TRACK 16

♩=160

Bm Dm

Play 4 times

Time signature changes are part and parcel of Dream Theater's prog offering. We're switching between 7/8 and 4/4 here so count at double speed to keep time: say '1&2&3&4' in 4/4 and '1&2&3&4' in 7/8. If you only count on the numbers, you might lose track in the 7/4 sections.

BEHOLD PAUL GILBERT
Gilbert's new album takes in epic ballads, rock and even jazz fusion



04 PAUL GILBERT'S JAZZ-TINGED SHRED PLAYING

It's shred but not as we know it! Paul's 2019 release, *Behold Electric Guitar*, takes in epic ballads, ballsy rock and even jazz fusion, all delivered with Gilbert's deft, quirky style, naturally. It's always big news when PG

releases a new album and his maturity and classy phrasing are becoming more and more evident year on year. A perfect opportunity to look at his technique, then! Take a look below where our example focuses on that tricky skill of string skipping.

STRING SKIPPED PHRASING

TRACK 17

♩=102

Dm¹¹ Dm¹³

Play 4 times

Here we're looking at one of the shred icon's most-used technical approaches - string skipping. The idea is that each short phrase is arranged over two strings - but with the challenge of skipping over an idle string in between the ones you're playing on. Slow practice is the name of the game here.

they achieved their goal, producing a reckless, crunching album, full of unhinged leads, strange textures and rattling, heavy riffs. The 2019 sound? Look no further, we'd say.

TRACK 18

$\text{♩} = 130$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$
 N.C. D^5 N.C. C^5 N.C. B^b5 N.C. Play 4 times

TAB: 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 7 5 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 5 3 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 3 1 0 0 3 0 0 5 0 0 3 0 0



END OF THEIR REIGN
In 2019 legendary metal band Slayer embarked on their final world tour

OG SLAYER'S FAREWELL TOUR

After nearly 40 years of heavy riffing, 2019 marks the year the fearsome foursome embarked on their final world tour. As one of the 'Big Four' thrash acts alongside Metallica, Megadeth and Anthrax, Slayer have been one of the most influential metal bands

of all time. If you want to play even just a small amount of metal, be sure to take a listen to Kerry King and co. Our tab example will help you get a feel for their palm-muted thrash riffs on albums like *Reign In Blood*. Slayer often top 170 bpm with this kind of riff, so practise slowly to develop your skills.

TRACK 19

[illegible]

FILIOLO: JACOB DUNDEISCH/MAINKIND LU BELT

legendary sets. The Cure are perhaps not an easy band to mimic, but a clean tone with a liberal dose of chorus is a good starting point for sonic experimentation.

TRACK 20

This is a deceptively tricky Cure style line requiring quick tidy chord changes. The notes should all ring out over each other, you see; change too early and you'll end up with a gap in your sound. Practise the four chords to get a feel for the changes before trying out the arpeggios.



08 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB'S INDIE-POP TRIUMPH

From the slick tapping grooves in *Satellite*, the funky delay lines in *Talk* and the driving rhythms throughout, it's an accomplished album. We love it!

TRACK 21

Here we're looking at some of the rhythm work both Trimble and Halliday deliver throughout TDCC's music. Full barre chords would fill out the sound. By contrast, these three-note shapes sound funky, so they'll cut nicely through a mix. Take these chords further by experimenting with notes on the first string.

09 SLIPKNOT'S ACCLAIMED SIXTH ALBUM

Metal fans rejoiced when the new Slipknot album dropped. Four years in the making *We Are*

Not Your Kind received critical acclaim and marks 20 years since the band's debut. If you want to ape Jim and Mick's style we recommend tuning your guitar to

drop B tuning (B F# B E G# C#) – that means the bass string is tuned down five semitones to B and all other strings are three semitones down.



DROP B RIFF

TRACK 22

♩ = 130

Play 4 times

Our Slipknot style riff is all about the flourishes at the end of bars 2 and 4. Bar 2 features a pinched harmonic on the 3rd fret D note. The idea is to touch the string with your thumb as you pick down. It's tricky so experiment to find the sweet spot for the harmonic. Finally the end of bar 4 features a change to the riff to mix things up a bit.



TOOL UP

Tool's long-awaited fifth studio album, *Fear Inoculum*, finally dropped in August

10 TOOL'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN

Not even a 13 year wait for new material can test the faith of Tool's devoted fans. Yes, August finally saw the return of the alt-metal legends with their acclaimed *Fear Inoculum* album – and fans lapped it up. With most 'songs' clocking in at over 10

minutes, it's fair to describe this as a concept album, but standard fare for Tool. Typically of Tool's progressive style you can expect warped, textural tones and plenty of odd time riffing. We're looking at the band's odd time riffing here. Watch out for the chords on the offbeat too.

ODD TIME RIFFING

TRACK 23

♩ = 114

Play 4 times

In typical Tool style we're looking at odd time here with a riff in 7/4. With seven beats in every bar and several chords played on the offbeat you'd think this would be tough to play – but there's a natural sounding feel that's easy to pick up on. Try to count to seven in time with the music to develop your feel for this time signature.

STRATOSPHERIC

Dave Gilmour auctioned off 120 of his most famous guitars, including his iconic Black Strat

THE BLACK STRAT



13 ROB SCALLON'S PEDALBOARD RECORD

Jaws dropped when the Guinness World Record for the World's Largest Guitar Effect Pedalboard was set by US music retail giant Sweetwater and YouTube guitarist Rob Scallon back in August. The stats give you an idea of the scale of their endeavours... A 70-foot board comprising 319 different effect pedals on 34 separate boards hooked up with 500 feet of cabling was set up to run into the logical conclusion – a massive wall of Marshall stacks. As for Scallon, he had 1,248 knobs to dial in the tone he wanted!

14 GILMOUR'S GUITAR SALE

Another world record would be set in June, this time courtesy of David Gilmour who auctioned off 120 of his most famous guitars. The star of the show? His iconic Black Strat, which was the record setter, fetching an astonishing \$3,975,000. The legendary instrument, as heard on Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon* and *Wish You Were Here*, was heavily modded and restored over the years.

15 SHREDDING WITH THE ALIEN

As of this year, hardcore fans can shred along with Satch's own backing tracks. Well, provided you've managed to get hold of one of the limited edition reissues of the shred legend's 1987 debut, *Surfing With The Alien*, you can. Featuring a remaster of the album and a second disc of guitar-less backing tracks, the double LP is limited to a run of just 3,500 copies. We're hoping for a second run!

16 NEW HENDRIX FOOTAGE

Billed as "one of the greatest and most anticipated, unseen treasures in musical history", a 50-year-old movie capturing Jimi Hendrix on the last European performance of the original Experience lineup was shown at the Royal Albert Hall in October. The lost film captured incendiary performances of songs like *Little Wing*, *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*, *Fire*, *Foxy Lady* and *Stone Free*, as well as including backstage goings-on. Will it ever be released commercially though? That's what we want to know!

17 DUANE ALLMAN'S LAYLA LES PAUL SELLS FOR \$1.25M

Allman died in a motorcycle crash in 1971 aged 24, leaving behind a considerable musical legacy for a man of such tender years. This year saw a number of the great man's guitars being sold, including a 1961/1962 Gibson SG and his iconic '57 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop. This was his go-to guitar in the early Allman Brothers period and, perhaps most famously, during the *Layla* recording sessions with Eric Clapton.

18 SHEERAN PLAYS LOWDI!

At this year's NAMM show in January the best known guitarist in the world bar none announced he was partnering with renowned acoustic guitar manufacturer Lowden to produce a line of affordable acoustic guitars. Based on Lowden's 'W' and 'S' models, the guitars feature sustainably-sourced tonewoods, including cedar, walnut, 'Santos rosewood' (aka pau ferro) and sitka spruce, one-piece mahogany necks and ebony 'boards and bridges. Great guitars at budget prices. What's not to like?

THE HOT LIST



TONE FREE!

THREE OF 2019'S HOTTEST GUITAR TONES

1 ARISTOCRATIC WAH SOUNDS FROM THE GOVAN-ER OF GUITAR

Guitarist Guthrie Govan (The Aristocrats)

Song D-Grade Fuck Movie Jam

Album You Know What...?

Without doubt one of the world's most visionary guitarists, Guthrie Govan's playing is near impossible to pigeonhole, taking in elements of rock, jazz, fusion and myriad other styles too. Turns out he's quite the tone hound too, and the filthy, distorted wah tones on the opening track to this year's *Aristocrats* album could well be an ode to Jimi Hendrix – one of Guthrie's acknowledged heroes. Our pals at musicradar.com spoke to Guthrie in June, and, though we didn't get specifics for this song, we know he's been rocking his signature GG Charvel guitar, a Victory V30 MKII head and 2x12 cab equipped with Celestion V30s. An XotiQ wah is the icing on Guthrie's sonic cake.

2 ROCKING A TWO ROCK

Guitarist Joey Landreth

Song Where Did I Go Wrong

Album Hindsight

Joey Landreth's 2019 *Hindsight* offers up a bevy of guitar sounds that will please even the most discerning tonal connoisseur. Back in July, Joey told TG about the guitar he uses to play one of our favourite tracks, *Where Did I Go Wrong*. Built by Canadian luthier Alex Sorotkin, Joey's custom-built 'Goldie Han Solo' Wraptail is designed to be what he calls "a poor man's '54 [Les Paul]". Stringing up with frankly finger-shredding .019 gauge strings (yes, nineteens!) and tuning to open C (CGCEGC), it's pretty tough to emulate Joey's tone, and played through Joey's Two Rock Bloomfield Drive amp it's a match made in tonal heaven.

3 SMOKING HOT CIGAR BOX TONES

Guitarist Samantha Fish

Song Bulletproof

Album Kill Or Be Kind

Lo-fi roots-rock at its best from the Kansas City rocker here on 2019's *Kill Or Be Kind*. And the sultry slide guitar tones on album opener, *Bulletproof*? Well, that comes courtesy of Samantha's four-string electric cigar box guitar equipped with a pickup from a Fender Precision bass and tuned to GDGD. It'd be tricky but you could potentially tune your guitar's top- or middle-four strings down to get the same notes. And, playing through a Category 5 Camille amp with a JHS Mini Foot Fuzz, it's a tough tone to recreate. A small blues box like a Fender Champ with a fuzz style pedal should get you close though.



TG'S BEST RIFFS OF THE YEAR

RIFF ON! WRAP YOUR FINGERS AROUND THREE OF OUR FAVOURITE RIFFS OF 2019

SEE THE VIDEOS AT
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22 RAMMSTEIN - DEUTSCHLAND

Appears at 0:39-1:02

Tempo 120bpm

Key D minor

Main techniques: Alternate picking / drop C tuning (CGCFAD)
Tool weren't the only band making long-awaited returns this year. Ten years have passed since Rammstein's *Liebe ist für alle da* and this year's untitled album's lead single *Deutschland* features one of our favourite riffs. Guitarist Richard Kruspe's impressive alternate picked 16th note line is pretty tough to play. It's not just the picking that poses a challenge – practise slowly to synchronise both hands together. We recorded a slow play through of the riff back in our September issue.

23 SLIPKNOT - UNSAINTED

Appears at 1:00-1:19

Tempo 204 bpm

Key E Phrygian / E Phrygian dominant

Main techniques: Powerchords / drop B tuning (B F# B E G# C#)
Another of our favourite albums in 2019 was Slipknot's *We Are Not Your Kind*, and we looked at the first single in our October issue. Slowed down, the riff is really simple – it's formed of just a handful of easy one-finger powerchord shapes in drop B tuning. The challenge comes when you play at full tempo, where the rhythms created between the powerchords and palm-muted notes become all that much harder. Like we always say, slow practice will see you right, so take a look at the slow play through in our video and only increase your speed gradually.

24 THE BLACK KEYS - LO/HI

Appears at 0:00-0:17

Tempo 122bpm

Key A minor pentatonic

Main techniques: Single-note playing/pentatonics
June's *Let's Rock* marked a return to unashamedly reckless, crunching rock 'n' roll for the Akron, Ohio duo, but the riff from the album's lead single *Lo/Hi* is a low key bluesy line. It's still a great riff though, weaving around the A minor pentatonic scale on the bass strings with a compressed, fuzz-laden tone coaxed from guitarist Dan Auerbach's Ibanez Custom SG. There are two phrases to master and two shapes of the minor pentatonic scale to get to grips with too. Take a look at our slowed down video play through from TG's August issue and play along.

