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— HANDMADE IN EUROPE —

NEW!

FAME FORUM CUSTOM SPALTED MAPLE TOP NATURAL #FC2002040

The Forum Custom is the flagship of the premium guitar forgery of M-Guitars in Danzig. The best tone woods, hand-wound Seymour Duncan USA pickups and first-class hardware from the German manufacturer Schaller, are combined with refinements such as Abalone bindings, gold-plating and a carefully applied transparent Burst finish. Fame Forum Custom – a premium guitar!

The body of the Fame Forum Custom consists of mahogany and features a two-piece top made from high-contrast and evenly grained quilted maple. The experienced guitar builders in Danzig select for a particularly powerful grain with a three-dimension depth effect, which is highlighted by the illuminating Burst finish. An additional optical depth effect as well as clear body contours is created by the shimmering iridescent abalone purfling, which is rounded off by a cream-coloured binding.

Whoever plays the Forum Custom, whether strapped over your shoulder or resting in your lap, will be amazed by the sleek profile and weight of this instrument! All of the hardware of this instrument including knobs, the bridge and switches are recessed into the top for ergonomic purposes, to make palm muting and picking as comfortable as possible.

Regardless if shredder or Blues fan: fast runs as well as organic bendings are ideally supported by the slim, yet contoured 'C' profile of the mahogany neck. To reach even the highest frets, the Forum Custom features a flattened neck heel block, while neck tenon was extended and even reaches under the neck pickup which also helps to improve sustain and construction stability.
Code: GIT0053115-000

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LEARN TO PLAY

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
UNDER THE BRIDGE

AC/DC
HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE

*Rockschool version

SAM FENDER
HYPERSONIC MISSILES

TOTAL GUITAR

THE ORIGINAL
INFLUENCER

Jimi

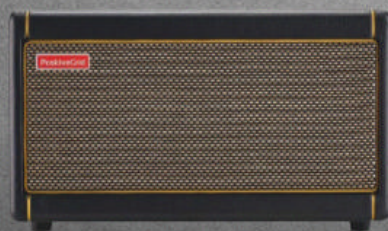
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GUITAR HERO
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- ✓ Signature chords and rhythm lesson
- ✓ Get Jimi's sound on any budget

+

JUSTIN HAWKINS
FRANK TURNER
JACK GARRATT
ED O'BRIEN



REVIEWED
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Game-changing
"smart" amp



THE TG GROUP TEST
2020 GIBSONS

The Big G's solidbody rockers rated!



THEY'VE ARRIVED

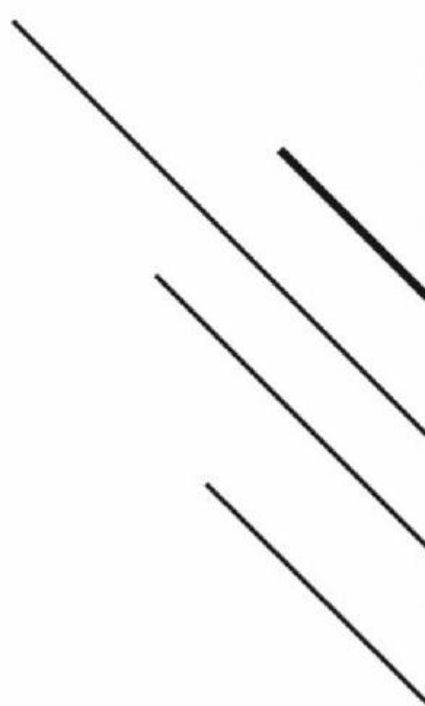
Sheeran
BY *Lowden*

"This is what I record with, this is what I play with, this is what I have at home to just chill out and strum to, and I think once you know you're serious about playing guitar this is the best instrument that you could get."

Ed Sheeran



SheeranGuitars.com





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Welcome...



When we first considered putting Jimi Hendrix on the cover, our thoughts turned immediately to his influence. Of course, Jimi's a guitar hero, perhaps the ultimate guitar hero, so he's earned his place! But in 2020, a full 50 years since his tragic and untimely death, we wondered if we could truly say Jimi is an influential guitarist.

Well, here at TG Towers, we'd say the answer is a definitive 'yes'! Before I even mention Jimi's musicianship, there's his tone to

consider. Own a multi-fx pedal? Or a software amp/fx sim? Chances are there's a Jimi Hendrix patch. Scratch that! The chances are there are several. Marshall amps, Uni-Vibe pedals, wah wah, fuzz and octave-fuzz effects were key to Jimi's tone, and manufacturers have been modelling them for years. Jimi used equipment that was cutting edge at the time, and, such is his lasting influence, we're all still stuck on it today. Even if you're not immersed in Jimi fandom, these sounds are just part of the backdrop of rock and blues.

And his musicianship? Well, to be honest, we could fill the mag analysing every last chord embellishment and fiery solo. However, this month, we're looking at Jimi's influence on some contemporary players and hopefully imparting some wisdom so that you can learn about this guitar legend's playing style through 20 of his biggest and best loved songs. Enjoy the issue!

Chris

Chris Bird Acting Editor

MAKING THIS MONTH'S MAG



JONATHAN HORSLEY

TG always keeps Jonathan pretty busy and this issue has been no exception. As well as interviewing Frank Turner and Amy Love of the Nova Twins, the man generally referred to as 'The Horse' got up close and personal with four of Gibson's 2020 range of solidbody electrics. Find out what he thinks on p98.



STAN BULL

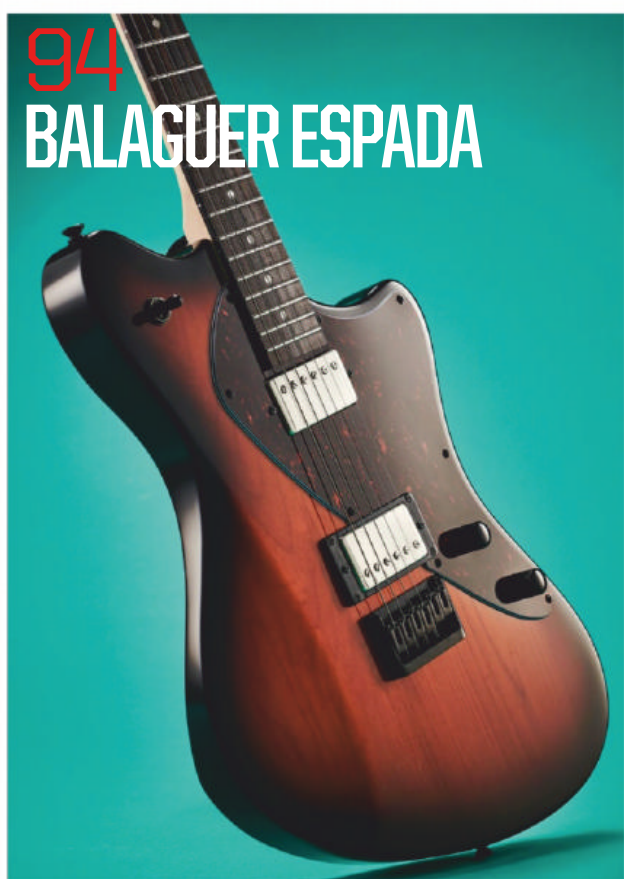
"I got into Hendrix through my dad's CD collection," says Stan. "But Jimi always stood out as being several degrees cooler than the his contemporaries. To this day, I find myself inspired by his otherworldly tones and unusual mixing style of having the guitar front and centre. To me, Jimi still sounds like the future."



AMIT SHARMA

As ever, the sheer number of guitarists and bands Amit speaks to for a typical issue of TG never ceases to amaze us. This month: Dave Dalone from H.E.A.T., Ed O'Brien of Radiohead fame, Kid Kapichi, Nili Brosh, Video Nasties plus a host of players talking about Jimi Hendrix in our cover feature. Nice work, Amit!

#331 TOTAL Guitar Contents



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Words: Paul Elliott Photo: Lauren Thomason / Events United

The meanest of times

Massachusetts punks Dropkick Murphys go viral after performing for just a camera crew on St Patrick's Day

ESTD
DROPKICK MURPHY'S

A

mid the coronavirus crisis, with the postponement of gigs all over the world, many artists reached out to their fans with live streaming performances.

One such act was American Celtic punk band Dropkick Murphys. Following the cancellation of their annual St. Patrick's Day concert in Boston on March 17th, they performed instead at the place where they rehearsed – on a soundstage in Derry, New Hampshire, with just a film crew for company. The real-time viewing audience exceeded 300,000, but within 24 hours almost ten million people had watched the video of the show across multiple platforms. In troubled times, a connection was made.



SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

GEAR

THE BROADCASTER IS BACK

FENDER'S FIRST-EVER TWO-PICKUP SOLID-BODY ELECTRIC GUITAR RECEIVES A MODERN-DAY MAKEOVER.

T

here are only believed to be about 250 examples of the original Fender Broadcaster – Fender's first solid body electric guitar with a truss rod and two pickups.

A few months after its release in 1950, Gretsch, which owned the BroadKaster trademark, took legal action and ended Fender's use of the name. This led to the "Nocaster" period in early 1951, when Fender snipped the Broadcaster decal from the headstock of the guitars, and then to the model being renamed the Telecaster that summer.

Now, Fender has revived the original two-pickup guitar with the 70th Anniversary Broadcaster. Features on the new model include an ash body with a Blackguard Blonde lacquer finish, 'U'-shaped one-piece maple neck with a 7.25" radius fingerboard and 21 vintage-tall frets and Custom Shop-designed '50-'51 Blackguard pickups. Aesthetic touches include a period-correct black phenolic pickguard, '50s Broadcaster spaghetti logo and an anniversary neck plate.

While the guitar's controls are wired for standard Tele operation, an optional original Broadcaster wiring kit, included in the case, can be installed to replicate the "blend" circuit used in original Broadcasters.

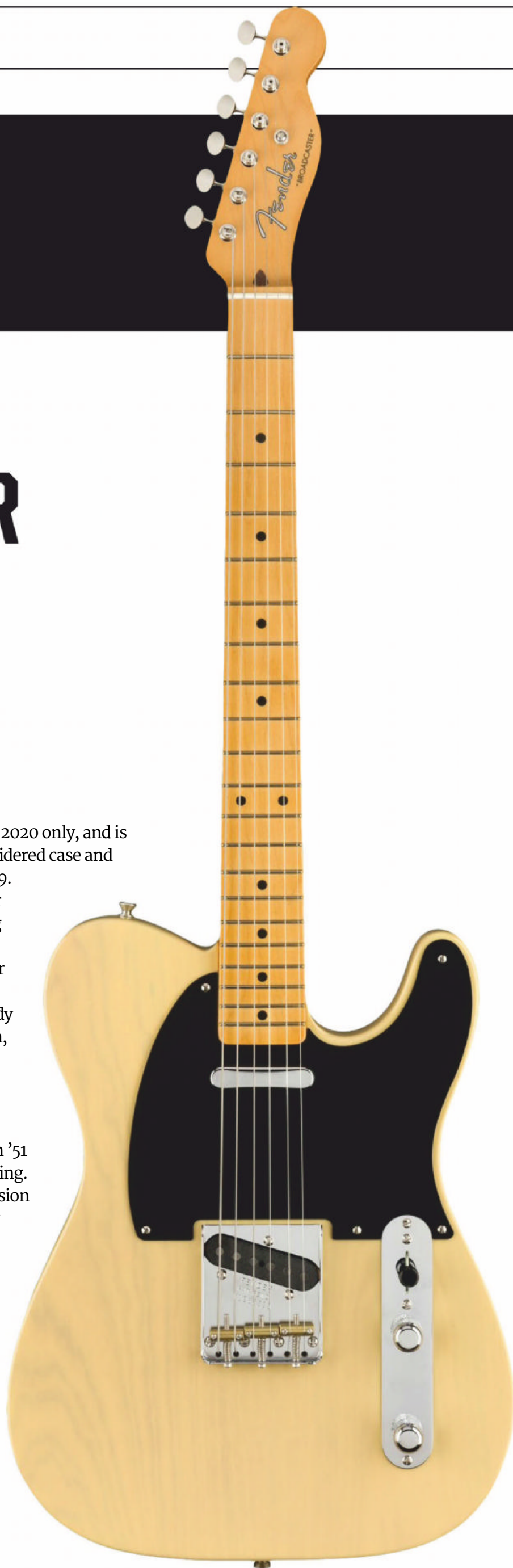
The 70th Anniversary Broadcaster is

limited to production in 2020 only, and is available with an embroidered case and a custom COA for £2,009.

Additionally, the Fender Custom Shop is offering a Limited Edition 70th Anniversary Broadcaster model, featuring a two-piece select ash body with an off-center seam, a one-piece rift-sawn maple neck with a 1950 Broadcaster profile and hand-wound '50-'51 Blackguard pickups with '51 modded "Nocaster" wiring.

The Custom Shop version is available in four aging packages: NOS Time Capsule, Journeyman Relic, Relic and Heavy Relic, all finished in the original "flash coat" lacquer.

