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THEY'VE ARRIVED

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BY *Lowden*

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Ed Sheeran



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Future Publishing
QUAY HOUSE, THE AMBURY, BATH, BA1 1UA
Tel: 01225 442244 **Fax:** 01225 822763
Email: totalguitar@futurenet.com
Website: www.totalguitar.co.uk

EDITORIAL

Acting Editor: Chris Bird
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell
Senior Music Editor: Jason Sidwell
Guitar Features & Tuition Editor: Chris Bird
Production Editor: Stan Bull
Music Co-ordinators: Zoe Maughan, Natalie Beilby

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Barrett, Phil Capone, Jack Ellis, Charlie Griffiths, Jonathan Horsley, Stephen Kelly, Alex Lynham, Grant Moon, Matthew Parker, Amit Sharma, Michael Astley-Brown, Rob Laing, Paul Elliott, Stuart Williams

Music Engraver: Simon Troup and Jennie Troup
Photography: Olly Curtis, Neil Godwin, Will Ireland

ADVERTISING

Phone: 01225 442244 **Fax:** 01225 732285
Chief Revenue Officer: Zach Sullivan, zach.sullivan@futurenet.com
UK Commercial Sales Director: Clare Dove, clare.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Sales Director: Lara Jaggon, lara.jaggon@futurenet.com
Account Sales Directors: Alison Watson, alison.watson@futurenet.com
 Guy Meredith, guy.meredith@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Head Of Marketing: Sharon Todd
Subscriptions Marketing Manager: Tom Cooper

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller: Frances Twentyman
Head of Production UK & US: Mark Constance
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CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK reader order line & enquiries: 0844 848 2852
Overseas reader order line & enquiries: +44 (0)1604 251045
Online enquiries: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
Email: totalguitar@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

LICENSING

International Licensing Director: Matt Ellis, matt.ellis@futurenet.com
Tel: +44 (0)1225 442244

MANAGEMENT

Brand Director, Music: Stuart Williams
Head Of Art: Rodney Dive
Content Director: Scott Rowley
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell

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Welcome...



I remember when I first became aware of blues. Aged about 13, I'd been listening to rock for a while and playing guitar for a year or two. Then, in 1990, two things happened; Gary Moore released his career-defining *Still Got The Blues* album and Stevie Ray Vaughan died tragically. It was my first exposure to these giants and I was hooked immediately, quickly exploring earlier generations of guitarists who'd influenced my own new heroes. Looking back, it felt like Gary and

Stevie were breaking new ground in the way they played – albeit in a style I was only just discovering myself. Their music felt fresh!

Fast forward to 2020 and this issue we find ourselves looking at modern-day blues, and today's new generation of guitarists are proving there's still fertile territory in a genre which pre-dates recording technology. Gary Clark Jr., who you'll have seen on the cover, is at the forefront of the movement, but, fearful of being typecast, is drawing on funk, soul and hip-hop influences to take blues in new directions. Again, fresh!

In this month's 19-page feature we've spoken to a host of players at the cutting edge of blues – and they've been spilling the beans to give us their playing tips and their wisdom. Alongside all the hottest gear reviews and songs to learn, hopefully there's plenty to keep you going until next month!

Chris

Chris Bird Acting Editor

MAKING THIS MONTH'S MAG



ROB LAING

TG's former Editor just can't stay away. But then, he's only moved about 10 feet since he went to work on musicradar.com – close enough for TG staffers to leave the Martin X Series acoustic and Fender's Super Lead III by his desk with post-it notes marked 'Please review!' attached. Find out his thoughts in this month's Gas Station (p90).



STAN BULL

In keeping with the theme of 'new', Stan's been enthusiastic about a number of other young artists appearing in this issue. At the top of the list are Code Orange (p32). "I'm may not be the biggest metalhead in the office," he says, "but I know an inspiring band when I hear one. This lot have broken through the glass ceiling."

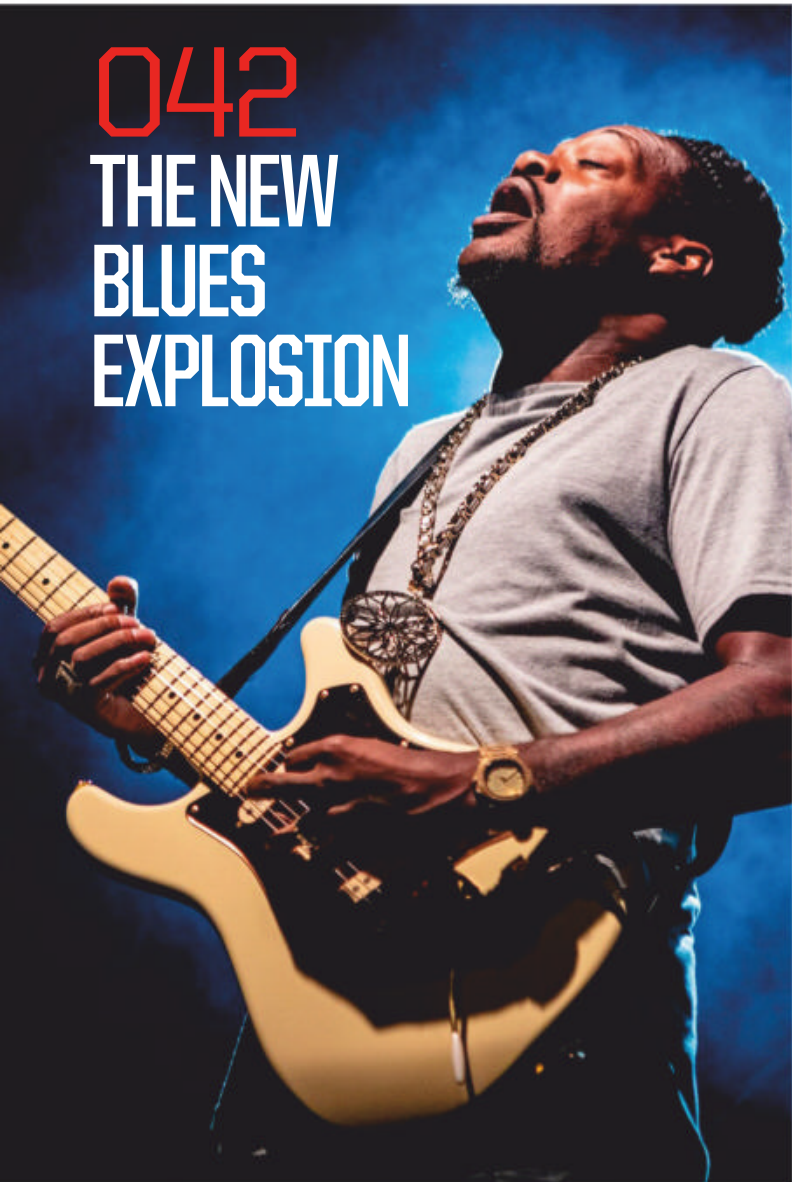


AMIT SHARMA

"I haven't left the house much lately," remarked Amit, and, to be honest, we can't say we're surprised. Aside from conducting telephone interviews for this month's massive cover feature (all 14 of 'em!), TG's prolific contributor even found time to catch up with Anna Calvi (p12) and Code Orange's Reba Meyers (p32).

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Words: Scott Rowley Photo: Ross Halfin

BLUES FOR GREENY

Legends of the music world came together last month for a tribute to the one and only Peter Green at the London Palladium...

06



T

he New Blues? You could say that Peter Green invented that back in 1968. Sure, first as guitarist for John Mayall's Bluesbreakers (where he replaced Eric

Clapton) and then as the guitarist/frontman and creative force behind the original Fleetwood Mac, Green was key to the British Blues Explosion – arguably the third wave of blues after 'country blues' (acoustic) and 'urban blues' (electric). And, yeah, these days the music of the British Blues Explosion is the orthodoxy – classic rock, dad rock, the preserve of blues bores the world over.

But there was always more to Peter Green than blues vamps and old-timey shuffles. Between March 1968 and May 1970, Green's Fleetwood Mac released six singles that redefined music. With *Black Magic Woman*, *Need Your Love So Bad*, *Albatross*, *Man Of The World*, *Oh Well* and the last song he ever wrote for the band, *The Green Manalishi (With The Two Prong Crown)*, Peter Green took the blues template to the moon and back, blowing the minds of everyone from The Beatles to Pink Floyd, and inspiring future rock heroes as varied as Judas Priest, Gary Moore and Noel Gallagher.

Noel was one of the many guests at 'Mick Fleetwood & Friends Celebrate The Music Of Peter Green' at the London Palladium on 26th February, where the guitar heroes paying tribute to Green's genius included David Gilmour (making *Oh Well Pt.2* sound like it was the cornerstone of Pink Floyd's back catalogue, and adding some gorgeous lap steel to *Albatross*), Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top (duetting on *Oh Well* with Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler), former Mac and longtime Bob Seger guitarist Rick Vito, Jonny Lang, Pete Townshend (demonstrating how he nicked a bit of the Mac's *Station Man* for The Who's *Won't Be Fooled Again*), Green's original co-guitarist Jeremy Spencer (threading delicate slide licks through Elmore James's *The Sky Is Crying*), and Metallica's Kirk Hammett, the current owner of 'Greeny', the 1959 Les Paul Standard previously owned by both Green and Gary Moore.

Green himself? He wasn't there to hear it. He retreated from music after drug and mental health problems in the 70s. Fair play: when you've reinvented the blues and inspired an entire generation of guitar players, your work here is done.

"Peter said he wasn't cut out for the music business," Gary Moore once said. "I think he did the right thing leaving... He was an amazingly deep person – I mean, it's in the music isn't it? Anyone can hear that."

Kirk Hammett takes to the stage with Billy Gibbons wielding 'Greeny', a 59 Les Paul standard once belonging to the man himself

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



The Strokes teasing their next chapter from the rally in New Hampshire



EVENT

THE ADULTS ARE TALKING

INDIE ICONS THE STROKES PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO BERNIE AND ANNOUNCE THEIR SIXTH ALBUM

Last month, 00s indie revivalists The Strokes returned to the stage once more to perform at a Bernie Sanders rally in New Hampshire, showing support for the Democratic candidate alongside the likes of Vampire Weekend and Sunflower Bean. During their set, the group debuted a new song in the form of *Bad Decisions* and announced the release of their imminent sixth album, *The New Abnormal*.

The band's latest studio effort is to be released on 10th April and was recorded by Rick Rubin at his Shangri-La studios in Malibu, California. Eagle-eyed fans of the group may recognise *Ode to the Met* and *The Adults Are Talking* on the track list, two songs

which have been performed live in the band's more recent (but still sporadic) performances. The album artwork is taken from a painting by the late New York artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Following speeches from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cornel West, Cynthia Nixon and Sanders himself, the band took to the stage to perform an hour-long set which featured two new songs, a video of a third titled *At The Door*, a cover of Talking Heads' *Burning Down The House* and revered Strokes classics *Hard To Explain*, *Someday* and *New York City Cops*, ending in a mass-stage invasion and the interference of real-life New York City police officers.

***The New Abnormal* will be released via Cult Records/RCA on 10th April.**





Artists from far and wide paid respect to the New York Dolls guitarist on this hand-painted Gretsch

HELP FOR HEROES

A GUITAR SIGNED BY KEITH RICHARDS, SLASH AND MANY MORE IS UP FOR AUCTION TO BENEFIT NEW YORK DOLLS' SYLVAIN SYLVAIN

Back in April 2019, New York Dolls guitarist Sylvain Sylvain revealed he was undergoing treatment for cancer, and a GoFundMe page was set up to help offset the cost of medical bills. At the time of writing, almost \$72,000 of the \$80,000 target has been raised.

Now, musicians and bands ranging from Keith Richards and Slash to Skid Row, Faster Pussycat and others have signed a one-of-a-kind Gretsch electric guitar, hand-painted by Dogs D'Amour frontman Tyla, to raise additional funds for Sylvain.

The charity guitar is the brainchild of Tyla and his friend and business partner, Alan Hampton. Hampton, who owns a bar that



has hosted performances from Sylvain and Tyla, had the idea of purchasing the Gretsch, a model played by both artists, and then have it painted and auctioned off. Tyla secured a Gretsch Electromatic guitar, donated by the company's Mike Taft, hand-painted an original New York Dolls design on it and reached out to artists for autographs.

To combat the costs of shipping the guitar around the world, all artists wishing to take part provided authenticated handwritten signatures, which were then process-printed onto the back of the guitar. The original signatures are included in the auction.

The guitar recently sold at auction on Ebay for a total of £5,300.

ROUND-UP

The newspieces picking our ears up



The Art of Shredding

Dean's new Exile Select Series to introduce new levels of shredding...

Dean Guitars has introduced the Exile Select Series, a new range in the company's top-level import line of models. The six guitars, according to Dean, were designed to help players attain "the next level of shredding glory."

The guitars are available with a choice of burled poplar or satin-finished quilt maple tops, as well as an Exile-shape alder body with beveled edge, three-piece Slim D-shape maple neck and a 16-inch radius ebony fretboard with 24 jumbo frets and pearloid block inlays.

Other features include mini Grover tuners, five-ply body and headstock binding and a Floyd Rose tremolo bridge system option. Electronics are EMG 57TW / 66TW coil-split pickups with push/pull volume and tone pots and a five-way selector switch. Finish options are Satin Turquoise Burst or Satin Natural, with a choice of six- or seven-string configurations.

For more information, head to deanguitars.com

Whilst the Sonnet is also available in blonde, the black model looks none-more-slick

10

Photography: Olly Curtis

BLACKSTAR SONNET 60 AND SUPER FLY

Crank your open-mic or busking set up to 11 with the latest acoustic amps from Blackstar...

UP CLOSE



Portability

The Super Fly can run from its rechargeable battery, and also includes mic and bluetooth connectivity, making it perfect for busking.



Wattage

Blackstar's Sonnet comes in two versions: 60 and 120, with an option for two different finishes on each.



Features

The Sonnet includes two channels, Bluetooth, reverb, phase switching and a tilt-back stand on both models.



F

ollowing 2019's Super Fly portable amp, Blackstar has recently expanded its acoustic stable with the addition of the Sonnet and Fly3

Acoustic (more on that later on p91).

While the Super Fly is battery-powered and aimed at those wanting to perform 'on the go' (there's an electric channel with overdrive in addition to the acoustic voicing and mic input), the Sonnet is a much more acoustic-specific amp.

The Sonnet lineup comprises two models: Sonnet 60 and Sonnet 120 each with – you guessed it – either 60 or 120 watts of output power on tap. Key features for both amps include four inputs: microphone, instrument, auxiliary and bluetooth, as well as reverb (independent levels for each channel), phase switching to help manage feedback and a tilt-back stand to ensure your sound is projecting properly.

As well as the extra power, the Sonnet 120 has a few additional features up its sleeve, such as an 8-inch speaker (plus tweeter), two additional reverb types, phantom power and a level control per-channel for the anti-feedback circuit.

The Sonnet 60 and 120 are also both available in a modern black-with-black-grill or blonde with copper styling for a more 'vintage' look.

"We're all guilty of wanting to play fast when we shouldn't!"

12

FIVE MINUTES ALONE ANNA CALVI

The London-born singer-songwriter on scoring *Peaky Blinders* and controlling the urge to play fast.

Got my first real six-string

"My first guitar was a Strat that belonged to my Dad. I don't know exactly what year it was from, but it was probably an 80s model. I must have been around eight at the time. In the beginning, my Dad taught me a few things, some blues and rock 'n' roll stuff. Like a lot of players, when I learned the pentatonic scale I was suddenly able to jam along to a lot of my favourite records... That was probably my first big moment on guitar as a kid."

Castles made of sand

"I'd say my initial guitar hero was Jimi Hendrix. I saw some footage of him playing at Woodstock, I must have been around nine years old and I thought he sounded amazing. It got me really excited. If I could meet any musician from history, it would definitely have to be him. Just to be in the same room and see him play would be magical. When I was a bit older, I got into Jeff Buckley, I really loved his approach to guitar, as well as [jazz and] fusion-style players John McLaughlin and Django Reinhardt."

"FOR ONLY TWO FINFERS, DJANGO REINHARDT DEFINITELY GOT AROUND THE FRETBOARD..."

Tommy used to work on the docks

"It was an amazing opportunity to score the fifth series of *Peaky Blinders*. The main thing I talked about with the director was how to score Tommy Shelby's mind, because he's psychologically deteriorating as the story goes on. I wanted to find ways to bring out the tension through music. I used a lot of sliding and bent notes to help create that suspense, that feeling of chaos and things not being quite right, plus some strong hits on the guitar for danger and aggression."

Don't stop me now

"The worst thing about playing guitar is having to resist the urge to play fast all the time. There's something about guitar that makes you want to show off how fast you can play. I don't know why – of all the things that impress, it's not really fast playing that makes someone a great guitarist. But we're all guilty of wanting to when we shouldn't! I always felt Django Reinhardt played fast, even if that's not the first thing people think of when they hear that name. For only two fingers, he definitely got around the fretboard."

Wandering stars, for whom it is reserved

"I did some recording with Adrian Utley from Portishead, who taught me a valuable lesson. I remember I was strumming this riff and he kept asking me to play it in different styles, the same notes but as if they were glam rock or whatever. I'd never really thought about it like that before. Often when you're singing you will think about putting on these different characters as you do it. It had never occurred to me to think of my guitar lines in the same way, and I remember learning a lot from that."

You're the one that I want

"I got my dream guitar when I was 14 and it's the same guitar I play now – a 1994 Telecaster. It just sounds so pure and beautiful, better than anything else I've played. I'm monogamous when it comes to guitars. I haven't changed anything on it, though I do sometimes wish it had a whammy bar because they can be a lot of fun."

The road not taken

"I think it's all about adding extensions to the scale. You can put a nine in there or bend up to it or bend down in some way. You can find notes that are slightly dissonant to lead you to where you end up. A less-walked path to get back into the final notes from the pentatonic scale, which can be stronger-sounding. I find that's a great way of making the scale more interesting."

Anna Calvi's new release *Hunted* is out now.

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White Stones:
For those missing
Opeth's death
metal days look
no further



WHITE STONES

Opeth four-stringer revisits his death metal roots...

As the bass player in progressive rock visionaries Opeth, it would be fair to say it's usually Martín Méndez's bandmates Mikael Åkerfeldt and Fredrik Åkesson being interviewed for this magazine. That all changes this year with the arrival of Martín's new death metal project White Stones and their debut album *Kuarahy* (named after his birthplace in Uruguay), on which he played six-string as well as covering the lower register he's known for.

"I've always written music but never really presented anything to Mikael for Opeth," says Martín, calling

from his Barcelona home. "This all came from having fun. After writing six songs I felt there was something good there, so I called up some local friends. The singer has been my neighbour for many years and owns the studio I recorded in. The drummer and the live guitarist play in bands around here, so we've known each other a while."

The 10 tracks heard on the debut were originally set for a low-key limited vinyl release, but it was encouragement from Mikael and manager

Andy Farrow that swiftly led to a deal with Nuclear Blast. It wouldn't have been possible in the past, notes Martín, but Opeth taking a small step back from heavy touring has made it possible to pursue new avenues of creativity.

For the recordings, he stuck to a few basic essentials and dialled in some distinctly organic, yet forceful tones. "I did the whole album with a stock Fender Stratocaster

with original single-coils," continues Martín, save for the solos which were mostly performed by Åkesson. "That went through a Mesa/Boogie Rectifier on the orange channel, which has less distortion. I didn't use much gain, to be honest, it was probably on about three! Effects like delay and reverb were added through plug-ins, so really it was all done with one guitar and one amp."

FOR FANS OF Opeth, Morbid Angel, Death
GEAR Fender Stratocaster, Mesa/Boogie Rectifier, Fender Jazz Bass

"THE ALBUM CAME FROM HAVING FUN. I CALLED UP SOME FRIENDS; THE SINGER IS MY NEIGHBOUR..."

Words: Amit Sharma Photo: @chiaraceccaiori, Ralph Barkham



GABRIELLA JONES

Seductive pop/blues from the Midlands

After making a name for herself at various events like Wireless, Hard Rock Calling and the Isle Of Wight Festival – as well as supporting megastars like Beyoncé and Bon Jovi – Gabriella Jones has released her latest track 404 via Spotify. The Birmingham-based singer-songwriter describes her poppy blues as “something simple, but with the power to move people”, and similar things could be said of the band that inspired her most...

“My main guitar hero is Paul Kossoff,” says Gabriella. “That’s why the main guitar I play is a Paul Kossoff 1959 Reissue Les Paul in Lemon Burst. I grew up listening to a lot of Free and loved his vibrato.”

“This generation needs that one riff or hit song which transcends genres and has widespread appeal,” she says – which, we suspect, is precisely what she’ll be working on for the rest of the year.

FOR FANS OF Free, Fleetwood Mac,
GEAR Gibson Les Paul Kossoff 1959



LEECHES

Manchester crew hellbent on sonic terror

The 10 tracks that make up Leeches’ second full-length *To Dull The Blades Of Your Abuse* are undoubtedly some of the most harrowing and disturbing sounds coming out of the UK right now. Fusing elements of blackened hardcore, death, post- and industrial metal into a powerfully cohesive yet remarkably violent aural assault, the Manchester hellraisers also use feedback as a powerful tool to disorientate their listeners...

“Feedback is the most important,” stresses guitarist Judd Langley, who cites “guitarists who think for themselves” as key influences. To bring their malevolent noises to the stage, the guitarist says he isn’t particularly fussy: “I tend to use the Way Huge Swollen Pickle Jumbo Fuzz mainly, but generally I’ll rely on whatever can be stamped on extremely hard and not break.”

FOR FANS OF Converge, Code Orange
GEAR Way Huge Swollen Pickle



CLEOPATRICK

WHO? The Canadian duo who just opened on Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes’ UK run

SOUNDS LIKE Two mates playing stripped-down, bluesy punk rock

GEAR Gibson Les Paul Traditional 2011, Vox AC30, Earthquaker Devices Cloven Hoof

FOR FANS OF Jimmy Eat World, Highly Suspect
HEAR Sanjake



FÉLIX RABIN

WHO? The young blues ace recently seen on tour with Samantha Fish

SOUNDS LIKE The makings of the next John Mayer? Watch this space

GEAR Fender Stratocaster ’66 reissue, Fender Blues Junior, Blackstar HT Dual Distortion

FOR FANS OF John Mayer, Jeff Buckley, Cream
HEAR Pagboy



IRIST

WHO? The Atlanta quintet recently signed by Nuclear Blast for their debut

SOUNDS LIKE What you’d hear if Gojira and Mastodon formed a supergroup

GEAR Dunable Yeti, Reverend Sensei RA, EVH 5150 III, Marshall JCM 800 2203, Strymon BigSky

FOR FANS OF Gojira, Kylesa, Sepultura
HEAR Order Of The Mind

1 I'd always wanted a Gold Top. I was talking to Nick Fraser, the Technical Manager for PRS Europe, and he suggested I get a Custom Shop one made. I was going to be 50 the next year so I thought, 'You know what, instead of a mid-life crisis why don't I get a guitar made for myself?' We specced it up and a year later, the day before my 50th birthday, I got the call that it had arrived. I drove up to their workshop in Cambridge straight away, and that's the picture you see here. That night, I went for dinner with the band, took the guitar to show them, and they gave me this envelope stuffed with money saying: 'This is for your guitar - Happy Birthday!' I've had it three years now, it's the only one in the world, and it's hands down the most comfortable, most responsive, best-sounding guitar I've ever owned. I've used it on every demo and recording since, like the single *This Means War*.

Interview Grant Moon Photo Kevin Nixon

ME AND MY GUITAR

ACE SKUNK ANANSIE

The Brit rockers' powerhouse guitarist on the 50th Birthday present to end them all - his custom-made Paul Reed Smith Gold Top

2 I switched from Gibsons to PRS in 2000 when I got my first Tremonti. They have a nice, thin neck, so I wanted one like that. But I could tell from the slightly different profile that this didn't just come with a Tremonti neck stuck onto it - this one's custom-made, and it's so comfortable. The fretboard is real rosewood. I had to get the certificate from CITES [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species] for that. The PRS birds are lovely - they're not just white, they've got more colour in them, like abalone.

3 My original spec was a PRS 57/08 in the bridge and in the neck, but the neck was too bassy for me, so I swapped that with a 59/09 to balance it up. Now on the bridge pickup it's really 1971 - that Free, Paul Kossoff *Fire And Water* sound, and going through the neck it can sound like Slash, *Appetite For Destruction* era. I've got those two classic sounds to play with.

4 Both pickups are independently coil-tapped. You can mix what you have as a humbucker and single coil when you're in the middle [pickup selector] position. There are a lot of sound combinations available on here.

5 The bridge is the PRS 594, 'tune-o-matic'-style bridge - their take on the classic Gibson bridge, with a vintage-style tailpiece, too.

6 I wanted a black headstock because all Gibson Gold Tops have that, and the PRS logo is on there in gold. The Custom Shop guys actually wrote 'Happy 50th Birthday Ace' in lacquer on the back! The tuners are the PRS Phase IIIs that are open so you can see the screws. I've since swapped the ACE truss rod cover with a custom one by Jay Tsujimura, the guy who made Lenny Kravitz's jewellery. It's my swallow logo cut into a silver cover.

7 The guitar's not too heavy, about the same weight as a Les Paul Gold Top. The body is mahogany with a maple top then the gold lacquer. I've since added my swallow logo to it, too, and have a few good luck stickers on the back. You know, bands are funny. It's like when you get a new girlfriend and they'll eye them sceptically. It's the same with guitars, like, 'Hmm, do we like your new guitar?' It's usually for the look of it! Well, they appreciated this one straight away. I was writing the other day, and [bassist] Cass said 'That's such a good-sounding guitar'. It's been accepted by the band!



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BACK TRACK

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

AMERICAN FOLK

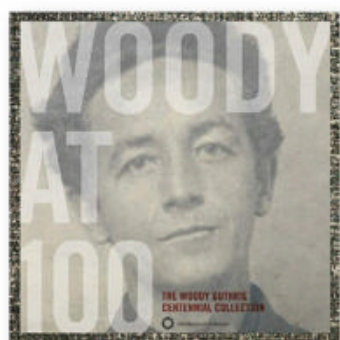
The cultural and geographical isolation that helped shape the folk music traditions of the British Isles was conspicuously absent on the other side of the Atlantic, as American musicians readily adapted Old World songs for guitar, and the emergence of unique forms – bluegrass and country from the mountains, jazz and blues from the South – profoundly influenced the sound of contemporary American music. From Carter picking to open tuning, modern guitar owes much to the inventions of American folk.



START WITH DAVE VAN RONK FOLKSINGER (1962)

I Regarded by many as a crucial link between America's post-war folk revival and the folk rock zeitgeist of Bob Dylan *et al*, Dave Van Ronk was a boho raconteur, a technically versatile jazz guitarist who reverse-engineered himself into a folk/blues fingerpicker. An eclectic offering, Van Ronk convincingly moves between the syncopated ragtime of *Samson And Delilah* and a languid, bluesy take on Ray Charles' *Come Back Baby*, squeezing in the West African ballad *Chicken Is Nice* for good measure. Van Ronk's arrangements of traditional material seem to deftly underscore the emotions at play, such as the slow-burning threat of violence as a few spartan notes build to a rhythmic climax in *Poor Lazarus*.

Download *Poor Lazarus*



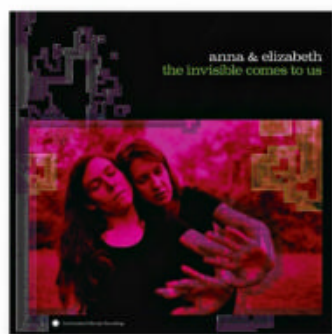
THEN TRY

WOODY GUTHRIE

Woody At 100 (2012)

2 There are times when the music of Woody Guthrie can get a little lost in the man's own mythos, but set aside the wandering poet shtick and what's left is a body of music rich in righteous indignation, wit and warmth. *Talking Columbia* and *Hard Travelin'* rely on simple, economic chord progressions indebted to country musicians like Jimmie Rodgers and Maybelle Carter (*This Land Is Your Land* borrows its melody from Carter's *When The World's On Fire*), while the wry *Talking Dust Bowl* draws from 1920s blues. Fingerstyle murder ballad *Buffalo Skinners* is an eerie highlight, while *Pretty Boy Floyd* presents Guthrie's socialist bona fides in rousing, yet sympathetic fashion.

Download *Talking Columbia*



WORTH A SPIN

ANNA & ELIZABETH

The Invisible Comes To Us (2018)

5 A number of female artists producing American traditional music with deeply-rooted yet musically-progressive approaches emerged in the last decade, including the duo of Anna Roberts-Gevalt and Elizabeth LaPrelle. Faithful interpretations like *John Of Hazelgreen* harness the acoustic guitar and banjo of Appalachian ballad traditions, while the gorgeous hymnal *Mother In The Graveyard* rests on an effective single-chord drone. *Virginia Rambler* is a total deconstruction, and though *Ripest Of Apples* and *Black Eyed Susan* hew a little closer to their origins, both benefit from a refreshingly experimental arrangement.

Download *Ripest Of Apples*



DON'T MISS OUT

JAKE XERXES FUSSELL

What In The Natural World (2017)

3 Fascinated by the past but unafraid to reframe it for the present, Fussell's music is a fine example of 21st century folk; his choice of source material reaching from the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia to the coal mines of South Wales. The tone throughout borders on the dream-like, Fussell's playing nimble and understated on a quaint reimagining of Duke Ellington's *Jump For Joy*, enriched by contributions from fingerstyle guitarist Nathan Salsburg on *Pinnacle Mountain Silver Mine*, and the hypnotic steel guitar of Mountain Goats sideman Nathan Golub on *Canyoneers* and album highlight *Furniture Man*.

Download *Furniture Man*



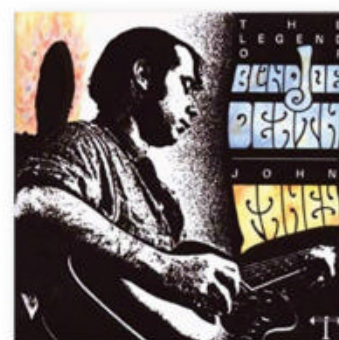
WILD CARD

MARISA ANDERSON

Traditional And Public Domain Songs (2013)

6 When a piece of music becomes so played out that it loses any artistic meaning, sometimes only stark reinvention can help us hear it anew: enter Marisa Anderson, whose solo interpretation of these worn-out songs for electric guitar is a revelation. A work of texture and tone, Anderson imbues standards like *Pretty Polly* with the nastiness of a blood-and-dust Western, while Gospel tunes *Uncloudy Day* and *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* border on mild psychedelia – the drifting, sustained notes a fine example of what guitarist William Tyler dubbed “cosmic pastoral”.