Photo: Xavi Torred / Chikito Nozu / Timothy Morris / Getty

THE BEST OF THE REST...



25 WEEZER - THE END OF THE GAME

Rivers takes inspiration from the great Eddie Van Halen here. Tap, pull off, hammer on. Rinse and repeat. Just make sure to keep those idle strings as dead as you can make 'em!



26 ALTER BRIDGE - WOULDN'T YOU RATHER

Mark Tremonti and Myles Kennedy's pre-verse riff just oozes cool. Harmonically dark and syncopated too, but without veering into proggy odd time. Alt metal at its best, we'd say!



27 SAMI FENDER - THE BORDERS

You might see this as more of a chord progression than a riff, but Sam's quickly executed arpeggios essentially form a partly repeating phrase. And we just love those Jazzmaster cleans. Check out our lesson this month on p18.

Gear Of The Year

Our pick of the best products 2019 had to offer

TG prides itself on bringing you the best new 'real world' gear throughout the year. Whether it be a purist's dream or a brand-new innovation, we love getting our hands on the gear you want

to see, and nothing excites us more than when it plays and sounds great within a sensible budget. Picking a single best product from the triple-figures we see each year is a difficult decision, so to keep it fair, we've looked back

over the last 13 issues to revisit the products that really caught our eye and achieved the highest ranking scores in their category. So, check out the guitars, amps and pedals that rocked 2019, and here's to another great year of gear!



BEST ELECTRIC

CORT G290 FAT

VERSATILE QUALITY MADE AFFORDABLE

We see a lot of gear throughout the year here on TG, so it really does take something special to really get us raving. Cort's G290 Fat does special in spades, so much so that we had to invent a new review award after playing it! This swamp ash/maple-clad beauty maxed out our review criteria

across the board, with impeccable build quality, playability and versatile features, making it the perfect choice for any guitarist wanting to cover plenty of ground with one instrument. And what's more, it's done to a price point that puts it in reach of many players. Put simply, this guitar is a steal that will land you in the right kind of Cort.

THE CONTENDERS



**FENDER
VINTERA 60S
TELECASTER
BIGSBY**

**GIBSON SG
STANDARD**

**BEST ACOUSTIC****YAMAHA STORIA**

ACOUSTIC COMFORT FOR THE MASSES

You may have noticed a bit of a sea change from gear companies in recent years. While heritage and vintage appointments have never been more popular, there is also a contemporary push across the industry to make guitar-playing more accessible and inclusive – and Yamaha has helped lead the charge. The Storia line has your front room squarely in its sights, with

sharp visuals and an affordable price tag to match. Of course, tidy looks mean nothing if it doesn't inspire you to play, but with comfort from the agile, bevelled-edge body design and rolled fingerboard, plus the pleasingly sparkly, resonant tone courtesy of its solid mahogany top, we struggled to put this guitar down. And that's exactly what Yamaha wants – mission accomplished.

THE CONTENDERS**EPIPHONE
EJ-200SCE****TAYLOR
GRAND
PACIFIC
317E****BEST AMP****LINE 6 SPIDER V 120 MK II**

THIS SPIDER DEFINITELY HAS LEGS

After the original Line 6 Spider V garnered mixed opinions, we were glad to see the modelling veterans push to move forward with a revised V Mk II. We got our hands on one in issue 323: our man on the amp ground Nick Guppy loved it, claiming it to be “one of the best modelling amps” we’ve ever heard. The

Spider V MKII won the maximum review score possible, excelling in every area thanks to a feature-packed spec that’s brimming with over 200 amp, cab and effects models, an on-board looper/drum machine, USB connectivity and more – all delivered at an extremely affordable price point.

THE CONTENDERS**FENDER TONE
MASTER DELUXE****BLACKSTAR
HT-20R MK II**

BEST EFFECTS ELECTRO- HARMONIX MONO SYNTH

OUR FRIENDS ELECTRIC

EHX have been on a quest over the last couple of years. As synths continue to dominate popular music, their thinking goes, why should us guitar players be cut out of the fun?

Following a number of pedals featuring vintage keys and polyphonic synths, we think that the Mono Synth is the most useful of the range to date. Everything you need to cover classic synth lead and bass lines with your guitar is in here, from funky envelope octave-down sounds to sparkly 80s long-tail tones. Get one of these on-stage and you can send the keyboard player off to the bar.



THE CONTENDERS



**AMPTWEAKER
TIGHT METAL
JR**



**SINVERTEK
FLUID TIME
MK II**

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO COVER CLASSIC SYNTH LEAD AND BASS LINES IS IN HERE



BEST INNOVATION LINE 6 HELIX HX STOMP

TONAL DNA DONE RIGHT

As the valve vs modelling debate rages on, it can be a moot point when decent modelling technology still sets you back more than a giggable valve amp. Thankfully, Line 6 helped close that gap this year by bringing us the Helix HX Stomp.

We know plenty of seasoned tone hounds who have ditched their traditional rigs in favour of more portable setups such as the Helix, and the HX Stomp contains the same amp/cab/FX

modelling as its bigger brothers. This do-it-all little pedal can be your entire rig, your front end, or your effects section for electric, acoustic or bass – and it's every bit as useful live as it is in the studio.

Regardless of where you stand on the big question of valve vs digital, all players stand to benefit from technology trickling down to create more portable, simplified and accessible products like the HX Stomp.

THE CONTENDERS



KEMPER PROFILER STAGE



TONewood AMP

PLENTY OF TONE HOUNDS HAVE DITCHED THEIR TRADITIONAL RIGS

MUSIC TRUMP(ET)'S WAR

Once upon a time, there was a man with a trumpet. And when he was a soldier in the US Army landing on the beaches of Normandy, he kept it by his side. Once, when he was standing guard at night, his captain told him: "Don't play tonight, there's a sharpshooter out there." But our

man thought: "That guy out there is just as scared and lonely as me. I'll play a piece for him." The next day, a POW was brought into the camp, and he asked: "Who is the trumpeter that played 'Lili Marleen' last night? When I heard that song, the war was over for me - I just

couldn't use my gun any more." The man with the trumpet was called Jack Leroy Tueller. And though it may sound like a fairy tale, this is a true story. A story only music can write.

**THE POWER
OF MUSIC!**





th•mann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION

QUEEN NOW I'M HERE

Learn this classic Brian May-
penned rocker from Queen's 1974
Sheer Heart Attack album

Featuring on Queen's 1974 *Sheer Heart Attack* album, *Now I'm Here* is about the band's experiences on their first tour of America. The lyrics reveal references to the infamous 'Dungeon' club in New Orleans, and to Mott The Hoople, who Queen were supporting. The song remains a firm fan favourite and was performed on every Queen show from 1974 to 1986 and is currently the opening song on the Queen and Adam Lambert tour.

The song has three main tonal centres; the opening riff is in D, the main signature riff is in E and the verses and solos are in the B Mixolydian mode. Brian seamlessly links these key changes so they are almost unnoticeable. As the E riff is the main hook of the song, there is no typical chorus section, so in our tab we refer to the ascending major chords as the chorus. Read on as we break the track down piece by piece.

GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'Now I'm Here'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL

OVERDRIVE

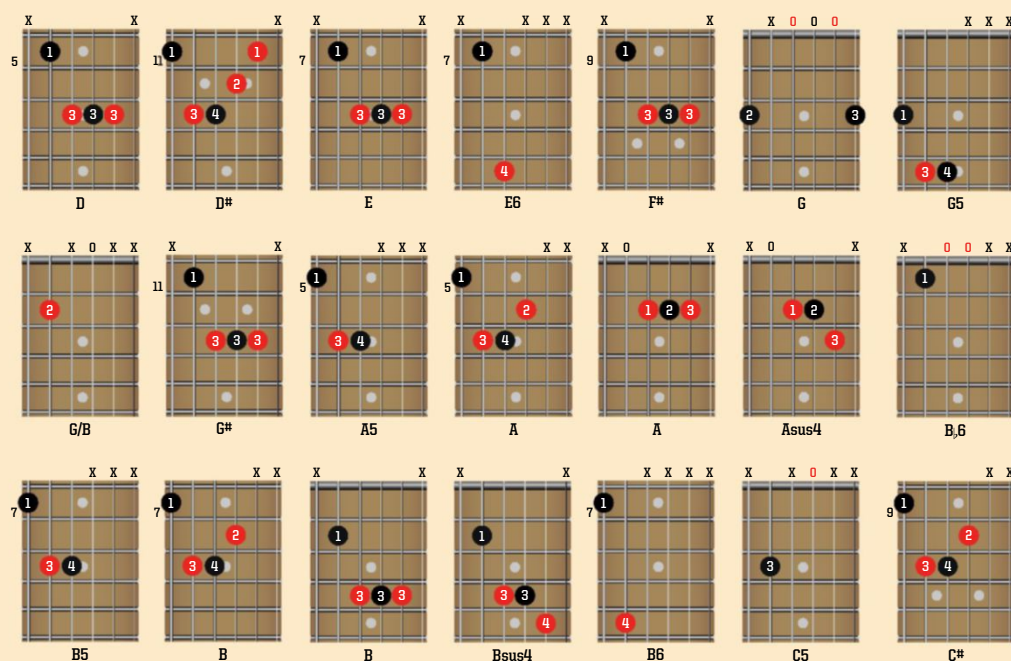
Opt for a bridge humbucker for the whole song. It's roughly equivalent to Brian's 'in phase' twin single-coil approach. If you play a Strat, a lone bridge pickup will get you closer to Brian's tone than bridge and middle.

Brian famously plays his own homemade Red Special guitar which has three single-coil pickups which can be used in a multitude of combinations. Add to this the Vox AC30 amp and the Treble Booster pedal to add gain and you have the core of Brian's sound. For straight-ahead rock songs like this Brian typically used the middle and bridge pickups in an 'in phase' position.

For our track we used a Brian May Guitars Red Special through IK Multimedia's AmpliTube Brian May plugin. We selected the *Now I'm Here* preset and off we went, picking with an old English sixpence for that Brian style metallic pick attack.

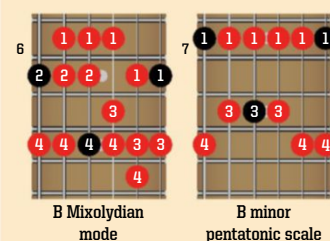
CHORDS

There are a lot of chords here, but they fit together in logical progressions, which means learning them in context isn't such a challenge. The intro starts in D and has a descending sequence (Csus2, G/B, B $\flat$ 6) – these chords all have an open G note in common. The chorus section has an ascending sequence of major chords, which account for most of the chords here, but there are only two essential shapes which are barre chords rooted on the fifth and sixth strings. Finally we have the verse which follows a rock 'n' roll style riff on 5th and 6th diads.



SCALES

The two solos are played over a B-E-A chord progression – the fifth, first and fourth chords from the key of E major (the notes of E major are E F# G# A B C# D#). However, B is the root chord, so Brian is using a 'mode' of the scale known as the Mixolydian mode. This is the name given to the mode starting on the fifth note of the major scale – so here it's B Mixolydian (B C# D# E F# G# A). Great for blues-rock but with a sometimes overly cheerful sound, a common trick is to darken the Mixolydian mode by using the minor pentatonic scale. During both solos you can hear Brian having fun with the interplay between the minor and major 3rd intervals of both scales.



QUEEN

NOW I'M HERE

FULL
TAB

NOW I'M HERE

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QUEEN NOW I'M HERE Intro

♩=134

D⁵

Play 4 times

A D⁵ D D⁵

PM

Csus² G/B B^b6

TAB

Csus² D⁵ A D⁵ D

PM

TAB

D⁵ Csus² 1. G/B Csus² D⁵ 2. G/B A

PM

TAB

Use palm-muted downstrokes to play these D5 powerchords, lifting your palm for the accented A and D chords in bar 5. As you play the descending Csus2 and G/B chords use the underside of your fretting finger to mute the idle fourth string, so you can continue to play downstrokes across all three strings.