Look familiar? Fender's mythical Broadcaster returns for 2020





Regardless of the lawsuits, we do love a bit of *Stairway*

ZEPPELIN FINALLY WIN STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN COPYRIGHT LAWSUIT

The protracted copyright battle over *Stairway to Heaven* appears to have come to an end, with the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruling in a 9-2 decision on March 9th that Led Zeppelin did not steal the song's iconic opening acoustic guitar intro.

The ruling affirmed a decision by a Los Angeles jury in 2016. That case saw a trustee representing the estate of late Spirit guitarist and songwriter Randy Wolfe (a.k.a. Randy California) accuse Led Zeppelin of lifting a piece of the 1968 Spirit instrumental, *Taurus*, for the intro to their own 1971 song.

The 2016 case was decided in Zeppelin's favor, but in 2019, a ninth circuit panel ordered a new trial after finding errors in the jury instruction process at the first trial. In particular, jurors had not been allowed to hear sound recordings of *Taurus* and *Stairway to Heaven*, due to the fact that a judge had determined that only Wolfe's sheet music, and not the actual sound recording, was protected under the 1909 Copyright Act.

Taurus was written before federal law covered sound recordings.

In 2019, plaintiff's attorney Francis Malofiy argued that the copyrighted musical composition of *Taurus* should also include the song as it was recorded, rather than just transcribed on paper. But on March 9th, an 11-judge panel in San Francisco reaffirmed the 2016 ruling based on the 1909 Copyright Act, determining that the court was not in error for not allowing the jury to hear the *Taurus* sound recording at the original trial.

The appeals court also elected to ditch what is known as the inverse ratio rule, which states that the more access songwriters have to previously written works, the lower the bar for proving substantial similarity. In the case of Zeppelin and *Taurus*, the original lawsuit claimed Robert Plant and Jimmy Page were familiar with *Taurus* because Spirit and Led Zeppelin had played shows together in 1968 and 1969.

The new ruling would seem to signal the conclusion of the case. "The trial and appeal process has been a long climb up the *Stairway to Heaven*," circuit Judge Margaret McKeown stated.

ROUND-UP

The newspieces picking our ears up



RIP Rainey

Sacred Reich guitarist and founding member Jason Rainey dead at 53

Jason Rainey, who founded and played guitar for Phoenix, Arizona thrash metal act Sacred Reich, died of a heart attack on March 16th, aged 53. The news was confirmed by his former band, who said in a statement posted to the official Sacred Reich Facebook page: "It is with deep sadness and broken hearts that we must announce that our friend, guitarist and founding member of Sacred Reich, Jason Rainey has passed away."

"Jason started the band after only playing guitar for six months. With sheer determination and will, he lead us through the early years of the band. He worked tirelessly. Sacred Reich was his life. In recent years, he faced some serious medical issues. He ultimately succumbed to a heart attack on Monday, March 16th. Jason, we wish you peace and love."

Rainey appeared with Sacred Reich on the band's first four full-length albums, beginning with the 1987 Metal Blade debut, *Ignorance*, through to 1996's *Heal*.

Photography: Dilly Curtis

AMERICAN DREAM

Fender's latest Strat is anything but a vintage throwback. Meet the new do-it-all hybrid American Acoustasonic Strat

010



Following on the success of last year's Acoustasonic Telecaster, Fender launched the Acoustasonic Stratocaster at 2020's NAMM Show. For the uninitiated – if the distinctive visuals don't give it away – this Strat-shaped acoustic/electric hybrid is packing a number of hidden features under the hood.

The design is centred around a fully-hollow body (mahogany back and sides and a solid Sitka spruce top), available in five different finishes. The electronics offer the real magic, though, with a trio of sources: a Fender Noiseless magnetic pickup, Fishman Acoustasonic under-saddle piezo, and a Fishman Acoustasonic Enhancer, designed to offer percussive players a helping hand with picking up physical sound from the body.

These can be blended, of course, and the Acoustic Engine provides the acoustic modelling, allowing you to choose from a wide range of acoustic body styles, as well as more traditional electric-style magnetic sounds.

We've got our hands on one, and will be taking a closer look soon! The Fender American Acoustasonic is available now, priced £1749.

UP CLOSE



Voices

The Acoustasonic includes a number of different sounds you can dial in, from traditional dreadnoughts through to small-bodied acoustics.



Magnetic pickup

As well as the Fishman under-saddle, the Acoustasonic comes with a Fender Noiseless magnetic pickup so you can play it like a Strat for electric sounds, or blend for hybrid tones!



Yes, SIRS

Fender's SIRS (Stringed Instrument Resonance System) has been designed to allow the guitar to produce a "naturally loud, resonant voice" even when it's unplugged.



Mark checking
once again for
“lazy fingers”

12

FIVE MINUTES ALONE MARK POTTER

The Elbow guitarist discusses his weirdest gig, a Brian May meltdown and why they're often picking a Pignose

Got my first real six-string

“My first guitar didn't have a name on the headstock. It was a natural wood, Les Paul-shaped guitar, which I absolutely loved, as you do with your first guitar. My first ‘proper’ guitar was when I was lucky enough to save up and buy a Gibson SG, because my heroes at the time were Angus Young and Carlos Santana. I was always a worker, I always had a job and saved my money, so I was about 15 when I got my SG. Pretty spoilt, really, at that age.”

Break on through to the other side

“I loved Nick Drake's guitar style, early on. At that age I wasn't a fingerpicker, but it made me regularly pickup the acoustic guitar. One day, I did realise I could fingerpick to a decent standard. It felt like, ‘Oh right, I'm getting somewhere here!’ But I've got lazy little finger on my right hand that I wish I'd incorporated more. It's not quite as ‘involved’ as the others.”

Just a castaway, an island lost at sea

“One guitar, one pedal, one amp? It's got to be

the SG, the pedal would be an EHX Big Muff and the amp would be a 1959 Fender Bassman. That's a no-brainer, that. I've recently switched over to the Kemper Profiler. We just got back from a few weeks in California and, like a lucky bugger, it was waiting for me when I got home. I can't believe how great it sounds. I'll definitely be going back to the studio with it.”

Pigs on the wing

“We use the little Pignose guitars with the built-in speakers a lot and at the end of every tour, Guy (Garvey, Elbow vocalist/guitarist) will give it to the support band. They're great writing tools. That guitar is on every Elbow record we've made. The problem is we have to keep buying them! It's always like, ‘Where's the Pignose? Ah shit, we gave it away again...’ You should see Guy playing one, though: they're so small and he's such a looming figure. I've not yet convinced him to play one onstage.”

A kind of magic

“If I could have a lesson from anyone I think it would have to be Brian May. Queen were such an influence on me and my brother [Craig, keys/producer]. We actually met Brian at the 2012 Olympics. He knew who we were and it totally blew my mind. Our Stage Manager Rich House is also a huge Queen fan, and he, brilliantly, introduced himself as Brian! It was like putting your hand up and calling your teacher ‘Mum’. He gets a lot of shit for that...

Working on a dream

“My greatest strength is probably that I'm always working on my tone. I'll be in rehearsal an hour before everyone else, still tweaking my *Grounds For Divorce* sound. Guy will be like, ‘You're not *still* working on that fucking guitar sound are you?’ Then we'll play the song and he'll be like, ‘Ooh, that sounds good!’ Maybe that's a weakness as well. I wouldn't have survived in the Motown studio. They'd be like, ‘We're not getting him in, he takes five hours to start playing!’”

One day like this

“In the early 2000s, we played a Greek festival on what was, apparently, a contaminated beach. There had been some leak or something and there were signs up everywhere saying ‘Don't dip your feet in the water.’ The crosswind was so ridiculous that the town, eight miles away, heard the gig, whereas everyone stood on the beach heard nothing. The band on before us was six women, naked, but green, playing instruments they'd made out of various pieces of trees. It was an odd one!”

Elbow's new album *Live At The Ritz* is out on April 17th via Polydor.

“THE BAND BEFORE US WERE SIX WOMEN, NAKED AND GREEN, PLAYING INSTRUMENTS MADE OF TREES”

Staz Lindes of **The Paranoyds** plays the Lead III in Metallic Purple.



The Lead II & III

A blast from our past with screaming hot pickups & electric new colours.



LEAD II in Neon Green



LEAD III in Metallic Purple

Fender

Last gang in town:
"We come as
a package..."

KID KAPICHI

Hastings renegades mixing punk ferocity with Britrock psychedelia

Together we just about form one good enough singer and one good enough guitarist," jokes Kid Kapichi singer/guitarist Ben Beetham, who co-fronts the alternative rock band with singer/guitarist Jack Wilson. "I guess I tend to handle the more melodic parts while Jack goes for the more aggressive stuff. Generally, it feels quite natural in terms of who ends up singing what."

"We come as a package," nods Jack, in agreement. "Whoever is singing lead normally takes a back seat on the guitar front of that particular song."

After being playlisted by mainstream radio stations while supporting Frank Carter And The Rattlesnakes across Europe last year, the Hastings quartet are gearing up for an even bigger 2020. The two frontmen speak of sell-out tours, a busy festival season and "some very tasty support slots in the crosshairs".

More importantly, their highly anticipated debut full-length will arrive after summer, coinciding with the biggest headline tour of their career, with performances at

venues the pair say they've always dreamed of playing...

"I use a '53 reissue Tele for pretty much everything I do," says Ben, when asked what we can expect to see with him on stage. "And then that goes through a Fender Deluxe Reverb for that ghostly surf twang. I get my signature tone through using a Visual Sound Double Trouble overdrive as well as a POG2 and MXR graphic EQ. There's more

but that's as much as I'm willing to give away!"

"Like Ben, I always stick with the same guitar, which is this 1973 Strat I got when I was a kid," adds Jack. "I've never heard another Fender like it; that thing is a total monster! I plug into a Vox AC30 along with an old Big Muff I got for £20 and then add a tonne of Fender Reverb/Tremolo and an Electro-Harmonix delay."

FOR FANS OF QOTSA, Royal Blood, Slaves
GEAR Fender Strat, Fender Telecaster, Vox AC30, Fender Deluxe Reverb

**"I STICK WITH MY 1973 STRAT I GOT AS A KID
- THAT THING IS A TOTAL MONSTER!"**



NILI BROSH

The session star taking the world by storm

When she was in Cirque Du Soleil's Michael Jackson: One show, Las Vegas-based guitarist Nili Brosh was performing 10 times a week in one of the biggest residencies of its kind. Though she'd played alongside original Shrapnel Records hero Tony MacAlpine, taught where she once studied at Berklee and released three solo albums, that particular entry on her CV is one that she describes as a totally different kind of gig...

"I got to play the *Beat It* solo while shooting arcs of fire from my guitar, sometimes twice a day," she laughs, describing the experience as life-changing and otherworldly. Playing to a high level is one thing that remains consistent in anything Nili puts her mind to, and latest album *Spectrum* welds her instrumental rock influences and different worlds of sound.

FOR FANS OF Tony MacAlpine
GEAR Ibanez RG1527, Peavey JSX



VIDEO NASTIES

Make way for Liverpool's rising riff merchants

The link between heavy metal and horror stretches all the way back to when four Brummies stood outside their local cinema and decided to take their blues to devilish extremes. It's something that Merseyside black'n'rollers Video Nasties are embracing with great success...

"I started watching horror films around the same time I was getting into heavy metal," says guitarist Stu Taylor. "I'm pretty sure that the music and imagery of Iron

Maiden had something to do with that. I've always loved John Carpenter's films. He's a musician in his own right and has scored all his films himself, with an ability to make the viewer feel tense and uneasy without being predictable. The minimalist approach to his scores is something I've taken when writing our album. It's about creating a feel and not overcomplicating things."

FOR FANS OF Entombed, Kvelertak
GEAR Gordon Smith Graduate 60



MADRE SUN

WHO? The new London-based band featuring Michael Schenker's son Tyson

SOUNDS LIKE All your favourite 90s rock bands mixed together

GEAR Gibson Flying V, Orange AD30, Boss DD3, MXR Micro Amp

FOR FANS OF Alice In Chains, Stone Temple Pilots
HEAR *Trick Up The Sleeve*



LAKOTA JOHN

WHO? The 23 year-old singer/guitarist recently announced for Joe Bonamassa's annual cruise

SOUNDS LIKE Gritty and soulful ragtime blues with a slick modern production

GEAR Fritz Electro-acoustics, LR Baggs Venue DI, Fulltone OCD

FOR FANS OF Blind Willie McTell, Reverend Gary Davis
HEAR *The Winds Of Time*



FALSE ADVERTISING

WHO? The UK grunge trio welding big riffs into poppy hooks

SOUNDS LIKE A band signed to Sub Pop Records around the end of the 80s

GEAR Maton MS T-Byrd, Fender Twin Reverb 1975 Silverface, EHX Green Russian Big Muff

FOR FANS OF Placebo, Smashing Pumpkins
HEAR *Brainfreeze*

1 "It's a black Gibson Les Paul Classic with a white pickguard. I changed the knobs, they're white now, though there's one which is red. I actually thought about the finish before I got it and realised it had to be black. Black with white feels seamless – you can use it any context and it will not stand out. It won't be overlooked, either, being such a beautiful instrument. I wouldn't go with an all-black guitar though, the white elements and details like the binding are very important. None of my heroes played a Les Paul, I guess. I didn't really want to go for a classic colour like Sunburst or Lemonburst, because that's all been done!"