Download *Pretty Polly*



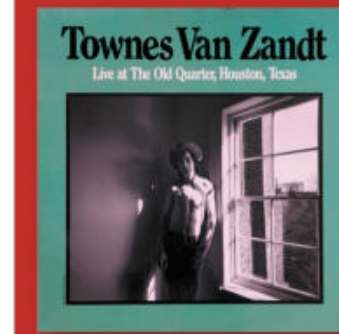
ALSO RECOMMENDED

JOHN FAHEY

The Legend Of Blind Joe Death (1967)

4 A descent into skid row alcoholism during his twilight years might have overshadowed John Fahey's legacy, but his striking originality as both performer and interpreter on these early recordings remains undimmed. While later releases would deconstruct folk and blues into increasingly dissonant, abstract shapes, here the pastoral renditions of *Poor Boy* and *John Henry* on steel-string acoustic are beautifully picked. Better still is the rhythmic workout on *Desperate Man Blues* and the melancholy *Sligo River Blues*, whose repetition resembles a classical raga.

Download *Sligo River Blues*



LIVE!

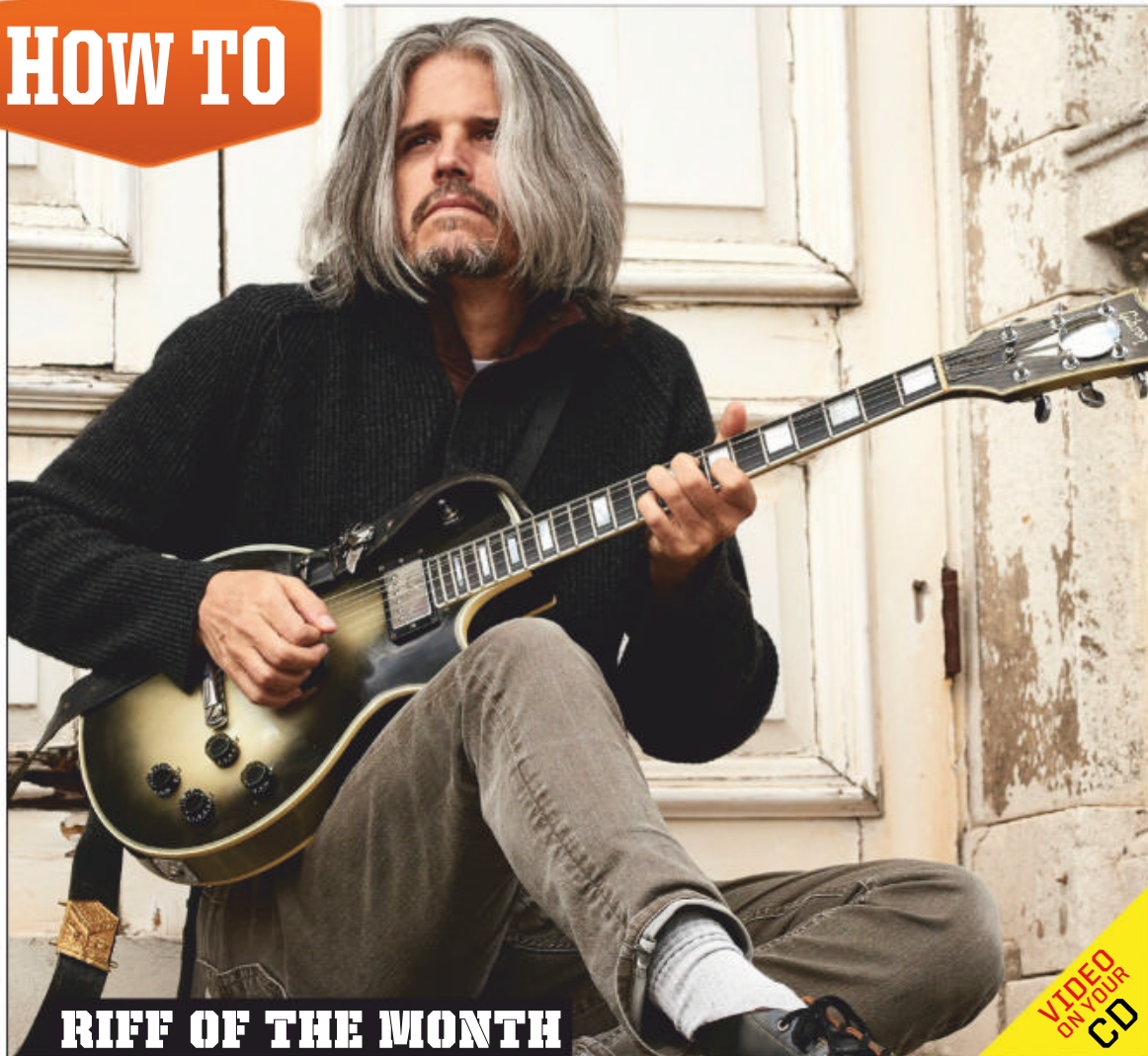
TOWNES VAN ZANDT

Live At The Old Quarter (1977)

7 As country music during the 1970s became increasingly beholden to the campy Nashville sound, Townes Van Zandt instead leaned into the balladeering of 60s folkies like Dylan and Tom Paxton. Although there's lively moments – including a scrappy cover of Bo Diddley's *Who Do You Love?* – it's Van Zandt's heartbreakers that hit hardest: *Kathleen's* spidery fingerpicking is countrified Leonard Cohen, while stripped-down versions of *To Live Is To Fly*, *Tower Song* and an electrifying *Lungs* make this an essential performance.

Download *Lungs*

HOW TO



RIFF OF THE MONTH

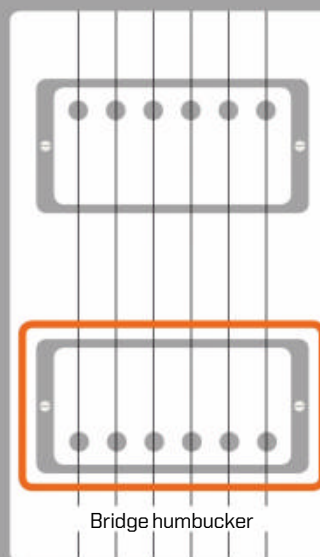
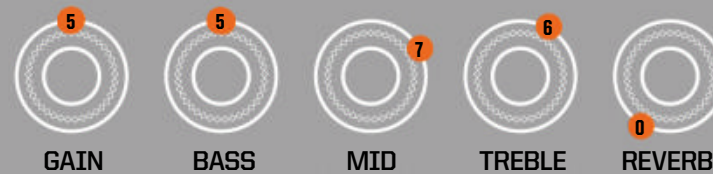
VIDEO
ON YOUR
CD

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Drop-D tuned riffs
- ✓ Exotic scale sounds
- ✓ Hammer-ons, slides and pedal tones

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Tool engineer Joe Barresi has stated that he recorded five guitar tracks using a variety of amps from Bogner to Rivera to Orange, which he would blend to achieve the desired tone for each part. A safe bet is that this riff comes from Adam's Les Paul Custom plugged into his main Diezel VH4 and Marshall Super Bass blend. A nice, even EQ and a modest amount of gain is all you need. There is also a phaser-type effect with the sweep set to a slow and shallow rate, to augment the riff rather than be the feature.

TOOL

7empest

When *Fear Inoculum* – the Californian prog-rock band's first album in over a decade – dropped last year, Tool proved they'd lost none of their magic. At the heart of the band's signature sound is guitarist Adam Jones' use of drop D tuning. Achieving this tuning is simple enough – all you do is drop your sixth string down from E to D, so your tuning is D A D G B E (as opposed to the

standard E A D G B E). So many of the band's iconic riffs, such as *Jambi*, *Schism* or *Forty Six & 2*, would either be impossible to play, or sound very different indeed played any other way.

Part of Adam's riffing approach is to create repeating, meditative hooks with a hypnotic quality, which this line in 15-minute epic *7empest* certainly has. And, although it's relatively simple, the slide from 3rd to 8th fret can be a little tricky to play accurately.

Be sure to follow our slowed-down performance in the video on your Guitar Skills CD and you'll have all the tools you need.

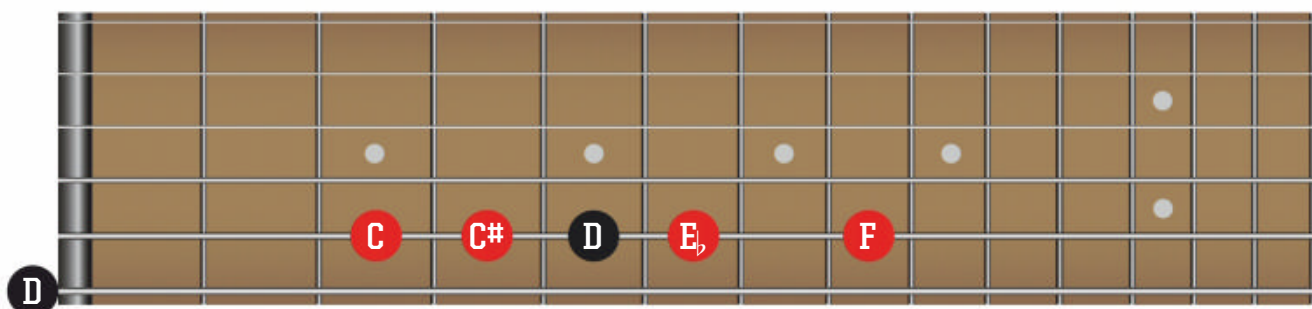
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 1:19–1:46

Tempo: 142 bpm

Key/scale: D Phrygian mode

Main techniques: Slides / hammer-ons / single-note picking



The riff uses a repeating open low D note along with five notes along the fifth string. For most of the riff, you will be using the notes on the 3rd, 5th and 7th frets, while the remaining two notes appear as variations at the end of each two-bar repeat. The riff lands mostly in D Phrygian territory (D E, F G A B, C). Note that the major 7th (C#) note in the riff doesn't technically fit within the scale, but acts as a brief passing note.

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GETTING STARTED WITH... SCALES

They're at the heart of nearly all music. TG looks at the thorny subject of scales...

"Scales. Everyone talks about them, but what are they?"

Basically, a scale gives you a skeleton set of notes to make music with. A musical scale climbs up through a sequence of notes (ascending) and back down (descending), almost always using the same notes.

"Okay, they sound boring. What's the point?"

Scales have a bad rep because some people focus on the misapprehension that if you learn them you'll be forced to do endless scale practice instead of playing real music. Not so! Scales are music's building blocks – the basis of the music you love. They are used in riffs, solos and to make chords. Ignore them at your peril.

"That makes sense. Where do I start?"

The minor pentatonic scale is used by loads of guitarists, so it's a great first scale to learn. Although it has a long name, it's easy to play. It has five different notes, with the first note repeated at a higher pitch, so you play six notes in total. The first note is where the scale gets its name. The first scale shown in the boxout on the right starts with an E note, so it's the E minor pentatonic scale. Simple!

"Right, I'm armed and ready – what actual music can I play?"

Our first tab example is a simple, fun riff based on the E minor pentatonic scale. Get stuck in.

"That was better than I thought, did you mention something about lead playing, too?"

The major scale is used in *all* Western genres. Pop, rock, country, jazz, indie – everywhere! The scale has a bright, happy sound found at the heart of nursery rhymes like *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, but, more importantly, in soaring melodies like Steve Vai's *Liberty* and the main theme in *Star Wars*. Our second tab example uses the G major scale and is a great opportunity for you to play your first epic melody.

"I want more!"

The two scales on the right will keep you busy for a while. Don't fall into the trap of learning endless scales – work on how to use these well first. Use them to create your own riffs and melodies. If you don't know where to start, try changing just one note in our examples. If you stick to the notes in the scale it's almost impossible to play a duff note.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

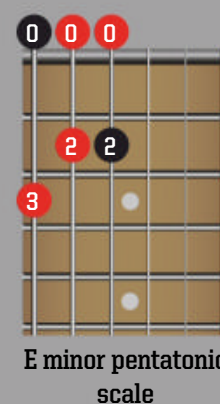
- ✓ Two easy scale shapes
- ✓ One hard rock riff
- ✓ An easy scale-based melody

BOXING CLEVER...

Learn scales the easy way with two essential fret boxes

1. The E minor pentatonic scale

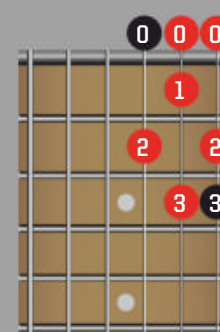
Play each note one after the other and try to make them all the same length. You've got four fretting fingers – the numbers in the dots tell you the best one to use as you play each note.



E minor pentatonic scale

2. The G major scale

Again, make sure you use the fingers shown for each note – this helps with accuracy. Listen out for the brighter, happier vibe of the major scale compared to the edgier minor pentatonic scale.



G major scale

1 E MINOR PENTATONIC RIFF

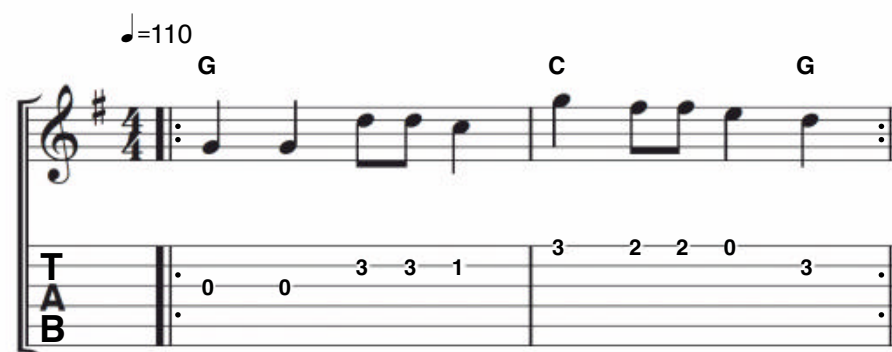
TRACK 07



It's tempting to play this riff using just your first finger. However, use the fingers shown in the scale box and you'll play faster and more fluently.

2 G MAJOR MELODY

TRACK 08



As soon as you've played each fretted note, release pressure on the string and start moving to the next fret – this will help you play the riff at full speed.

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Fender

THE FX FILES TG'S CLASSIC STOMPBOX GUIDE



OVERDRIVE

This pot controls the gain of the op-amp stage, effectively increasing the amount of amplification the pedal generates, and thus the amount of clipping in turn.

LEVEL

The level control dumps signal to ground, reducing the output volume of the pedal.

TONE

The tone control on the Tubescreamer, like the one on the ProCo RAT, is deceptively simple. An oversimplified, and not-quite-correct summary would be that, depending on the position in its rotation, it's a low-pass filter or a bandpass filter. For most players, it's best understood as functioning like a high-pass filter, with most treble content removed when it's fully counter-clockwise.

IBANEZ TUBE SCREAMER

The original 'overdrive pedal', the Ibanez Tube Screamer was ground zero for a new type of effect, and all the op-amp based drives that have followed.



ot only is the Ibanez Tube Screamer the most famous overdrive ever produced, it's also probably where we get the name 'overdrive' from, as the original TS-808 model labelled the gain control on the pedal 'overdrive'. Its origins are interesting – although now Maxon is a company you can buy readily in a guitar shop, back then they were an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) for other brands, in this case Ibanez.

The Tube Screamer circuit was designed by Susumu Tamura, an engineer for Maxon, in 1979. It was conceived as a competitor to the BOSS OD-1 and MXR Distortion+, and its op-amp based topology instantly set it apart from transistor and JFET-based designs, as well as fuzzboxes. To this day, the family tree of Tube Screamer pedals includes most op-amp based drives that use soft clipping

in the op-amp's feedback path – which is to say, almost all overdrive pedals.

The original Ibanez units are rare and coveted, but there's also Maxon units available, which were marketed as the OD-808 and OD-9; these correspond to the two 'classic' Tube Screamers that Maxon produced – the TS-808 and TS-9. Although Ibanez would continue to build variations of the

unit and alter the circuit further for the next 20 years, when people say 'Tube Screamer' tone, they're generally talking about the TS-808 or TS-9 models, and this is reflected by the number of high-profile players that have gravitated towards these units over the years. Since then, not only has the pedal been cloned to death, it's been built on and adapted into a huge spread of different forms.

WHEN PEOPLE SAY 'TUBE SCREAMER' TONE, THEY'RE GENERALLY TALKING ABOUT THE IBANEZ TS-808 AND TS-9

UNDER THE INFLUENCE



PAUL COCHRANE TIMMY

FROM \$129

With the new MXR version about to be released, Paul Cochrane's classic overdrive circuit is poised to become more accessible than ever. Essentially a streamlined op-amp drive with less compression than a Tube Screamer, a dual-cut EQ and no 'mid-hump', the Timmy is ideal for low-gain drive sounds or using as a boost to drive a tube amp into saturation.



ANALOG MAN KING OF TONE

FROM \$245

The two main influences on the coveted King Of Tone are the Tube Screamer and the Marshall Bluesbreaker pedal, and for all its component changes and rare diodes, the biggest changes to the tone are the EQ – like the Timmy, an absence of the mid hump – and increased headroom. You can hear the difference in diodes, but it's a marginal change in the grander scheme of things.



SNAKE OIL EFFECTS THE VERY THING

FROM £149

If you're not after lots of clipping, but mainly want to use the Tube Screamer as a boost, then there have been a number of versions of the circuit created by the DIY community over the years. Amongst the best is Jack Orman's TS circuit, which repurposes it as a boost. The Very Thing is very closely based on this design, should you not want to build your own.

CLASSIC TONES

GET THE TONE #1 METAL BOOST

For everything from grunge to modern tech-metal, you need your amp working overtime. This setting dials back the pedal gain and uses the huge volume tap on offer from the Tubescreamer to coax more gain out of the amp, which you want to have running on the gain channel. You'll likely want to roll off some bass off your amp to stop it getting 'woofy'.



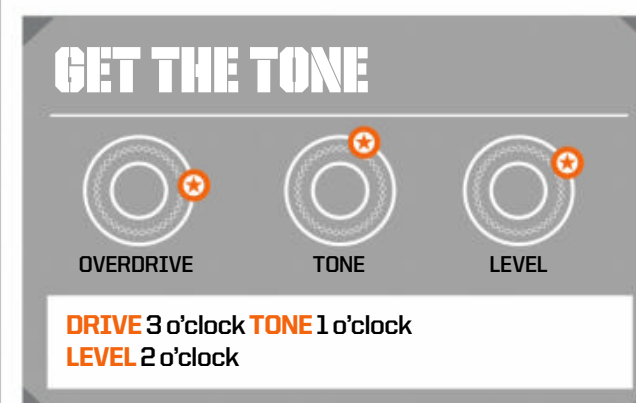
GET THE TONE #2 BLUE TONE

Rolling back the treble at either the guitar or the pedal, and using a combination of amp and pedal saturation to get a resonant, 'singing' lead is perhaps the Tubescreamer's quintessential setting. Through our single-ended 5W test amp, we found this to be an effective setting, with the guitar's tone pot wide open and on the neck pickup.



GET THE TONE #3 SATURATED RHYTHM TONE

Although not that many people use its drive wide open, the Tubescreamer has a surprising amount of distortion on offer when it's maxed out. Into a solid-state amp this can sound a little bit thin, but into a tube amp, carefully dialling in the level control can result in a thick, powerful rhythm tone.



Our short backing track is a jam around a Dsus4-D-Asus4-A chord progression. Either follow the track with the chord shapes below or try playing your own riffs around the sus and major notes.

WHAT THE

f THEORY MADE EASY

THIS MONTH...

Go beyond basic majors and get some new shapes sussed with our look at sus chords

Theory helps explain the creative aspects of music. Ponder on that for a moment. Theory isn't there to give you strict rules to follow – it's your music and your rules! No, theory should help explain what's going on. The structures and scales you learn are just commonly-used patterns. Get to grips with them and gradually you'll understand how the guitarists you love write and play.

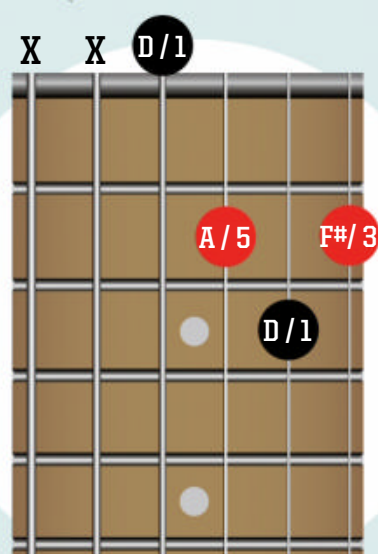
Which brings us on to this month's lesson on suspended (or 'sus') chords. Most guitarists start

playing sus chords long before they know how they work – there are loads of easy shapes, after all.

So, how does knowing the theory help you? Well, once equipped with a little essential knowledge, you can start to plot new shapes around the fretboard. You'll develop your ear, too, and start improvising around these essential shapes. And if chords aren't immediately exciting to you, just remember that you can write riffs, arpeggios and melodies around these ideas too. Before you know it, you'll be incorporating these ideas into your playing.

NICE AN' D'EASY! 1

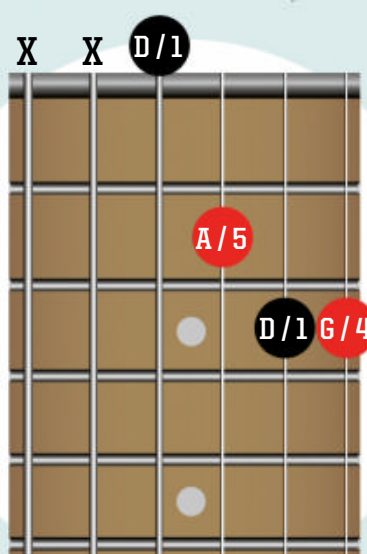
Let's start with one of the easiest chords of all – D. It's a beginner chord and super easy to play. The notes are D, F# and A, just spread out in a different order to make it easier to play. Let's move on to the theory, then... The D major scale has seven notes: D E F# G A B C#. Try to remember that D, F# and A are the first, third and fifth notes; we've marked them 1, 3 and 5.



D (notes & intervals)

2 GETTING IT SUSSED

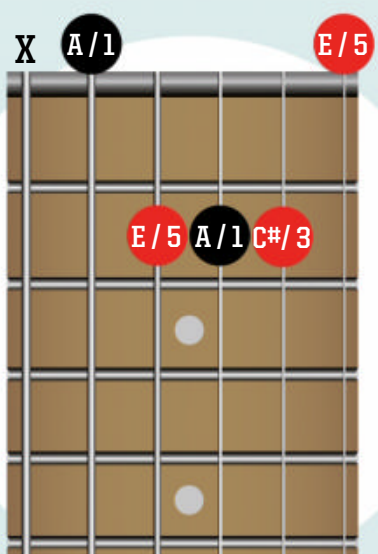
Dsus4 is about as easy as guitar chords get. If you were using your first three fingers to fret the D chord, just drop your fourth finger down to play the new note. Theory-wise, you'll be ditching the 3rd (F#) and replacing it with a 4th (G). The 3rd is said to be 'suspended' in favour of the 4th, hence the name D 'sus' 4.



Dsus4 (notes & intervals)

NOW TRY A 2

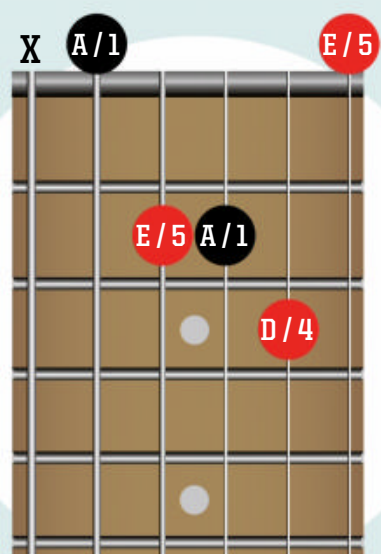
Let's try it with another easy open chord – this time A. Again, aim to identify the notes and their corresponding intervals. Get your head around that and you'll be well on your way to sus chord mastery all across the fretboard. The notes in an A chord are A, C# and E – the first, third and fifth notes of the A major scale (A B C# D E F# G#).



A (notes & intervals)

4 ASUS4

Look back at D and Dsus4. Remember, we ditched the 3rd interval and replaced it with a 4th. Well, the shape's slightly different here, but the process is the same. Play the 3rd fret on the second string and your 3rd interval (C#) becomes a 4th (D) to give you Asus4. Whichever major chord you're playing, you'll find the 4th one fret higher than the 3rd.



Asus4 (notes & intervals)

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HER LOCAL

Words Rob Laing
Photography James Sharrock

BRIAN FALLON'S THIRD SOLO ALBUM IS HIS STRONGEST STATEMENT YET – HE TELLS US HOW AN OPEN MIND AND OPEN HEART FOUND HIM RAISING HIS BAR AS A PLAYER AND SONGWRITER. BUT IT DIDN'T COME EASILY...

“I feel that in my career, everything I’ve hinted at, from *Sink Or Swim* to *The ’59 Sound* to playing with Bruce and all that stuff, everything has been a hint and a partial viewing to what I truly hear in my heart and I’m trying to do. And I’ve never achieved it, and I’m demanding of myself that it will happen.” Brian Fallon told us that just over a year ago. So today, as we read those words back to him when we meet in the cafe of

London’s Rough Trade East record shop to discuss his new solo album *Local Honey*, we have to ask him – did it happen?

“I feel that this is step one,” he smiles. “The door is now opened, walked through. I have no choice but to walk forwards. I honestly feel that when I’m done making records this will have been day one. And it felt good though to get there, personally. Even if the record didn’t do well, I feel like I’ve achieved something already.”





If this is a new start for the Gaslight Anthem chief, it's quite a statement to begin with. *Local Honey* is eight songs but feels complete because its writer makes every moment of them count; in place of the punk rock fire of old there's a restraint and striking honesty that feels just as powerful. But it could only have come from a sea-change in Fallon's approach as a player and a person.

AN EDUCATION

"If I hadn't done all those lessons I would not have been able to play or write the songs," Fallon admits to us. Last time TG met the New Jersey songwriter, he told us he was deep into a quest to improve and learn more as a guitarist – aside from mainstay influences like Dylan and Tom Waits, he was absorbing knowledge from diverse sources including Mark Knopfler's fingerstyle and YouTuber John Tuggle's blues technique. But Fallon had also begun playing piano live, too, reworking Gaslight favourite *The '59 Sound* alongside his varied solo work to spine-tingling effect. *Local Honey* now sees all that time paying off. Big time. The album is a detailed but moving work that mixes acoustic

fingerpicking with layers of electric and keys to sidestep genre pigeon-holing. Somehow he's managed to carve out something unique and

contemporary for himself alongside The National and The War On Drugs producer Peter Katis. This isn't Brian Fallon's rootsy Americana album. "If you left me to my own devices it would

probably be more traditional," he admits. "There would have been fiddles on it. I think that's why I went to Peter. I think people make traditional Americana records better than I could. I didn't want to compete. Because I'm the kind of person where if I can't at least do well, I don't want to compete. I'm not going to run you in a race because I can't run."

HERE AND NOW

Listeners will also feel a distinct shift in his lyricism; while the tragic *Vincent* is Brian's first fully fictional tale of murder and tragedy, he's more personal and present than ever before elsewhere. *You Have Stolen My Heart* is his purest love song; on moving opener *When You're Ready*, he's a father talking to his young daughter, and *21 Days* suggests his personal shift from a darker time beneath the guise of what seems to be a bittersweet goodbye to cigarettes. All are his truths.

"I've always had this wall that I've put up," Brian confesses, the warm candour of the album very much evident in person today. "Even the most personal songs I've written before I never opened up all the way. I guess it's maybe the age or the place I'm at in life where I think, I'm just going to do this and I'm not worried about hiding anything. I don't care... Well, it's not that I don't care because I do care, but I'm ok with being uncomfortable; I'm ok with being exposed."

If *21 Days* is a confessional born from "a lot of therapy" its musical development was just as complex. Intimate and slow building on record with vocals verging on spoken word at

"I'M OK WITH BEING UNCOMFORTABLE; I'M OK WITH BEING EXPOSED..."

➔ first, it actually started as full-bore rock song truer to the Gaslight days before Brian reworked it over painstaking weeks following Katis's admittance he wasn't sure he could produce that kind of music when he heard the original demo.

"That song, I tell you, it was like building a house one screw at a time. It was crazy. It was so difficult. But we recorded it with me yelling and recorded it with me quiet and I swear to you it hit harder when it was quiet. And I was like, I don't believe this just happened. But that really opened my eyes to a lot of things."

CHORD WORK

It's indicative of a writing and recording process that saw Fallon willingly leaving his comfort zones as a guitarist, while also embracing others. Songs like *I Don't Mind (If I'm With You)* and *Lonely For You Only* were slowed right down while overdubbed electric parts and keys were taken in and out of the mix in pursuit of the perfect equilibrium of sounds and textures we now hear. Alongside some wonderfully inventive drum work from Kurt Leon (who will join Brian's band on tour this year), there are details that become clearer over repeated listens – including electric licks from Brian's blonde Custom Shop Tele through his '66 Fender Deluxe Reverb, aka "the best amp ever".

"With this stuff, I was looking at the way Daniel Lanois plays," he notes. "He's got that band Black Dub that he plays in, and if you listen to his guitar playing it's extremely held back but tasteful. Even the Tom Waits records Keith Richards played on, like *Rain Dogs*, he would play these extremely tasty things but it was way in the back. One note had to mean everything. If I didn't go through the last two years, and I'm still doing it... I'm learning. I'm way into Julian Lage now, I'm learning all these different things. But you've got to hold back, that's the secret. Hit the right note at the right time."

Rhythmically, Fallon hasn't gone jazz on us. Quite the opposite. "I started to learn all these different chord progressions because I've always used I-V-VI-IV a lot [see hundreds of hits from YMCA to *Every Breath You Take*, *Let's Get It On*, *Stand By Me*, NIN's *Hurt*; the list goes on] and variations of that. But you know, I like that chord progression still. And I said that to Peter, 'I learned all this jazz stuff so should I be using these

OPEN ALL NIGHT

Fallon performing with The Horrible Crowes at The Koko, London



"YOU'VE GOT TO HOLD BACK – HIT THE RIGHT NOTES AT THE RIGHT TIME"

chords?' And he's like, "No, because it's not sad. Use the sad chords. That's what's good." It kind of gave me permission. I'm using the chords I want to use. Even the song *Nocturne* by Julian Lage, it's B minor to A and then D. It's the same chord progression I use, but although it's like this really fancy jazz song, it's kind of the same thing."