QUEEN NOW I'M HERE Bridge 1

This section is loud so don't be afraid to hit the strings with confidence. There's a 'pushed' feel, which means the chord changes happen one eighth note earlier than beat 1 of each bar, but keep your foot tapping on the downbeat throughout to ensure good timing.

QUEEN NOW I'M HERE Main riff

This riff uses the E blues scale (E G A B♭ B D) and E Mixolydian mode (E F♯ G♯ A B C♯ D). Brian mixes up the notes from the two scales, rather than switching between one scale and the other – giving a colourful sound. Keep your picking hand moving in a constant eighth note motion to stay in the groove.

QUEEN NOW I'M HERE Verses 1 & 2

This section is a bluesy rock 'n' roll riff. Play the B5 and E chords with your first and third fingers and reach up with your fourth finger to add the 11th fret note to each chord. Note that both verses are the same except for the final bar. We've included the alternate endings in the tab for you.

[illegible]

This bridge is almost the same as the second half of bridge 1, except there are some slight rhythmic variations and it's half the length. The final open E note sets up a repeat of the main riff here too, so play this note as a 'tie' into that riff. After the repeat of the main riff, play the verse with the second ending, before heading to chorus 2!

[illegible]

This bridge is almost the same as the second half of bridge 1, except there are some slight rhythmic variations and it's half the length. The final open E note sets up a repeat of the main riff here too, so play this note as a 'tie' into that riff. After the repeat of the main riff, play the verse with the second ending, before heading to chorus 2!

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part (G) and a bass part (B). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. A time marker of 2:01 is shown. The guitar part features various chords and fret numbers, while the bass part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering the first 11 measures and the second system covering the remaining 10 measures.

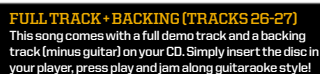
System 1:

- Measure 1:** G⁵ (Guitar: 5, 5, 5, 5; Bass: 5, 5, 5, 5)
- Measure 2:** C (Guitar: 5, 5, 5, 5; Bass: 5, 5, 5, 5)
- Measure 3:** A (Guitar: 5, 5, 5, 5; Bass: 5, 5, 5, 5)
- Measure 4:** D (Guitar: 5, 5, 5, 5; Bass: 5, 5, 5, 5)
- Measure 5:** B (Guitar: 7, 7, 7, 7; Bass: 7, 7, 7, 7)
- Measure 6:** E (Guitar: 9, 9, 9, 9; Bass: 9, 9, 9, 9)
- Measure 7:** C# (Guitar: 9, 10, 11, 11; Bass: 9, 10, 11, 11)

System 2:

- Measure 8:** F# (Guitar: 9, 10, 11, 11; Bass: 9, 10, 11, 11)
- Measure 9:** D⁵ (Guitar: 3, 3, 3, 3; Bass: 3, 3, 3, 3)
- Measure 10:** E (Guitar: 2, 3, 2, 0; Bass: 2, 3, 2, 0)
- Measure 11:** E (Guitar: 9, 9, 2, 2; Bass: 9, 9, 2, 2)
- Measure 12:** A (Guitar: 2, 2, 2, 0; Bass: 2, 2, 2, 0)

TOTAL GUITAR DECEMBER 2019



2:16

B E A B E A

PB6 RP PB6 - - - - - !

TAB

6 (7) (8) (8) (7) (7) (7) BD (7) (6) 4 6 4 4 4 4 4 7 7 7 7 7 7 4 5 7 8 9 9 4/6 4 4 × 6 (8) 4

BU BU BD

BU

Brian starts the solo in what looks like the G# minor pentatonic scale, but in fact it's B major pentatonic thanks to the B root notes. In bar 4 he slides this shape up to 7th fret where it sounds like B minor pentatonic, but he also adds B Mixolydian notes. Brian makes great use of minor to major 3rds, doublestop slides and bluesy bends in this solo.

24

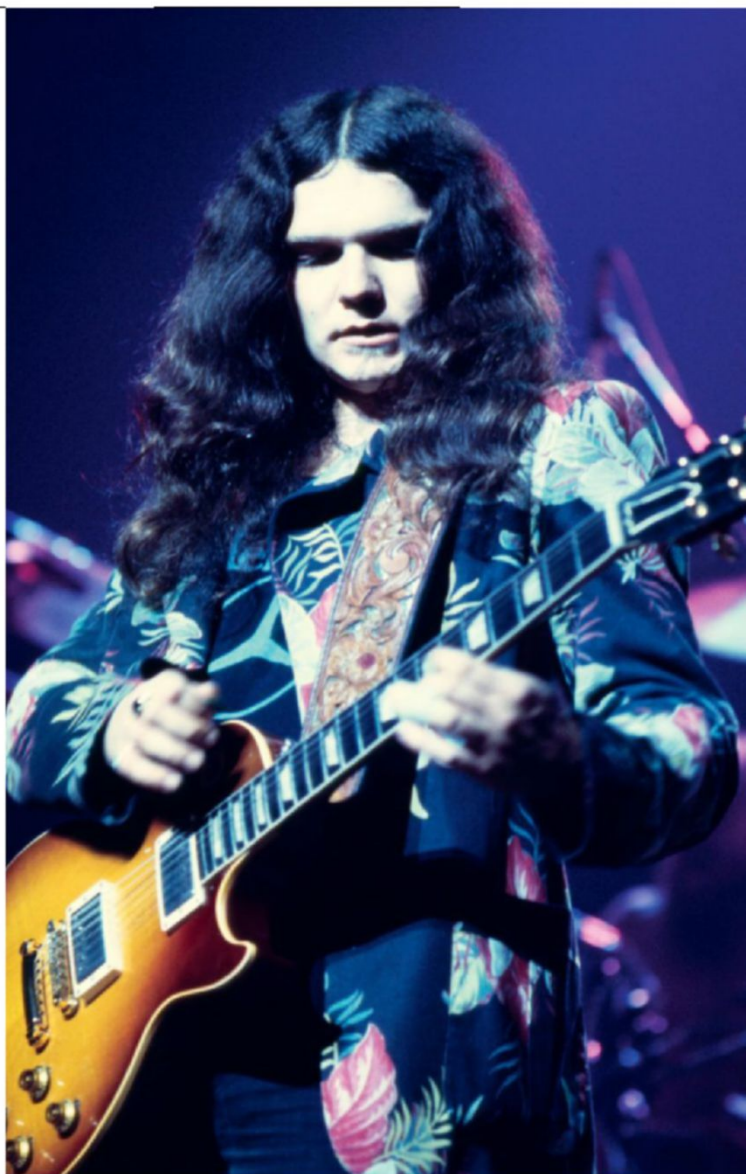
LYNYRD SKYNYRD I NEED YOU

TG and Rockschoo! look at a deep cut from the undisputed Kings of Southern Rock

Taken from the band's appropriately titled sophomore release, *Second Helping*, *I Need You* features three guitars, courtesy of the classic lineup of Gary Rossington, Allen Collins and Ed King. Blues-rock attitude and guitar tones, topped off with the country-inflected vocals of Ronnie Van Zant would define their Southern rock sound.

The intro features a doubled lead guitar part using the A minor pentatonic scale over predominantly

Am, C and D chords, plus an occasional G. Some guitarists may find the 6/8 time signature tricky however. The intro features mainly 16th notes, whereas the verse is more rhythmically complex. Try to feel the '1 & a 2 & a' pulse and plot out where the 16ths and triplets fall in between these. As you gain understanding of the rhythm, start to pay attention to details like when to bend up or down and which strings need to be muted.



Whether you're taking your first steps on guitar or moving into further/higher education, a Rockschoo! Grade will improve your playing ability whilst you learn iconic tracks from the world of popular music. For more info visit: www.rslawards.com

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Gary Rossington & Ronald Zant
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LYNYRD SKYNYRD I NEED YOU

TRACKS 28-29

♩ = 42

Am C D

BU BD 8 BU BD 8-10 BD 8

7 7 5 7 (9) (7) 5 8 7 (9) (9) (7) 5 5-7

† repick held bend

Am D C G/B Am C

5 5 BU BD 8 8-10 8-10 8 9 7 5

7 (9) [9] (7) 5 5 7 5 7 9 8



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 28-29)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar solo style!

LYNYRD SKYNYRD / I NEED YOU

LYNYRD SKYNYRD I NEED YOU (cont'd)

TRACKS 28-29

Musical notation for measures 7-10. Chords: D, Am. Fingering: 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 7, 8, (10), 8, (8)(10), 8, (10), 8, (8), 5. Technique: BU, BD, BU, BU, BD.

Musical notation for measures 11-13. Chords: C, D, Am. Fingering: 8, 8, (10), 8, (10), (8), 5, 8, 10, 10, 10, 8, (10), (8), 5, 10, 8. Technique: BU, BD, BU, BD. Annotation: † repick held bend.

Musical notation for measures 14-15. Chords: C, D. Fingering: 10, (13), 8, 10, 8, 8, 8, 10, 8, 9, 7, 5, 7, 7, 9, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5. Technique: BU.

Musical notation for measures 16-17. Chord: Am. Fingering: 7, 0.

Musical notation for measures 18-20. Chords: Am, C, D. Fingering: 0, 2, 0, 2, 3, 3, 0, 2, 0, 3, 3, 0, 2, 3, 1/4, 3. Technique: triplets.

Musical notation for measures 21-24. Chords: Am, C. Fingering: 0, 2, 0, 2, 3, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 2, 3, 3, 0, 2, 0, 3, 2, 0. Technique: triplets.

27

D Am Dadd²sus⁴ Dsus⁴ Am

30

C D Am D G

33

Am C/G D/F# F⁶

36

Am D Am C

39

D A C D G Am

Take note of bars 24 and 28 and the use of rests and syncopation. It would be a good idea to work with a metronome, slowing each bar down and actually counting the 6/8 time signature out loud to meter out each phrase. Finally, just a reminder that this part is almost entirely played in the A minor pentatonic scale (A C D E G).



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TRADITIONAL KOROBEINIKI AKA TETRIS THEME

TG brings you an arrangement of the 19th century Russian folk tune that became world famous thanks to a 1980s videogame

Originally a Russian folk tune based around Nikolay Nekrasov's similarly titled 1861 poem, *Korobeiniki* has been part of traditional Russian repertoire for well over a century. However, it was Hirokazu Tanaka's 1989 arrangement of this piece for the Nintendo Game Boy version of the hugely successful *Tetris* game that brought it to global consciousness. It's frequently ranked among the most instantly recognisable and popular videogame tunes of all time.

So what does that mean for us guitarists? Well, it's a great tune to learn and with this month's bagged Nintendo catalogue accompanying the mag, we thought it'd be a great time to take a look at the music.

The chords are fairly easy if you only want to jam along. For convenience, just play E7 wherever you see E7/G# or E7/9 chord names. The lead part isn't too challenging though, except for our shreddy tapping section, which will need slow, careful practice.



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 30-31)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

KOROBEGINIKI / TETRIS THEME

KOROBEGINIKI MAIN MELODY

TRACKS 30-31

$\text{♩} = 140$

E Am E Am Dm C E Am

We're kicking off our arrangement with a run through of the main melody. Look for a small dot above or below some of the notes. This tells you to play staccato, which simply means the note is cut short. All you have to do is lift your fretting finger slightly to bring the string away from the fret to mute out your sound.

KOROBEGINIKI HARMONY MELODY

TRACKS 30-31

E Am E Am Dm C E Am

This harmony to the main melody isn't phrased quite the same as the main part; it's similar, but, in places, the two guitars weave around each other. Listen out for the programmed hi-hat (panned right) to keep you locked in. Timing is pretty important here, otherwise the two guitars will sound a little loose.

KOROBEGINIKI MIDDLE EIGHT

TRACKS 30-31

Am E⁷/G# Am E

In contrast to the previous two sections, this part is played with long sustaining notes. Use an even vibrato, repeatedly bending the strings down towards the floor and back again with a turning wrist movement. Head back to the main/harmony melody when you reach the end.

KOROBEGINIKI TAPPED SECTION

TRACKS 30-31

E Am

KOROBENIKI TAPPED SECTION (CONT'D)

TRACKS 30-31

3

5

7

After a repeat of the main/harmony melody we reach a Bumblefoot-inspired tapping section where the chord notes are played along the first string. Tap with the first finger of your pick hand or use your second finger if you need to keep hold of your pick. Mute the idle strings by resting your pick hand on the lower strings as you tap.