Interview Amit Sharma Photo Rawfoto.se/Gustaf Sandholm Andersson

ME AND MY GUITAR

DAVE DALONE

H.E.A.T.

For kicking ass in Sweden's best melodic hard rock band since Europe, Dave's weapon of choice is his Gibson Les Paul Classic

2 "I was a Strat guy my whole life. I only played Fenders until about four or five years ago. Les Pauls are such beautiful instruments, I guess I just fell in love with the looks of them. It made me rethink my rig. I wanted a Strat sound but in a Les Paul body, which was an issue at first, but I ended up falling in love with the feel and scale-length of a Gibson. I definitely remember Les Pauls catching my eye at the beginning, it just took me a few years on a Strat to find my way there! I also really love the look of the Grover vintage tuners that this model comes with."

3 "Everything in this guitar is bone-stock except for those knobs. I haven't actually checked, but I'd be surprised if those weren't the regular Gibson pickups inside. I have another Japanese Les Paul, a Burny from 1983, which I've been experimenting with that currently has a DiMarzio PAF in it. There's a chance I might swap these ones out if I find something I really like. There's no split-coil mode, these are just regular humbuckers."

4 "I use 10-46 gauge Elixir Strings as we play in standard tuning. They last a lot longer! When I'm touring, say if we're out for three weeks playing a lot of shows in a row, I'll always try to stick with Elixir because they are so durable and you don't need to worry about them snapping as much as you do with uncoated strings. In the studio, however, I tend to prefer uncoated strings like DR or Ernie Balls, but for touring, it's all about the Elixirs. You don't need to change them after every show, they don't seem to get sweaty or rusty."

5 "It has a flake torn off on the back side of the headstock, some belt scrapes on the back and some by the pickup selector which is pretty odd... It must have been from the previous owner. There are also some scratches near the volume knob – when I changed the knobs, I noticed they'd been glued into the pots. I actually had to crush them to get them off! Which, unfortunately, left a few marks..."

The album *H.E.A.T. II* is out now.



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Rabea

launch your tone into the ambient-sphere

Photo: Max Taylor-Grant

Bare Knuckle

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Bob Marley:
A man who needs
no introduction

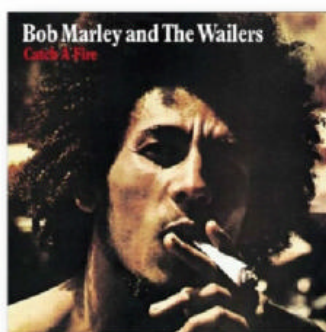


BACK TRACK

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

REGGAE

With its signature offbeat rhythms, reggae is one of contemporary music's most recognisable forms, combining Jamaican folk elements with other sounds from urban America to create a music that has reached far beyond Kingston's shores. Similar to funk, reggae guitar plays a more submissive role, but despite this, its staccato chords – originating in the acoustic polyrhythms of Afro-Caribbean folk – can be heard not just in the hits of Bob Marley, but also in rock acts The Clash, The Police and No Doubt.



START WITH THE WAILERS CATCH A FIRE (1973)

Although *Catch A Fire* signalled The Wailers' arrival to an international audience, the band had already been recording for the better part of a decade, cutting their teeth on ska covers of *What's New Pussycat?* before falling in with legendary producer Lee 'Scratch' Perry and evolving into the finely-tuned ensemble of their major label debut. There's precious few six-string heroics here: Peter Tosh and Bob Marley's guitar lines are modest but tight (and more prominent in the mix than most reggae of the time), with Muscle Shoals guitarist Wayne Perkins adding soulful leads to *Stir It Up* and *Concrete Jungle*. Sublime songwriting sells itself, however, and this album has it in spades.

Download *Concrete Jungle*



THEN TRY TOOTS & THE MAYTALS In The Dark (1973)

2 Alongside the Wailers, the Maytals have long been considered one half of reggae's yin & yang, with frontman Toots Hibbert even coining the term "reggay" to describe the more laid-back direction that ska had taken in the late 60s. Eschewing themes of Rastafarianism and militant activism, songs like *Love's Gonna Walk Out On Me* and *Time Tough* are more closely aligned with the rich soul and spirituals of Stax Records. A perfect cover of John Denver's *Take Me Home, Country Roads* adds some Caribbean skank to the country classic, while 54-46 *Was My Number* reinforces the familiar staccato rhythm with an infectiously simple riff.

Download 54-46 Was My Number



WORTH A SPIN BURNING SPEAR Marcus Garvey (1975)

5 While a spirit of protest defines much of 70s roots reggae, few albums are as sharply politicised as *Burning Spear's* exploration of black culture and spiritual identity, realised with the help of an all-star backing band including Aggrovators' guitarists Earl Smith and Tony Chin. Themes of poverty and division course through many of the tracks here, most arrestingly on calypso-tinged *Slavery Days*, while the funky title track jostles with all the brass and bass of a James Brown number. *Red, Gold And Green* gets top marks, though, for combining a suite of Caribbean-infused licks with the familiar chanking riffs.

Download Red, Gold And Green



DON'T MISS OUT PETER TOSH Equal Rights (1977)

3 Though *Equal Rights* lacks some of the bile present in Tosh's early 70s cuts (revenge fantasy *Here Comes The Judge* remains a horrifying trip), it benefits from a more focussed polemic and sharper songwriting, the former Wailer joined on guitar by Al Anderson, fresh from a stint on Bob Marley's *Natty Dread*. Anderson adds an American sensibility to many songs here, like the smouldering, bluesy lead on a reimagined *Get Up, Stand Up* and the psychedelic intro of *Stepping Razor*, the latter underpinned with some Jimmy Nolen style wah-wah; indeed, there's a moody, half-speed funkiness throughout, particularly on *Jah Guide* and the superb *Downpressor Man*.

Download Downpressor Man



WILD CARD SCIENTIST Meets The Space Invaders (1981)

6 No mere half-hearted knob-twiddler, dub impresario Scientist enlisted the much sought-after Roots Radics Band to record for this barmy cut-and-paste masterpiece, including versatile session guitarist Bingy Bunny. There's a whiff of infamous 60s producer Joe Meek in the sludgy, deconstructed reggae of *Time Warp* and *Pulsar*, as Bunny's sunshine licks dissipate in ripples of subterranean reverb, while *Cloning Process* and *Quasar's* stark sense of emptiness lay the foundations for British trip-hop acts like Massive Attack.

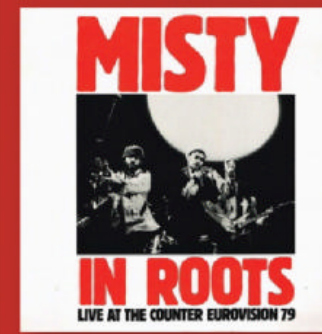
Download Quasar



ALSO RECOMMENDED THE CONGOS Heart Of The Congos (1977)

4 Label disputes and the infamous eccentricities of producer Lee 'Scratch' Perry nearly did it for The Congos' debut, with barely a handful of copies released amid whispers of a record label conspiracy to protect the sales figures of Bob Marley's *Exodus*. Backed by Perry's house band, The Upsetters (including influential ska/jazz guitarist Ernest Ranglin), the songs here are marked by a dense, melodic richness, the soulful vocal harmonies an echo of mid-60s rocksteady on the breezy *Children Crying* and *La La Bam-Bam*. Meanwhile, the offbeat skank that Ranglin helped popularise cuts through the murky production most noticeably on the phaser-steeped *Fisherman*.

Download Fisherman



LIVE! MISTY IN ROOTS Live At The Counter Eurovision (1979)

7 Cherished by diehards (including DJ John Peel) as one of reggae's finest live cuts and a landmark British release, the debut from west London's Misty In Roots crackles with the same spirit of protest that, two years later, would erupt in a wave of violent riots across England. Opener *Man Kind* glowers with Old Testament venom, while highlight *Ghetto Of The City* unfolds into fiery, groove-heavy jams. Though the guitar gets a little lost in the wilderness at times, the sum here is greater than its parts.

Download Ghetto Of The City

GETTING STARTED WITH... CHORDS FOR SOLOS

Ditch scale shapes and use chord tones for a creative approach to your first guitar solos

“Okay, what on Earth is chord tone soloing?”

Solos are usually accompanied by a set of chords called a progression. Each chord contains notes – these are the chord tones. In this situation, though, we’re going to play them individually (known as an ‘arpeggio’) and use them for soloing.

“Surely chords are chords? How do you use them in solos?”

Some guitarists like to map their lead lines – either by writing solos in advance or by being skilled improvisers – to these chords to give their playing a synergy with the rest of the music. The most effective way of doing this is to use the notes from the chords being played.

“Gotta be honest, I’m feeling a little intimidated right now...”

Chord tone soloing can get really complex, but don’t get bogged down in the theory at this stage; just aim to incorporate some notes from chords in your playing. If you know the chords in the music, you’re equipped with loads of notes that’ll work in a solo.

“If I’m not getting deep into the theory, what’s the point?”

If you base your leads on scales exclusively

there’s a tendency to move around the scale by playing the next highest or lowest note – this quickly gets old and leaves your solos sounding like streams of notes that are the musical equivalent of repeatedly going up and down a ladder. Using chord tones automatically produces bigger jumps between notes (aka ‘intervals’) and can be a platform for some really creative ideas.

“That sounds interesting, where can I hear it in action?”

You can hear jazz pioneer Charlie Christian deftly playing over fast chord changes in the jaw-dropping *Solo Flight*. It doesn’t always have to be so technical, though. Slash’s main theme in Guns N’ Roses’ *Estranged* shows how chord tones’ bigger intervals can be used to create a catchy melody.

“I’m sold! Where do I start?”

The first step is to get these new note combinations under your fingers. They will feel odd at first, especially when you have to move across strings on adjacent notes. The first tab exercise shows you the notes/tones from G, Am, Bm and C chords. Our second example shows how you can add a smattering of this new approach to a lead guitar lick.

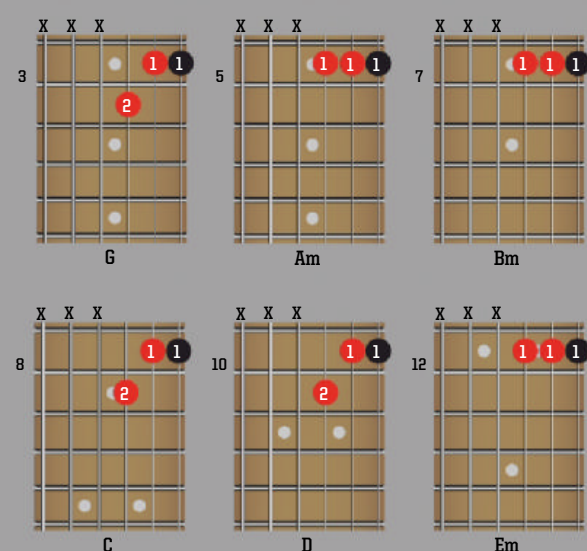
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ What chord tones are
- ✓ Simple ways to use them in solos
- ✓ A lick using chord tones

MORE CHORDS...

Learn the chords, memorise the notes, play better solos!

These six chords are all from the same key (G major, as it happens), but they’re not bog-standard open shapes. Plotted across the highest strings and ascending the fretboard, they’re perfectly suited to wailing leads – once you start playing chord tones, anyway!



Step 1.

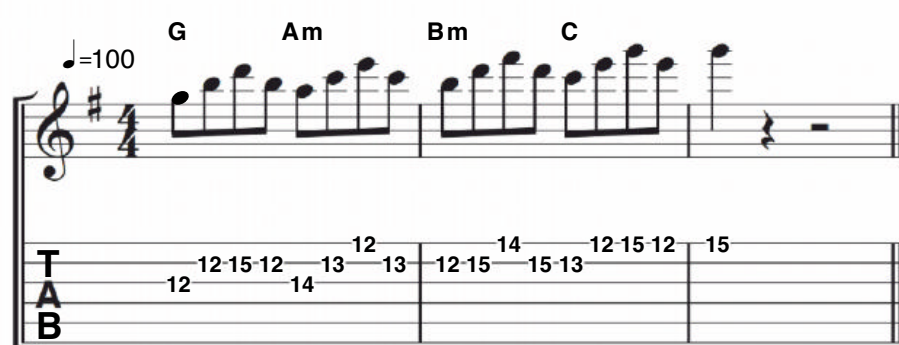
Play each chord as a chord – just strum like any other chord, taking care to keep the idle strings quiet.

Step 2.