Fallon's clearly warming to a theme here. He turned 40 a couple of days before we meet, and there's something key to be learned from his path as a player to get to this point – namely growing while embracing the things that make up your identity.

"I think it's a thing that's my thing. If you boiled it down, it's the melodies of those chords. Well, some people might say to me, 'That's boring, you use the same chords all the time'. I think that's pretty creative that I've written, like, 95 songs with similar chords. I don't know

about you, but I think I'm doing alright. You know what I'm saying? [laughs]. I know what the chords are, I've got the 7th, the 9ths, the 11th... But I don't care."

Brian's example of another key influence whose nuanced songs were sometimes misunderstood as 'simple' is telling. The parallels aren't hard to draw. "I read in an interview with Tom Petty, a guitar player came up to him, a friend of his, and said, 'I've got this cool chord and I used it in a song.' And Petty said, 'Why? Do you know why that chord's not been used in a song before? Because it's not good.' Fair enough, because you know what works? G, D and C. So leave it to Tom Petty, bless him."

Local Honey is released through Brian Fallon's Lesser Known Records on 27th March. He tours the UK with his band The Howling Weather in May.

IT'S GOOD TO BE KING

If G, D and C are good enough for Tom Petty, they're good enough for Fallon, he says

YOUR LATEST TRICK

Knopfler knowledge

Local Honey contains Brian's unabashed take on "Mark Knopfler covering Tom Petty" with the song *Hard Feeling* – the writing for which stalled two years ago and needed his growth as a musician to get it done. "The patterns of the chord cycle only happen twice then it moves, throughout the whole song," notes Fallon. Like many of Mark's songs, it sounds so simple but it's so not simple." But the former Dire Straits leader's influence appears elsewhere, though it could be easily missed.

"There's a song he did called *Haul Away* and it sounds like an old Irish ballad," Brian explains. "I was trying to figure it out and he's using standard chords but he's playing it like a piano, not like a guitar. That was one of the tricks I used on the record, chord-wise. When a piano moves chords it's not like '1, 2, 3, 4' move, it's '1 and 2 and 3 and 4'. If you move guitar chords like that you have to adapt your strumming and your picking. Jeff Buckley did it really well and Nina Simone's guitar player [Alvin Schackman] did it amazingly.

"I was learning that these chords were moving at different times, but it wasn't a fingerpicking song – I thought to myself, 'How do I do this?' On *Haul Away*, Mark was strumming with his fingers, but it's not up and down, there's not like a bass note and then a high strum – like boom-ring, boom-ring – to keep the beat. With this, there's only the ring. So it's rest, ring. To get that delicate strum, and the strum [I use] on the song *You Have Stolen My Heart*, is so much harder than it seems!"

Words Amit Sharma / Photo Olly Curtis

THE POWER OF THREE

In Code Orange, one of the heaviest bands on Earth, **Reba Meyers** is one of three guitarists. With an experimental new album released this month, she discusses the origins of her “unique, self-taught style”, the influence of hip-hop and music theory in her writing, and the “perfect” design of her first signature guitar. **Plus:** Reba’s studio gear breakdown.

There’s a well of unimaginable darkness and intensity driving Code Orange’s latest album *Underneath*. So much so, that it feels almost more soundtrack than metal – adding digital squelches and heavily-effected samples to the nightmarish onslaught of chainsaw guitars and crushing beatdowns.

The Pittsburgh noise merchants, who won a Grammy nomination on their last album, 2017’s *Forever*, now stand as one of the most important extreme bands of the last decade. Speaking to TG in the cafeteria of a London hotel, guitarist Reba Meyers explains the secrets to their devastating sound, and how employing hip-hop sampling techniques helped them make heavy metal even heavier...



THE NEW BLACK

"I love evil sounds people wouldn't necessarily know are played on guitar"

Since your last TG interview, you released the LTD RM-600 with ESP. What were you looking for in your very first signature guitar?

"Honestly, I was surprised when they first asked me! I really didn't expect it. I've always been an ESP player... That's just been me my whole life, ever since I started playing metal guitar. Tony [Rauser], who is the Artist Rep, came to some of our shows and we became friends, then ended up asking me. I had not planned for it, so on a whim I started messing around with designs, getting the right headstock on the right body. I've always wanted to play a reverse headstock guitar, but I love the Viper, so we thought we'd see what it looked like on Photoshop. I thought it looked sick, so then we started messing around with finishes. There was no masterplan per se, but sometimes that's better. A lot of times, if you take too long and sulk and sit on things – even songs and riffs – it starts getting too convoluted. An idea that pops into your head out of nowhere can be so much better."

And there's only one pickup – an EMG 81 in the bridge...

"It's just *classic*. I've always experimented with different things but you can't really go wrong with that one, whoever buys this guitar will be in love with the sound of that pickup. It's perfect for this style of music. I was so happy with how it came out, I didn't expect it to be so perfect but they got everything right, including the weights. I wanted to make it heavier at first because I was so used to my old LTD from the early 2000s, so they worked with me on that. Then they had the factory figure out a way to do the finish with saran wrap, using this special technique they hadn't done before. They went pretty hard on it! I was proud and very pleased."

It also made history as ESP's first signature guitar for a female musician...

"I'm sure there's a lot of women out there that can shred a lot harder than I do! I hope this inspires other guitarists who are confident in how they play, even if it isn't the usual demo shredding guitar style. There's a lot of that and it's cool, but that's not why I love guitar. I'm glad I can represent not only female guitarists, but also any guitar player who isn't the same as the rest of the roster. I feel like I come from a different side of things. When you're born into punk music, you don't play the typical way. I'm self-taught; I learned how to play

based on who I saw in my city. Nowadays, everyone can look on YouTube, but growing up, it was more about taking little pieces from other musicians in Pittsburgh and my friends. It's that more unique, self-taught style"

What felt different about the writing and recording process for *Underneath*?

"We've been taking a lot of influence from modern rap, which people dog on in the metal community sometimes. But there's a production style and freedom in current rap artists that we find admirable. I've watched a lot of interviews with Mike Dean, who is a producer for Kanye and others, where he talks a lot about using different software for guitars and how he creates ideas and makes beats. It's very inspiring. He came from a classical background, it seemed, playing saxophone – which I really related to because that's the world I came from. It made me realise I could connect my knowledge of chord progressions and music theory to the band, even though it's not something you might expect. Whenever I think about who it should sound like, the answer is always the deepest version of Code Orange. I didn't want it to sound like this band mixed with that band. It had to sound like us."

There's almost a mechanical sense to a lot of the guitars, like they've been chopped to the extreme...

"There's a song called *You And You Alone* which really went far with that approach. I wrote a bunch of stuff quickly and demoed it out with programmed drums. It was a messy thing with a chorus in between, me and Jami (Morgan, drummer) thought Shade (guitarist/vocalist Eric 'Shade' Balderose) could do something insane, so he chopped it up into some electronic version of itself. I had to go back and relearn how to actually play it. There was a lot of that on this album, ideas that got screwed up and relearned, which then created another style and feeling to it. I was able to go so much further than I expected myself to using

all the digital and analogue mixed together. The line between electronics and guitars is fine – we have a core guitar sound but it gets blurry in the other bleed-noise sections. You don't really know which is which. Sometimes computers have an unnatural feel, so our approach was to make something electronic starting with a guitar riff. It's a human playing with hands, it might be a bit messier but it creates a tenseness and realness that's really important to our band and why people like us. It's a perfect situation, no-one is trying to turn down, it's three people who really understand guitars chopping riffs and sending them back and forth."

That makes for some really unusual time changes and pushes with your riffs...

"Yeah, as well as the Pittsburgh beatdown-style bands who introduced us to that. That's where we got the influence for super heavy time-switching riffs. It's kinda ingrained into us. People might look at it really technically and say it's a bar of four, then five and then seven. I never think about that until much later, just so I know what's going on. That's all by ear. If you have an understanding of where the beat needs to fall and where it can feel cool when it's in the 'wrong' place, it happens on the fly. If you took a part like that and lined it all up perfectly, it wouldn't sound good. You need a feel for those kinds of parts."



A guide to Reba's gear on the *Underneath*...

ESP CUSTOM VIPER

"They recently gave me a Custom Shop cherry red Viper which is just *perfect* for our sound. For some reason, I play my best on that guitar and I can't explain why. I tried so many in the studio, especially to get some variance in there, and there are some Gibsons to thicken out the choruses, but for the most I was just using that one Custom shop. I've never had anything like it. It has EMG pickups too, there's the 85 in the neck, but I never come off the 81 bridge pickup – ever!"

EVH 5150 III

"I hadn't used this amp much before; it caught me by surprise! Once we started rolling, I was using it a lot. The EVH didn't need any extra tweaking or gain, it was perfectly cutting and smooth – present but not in a crunchy way, which tends to be the battle I'm always having!"

SOUNDTOYS PLUG-INS

"What made this album different was how we used plug-ins and pedals in conjunction. Soundtoys make a lot of plug-ins that are mainly used for vocals, but you can use them on anything. I used the PhaseMistress, FilterFreak and Decapitator on my guitars. There was a whole bundle of stuff and not many people use them the way we do, which created these new, unusual sounds."

It's an unusual dynamic you have between you and the band's other two guitarists, Shade and Dominic Landolina. What have you learned to watch out for with three guitars on stage?

"Tuning is the main issue, if I'm being honest. I'm constantly being a stickler about that. My bandmates know what kind of look I give them when something's wrong. When you're playing in drop A or B, if you hit the strings too hard it's gonna sound like shit because you'll go out of tune. That's a constant issue for a band with three guitar players. Other than that, it's making sure we're not all playing when we don't need to be. Having three guitarists is a necessity for us, especially on this record – there's an *insane* amount of stuff going on, it's really dense. We need to keep the most important facets played live, I don't want us to be missing important pieces. Three guitars can easily fill all the gaps sonically, my sound is really mid-rangey and in your face while Dom's is really scooped with Strat highs and low-end from the amp and then Shade will fill in any gaps we need. His main thing is synths now, but he runs his guitars through his computer. We get him to do a lot of the avant-garde stuff when we play live."

Natural sounds like pick-scrapes, harmonics and clashing diads also add to the heaviness...

"I have a box of tricks, basically. Noises are something you can throw in there to make it even more mean-sounding. It's something I'm addicted to,

honestly. It also makes playing guitar more fun and satisfying, you're not just playing a bunch of chords or shred stuff. I love those evil sounds that people wouldn't necessarily know are played on guitar, made through just hands and body. It's an intensity I'm addicted to."

"MY BAND KNOW THE KIND OF LOOK I GIVE THEM WHEN SOMETHING'S WRONG"



Rory Clewlow with Enter Shikari - Pic: Tom Pullen



THE BEST AMPS IN THE WORLD

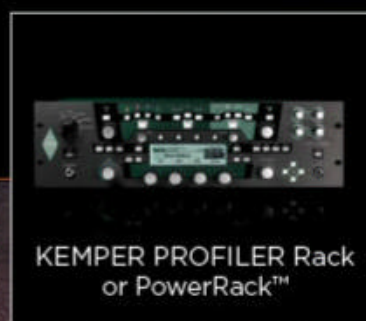
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When we talk punk rock we often talk about three chords and those being enough to capture its whole aesthetic. As

though that's all you need. But that alone doesn't get you there. You've got to find a way of capturing a punk intensity, of getting that attitude into a recording. The Chats, a gloriously unworked and uncouth punk trio from Queensland, Australia, applied a simple rule to the making of their debut album *High Risk Behaviour*: you get three takes and that's it.

As guitarist Josh "Pricey" Price tells it, forget rehearsals. Playing in The Chats isn't an office job. "We'd just go into the studio with no songs and then whack for a day and come out with four," he says. "And we don't really know how to play them still. There are like four songs on the record that I don't even know how to play." Does he worry about having to play them live? "I am a big fan of Joe Walsh and he said, 'If you act like you know what you are doing, everybody thinks you do,'" says Pricey. "That's a good bit of advice, I reckon."

The Chats were formed in 2016. They played as a four-piece for a short while before paring it down to a trio with Eamon Sandwith on vocals and bass and Matt Boggis on drums. A very modern kind of fame found them in 2017 on the back of a viral video for the track *Smoko* named after Aussie slang for a cigarette break. Thereafter, things changed. They found famous fans in Iggy Pop and Dave Grohl, and toured with Queens Of The Stone Age. They have a US tour booked for April, a European tour in October, and they're playing theatres, not clubs. "Everyday it's like you're pinching yourself," says Pricey. "I was washing cars in a car dealership. Eamon was a checkout chick at Coles. Matt never really had a job."

The Chats are a full-time concern, but their approach is still DIY. A mate manages them. They formed their own label. Their sound remains unevolved from those early days out in the boonies, playing in their mate's shed. "He'd have a pool table and a big fridge, ping-pong and darts, a couch, a big generator," recalls Pricey. "We'd set it all up and just used to sleep on the couches. Oh, dude, we used to



AUSSIE RULES

Words
Jonathan Horsley

BRINGING THE THUNDER FROM DOWN UNDER, **THE CHATS** ARE THE WORLD'S HOTTEST NEW PUNK BAND, LOVED BY IGGY POP AND DAVE GROHL. BUT AS GUITARIST JOSH 'PRICEY' PRICE ADMITS: "THERE ARE SONGS ON OUR RECORD THAT I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO PLAY!"

jam non-stop. We'd go over after school or work and jam all night because we were out in the middle of nowhere. No one could hear us. We could just jam until two in the morning or something, then wake up and go to school or work. It was great."

The Sunshine Coast features miles of unspoilt beaches, small towns separated by bushland. The heat can get the better of you, as can the drink. It feels sleepy, but kind of lawless too, as though everyone is left to their own devices. "Yeah, totally, it does feel a little bit like that," says Pricey. "It just feels like we are

on the moon sometimes." There's plenty of wide-open space for misadventures, and the songs on *High Risk Behaviour* are full of such stories, such as *The Clap*, which is a skronky shout-along number about venereal disease, complete with thematically apt hand-claps. Every track on *High Risk Behaviour* is written from experience. These grubby stories about the drink, the bongs, the clap... "I just write about things that actually happen," says Pricey. "I dunno, people just write shit and I can't. I have to wait for something to happen, something to really piss me off." Once the story is in place, it's given the same treatment;

simple arrangements, fast, loud and brief.

"PUNK IS AN ATTITUDE"



HIGH RISK BEHAVIOUR

The Chats from left:
Josh 'Pricey' Price, Eamon
Sandwith and Matt Boggis

Pricey mostly tracked the album with a rare solid-body Takamine GX100 electric that's shaped like an Explorer, though he uses a Jazzmaster as well. These will invariably go through a Fender Twin, with an always-on EHX Soul Food for that Chuck Berry breakup. "I have the amp on pretty clean and then I'll put that on with a little bit of drive to get that thickness," says Pricey. "But not too thick. I still like that twang." He cites Berry, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Angus Young as his heroes, and brings 12-bar blues riffs into The Chats' arrangements. He'll also use a Crowther Audio Hot Cake for solos. Are guitar solos punk? "I think people are getting the wrong understanding of punk," he says. "Punk is an attitude. I might say we are a rock band but everyone calls us punk, and I get it."

Matt Walter

**LET THE MUSIC
DO THE TALKING**

Joe Perry, the bad
boy of Boston...



Words Jonny Scaramanga, Richard Bienstock, Chris Bird Photography Olly Curtis, Kevin Nixon Guitars and backing Jonny Scaramanga

ROCK THIS WAY!

GET A GRIP ON THE AEROSMITH MAIN MAN'S STYLE AND PUT SWAGGER IN YOUR RIFFS AND SWING IN YOUR SOLOS

"I'm not sure where it comes from, because we come from two different places", Aerosmith's Brad Whitford related to TG's sister mag *Guitar Player* in 2019. "He's [Joe Perry] not schooled at all, so it's totally a "feel" thing for him, whereas I did a lot more studying of the guitar. So you're seeing two different approaches, but they work really well together. Ultimately, you want to have both sides." What Brad is explaining is the intangible secret of the Aerosmith groove machine. Even if you can play like Perry or Whitford, the band's sound is the sum of two distinct parts.

Joe's take on this? "I listen to what Brad's playing, and he listens to what I'm playing, and then we just try and mix it up, right down to – especially in the earlier days – saying, 'Who's gonna play the Strat? Who's gonna play the Les Paul?' That kind of thing. And when we come up with new riffs and new songs, we each come at it from different angles, and then we settle into our thing. I've always felt like we have two lead players and two different flavours in this band, and that's really important."

The division of sonic duties is far from simple, though, and certainly not just a matter of Strats and Les Pauls. Though Fender and Gibson feature heavily in the duo's arsenal, both have extensive guitar

collections. Alongside the big two brands, Perry's recently been spotted playing a Guild Bladerunner, a Nelson Admiralcaster, an Echopark Geisha and a Danelectro 12-string; Whitford's played a Charvel Pro Mod SD1, a Gretsch G6228 and various other S- and T-style guitars. Still, if there's a formula to be had, and if you're playing with another guitarist, you're best off using one humbucker- and one single coil-equipped guitar. A little light fuzz, and, if it takes your fancy, a clean boost are the icing on the cake.

In this lesson, we're breaking down some of Joe's trademark techniques before taking a look at his riffing secrets. Our photos show you how Joe approaches the basics – and you can apply these to our musical examples.

Like his hero Keith Richards, Joe Perry's guitar approach has been described as 'tight yet loose'. To get his parts to sound right you'll need to nail both parts of that equation. The tightness comes from

Joe's outstanding groove and the way the entire Aerosmith machine locks in together. The looseness is about being relaxed. No one ever accused Joe of seeming uptight, and if you approach the

music like you're too cool to care, you'll be well on your way. That means keeping your wrists loose, and being sure not to rush. Even when he's playing manic solos, Joe doesn't sound like he's in a hurry.

Many Aerosmith songs are played with swing, and this funk and soul influence is crucial to making the riffs feel right. Listen carefully to the drummer's kick and hi-hat while you play.



HOLDING HIS PICK

Joe holds his pick between his thumb and the flat pad of his index finger, with his thumb straight or bent slightly back, approaching the string almost parallel.



ANCHORING HIS PICK HAND

For more control, Joe often anchors a couple of free fingers on the body near the bridge pickup. Picking near the bridge gives bite to his tone.



HYBRID PICKING

From this anchored position, Joe can easily pluck the highest strings with his second and third fingers, like for those open string snaps in *Walk This Way*.



THUMB OVER THE NECK

Joe mostly uses the 'baseball bat grip' or thumb-over position preferred by many rock and blues players for more controlled bending and vibrato.



STRING BENDING

Joe's fingers don't move relative to his hand when he bends. The movement comes from a rotation of his wrist and forearm.



WIDE-STRETCH THUMB POSITION

Wide stretches on bass strings are impossible with a thumb-over grip, so Joe uses this more classical position on his funkier riffs round the bottom end.

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Words Amit Sharma, John Bishop, Charlie Griffiths

THE NEW Blues EXPLOSION!



In the hands of a new generation of guitarists, the power of the blues lives on. *TG* speaks to the leading players in modern blues about technique, tone, influences and more...

For a genre so deeply and tragically entrenched in history – stretching back one and a half centuries – the blues finds itself in a defiantly rude state of health in

2020. The world is a very different place now, and still far from perfect, though truth be told the potency of pentatonic scales, 12-bars and flat fives to the human ear has never waned, largely thanks to the musicians keeping this form of expression alive.

For this month's special, we wanted to celebrate the players who have been doing precisely that – whether it be dedicating their lives to faithful recreations of the sounds of the past or finding new ways to reinvent a very classic formula by introducing country, jazz or hip-hop tonalities. As an art form, the blues has never been

more diverse and musically rich, which means there's no shortage of sounds and talent to take inspiration and learn from.

Right now, when it comes to embodying the sheer power of the blues – from songwriting to chops and attitude – few could rival Eric Gales. Whether he's showcasing his fiery genius through blazing pentatonic sweeps or his playful side courtesy of some heavily embellished chords, occasionally sticking to the standards and at other times rewriting the rulebook, there's no denying the Memphis-born virtuoso is the complete package. Even beyond the music he's known for, stretching way back into his early childhood, his essence and life story is just about as bluesy as it gets...

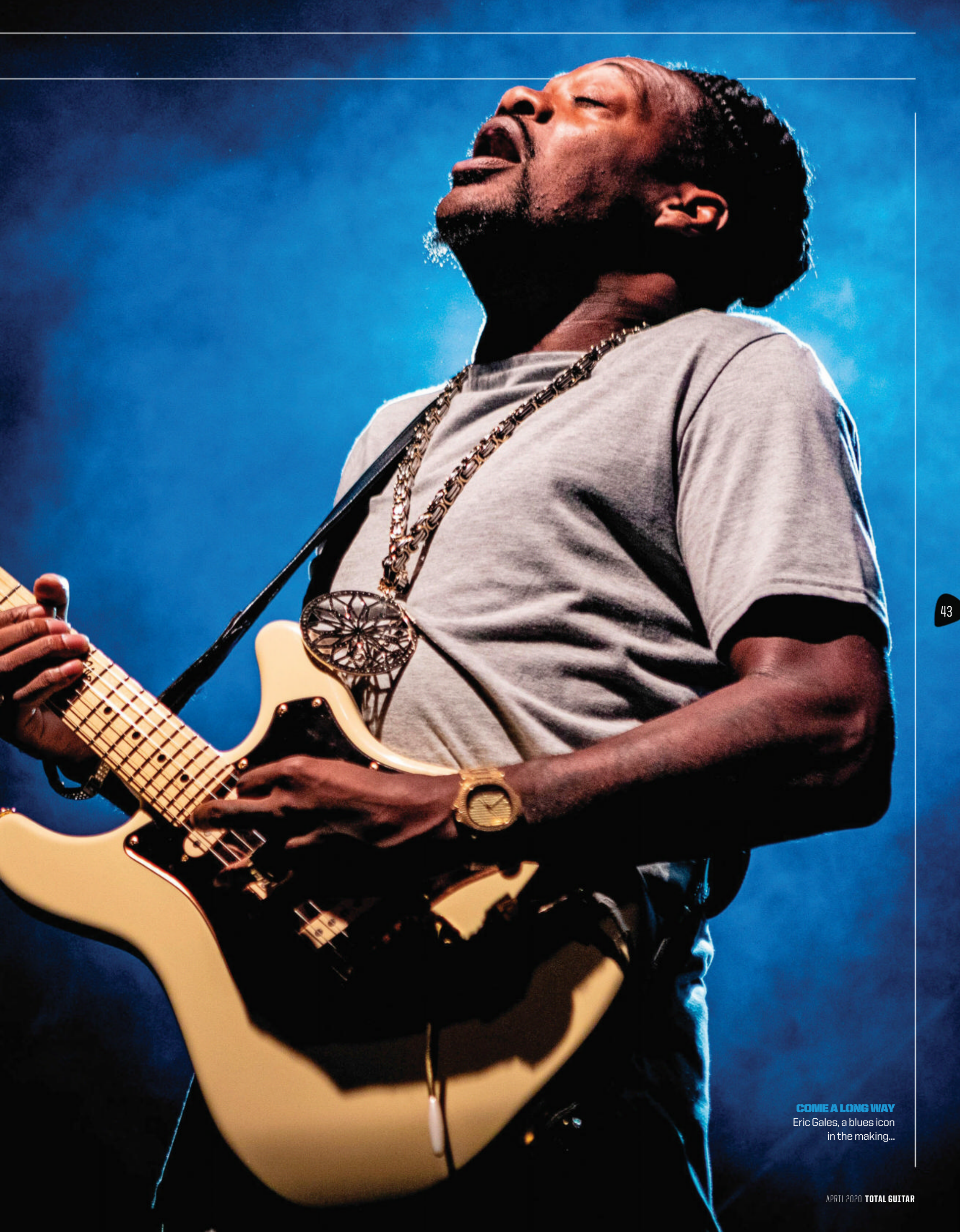
"For me, the blues always felt like the most deep and meaningful mould and style of music," he tells *TG*. "I just don't think other styles can get the

message across in the same way. Plus it's very close to the gospel music I grew up around, going to church with my mum and dad and coming from a musical family. That's probably the main reason why it all made sense to me and why I ended up striving to always play from the heart and soul.

"Ultimately, you have to find whatever it is that makes you feel more inspired. Is it the tone or the player or the genre? Inspiration can come in many forms – so get out there and find it – and it will carry you through for days, even weeks!"

FEATURED IN *TG*'S NEW BLUES SPECIAL

- * ALL-STAR LESSONS WITH ERIC GALES, JOE BONAMASSA, SAMANTHA FISH AND MORE
- * ALL THE GEAR YOU NEED
- * THE REINVENTION OF GARY CLARK JR.
- * THE 20 GREATEST MODERN BLUES RIFFS



COME A LONG WAY
Eric Gales, a blues icon
in the making...

Artist Profile CHRISTONE KINGFISH INGRAM

The extremely young yet equally talented Mississippi native who's making a name for himself by squaring up to the big guns. Meet your new favourite blues prodigy...

As well as contemporary heroes like Gary Clark Jr. and Lauryn Hill, there was one lesser-known name credited as a guest musician in the liner notes of Eric Gales' *Middle Of The Road* album – generally considered the best blues release of 2017. That name was Christone Kingfish Ingram, who despite only being 16 years old at the time of recording his contributions for the track *Help Yourself*, played with the conviction and authority of an old blues master, much like Gales himself.

He's been since spotted promoting the new Vintera series by Fender, covering Screamin' Jay Hawkins' hit *I Put A Spell On You* on a Seafoam Green Strat. And as far as promotional material goes, they couldn't have picked a better rising star to help translate their legacy to modern players. Hailing from Clarksdale – the birthplace of blues heroes like Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters – he's a guitarist that looks set to carry the traditions of old into an incredibly bright future.



COOL SHUFFLE RIFFS

TRACK 16

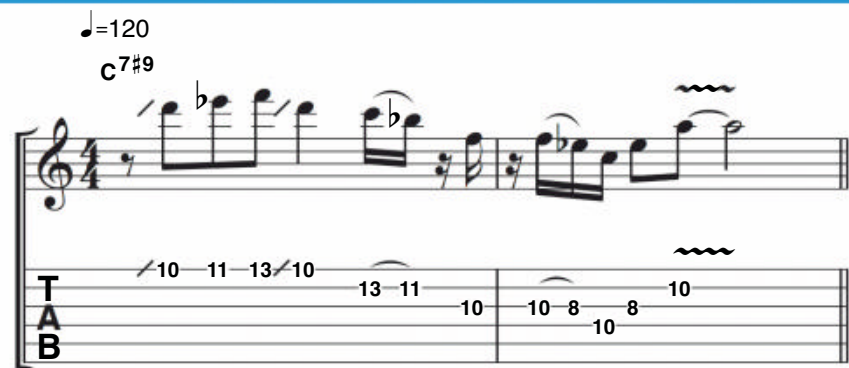


A fierce soloist, Christone also knows how to lay down a solid shuffle riff – an essential part of the blues. Our classic riff is based around the bottom three notes of an E chord, but it's the surrounding notes that'll make it sound authentic.



GO BEYOND PENTATONICS

TRACK 17



The minor pentatonic scale is often found at the core of blues solos. Like many players, Ana adds other notes from outside the scale for extra flavour. With the C minor pentatonic scale (C E, F G B,) as our foundation, we're adding D (a 9th interval) and A (6th) notes. Now try it without thinking of the scale, just like Ana!

Artist Profile ANA POPOVIĆ

Serbian-born, American-based blues ace Ana Popović believes the secret to great blues is “Trying to stay within the boundaries, while also pushing the limits to introduce something new...”

“That sounds tricky, right?! There are limitations to what you can do because the essence of the blues (I-IV-V and the pentatonic scale) is the tradition. And if you alter that too much it will turn into something else. But there's a lot you can do to sound more unique. I might switch from using a plectrum to fingerstyle to ‘feel’ the notes a little more and find the right texture. I might pick up a slide, having learned a lot from Elmore James, Roy Rogers or Johnny Winter. Or, I might introduce outside notes into my

pentatonic framework, using all kinds of notes through 9s, flat 9s, 6ths, flat 6ths, major 7s. I might use the altered scale on any 5th chord. I find the ‘approach note pattern’ in the bebop style or in the form of a bend or landing on the note can add to sounding unconventional and unexpected. But most importantly, I never actually think of the scale when I play. I think of moods and essence of the song and the groove. So my tips would be think less and let your inner-self do the talking in order for you to find your own signature guitar style.

BULLETPROOF

Samantha's sound, songs and style have seen her win plenty of awards already

Artist Profile

SAMANTHA FISH

Born and raised in Kansas City, Samantha Fish has become a modern master of all things Southern and swampy, whisking us away with her tantalising roots-rock...

"I really mean it when I'm saying it... And ultimately that's the most important aspect of blues.

I remember years back, I got into some serious hand trouble because I was holding my guitar too aggressively and kinda strangling it! Using a lighter touch didn't seem to match the feeling of my music, when I'm on stage, I'm feeling really passionate about what I'm doing. So, the answer was to find somewhere in the middle... There's a balance between emotion and keepin' the fuckin' thing in tune. The pentatonic scale is the most important thing to play rock and blues music. You think about it a lot at first but the further you go, the less you need to, because

it becomes ingrained. I've actually found there are more right notes than wrong notes on the guitar. If you hit a wrong one, bend it into something better. I'm kinda obsessed with that whole North Mississippi sound, but I also have more modern blues heroes, too. I think Jack White is one hell of a blues player, but he doesn't get a lot of recognition in the blues because he's considered more contemporary rock. Everything he does is blues and has introduced that sound to a new generation. He evolved it which is so important to perpetuate the genre. Same as Dan Auerbach or Gary Clark Jr. - they're all just moving it forwards in new ways. I also love Derek Trucks. Nobody sounds like him in the world. You just know... And that's what I aspire towards."

GET A PENTATONIC GROOVE ON

TRACK 15

♩=100

T
A
B

0 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 9 5 0 7 5 7 5 7 5 0

Of course Samantha can hold down a tight groove - the Kansas City blueswoman played drums for two years before ever picking up a guitar! This simple riff uses the E minor pentatonic scale as a funky foundation to build your riffs on. And it's a well-used shape, too, so make sure to memorise it!

Artist Profile JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

One of the UK's top contributions to the new wave of blues players, Joanne Shaw Taylor insists her playing is an amalgamation of different styles and genres...