KOROBENIKI POWERCHORD SECTION

TRACKS 30-31

1:10

1

5

Strum confidently and slide as accurately as possible between chords wherever there's a slide line in the tab. Keep steady momentum by strumming consistently, using downstrokes for onbeat notes and upstrokes in between. In bar 3 you switch to octave shapes - mute the fourth string by resting your first finger against it.

The **60s**
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Player: Curtis Harding



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JAM TRACK PLAY GUITAR WITH A BAND!

MINOR BLUES

Learn some variations on the standard 12-bar pattern with TG's minor blues backing track

Blues has influenced just about every form of guitar-based music, from rock 'n' roll, folk and heavy metal to soul, disco, rock and pop. If you can hone a few blues licks you'll be well on your way to getting to grips with all of these styles.

If you've ever played a 12-bar blues in A, you'll probably know the good old A-D-E chord sequence; it's often called a I-IV-V progression because the chords are built on the first, fourth and

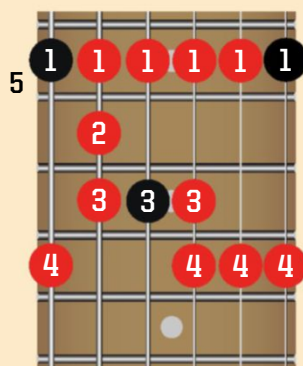
fifth notes of the A major scale (A B C# D E F# G#). And it's often played as A7-D7-E7 for a bluesier sound.

In this month's Jam Track we're mixing up some of those standard chords in favour of some minor shapes (Am7 and Dm7) in a slow ballad-like blues track. We've even included a few non-standard shapes for a bit of colour. To jam along, either take a scale-based approach or target the chords. Read on and we'll explain all.

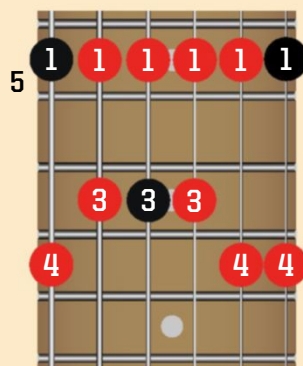


SCALES

Tying in with the Am7 root chord, the A blues (A C D E $\flat$ E G) and minor pentatonic scales (A C D E G) are great options to base your soloing ideas on here – they'll work through the whole track too. To take your solos to the next level, try adding in some other chord tones, ie, notes from the chords you're playing over. For example, you could target an F note over Fmaj7 (F A C E) and Dm7 (D F A C). F can potentially offer an unexpected sound because it doesn't appear in the scales. And, with its G# and B notes, E7#9 (E G# B D G) offers a few opportunities for invention too.



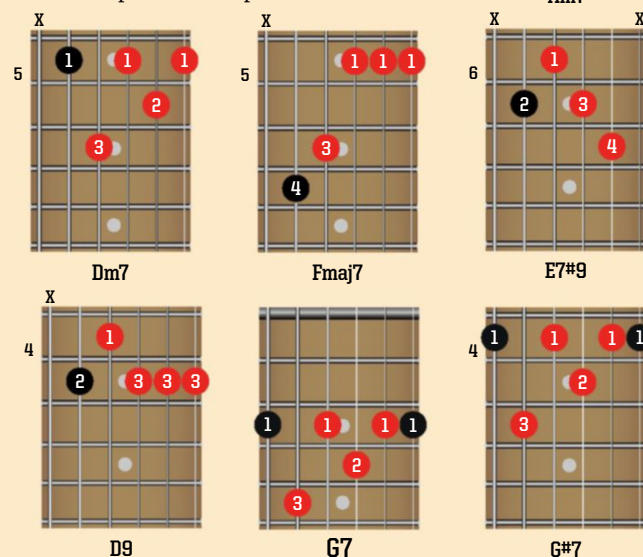
A blues scale



A minor pentatonic scale

CHORDS

Am7 and Dm7 are common barre chord shapes. In our track these are played with a staccato feel, as are the Fmaj7/E7#9 shapes. The D9 chord has a resonating sound so rake your pick across the strings and let them ring out. G7 and G#7 give a melodic 'pull' into a repeat of the section.



**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 32)**

This song comes with a backing track on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

JAM TRACK / MINOR BLUES**JAM TRACK**

King Bee

CHEAT SHEET

Tempo: 88bpm

Time signature: 4/4

Key/scale: A minor

VERSE / CHORUS

||: A⁷ / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / |

| D⁷ / / / | / / / / | A⁷ / / / | / / / / |

| F^{maj}7 / / / | E⁷#⁹ / / / |

| D⁹ / / / | / / / G⁷ G[#]7 .|| x⁹

Like many blues songs, our track follows a repeating 12-bar pattern – that means there's no verse, chorus or middle section unless you create one from how you play. Try playing sparsely on the first time through, building your ideas on the second time, then going for it with your best licks on the third time. As the section repeats over and again, maybe try dropping out, then gradually introducing your guitar parts again. It's a good way to develop your ideas over the course of the track.

THE TURNAROUND LICKS OF THE BLUES GIANTS

DANNY KIRWAN

Learn a handful of licks in the style of this often unsung British blues revivalist, complete with a backing track to jam over

Danny Kirwan's prodigious talent as an 18-year-old was such that he was invited to join Fleetwood Mac with the great Peter Green on the strength of his performances with a pub band, Boilerhouse. He immediately made the leap to playing on international concert stages, becoming a foil to Peter Green, playing harmony guitars on Fleetwood Mac's much loved classic, *Albatross*, plus bringing his fiery vibrato and love of different styles such as jazz to slightly lesser known tracks like *Jigsaw Puzzle Blues*.

Danny was a huge fan of Green's playing before being asked to join Fleetwood Mac – and you can hear a little of this in the directness of his blues phrasing. However, his style in many ways pointed to the way ahead for the band. Danny used a more distorted tone, as became much more the norm by the 1970s. He is most associated with a Gibson Les Paul, but this isn't essential. Do opt for a humbucker-equipped guitar if you can though. You'll need a powerful but clear tone, using a little overdrive and some spring style reverb. No other effects are needed – apart from finger vibrato!



1 WHAT'S O-KIRWAN

TRACK 33

As you'll see, these ideas are not about expanding your vocabulary to include exotic scales – all of them use the B minor pentatonic. This is all about expressiveness, especially the vibrato – be prepared to spend time perfecting Danny's wide, fast method, but be careful not to overdo it.

2 SUSTAINED NOTES

TRACK 34

It must have been fun to hold these sustained notes through a cranked amplifier on stage – and this is the feeling we are chasing with this example. Add vibrato and a little reverb to complete the picture. Make sure to support your string bends with one or two free fingers.



FULL TRACKS (TRACKS 33-38)
These tab examples come with audio tracks on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

THE TURNAROUND / DANNY KIRWAN

3 MELODY WITH 16THS

TRACK 35

Adding in a couple of 16th notes gives a real feeling of movement, but this is still all about the melody – not widdly runs up and down the fretboard. Notice we're sticking pretty close to the same register in all these examples. Kirwan was fluent across the fretboard, but also a master of eking the best out of one or two scale shapes.

4 SOLO OPENER

TRACK 36

This lick demonstrates how Danny might open a solo. The rapid triplet in bar 2 adds an embellishment to the simple melodic idea here. It's been mentioned already, but watch out for that vibrato. Recording yourself and listening back is a great way to evaluate this aspect of your playing.

5 PLAYING THE CHANGES

TRACK 37

This example covers the change from E minor back to B minor. Though there is no need to think of this as a change of scale, it is nice to emphasise the root sometime – it'll help outline the chord changes. We're starting off with a held E note and finishing with a sustained B.

ACOUSTIC



Unplugged

YOUR MONTH IN THE ACOUSTIC WORLD

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WILLIAM DUVALL

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ACOUSTIC TAB:
SHALLOW

DOUBLE UP

ACOUSTIC GUITARIST OF THE YEAR FINALIST TO RELEASE NEW INSTRUMENTAL DUO ALBUM

Karlijn Langendijk, a finalist for our 2018 Acoustic Guitarist Of The Year, is going to have a very busy few months. The nylon-string player is releasing a guitar duo album called *Meraki* with Czech guitarist Ladislav Pazdera on 12 December, and touring with our 2019 AGOTY winner Christie Lenée.

It's a showcase for two of the finest young European acoustic players around – but Karlijn is doing it all while recovering from the hand injury she was suffering with during her remarkable 2018 live finals performance at the UK Guitar Show.

"After playing the competition, I travelled to India to treat my hand injury, which had only become worse," Karlijn tells us. "I had so many new ideas, but I couldn't bring any of them to life because I had to stop playing completely. Little by little I recovered (now at around 70%), and all the music that had been

Karlijn Langendijk's hand injury isn't holding her back



locked up inside me for all this while could finally come out.

"Ladislav and I started a guitar duo – and whichever musical ideas I had, or he had, we worked them out to some interesting and diverse duo pieces. To me, making this album was a way of finding back my passion and joy in playing."

In November Karlijn is hitting the road in Europe with two other

innovative female acoustic guitar players for the MusiSHEans Guitar Tour. It's the live launch of a movement with big plans for the future. "In 2018 I co-founded MusiSHEans," Karlijn explains. "It's a community to support and empower female musicians, with Vivek Advani and Judith Beckedorf. Currently we are focussing on guitarists/stringed instruments in particular."



GOING FOR GOLD

CORT ADDS THE GOLD-OC6 TO ITS PREMIUM LINE OF ACOUSTIC GUITARS

Offering a smaller body for a more comfortable playing experience and a torrefied solid sitka spruce top for a tone that belies the instrument's contemporary build, the latest Cort is stunning to behold.

Featuring a solid African mahogany back and sides, a mahogany neck and ebony fretboard, the Gold-OC6 uses Cort's ATV (Aged To Vintage) treatment on its sitka spruce top. This torrefaction process takes some of the oils, sugar and resin out of the wood, just as it would

after decades of ageing, as vintage acoustic would open up with age. The hope is that Cort's acoustic delivers a similarly vintage tone off the shelf.

The Gold-OC6 includes a neat Fishman Flex Blend System, which has an onboard tuner with a display positioned on the shoulder, plus blend features for dialling in a good amplified tone.

Other build features include the double-lock neck joint, which sees a traditional dovetail neck joint reinforced by a big bolt to help transfer resonance. The Gold OC-6 is priced at £859.

TRACKS 39-43

FIVE JAZZ CHORDS

Essential chords to fuel your creativity



Dm7,5



A7#5



Dm9



Gm13



Cmaj7

William DuVall

THE ALICE IN CHAINS MAN LEAVES THE AMP ON STANDBY FOR HIS DEBUT SOLO ALBUM, *ONE ALONE*, AND STRIPS HIS SONGWRITING BACK TO THE BASICS

William DuVall is not one to overthink the business of songwriting. The Alice In Chains frontman's debut solo album, *One Alone*, takes a deep dive into themes most personal to him, catching him in a moment of unplugged reflection, but it was conceived right in the moment. It is as though to do otherwise, and fastidiously map his compositions out, might choke the life out of the whole enterprise.

"With Alice, there might be a little more forethought," he explains. "But that is just the nature of that band. We have got two singers that we are having to deal with, all these harmonies, all these layers, and all this stuff. That does require a bit more thought. But, yeah, for my own music, it is totally, totally instinctive."

Even the tracks that had been written and recorded with his previous band Comes With The Fall had that same instinctive vigour willing them into being; tracks such as *White Hot*, which he shared with his bandmates a few moments before the red light went on the studio. When DuVall came to track *One Alone* across a couple of weekend sessions – just him and a borrowed Gibson J-185 – it was a similar deal. In some cases, no one had heard this material, and with no management and record label expectations DuVall says that the idea behind the record was to see if his songwriting "could stand up to a solo acoustic presentation" and this gave him the impetus to record them.

"I didn't even know if they would see the light of day," says DuVall. "A song like *Til The Light Guides Me Home*, the first time I really played that properly was just to myself, and then I went into the studio and I tracked the version you hear on the album. [Pauses] The engineer would have been the first to hear that! *The Veil Of All My Fears*, that was written the day before I recorded it, so it was written on

30 December 2017 and recorded on New Year's Eve. I wrote that in a hotel room in Atlanta and my fiancée would have been the first one to hear that. I wrote it right there."