Now think ‘lead guitar’, and play each note from each chord separately.

1 G, AM, BM AND C CHORD TONES

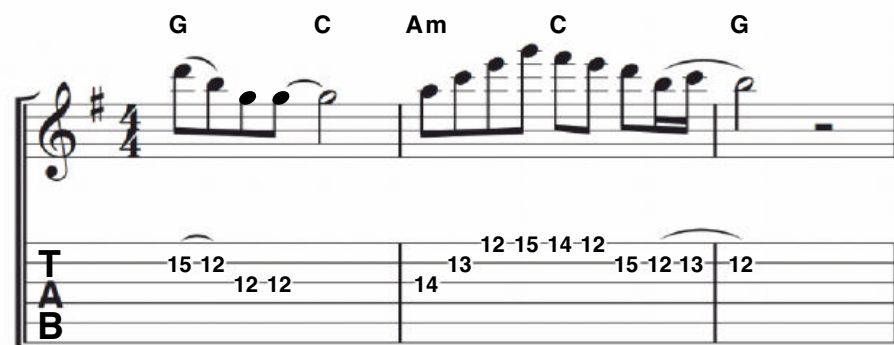
TRACK 07



Start very slowly and gradually build up speed. Make sure none of the notes bleed into each other.

2 LEAD GUITAR LICK

TRACK 08



Play the scale a few times before attempting this melodic lick. This will help you get used to how the scale sits under your fingers.



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THE FX FILES TG'S CLASSIC STOMPBOX GUIDE



VOLUME:

The volume control simply controls the output level of the pedal, dumping unwanted signal to ground.

GAIN:

This controls the amount of volume gain in the op-amp amplifier stage, and as a result, the amount of clipping as well.

TONE:

The tone control is a treble filter, though due to how the voice control operates, it's highly interactive with that.

VOICE:

The voice pot can be used to dial out some of the bass from the signal, but also affects the maximum amount of gain available. As a result, the voice knob's ability to darken the guitar tone is more pronounced.

HERMIDA AUDIO ZENDRIVE

One of the first pedals to be marketed as an 'amp in a box', the Zendrive's Dumble-like sound made it a word-of-mouth smash after its release in 2004



he Zendrive was designed by former NASA engineer Alfonso Hermida after he heard Robben Ford's version of *Golden Slumbers*, and wanted to recreate the guitar tone he heard on the track. Little did he know, that the sound was the product of an unobtainium Dumble amplifier. His first attempt, the Mosferatu, was a failure – Hermida managed to get it into Ford's hands, but the amount of gain Ford had used on that track wasn't his style.

Returning to an earlier design for a pedal that was lower gain, Hermida ended up striking a better balance, and the Zendrive was born. Initially, it only had three controls, with the 'voice' control that governs the bass response being a later addition. Ford was ultimately so taken with the Zendrive that he was seen playing through it into a Fender Twin, yet still able to replicate his tone.

The Zendrive uses an unusual method to generate its clipping – it uses MOSFET transistors as clipping diodes, giving it a somewhat unique, low-gain voicing. Very distinctive by itself, many players also found that it stacked well with other pedals, and a popular trick is to pair a Zendrive and a Timmy – although conventional wisdom on the correct order varies.

In the 2010s, Lovepedal took over production, meaning that the price – and scarcity – of the Zendrive declined, but many players will say that the 'true' Zendrives are those produced before the Lovepedal version, or those still produced as limited runs by Hermida himself. There have been several modifications to the circuit since, usually marked by a different colour enclosure.

THE 'THUMP' OF THE OVERDRIVE SHOWED THAT THINKING OUTSIDE-THE-BOX COULD STILL REWARD PEDAL BUILDERS

UNDER THE INFLUENCE



JOYO TAICHI

FROM £50

For a rugged, no-nonsense clone of the Zendrive that's through-hole, uses the same parts as the original and even looks pretty cool, in a metal-and-glass-building kind of way, look no further than the JOYO Taichi. It's a part-for-part clone of the Zendrive, so there's not really much to report other than that, yes, it sounds like a Zendrive.



ZENDRIVE 2

DISCONTINUED!

It's no longer manufactured, and used prices are pretty extreme, but Hermida's next iteration of the Zendrive was even more eccentric. Where the original used MOSFET transistors, the Zendrive 2 used a 12AX7 valve purely for clipping. Although it wasn't a success on the scale of the first Zendrive, it's arguably a more interesting device.



WAMPLER EUPHORIA

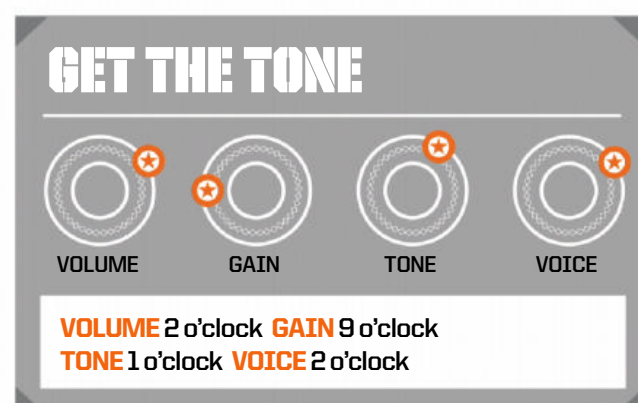
FROM £183

Although it's not a clone of the Zendrive, the Wampler Euphoria also aims to emulate the 'Dumble sound'. It sounds different to the Zendrive, and, well, different to a Dumble too, but it's an interesting enough drive that takes inspiration from the Tube Screamer and Paul Cochrane's Timmy.

CLASSIC TONES

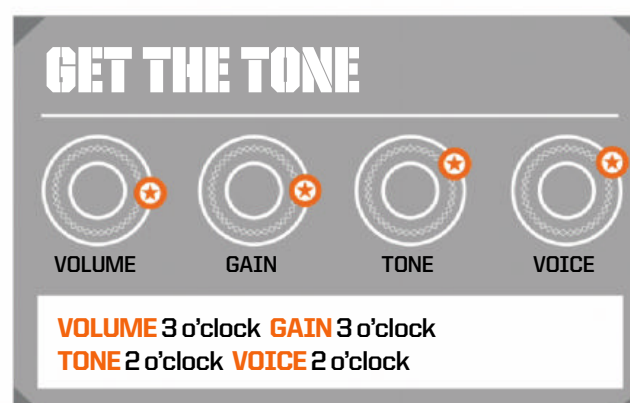
GET THE TONE #1 DYNAMIC BLUES

On a neck single-coil, this is a dynamic, expressive solo tone that has the singing, resonant sustain that you can expect when rolling back tone at the guitar and amp, as well as a bit more body to the guitar on account of the extra gain and volume brought to the table by the Zendrive. It's responsive to picking dynamics as well as rolling back the volume at the guitar end.



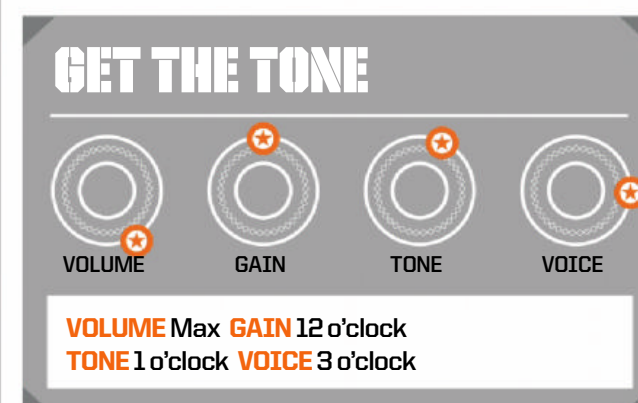
GET THE TONE #2 MID-FORWARD RHYTHM

For a thicker, less dynamic sound, the Zendrive needs to be slammed, as it's a relatively low-gain pedal. By increasing both the gain and the volume substantially, into our 5W studio tube amp we found that we got a decent amount of saturation from both pedal and amp. To our ear, the tone and voice can also need a slight adjustment to taste as you up the gain.



GET THE TONE #3 UNDONE

With a Gibson Les Paul Standard on the rear pickup, we found that this setting – with some chorus, naturally – was a dead-ringer for the expressive, lower-gain guitar sound found on the classic Failure track *Undone*, just going to show that the Zendrive is by no means a one-trick blues pony.



Our short backing track is a jam around an Am-Dm chord progression. Try strumming along on the chords, playing arpeggios or writing your own licks using notes from the chords

WHAT THE

THEORY MADE EASY

THIS MONTH...

Improve your playing and get to grips with the theory behind minor chords



For many guitarists, music theory is often considered a bit of a grind. TG's opinion on this thorny subject? We would argue that theory can help you become a much better player. Understand a few essential basics and you'll fuel your creative fire in new ways.

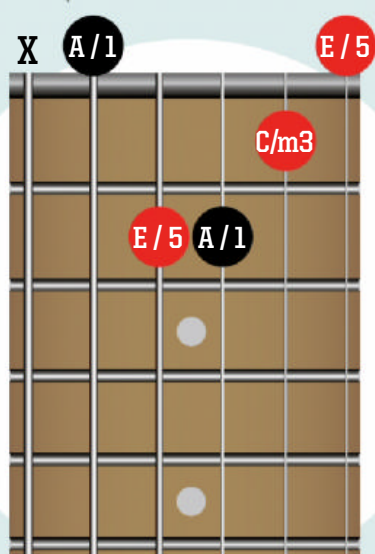
All of which brings us on to the subject of this month's tutorial. As guitarists, we all play minor chords every time we pick up the instrument – they definitely count as essential basics! The thing is, those chords can be played

in countless different ways. For instance, they can be broken down into arpeggios where you play the notes one at a time. Or, alternatively, if you know how a chord is built, you can use it as a pool of notes to base a solo around. You see where we're going?

Here then, we're looking at the structure of those everyday minor chords you already know. The shapes are of course nice and easy. See if you can find the notes of the chords in other parts of the fretboard and you'll soon be playing new chord shapes and new licks all around the neck.

A MINOR PROBLEM! 1

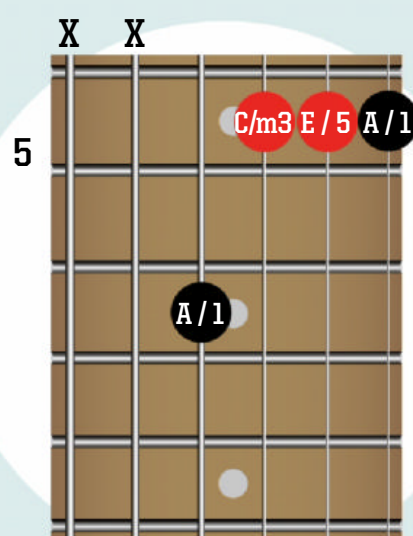
Here's an A minor chord – you recognise the shape, right? It's a mix of A, C and E notes; the intervals are a root note (A, shown as a '1' here), a minor 3rd (C) and a 5th (E). They're called '1', '3' and '5' because they're the first, third and fifth notes of the A 'natural' minor scale (A B C D E F G). Still with us?



Am (notes & intervals)

2 MOVING ON UP

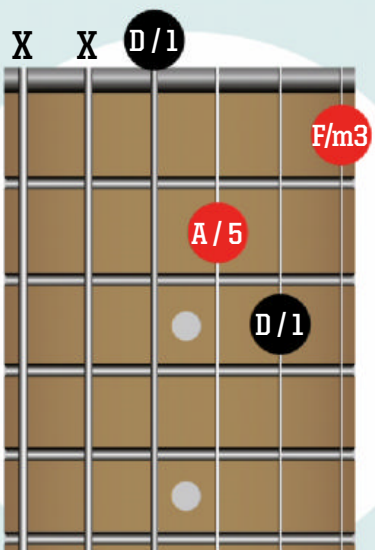
The guitar is unusual because most notes are repeated in various places on the fretboard. With that in mind, here's another A minor chord. Same notes and intervals – just arranged in a slightly different order. So what? Well, each shape will inspire you to play new riffs and licks – each one falls differently under your fingers after all. The more shapes you learn, the more creative you'll get.



Am (notes & intervals)

EASY D MINOR 3

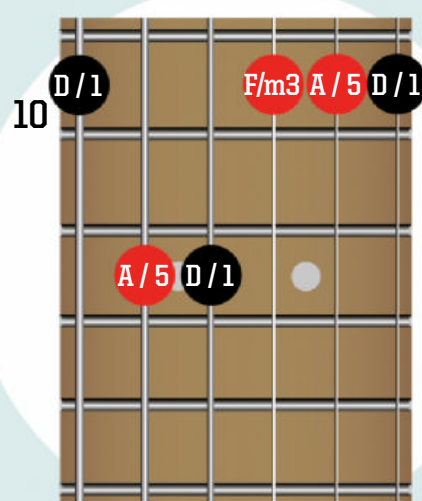
Another easy chord – this time, D minor. Again, there's a root note (D, of course!), a minor 3rd (F) and a 5th (A) – the first, third and fifth notes in D minor (D E F G A B, C). The gaps between D, F and A are the same as the gaps between A, C and E – and it's the same for all minor chords. Just start on a new root note and work out the minor 3rd and 5th intervals.