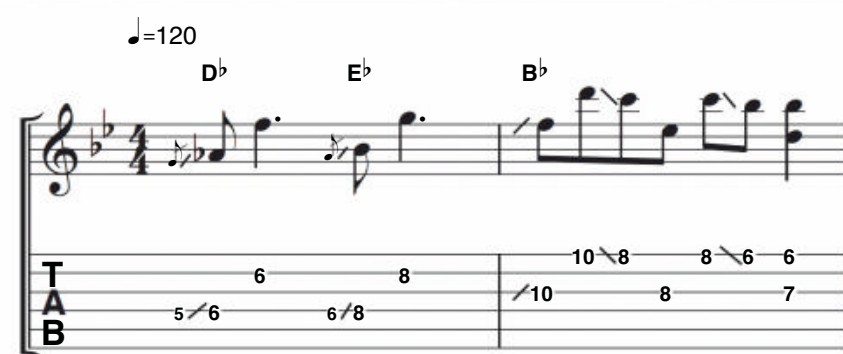
West Midlands prodigy Joanne Shaw Taylor has gone from being one of the most exciting blues newcomers and lead guitarist in Annie Lennox's band to one of the genre's most respected players, having inked a major label deal for last year's sixth album *Reckless Heart*. That said, she hasn't forgotten where she came from, swearing by her very first electric (a 1966 Fender Esquire bought on Denmark Street) above all else. "I don't think I'm a traditionalist,

but I wouldn't say that I'm pushing boundaries like Jack White," she once admitted. "I think I'm a mixture of influences. I'm not predominantly a blues player, but obviously that's a huge influence on me. There's the rock and classic rock – Free, Paul Kossoff, Gary Moore, Clapton and all kinds of 60s stuff. It gives you a nice wide area to draw from. As a songwriter, I listen to a lot of different stuff – soul, Prince, Motown. I try to include everything into my style."



MOTOWN-INSPIRED PHRASING

TRACK 18

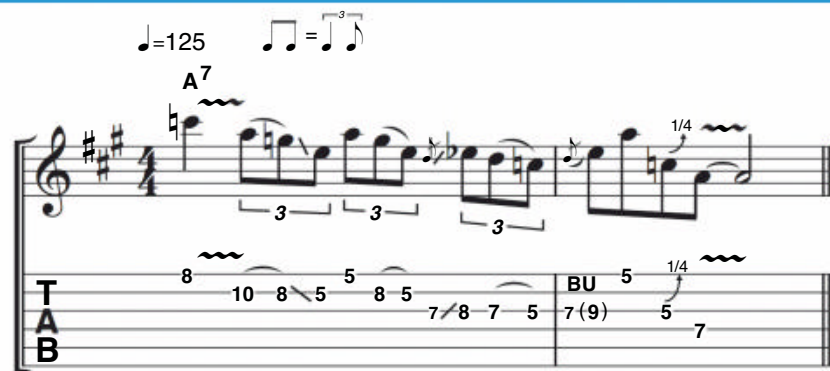


Joanne admits to a broad range of influences and we're looking at some soul-style sliding shapes here. These can be used both as a way to outline a chord progression (as with the D_b and E_b chords in bar 1) or in a more melodic way (bar 2). Try moving the shapes all round the fretboard.



DESCENDING PHRASING

TRACK 19



Before you get into the tough chromatic licks Hicks describes, it's worth learning to navigate some simpler pentatonic ideas - like this descending line. And chromatic notes? Just try adding in one or two notes from outside the lick. Easy! Think also about which combination of fingers makes the lick easier.

Artist Profile KING SOLOMON HICKS

Despite being only 25 years old, King Solomon Hicks has been active on the New York blues scene for a decade. Here's what he's learned...

"I've had a lot of mentors in my life. New York City and Harlem isn't really a big blues town compared to Chicago or Texas or Memphis, so a lot of my inspiration came from listening to records. Thanks to YouTube I've spent countless hours watching the three Kings, as well as some modern players who are equally amazing, like Eric Gales, Joanne Shaw Taylor or Tyler Bryant. I guess the only real way to play the blues is to live it. I know that's a funny thing to say – obviously the original blues guys went through a much rougher time

in history. Practising and listening to the right records is great but there's nothing like going through your own heartbreak. Being in New York, there's a lot of jazz here, and though I try not to think about the harmonies and chromaticism too much, I guess it still comes out. You can take a lick and descend or ascend chromatically, even if it's not necessarily in key. There are lots of ways to stretch the pentatonic scale out that way to give it new flavours, bending notes here and there. I also like using my thumb like Wes Montgomery did for a warmer tone with less bite."



BLUES GEAR BUYERS GUIDE

Got the blues but not the rig? Kit yourself out with our authentic guide to the best bluesy gear around

GIBSON LES PAUL STANDARD 50S P90 GOLDTOP

RRP: £1999

While just about any Gibson Les Paul will come in handy for nailing thicker and meatier blues tones, this Goldtop oozes some extra vintage class and flair. And compared to the typical humbuckers found on most other models, the P90s are better suited to warmer and rounder sounds.

FENDER ORIGINAL '60S STRATOCASTER

RRP: £1699

That unmistakably glassy and chimy sound of a Strat has been integral to many a great blues recording. Finished in 3-Color Sunburst, Shell Pink or Olympic White and complimented by a period-correct mint green scratchplate, the American Original guitars are worthy of the guitar giant's game-changing legacy.

GIBSON ES-335

RRP: £2299

Many of the early greats – from Chuck Berry to BB King – favoured Gibson semi-hollowbody guitars, which carried a more natural, open and airy resonance compared to the sharper attack given by solid-bodied instruments. Then, of course, there's the fact they simply look cooler than virtually any other guitar out there.

FENDER PLAYER TELECASTER

RRP: £599

With more of a mid-range snarl in direct comparison to the scooped output of a Strat, the Fender Telecaster has been wielded by all sorts of players from Muddy Waters and Jimmy Page to Prince and Joanne Shaw Taylor. The Player Series from the Ensenada factory brings a lot on a budget.

TAYLOR 324CE

RRP: £2399

While a lot of Taylor acoustics feature Sitka Spruce tops, which are usually brighter sounding, this model pairs a warmer Tropical Mahogany top with Tasmanian Blackwood for the back and sides. The result is a high-quality acoustic with an airy mellowness perfectly suited to folk blues.

MARTIN 000-15M STREETMASTER

RRP: £1499

With a gorgeous distressed satin finish and plenty of warmth from the all-mahogany body, here's an acoustic that looks every bit as vintage as it sounds. Instead of a scooped EQ curve like more modern acoustics, the StreetMaster thrives and drives on mids, ideal for the blues hounds among us...

FENDER '57 CUSTOM TWIN

RRP: £2799

When it comes down to touch dynamics and sensitivity to bring out all the nuances in your playing, few amps will be able to compete with the response of a valve-powered Fender combo. This hand-wired Fender '57 Custom might be on the expensive side, but tonally it's in a class of its own.



BOSS KATANA

For more than just blues, but full of great tone nonetheless



MARSHALL 1962HW BLUESBREAKER

RRP: 1499

Allegedly created so that Eric Clapton could fit his amp into the boot of his car, the first ever Marshall combo was affectionately named after the band it was most associated with. It soon became one of the most popular amps of its era and this hand-wired modern reissue recreates those timeless Beano album tones with minimal fuss.

VICTORY V30 MKII

RRP: £999

Designed with some expertise from one of the most respected players to ever pick up the instrument, Guthrie Govan, this updated version of The Countess offers two channels, each with a crunch mode as well as a switch to take you back to the original V30. If you want boutique looks and tones without the boutique pricetag, look no further...

BOSS KATANA

RRP: £229

With its built-in effects and five unique amp characters, this modelling amp from Boss can cover a whole lot more than blues. But given the quality of its less overdriven and cleaner modes, which are often where amps of this ilk fall flat, it definitely tops the list of budget options.

IBANEZ TS9 TUBE SCREAMER

RRP: £129

Stevie Ray Vaughan is probably responsible

GIBSON ES-335

A true staple of the blues (but looks nicest in red)





for more Tube Screamer sales than any other guitar player to ever walk the earth. And rightly so – by boosting the mids and adding overdrive into highly compressed and cranked Fender combos, he created some of the greatest guitar tones in music history.

BOSS BD-2W BLUES DRIVER

RRP: £135

Smoother and more transparent than a Tube Screamer, the Blues Driver is more suited to players who want a boost in signal and overdrive without affecting their overall amp tone. This special edition Waza Craft version offers all the classic sounds as well as new options through its Custom mode.



JIM DUNLOP FUZZ FACE

RRP: £159

One of the first pedals of its kind, the original Fuzz Face was famously utilised by early rock pioneers like Jimi Hendrix and David Gilmour. The secret behind its rich, creamy fuzz was the Germanium PNP transistor – which, we're pleased to report, is still found on the models produced today.

JIM DUNLOP CRY BABY WAH

RRP: £79

There are many variations of Jim Dunlop's legendary Cry Baby wah, from mini versions to signature editions with on-board distortion and frequency dials, but the basic GCB95 version – first manufactured in 1965 – remains a firm favourite to this day. Wah sounds don't come much more classic than this.

DRYBELL VIBE MACHINE MK2

RRP: £285

If you're looking to recreate that throbbing modulation conjured by Jimi Hendrix on *Machine Gun*, or by Robin Trower on early hit *Bridge Of Sighs*, you're going to need a good



vibe pedal. This update of the Vibe Machine by Croatian specialists Drybell is pretty much the best of its kind, with even more modes and functionality bundled into a tiny package.

KEELEY COMPRESSOR PLUS

RRP: £129

If you're after clean blues tones and don't have the luxury of a hand-wired Fender-style amp, a compressor pedal may very well end up becoming your best friend. This mid-priced unit made Robert Keeley – a world-renowned effects tweaker and builder – is undoubtedly one of the best on the market.

XOTIC EP BOOSTER

RRP: £119

While it's great for an extra push for leads and solos, the EP Booster is even better at being an 'always-on' pedal to ramp up richness and articulation no matter what you're plugged into. It's voiced after the pre-amp in Echoplex EP-3 tape delay once favoured by players as esteemed as Neil Young, Brian May and EVH.

**MARSHALL
BLUESBREAKER**

Can you even *think* of a more iconic-looking amp?

**LINE 6 HX
STOMP HELIX**

RRP: £399

Much like the Boss Katana amps, the Line 6 Helix series stretches far beyond your basic blues crunch yet doesn't lose sight of those vintage overdriven sounds in its quest across the tonal spectrum. What you get is an entire rig in one relatively small floor unit, modelling all kinds of classic amps and effects.



Adaptive Radius Technology as well as a Unique Tension Control system.

FENDER STOOL

RRP: £75

Anyone prone to playing a bit of guitar in kitchen or garage will undoubtedly want one of these Fender stools to rest on as they do it. The only question is whether to go for the classic logo or Custom Shop version. Or perhaps both.

**JIM DUNLOP
DEREK TRUCKS
SIGNATURE SLIDE**

RRP: £20

If you're going to pick up a slide, it might as well be the one used by the man generally considered to be the best in the world. The closed weighted end of this medicine bottle-style slide ensures a slick and balanced playability.

**G7TH PERFORMANCE
3 CAPO**

RRP: £39.99

A capo can turn your acoustic or electric into a whole new instrument. Since launching in 2004, G7th have been behind some of the most popular models and the new Performance 3 version offers their

**MARSHALL MAJOR III
HEADPHONES**

RRP: £69

Since launching their first headphone range in 2010, the Marshall logo has been seen almost everywhere and on everyone - from guitar nerds to just about anyone that wants to enjoy music on the move. The Major III offers crystal clarity and great value for money, costing only half the price of its Bluetooth-enabled bigger brother.



Artist Profile

JOE BONAMASSA

The New York blues master has spent his life paying dues to the originals who inspired him, even as he gradually transitions into becoming one of the genre's elder statesmen...

Where would the blues be without Joe Bonamassa? It's hard to say, but there's no denying the 42-year-old virtuoso has dedicated his life to the cause, starting out as a young prodigy mentored by the likes of BB King and Danny Gatton to eventually becoming the blues giant we know today. Responsible for some of the most jaw-dropping techniques and tones in the entire history of the genre, it's JoBo's attention to detail that has ultimately paved his way to global domination. That said, he'd be the first to tell you he wouldn't have gotten here without his heroes...

"Albert, Freddie and BB were the archetypes for modern electric blues," he tells us. "They wrote the

playbook and we're all still using those same licks now. But they were inventions back then. Just look at how BB was able to identify himself with one note! There are those early live recordings from the early 60s - *Live At The Regal*, *Blues Is King* - that reverb-drenched stereo Gibson sound. That was the archetype for electric blues for me. Coupled with the material and his singing, it was a tour de force. And so powerful. Albert was a soul singer and had about ten distinguishing riffs. But he was able to use them in such a devastating way... You always know when it's Albert King. And then Freddie was the scorpion, he would tear your face off with treble and play with bad intentions, you know? They don't call them the three kings for nothing!"

JOBO'S TRICK: SLOW THEN FAST

TRACK 20

$\text{♩} = 120$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$

E G A C

TAB

15-12 14-12 12-10 12-9 12-9 12-10

Few guitarists have revved up the blues more than Joe in recent years, and this lick is pure Bonamassa gold. The notes are pentatonic scale-based but it's all about the rhythm. Switching between swung eighth notes and 16ths is the trick, giving a sense of accelerating then pulling back. Try it with any pentatonic scale.



Artist Profile DEREK TRUCKS

Derek Trucks might just be the king of modern slide guitar, a player who has channelled the spirit and technique of his hero Duane Allman into something distinctly his own...

Considered by many to be the greatest slide player alive right now, it should come as no surprise that Derek Trucks' earliest musical memory was hearing Duane Allman on The Allman Brothers first live album *At Fillmore East*, as well as the slide pioneer's contributions on *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs* by Derek And The Dominos. There was something about the power of a slide guitar, he once told this magazine, and its ability to emulate the human voice. A big part of that came down to the microtones available to slide players – those notes in between

the semitone divisions across the fretboard. "There's no distinction between one note and the next: you're hearing every inflection in between," he once noted, while also admitting picking up a slide came with its own unique challenges. "I think it's a lot harder to bullshit people as a slide player, as opposed to straight playing, because it's so raw and honest. Y'know, you can sit in a room, practise all day, learn your scales and blaze blues riffs: it's easy to hide behind that. But I think with the slide, it's a little bit tougher. And I've certainly heard people play that are bullshitting!"



VOCAL-LIKE SLIDE PHRASING

TRACK 21

♩ = 60

Am F G

A slide master, Derek truly brings his own unique vocal phrasing to the guitar. Now that's bullshit-free! Here we concentrate our efforts up and down one string – slide guitar in a microcosm, if you like. The flurry of notes is typical Trucks fare. Try also pressing down so your slide 'frets' like your fingers.



SRV-INSPIRED LICK

TRACK 22

♩ = 92

C⁹ F⁹

The legendary Stevie Ray Vaughan was a huge influence to masses of new players looking to add fire and flair to their playing – Dan Patlansky in particular. This lick channels both players, taking a minor pentatonic framework and adding more colour with notes from outside the scale.

Artist Profile DAN PATLANSKY

Few can rival South African singer-songwriter ace Dan Patlansky when it comes to that angrier, SRV-inspired Texan-style blues...

"Through my teen years all I listened to was SRV. I wanted to sound like him, dress like him, I wanted to be him. And I don't regret that phase at all, it became the foundation of my playing, a more aggressive and relentless take on the blues. I noticed after a while that the faster I played, the more my picking hand would start locking up. It's a natural human reaction because your brain is telling you that you are doing something intense. As soon as your picking hand starts locking up, all fluidity goes out of the window. You won't have that natural flow. Thankfully, there are definitely shortcuts that make it easier. I looked into what SRV was

doing, and even faster guys like Yngwie Malmsteen, and the one thing they in common was a very loose picking hand. SRV looks like he's hacking the guitar in half, but if you focus in on what his right hand was actually doing, it was relaxed. For years, I battled to get my speed and tone up to scratch. In photos I would notice my right hand looking as stiff as a board. That was my lightbulb moment. I got into hybrid picking – using a mix of pick and middle finger for the faster runs. It's almost like having two picks instead of one! How I learned the technique was arpeggiating basic chords with hybrid picking, it really woke up my right hand and made it so much more natural.



Artist Profile CHRIS BUCK

Once described as a “f*cking awesome guitarist” by Guns N’ Roses legend Slash – who might know a thing or two about the blues – Newport’s Chris Buck is one of the rising stars of the genre...

The big turning point for me was seeing how Hendrix approached playing rhythm; until that moment, rhythm and lead had been two distinctly separate art forms. Obviously its lineage goes back further to the likes of Curtis Mayfield, but seeing how effortlessly Hendrix intertwined melody and harmony was revolutionary. Any combination of the two that I work into my playing undoubtedly has its roots in those early days of emulating Jimi. For me, the major pentatonic scale is infinitely the most musical – I find it easier to be lyrical and expressive in that context. I know that’s

totally the opposite to a lot of players, who prefer minor, but I wouldn’t say that I ever really made a point of practising one more than the other. In hindsight, I used to put great emphasis on learning and understanding a song’s melody as much I did as its chord progression. Not just the notes themselves but the inflection with which they were delivered. Whether it’s Nat King Cole or Paul Rodgers, there’s something to be gleaned from any great vocalist; the way they approach notes, if they fall off them laconically or make a show of it, their vibrato, the dynamic of one line or word versus another...”

DEVELOPING TOUCH AND FEEL

TRACK 23

♩=60
Am F G

BU BD BU BD

TAB: 10 13 10 12 11 10 15 12 13 10 15 13 15 (17) (15) (17) (15) 13 11 12 13 11 12 14 12 14 12

Playing fingerstyle certainly isn’t new, but it offers a level of touch and feel that’ll really help you discover your own identity on the instrument. The tab here in our Buck-inspired example may look scary but it’s a slow ballad, so it’s slow enough not to be too challenging. Played with a pick, you’d get a more forceful and less personal delivery.

Artist Profile JONNY LANG

The American gospel singer/guitarist pays tribute to the man he describes as the greatest living blues legend...

It speaks volumes that in the list of guest performers involved with Mick Fleetwood’s Peter Green tribute night at the London Palladium in February – dotted in amongst an all-star cast including luminaries such as David Gilmour, John Mayall and Billy F. Gibbons – the only ‘younger’ name belonged to Jonny Lang. The North Dakotan gospel rocker doffs his cap to many of the old blues legends, though perhaps one more than any other...

“There are so many legendary blues musicians still alive,”

he recently noted. “But I guess for me Buddy Guy is the big one, he’s probably *the* guy when it comes to the proper legends. I remember seeing him play at some point very early on in my career, just watching him go crazy on stage. He wasn’t thinking about it at all. That’s what made me realise it’s okay to be reckless when you play music. That’s perfectly fine. It can actually help push you into a different place and find new ideas. Buddy is the master of that... The guy is amazing!”



FUNKY RIFFING

TRACK 24

♩=85
D⁹

TAB: 5 7 x x 5 7 9 10 10 10 8 9 9 9 5 7 x x 5 7 7 5 3 5

The autowah effect adds a funky edge and sounds great for riffs and quirky lead work. Sliding into chords from a semitone below is a tried and tested funk trick, and here we are using a cool sounding fingering for the D9 chord.

Artist Profile

ERJA LYYTINEN

If Carlos Santana describes you as “the future” of guitar music, chances are you’re going to be well versed in the blues. Here Finland’s Erja Lyytinen explains the secrets to her style...

“The secret to playing great blues is emotion. You have to be true to what you play. It’s good to know the tradition and the roots, of course, but I like to mix the old blues with modern sounds. I use pedals to create interesting worlds. Blues can be played fast, slow, seriously or humorously. There are so many ways to express yourself. Theoretically the blue note is considered to be essential in blues music. It is a note somewhere between minor and major third that gives this longing, melancholic sound. When playing a blues solo, I try to tell a story,

starting from a quiet, easy-going conversation, and letting it grow little by little, until the ‘words’ pour out fast and loud. I also like to use a lot of bends and I like to explore with rhythmical ideas, sometimes repeating the same pattern to create tension. I’ve always loved Albert King’s overbends and experimenting with those sorts of sounds – like bending a whole step up, then come down slightly a microtone, go back up to the first note and repeat that a few times! It’s a great exercise and once you’ve mastered it, it can make the world of difference to your sound.”



BIG BLUESY BENDS

TRACK 25

♩=80

B⁵ A⁵ E/G[#] A⁵

BU BU BU BD

10 (12) 7 10 7 9 (11) 9 7 10 (12) 12 (14) (12) 10 12

Some things never change. Since the dawn of electric guitar-based blues, string bends have been a staple soloing technique – and Erja has a full arsenal of chops. Here in our Lyytinen-style, lick you can hear how bending gradually higher up the fretboard builds the excitement



BITING LEAD SOUNDS

TRACK 26

♩=130

A^m

BU BU BD BU BU BU

10 (12) 10 (12) (10) 8 10 (12) 10 (12) 9 (10) 8 10

Kenny’s influences run deep, from SRV-style aggressive lead to earlier Chicago blues influences. Here, we’re looking at the more traditional end of the spectrum and a technique also used by greats like Albert King and Gary Moore – the two-string bend. The trick is getting the interval just right so it really bites.

Artist Profile

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

Self-taught Louisiana blues maestro Kenny Wayne Shepherd has become one of the genre’s modern heroes, and deservedly so...

“Music is not something you can fake. You have to tap into your heart and soul, displaying that through your instrument and then following your own instincts and intuitions. I certainly feel like there are a lot of players out there that have a deeper vocabulary than I do, especially in other genres. But I work hard on crafting an emotional experience through my solos. In each song, I’m trying to convey a different emotional story – even if the licks are similar from one song to the next, it’s how they’re woven together that tells the story in a different way. That’s

where instinct comes in, knowing when to build it all up and bring it back down. Even something as simple as a slide across the strings, with no actual notes played, can be powerful. It’s more like a sound effect and came from Albert King, I think. I don’t know what inspired him to do it but it sounds almost like a jet engine going over you. It’s such a simple trick that can add so much excitement and energy to a song. Then, there are other Albert King-style ideas like pulling up on one string and catching another for the bend down. To be honest, whenever you need the ultimate go-to licks for when all else fails, think like Albert King!”

THE REINVENTION OF GARY CLARK JR.

How the modern blues trailblazer has defied convention and broken the mould in order to find himself, pushing the genre in new directions along the way...

It would be fair to say singer/guitarist and multiple Grammy winner Gary Clark Jr. has a complicated relationship with the blues. On one hand, he learned virtually everything he knows about music from growing up in Austin, Texas – starting with his experiences at the local Baptist church where he backed the choir and later at Antone's, the club in which Stevie Ray Vaughan and his elder brother Jimmie had famously cut their teeth some decades prior. These early years were pivotal in moulding Clark as one of the most commercially successful, critically revered and musically diverse guitar heroes of the modern age – a man who's played with everyone from BB King and Jeff Beck to Alicia Keys and Foo Fighters and comfortably held his own...

"The first time I walked into Antone's was kinda mind-blowing," he told this writer around the release of his 2015 album, *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim*. "It was something I don't really know how to describe, there was this feeling that brought depth to my life. Clifford Antone [now deceased] took me in and brought me under his wing. He introduced me to Jimmie Vaughan, Hubert Sumlin, Calvin 'Fuzz' Jones, Pinetop Perkins – all these greats that played with Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf.

"I learned a lot about history and a lot about myself as a black man in

white culture. I don't want to turn this into a race thing, but it got real for me, as far as understanding where things came from in terms of the evolution of guitar playing – it starting off as an accompanying instrument and ending up out front thanks to Chuck Berry and Jimi Hendrix. They're the guys who started this whole thing. It was an eye-opener for me, a place where I got my education, more so than I did from going to grade school. Not to discredit school, it's important for kids to stay in school! But for me, it was a great learning experience that shaped who I am today. I'm very grateful for it."

Fast forward a few years to the writing sessions for latest album *This Land*, however, and the notion of being any kind of modern blues saviour was not sitting well with him at all. Clark felt stuck creatively and typecast as a one-trick pony, unable to shake off the feeling that he was stagnating in a genre that's often too guilty of sticking to tried-and-test formulas. He'd won all kinds of awards, gotten his major label deal, played at the White House for former President Barack Obama and received a letter from Eric Clapton with an unforgettably powerful admission. "Thank you," Clapton wrote. "You make me want to play again".

But it just wasn't enough. In order to move forward,

**"REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE,
BUT PUSH THE LIMITS AND
SEE HOW FAR YOU CAN GO"**

RETRO BUT CONTEMPORARY

TRACK 27

♩=90
Am

T
A
B

7 5 7 7 5 3 5 5 7 5 7

Fuzz and spring reverb fuel Gary's retro-yet-contemporary vibe and we're looking at a simple minor pentatonic riff here. Gary's fretting is more nuanced than you might notice on a first listen, so pay attention to small details like the short, clipped feel of staccato playing and the bluesy-sounding quarter-tone bends.

CLARK'S BLUES

TRACK 28

Am

T
A
B

7 5 (9) 9 (11) 10 (12) 12 (14) 16 (17) 13

BU BU BU BU BU

Gary's soloing is very much about his feel for dynamics and how effects like fuzz distortion and octavers affect his tone. These clashing unison bends are typical of his style, and if you add a little finger vibrato to the third string you'll create a bluesy dissonance.

Gary Clark Jr. had to rethink, re-evaluate and reinvent himself – and ultimately draw on his soul, funk and hip-hop influences more than ever before...

"The whole soul thing came from my parents," he explained in a later interview with this writer. "My dad was like a soul brother and kinda funky. There are pictures of him with a big-ass fro and the bell-bottoms, and my mother was pretty righteous. They grew up in the era where it was all afros, shiny suits and disco lights. Bands like The Temptations, The Spinners, Parliament, Maze, Al Green, Marvin Gaye and The Jackson Five – all their classic records were playing in my house while I was growing up..."

"I remember seeing Tito Jackson with the 335 and long hair and thinking he was pretty cool. Also Curtis Mayfield – man, those tones rang out and resonated with me.

One of the songs I really loved as a kid, especially because of the guitar, was *With A Child's Heart*, from one of Michael Jackson's first solo albums. The guitar tone was really beautiful, with loads of subtle hammer-ons over these gorgeous chord changes. I remember thinking to myself, 'Woah, I want to play guitar one day and sound like that.'"

As fate would have it, the young Texan's hopes and dreams would eventually become reality, and – having just announced a 35-date North American tour as special guest to indie rock heavyweights The Black Keys – he stands today not only as one of the most important crossover artists to embrace and embody the blues, but also the musician best poised to propel it to new heights.

"You do things musically by reaching back and pulling from the foundation to push it all forward," he explains to TG. "That's how I am in life and how I am as a person. I grew up in a house where I was taught to respect your elders and where you come from – remember who you are – but also to look forward. Encourage yourself to push the limits and see how far you can go..."

20

BEST BLUES RIFFS

Blues bangers
from today's
modern maestros.

Plus, learn with
TG's slowed
down videos!

AIN'T MESSIN' ROUND

Evoking Hendrix and
Zeppelin, Gary Clark Jr.
is a master of the
blues-rock riff

01 JEFF BECK HAMMERHEAD

Master of reinvention and arguably the most dependably brilliant guitarist to walk the earth, Jeff Beck won his last Grammy in 2011 thanks to this absolute gem of a riff. It's built off the D Mixolydian scale, sticking to the minor pentatonic notes from the same key save for the addition of a major 3rd.

02 JOE BONAMASSA DIRT IN MY POCKET

The fourth track from 2007 fan-favourite *Sloe Gin* could very well be JoBo at his heaviest, making full use of an open-E tuning, a slide and a fair amount of overdrive. The usage of a major 6th in addition to the 2nds, 3rds and minor 7ths found in the riff is what gives it a Dorian flavour.



03 RICHIE KOTZEN PEACE SIGN

Section: Intro/Verse
Appears at: 0:00-0:16
Original tempo: 123bpm
Key: B minor

Richie plays this riff using the first and second positions of the B minor pentatonic scale. The doublestops on the second and third strings borrow from the Dorian mode, too. Richie tends to play the notes on the sixth string with his thumb, so the opening octave shapes are played by the thumb and third finger. This riff is made up of a lot of parts and techniques from string skips to slides to vibrato to bluesy bends so break this one down into chunks to help memorise it more easily. Although we've played the riff with a pick, you can also play the riff fingerstyle as Richie does!

04 THE DEREK TRUCKS BAND CROW JANE

On this track, Derek gets some extra mileage out of his 7th chords, switching between playing bass/root note rhythms with his thumb and spelling out dominant chords with his fingers. It would make a great exercise to practice your fingerstyle blues.

05 BILLY F. GIBBONS MISSIN' YO' KISSIN'

"There's a secret language to the blues, you need to say it without saying it," the ZZ Top singer/guitarist told TG around the release of his second solo album. Its opening track does exactly that, making use of the classic boogie shuffle Billy built his career on



06 GARY CLARK JR. WHAT ABOUT US

Section: Intro/Verse
Appears at: 0:17-0:40
Original tempo: 80bpm
Key: F minor

This riff starts with some Hendrix-style chord fragments which you can play with a barre at the 5th fret and your remaining fingers to add the chord changes. Gary lets the notes ring together and creates a nice dissonance between these close intervals. The second half of the riff is more of a Led Zep-style rock riff with the F root note played with palm mutes and even downstrokes, and the A_b and B_b powerchords on the middle two strings.

07 GARY MOORE UMBRELLA MAN BLUES

This track from what would be Gary Moore's final solo album cheekily nods to his Thin Lizzy years and is built off the A-minor pentatonic scale. Nine years on from his passing, the Belfast blues hero's influence is felt in every corner of the world.

08 LARKIN POE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Led by sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell, Larkin Poe have become one of the most exciting names to emerge in blues over recent years. On *Blue Ridge Mountains*, Rebecca holds the chords and sings while Megan matches her melodies on lapsteel.

09 JOSH SMITH FIRST HAND LOOK (AT DOWN AND OUT)

"Josh is one of my favourite musicians on the planet," Joe Bonamassa once stated, praising the American singer/guitarist's ability to "transcend the boundaries of blues into a genre



of his own". This track from his *Over Your Head* album reworks familiar E minor pentatonic notes into an unusual swing.

10 ERJA LYYTINEN SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Finish singer/guitarist Erja Lyytinen's opening riff to *Snake In The Grass* doesn't feel especially remarkable – at least until you get to its final bar, where she climbs back down the C blues scale in a way guaranteed to turn heads and raise eyebrows. It's a great example of using time divisions to catch listeners off-guard.