The acoustic guitar might seem a change of pace for an artist who made his name in the DC hardcore scene but in truth it was the best instrument for this project. The acoustic guitar is immediate. DuVall talks about this a lot, about the immediacy and portability of the guitar, of it having an organic, tactile quality. With the acoustic, it's right there, resonating, just as it has done throughout DuVall's career.

"That's what I started on," he says. "The very first guitar that I discovered and started playing was a very dilapidated, neglected, abandoned nylon-string acoustic, a Spanish guitar I found in my grandmother's basement. Strings that are literally peeling apart."

DuVall will forever be a disciple of the electric guitar, players who sought out new frontiers in volume and noise, with Jimi Hendrix the most brilliant lodestar in his firmament, but those who could articulate their ideas with an acoustic hold a similar attraction. "I always loved the way that Jimmy Page used acoustic guitars in

Zeppelin's music, how he could make acoustic music that heavy," says DuVall. "He would layer it in with electrics and with [John] Bonham's drums and everything, and it would turn into this amazing sonic tapestry—I loved all that stuff. Players such as Django, who is obviously a virtuoso, or somebody like Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, Shakti, all that stuff. I love that music, even as a small kid, and I loved what [McLaughlin] did with the Acoustic Trio, *Friday Night In San Francisco*, when he was with Paco De Lucía and Di Meola."

Trailblazers such as Page, McLaughlin and Django were all part of his musical education, and made DuVall alert to the potential of the acoustic guitar. But wait: if the acoustic guitar is such a big part of his life, how come he had to borrow a J-185 from his old Neon Christ bandmate Jimmy Demer when it came time to record the album?

"I didn't really have an acoustic in Atlanta at the time that I loved!" he says. "It's everything I want out of that Gibson voicing. All of my gear is in LA, in Alice's storage lockup. It is just a great acoustic guitar. If I had a session in Atlanta or something, an album I was producing for another band and I needed an acoustic guitar, I'd be like, 'Jimmy let me borrow that guitar!'. The same thing happened when I went into the studio to record."



FREE 'BIRD

William DuVall on replacing his borrowed J-185 with a Gibson Hummingbird

William DuVall and Jimmy Demer are close enough that DuVall can borrow his J-185 whenever he is in town, but taking it on the road? Luckily, Gibson hooked DuVall up with a Hummingbird that is essentially the same acoustic he's been playing with Alice In Chains for the past decade. "You just have these guitars that speak to you every so often and that 185 was one, and now this new Hummingbird is another," says DuVall. As for the electronics, he's had an LR Baggs pickup installed over the soundhole. "I didn't really want to put a pickup under the bridge. There's something about electrifying an acoustic guitar. I didn't even want to hide the fact that that's what we're doing! But I dig the sound of it."

**"THE VERY FIRST GUITAR THAT
I STARTED PLAYING WAS A
DILAPIDATED NYLON-STRING
ACOUSTIC I FOUND IN MY
GRANDMOTHER'S BASEMENT"**

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

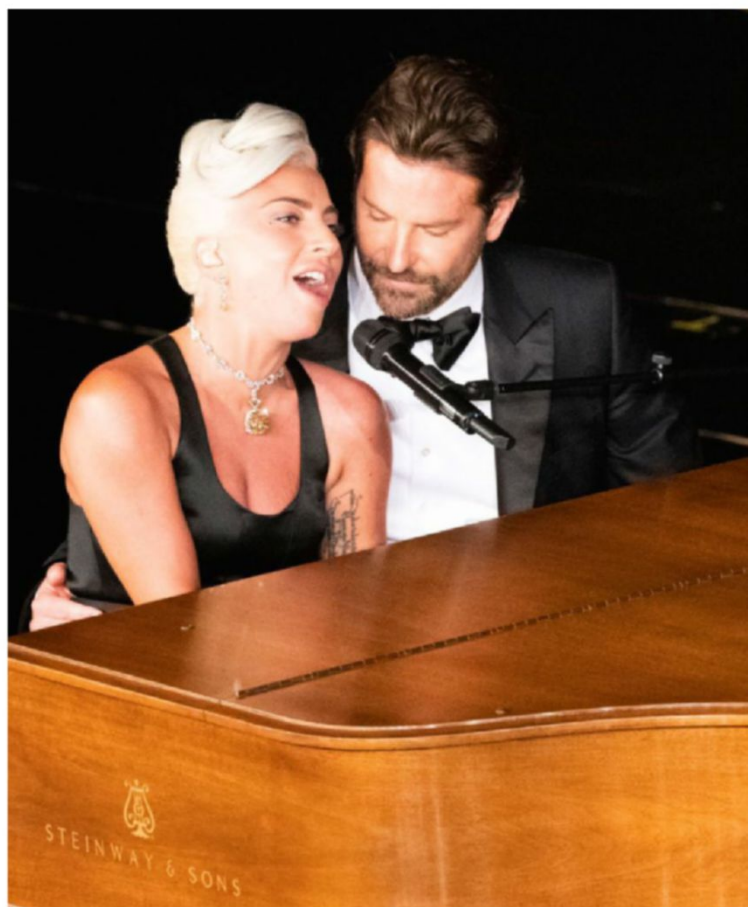
LADY GAGA & BRADLEY COOPER SHALLOW

This multi-award-winning power ballad from one of 2018's top movies will make a star of you at that next open-mic night!

Originally released in 1937, last year's (third) remake of *A Star Is Born* stars Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga who would also record the chart-busting single for the soundtrack. It's an interesting song with an unusual structure, having its roots in country but following the 'quiet intro/bombastic ending' rock trope. Think *Stairway To Heaven* but with pop sensibilities.

Our tab focuses on the acoustic guitar part you'll hear in the intro,

verse and refrain, beautifully played by Lukas Nelson, son of country great Willie Nelson. You'll hear subtle variations throughout on the original recording, suggesting that the song was probably recorded 'old-school style' in one single take, rather than comped together in Pro Tools. We've simplified the verse part but you can mix and match the second and third bars of both sections to create more variety. We've also included chord boxes which will help you create your own interpretation.



CHORDS

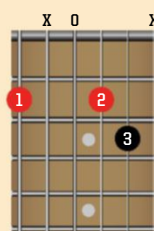
The first six shapes are used in the intro, verse and refrain; you can then switch from fingerpicking to a simple strum pattern for a lift during the second half of the song. Perfect when performing solo. Use the regular D shape (instead of D/F#) for the strummed sections.

SHALLOW (FROM A STAR IS BORN)

Words and Music by Stefani Germanotta, Mark Ronson, Andrew Wyatt and Anthony Rossomando
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Em7



D/F#



G



C



Cadd9



D



Am



Em



Am/G



Bm



A

**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 44)**

This song comes with a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-like style!

LADY GAGA & BRADLEY COOPER/ SHALLOW**SONG SHEET***Shallow***Verse 1**

Em7 D/F# G
Tell me somethin' girl
C G D
Are you happy in this modern world?
Em7 D/F# G
Or do you need more?
C G D
Is there somethin' else you're searchin' for?

Refrain

Em7 D/F# G
I'm fall - ing
C G D
In all the good times I find myself
Em7 D/F# G
Longin' for change
C G D
And in the bad times I fear myself
Em7 / D/F# / G / / / x2

Verse 2

Em7 D/F# G
Tell me somethin' boy
C G D
Aren't you tired tryin' to fill that void
Em7 D/F# G
Or do you need more?
C G D
Ain't it hard keeping it so hardcore?

Repeat refrain**Pre-chorus**

Am D/F#
I'm off the deep end, watch as I dive in
G D Em
I'll never meet the ground
Am D/F#
Crash through the surface, where they can't hurt us
G D Em
We're far from the shallow now

Chorus

Am Am/G D/F#
In the sha-ha, sha-la-low
G D Em
In the sha-sha-la, la-la-low
Am Am/G D/F#
In the sha-ha, sha-ha-low
G D Em
We're far from the shallow now

Bridge

Bm D
Oh, ha-ah-aah-ah
A A Em7
Aah, ha-ah-ah-ah-aah
Bm D A
Oh, ah, ha-ah-ah-ah-aa-aah

(Repeat pre-chorus & chorus)**LADY GAGA & BRADLEY COOPER SHALLOW Intro**

TRACK 44

Fine *D.C. al Fine*

Although this part sounds simple it's quite intricate, requiring you to pick with your thumb (marked *p* in the tab) and the first three fingers (*i*, *m* and *a*). Watch out for the 'push' into the first G chord, where you'll pinch all three notes simultaneously and time the notes just before beat 1 of bar 2.

LADY GAGA & BRADLEY COOPER SHALLOW Verse

TRACK 44

This verse immediately follows the intro. Essentially it's the same, following roughly the same chords and timing. Still, it's worth practising the two sections. Once you get the small variations down you should find it easier to make up your own fingerpicked ideas around this chord progression.

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE
BEST NEW GEAR

Welcome to the GAS (Gear Acquisition Syndrome*) Station! Every issue, TG scours the market for the hottest new gear and brings you transparent reviews that you can trust. From the smallest of accessories that make your life easier, to big investments such as brand new guitars, amps and effects pedals – if it's worth your attention, you'll find it here!

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

Our product selection is driven by our love of gear. We select the most exciting products on the market every month to bring you opinions you can trust.

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

We're not gear snobs here at *Total Guitar*. We judge it on whether it looks good, sounds good and plays well – not by the name on the headstock.

*WHAT IS GAS?

Gear Acquisition Syndrome is the guitar-player's never-ending urge to acquire new gear, irrespective of whether they actually need it. Don't pretend you don't have it – we all do!

NO SNAKE OIL

You won't find us getting hung up on hokey mythology or nonsense marketing speak: we aim to bring you bullshit-free opinions on the gear you're interested in.

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

TG review scores are a true reflection of our experts' opinion on the product they've been testing. You'll never find a rating in our mag that has been bought and paid for.

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

We test every product under the conditions that they were designed for. For example, if an amp is designed to be played loud, rest assured that we'll have tested it at rehearsal/gig volumes!

BEST BUY AWARD

TG Best Buy Awards are reserved for stand-out products that earn a five-star rating. This is the best, most exciting new gear that you need to check out



BEST FOR...

Different guitarists have different needs. This badge highlights a particular strength that a product has in a TG Test or Group Test, so you can choose what's best for you



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090 START ME UP

Five new products to get you started

092 FENDER AMERICAN ULTRA SERIES STRATOCASTER

Is this the pinnacle of what a Fender Strat can be?

096 MOOER GE150

A nicely priced amp-modelling multi-effects

098 MARTIN ROAD SERIES D-12E

A pro quality solid-wood dreadnought at an affordable price

100 TG TEST: MODELLING COMBOS

Next generation top modellers!

106 AMPLITUDE BRIAN MAY

IK Multimedia's ultimate rig for Queen tones



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



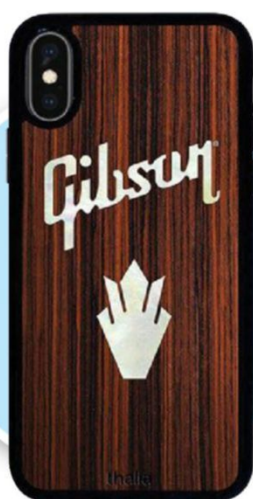
SOME ISSUES



POOR



01



02



03



04



05

START ME UP!

Five new products to fuel your GAS this month...