Dm (notes & intervals)

4 D MINOR HIGHER UP

Hammering the point home, here's another D minor chord. Once again, it's a mix of D, F and A notes – the root, minor 3rd and 5th intervals. It's worth knowing the difference between minor and major 3rds too. A minor 3rd is three semitones above the root note and has a mournful sound; a major 3rd is four semitones above the root and makes the chord sound bright and happy.



Asus4 (notes & intervals)

OWN THE LOW END

JS SERIES **SPECTRA BASS** JS3VQ

Introducing the new Jackson Spectra Bass JS3VQ – an assertive instrument featuring a sleek offset Spectra body shape with large upper horn for precise balance and playing comfort, rippling quilt maple top for added style, and a speedy 12"-16" compound radius fingerboard that is the ideal platform for intricate riffing. Perfectly voiced Jackson pickups provide full depth and power, with a push/pull volume control (active/passive mode) and flexible EQ controls for fully customizable tone.

Jackson

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The Nova Twins sound is an assaultive, all-frequencies experience. It's a melting pot, an electric stew of UK grime and hip-hop, subversive pop, punk rock and saw-wave skronk, seasoned liberally with heavily-processed guitar. There's a sense of chaos, of the ground giving way beneath you. This being music, that feeling is illusory. You can't compose chaos, but as Nova Twins guitarist and vocalist Amy Love explains, when you feel totally free to create, you can get pretty darn close. Love formed Nova Twins with bassist Georgia South about five years ago, maybe longer – Love is hazy on the details. But this she does remember: their sound evolved under their own steam. "Georgia's parents are musical," says Love. "For years, they always encouraged us just to be as creative as we could, to do what we wanted no matter how crazy or weird it might have sounded. We were encouraged to be weird and wonderful."

It helped that there was no one scene where Love felt at home in. Her mum would play Toni Braxton and Whitney around the house. Love naturally gravitated towards bands such as the New York Dolls, MC5 and Deep Purple. Their energy was infectious, setting certain expectations as to how energy could transform a live performance, and yet, inspired as she was, Love still felt she was experiencing it from a remove. "I am half-Iranian and half-Nigerian," she says. "I think when you are already from different cultures and backgrounds, you already don't necessarily feel like you can fit in. You do feel on the outside sometimes, and I think when that happens you look elsewhere. There was no point where I thought, 'This is where I belong'. I had the privilege to just walk around and take my pick. Obviously, the people who looked like me were in the hip-hop category, so I was looking at people like Missy Elliott and Destiny's Child, and more R&B/hip-hop artists. I think that is why it is quite a broad sound and it crosses over."

Nova Twins are a guitar band, for sure. You could think of them as the quintessential power trio, with drummer Tim Nugent rounding out the lineup and laying down quicksilver rhythms for Love and South to build upon. Typically, that'll leave space for guitar, but with Nova Twins, Love has to search for the

CHAOS TH

Words Jonathan Horsley





EDRY

**“WE WERE
ENCOURAGED TO
BE WEIRD AND
WONDERFUL.”**

AMY LOVE

ON THE **NOVA TWINS**’ INCENDIARY DEBUT, *WHO ARE THE GIRLS?*, AMY LOVE APPLIES A PUNK-ROCK ETHOS TO A BASS-HEAVY, PROPULSIVE SOUND, AND DRAGS THE ELECTRIC GUITAR OUT OF ITS COMFORT ZONE. DARE YOU FOLLOW SUIT?

frequencies in which her guitar can do the most damage. Often she will use it as texture, as raw, organic material fighting for air time with the drums and South’s bass. South is an inveterate tone

seeker, augmenting her bass with an array of stompboxes. Her signal path is jealously guarded but we’d suspect there is some hefty synth pedals on her board, perhaps a pandaMidi Future Impact V3 or a Boss SYB-5.

Love is similarly adventurous with pedals but also similarly coy. What she is prepared to say is that she uses a ProCo Rat, a tuner, and has only added one pedal in the last two years. “Georgia would kill me if I divulged anything!” she protests. “But I like Crazy Tube Circuits, Boss, EarthQuaker Devices...” In the studio, producer Jim Abbiss would wheel out more pedals to try. But they weren’t looking to fine-tune the recording. On the contrary, Abbiss’ role was in trying to get capture the intensity of the Nova Twins live sound onto tape; the last thing the recording needed was housetraining. “Jim wasn’t into fucking around with things too much,” says Love. “It wasn’t like, ‘Let’s neaten this and quantize this. Let’s clean up the drums.’ If there was a glitch with the pedals, it would be celebrated like it was a really cool thing.”

As for guitars, Love uses a Gretsch Double Jet in Firebird Red, which she runs through a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe combo. “I use Fender amps because, again, they’re a bit more true sounding,” she explains. “It really complements your sound when you use a lot of pedals.” Thereafter, it’s about finding a tone that will cut through and be heard. “Because the bass is so wide and low, I tend to also go super-high, like a falsetto range,” says Love. “Especially with the sound being so heavy, I tend to play higher octaves up the neck because it is a way for it to cut through.” It’s not subtle, but then that’s not the Nova Twins’ MO. If you’re going to dismantle conceptions of genre and construct an empowering sound that’s all your own, where’s the use in being subtle? “It’s quite shrill and abrasive, but in the best way!” says Love. “It works for the us.” **Nova Twins’ debut album, *Who Are The Girls?* is out now on 333 Wreckords Crew.**

EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE

Words Amit Sharma
Photography James Sharrock

28



W

ith his debut solo album released this month, Radiohead guitarist Ed O'Brien welcomes TG into the London studio where the album was recorded, and talks in depth about his creative process, the vast array of guitars and gear he uses, the influences that shaped his new music – from electronica to Keith Richards and Rush – and his role in one of the world's most important guitar bands...



➔ “It’s magnificent... Like an old Rolls Royce,” says Radiohead guitarist Ed O’Brien, pointing to the Cadac desk which once belonged to his main band and ended up being sold to producers Alan Moulder and Flood. It was here at West London’s Assault & Battery Studios, with Moulder and Flood, that O’Brien recorded and mixed parts of his first solo record as EOB. Prior to that, the analogue console had resided at Wessex Sound Studios and was used to track some of the greatest rock albums of the late 70s, including the Sex Pistols’ *Never Mind The Bollocks*, The Clash’s *London Calling* and Queen’s *Sheer Heart Attack*. This old console has earned its place in history – and the same could be said of O’Brien himself.

As a founding member of one of the most important guitar bands in popular music, O’Brien has been the recipient of countless awards and accolades, although he chooses not to dwell on such merits. Instead, he is the kind of musician who prefers to live in the present – you quickly get the impression he only measures himself on what he has in front of him right now. Over an afternoon of walking TG through the guitars, amps and pedals used on *Earth*, plucking through Beatlesy closer *Cloak Of The Night* on his Martin during our photo shoot, the Radiohead guitarist is every bit as earnest and sincere as the music he is known for.

“It’s funny, because people thought this would be more of an ambient album or textural kind of thing,” he says, when told this latest work is surprisingly guitar-heavy in places. “Maybe that’s what they see as my role in Radiohead. A lot of the responses so far have been like, ‘I had no idea you’d do something like this,’ which is always great to hear. With this, I wanted to make something very direct, but I guess with all that texture and colour, too...”

You started writing in Brazil. Was the environment reflected in what you came out with?

“For me, being in Brazil made me feel like I had time... And it had been years since I felt like that. I could dedicate myself to being a songwriter because I never really had the time before or worked out how to do it. I’d written bits and pieces like getting the computer out, a lot of electronic gear and making something electronic, but after about six weeks I wasn’t getting anything back. Normally you get over the hump



“I SAW MY MARTIN SITTING IN THE CORNER AND ALL I WANTED WAS TO PLAY IT”

of things and know where to give it a start. Then I saw my Martin 000 sitting in the corner and I realised all I wanted to do was pick it up and start playing it. And so I did – I thought, ‘Fuck this, let’s do what I want to do rather than what I think I should be doing!’”

So the foundation was more guitar than synth?

“It was a real eye-opener, which started the process. When we moved back to Britain in 2013 – playing that Martin acoustic in my shed, that’s when things really started happening. I found a way of writing that worked for me. I got out of the way, basically. I let it happen and stayed in that semi-meditative state that this stuff gets written in. Once I started demoing with Ian Davenport at Courtyard Studios in Oxfordshire, it was like, ‘Okay – yeah, I want to make a solo record now’. I didn’t know if I would be singing or someone else would, it was

SHANGRI-LA
O’Brien in West London’s Assault & Battery studios, March 2020

more a case of one step at a time, so I did some guide vocals which were enough to start dreaming it all up.”

What’s the story behind the Martin?

“I bought it in LA around 2009. We were there for the Grammy Awards as *In Rainbows* was up for Best Album. I had a bit of a spree during that trip; I just felt like I needed some new instruments. I bought that, a ’72 Tele and an old ’68 Fender amp, some kind of 6x10 Silverface. I actually bought the Martin from that big store on Sunset, Guitar Center, because they had a big vintage section. I don’t really know what the good shit is, I’m somebody who picks things up to find out. I felt there was a nice tone to it. I wanted something old, wood and folky. It had to feel like it was of the trees and woods.”

Speaking of which, there’s a folky side of you on these recordings that

LONG TIME COMING

O'Brien's 'surprisingly' guitar-heavy album was born out of him doing what he wanted to do; not what he felt he should

we hadn't quite heard in Radiohead...

"That's probably because it's never been in Radiohead! Those parts were the kind of thing that Thom would come up with – he'll have written a song on his acoustic guitar so those kinds of rhythm picky bits he would play. I mean, *Street Spirit (Fade Out)* is the only thing I can think of which he had written but I played. I did the arpeggio thing, but I can't remember why I ended up playing it. So those are traditionally his parts. My role in Radiohead is different. One of the things I've loved about this whole project is I get to play *all* the guitars! I love all the sonics and sound stuff, but I really love playing rhythm guitar and bass, too."

The guitars on opening track *Shangri-La* get pretty hairy at points. What exactly are we hearing?

"That was the Martin going through a distortion pedal and into an amp.

I really like how it combined with the bass, that gave it a genuine edge. I'm really into that whole Keith Richards thing, how he used distorted acoustics on songs like *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. I love distorted electric sounds but they can be so... I don't want to say 'cliché', because that's not fair, but I can be a bit of a sonic snob, if you like. The greatest distorted guitar sound was Steve Jones on *Never Mind The Bollocks*. That's how a distorted guitar should sound in my mind. A lot of distorted guitar sounds these days don't have that element of danger, they're almost too slick. I like it a bit more crunchy, edgy and not quite right, I guess."

That song also features some heavily delayed, pitch-shifted guitars – which recur throughout the nine tracks...

"That's just the Digitech Whammy and my old Electro-Harmonix Memory Man,

with the vibrato of the chorus right up so it's modulating. There's a bit of a trail, maybe some reverb on there, but mainly delay. I've been using a Memory Man for years... I used to call it the 'God' pedal. Everything that goes through it is amazing. That and the Whammy got used all over the album. They're both such important pedals for me. There's something about the Memory Man that frames the sound so beautifully, it takes off the edge – because the Whammy can be a harsh pedal, it makes me roll my tone off. I love that side of playing. The guitar to me is a bit like an oscillator on a synthesizer, it's the start of a sound rather than the sound in itself. I love the purity of an acoustic and an electric, but I guess coming from Radiohead I'm more used to treating the guitar like a synthesizer and processing it that way. Anything that can take you into a new range, like a Whammy, is very useful."

Especially in a three-guitar band like Radiohead...

"Exactly, Thom might have put something down and how we might arrive there as a band when there's not much room left. You have to work out what frequencies are missing, so I've ended up using things like Whammy pedals or even capos a lot. I like space and air in songs. I hate songs that are full-on the whole way through. Well, I don't hate them but I guess we came from a lot of Britpop in the 90s with distorted guitars the whole way through. We got fed up of that quickly and began to realise space is more important. There needs to be things higher, lower and in the middle but with enough separation. You want riffs and melodies that interweave with one another in different registers."

Would we be right in guessing a lot of the 'synths' in the song *Brasil* are actually heavily effected guitars?

"You would, there's the acoustic guitar in the beginning but in the second half where it goes more dance there are so many guitars in the background. The high chiming thing is a guitar. Every part that sounds like a synth is multitracked sustainer guitars, like the string-section of an orchestra. Even the deeper bass notes, is a Spanish guitar played in a way that sounds more like a sequencer. Most people would be surprised by how much guitar there is on that track!"



Custom Shop Les Paul, made in 1996, I think, and it's a great guitar that sounds lovely.