11 ROBIN TROWER TRUTH OR LIES

On his 1974 hit *Bridge Of Sighs*, Robin Trower popularised the sound of a Fender Strat going through a vibe pedal. All these years later, on tracks like this, his recipe for gripping, psychedelic blues is clearly one that still works.



12 JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR WHO DO YOU LOVE

Section: Intro/Verse
Appears at: 0:00-0:19
Original tempo: 105bpm
Key: Bb minor

This riff is based in the first position of the B_b minor pentatonic scale and primarily uses the middle two strings. The first phrase is a pull-off from the 8th fret to the 6th on the fourth string, then moves down to the 8th fret on the fifth string. There is a muted note which acts as a punctuation mark in the rhythm – keep your fingers resting lightly on the strings without pressing down and pick as normal. At the end of the riff, slide up to 13th fret on the third string. Add some vibrato on the longer notes for blues 'feel'.



13 ERIC GALES I'VE BEEN DECEIVED

Section: Verse

Appears at: 0:22-0:46

Original tempo: 82bpm

Key: C minor (original key C# minor)

Eric's guitar is tuned to drop C#, but we've recorded the video in drop D, so you can simply tune your sixth string down a tone rather than retuning your whole guitar. The riff starts with an open powerchord on the lowest two strings, followed by a melody on frets 5, 3 and 7 of the fourth string. Eric's playing is very lyrical and emotive, so the best way to learn this phrase is to think of the words he sings 'how does it feel' and place each note on the syllables. The riff repeats four times, with a variation the third time.

14 BLUES PILLS YOU GOTTA TRY

There has no shortage of young bands trying to emulate the vintage sounds of the past in recent years, but few have pulled it off with the conviction and authenticity of Sweden's Blues Pills. This 60s-style G minor jam off their second album is one of their finest.

15 ERIC CLAPTON SPIRAL

This ballad from one of Slowhand's more recent studio albums uses dominant doublestops against an A root note to great effect. It's an old trick – similar usage of intervallic pairs, usually 3rds or 6ths, stretches throughout his entire discography – but it sure works.

16 BUDDY GUY WHAT'S UP WITH THAT WOMAN

As one of the elder statesmen of the genre – now fast approaching his 84th birthday – Buddy Guy shows no signs of tiring from what he does best. This track from 2003's *Rhythm & Blues* swings hard in A minor and makes good use of that all-important 5th.

17 LARRY CARLTON INKBLOT 11

Though he's generally considered more of a jazz musician, Larry Carlton's blues albums



– particularly 2003's *Sapphire Blues* and its 2006 follow-up *Fire Wire* – are the mark of a man with impeccable taste. The up-tempo grooves of *Inkblot 11* are reminiscent of Stevie Ray Vaughan at his funkier.

18 CLUTCH THE REGULATOR

Though Clutch are better known for their heavier, electric guitar-driven pentatonic riffs, *The Regulator* saw guitarist Tim Sult evoke more of a swamp-style blues on a dropped-D acoustic. Its inclusion on hit American TV show *The Walking Dead* helped the band reach new audiences.



19 TYLER BRYANT ON TO THE NEXT

Section: Intro/Verse

Appears at: 0:00-0:13

Original tempo: 83bpm

Key: F# minor (original key F minor)

Tyler tunes his guitar down to E_b, but we've shown the riff in standard E tuning so you don't have to retune. This riff uses 1st position of the F# minor pentatonic scale with first finger at the 2nd fret. The first phrase is played as a pick-up bar leading into bar 1. Use your third finger to bend the third string, then use your first and third fingers to complete the phrase. The rest of the riff is played with straight 16th notes on the sixth string using the 2nd and 5th frets and an open string. Play with even, alternate picking throughout.

20 JOHN MAYER NEON

Despite reinventing himself as more of a bluesman as the years have gone on, it's this riff from John Mayer's breakthrough debut album *Room For Squares* that showcases him at his best – breathing life into simple chords with complex fingerstyle rhythms.



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'70S ROCK & INDIE ROCK with Jon Bishop



This course will cover many of the main components that guitarists use, ranging from scales and chord riffing through to string bending and use of harmonics. Lots of classic rock and indie riffs will be looked at with iconic songs.

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The focus of this course will be on relevant techniques, from picking to legato, and to improve and supercharge your rock guitar playing. Guitarists covered will range from Randy Rhoads to Paul Gilbert, Yngwie Malmsteen to Steve Vai.

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This course will cover the basics (extended chords, simple diatonic licks, swing feel, blues) through to more advanced concepts and devices (chord substitution, modal phrasing, outside playing).

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SANTANA

SMOOTH

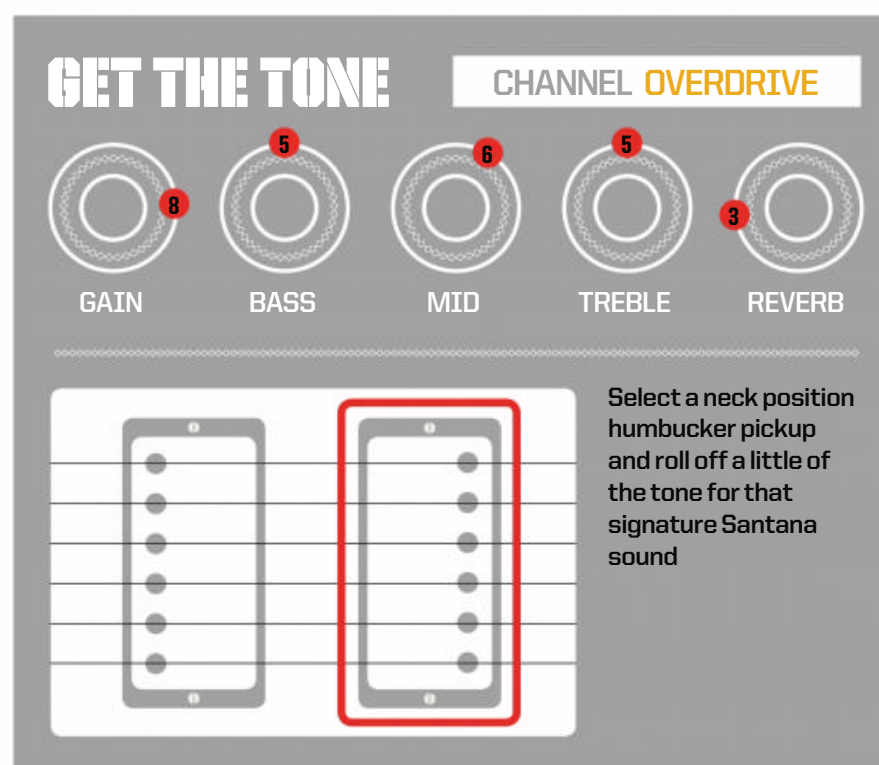
Jam along with Santana's 1999 summer hit and master the Latin-rock legend's long, masterful solo

Taken from *Supernatural*, the multi-platinum selling album that won over a whole new generation of fans for the irrepressible guitar hero, *Smooth* was a huge hit for Santana back in the summer of 1999. In a clever move to reboot Santana's career, the album featured collaborations with prominent artists of the day, and this track showcases Matchbox Twenty vocalist Rob Thomas (who co-wrote the song with producer Itaal Shur).

The song is effectively one long guitar solo; there are no rhythm parts, just plenty of cool licks to learn! Santana has never allowed himself to be boxed in by the minor pentatonic scale, and this song is no exception. You'll find plenty of examples of how to use the A 'natural' minor scale, and the A harmonic minor scale. But don't worry, this is no fusion 'shred off' – Santana's style is incredibly musical; his ideas always beautifully phrased. Hopefully this track will inspire you to think more outside of the (pentatonic) box, too!

GET THE SOUND

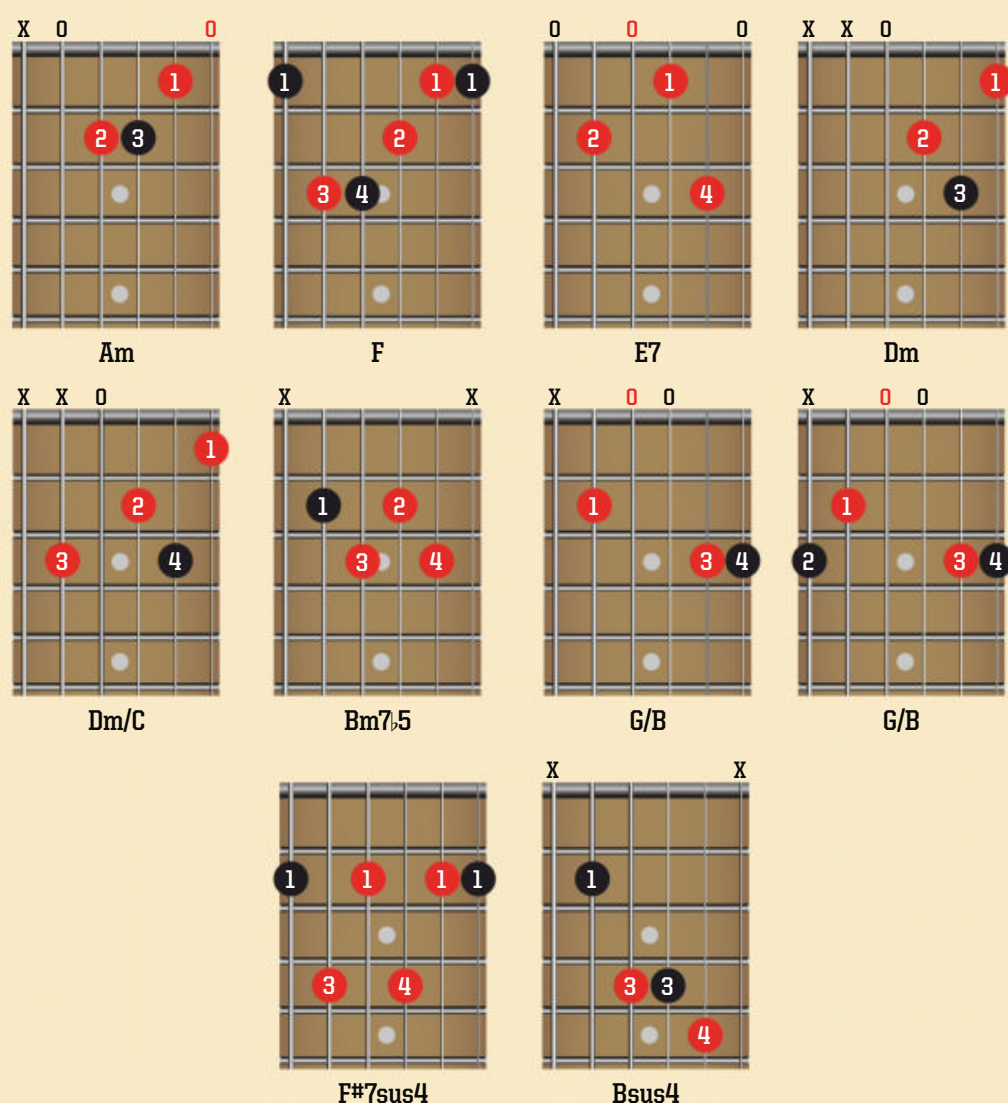
Everything you need to know before playing 'Smooth'



Carlos' tone has been the stuff of legend since the earliest days of his career. He was one of the first players to switch to Mesa/Boogie amps in the early 70s, and still uses his original MkI combo. On *Smooth*, he played his own signature PRS Santana II guitar. Opt for an overdrive channel on your amp with plenty of gain dialled in to get that famous singing sustain. Roll off some of your guitar's volume in the verse and chorus for a cleaner tone, then turn up again for the intro/interlude/solos. Santana also varies his pick attack to create greater levels of expression and dynamics, so don't be afraid to experiment!

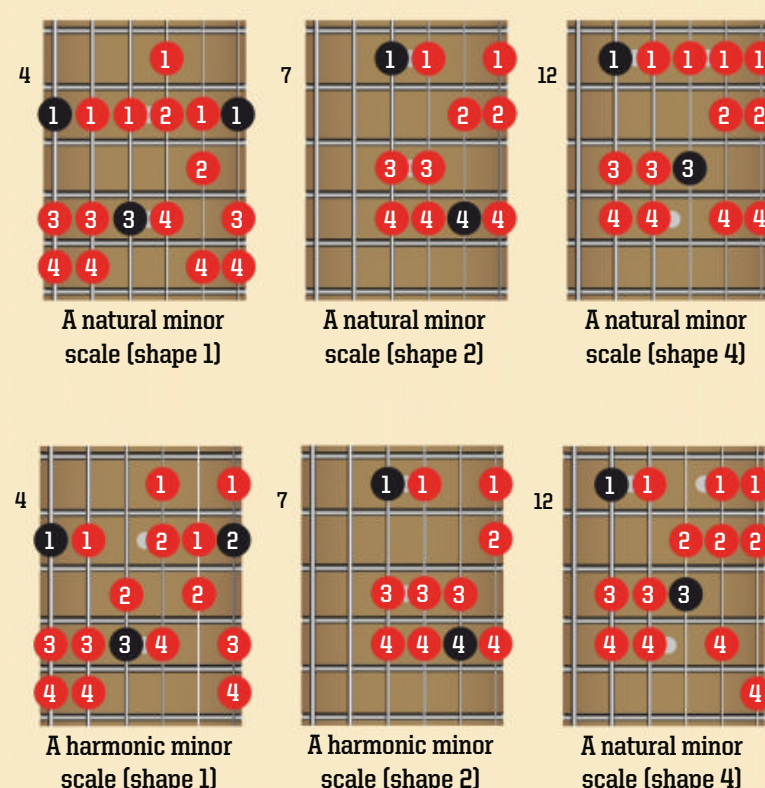
CHORDS

The chord boxes are purely optional for this track because Santana only plays lead on it! There's no rhythm guitar either, but who wouldn't want to try a few strums over that intoxicating Latin groove? Either add some rhythm to the full mix or try your own unplugged version.



SCALES

Santana uses the A natural minor (A B C D E F G) and harmonic minor (A B C D E F G#) scales throughout. The latter is key to that exotic Latin vibe. The major 7th G# note in this scale makes it 'fit' with the E7 chords (E G# B D) perfectly. These shapes will help you navigate your way around the fretboard. Try them out before you tackle the solos in *Smooth*.



SANTANA

SMOOTH

SMOOTH
Words by Rob Thomas
Music by Rob Thomas and Itaal Shur
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SANTANA SMOOTH Intro solo

♩=118

The first four bars should be played in 12th position using shape four of the natural minor and harmonic minor scales. Shift down to 5th position in bar 4 for the tone bend on the third string. In bar 6, the lick is played mainly along the fourth string – use your third finger for the slide.

SANTANA SMOOTH Verse 1

0:19

SANTANA SMOOTH Verse 1 (cont'd)

Chords: Dm, Dm/C, Bm^{7b5}, E⁷, Am, F, E⁷

Tablature: BU 15(17) 12 15 12 15 12 13 13 15 15(17) (15)(17) [17]

8

The lick across bars 7 and 8 illustrates how Santana effortlessly switches between the natural minor and harmonic minor scales to reflect the changing harmony; he's not forcing pentatonic licks over chord changes, his ideas are in response to what he's hearing in the music.

SANTANA SMOOTH Pre-chorus 1 / Chorus 1

Chords: Dm, Dm/C, G/B, G, F^{#7sus4}, B^{sus4}, E⁷, Am, F, Dm⁷, E⁷

Tablature: 12 12 12 14 15 14 12 13 12 14 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 13 15 13 15 13 13 15 13

1

4

6

The E note is found in both F^{#7sus4} and B^{sus4} chords, so Carlos' repeated bent and fretted E notes work perfectly, tying the chord progression and lead guitar together with elegant simplicity. Using common chord tones this way is a neat trick you can apply to your own playing.

SANTANA SMOOTH Interlude / Verse 2

Chords: Am, F, E⁷, Am, F, E⁷

Tablature: 12-14 13 14 12-12(13) (12) 10-12 13 10 10 15(17) (17)(15)

1

SANTANA SMOOTH Interlude / Verse 2 (cont'd)

Am F E⁷ Am F E⁷

PB15 BD (17) (15) 13 14 7/9 7 9

Dm Dm/C Bm^{7b5} E⁷ Am F E⁷

Am F Am F E⁷

BU 15(17) 12 15 12 15 13 13 15 15(17) (15)(17) [17]

The recurring opening melody is played here with its conclusion spilling across the start of verse 2, hence we've presented these two parts as one example. Use pick attack to drop your playing level going into the verse, then roll off your guitars' volume a little for the rest of the example.

SANTANA SMOOTH Pre-chorus 2 / Verse 2

Dm Dm/C Bm^{7b5} G⁷

F^{#7sus4} B^{7sus4} E⁷

BU 15(17) 12 BU 15(17) 12 15 12 15 17 15(17) BD RP (15) 13 15 13 15 13 15 13



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 29-30)
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 style!

SANTANA / SMOOTH

SANTANA SMOOTH Pre-chorus 2 / Verse 2 (cont'd)

Am F E⁷ Am F E⁷

TAB 14 12 14 12 13 15 15

6

Am F E⁷ Dm E⁷

TAB 12-13-12 15-13 12 13 15 13 15-13-15 13 13 13 15 10 10 12

10

Notice that the ideas here are similar, but not identical, to those in the previous pre-chorus and verse. The chorus section has also been filled out with a rising theme in bars 11 to 14. Building ideas in this way demonstrates Santana's skill and musicality, he's not just jamming along and playing the first idea that comes into his head!

SANTANA SMOOTH Solo

Am F E⁷ Am F

TAB 12 14 13 13 12 (13) (12) 14 12 14

1

E⁷ Am F E⁷

TAB 13 14 13 12 13 12 14 12 13 12 13 12 12 12-13-12

4

Am F E⁷

TAB 14 14 12-14 12-14 12 14

7

68

F#7sus4

Bsus4

T

A

B

9 9 9 9 9 9 10 10 10 10 10 10 11 11 11 11 11 11 12 12 12 12 12 12

7 7 7 7 7 7 8 8 8 8 8 8 9 9 9 9 9 9 10 10 10 10 10 10

17

SANTANA SMOOTH Solo (cont'd)

E⁷



6 6 3

	13	13	13	13	13	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	17
T	13	13	13	13	13	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	17
B	11	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	15

18

Santana opens his solo with ‘variations on a theme’ of the intro melody based in 12th position. In bar 8, you’ll need to move the natural minor shape up an octave to the 17th position. The concluding octave shapes should be fretted using your first and third fingers; mute the idle open strings by angling your fingers onto the adjacent open strings.

SANTANA SMOOTH Outro solo

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar melody and a bass line. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a treble clef and includes chord markings: Am, F, E7, Am, and F. The bass part is written in standard notation with a bass clef and includes the markings "BU BD". Below the standard notation, there are guitar and bass tabs. The guitar tab is on a single staff and the bass tab is on a single staff, both showing fret numbers and fingerings. The guitar tab includes a "3" indicating a triplet. The bass tab includes a "[14]" indicating a natural harmonic. The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines.

Guitar Tab:

Measure 1: Am (12 14), F (13 14), E7 (12 12 (13) (12))

Measure 2: Am (13 12), F (13 12 13 12)

Measure 3: Am (14 12 14), F (14 [14] 12 14)

Bass Tab:

Measure 1: 12 14

Measure 2: 13 14 12 12 (13) (12) 14 12

Measure 3: 13 12 13 12 13 12 14 12 14 14 [14] 12 14

SANTANA SMOOTH Outro solo (cont'd)

The musical notation for the guitar solo in 'The Sound of Silence' is shown. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a melody with notes and rests, and the bass staff contains a bass line with notes and rests. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The solo is marked with a 'Solo' instruction and a 'Guitar' instruction. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and a wavy line indicating a tremolo effect.

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar melody and a bass line. The guitar part is written in standard notation on a single staff, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bass line is written in standard notation on a single staff, with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three measures, each with a chord symbol above it: E7, Am, and F. The guitar melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the third measure. The bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the third measure. The guitar and bass parts are synchronized, with the guitar playing the melody and the bass providing a harmonic accompaniment. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format, suitable for a music book or a digital sheet music application.

Guitar Tab:

Measure 1: E7
 Tab: 12 15 14 12 12 12

Measure 2: Am
 Tab: 9 10 12 9 10 12 10 12 14

Measure 3: F
 Tab: 12 13 15 12 12

[illegible]

Once again, Santana uses the intro melody as the opening motif for his final solo. Things get pretty wild here, especially towards the end – the best way to approach this section is by breaking it down into manageable four-bar licks. Start slowly, practising with a metronome before playing along to our backing track.

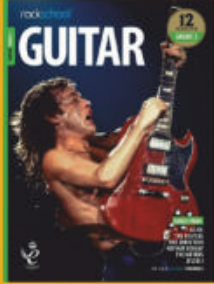
THE BEATLES HELTER SKELTER

TG and Rockscool take a look at a song that paved the way for heavier rock acts that followed

The story goes that Paul McCartney, taking guitar duties, was trying to create the dirtiest sound that The Beatles could muster. To his credit, the song achieved a level of aggression the band had rarely displayed before. By today's standards, the guitar isn't very distorted, but back in 1968 it was a full-force delivery that would influence many rock and metal bands to follow. Here, we're looking at an abridged version of the song with some parts simplified to match the expectations

of Rockscool's Grade Two exam. Having said that, most of the vital elements remain. Play the four-bar intro with downstrokes for an urgent, forceful delivery, making sure to keep the open first string ringing out. The next section is based around G, E7 and A chords – E7 can be awkward, so practise the fourth finger stretch. The arrangement rounds off with rock 'n' roll riffing and a reworking of the intro. Don't be afraid to sacrifice some of the tidiness for a more authentic vibe.





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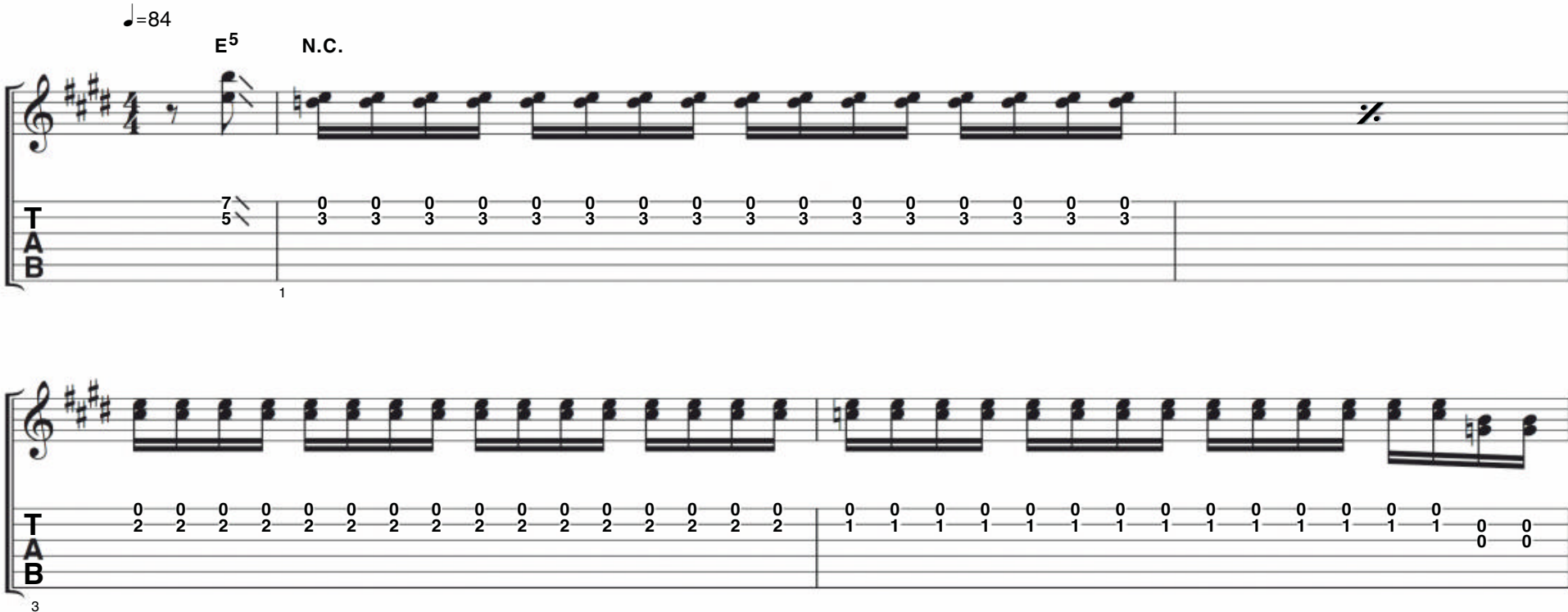
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THE BEATLES HELTER SKELTER

TRACKS 31-32

♩=84

E⁵ N.C.



Words: Mike Goodman Photography: Getty Images



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 31-32)
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, guitaraoke style!

THE BEATLES / HELTER SKELTER

THE BEATLES HELTER SKELTER (cont'd)

TRACKS 31-32

G **E⁷**

Measures 5-8 of the guitar tab. Measure 5 is marked with a 'G' chord and measures 6-8 with an 'E⁷' chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tab is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0-3 for measures 5-8 and 0-2 for measures 9-12.

TAB

5

Measures 9-12 of the guitar tab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tab is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0-3 for measures 9-12.

TAB

7

Measures 13-16 of the guitar tab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tab is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0-3 for measures 13-16.

TAB

9

G

Measures 17-20 of the guitar tab. Measure 17 is marked with a 'G' chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tab is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0-3 for measures 17-20.

TAB

11

A **E⁷**

Measures 21-24 of the guitar tab. Measure 21 is marked with an 'A' chord and measures 22-24 with an 'E⁷' chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tab is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0-3 for measures 21-24.

TAB

13

THE BEATLES HELTER SKELTER (cont'd)

TRACKS 31-32

15

The ending of the song is shown in musical notation. The treble clef staff has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass clef staff is labeled 'TAB' and contains fret numbers. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Above the first measure is a chord symbol 'A⁵', and above the second measure is 'A⁶'. The final measure is labeled with a chord symbol 'E'.

[illegible][illegible]

The fretted notes that are played with the open E drone string (in the intro and outro) can be pulled slightly sharp to add tension and aggression to the sound, but this does make it trickier to keep the open E string cleanly ringing - it's up to you! In bars 15 to 17, make sure you use 'down-up'-style alternate picking and build up your speed gradually.



JEFF BECK



MAY 2020

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THU 21	GATESHEAD SAGE
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JAM TRACK PLAY GUITAR WITH A BAND!

ROCKABILLY

Get brylcreem slick with your rockabilly licks as you jam along with our 50s-style backing track

In the 1950s, a new style would come to life, fusing elements of country and rhythm and blues to create a sound that would eventually morph into rock 'n' roll and even influence the later punk movement. Elvis Presley guitarist Scotty Moore is widely regarded as one of the defining forces of rockabilly, as were Gene Vincent's axeman Cliff Gallup and virtuoso soloist Chet Atkins. Later, the style would enjoy a resurgence in the 70s and 80s with acts like the Stray Cats and Reverend

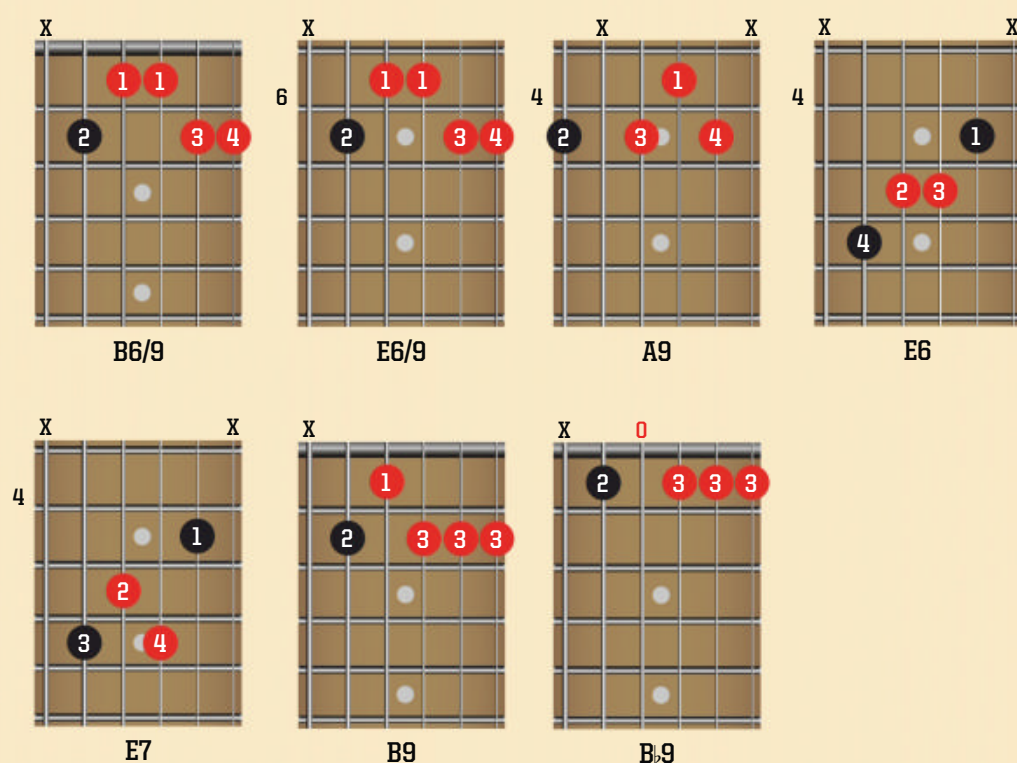
Horton Heap taking the style in bold new directions.

This month's jam track harks back to the earlier era, with acoustic and hollow body guitars at the heart of the sound. Still, some harmonic themes have persevered throughout. The chords in our track can be applied anywhere from pre-rock 'n' roll to more aggressive punk-tinged psychobilly. Listen carefully to identify their sonic flavours and experiment with tempo and drive tones to mix things up stylistically.