BARE KNUCKLE SILO RABEA MASSAAD SIGNATURE

1 Bare Knuckle has teamed up with progman and YouTube star Rabea Massaad for the Silo humbucker. Designed by Bare Knuckle MD Tim Mills, Massaad and Adam 'Nolly' Getgood, the Silo boasts "clean and split-coil tones that are pure, warm, and full bodied, responding extremely well to pick dynamics and changes on the volume pot". The Silo is available in six-, seven- and eight-string iterations, with a range of finishes. (from £139, bareknucklepickups.co.uk)

GIBSON PHONE

2 Gibson has teamed up with Thalia Collections to offer a series of handmade cases that cover your phone in style, in three designs: AAA curly Hawaiian koa engraved with a Les Paul signature and pearl Gibson logo; Indian rosewood with a Gibson Holly logo inlay; and Indian rosewood with a mother-of-pearl Gibson logo inlay. All three cases are constructed of military-grade polycarbonate and overmoulded with TPU rubber. There's also wireless charging support and a variety of sizes for iPhones. (£59 each, gibson.com)

STRYMON IRIDIUM

3 Strymon's amp modeller focuses on clean-to-crunch amp textures, with models of the Fender Deluxe Reverb, Vox AC30TB and Marshall Plexi, driven by its Matrix Modelling. The amps are adjusted via drive, bass, middle, treble and level controls, and promise to go beyond the originals, driven by Strymon's analog JFET preamp front end. There are Nine Impulse Response cabinets, which can be adjusted via the Iridium's Room control, and you can load your own IRs using Strymon's Impulse Manager software. (£399, strymon.net)

DEAN MARKLEY DOYLE ANNIHILATORS

4 Dean Markley's Annihilators—built for Misfits guitarist Doyle—are designed for rough treatment. The 10-60 gauge set is made of nickel-plated steel and hand-wound slowly over a hex core, with the outer string wrap maintaining 100% contact with the core. Dean Markley says the core-to-wrap ratio makes bending easier and provides the physical and tonal durability for Doyle's aggressive playing. Or, as Doyle puts it, "I beat the [expletive] out of them, and they don't break." (£649, deanmarkley.com)

ELECTRO-HARMONIX 5MM

5 This power amp pedal produces 2.5 watts and can be connected directly to an 8-16-ohm speaker cabinet. The controls are streamlined—there's a volume knob and a bright/norm switch that adds top boost/presence—but the sounds on tap are varied. "You can use the 5MM alone to go from a sparkly clean tone to raw bluesy grit or plug a dirt/overdrive pedal or preamp into it," says EHX founder Mike Matthews. "Turn it up for some gnarly grind, or really crank it and get bathed in distortion." (£59, ehx.com)



FENDER AMERICAN ULTRA SERIES STRATOCASTER



£1859

Has Fender refined the contemporary Strat to perfection here?

How does a guitar company innovate while protecting the very things people loved about its instruments in the first place? It can be a fine line – remember Gibson's embrace of Robot Tuner models in 2015? Gibson probably wants to forget it too. Fender is approaching things in a more measured way – creating regularly revised lines for its iconic models built in Mexican and Corona to suit different budgets and tastes. And looking at the specs across the American-made Ultra Series, it's undoubtedly Fender's most contemporary. Does that make it the pinnacle of what a modern Fender can be too?

heard that before because the Ultras are the only Fender Series that has it. While the Elite had a C-D profile with 9.5"-14" radius, this is 10"-14". The idea is it gets flatter as you go up. To us it doesn't feel like a deep D profile and isn't jarring if you're used to a C-shape. The radius taper is also subtle and that nod to aiding comfort and speed is complemented at the back too.

There's a sleek 'Ultra Satin' finish to the neck and the maple is nicely toned with bevelled edges to add a played-in familiarity to the buttery feel. Go up the neck and you're in for a nice surprise. The curved heel joint and contouring around it was seen on the Elite

THE ULTRAS ARE ESSENTIALLY A REFRESH OF THE ELITES

First, we need to go back to get to the future. In 2016 Fender launched the Elite Series, and the Ultras share a lot of the same traits. This series is essentially a refresh of the Elites with updates and refinements. And the features here are significant.

Combined, they suggest this is an instrument for people who play guitar a lot and need enhanced tonal versatility and comfort from their Fender. But that could just as well apply to any of us who can afford the entrance fee. The Strat arguably benefits the most from that too. So let's break down what we have here and how it adds up.

The neck profile here is a Modern-D – you may not have

before and is something of a revolution for the Strat design. If you do spend time in the highest ranges of the fretboard this is a big selling point because it's a real success for freer access.

Comparing our Ash American Ultra Strat to one of the alder models finds this to be a little heavier, but it's about average for a Strat, weighing in at 8.2lbs, while the Plasma Red Burst is something Fender tested on a run of its Rarities series and it's vibrantly delivered here. The transparent reflection of the ash grain is certainly different and it won't be to some traditionalist tastes, but then, that's what the Ultra is all about to us.

1 TRUSS ROD ADJUSTMENT

The Elite series Strats had a rotary truss rod adjuster at the bottom of the neck but feedback from users influenced Fender's decision to return to tradition

2 S1 SWITCHING

Pressing a subtle switch on the volume control activates S1 switching that adds the neck pickup into series when activated in positions 1, 2 and 3; position 1: bridge and neck, position 2: bridge, middle and neck, position 3: middle and neck

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Ash
NECK: Maple, modern 'D'
SCALE: 648mm (25.5")
FINGERBOARD: Maple (10-14") compound radius
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo
PICKUPS: 3 x Fender Ultra Noiseless Vintage Strat
CONTROLS: 5-position pickup selector switch, master volume control (with S-1 switch and treble bleed), tone 1 (neck & middle), tone 2 (no-load pot)
HARDWARE: Bone nut, 2-point Deluxe synchronised vibrato with pop-in arm, Fender Deluxe rear-locking tuners
CASE: Deluxe moulded hardshell included
LEFT HANDED: No
FINISHES: Plasma Red Burst (as reviewed) Ultraburst (alder), Texas Tea (alder) Burst, Plasma Red Burst (ash), Arctic Pearl (alder), Cobra Blue (alder), Aged Natural (ash)
CONTACT: Fender EMEA
 Fender.com





Noiselessness

Are these pickups really single coils?

Fender's Ultra Noiseless pickups make a huge difference to tackling hum, but how? Well they're stacked single coils. Fender introduced the idea in 1998 with two single-coil pickups stacked on top of each other with the lower there to cancel out interference noise. The Ultras are technically the fifth iteration of the design and by the fourth generation, found on the Elite series, shielded wire was used for even more effective noise reduction, along with higher output Alnico 5 magnets, replacing the 3rd generation's mix of Alnico 2, 3 and 5 combo for the Strat's three pickups. Noiseless pickups are not 'true' single coils but there's plenty of the attack and character here with a lot less hum.

The S1 Switching found on the Elite Strat before has been simplified. It has different implications across the range for Tele, Jazzmaster and HSS Strat but here it brings the neck pickup into series with the middle and bridge pickups on positions 1, 2 and 3. It adds three new voices to the already versatile Strat armoury.

Blending the neck adds a bottom-end presence that mellows the more trebly end of the Strat spectrum somewhat. The middle and bridge pickups here aren't as spanky as some other 'Vintage' Strat single coils anyway, and the



The S1 switch makes this Strat an ultra-versatile workhorse instrument



Ultra Noiseless pickups (see above) have more contemporary fullness to their punch for us that makes them ideal for rockier, less bluesy territory too. They're also as quiet as you'd realistically hope.

The volume control itself has a treble bleed capacitor to retain high end when rolling off – and Fender has even thought of including tactile soft touch rubber edges to the knobs here. It's a great feature for any guitar and highly effective here – especially if you're controlling gain to clean up from the instrument. These tools at your disposal add up to a really

impressive and versatile Strat, and that's the standard we'd expect for this money to be honest. But the balance found here is harder to nail; this feels like that old familiar friend from Leo's brilliant mind, given a very well considered modern overhaul. For that it lives up to the Ultra name.

Rob Laing

SUMMARY	FEATURES									
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
	PLAYABILITY	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★

ALSO TRY...

FENDER DELUXE STRATOCASTER

£799

This series offers Noiseless pickups with a switch for middle, neck and bridge pickups in position 4, or a combination of the Neck and Bridge pickups in position 5.



66L USA FULLERTON DELUXE S-500

£1399

Another link to Leo Fender with his Magnetic Field Design pickups, this USA-made model features a mini-toggle series switch for neck and bridge or all three pickups together.



FENDER AMERICAN ULTRA STRATOCASTER HSS

£1859

If you need a 'bucker and Ultra specs this offers an S-1 Double Tap switch for a single-coil mode.





BE PROVOCATEUR

ARTIST: AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR

Designed in the UK by Patrick James Eggle
Solid Mahogany Body
Roasted Mahogany Neck
Truly Vintage Scale Length
Ebony Fingerboard
USA Seymour Duncan Pickups

Guitarist
CHOICE

ShergoldGuitars.com







MOOER GE150



£189

Less is Mooer with this nicely priced amp-modelling multi-effects

The past two years have seen a radical shift from Mooer, which has gone from the original purveyor of pocket money-friendly micro pedals with, ahem, familiar origins to an effects powerhouse in its own right, producing some astounding flagship devices, including the GE300 amp modeller/multi-effects. The GE150 combines the company's

tool too, with drum rhythms and metronome settings, an aux in jack, and a micro-USB, which even allows you to record direct via your phone.

All it takes is a quick peruse of the 200 onboard presets to confirm that this multi-effects is punching way above its price tag. While there are half as many models as on the GE300, there will be more than enough for most players. The clean models

via the handy onboard EQ, which is accessible on each patch.

This is no downsized GE300, however, and that becomes apparent while delving into the effects selection. There's a reasonable selection, but you're limited in terms of tweaking: each effect offers only three or four parameters, which limits your choice when it comes to modulations. We'd recommend avoiding the shonky pitch shifter, but the delays and reverbs are stellar, if a bit vanilla.

If you're shopping for a new multi-effects, the GE150 is a sound choice, particularly if realistic tones and a robust feature set are more important to you than soundscaping. You won't find better amp-modelled sounds from any other multi-effects in this price range, and that alone makes this diminutive unit worthy of your rig.

Michael Astley-Brown

OUR FAVES FROM THE MICRO PREAMP RANGE STAND OUT

reputation for value for money with its more recent innovative streak to produce a feature-packed multi-effects comfortably below the £200 mark.

For the modest outlay, you're getting 55 amp models – derived from Mooer's best-selling Micro Preamp series, no less – as well as a whopping 151 effects. While the unit packs its own array of Impulse Responses, what takes this above and beyond a typical multi-effects is the ability to add in your own. It's a handy practice

– particularly the Mesa Mk3 effort – compress beautifully, while the Jazz 120 model is as pristine as any recorded tones from the solid-state classic. The models that stand out correspond with our faves from the Micro Preamp range, so we quickly found our chug saviours in the 5150 and Engl Powerball sounds, which deliver all the aggression and saturation your heart could desire, minus the fizz. Any sounds that have a little too much top-end can be tamed

1 FOOTSWITCHES
Two footswitches are your lot for cycling through presets, but holding the left activates a built-in tuner, while keeping your foot on the right activates the 80-second looper

2 SIGNAL CHAIN
These green lights indicate which elements of your signal chain are currently active – pressing the mode switch switches them on or off

3 CONSTRUCTION
Kudos to Mooer: despite its light weight, the whole package looks sleek and feels rock-solid, particularly the smooth-operating expression pedal

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Multi-effects/amp modeller pedal

CONTROLS: Master, value, mode; play, save, exp, rhythm, tap and system buttons

SOCKETS: Input, 2x output, USB, headphones, micro-USB, aux in, power

BYPASS: Buffered

POWER: 9V power supply only (included)

CONTACT: Strings & Things
moeraudio.co.uk

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★★★★★
	SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
	BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
	USABILITY	★★★★★
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★



MARTIN ROAD SERIES D-12E

This dreadnought is streets ahead with its solid-wood build and Fishman pickup

£1149

Martin will forever be an aspirational acoustic guitar brand but that doesn't mean that it hasn't spared a thought for our pocketbooks in recent years. We have seen the X Series use high-pressure laminate builds to keep prices south of a grand, and the LX Series, aka Little Martin, offering affordable, travel-sized guitars. The Road Series was introduced in a similar fiscally conscious spirit. Built in Martin's plant in Navojoa, Mexico, and featuring solid-wood builds of sitka, sapele and koa, with Fishman MX-T electronics throughout, the Road Series is positioned as a pro-quality range for gigging musicians whose appearance fee can't quite stretch to Martin's US-built models, which, if we are honest, is most

even be the name on the headstock, that sense of feeling the weight of guitar-making history – Martin, after all, were the first to produce a dreadnought, naming the shape after the British battleship. But most likely it'll be the tone and feel that will get you.