It's all over the album,

actually. It's on *Shangri-La* and a few others, only for clean stuff – sounding so round and warm. It might have been the neck pickup but could even be the bridge with the tone knob turned off a bit, because it's still warm compared to a single-coil. I played my 1964 Epiphone bass with a single pickup, which sounds really dubby, fat and thick. And I also used a classic 1964 P-Bass too in blue, which plays really nice."

As for amps, what are the main ones you stuck with?

"I mainly used Audio Kitchen, the Little Chopper and the Big Chopper, as well as my Lazy J 20. Those were the main amps for this record. Lazy J is made by a guy in Surrey who builds these Fender Deluxe à la Neil Young-spec amps. They're really solid and sound brilliant. Flood and Alan Moulder got me into the Audio Kitchens, so that's what I've been using live in Radiohead – two Big Choppers with two 1x12 cabs and they sound mental."

DEEP DAYS

TG's seemingly 15-hour chat with Ed was even more in-depth than we'd dreamt of...

Brazilian beat. Initially I wanted it to sound like this Brazilian artist called Jorge Ben, but then get heavier in a T-Rex sort of way during the choruses. But it wasn't working, so I programmed a drum machine and we put this electro version of the track on top and crunched up the guitars. It's a bit of a hybrid. I guess it's the angriest song and the nearest to Radiohead around *The Bends* or *OK Computer*. I was aware of that when doing it. Your instinct is to react against what you've done in the past, but I realised that's what the song needed – a distorted chorus – so I just went with it. Johnny Marr actually said something great to me once and that was, 'Don't be scared of sounding like yourself at times' and by that he meant it's alright to do new stuff and if there's an element of your past in there, so be it. That's totally fine. It's no detriment to the song."

What kind of electric guitars are we hearing on *Earth*?

"My Telecaster got used a lot. I think the main guitars on this record were the Tele and the EOB Strat, plus my 335 for *Long Time Coming*. I used my

Deep Days has some South American qualities to it – nylon strings, Dorian tonalities...

"I don't know the theory behind it – clearly you do! (Laughs) In places like Brazil, rhythm, pulse, groove or tempo is everything. People might not even be able to play an instrument, but they're instant jazz aficionados because they understand the rhythm and the samba. It should be danced to, and essentially they're all dancers! The swing and BPM of that track was really important. We had a bit of a discussion with the engineers because they were younger and wanted to knock it down from 78BPM. We tried it at 76 and they were saying it felt more like hip-hop. I had to explain it's not hip-hop and I knew what they meant, but it had to feel slightly pushed. What's interesting is this song couldn't have come through at any other tempo. It simply wouldn't have arrived at 76 or 80 or 88."

Elsewhere, *Banksters* seems to revisit some of the alternative rock sounds you started out playing...

"That might be because it's in 7/8. It's the mongrel of all these tracks. When I wrote it, there was more of a light

MASS

Just a few of the pedals on Ed's expansive, ever-changing 'board



What about pedals? You're renowned for your heavy usage of effects...

"This is my live board with me today, I also have a studio one. There's a Whammy on there, a Deluxe Memory Man, an Origin Cali76, plus a Catalinbread Belle Epoch Deluxe Delay – they make such a great preamp I use that as well. For the delay, they used all the same power, preamp and components as an Echoplex, the only difference is that the delay is digital and not tape, but it still sounds amazing. The Kingsley Page is my boost – it's just a great tube kick to give things a bit more hair and thicken the signal a bit. I also have a ThorpyFX Mushroom Cloud, their version of the Big Muff, which I used a bit too. I also own a Hologram Electronics Infinite Jets. I love that thing, it's like an amazing synthesizer. I invited the guy who made it, Ryan Schaefer, to a Radiohead show. He told me he was trying to build this pedal that you literally had on your shelf but don't necessarily use the whole time. It helps create sounds that are different, you won't be

sure how you got there... But you did! It's one of those go-to pedals when you need something unusual. It makes your guitar stutter or sound like an accordion with backwards reverb. It's seriously good."

Are there any other pedals that aren't on this board that you like to use?

"I'm also a big fan of Chase Bliss Audio pedals. They're made by Joel Korte and he has this new pedal out called the Blooper. I used his red delay pedal a lot on this album, it sounds fantastic. I also went to Soundgas who are up in Derbyshire and bought a Binson Echorec P609 or 603. It's a great delay. I also bought a Roland Space Echo and a Korg Chorus Echo – all tape echoes – plus an Echoplex EP2. You could say tape delays are really important for me! I also used the old Kord SDD-3000 from the 80s. It's probably one of the main reasons I don't use the Timeline as much, it's so pristine. The Belle Epoch and Memory Man are fantastic analogue delays with amazing chips in them."

You certainly have plenty of options when it comes to delay...

"I find delay really inspiring, but it needs to have character. There's another one I have, the Meris Polymoon, which is also great. I haven't dug deep enough but it's such a cool delay with some great features like flanging and pitch-shifting. I needed a pedalboard that could do the job but also have enough future potential. When you get pedals, you have to invest time into those sounds. You need something you can investigate and dig deep on. This is great for that. I only really use the Timeline for its built-in looper. I also used a wah pedal a lot to sweep and take off the top. On *Olympik*, it's the wah going into a Memory Man and it sounds like a Rhodes when you get the delay right. People have been doing that for years, Mick Ronson did that a lot and Matt Johnson from The The was similar."

There's a fair few guest appearances, too, from Nathan East and David Uoley to Laura Marling and another member of Radiohead...

"I had some incredible musicians playing on this – drummers Omar Hakim and Glenn Kotche, Nathan East and Colin Greenwood on bass, Laura Marling, David Okumu and Adrian Uoley (Portishead) on guitar... Adrian did this great guitar that comes in during the outro of

"YOUR INSTINCT IS TO REACT AGAINST WHAT YOU'VE DONE BEFORE"

➔ the opening track. I don't know why but I call it the Alex Lifeson riff. It's a Rush kind of guitar, at least in my head."

It's interesting you mention Rush, as many would describe Radiohead as a progressive rock band of sorts...

"It's funny, I don't know any King Crimson. Or Rush, really. I had a friend who was into Rush though so I knew early 80s songs like *New World Man* and *The Spirit Of Radio*. I only knew the poppy side. The reason I mentioned them is because I just saw that documentary on them. It's so beautiful that friendship they had, the love they had for each other. I have a huge amount of respect for them, as I do for all musicians. The older I get, the more I respect other things. Pink Floyd, my dad was a massive fan. I didn't really like them until probably quite recently. Now I love *Wish You Were Here...* That's just mind-blowing genius. *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* is amazing."

But growing up you were more of a punk at heart?

"Yeah, I guess the whole post-punk thing felt more all-encompassing to me. I needed more of a melodic structure. Actually, the first kind of music I was into, back in the 70s, was The Beatles. There was so much melodic structure and all these pop sensibilities, even in their most experimental moments. Things like King Crimson were a bridge too far for me growing up, but it would be interesting to listen to them now. I guess I was taken by the whole dance wave when that Second Summer Of Love and acid house thing came along in 1988. That was massive. You can hear the dance influences in my own music, like *Brasil*. I wanted to have that trance-like quality. So that kind of electronic stuff has been more influential to me than Yes or King Crimson. I was at that age where I wasn't old enough to have seen the good [prog rock] stuff. It felt quite self-indulgent, and then punk had come along. I guess I was just more into the two-minute songs."

It's interesting how many genres you've dipped and dived through over the years. Is that musical openness a key to the success?

"I think the underlying thing in Radiohead has always been the truth, really. That's what we're looking for creatively. When we made



OK Computer, everyone was expecting *The Bends* part two. Same thing happened again with *Kid A*. We were just fortunate – the things we felt that were right to do were like left-turns. I don't think we were doing it deliberately, in order to be different, it was more like, 'We've done that so let's move on'. We liked the idea of being the Stanley Kubrick of bands. We wanted to make our *Dr. Strangelove*, then our *2001: A Space Odyssey*, our *Barry Lyndon*, our *Shining* and *Full Metal Jacket*. It wasn't necessarily trying to be wilfully different, we were just creating and exploring. It all came down to not getting bored and ultimately that came down to our DNA. I remember people telling us we were being weird every time we came out with one of these albums but it was like, 'Yeah... But David Bowie would have done that!'"

David Bowie is great comparison when it comes to reinvention and risk-taking...

"I think people like the idea of artists doing things that aren't safe – but you've got to be willing to fall flat on your face. And sometimes those

CLOAK OF THE NIGHT

"I like the idea of artists doing things that aren't safe..."

moments you do feel worse than they actually are. History and hindsight can be kind to those moments because they came from an artistic point of view. With Radiohead, we never tried to be the biggest band in the world. Trying to be the best band in the world in one thing, but not the biggest. When you get into that, you become more aware of alienating people. There are some people who love *Pablo Honey*, *The Bends* and *OK Computer* and didn't like *Kid A*. When we got into that whole Radio 1 circuit with *OK Computer*, it was us, The Verse, Oasis and Blur... We were all in there. Maybe some of those people who liked the guitar bands and went to the V Festival heard *Kid A* and thought, 'Not fockin' listening to this shit, what's this bollocks?!' You can't please everyone."

A Moon Shaped Pool came out in 2016. Any idea on when Radiohead plan to release follow-up?

"I'm sure there will be another album. That last record was a lot of old songs, which explains the different eras of Radiohead it might have sounded like. It will definitely happen, but when that is, I have no idea..."

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Gibson



THE SOUND THAT JACK BUILT

Words Jonathan Horsley
Photography Jesse Wild

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST **JACK GARRATT'S** SOUND IS A KALEIDOSCOPIC SOUNDSCAPE OF SYNTH PATTERNS AND POP HOOKS WITH A GNARLY STRAT TONE AT THE HEART OF IT. HERE, HE EXPLAINS HOW HE PUTS IT ALL TOGETHER

Jack Garratt might have been weaned on Stevie Ray Vaughan's heroic blues, but he is the sort of player who eschews fretboard pyrotechnics. Maybe that's because with synth and drums, trombone and piano, Garratt has enough going on, but it makes him an unconventional guitar hero. He would probably resist the term, but he's surely okay with being unconventional; it is what makes his sound his. After a hiatus, Garratt is returning with his much-anticipated sophomore record, *Love, Death & Dancing*, a record that sees his one-man polymath

approach to songwriting write large across two volumes of music. While he was in Bristol for an intimate set at Thekla, he took a bit of time out to talk songwriting and where his guitar fits in. He's worth listening to, because his control over his sound seems so assured. If he finds he is over-playing when trying to write a song, he's not afraid to switch it up and write on piano instead. Having recorded his debut, *Phase*, in 15 days, DI'ing his guitar, creating drum patterns on synth keys, creating the illusion of room space digitally, *Love, Death & Dancing* was afforded the luxury of a more organic recording environment. And it sees him fall back in love with his guitar after a period in which it felt more an adversary than friend.

What draws you to the Fender Stratocaster?

"Stevie Ray Vaughan, without a shadow of doubt. I first fell in love with the guitar watching him play. I remember my dad had an old VHS of Stevie Ray Vaughan, *Live At The El Mocambo*. I just remember the image of him and the sound, and how well it fit together. I remember knowing that that was the guitar I wanted. For me, it has always been a tone-driven thing, and the thing about Stevie Ray Vaughan's tone is you could play a Fender Strat and it would sound *nothing* like him. The guitar wasn't the tone. The Strat for me was the one instrument that was one of the resources that I could use to create a tone that was my own. [Pauses] I ended up mimicking his sound for about five years!"

What do you look for in an amp?

"I am a big fan of restrictions. The reason why my pedalboard isn't massive, the reason why I only play Strats, is that I much prefer challenging myself to create stories with limited resources, and the Rockerverb has a treble knob and a bass knob, and that's it. It has got reverb and tremolo on it, I think, but then the thing that caught my eye was it had the attenuator at the end of it. I needed something that still gave me some bite and gave me something to play off that wasn't overpowering the whole sound onstage. It having an attenuator gave me a girthy sound, mixed in with me playing on .011, .012 gauges [strings], playing on a rosewood fretboard, playing with a Tubescreamer – everything I love about guitar tone."

It's dynamic...

"It has got proper dirt on its bones and what I was looking for was something that would give me little kicks of presence now and then. Using the front pickup on my Strat you can get nice and warm and comfortable, and knowing that all you need is a flick to the back pickup to light everything up. That was a big thing that Stevie did. You never saw him down on the floor, twiddling; he was just pickup and volume, and I fucking love that. The Rockerverb I loved for that. It was really responsive."

What amp have you got today?

"Fender Twin, but it's the digital one [Tone Master]. I might get a lot of flak

SURPRISE YOURSELF

Despite being a long-term Strat man, Jack's smitten with his new Jaguar

for it, but I don't care; it sounds fucking wicked. It's insane. I have had a lot of guitar heads coming to the meet-and-greets after and saying the guitar tone is really good. It's incredible, and my crew bloody love it."

How do you find the digital amp's response?

"It's feeding into what the Tubescreamer is already doing, which is, when it's fingerstyle it's nice and soft, but the minute I get a pick out and I dig in to the strings it roars, because it has just got this headroom. I depend so much on my fingers doing the work than the pedalboard."