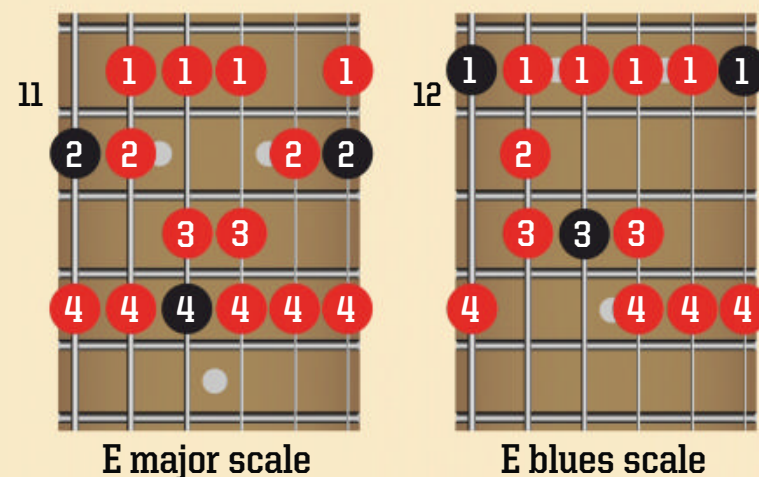
CHORDS

The '6' and '6/9' chords are quintessentially rockabilly-esque chords. Simply strum them, as we've done in this month's backing track, or try creating a solo out of some arpeggios. It's quite the challenge, but a typical approach in rockabilly solos.



SCALES

Our backing track is in E major (E F# G# A B C# D#), but be aware that there's a G note in the A9 chords – so target G instead of G# here. It's not as simple as widdling through the major scale, however. Generally, we recommend using arpeggios based on the chords in the chart or two- and three-note chord shapes arranged as melodically as you can. The E blues scale (E G A B, B D) features some out-of-key notes, but its tense, edgy sound is well suited to melodic runs.



**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 33)**

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

JAM TRACK / ROCKABILLY**CHEAT SHEET**

Tempo: 185 bpm

Time 4/4

Key/scale: E minor

JAM TRACK

T-Bird
Shuffle

INTRO / MID-VERSE BREAK

| B6/9 || E6/9 / / B6/9 | E6/9 / / / / / / / ||

VERSE

| A9 / / / / / / / | E6 / / / / / / / |
| B9 / / / / / / / | A9 / / / / / / / | E6 / / / / / / / ||

CHORUS

E6 / / / / / / /	E7 / / / / / / /		
A9 / / / / / / /	B9 / / / / / / / B6/9		
A9 / / / / / / /	E6 / / / / / / /		
B9 / / / / / / /	A9 / / / / / / /	E6 / / / / / / / B6/9	

Note that the verse actually runs twice through the eight-bar section shown here, each time separated by a further run through of the intro progression. The track doesn't change much, so think about light and shade in your solos. For example, you could switch between chord-based and melodic soloing.

THE TURNAROUND LICKS OF THE BLUES GIANTS

WARREN HAYNES

Learn the secrets of the explosive style of blues guitar guru Warren Haynes and practise over TG's custom-made backing track

Warren Haynes is perhaps best known as the longtime guitarist with Southern rock greats the Allman Brothers Band. He has also enjoyed a long solo career as a singer-songwriter, with a string of great live and studio recordings released with his own Warren Haynes Band and also with Gov't Mule – essentially a Haynes-fronted Allman Brothers side project.

Over the years, Warren has been closely associated with Gibson guitars, often being seen sporting a Les Paul 58 reissue or playing his signature Les Paul models. ES-335s and Firebirds also feature in his arsenal, alongside

a couple of Fenders and PRSs. You don't necessarily need a Gibson, but a humbucker-equipped guitar is near essential to recreate the majority of Warren's thick, overdriven tones.

This month's tab examples demonstrate a few of the key techniques and stylings Warren employs when soloing. Our backing track features a Warren Haynes band style chord progression that is great fun to solo over. All the licks in the lesson use the B minor pentatonic scale as their foundation – with other flavour tones added in to taste. Check out the 1993 album *Warren Haynes Band Live At The Sting* to hear more of his explosive style.



1 STRING BENDS AND PENTATONICS

TRACK 34

♩=123

B⁵ A⁵ G⁵ D/F# E⁵

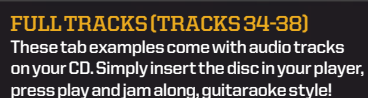
Our first example exploits trusty fingering for the best known shape of the minor pentatonic scale (usually known as 'shape 1'), with a few extra notes from outside the scale. The two fret-bending points exist on the 9th fret of the third string and the 10th fret of the second string.

2 CLASHING STRING BENDS

TRACK 35

B⁵ A⁵ G⁵ D/F# E⁵

This lick opens with a string-bend technique known as an 'oblique bend'. Hold the first string steady on the 17th fret then bend the second string. For a Hendrix-inspired clashing bend in Bar 3, grab the third string and pre-bend it as you bend the second string. When you strike the pre-bent string, release the bend for a clash.



THE TURNAROUND / WARREN HAYNES

TRACK 36

Effective sounding phrases that are easy to repeat are handy to have up your sleeve. Here we use a classic blues and rock idea and repeat it over two bars before bringing the lick to and end with the minor pentatonic scale. It's a neat idea that you can really milk.

TRACK 37

It's possible to bend and play two strings at the same time - and it's a great blues hack, too. If there's a 'trick' to this, it's not to play too tidily. These bends really scream when the notes aren't too accurate. So, just let rip with your fieriest bends - and remember, it's not an exact science!

TRACK 38

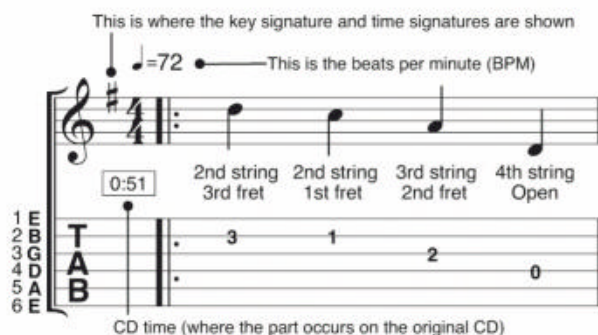
[illegible]

Notice the repeating 16th fret note on the third string in the opening two bars. Known as a 'pedal tone', a repeating note like this provides a solid base to play around and focuses your lick around a continuous, unchanging root. If you tend to widdle across the length of the fretboard, this is a cool way to add a bit of focus.

TAB GUIDE

Get more from TG by understanding our easy-to-follow musical terms and signs

What is tab?



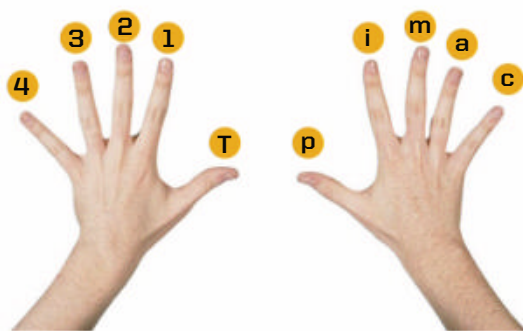
Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the

guitar, from the sixth (thick) string at the bottom to the first (thin) string at the top. On these lines, numbers represent which frets you place your fingers. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string, will be shown as a number '2' on the third line

down on the tab. Unfretted strings are shown with a '0'. The key and time signatures are shown in the notation. TG also includes a timestamp to tell you where in the original track you'll find each example and tempo expressed in beats per minute.

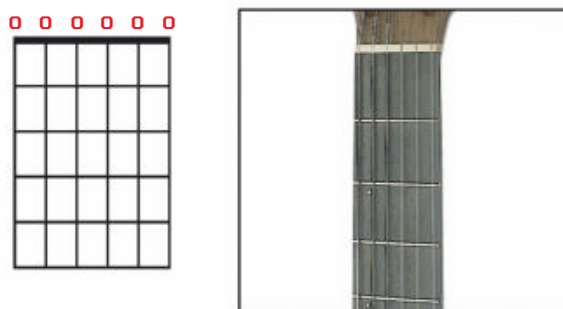
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



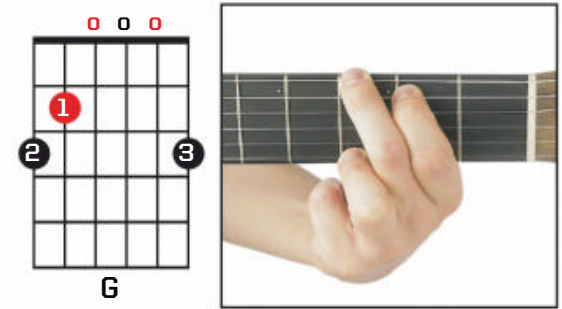
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: **1, 2, 3, 4, (T)**
Picking hand: **p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)**

NUT AND FRETBOARD



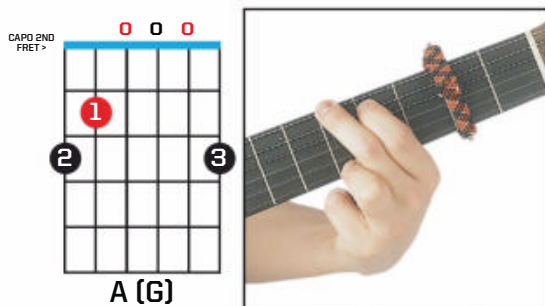
This fretboard diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



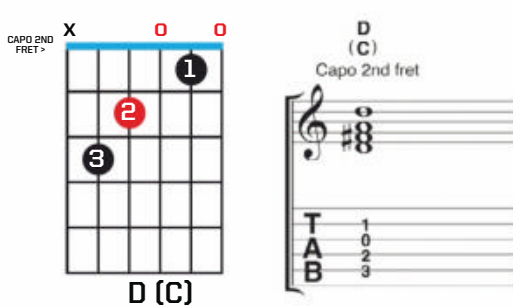
This diagram represents a G chord. The 'o's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black 'o' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



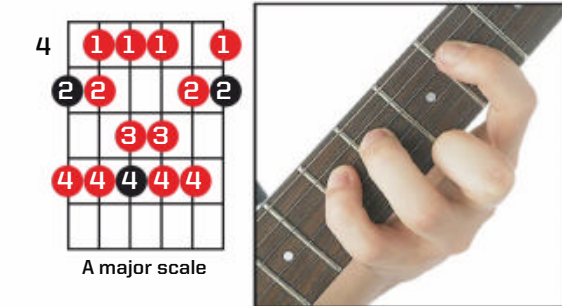
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo. For this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION



Here the chord looks like a C in the tab, but the capo on the 2nd fret raises the pitch to make it a D. The 2nd fret capo'd notes are shown with a '0' in the tab as if they were open strings.

SCALE EXAMPLE



The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale using black dots for root notes and red dots for other scale tones. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with the first, third and fourth fingers.

GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

DOWN AND UP-PICKING



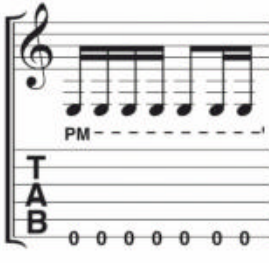
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



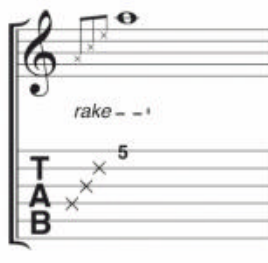
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING



Palm-mute by resting the edge of your picking hand palm on the strings near the bridge saddles.

PICK RAKE



Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. This is often used to augment a rake's last note.

APPREGGIATED CHORD



Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.

FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF



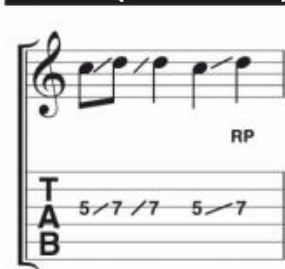
Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS



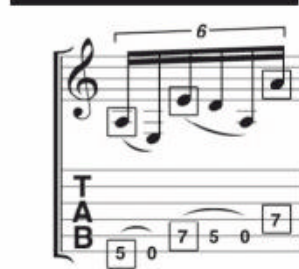
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



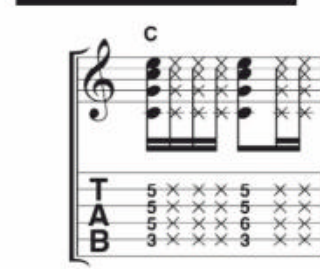
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering-on/tapping with your fret hand fingers, instead of picking.

FRET-HAND MUTING



X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by your fret hand when struck by your picking hand.

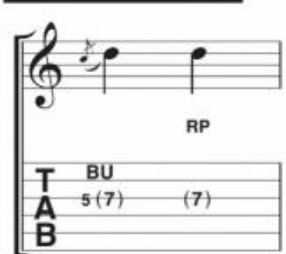
BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND



Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

PRE-BEND



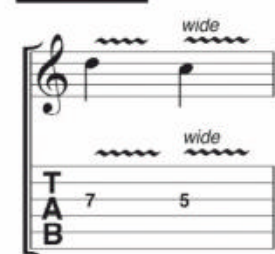
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND



Pick the note then bend up a quarter-tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a 'blues curl'.

VIBRATO



Your fretting hand vibrates the string by small bend-ups and releases. Exaggerate this effect to create a 'wide' vibrato.

HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS



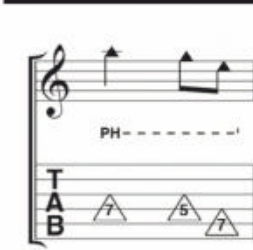
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



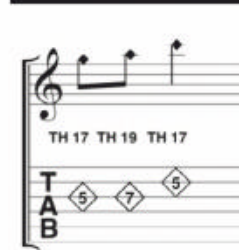
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



Place your finger on the note as shown, but sound it with a quick pick hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

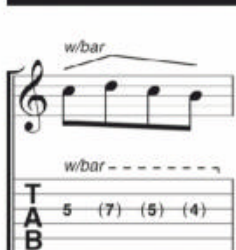
TOUCHED HARMONICS



A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg, TCH 9) for it to sound a harmonic.

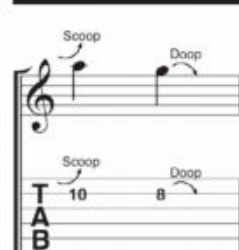
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

SCOOP AND DOOP



Scoop: depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop: lower the bar slightly after picking note.

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



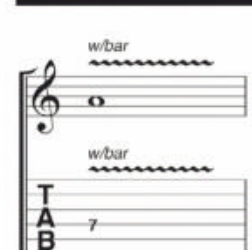
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



Sound the note and 'flick' the vibrato bar with your picking hand so it 'quivers'. This results in a 'gargling' sound!

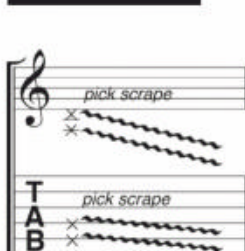
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



Gently rock the whammy bar to repeatedly bend the pitch up and down. This sounds similar to fret hand vibrato.

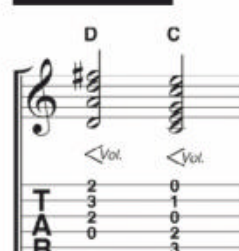
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

VIOLINING



Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

FINGER NUMBERING



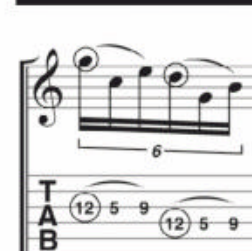
The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fingers required to play each note.

PIMA DIRECTIONS



Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

PICK HAND TAPPING



Tap (hammer-on) with a finger of your picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with 'i' or 'm'.

DEATH 081 ELVIS

Probably the most useless debate in the world: Is Elvis alive?

No question. He'll still live on long after everyone who now claims he is alive has died.

It is his music that made him immortal - along with Janis, Jimi, Wolfgang Amadeus, Freddie and all the others. Many of them lost the battle against drugs, alcohol and their inner demons far too soon. But they all had vanquished death long before.

THE POWER
OF MUSIC!



ACOUSTIC



Unplugged

YOUR MONTH IN THE ACOUSTIC WORLD

085

ACOUSTIC NEWS

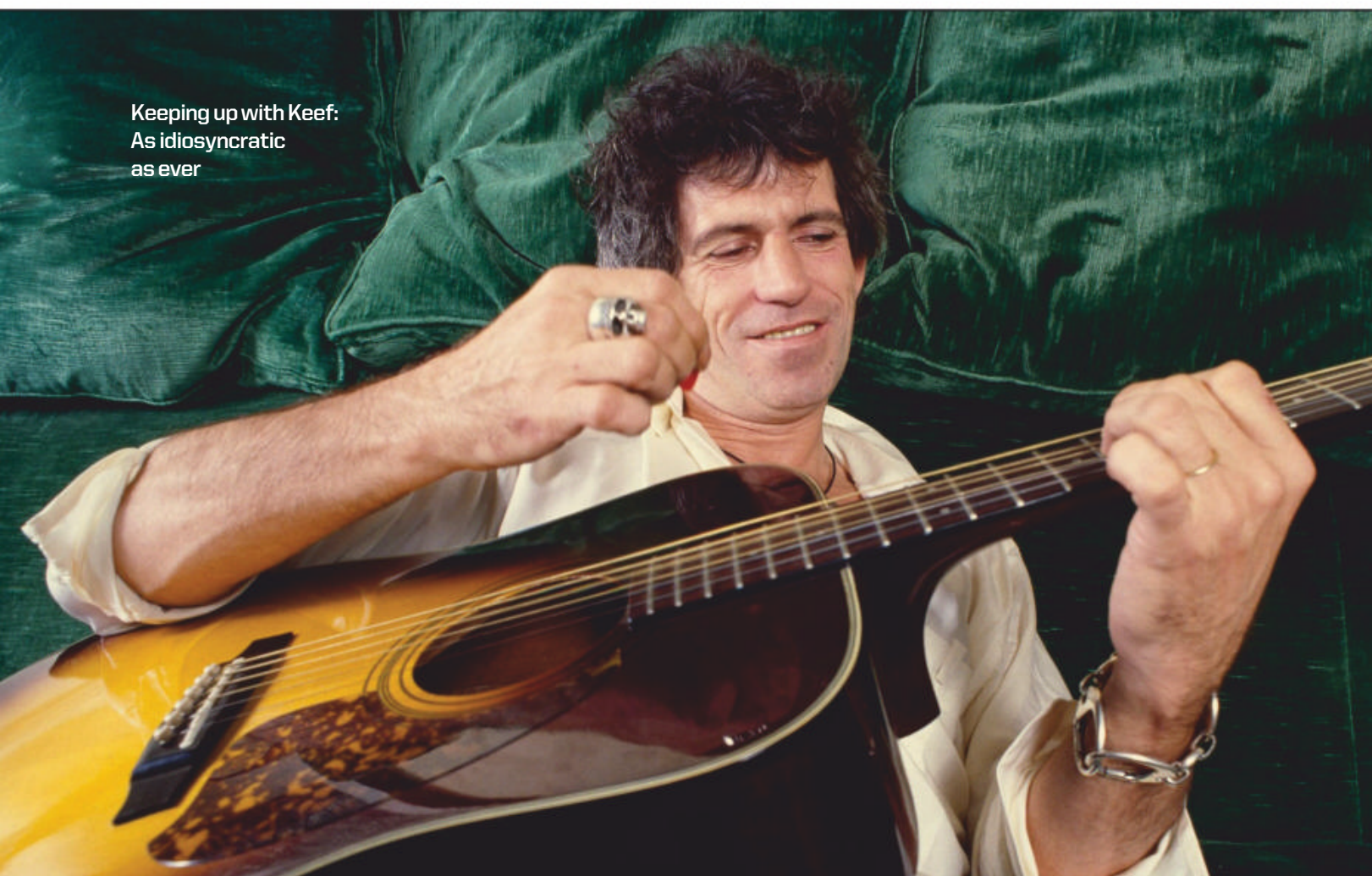
086

SEAFRET

088

ACOUSTIC TAB:
OLD TOWN ROAD

Keeping up with Keef:
As idiosyncratic
as ever



KEITH RICHARDS' SECRET ACOUSTIC GUITAR TUNING FINALLY REVEALED?

THE *YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT* TUNING HAS ELUDED MANY... UNTIL NOW!

The Rolling Stones are one of the most famous bands in guitar history, but that doesn't stop the persistent myths and mysteries around them – and one involves the tuning of the much-loved closing track to 1969's *Let It Bleed* album.

Keith Richards' rhythm part on the song *You Can't Always Get What You Want* has been the subject of conjecture amongst guitar-playing Stones fans for years. It isn't C and F chords, and it apparently isn't Keef's usual open G with the bottom string removed. Now, one man believes he's cracked it.

LA-based pro guitarist Jon MacLennan says he has spent "hours and hours and hours" listening to the recording in order to figure out exactly what Keef is doing on the studio track – because the man himself has never told us.

"I've seen every YouTube video, all the sheet music books, I've scanned the forums, interviews," says MacLennan. "I can't find any interview about Keith Richards talking about what he did to make this sound.

"Many people say it is in open E with a capo on the 8th fret," he adds. "This tuning sounds slightly like the recording, but it transfers the chords that Keith plays down to a thicker string. Unfortunately, this really changes the timbre of the fills.

"With other methods, you don't get that doubled high string, which is only heard when Keith strums through to the high E strings. That's what gives the guitar a chorusing 12-string sound at moments. Another theory is that the guitar is tuned to open G, a staple of Keith's playing, but this method is actually using a G6 – a slight variation from open G."

MacLennan has devised a way

players can create the sounds by blending a six- and 12-string. So yes, you need a 12-string. Hey, we never said it would be straightforward!

Here's his five-step method:

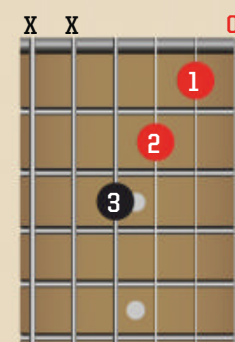
- 1** Start with a standard-tuned 12-string guitar and remove all doubled strings except for the doubled high E string. This gives a six-string guitar with two high E strings – seven strings in total
- 2** Remove the low E string completely. Now you should have a total of six strings
- 3** Tune the A string down one whole step to G
- 4** Add a capo on the 5th fret
- 5** Your final tuning should read (with the capo) C G C E A A

The guitarist demonstrates it all in this video, and we applaud his dedication: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYH8M-XfeWc&feature=emb_title

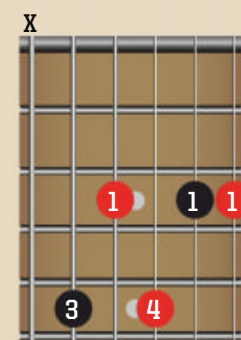
TRACKS 39-43

QUICK CHORDS

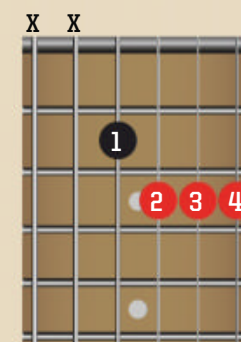
Essential chords to fuel your creativity



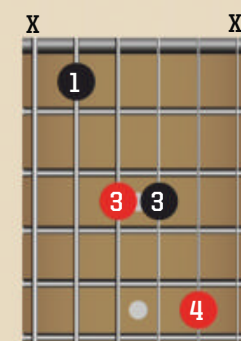
Fmaj7



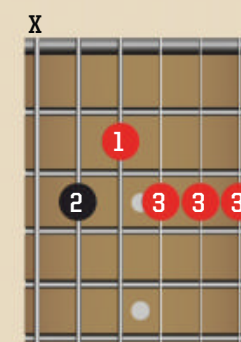
Dm7add11



Em7,5



B,add#11



C9

Seafret

WITH ALMOST 500 MILLION STREAMS TO DATE, YORKSHIRE DUO SEAFRET REALLY ARE MAKING WAVES. GUITARIST HARRY DRAPER TAKES US BELOW THE SURFACE OF THEIR SUCCESSFUL SOUND.

In 2009, Harry Draper tuned in to Radio 2 and his life changed. The legendary John Martyn had just died, and the station was presenting a tribute. “They played *May You Never*,” Draper recalls, “and I’d never heard that sound before – the fingerpicking, the arpeggios, the slapping. I became obsessed with him and went back through his whole catalogue. I went from a 13 year-old who’d never played guitar to wanting to play *May You Never*, and I didn’t put the guitar down until I could. John Martyn is the reason I got into playing.”

Now 24, Draper is one half of Yorkshire duo Seafret, completed by singer Jack Sedman, and their emotionally-charged pop ballads have found a huge audience online. Since the release of 2016 debut album *Tell Me It’s Real* they’ve clocked up over 300 million streams on Apple Music and Spotify. Their single *Oceans* has been played over 100 million times on Spotify, where Seafret are streamed on average two million times *per month*. Their stylish, gritty YouTube videos have been viewed over 170 million times, with *Game Of Thrones* star Maisie Williams starring in the clip for *Oceans*.

“It’s hard for us to believe,” says Draper. “It blows our minds. We just always loved playing and writing tunes and playing in pubs, then suddenly we got signed, wrote the album and it’s gone from there. We wrote *Oceans* in an hour after being in the pub. It’s only three chords! We go all over the world and we have to play that one.”

The duo have performed extensively across the UK, Europe, Russia and Brazil and they’ve opened for Lewis Capaldi, Hozier, James Bay and – in their home town of Bridlington – Jake Bugg. “These are all artists we really respect”, says Draper. “We’ve been very lucky.”

Draper met Sedman nine years ago at an open-mic night at a small pub in Sewerby, Yorkshire. The guitarist was

playing banjo with his dad’s band, and the singer was about to do his very first public turn. He sang James Morrison and Paolo Nutini songs, and impressed Draper enough to suggest they jam, where they hit it off.

After a slew of gigs playing covers at local boozers they started writing original material and adopted the name Seafret (a rolling mist that comes in off the sea). They quickly came to the attention of record producer Steve Harris (Kaiser Chiefs) and signed to Sweet Jane Recordings via Sony’s Columbia label in 2014, with *Tell Me It’s Real* following two years later.

“The first record was recorded over two years in various studios across London,” says Draper, “but the new one feels like an album. It was all recorded in two months in one place, Rocket Science Studios in Glasgow – just me, Jack and our producer, Ross [Hamilton]. We limited ourselves to four guitars, bass, piano, a couple of synths and amps. It’s more raw, there’s less on it, but we have a lot more experience now, and more confidence. We are being ourselves as writers, musicians and people this time.”

In the studio, Draper played a Gibson J200 guitar, with a Martin D18 for ‘the strummier parts’ and his £200 Yamaha classical guitar when a nylon tone was needed. All electric passages were played on his Japanese Fender Telecaster, usually through a Fender Twin Reverb. His pedalboard includes a TC Electronics Prophet Delay, Hall Of Fame Reverb, Overdrive and a Boss OC-3 Super Octave. “I set the octave so it picks up the bottom end and puts it an octave lower. I use that live, it’s low in the mix and you hardly notice it but it gives the choruses a boost, it sounds good through the subs. I stole the idea off Jon Gomm!”

Seafret’s current tour in support of new album *Most Of Us Are Strangers* takes them from Mexico to Moscow, culminating in their own headline show in Bridlington on 6th June. Live, Draper uses his workhorse guitar – his mahogany Taylor 322E, bought in London’s Denmark Street in 2014 with his record deal advance.

As modern as they are, Seafret have been compared to another iconic acoustic duo, Simon And Garfunkel. “Yeah,” says Draper with a laugh. “We’ve had that a few times. I love Paul’s guitar playing, the way he pronounces some notes and misses others out to complement the vocal. Art had such a beautiful voice, and so has Jack. He’s got the hair, too!” ***Most Of Us Are Strangers* is out now via The Orchard.**



HARRY’S HACKS

Harry Draper has some neat tricks to help you get that Seafret sound

“I tune my guitars down a semitone. You get more bottom end, a richer bass. I use heavy strings, 13s, and tuned down they’re slack and nicer to play.

“I’ll often tune my high E down to D, so that when you play a C, G and A Minor letting that D on top ring out gives the chords a nice, open feel. I use open D tuning a lot too – D A D F# A D. I’ve always loved that tuning; strum the open strings and you’ve got a lovely chord.”

As for his fingerpicking, that John Martyn influence comes through: “He only used his thumb and first finger, which is pretty amazing. You look at his hand and it’s so fast. I pick with those same fingers too.”

“WE WROTE *OCEANS* IN AN HOUR AFTER BEING IN THE PUB. NOW WE GO ALL OVER THE WORLD AND PLAY IT”

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

LIL NAS X OLD TOWN ROAD

Grab your cowboy hat and capo then get ready to ride the *Old Town Road* with TG's easy strummer lesson

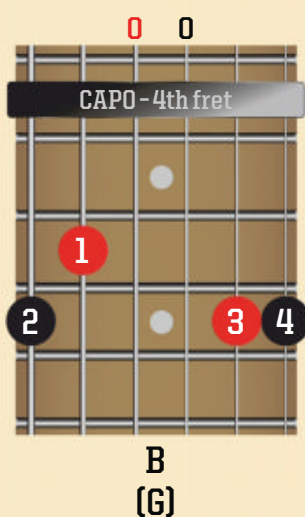
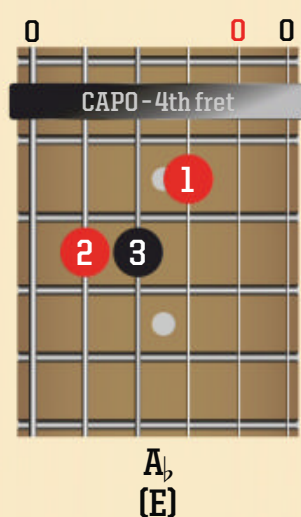
This huge hit for rapper Lil Nas X was released late in 2018. Columbia records quickly noticed the huge interest it was generating and jumped on the song, re-releasing both the original version and a remix featuring country superstar Billy Ray Cyrus in the spring of 2019. The song spent 17 weeks at the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart and also topped the charts in the UK, and has scooped up a multitude of awards worldwide.

You'll need just four simple open chord shapes to play *Old Town Road*, so you can easily add it to your open-mic repertoire. The recording features banjo samples taken from Nine Inch Nails' 2008 track 34 *Ghosts IV*. So, with no guitar, our tab is an arrangement based on the sounds you can hear from the sample and played in live performances. You'll need to use a capo on the 4th fret to play along with our backing track, but this makes it easy to change the key later if you wish.



CHORDS

Though not on the original recording, Billy Ray Cyrus has been seen jamming out these chords on acoustic guitar in live shows. If you're singing along solo, simply move the capo higher or lower to suit your pitch. The capo makes for some complicated chord names, but don't worry about that! All the shapes are easy to play and we're sticking with the un-capo'd names in the song sheet so you won't get confused. Finally, position your thumb around the back of the neck to keep the sixth string muted out.