Meeting any gigging player's brief, the D-12E comes across as a do-everything acoustic, with a bright but balanced voice that's as suited to flat-picking and strumming as it is to finger-picking. It features the non-scalloped X bracing pattern that Martin uses on its acoustics with dovetail neck joints, the pattern allowing the top to really resonate, while the onboard Fishman MX-T pickup/preamp system does a great job in amplifying the D-12E without stepping on its voice. Volume and tone controls are

THE WAFT OF LUXURY MAY WELL OVERPOWER THE SENSES

of us. But there is no acoustic such as Martin's Road Series D-12E dreadnought for an entry-level instrument.

Oh, my! When you pluck the D-12E dreadnought from its deluxe soft-shell case, the waft of luxury may well overpower the senses. It might be the D-12E's high-gloss finish that does it, immaculately applied across its solid sitka spruce top, and exquisite sapele back and sides. Others in the Road Series use gloss and satin finishes in a variety of combinations. The satin-smooth finish on the hand-rubbed C-profile 'Performing Artist' neck, which is substantial enough without ever feeling clubby, ideal for fretting chords, may also give one pause to gasp. Or it might

neatly hidden in the soundhole, as is the onboard tuner.

Elsewhere, the D-12E has vintage-style open-gear Grover tuners, a black pickguard, black binding on the body and neck, and 'Style 28' multi-stripe rosette and 'Style 18' purfling on the back. It looks great, feels premium. Using solid wood in its build means the D-12E will only sound better with age, as the oils and resins dry out over age. But hey, it sounds pretty darn sweet already.

Jonathan Horsley

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★★★★★
	SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
	BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
	PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

1 FINGERBOARD

Here Martin use Richlite, an FSC-certified sustainable material that is engineered from resin and recycled paper and looks, feels and performs uncannily like ebony

2 NECK

We might see some variance across the Road Series but these 'select hardwood' necks will all be crafted from eco-friendly, quality tonewoods

3 FISHMAN MX-T

The amplified signal is muted and a small but bright LED display in the soundhole illuminates when using the onboard tuner



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Dreadnought electro-acoustic
TOP: Solid sitka spruce
BACK AND SIDES: Solid sapele
NECK: Select hardwood, Performing Artist C profile
FINGERBOARD: Richlite
SCALE: 645mm (25.4")
FRETS: 20
TUNERS: Grover
NUT: Corian
BRIDGE: Richlite with drop-in GraphTech Tusq compensated saddle
ELECTRICS: Fishman MX-T with active onboard preamp and tuner, volume and tone controls
FINISH: Gloss
CONTACT: martinguitar.com / 0844 326 2000



PORTABLE DIGITAL AMPS

As the gap between digital and valves begins to close even further, TG gets its hands on a quartet of brand new models

Words: Jonathan Horsley / Photography: Oilly Curtis



Let's face it: guitarists love valves. From the minute you first started honking your guitar through a little solid-state practice amp, you've dreamed of owning a 'real' amp, with glass bottles glowing hot and bursting forth with even harmonic distortion. Well, that might have been the case for many of us, but in the last decade, modelling and digital technology has continued to improve, to where we are now at a point of difficult debate.

Purists will tell you that there's no substitute for a valve amp. They'll probably tell you about

their hearing loss and back problems while they do. But, joking aside, the tones produced by digital amps are now so convincingly valve-like that the benefits of lighter units and more manageable perceived volumes, plus a whole range of benefits such as recording, effects and memory banks are all major conveniences to would-be digital converts.

That's what this month's test is all about – can we get the kind of guitar tones at home, on stage or in a recording environment that will appease that valve itch? Boss, Blackstar, Fender and Yamaha all seem to think we can, so let's find out...





BOSS KATANA 50 MK II

£237

Who gives you extra?

Katana? I've heard of these before...

Yes, and Boss recently released the MK II versions of its popular modelling amps. This is the smallest of the range. The name of the game here is “more” compared with the original Katanas: twice as many amp models (10 vs five), extra effects, and a new ‘power amp input’ for running other effects into the power amp stage.

So it does quite a lot, then?

On paper, it's one of the best-equipped amps on test. The Katana MKII comes with cab-emulated outputs over USB and an analogue



output, so if you want to record or send a direct feed to a PA it gives you the sound of a mic'd cab, with three different voicings on offer. The Katana can work as an audio interface over USB for recording; the USB socket doubles as a gateway to Boss' Tone Central patch resource and Tone Studio editor.

You mentioned effects?

The Katana offers the most variation when it comes to effects in this group, with everything from classic Boss chorus to T-Wah (autowah), an octaver, pedal-controlled pitch bend among others. What's more, you can run up to five effects simultaneously.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling amp

POWER: 50 watts

KEY FEATURES: 10 amp models, 15 effects (60 via editor), USB recording, power amp input, out power level control,

CONTACT: Roland UK GBI 01792 702701
www.roland.com

BLACKSTAR SILVERLINE STANDARD

£369

Grey's amp anatomy

OK, it says Blackstar, but it's silver...

Yep. The visuals are a radical departure from the all-black designs we're used to from Blackstar. They set the Silverline apart from hulking valve heavyweights like the Series One and HT Venue valve amps. We think it looks classy from the off.

Enough about the looks: what's under the hood?

The Silverline range features five different models. The Standard we have here is a 20-watt, 1x10 combo. Blackstar loves to include patented methods of achieving ‘the sound in your head’, and the



Silverline is a continuation of its TVP (True Valve Power) technology. The idea is to bring high-end valve tone to a digital product, centred around two main areas of the amp: the pre-amp voicing, which is switchable from clean to heavy distortion through six selectable voices; and the power amp responses, which offer six different selections based on popular power amp valves.

What else does it do?

There are effects by way of three independent selected engines (Mod, Delay, Reverb), an emulated output/headphone socket, plus a line-in for jamming to music from your phone or other sources.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling amp

Power: 20 watts

KEY FEATURES: True Valve Power technology, six preamp voices, six valve responses, 12 effects, USB recording/re-amping

CONTACT: Blackstar Amplification
01604 817817
www.blackstaramps.com

FENDER TONE MASTER DELUXE REVERB

£869

Vintage goes modern

Wait, that looks like a Fender Deluxe!

Well-spotted. While other digital amps in this test are packed with classic amp models, the Fender Tone Master has its sights set squarely on one objective: to faithfully recreate one of the most iconic amps of all time in a digital format. It looks just like its valve parent on first sight, is roughly half the weight of a valve Deluxe and features no screens, menus or indicator lights.

So is it quite limited, then?

It might not have oodles of amps and effects, but the focus here is



on nailing the tone and weight of a known quantity. Amp fans know that the Deluxe is famed for its versatility, so as well as those sparkly clean tones, all-important tremolo circuit and reverb effects, it's possible to get rich-sounding overdrives from the Deluxe too. You have two channels (just like the original); normal and vibrato, both with hi/lo inputs so you can tailor it to the output of your guitar.

How has Fender made the amp so light?

The Tone Master uses a 100-watt digital power amp to recreate the output power and response of the original, which reduces the weight significantly.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling amp

POWER: 100 watts

KEY FEATURES: Hi/Low inputs, Normal/Vibrato channel, adjustable output power, lightweight Jensen N-12K speaker, emulated line-out

CONTACT: Fender GBI 0845 305 1122
www.fender.com

YAMAHA THR30II

£536

Home is where the THR is...

This one looks different to the others...

That's because it is. It's been a while since Yamaha first released the THR series – marketed as the 'third amp'. Many guitarists have their main gigging amp and a smaller amp for rehearsals and small venues, but nothing that can sit neatly in the front room. The THR has certainly been popular thanks to its small size, appealing looks and ear-pleasing tones. The MKII version continues on this path.

So it's not for gigging, then?

Yamaha's THR Head series is your place to look for fully giggable



amps, and the THR II line up is definitely more suited to using at home. That said, it does include an emulated output, so on-stage use isn't out of the question. The 30W model we have here includes wireless functionality for your guitar – a built-in receiver for a Line 6 Relay transmitter (not included), a rechargeable battery that lasts around five hours, and remote app control.

What about the sounds?

Hidden under the five-way Amp selector switch are three variations (Classic, Modern and Boutique), so you get 15 guitar amps in total, ranging from clean and vintage to saturated high-gain.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling amp

POWER: 30 watts

KEY FEATURES: 15 amp models, 3 bass amp models, 3 acoustic models, 8 effects, USB recording, Bluetooth, Line 6 Relay wireless integration

CONTACT: Yamaha Music Europe 0344 811 1116 uk.yamaha.com



HEAD TO HEAD

With effects galore from each, it's all about the tone

With so many models and features on offer here, the choice is less about the quality of the sounds and build, and more to do with the application you'll be using it for. We'll start by saying that all of these amps sound great, and with the number of tonal variations on offer for most, there's an almost overwhelming amount of tinkering to be done.

The Blackstar, Yamaha and Boss all offer a wide variety of sounds and effects across the board. We liked the smooth, rich overdrives of the Blackstar as we upped the gain, and the little Yamaha pumps out some beautifully lush reverbs. Of course, tweaking is optional, and one of the criticisms of digital amps is that they offer so many options that it's easy to become distracted rather than actually playing! That's where the Fender Tone Master excels, offering a unique take on digital technology within this group: if you're a technophobe and the thought of not being able to see what is going on with

THERE'S AN ALMOST OVERWHELMING AMOUNT OF TINKERING TO BE DONE

your tone bothers you, the Fender is a perfect choice. We were taken by its ability to recreate reverb- and trem-drenched cleans with such an 'organic' feel, while also offering punchy blues/Americana overdrives.

Blackstar's Silverline Standard and the Boss Katana are the most closely related in terms of size and features here. Both offer plenty of options, additional connectivity and editing, and it's the one face-off within the four that comes down to sound. To our ears, the Katana is voiced brighter than the Silverline Standard, with a marked bass roll-off that is noticeable both 'in the air' and through the floor when we plugged into the Boss. That said, the Boss Tone Studio offers cabinet resonance control (instead of a panel knob), so there is plenty of tweaking to the low-end response on offer: you just have to connect to a computer and save it. We'd suggest hyping the resonance, then using the bass control to remove what you don't need, to avoid constant computer hook-ups.

The visuals are a radical departure from the all-black designs we're used to from Blackstar



The name of the game here is "more" compared with the original Katanas



FINAL VERDICT

Digital amps have come into their own

To anyone still exclusively eyeing up valve amps for their next investment, we say: take a look at these four. They really are all that good. With every one of these lines offering alternative models except the Yamaha (although we'd be surprised if an update to the THR head doesn't come soon), you'll be hard-pushed not to find an amp that can be used for your purpose.

The Yamaha's updated features make it the obvious choice for convenience and speedy practice if you're not gigging, leaving nothing between you and getting going. Meanwhile, Blackstar's Silverline is our pick if you're looking to bridge the gap between using the amp at home for practice or recording as well as on stage. Fender's Tone Master is our definite choice for simplicity, plus the authentic tone and feel of the original, and

with some additional pedals, it will cover more ground than the indie/blues/classic rock sounds you'd expect. Finally, the Katana excels – in particular for its diverse range of effects and value for money.

So, valves vs digital? We're starting to believe it's irrelevant for many situations: the real verdict is that convenience matched with tone has never been as good as this. Just choose the right weapon for your battle.

1 BOSS KATANA 50 MK II



2 BLACKSTAR SILVERLINE STANDARD



3 FENDER TONE MASTER DELUXE REVERB



4 YAMAHA THR30II

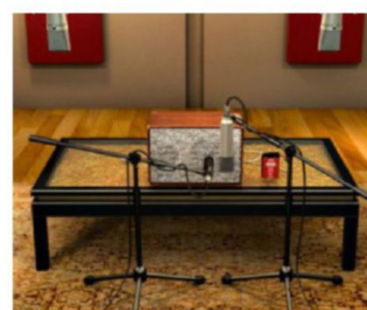
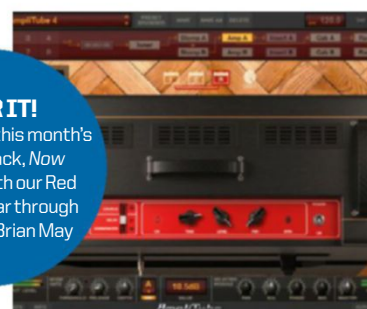


1	SUMMARY									
	FEATURES									
	SOUND QUALITY									
	VALUE FOR MONEY									
	BUILD QUALITY									
	USABILITY									
	OVERALL RATING									

2	SUMMARY									
	FEATURES									
	SOUND QUALITY									
	VALUE FOR MONEY									
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3	SUMMARY									
	FEATURES									
	SOUND QUALITY									
	VALUE FOR MONEY									
	BUILD QUALITY									
	USABILITY									
	OVERALL RATING									

4	SUMMARY									
	FEATURES									
	SOUND QUALITY									
	VALUE FOR MONEY									
	BUILD QUALITY									
	USABILITY									
	OVERALL RATING									



HEAR IT!