What do you get out of pedals?

"I need stomp pedals to help with dynamics. That's why the Tubescreamer is so important to me, because that is my base-level tone. I don't play acoustic guitars. I think there are enough white men in the world with acoustic guitars singing sad love songs. I don't particularly want to be one of them. There is a song called *Weathered* that is just me and the guitar, and the setup I have for it is just a Strat, middle pickup, Tubescreamer on, and reverb activated. I have the Tubescreamer on a hot setting and have the tone pretty much all the way up, the level all the way up, and the gain down, and what that gives me is a 'clean' tone that's got some warmth and some buzz."



What else is on your 'board?

"I've got the Boss Super Octave, which is there for some solo moments. It's fun to whack that on and kick it up a notch. That is used on the solo I do on *Worry*. For additional gain and presence – essentially as a tone booster – I have got the Moog Minifooger filter pedal. It has drive and tone, and I am essentially just using it as a boost pedal for big solos. That's for the end of *Worry* and one of my new songs called *Mara*. My favourite thing I have on there at the moment is a [EHX] Hum Debugger. Because of the way it works it ends up giving me this really short slapback effect. I don't have any delay pedals on the board and having that on is just an additional piece of something. And it gives a bit of loss at the top, a little less information at the top end. On top of that, I have an Orange pedal – I think it's called the Kongpressor. Sometimes I will take it off when I need a bit more dynamic range but I will whack it on when I am going for a wall of sound."

How would you describe your music to someone who hasn't hear it?

"It is tough to do that because I would describe it as 'me'. There also wasn't

a single song that I could offer someone and say, 'This is the best example of my music.'

I like to compete with myself, to make different

sounds and different styles. The best way to describe my music is that it is an amalgamation of everything I have listened to. I am a sponge. The things I listened to when I was seven are still leaking into the music I am making today, and I am not aware of it, which is good. If I become too aware of someone else's music in my music it's not my music; it's someone else's."

Are you more comfortable fingerstyle or flatpicking?

"They both create such different worlds. I use both a lot. When I was 16, I listened to Tommy Emmanuel and that is all I wanted to do, but then I started listening to Paul Simon and Jackson Browne, some Americana stuff, and noticed that fingerstyle can lend itself to a more songwriting place rather than spanking about on the strings and getting all the harmonics in. Paul Simon is an incredible fingerstyle guitarist but you wouldn't know it because you are not supposed to; he is playing the guitar for his songs. I love it when it's used

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

Why Jack sweats the small stuff, and why you should too...

"I think it is important to care about the things that other people won't necessarily notice. It will make the difference in somebody's response to something, in someone's reaction. The reason that my favourite producers are my favourite producers is because there are guitar riffs in Stevie Wonder records that I did not notice until my twentieth listen. If the guitar riffs were there on the first listen my reaction wouldn't be different. If you are not going to think about details then why should I trust that you have thought about anything else?"

right. Same with the pick. You can use both of them at the same time. I have always got a pick in my hands even if I know the song is just played with my fingers, just in case I have a moment where I need that chord to sing out."

How long have you had your Jaguar?

"Just for this tour. I've played around with a couple of Jags looking for different tones and none of them made it onto the record, but I knew when I was going out – especially for *Mara* – I needed something that was going to give me something slightly different. The Jaguar has been brilliant for that and I have got it in open C#. It is absolutely gorgeous."

How do you approach switching between instruments?

"What's fun is that, when I am in rehearsals, I have no idea. I'll try things out and see. It's trying to find the right moments to utilise those instruments without it feeling forced... *Mara* is a song that I just play guitar on and I have all these synths behind me that we are sending MIDI information to, so they are playing the rest of the song for me. They are essentially the limbs that I do not have. I've got two drum machines behind me and a couple of modifying synths."

Is this an act that is prone to complete disaster if everything doesn't go right?

"Yeah, it absolutely is. I had a lovely comment from someone at a meet-and-greet saying that if that wasn't present in the show it wouldn't be a Jack Garratt show. It really touched me when he said that, because my theory about shows is that there's nothing that says the audience shouldn't be as exhausted as I am when I walk offstage. I think part of that comes with the stress of not knowing whether it's going to work."

What do you see for your future with the guitar?

"I have no idea! For me, it has become such an inspiring friend and necessary confidante. Doing this show, which is a way more intimate show, I get to sit down. *Mara* is my favourite song to play because I have never in my life just sat down and played guitar in front of people before. It's interesting, intricate, and it forces me to play the guitar well. That is what the guitar is for me – a litmus test of how I am feeling."

"THE GUITAR FOR ME IS A LITMUS TEST OF HOW I'M FEELING..."

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GIVEN TO FLY

Pearl Jam's Mike McCready goes up for some air



Words, Guitars & Backing Jonny Scaramanga

Photo Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic/Getty

Jam Sessions...

DISCOVER THE LEAD LICKS AND ARRANGEMENT SECRETS OF THE BAND WHO SAVED ROCK 'N' ROLL FROM BAD TONE AND DODGY HAIR

If you've ever played in a two-guitar band, you'll know how tough it can be to make both guitars 'fit' without treading on each others' musical toes. As it turns out, there aren't many bands who do this better than grunge pioneers and survivors, Pearl Jam.

From the band's early 90s heyday – and most notably before switching to a three-guitar lineup – guitarists Mike McCready and Stone Gossard would dial in clearly distinct

tones and play their parts in different areas of the neck. The result was a typically expansive, orchestrated sound, often including some pretty clever chords and harmonic tricks.

For gear nerds, Pearl Jam also played their part in the vintage boom, helping to bring Strats, Les Pauls and single-channel valve amps back into fashion after the massively-processed sounds of 80s rock. Grunge represented a sea change for rock music in the 90s – and the Gossard/McCready duo were at the heart of it.

For a classic two-guitar *Ten*-era Pearl Jam setup, you'll ideally have one guitar with single-coil pickups (McCready mostly played Fender Strats in the early years) and one with humbuckers for chunky Gossard-style riffing. Don't worry if you haven't got the gear (or a second guitarist!), though – playing and attitude are far more important. And, as you'll see in our tab lessons, generally one guitar plays high on the neck while the other plays low. It's something you can try in your own arrangements.

1 STONE FREE!

TRACK 10

♩=95

D A/C# G/D D

TAB

1

N.C.

TAB

3

This is a Stone Gossard style rhythm part written to be played over our McCready style example that follows. Bars 1 and 2 feature three-note chords that fill out McCready's powerchords while keeping the sound of each guitar separate. You can find these shapes by playing only the middle notes of E-, A- and C-shape barre chords.

2 MIKE'D UP

TRACKS 11-12

1

3

Often, when one Pearl Jam guitarist plays high up the neck, the other holds down classic open position shapes. The sus2 and sus4 chords in bars 3 and 4 are a Pearl Jam trademark. Feel free to loosen up and vary the strumming once you have the basic rhythm down.

3 JAMMING ALONG

TRACK 13

1

3

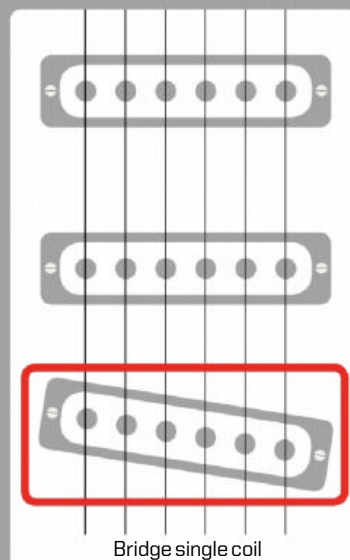
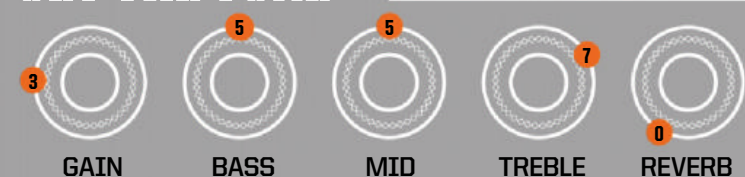
Here's an example of McCready's early soloing style, with nods to Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan for phrasing and vibrato. It may take some slow practice to co-ordinate the picking and pull-offs, but the result sounds more human and less mechanical than picking every note. McCready generally boosts a low gain amp with an overdrive pedal for his solo tones.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Major barre chord
- ✓ 6th string root notes
- ✓ Open string pedal

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Bridge single coil

This riff has a crunchy-clean sound which you can achieve with either a single coil or humbucker equipped guitar. Mike and Stone have used dozens of guitars over the years – everything from Strats to Les Pauls to Les Paul Juniors to Gibson SGs have made an appearance on Pearl Jam recordings. Whatever guitar you have, select the bridge pickup and set your EQ evenly with the treble control slightly higher for a more biting tone. The gain should be subtle; just enough to add some breakup to your clean sound and give the riff some attitude.



Photograph: Getty

PEARL JAM

Superblood Wolfmoon

W

ith *Gigaton*, their first album in seven years having been released in March, Pearl Jam have returned in 2020 to take back their alt-rock crown.

In second single *Superblood Wolfmoon*, founding members and guitarists Mike McCready and Stone Gossard take a simple approach, placing a 'moveable' barre chord shape in four different spots on the fretboard:

at the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 7th frets. It's a great opportunity to learn some fretboard notes. Rather than thinking of the fret numbers it is useful to know that A and B live on the 5th and 7th frets of the sixth string; F# and G# are at the 2nd and 4th frets – and these are the root notes of the chords you'll be playing.

Once you're familiar with the notes, simply play an 'E shape' major barre chord on each one. In Pearl Jam's riff, you'll only play the

lowest four strings for a more focussed chord sound. Watch our video where we've played through the riff slowly for you.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:25-0:42

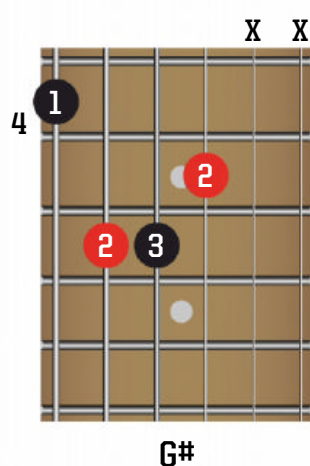
Tempo: 150 bpm

Key/scale: F# minor

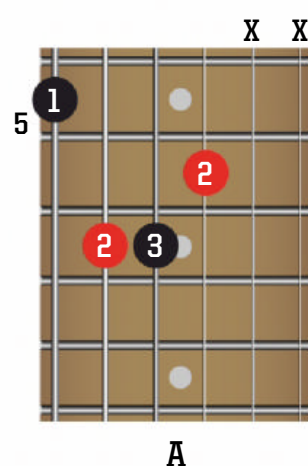
Main techniques: Slides, hammer-ons, single-note picking



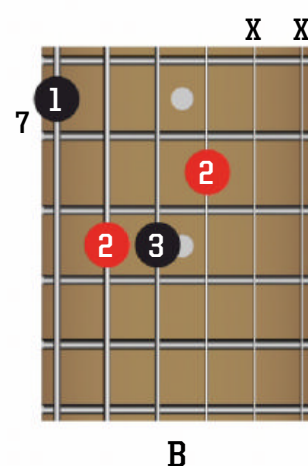
F#



G#



A



B

You only need to learn one chord shape – then just move it between the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 7th frets. When you play the riff you'll be lifting your first finger off the string at times to sound the sixth string. Just make sure you're fretting cleanly so it rings out when you need it to.

MAKING HISTORY SINCE 1958





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Rotosound's Alan Marcuson at Abbey Road studios with Pink Floyd while they were recording *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* in 1967. © Rotosound Archive

Words Amit Sharma Portrait Donald Silverstein

KISS THE SKY

Genius, visionary... **Jimi Hendrix** was the greatest guitar player that ever lived. With the 50th anniversary of his death arriving on September 18th 2020, *Total Guitar* celebrates the life and art of the man who reinvented the electric guitar for generations to come...