OLD TOWN ROAD
Words and Music by Trent Reznor, Billy Ray Cyrus, Jocelyn Donald, Atticus Ross, Kiowa Roukema and Montero Lamar Hill
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- Incorporates the song "34 Ghosts IV" (Words and Music by Atticus Ross and Trent Reznor)

**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-aoke style!

LIL NAS X / OLD TOWN ROAD**SONG SHEET***Old Town Road***Chorus**

Yeah, I'm gonna take my horse to the old town road
 I'm gonna ride 'til I can't no more
 I'm gonna take my horse to the old town road
 I'm gonna ride 'til I can't no more

Verse 1

I got the horses in the back
 Horse tack is attached
 Hat is matte black
 Got the boots that's black to match
 Ridin' on a horse, ha
 You can whip your Porsche
 I been in the valley
 You ain't been up off that porch, now

Pre-chorus

Can't nobody tell me nothin'
 You can't tell me nothin'
 Can't nobody tell me nothin'
 You can't tell me nothin'

Verse 2

Ridin' on a tractor
 Lean all in my bladder
 Cheated on my baby
 You can go and ask her
 My life is a movie
 Bull ridin' and boobies
 Cowboy hat from Gucci
 Wrangler on my booty

Repeat pre-chorus & chorus**Bridge**

Hat down, cross town, livin' like a rockstar
 Spend a lot of money on my brand new guitar
 Baby's got a habit
 Diamond rings and Fendi sports bras
 Ridin' down Rodeo in my Maserati sports car
 Got no stress, I've been through all that
 I'm like a Marlboro Man so I kick on back
 Wish I could roll on back to that old town road
 I wanna ride 'til I can't no more

Repeat chorus**LIL NAS X OLD TOWN ROAD Intro****TRACK 44**

♩=135 (half time feel)
 N.C.

Capo 4th fret

These diads should be played with a 'pinch'. That means picking down with your thumb and up with a finger - i.e., pinching the strings. Simple! Alternatively, use a pick for the low note with a free finger playing the higher note - a technique known as hybrid picking. It can be tricky, but it's handy when you want to switch from picking to strumming.

LIL NAS X OLD TOWN ROAD Chorus**TRACK 44**

These easy chords should pose no problems - just remember to use a capo at the 4th fret to play at the same pitch as the record. Use gentle downstrokes to recreate the steady pace of the original track and build up to more complicated strumming if you like. Some of the live performances are pretty epic!

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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091 START ME UP!

Five new items for your rig

092 FENDER LEAD III

This late-70s outlier gets a sprightly new reissue

096 MARTIN X-SERIES DX1E-04

An affordable dreadnought asking the big questions

098 HARLEY BENTON SC-550

Thomann's own-brand single-cut that rocks with the best of 'em

100 TG TEST: GRETSCH JETS

Two baritones and a double-cut square up as we assess part of the legendary brand's 2020 output

106 FENDER SMOLDER ACOUSTIC OVERDRIVE

The first ever acoustic stompbox from the Big F



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



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START ME UP!

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

ERNIE BALL SLINKY 2020 SETS

1 March sees the exciting release of a selection of new Ernie Ball string sets designed to give players more choice to find the right set for them. Adding to EB's already extensive range of strings, these include Turbo Slinkys (9.5, 12, 16, 26, 36, 46) Mondo Slinkys (10.5, 13.5, 17.5, 30, 42, 52), and Mighty Slinkys (8.5, 11, 15, 22w, 30, 40). Also in the product line are Ernie Ball's Skinny Top Beefy Bottom Slinkys (10, 13, 17, 32, 44, 54), which are available in both six and seven-string sets. (£7.29 www.ernieball.co.uk)

SOLIDGOLDFX COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

2 Yes, there is a clue in that name – Jimmy Page's Yardbirds/Zeppelin debut-era Tone Bender MkII fuzz tones can be summoned here, but that's only one half of the story. The Fuzz A channel brings updated MK1.5 Tone Bender sounds that can be combined or switched between as needed. The Canadian company's own JFET preamp brings more clarity to the legendary circuits and a very nice two-in-one deal on classic, highly-desirable fuzz machines. (£239 www.solidgoldfx.com)

EHX-2020 CHROMATIC TUNER

3 We're surprised it's taken the would-be-renowned pedal brand Electro-Harmonix this long to release a pedal tuner, but the EX-2020 Chromatic Tuner is making up for lost time with its pedalboard-friendly size and wallet-friendly price. The EHX-2020 can be calibrated to a reference standard of 436 to 445Hz in 1Hz steps and offers a wide tuning range of B0-B7, plus three flat tuning modes to enable you to tune down half a step, a whole step or a minor 3rd. (£39 www.ehx.com)

BLACKSTAR FLY 3 ACOUSTIC

4 Following the company's first dedicated acoustic combo with the Sonnet, it's now decided to continue the run with this edition of its hugely popular Fly 3 series that have set the standard for mini amps. The 3-watt combo offers flat response and a mid-cut mode with built-in echo, too. The Fly 3 Acoustic 103 Extension Cab is available separately to expand to 6-watts or a pack including the Fly 3 Acoustic and PSU-1 main adaptor. (£69 / Fly Acoustic Pack £99 www.blackstaramps.com)

D'ADDARIO PRO PLUS CAPO

5 The capo is perhaps the guitar's most essential but undervalued accessory, but D'Addario are giving it anatomical attention here. The company claims that the FlexFit technology used on the Pro Plus's pad mimics the anatomy of a human finger, eliminating unwanted buzz and intonation issues. Plenty of players can take reaping those potential rewards, too; the Pro Plus is compatible with flat, classical and vintage 7" radius fretboards. It's available in black and silver options. (£33.50 www.daddario.com)



FENDER LEAD III



£599

Is this rebirth of a late-70s model getting the second chance it deserves?

Guitars are discontinued for all kinds of reasons – some simply don't connect with enough players and for others it just isn't their time... Reissues can give lost gems a second life; a chance to find the fanbase that eluded them first time around. Which brings us here for the encore of the Fender Lead. It wasn't exactly a flash in the pan design originally, though.

Produced between 1979 and 1982, the Lead eventually encompassed three guises in its original lifetime; the single humbucker Lead I with series/parallel switch, the Lead II with two single-coils and a phase switch and finally, the double

degree. They're now part of Fender's ever-growing Mexican Player Series so that means Player series pickups and tuners, plus the modern C neck profile.

The Lead III potentially offers the widest tonal options of the two new models, and whadoyaknow; that's what we have here; in the Purple Metallic finish Fender is the keenest to showcase of the selection.

The 25.5-inch scale may be the same as a Strat but the narrower, more double-cut body makes the Lead III look and feel more compact. According to your own preferences, that could win you round if you've never taken to Leo's original or immediately turn you off. But make no mistake, its

“A STRAT ALTERNATIVE THAT PLAYERS MIGHT PREFER...”

humbucker Lead III that surfaced in 1982 with coil selector switch.

Bono picked up a Lead II in U2's earlier days; Clapton's is sitting in London's Hard Rock Cafe. Even St Vincent has a heavily-modded model. Even so, the Lead is not exactly a ubiquitous cult model. Switching configurations aside, it's tempting to dismiss the Lead as a budget Strat alternative that gave way to the advent of the Japanese Squier series in 1982. But spending time with one reveals a distinct shape that holds its own. It is a Strat alternative that players might actually prefer.

The Lead II and III are returning but the I has been left out of the reunion. While not being badged as a strict 'reissue', the two Leads for 2020 do stay authentic to some

distinct in the Fender catalogue. We like it a lot and the guitar feels close and personal sitting down, with a balance on the strap, too.

We like that metallic finish; it's certainly won a fair few fans in the TG office and works very well with the black/white-edged pickguard. Though CITES changes suggest rosewood will be working its way to more models this year, the Player series is sticking with pau ferro for now. It's undeniably a lighter alternative, but there's not much in it in terms of feel.

This is one of the most playable examples of the modern C neck we've encountered – the action is low and fast. People talk about the speed of flat profiles from the likes of Ibanez, but a well-set-up Fender C is an addictive thing

1 WEIGHT

Our test guitar is pretty much bang on average for a hardtail Strat in our experience at 7.4lbs

2 FINISH

While the other two finishes (Olympic White and Black) are options from the original Lead series, the Metallic Purple is all new

3 NECK

The original lead logo remains but the Player series neck profile is a little thicker than the old models

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Alder

NECK: Maple

SCALE: 648mm (25.5")

FINGERBOARD: Pau ferro fingerboard, Modern 'C' shape profile

FRETS: 22

PICKUPS: Alnico II humbucking

CONTROLS: Pickup Switching: 3-Position Toggle: Position 1. Bridge Pickup, Position 2. Bridge and Neck Pickups, Position 3. Neck Pickup

COIL-SPLIT SWITCHING:

1. Humbucker coil-split when bridge or middle pickup engaged
2. Standard humbucker mode
3. Humbucker coil-split when neck pickup engaged

HARDWARE: Six-saddle string-through-body hardtail with block saddles, 70s vintage style machine heads with F stamp tuners

FINISHES: Sienna Sunburst, Olympic White, Metallic Purple (as reviewed)



Lost And Found

Fender's unlikely comebacks

The Lead is not alone in being an old, somewhat obscure model brought back from the shadowy corners of guitar history. Fender has some weird and wonderful models away from the accepted classics. The late 60s single pickup Swinger (pictured above in its original form) being the most recent revival with a Japanese-only reissue. Before that, the wonderfully odd offset Meteora got a second chance with a 2018 Parallel Universe model followed by last year's more affordable HH model. The semi-hollow Starcaster revival is now on a victory lap – the recent Squier models were reviewed in TG327. Even the V-shape-gone-awry mid-80s Katana got a Prestige model in 2016. But there's plenty more Fender gold to be mined in them hills – the Performer must be due a reappraisal soon!

indeed. John Mayer claims the slack in the strings is the key to a great guitar, and there's a sense of easier wins for your bends and vibrato offered with the elasticity here that we love. The large heel block is definitely from the older school, but the acoustic experience here bodes well for plugging in.

The thin alder bodies of Fenders with this scale length are typically bright sounding guitars and that in turn leads to a lively tonality when humbuckers are brought into play. That's here in spades from these Alnico IIs – a crisper crunch along with some welcome versatility.



A caveat worth remembering is that despite the 'best of both worlds' concept, coil-splits aren't the same as the full-fat single-coil experience. The level drops a little when you split here, but so does the bottom end. What you gain is three more single-coil-esque flavours – we especially like the mid position split here, a great balance of throaty punch that recalls the middle territory of a Strat that's also great for strumming with the volume wound down a notch.

This is an interesting mix of the distinct with Strat traits; the

familiar and the fresh all from an unlikely comeback. The Lead III really must be tried out to see what it offers in feel and tone, but we think it feels good and plays great. Rather than badge this as worthy addition to a guitar arsenal, we think it holds its own as a potential main squeeze to cover your needs.

Rob Laing

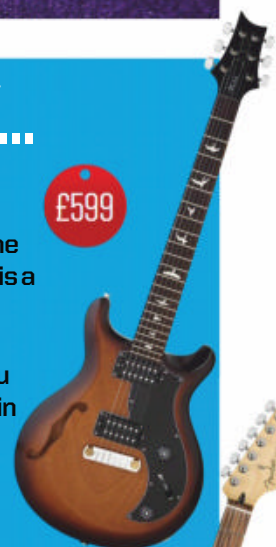
SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	PLAYABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

ALSO TRY...

PRS SE MIRA

£599

With a coil-split on the 85/15 'buckers, this is a close rival for price too, so it all comes down to whether you like the PRS Wide Thin neck profile.



PLAYER STRATOCASTER HSH

£609

If it really must be a Strat, why not throw another pickup (an alnico 5 single-coil) and a two-point trem into the mix?



CORT 290 FAT

£549

If we're talking versatility, it's hard to ignore our guitar of 2019 – classy build with five positions including coil splits and some wonderful tones.



BE PROVOCATEUR

ARTIST: **DEMOB HAPPY**

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

ShergoldGuitars.com





MARTIN X SERIES DX1E-04 £603

What does Martin's entry-level laminate-made dreadnought add up to?

The entry-level models of big guitar brands aren't just important for players, they're absolutely vital for the brand's fortunes. As guitarists we have our loyalties, but they have to be earned. So if we have a good experience with a guitar early on, we may well trade up in time and stick with that brand for years. Conversely, if we have a negative experience, it might inform our opinion of that guitar company for a long time.

Martin's entry level X1 Series models represent a significant investment, there's no way around it. And the Martin name carries expectations earned over generations. But their build is

the approach for some of us – in a good way. Fingerpicking suddenly feels friendlier. Digging in doesn't faze the DX1E; it seems confident in its balance across the spectrum.

Honestly, we were getting a bit tired of seeing Fishman's Sonitone system with Sonicore piezo on so many electros in this price range. It's now called the MX here and the sensors and processing have reportedly been upgraded. We can definitely hear it in a hotter low-end that adds welcome warmth. Your control to dial this back on the guitar if required is limited because the two controls inside the soundhole are volume and a treble roll-off called Tone.

This guitar raises the question, how much do materials matter?

“IT RAISES THE QUESTION, DO MATERIALS MATTER?”

significantly different from the traditional idea of a Martin, even though 2020 brings changes to it.

The DX1E-04's top and sides are high pressure laminate. For some players this will spell two things; cheap and not 'real wood'. The stock argument will be this choice is more resistant to temperature changes that can play havoc with acoustic guitar. It's also sustainable material. More importantly, how does it play?

Very well, actually. We don't use the word 'silky' lightly, but this really is. Low action and fast – it feels quite effortless to play for a dreadnought. What it lacks in boomy projection and mid punch it makes up for in a lovely, balanced response to a more delicate touch. It will change

Perhaps it depends who is making the guitar. This is a very playable guitar with a beautiful balance and response to lightness of touch. It's made of laminate and plywood woods. We still don't like the striped look of the 'stratabond' multilayered wood neck and the DX1E-04 finds itself in a very competitive end of the market, but there's something reassuring to be found. Martin know how to construct consistently fine playing and sounding guitars.

Rob Laing

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

1 SCALLOPED X-BRACING

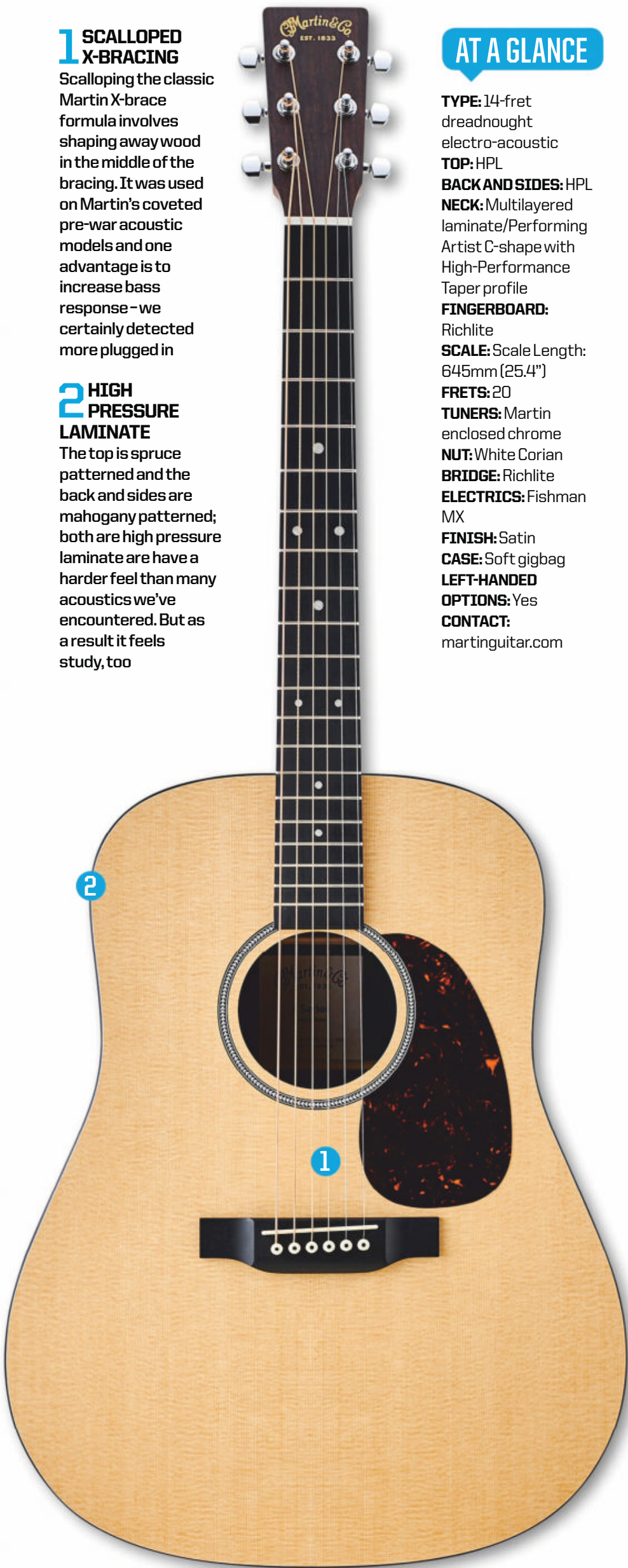
Scalloping the classic Martin X-brace formula involves shaping away wood in the middle of the bracing. It was used on Martin's coveted pre-war acoustic models and one advantage is to increase bass response – we certainly detected more plugged in

2 HIGH PRESSURE LAMINATE

The top is spruce patterned and the back and sides are mahogany patterned; both are high pressure laminate are have a harder feel than many acoustics we've encountered. But as a result it feels study, too

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: 14-fret dreadnought electro-acoustic
TOP: HPL
BACK AND SIDES: HPL
NECK: Multilayered laminate/Performing Artist C-shape with High-Performance Taper profile
FINGERBOARD: Richlite
SCALE: Scale Length: 645mm (25.4")
FRETS: 20
TUNERS: Martin enclosed chrome
NUT: White Corian
BRIDGE: Richlite
ELECTRICS: Fishman MX
FINISH: Satin
CASE: Soft gigbag
LEFT-HANDED OPTIONS: Yes
CONTACT: martinguitar.com





HARLEY BENTON SC-550

£222

A great-sounding budget electric that's a single-cut above

Whether Harley Benton is, he certainly keeps himself busy. The elusive figure behind German über-retailer Thomann's own-brand gear has lent his name to over 1,500 products at the time of writing, ranging from capos to pedalboard power supplies and double-neck electrics. In recent years, Herr Benton has stepped up his game with the company's electric guitars, offering the kind of spec you'd expect to see on models at double or even triple the price – and that's certainly the case with the SC-550 that's winged its way across Europe for review.

There are no prizes for guessing the inspiration behind this made-in-Vietnam single-cut, but there's no denying it's a looker.

THE PICKUPS ARE A DIRECT ROUTE TO CLASSIC ROCK CITY

There are some important distinctions between the SC-550 and its muse, however: that cutaway is more Florentine than Venetian, and there's an angled neck heel to provide better upper-fret access – oh, and enough aesthetic tweaks to the headstock and inlay designs to keep Gibson's lawyers at bay. Our only quibble with the build is that the alignment of the D and G-string machineheads is slightly off, but that's only visible on the rear of the headstock – and it's not like we haven't seen that from other manufacturers at all price points.

If someone taped up the headstock logo and handed you the SC-550, you would have no idea it was a budget guitar.

The jatoba fingerboard, while almost black in appearance, possesses that familiar soft rosewood feel, and when combined with the comfortable D-shape neck, puts you firmly in classic single-cut playing territory. The factory-fitted 0.010 D'Addario XL strings give a more robust playing response that make the guitar feel more expensive, too – particularly compared with 24.75"-scale single-cuts strung up with a little-too-slinky 0.009s.

That price tag-busting performance translates to the Roswell pickups, too. They offer a mid-to-high output that's teamed with plenty of presence and touch sensitivity, which means they handle overdrive with gusto. That high-end sparkle means the neck humbucker isn't overly dark, while still possessing plenty of muscle.

The bridge, meanwhile, is a direct route to Classic Rock City, offering enough punch for all the Page/Perry/Slash riffage you can handle. There are some seriously funky middle-position tones, too.

The budget-guitar market is awash with accomplished electrics these days, but this single-cut has the distinct advantage of Thomann's keen attention to detail, as well as some stellar tones. You're guaranteed a good time with this Harley.

Michael Astley-Brown

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

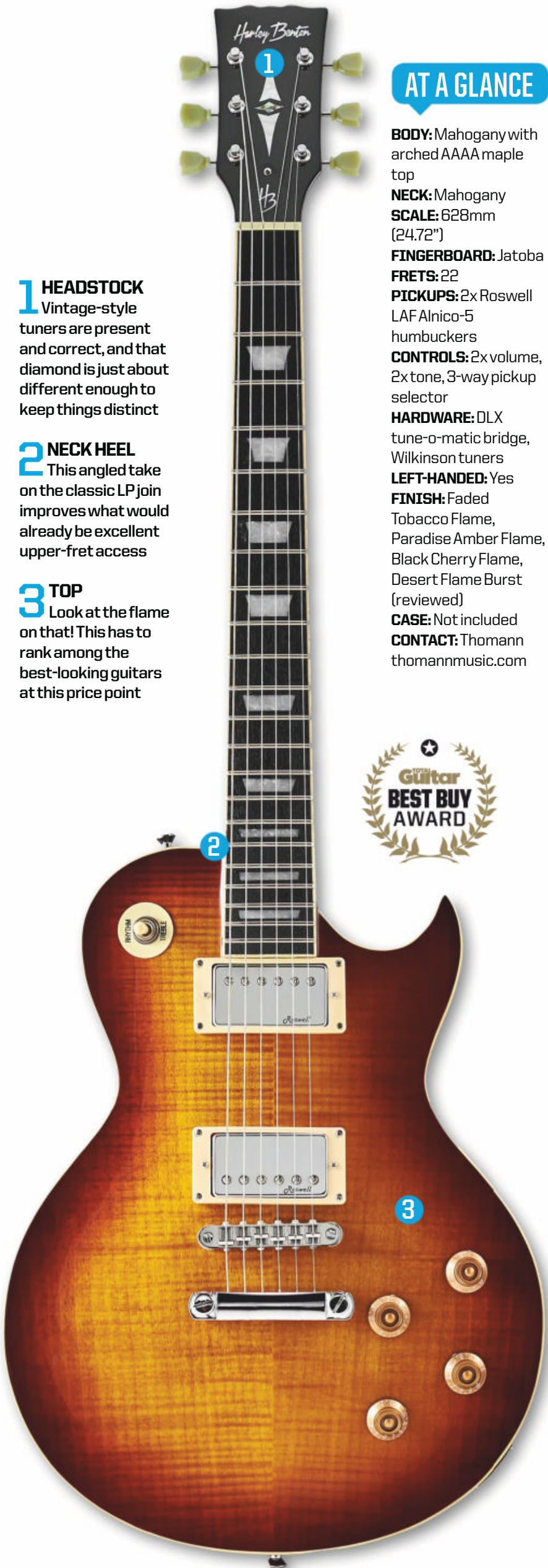
AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Mahogany with arched AAAA maple top
- NECK:** Mahogany
- SCALE:** 628mm (24.72")
- FINGERBOARD:** Jatoba
- FRETS:** 22
- PICKUPS:** 2x Roswell LAF Alnico-5 humbuckers
- CONTROLS:** 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way pickup selector
- HARDWARE:** DLX tune-o-matic bridge, Wilkinson tuners
- LEFT-HANDED:** Yes
- FINISH:** Faded Tobacco Flame, Paradise Amber Flame, Black Cherry Flame, Desert Flame Burst (reviewed)
- CASE:** Not included
- CONTACT:** Thomann thomannmusic.com

1 HEADSTOCK
Vintage-style tuners are present and correct, and that diamond is just about different enough to keep things distinct

2 NECK HEEL
This angled take on the classic LP join improves what would already be excellent upper-fret access

3 TOP
Look at the flame on that! This has to rank among the best-looking guitars at this price point





Words Jonathan Horsley / Photography Phil Barker

GRETSCH JETS ROUND-UP

Blast off to Kicksville with two baritone single-cuts and a neat double-cut that present classic Gretsch tones at pocket-friendly Electromatic prices...



101

Maybe it's because Gretsch came of age at a time when rock 'n' roll was the big bang moment for youth culture that it will always be a heritage brand. Maybe it's simply a case of the classics never going out of style. But for all the revisions it has made to its line-up over the years since the Gretsch plant in Brooklyn, New York was a mid-50s epicentre of cool, there's something unchanged about its guitars, as though they were unearthed in Grandpa's attic. Take this month's Jets. We'll start with the baritones, the G5260 and G5260T, the T for tremolo. These have a 29.75-inch scale to

accommodate low tunings such as baritone (B E A D F# B) or A standard (A D G C E A) without the strings going floppy, yet it looks and feels uncannily like a super-sized Duo Jet. Then there's the G522 Double Jet, Double Jet as in double-cut, that's finished in a deep red Walnut Stain. The Electromatic versions of today might have subtle changes in build – they are built in China, there are newly-designed pickups – but the fundamentals remain unchanged, with a chambered mahogany body offering that lightweight Gretsch experience. Whether in baritone tunings or at concert pitch, these are all designed to twang. It's just a question of which register you want to park yourself in. Let's take a look and see which one is right for you.





G5260T JET BARITONE

£659

That twang is back in style



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 29.75"
PICKUPS: 2x Gretsch Mini-humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 1x tone
SWITCHING: 3-Position Toggle
HARDWARE: Bigsby-licensed B50 Vibrato, anchored Adjusto-Matic bridge, chrome
FINISH: Black [as reviewed], Airline Silver
CONTACT: 0845 305 1122 / GretschGuitars.com

Baritones might have enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years with metal players looking to put them into the service of high-end, low-end chug but they are nothing new, and were originally designed for less musically-destructive applications. Hitherto their destructive potential would have been restricted to demarcation disputes with musicians' unions; are you a bassist or a guitarist? Well, using this you are kind of both. Picking up the G5260T, that's the first thing that hits you. It's a six-string, the geometry seems in proportion, familiar, and that neck profile, a shallow C, is never going to fool you in a blind taste test with a P-Bass, but it sure does feel like a different instrument; like a bass. This is how baritones were originally intended. Duane Eddy, a man whose tone should be listed in all good dictionaries under

'twang', used a Danelectro Longhorn 4623 liberally – most famously on 1959's *The Twang's The Thang* – and his signature tone was faithfully transposed to the longer 30-inch scale instrument. You'll find the same experience with the G5260T. It has a solid mahogany body, a big ol' slab with a similarly-scaled maple neck with a four-bolt heel, and once you catch your breath after hearing the low sixth-string – here tuned to A – rumble for the first time, you'll be struck by how much of that Gretsch elastic growl is in its tone. The musical possibilities soon stretch out in front of you. As Gretsch guitars go, the

electronics are simple. There are two mini-humbuckers, G-Arrow master volume and tone controls, and a three-way pickup selector. Clean, dry tones reveal a baseline piano-esque bass tone, ideal for sitting under the hurdy-gurdy clang of a modern beat combo, but dial in some spring reverb, some tremolo and slapback delay and you're back in the orbit of 50s rock 'n' roll tones. Here, the G5260T truly excels, with the Bigsby-licensed B50 vibrato on hand to provide a little wobble to those oh-so-dreamy chords. If you liked Vinnie Bell's playing on the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack then the G5260T is a fun entry-point into that world.

“THE GEOMETRY SEEMS IN PROPORTION, FAMILIAR, BUT IT SURE DOES FEEL LIKE A DIFFERENT INSTRUMENT; LIKE A BASS”



G5260 JET BARITONE

£569

Let's get ready to rumble...



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 29.75"
PICKUPS: 2x Gretsch Mini-humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 1x tone
SWITCHING: 3-Position Toggle
HARDWARE: V-Stoptail, anchored Adjusto-Matic bridge, chrome
FINISH: London Grey [as reviewed], Jade Grey Metallic, Dark Cherry Metallic
CONTACT: 0845 305 1122 / GretschGuitars.com



For all intents and purposes, the G5260 is pretty much the same guitar as the G5260T. It, too, has the solid mahogany body and the bolt-on maple neck. The scale is a similarly generous 29.75 inches. The fingerboard is laurel – as is it is across the 2020 Electromatic models – and you’ve got the same electronics, with a pair of gnarly proprietary mini ‘buckers with master volume and tone and a three-way selector for dialling in the tones. The anchored Adjusto-Matic bridge is identical. So why does it feel different? Why the subtle variation in sound? Well, it sure isn’t the block inlay. Maybe it’s to do with the V-Stoptail, which offers a solid zero-wobble anchor point for your strings, and the imagination, too. Sometimes there is no getting by the power of suggestion. The G5260 could be deployed in almost all the same situations as its Bigsby-equipped

sibling, but there’s something about its tone, the sharper attack, and the promise of a fuss-free experience – the Bigsby can be a fiddle – that make this a baritone for sitting in the pocket, partnering up with the drummer as the rhythm section, or digging in for some super-aggressive low-end playing. The factory settings say rock ‘n’ roll, but the clarity and heat of those mini-humbuckers makes the G5260 suitable for all kinds of mischief. Clean, it’s ideal for playing country basslines. With a splash of spring reverb you can put a new spin on your surf rock playing. Indeed, approaching the baritone from a regular six-string is a transformative

experience, and thanks to its skinny-ish neck, the G5260 isn’t too intimidating. If your amp can handle it – and this will reward those who invested in a combo with a 12-inch speaker – the G5260 has a lot of range for playing distorted. You can imagine some alt-metal acts getting a lot of high-volume joy from the G5260 and a fuzz box. The question is whether drowning out its natural twang is worth it.