We recorded this month's Classic Track, *Now I'm Here*, with our Red Special guitar through AmpliTube Brian May

AMPLITUBE BRIAN MAY £103

Sheer tone attack! IK Multimedia open the palace doors to Queen's throne room

Brian May's tones have been the stuff of legend since the 70s and now you can have them all at your fingertips in IK Multimedia's new AmpliTube signature model pack. Don't have a Brian May guitar? No problem, thanks to the genius-like inclusion of IK's 'Red Special' stompbox which simulates Brian's guitar. First select whether your guitar is single coil or humbucking – then let AmpliTube do the rest. Each of the virtual 'Tri-Sonic' pickups has an on/off knob as well as a phase switch, giving you all of May's own sonic permutations.

The next ingredient is IK's treble booster based on the KAT Brian uses to add gain and tighten up the low end of his tone. A nifty 70s/80s/90s switch ensures your tone is era-correct. To add more magic we have two effect pedals, the 'May Wah' and 'FOX Phaser', and finally the 'Star Gate' noise gate which cleans everything up.

Amp-wise, IK's suite contains the two main models Brian has used for his entire Queen career. We have a Vox AC30, which supplies Brian's main rhythm and lead sounds and can be used in mono or in a three-speaker 'wet dry wet' stereo setup. But the jewel

in the crown is IK's 'Deacy' amp – based on a six-inch radio speaker modified by John Deacon. Originally powered by a 9v battery, the tone changed depending how much charge was left. Amazingly, IK has included a 'battery power' control for authentic tonal tweaks in *Good Company* and *Bijou*.

This ultimate Brian May rig is user friendly and the presets cover all the iconic Queen tones. You'll need AmpliTube 4 too, but apart from that, IK Multimedia has delivered the works!

Charlie Griffiths

AT A GLANCE

AMPS:
BM 30 Vox AC30
BM DK modified radio

CABINETS:
2x12 BM 30 Blue
2x12 BM 30 H70
1x6 BM DK 'Deacy'

STOMPBOXES:
Red Special
guitar simulator
Treble Booster
May Wah
FOX Phaser
Star Gate

WE HAVE THE 'MAY WAH' AND 'FOX PHASER' EFFECT PEDALS

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★★★★★
	SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
	BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
	USABILITY	★★★★★
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★





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FIX YOUR GUITAR

SETTING A LOCKING NUT'S HEIGHT

Fine-tune the action once and for all at the less obvious end of the neck with this awesome guide

Words: Jack Ellis

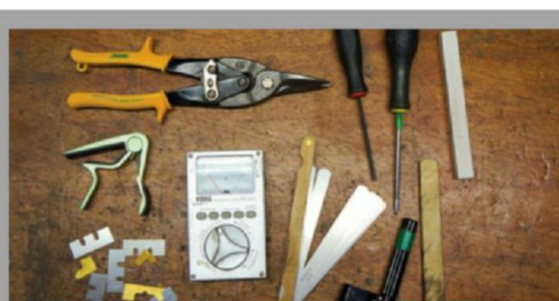
The locking nut is integral to the high performance tremolo system – it removes the non playing part of each string from the equation by locking it down. This Floyd Rose one is the most commonplace but it's also quite common to see the nut height set wrong – often by the factory. We figure it must be too fiddly for the regular assembly line to get it right each time so they err on the high side each time.

Mankind has not come this far to put up with that minor

annoyance! Being as this will be set for life let's take care to do this properly and it will be a small but important victory that you can reap the rewards from!

Set a nut too low and it will buzz on 1st fret; set too high and it's hard work and intonates out of tune.

Adjusting takes a couple of specialised tools and some careful measuring but can get you the comfortable action you so desperately crave. After all, setting the nut height is just as important as setting the bridge height...



WHAT YOU NEED

- ▶ PH1 Screwdriver
- ▶ 2.5, 3 and 4mm allen keys
- ▶ Feeler gauge
- ▶ Fresh strings
- ▶ String winder
- ▶ String cutters
- ▶ Specialised sanding block (faced with 120 grit sandpaper)
- ▶ Capos x2
- ▶ Tuner
- ▶ Wooden strip (for blocking the bridge)
- ▶ Tin snips (for creating shims)
- ▶ Beer can (brill shim material!)

SKILL LEVEL
Medium



MEET YOUR EXPERT

Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: www.jacksinstrument services.co.uk



1 Let's get to work - string up your guitar with a fresh set of strings. It's not a good idea to set up anything around old worn strings, especially if they have bends or kinks in them! You don't need the locking clamps around at the moment so stash them away safely.



2 As a Floyd Rose veteran I don't need to tell you about the woes of tuning this system up. Let's do ourselves a favour and block the bridge off temporarily. This trusty piece of wood allows us to get on with repeat tuning and make some progress on addressing the nut height.



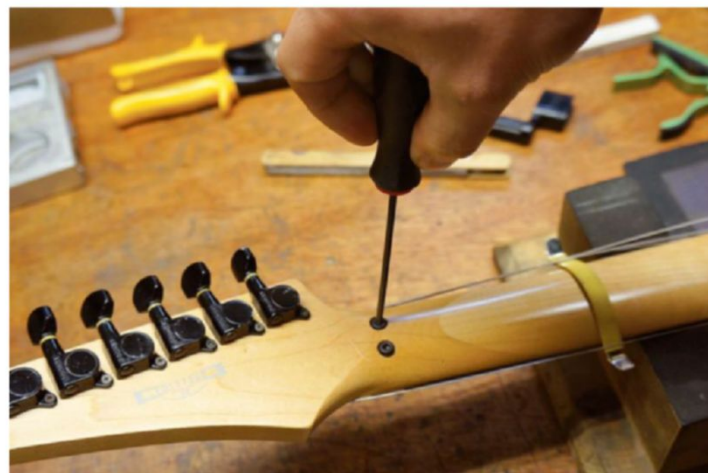
3 We absolutely cannot adjust nut height unless the truss rod is set. Press on 1st fret then press down on 15th fret and we'll use the straight string as a guide to see how bent forward the neck is. The feeler gauge is put over 8th or 9th fret underneath the string; .007" is the magic clearance. Adjust the truss rod accordingly.



4 Stick the capo onto 3rd fret and let's check the gap over 1st fret. There should be a clearance of .002" to .006" measured with a feeler gauge. Be sure to accurately measure each side. We like the high E string to be the lowest and the bass E string to have more clearance to allow for a bit of ferocity.



5 The readings from step 4 will determine if you take route A or route B later, but whichever, get this thing out of the way. We'll be lifting the strings off so we can attack under the nut; this string retainer just gets in the way. We'll put it back on later and set the height.



6 There are two ways that a locking nut is attached; some are bolted on from the rear and some are screwed in from the front - the screws hide under the string clamps. With bolts, take note of the mini washers and star washers that will fall out. Make sure you don't lose anything!



7 Great, now we have access to the pad that the nut unit sits on. Based on your reading in step 4 follow route A if your clearances were too large and follow route B if your clearances were too small. Do not be tempted to file down the bottom of the metal nut unit – it's rock hard!



8 Route A Part 1 – initial nut clearance was too large. We've made a specialised sanding block from a piece of Micarta with 120 grit paper double-side taped on. The width is absolutely key as well as it being 100% flat. The timber bed is hardwood so it will work slowly at best – that suits us for fine-tuning!



9 Route A Part 2 – it's all about technique. Begin to work the timber with the sanding block being incredibly careful. You do not want the tool to slip and scratch the headstock. The hardest thing to get right is to keep parallel and not accidentally round off the timber. The bottom of the nut is flat don't forget.



10 Route B – initial nut clearance was too small. In this case we'll shim the nut up to its correct clearance. Thin metal shims should be trapped under the nut to fine-tune the height. If you don't have some you can re-purpose a beer can after enjoyment using some tin snips. Just be careful as these become lethally sharp.



11 Whether the process took you down route A or B this is the critical part – checking again and knowing when to stop! The strings must be replaced and fully tuned to test your nut clearances. Tightening up the nut fastenings helps too and it squishes down a little. If you need to make a change head back to Route A or B and repeat.



12 The nut is set and it's set for life. This pain-in-the-arse task will not have to be set again unless you convert to playing slide guitar. Let's set the string retainer height. It should be tightened so each string touches the back of the locking nut unit. This means that when you clamp the string locks back up it doesn't raise the pitch.

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The Playlist

Chris Rest from Californian punks **Lagwagon** details the musical education that shaped him, from blues to Nuge...

The first song I remember... **Maxwell's Silver Hammer – The Beatles**

"My parents were young. I was born in 1967 and they were huge Beatles fans. The Beatles were always playing around my house. I remember liking *Maxwell's Silver Hammer* because of the humour. I always had a morbid sense of humour, a sort of Monty Python, laughing at people getting hurt kinda thing! [Laughs]. My mom said that my favourite song when I was very young was a song by Donovan called *I Love My Shirt*."

The first song I played...

***Smoke On The Water* – Deep Purple**

"It's kind of a cliché but there was a guy renting a room from my parents and he had the electric guitar that I first picked up, and the very first thing I played was the *Smoke On The Water* riff, probably on the one string and in the wrong key. But that was it. If you listen to that song it's not just guitar; it's keyboard, too, doubling that riff, and it's such a strong blues scale riff with that flat-five in there."

The song that got me playing guitar...

***I Want You To Want Me* – Cheap Trick**

"It could have been the *Cheap Trick At Budokan*, that whole album. They were one of my favourite bands for sure when I first started playing guitar. Before that I was playing drums and piano... So, Cheap Trick, and The Knack *Get The Knack*. I wished I had an older sibling that could turn me onto great rock albums because I could only discover music from listening to FM radio. We got a really good station from Los Angeles, the KMET, that my parents listened to all the time, so I was exposed to ZZ Top, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC."

The song I enjoy playing the most live...

***Immersion* – Klone**

"This is a perfect song to play live

and we often begin the set with this one. It's a very emotional and luminous song. I also like to move around on stage and it's really heavy and physical to play. When the drums come in I feel the power on stage."

The ultimate FM radio song...

***Wango Tango* – Ted Nugent**

"I just thought, 'That guy is just crazy! He's all over the place on the guitar.' It was the way he was talking like one of those FM DJs, talking so fast and having so much energy."

My guitar students always ask me to teach them this... ***May 16* – Lagwagon**

"It was on a Tony Hawks skateboarding videogame and that's how a lot of people discovered our band. It's got some interesting chords. It's mostly D major but it has this D9 in it, a D major 7, and some chords you wouldn't expect to hear in a punk song. It's more complicated than you think. I think we try to have some substance in our chord progressions."



The riff I wish I'd written ***Back In Black* – AC/DC**

"Even though it is not my favourite AC/DC album that riff is amazing. I love Angus' playing. It's so pure, and with his vibrato and his energy. He has always been one of my favourite guitar players. I think *Highway To Hell* might be one of my all-time favourite albums, front to back, but *Back In Black* is a great riff. I wish I had written that song."

The song that gives me the blues...

***Three O'Clock Blues* – BB King**

"BB King's vibrato is so awesome and he has so much feeling. He is one of those people who the music just flowed out of. This is his essential essence, that approach to major blues, mixing major and minor together, then mixed with his vibrato and phrasing. He played solos like a vocal."

A song for trying out new gear...

***A New Level* – Pantera**

"I love this riff to test palm muting and hear how heavy an amp sounds. I also like to play an acoustic riff from Opeth's *Damnation*."

Lagwagon's latest album *Railer* is out now on Fat Wreck Chords



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