“IDEAL FOR COUNTRY BASSLINES, A NEW SPIN ON YOUR SURF ROCK PLAYING OR EVEN HIGH-VOLUME ALT-METAL WHEN PAIRED WITH A FUZZ BOX”



G5222 DOUBLE JET

Built for the long haul

£495



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Chambered mahogany with maple top

NECK: Mahogany, set

FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel

FRETS: 22

SCALE: 24.6"

PICKUPS: 2x Gretsch Black Top Broad'Tron

CONTROLS: 1x master volume with treble bleed circuit, 1x master tone, 2x volume

SWITCHING: 3-Position Toggle

HARDWARE: V-Stoptail, anchored Adjusto-Matic bridge, chrome

FINISH: Walnut Stain [as reviewed], Jade Grey Metallic, London Grey, Aged Natural

CONTACT: 0845 3051122/
GretschGuitars.com

If your eyes are watering and fretting hand is in paroxysms of psychosomatic tendonitis at the mere prospect of playing your go-to rock and blues riffs on the wide-open spaces of a 29.75-inch scale guitar, then worry not, the G5222 Double Jet returns us to familiar territory. In fact, after adjusting your style to get the most out of the baritones, the Double Jet feels like a toy. Its neck has got a fairly skinny profile – a “thin U,” says Gretsch – that welcomes all styles, with a short-ish 24.6-inch scale and a flat-feeling 12-inch fretboard with 22 medium-jumbo frets. This all adds up to feel reassuringly contemporary, despite being on a guitar that’s all about finding tones that predate the colour TV. The neck is glued to the body. Channeling classic Jets of yore, it has a chambered mahogany body with maple top that keeps it light



and resonant. When it was unveiled at NAMM 2020, the main talking point was the newly-designed Black Top Broad'Tron pickups. These are controlled by a master volume control mounted on the treble-side horn, with individual volume controls for each pickup and a master tone control. Gretsch’s four-knob setup might seem a little complicated, but it makes perfect sense when interacting with a pushed valve amplifier. It gives you total control over the guitar’s tone, with the master volume’s treble bleed circuit allowing you to roll back the volume without losing any brightness. The Black Top Broad'Tron

pickups are wound quite hot as Gretsch pickups go, but retain the sort of balance you would expect. The bridge pickup has plenty of trebly attitude. Taking the tone control back a little and it rounds off some of that meanness quite nicely. Select both pickups together and kick on some overdrive or fuzz and you’ll find the Double Jet in classic rock territory where there’s no shortage of midrange sustain. The neck pickup rounds out the tone without killing the harmonics. It’s seriously addictive. But then you’ll have to wean yourself off that bridge pickup to get there. That won’t be easy.

“FEELS REASSURINGLY CONTEMPORARY FOR A GUITAR THAT’S ALL ABOUT FINDING TONES THAT PREDATE THE COLOUR TV”

FINAL VERDICT

Will you succumb to your most bass impulses?

There's no question that the Jet Baritones are specialist instruments, but at the Electromatic price-point they sure are tempting for anyone looking to add a baritone to their game. There was little fuss with either baritone. Intonation and tuning was solid. Once you get used to the sound fretboard geography and the weight, they are eminently playable instruments. The Bigsby-licensed B50 vibrato is stable, and although it is naturally a lot stiffer, with less give than

those equipped on your regular standard-tuned six-strings, it turned an instrument that was built for the rhythm section into something capable of taking the lead. Using this with tape echo and experimenting with reverb, it really does become transcendent. That said, there's something about the simplicity of the G5260. The V-Stoptail is super tidy. If you don't think you'll use the Bigsby much, save some money on the G5260. The Double Jet, meanwhile, is a no-brainer if you are looking for a rock

'n' roll machine. The V-Stoptail looks great on it. The Walnut Stain finish is more red than walnut and incredible. The Black Top Broad'Trons are just about hot enough. We would have preferred a fatter neck but that might be an unpopular opinion. Nonetheless, the Double Jet is so accessible, so easy to get a tune out of. Rock, country, blues? All the above and more. Love AC/DC but can't spring for a Malcolm Signature? Well, the Double Jet is available in Aged Natural finish, and the bridge pickup here says "Buy me now."

G5260T JET BARITONE



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

G5260 JET BARITONE



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

G5222 DOUBLE JET



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



FENDER SMOLDER ACOUSTIC OVERDRIVE

£129



The Big F's ever-growing effects family births its first acoustic stompbox

When Fender launched a brand new effects line with six pedals at the beginning of 2018, few could have predicted just how enthusiastically it would embrace expanding it; there's now 22 pedals and counting in a consistently impressive range that brings innovative features to the table. This is Fender's first acoustic pedal in the family, and rather than a more ubiquitous reverb, compression or delay, they've gone for a dedicated overdrive. We're intrigued! It turns out we are right to be.

Like the rest of the line, the Smolder has a hardy chassis, with simple and contemporary typeface making everything clear. Metallic brown is very much an 'unplugged' vibe too, right? The optional LEDs on the controls are a win for us too for dark stages – and can be switch off at the back. Fender's effects reflect consideration in what its new circuits can offer that others on the market may not. This goes further than you may presume; the Pickup Compensation control effectively smooths out our piezo electro acoustic's tone to prove a useful tool in itself even with

the drive dialled right down. While the gain takes you from a boost to fiercer territory, the EQ effectively shapes it to become a versatile, organic tool. The Tone dials out any unwanted sizzle from your drive tone (we didn't get much anyway, top be fair) and the Blend is the real key control here; it balances overdriven and pure piezo signal. The combination is a highly editable, versatile and very musical acoustic pedal that's another win for the series.

Rob Laing

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Acoustic overdrive pedal
CONTROLS: Tone, Treble, Bass, Pickup Comp, Level, Blend, Drive, LEDs off and on
BYPASS: True bypass
SOCKETS: Guitar in, guitar out (the pedal has default inbuilt cabinet simulation when plugged into an amp or PA)
POWER: DC 9V
CONTACT: Fender EMEA Fender.com

HIGHLY EDITABLE, VERSATILE AND MUSICAL

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



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FIX YOUR GUITAR

INSTALLING A NEW
3-WAY SWITCH

Our guide to soldering in a different brand switch without ruining the circuit

Words: Jack Ellis

Any moving electrical part on your guitar is can wear out. Tone pots and jack sockets are especially prone. And it'll come as no surprise that switches can become crackly or fail mechanically too – just like this month's repair job. The old switch doesn't have any 'clicks', so it won't stay in position, and, as such, it's earned itself a ticket to the landfill. Here's the thing though; the new switch has a different pin layout which confuses things a little; there's a more complicated circuit

than expected to keep an eye on too. To boot, we'll show you how to ID pickup colour codes if you have an unusual pickup.

The switch we'll be, erm, switching is an Oak Grigsby 3-way item which will replace the bust no-namer example. The Oak Grigsby one is the more common Fender style terminal layout and we'll need to use both sides of it. We like these switches because you can see the workings of them, so, if there's ever any confusion as to which terminals are getting connected, you can just look!



WHAT YOU NEED

- ▶ 40Watt Soldering iron
- ▶ 60/40 Solder
- ▶ Soldering helping hand
- ▶ New 3-way switch

- ▶ Wire cutters
- ▶ Wire strippers
- ▶ Handy poker/pick
- ▶ Masking tape
- ▶ Wiring Diagram (either drawn or downloaded)

- ▶ Pickup colour code (optional)
- ▶ Digital Multimeter (optional)

SKILL LEVEL
Medium

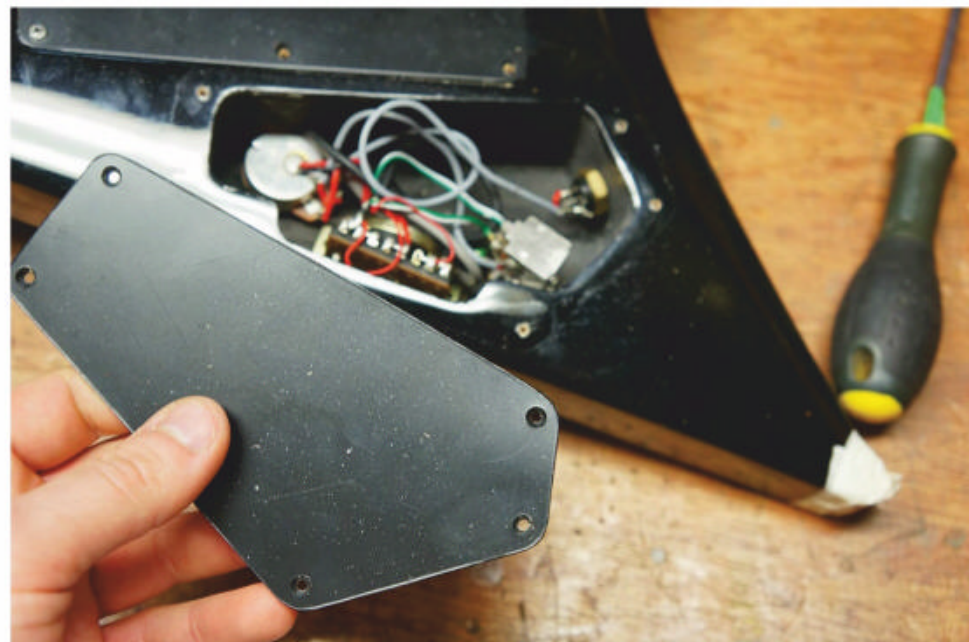


MEET YOUR EXPERT

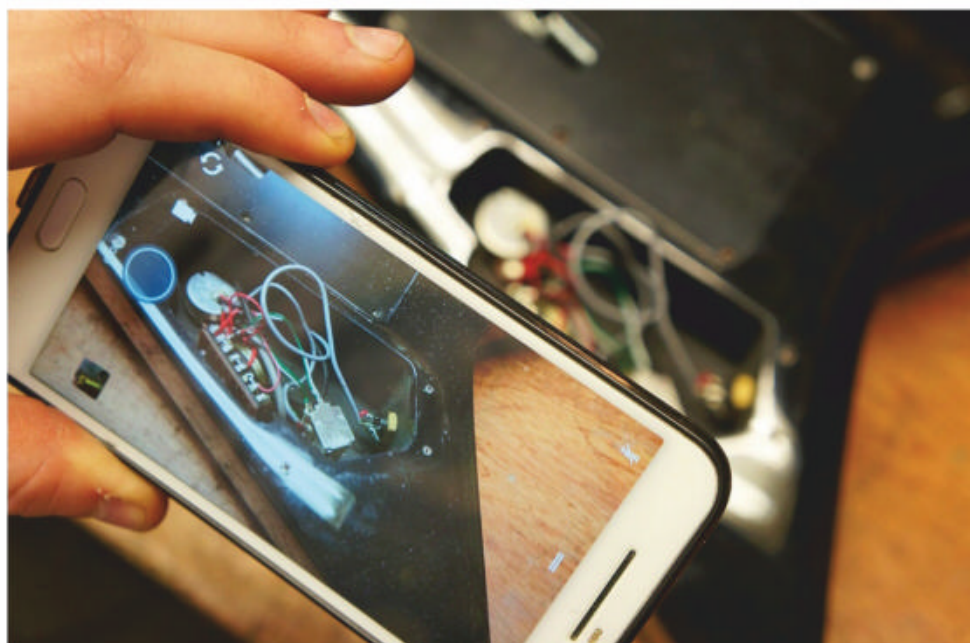
Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: www.jacksinstrument-services.co.uk



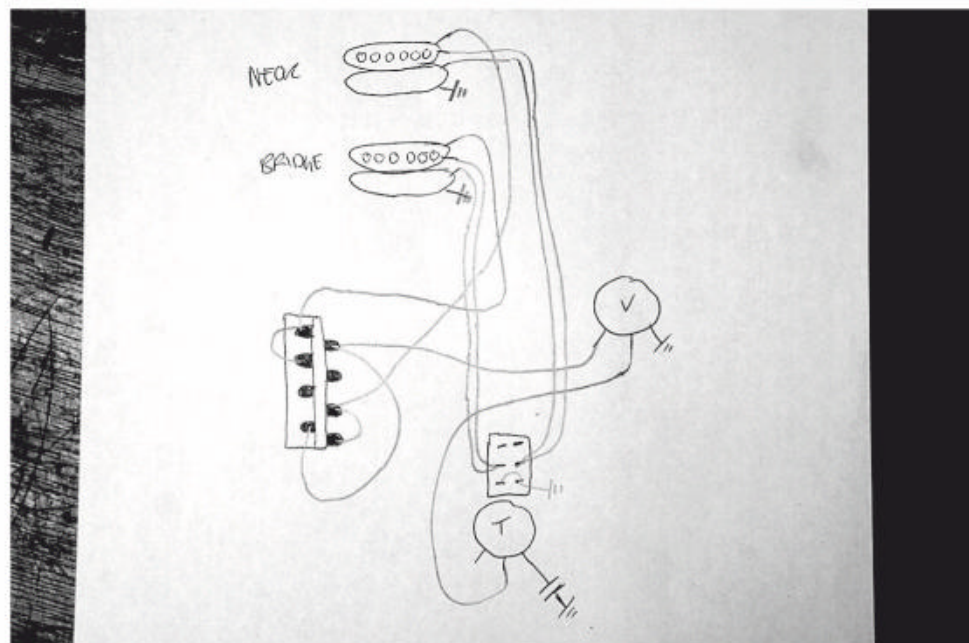
1 Whip off the back plate cover - this will get you access to the electronics cavity where all its guts are hiding. A PH1 screwdriver will do just fine. Our repair here is for a Kramer Vanguard guitar but the principles presented here are fairly general.



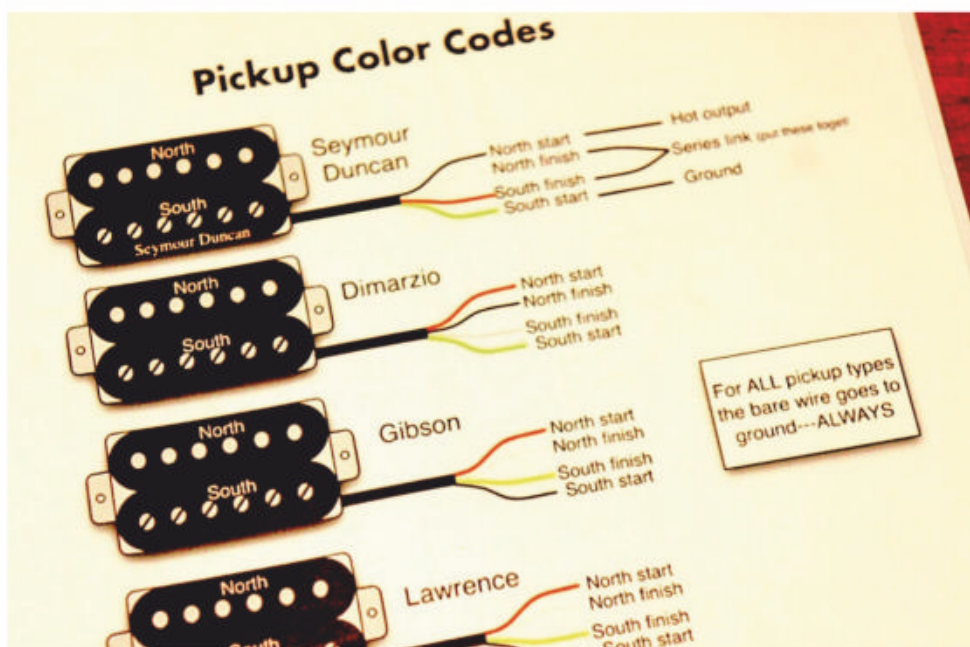
2 Inside, we have a surprise component we weren't expecting - a push-pull pot. So, we have a master volume, a master tone, 3-way switch and a coil-split function. The push-pull pot has two functions: to turn down the treble (tone), and to cut half of each pickup out - coil-splitting both pickups - by pulling the switch up.



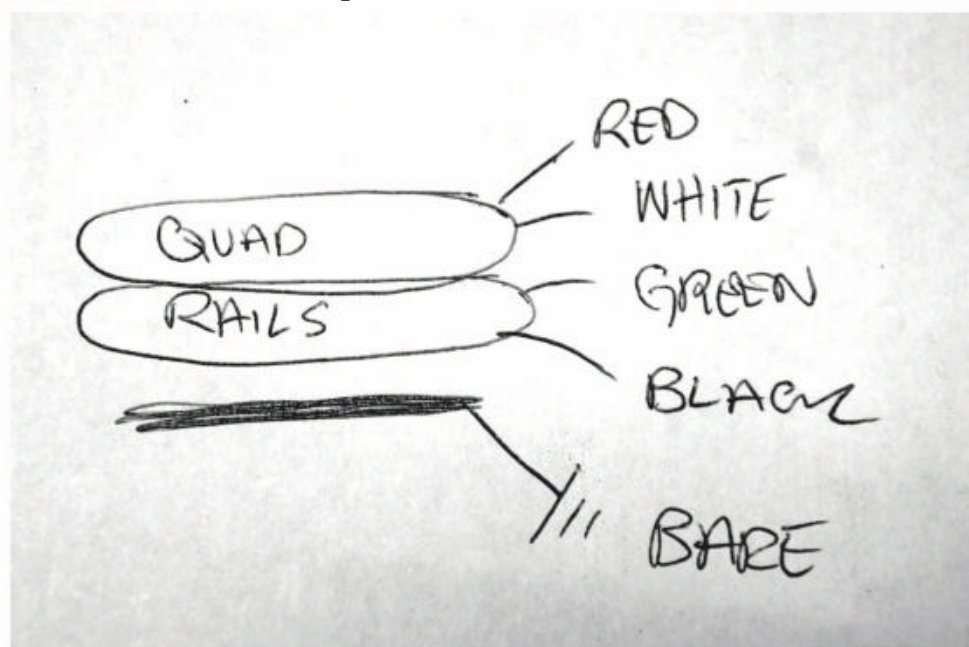
3 Take a snap of the old wiring just in case anything goes wrong. We're aiming to change just the pickup switch only but chances are a wire may fall off too, especially on an old guitar. Even better would be to draw the wiring diagram. www.guitarelectronics.com hosts loads of accurate diagrams.



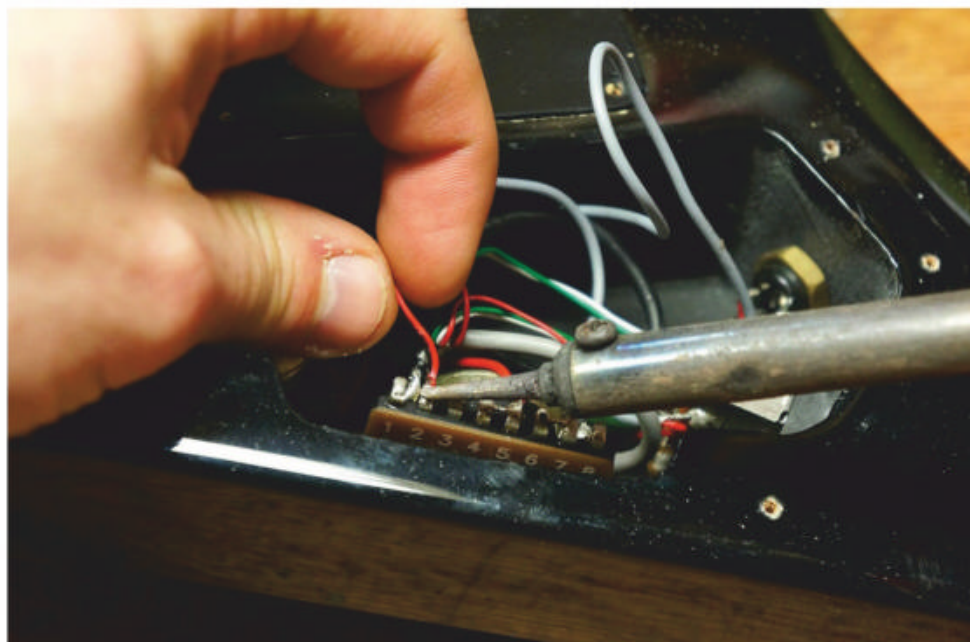
4 Oh look, a diagram! We drew this to lay out the whole wiring diagram, including all the details for the coil-split design and also to put in the new switch. There are essentially two switch designs: one with the solder terminals all in a line and another offset style, which is what Fender tend to use. This diagram converts one style to the other to save head-scratching!



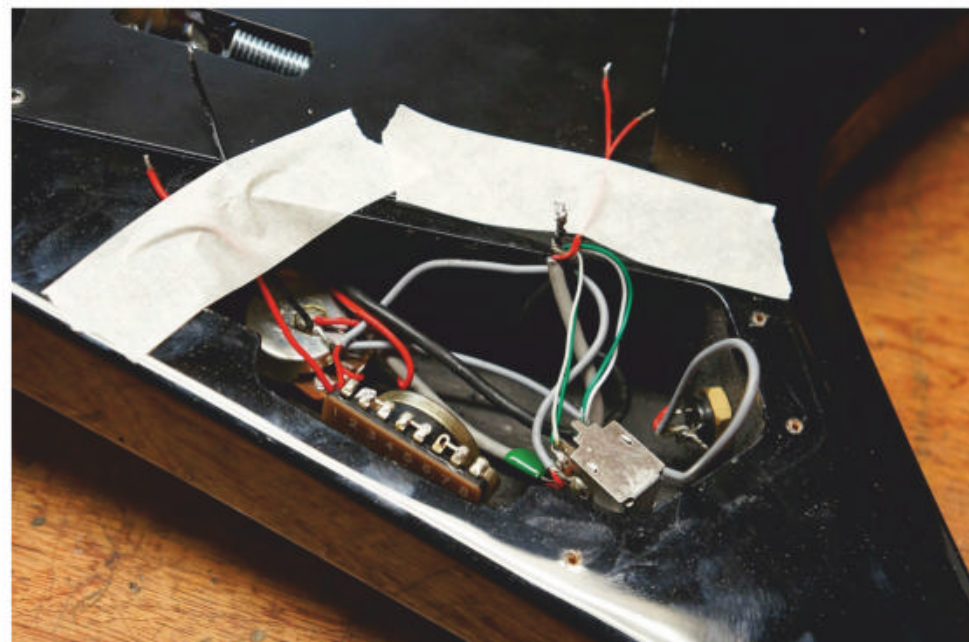
5 Still more theory before we get to the practical exam! Each manufacturer has their own cabling colours, Googling 'pickup colour codes' will be immensely helpful to learn which wire is what. In our Kramer here, we have the brilliantly daft Quad Rail pickups. You can use the old locations of the wires to skip this step if you're confident.



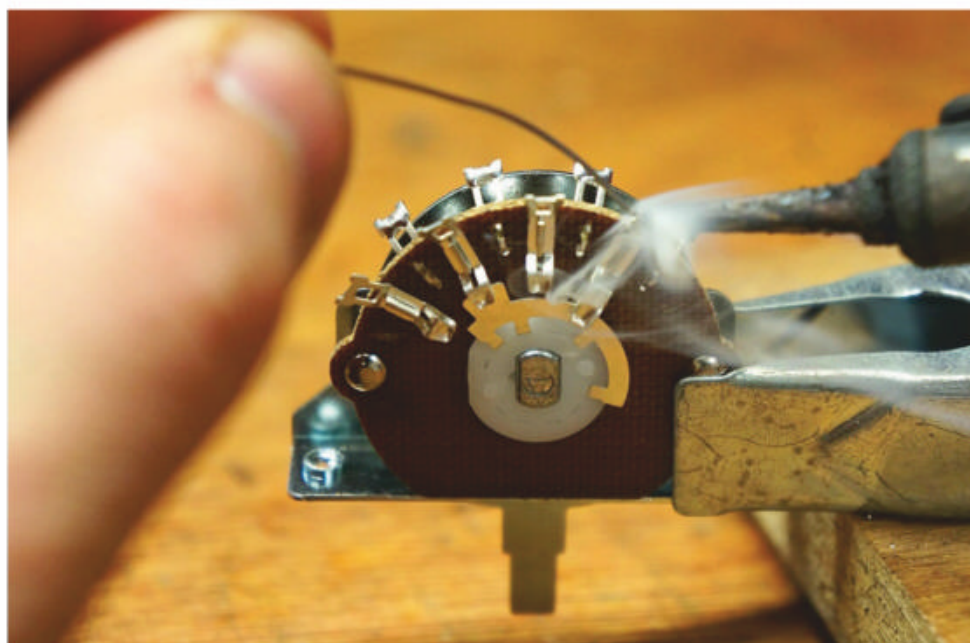
6 Each Quad Rails pickup has four coils connected in series for a whopping output. We figured out the colour code for ours by getting a ~6k ohm reading from red+white and the same from green+black using a multimeter. The bare wire is always earth. Here, the green+white is the coil junction that gets sent to the push-pull pot.



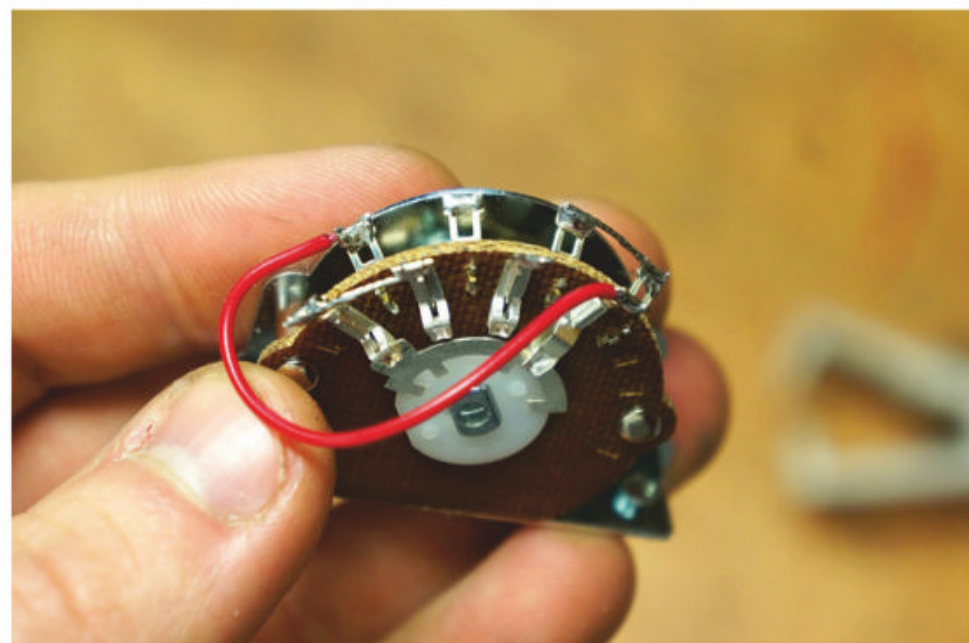
7 Whip out the connections from the old switch by unsoldering them. You could snip them with wire cutters, but then you'd have to strip the wires again, and sometimes there's not enough wire left. Our switch had ground wires going to the casing of the old switch, we'll move them to connect to the body of the pots instead.



8 Top Tip! Tape wires out the way, when you're re-soldering the new switch back in the last thing you want is to melt a rogue wire. Unscrew the old switch from the front of the guitar using a PH2 Screw driver, we chose to reuse the old screws as they suited our colour scheme!



9 We're preparing the new offset terminal-style switch by tinning each terminal. This will free up a hand when we reattach the wires later, where all we have to do is heat the joint up and melt in the wire, and not have to supply solder at the same time! Use a solder helper to hold the switch in place but be careful not to damage it.



10 Following the diagram, we've added some jumper wires onto the switch – this is best done safely clamped in a soldering helper before it goes back into the control cavity. The bare jumper wires are where the pickup 'hot' wires will attach, one pickup per side. The red wire connects the two common terminals together.



11 Go for it, complete the circuit adding your hot wires and output wire. In our case, we had to rehome two ground wires that used to be attached to the switch body; we sent them to another earth connection on the rear of the pots. Mount the new switch on your guitar with the two bolts to the front.



12 Time to test! Plug in, turn up the volume and tap test by tapping a screwdriver onto your pickup. You should hear the pickups working through your amp. If your pickups are the wrong way round compared to the switch then swap the two hot wires around. If you made a mistake, go back to the diagram and see what it could be.

A man with sunglasses and a dark jacket is playing a bright red acoustic guitar. He is standing in a doorway, with a dark brick wall on either side. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the doorway behind him. The overall mood is artistic and moody.

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The Playlist

Volbeat's axeman on why there are no guilty pleasures, and how Eddie Van Halen has eluded him

The Riff that made me want to play... **Back In Black - AC/DC**
There are a few, it's kind of hard for me to remember back then as kid but there are three! AC/DC's *Back In Black* is one that really stands out. That riff is just phenomenal, there's something about the way they recorded it too - Mutt Lange is a genius, he's one of my idols as a producer. There's just something very special about the way that riff sounds.

Another of my favourites, and one of the heaviest riffs of all time, *Immigrant Song* by Led Zeppelin. Still to this day it gets me all fired up when I hear it. Then anything by Van Halen! He's my all-time favourite guitar player, back when I was a kid it was those three bands - AC/DC, Led Zeppelin and Van Halen that really put me on this path!

The riff I want to be remembered for

I don't know man! That's a hard question... I'm weird, I'm definitely a perfectionist and even stuff that I've done over the years I'm always thinking 'Oh man, I could have done that better' or 'I could have played that differently'. So it's honestly hard for me to even say.

The riff that will destroy the crowd...

For us (and any band really) we get excited about the new material. A band like Volbeat, or even when I was in Anthrax, there's these classic staples that have to be in the set and you have to play them every night. And that's awesome, but as a band we're always excited about playing new songs. We have a new album out called *Rewind, Replay, Rebound* and all the songs on that record go over really good live.

The song that is a big challenge live...

For me sometimes, I like to use the first few songs in the set to get my hands going.

Sometimes there will be a song with a challenging solo and I'll be like 'Damn, I wish this was later in the set!'



The best tone on record...

1984 - Van Halen

I think for me one of the best tones ever is Eddie Van Halen on Van Halen 1984. I think on that record his sound

was totally realised and focussed. I mean, it is on every record! But that one in particular is really spot-on, it's amazing.

The solo that I wish I'd written...

Fool In The Rain - Led Zeppelin

Maybe Jimmy Page's solo from *Fool In The Rain*. That's a great solo. If not, then Eddie Van Halen on Michael Jackson's *Beat It* is one of my favourites of all time. And only one take! Actually, I think they did two and then kept the first one. Steve Lukather is on there too and he's another favourite of mine!

My guilty pleasure...

You Should Be Sad - Halsey

I listen to all kinds of stuff man, from extreme metal to pop music so I'm not embarrassed! It's all music and I appreciate all of it. I like the new Halsey song I heard the other day [*You Should Be Sad*]... It's funny, I've been in the studio producing this band called Like Machines, doing a couple of tracks. We were dialling in tones and we found this really cool tone, drenched in reverb, a little bit fuzzy and heavy. When I heard that new Halsey song there's a sound in the middle of it that's kind of similar. I was like 'Wow, this is an amazing guitar sound!'

If I could jam on a song with one player...

Eddie Van Halen. I've never met him, I'm new to the Fender/Jackson family but I've never met him. Years ago, I was doing The Damned Things with Scott Ian and those guys. We were supposed to play the Soundwave festival in Australia and Van Halen were headlining so I was hoping to meet him then, but that [got cancelled] so I never ended up meeting him.

The song I'm most proud of...

I'm really proud of the stuff on the new album. I feel like I'm always trying to progress as a musician - not just as a guitar player. I'm a producer and I also play other instruments, so I just love making music.



RABEA MASSAAD

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