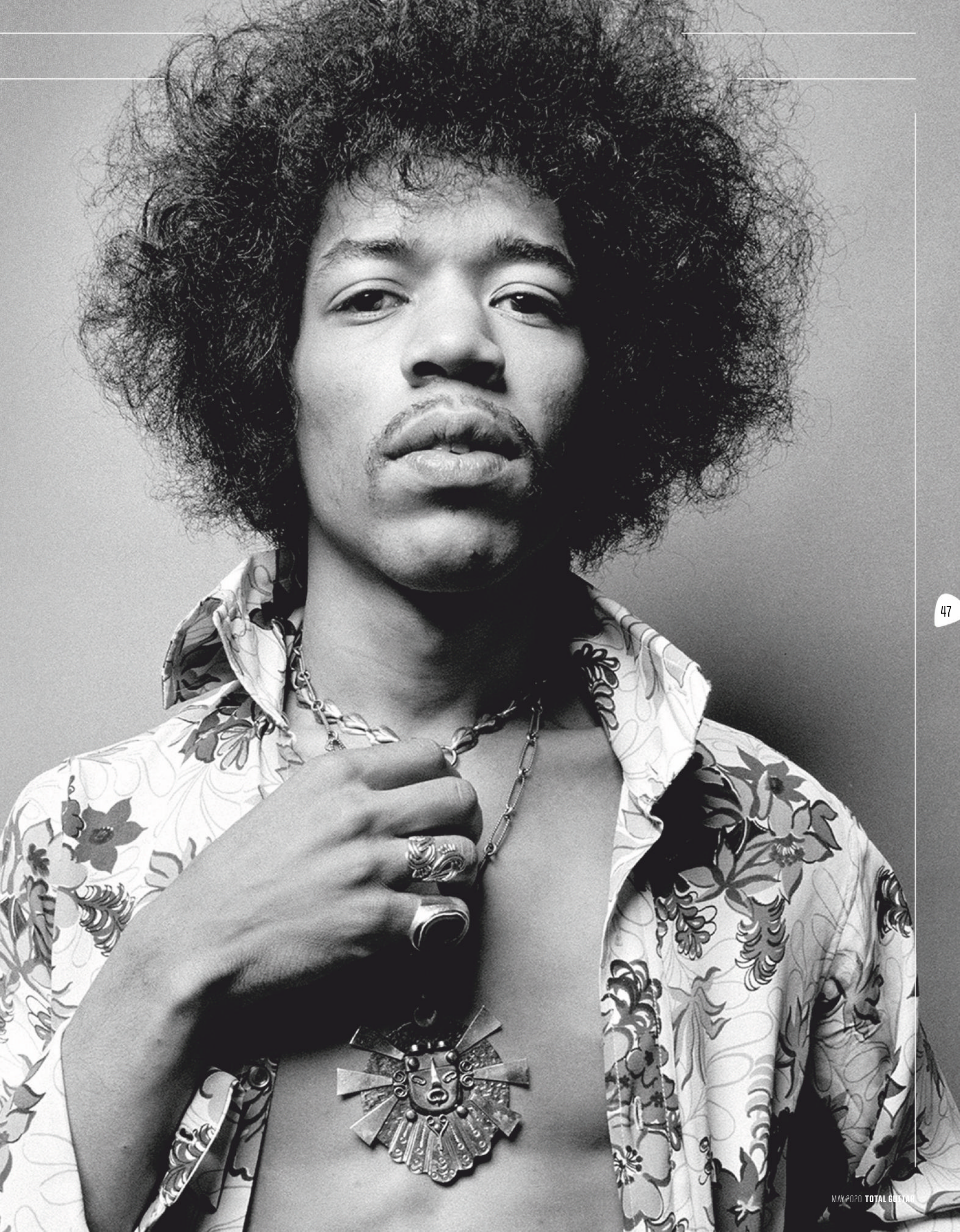
In many ways, it's like the electric guitar didn't really exist before him. Of course, Jimi Hendrix had his influences – Muddy Waters and Albert King to name just two. But it was Hendrix who radically revolutionized the instrument once and for all, and the impact he made in the late 60s has not been surpassed in all the years since.

It was Jimi who turned the six-string into a weapon, with its bullets cast in a melting pot of hot-rod blues, molten fuzz and screaming psychedelia. No longer did the guitar feel like it was in the background, accompanying the rest of the band or adding melodies to help reinforce a lyric. It was now the undisputed star of the show. The guitar hero had arrived.

Born in Seattle on November 27th 1942, Johnny Allen Hendrix – renamed James Marshall Hendrix at the age of four – had a fairly unstable upbringing. It was actually a school social worker at the Horace Mann Elementary who noticed him carrying a broom around much like a guitar, and wrote to her seniors to request a real instrument for his psychological growth, using funding for underprivileged children. Sadly, her efforts failed. But a few years later, Jimi found an old ukulele with only one string, on which he started learning his favourite Elvis Presley songs. Eventually he acquired his first acoustic for \$5, swiftly followed by his first electric – a white Supro Ozark – on which he started crafting his own style, built off what he'd learned from the likes of blues

pioneers Howlin' Wolf and Robert Johnson. "Sometimes you'll want to give up the guitar," Hendrix himself once admitted. "You'll hate the guitar. But if you stick with it, you're gonna be rewarded..."

At the age of 19, having been implicated in a number of car thefts, Hendrix faced a tough decision: go to jail, or join the US Army. He chose the latter. The 101st Airborne was, however, no place for an introverted artsy misfit and within a year his platoon sergeant had assessed the new recruit had "no interest whatsoever in the Army", and that in his professional opinion, "Private Hendrix will never come up to the standards required of a soldier" – even going as far as saying he felt "that the military service will benefit if he is discharged as soon as possible!"





Released from duty, he formed The King Kasuals in Clarksville, Tennessee, with bassist Billy Cox (also discharged), and eventually carved out a name for himself as session musician for soul music greats such as Sam Cooke, Ike & Tina Turner and Wilson Pickett. In 1964, Hendrix auditioned for The Isley Brothers' backing band, a position he quickly swapped for a spot in Little Richard's touring group, The Upsetters. But if these gigs gave him a valuable apprenticeship, his real musical birth took place on September 24th 1966,

just two months before his 24th birthday, when he travelled to London to work with producer Chas Chandler, the former bassist for British rock band The Animals.

Within a few days of his arrival, Hendrix had signed a management contract with Chandler and ex-Animals manager Michael Jeffrey, and hooked up with bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell. After Hendrix changed his first name to Jimi, he and Redding and Mitchell were unveiled as a new three-piece group: The Jimi Hendrix

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Jimi playing with his Experience bandmates Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell

Experience. And, on October 1st, just a week after touching down in London, Jimi got up on stage at the Regent Street Polytechnic to jam with Cream, the new supergroup led by one of the most acclaimed guitarists in the British rock scene, Eric Clapton. As Clapton would recall of Jimi's performance that night: "He played just about every style you could think of, and not in a flashy way. I mean, he did a few of his tricks, like playing with his teeth and behind his back, but it wasn't in an upstaging sense at all, and that was it... He walked off, and my life was never the same again." Chandler later reported that Clapton had shouted to him after the show: "You never told me he was *that* good!"

The Experience wasted little time and, in the final month of that year, debut single *Hey Joe* was in the UK Top 10. So they kept at it, following up with

"HIS SOUND WAS BIGGER THAN ANYTHING THAT HAD COME BEFORE IT"

the release of *Purple Haze* a few months later and more live performances, making history one night when their leader took some lighter fluid and set his instrument ablaze in front of an astonished sold-out crowd at London Astoria. “The time I burned my guitar it was like a sacrifice,” Hendrix later observed. “You sacrifice the things you love. I love my guitar.”

In May 1967, the debut album *Are You Experienced* was released on UK indie Track Records, produced by Chandler and engineered by Eddie Kramer – who would go on to assist for all of Hendrix’s recordings. It marked not only a turning point for guitar-based music but popular music as a whole. The aural assault of *Manic Depression*, *Fire* and *Foxy Lady* felt thicker, louder and bigger than anything that had come before it – overdriven amplifiers and effects pedals combining to create an unholy fuzz that would eventually go on to inspire heavy metal. “Jimi threw a tantrum because I wouldn’t let him play guitar loud enough,” Chandler later recalled. “He was playing a Marshall twin stack, and it was so loud in the studio that we were picking up various rattles and noises.” At the time, it wasn’t the done thing, but thanks to Jimi that soon changed.

Other songs on that first album, *Third Stone From The Sun* and *I Don’t Live Today*, tapped into more psychedelic dimensions, laying down the roots for space rock and stoner rock, as well as other kinds of experimental guitar-based music. Elsewhere, on *May This Be Love* and non-album singles *Hey Joe* and *The Wind Cries Mary*, Jimi’s early R’n’B influences were more than apparent, harking back to his years backing many a soul legend. The usage of chord inversions with simple yet highly effective trills, playing both lead and rhythmic lines simultaneously would instantly become one of Hendrix’s trademarks. “Blues is easy to play, but hard to feel,” he once shrugged.

But perhaps most importantly, it was the young prodigy’s wildly innovative leads that inspired countless waves of devotees. His screeching solos on *Purple Haze* still raise hairs to this day, played on a Fender Strat (or Telecaster, depending on your most trusted source) fed into an Octavia and Fuzz Face for intensified harmonics, crying its way through both minor and major blues in an almost sitar-like fashion. *Manic Depression*, on the hand, could be



considered one of the earliest examples of shredding, with fast pentatonic runs played on a guitar distorted beyond the blues, while moments of *I Don’t Live Today* captured Hendrix on his quest for a higher truth, embracing the more spiritual side of self-expression. “Music doesn’t lie,” Hendrix said. “If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen through music.” He also stated his desire for “our sound to go into the soul of the audience, and see if it can awaken some little thing in their minds... ’cause there are so many sleeping people.”

The invention of the wah pedal in 1966 also meant that Jimi – along with new friend Eric Clapton – was among the first to add one to his arsenal. That coupled with the reverse delay – heard on the song *Are You Experienced?* – and other studio trickery made the trio’s

BOLD AS LOVE

“Blues is easy to play, but hard to feel...”

debut one of the most ambitious and colourful guitar recordings of its time, taking the acid-marinated properties of flower power to new extremes.

Jimi’s genius was not lost on Jeff Beck, who had at that time made a name for himself as a session guitarist and member of The Yardbirds. As Beck later admitted: “When I saw Jimi we knew he was going to be trouble. And by ‘we’, I mean me and Eric [Clapton], because Jimmy [Page] wasn’t in the frame at that point. I saw him at one of his earliest performances in Britain, and it was quite devastating. He did all the dirty tricks – setting fire to his guitar, doing swoops up and down his neck, all the great showmanship to put the final nail in our coffin. I had the same temperament as Hendrix in terms of ‘I’ll kill you’, but he did it in such a good package, with beautiful songs.”

The second Experience album, *Axis: Bold As Love*, arrived just half a year later, in December 1967, and eclipsed its predecessor in sheer creative depth and ambition, as well as benefitting from a better production. Opening track *EXP* was Hendrix's homage to outer space, his scorched feedback hypnotically sweeping from left to right, while the heavyweight grooves of *Spanish Castle Magic* and *If 6 Was 9* kicked harder and louder than those heard on the debut.

To his rivals and peers, this was the record that cemented Jimi's stature as the undisputed guitar god – a musician in his absolute prime, with songs such as *Little Wing*, *Bold As Love* and *Castles Made Of Sand* further exemplifying his trademark of chordal substitutions with decorative melodic embellishments. There was also a new sense of control to his leads – less frantic and more disciplined than on the debut. And even beyond the guitar, his soulful vocals and poetic lyrics had solidified in thrillingly unexpected ways – which, when coupled with a flamboyant dress sense and penchant for setting his guitars alight, presented an artist that was fully moulded in just about every single perceivable way. Despite having only been in London a year, it was a period of intense creative evolution.

The Experience's third and final studio album, *Electric Ladyland*, arrived in October 1968 – although by this stage the cracks were beginning to show in Hendrix's relationship with his bandmates and manager. The sessions began in London's Olympic Studio, but eventually got moved to Record Plant Studios in New York.

It was around this time that a 14 year-old German kid, Uli Jon Roth, saw the Experience with his own eyes, and felt first-hand just how much power one single guitar player could wield. Roth, who went on to find fame with Scorpions in the 70s, remembers: "I first saw Hendrix on TV a few years before, playing *Hey Joe*, and it had a very deep impact on me. I got the album *Are You Experienced* and I remember sitting in a dark room for a long time, constantly listening to *Third Stone From The Sun* and seeing all the images in my mind. It was like music from outer space. But what really did it for me was when I saw Jimi live for myself in Hamburg in January 1969. It was his last tour with the Experience, and he was at the absolute height of his creative power. The guitar sound was

unbelievable, so rich and powerful. He had so much charisma – it was like I saw a light all around his body. That concert did my head in. I still have the ticket."

By the time Hendrix arrived at that summer's Woodstock, where he famously moved his headline set from midnight Sunday to Monday morning, he was one of the highest-paid musicians in rock. Noel Redding had left and been replaced by Billy Cox, and the group had also recruited a rhythm guitarist and two conga players. When they were announced as The Jimi Hendrix Experience, their leader clarified, "We decided to change the whole thing around and call it Gypsy Sun and Rainbows. For short, it's nothin' but a band of gypsies." It was at Woodstock, having reportedly not slept for three days, that Hendrix played a heavily improvised version of America's national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, further casting his name in legend.

The *Band Of Gypsies* live album, recorded on New Year's Day 1970 as a trio with Cox on bass and Buddy Miles on drums and sharing lead vocals, showcased a different side of Jimi that was more bluesy and funky than experimental. Even so, tracks like *Machine Gun* and *Message To Love* showcased yet more growth in his technical mastery – with even more power to those mercurial bends and trills. It would be the new line-up's only release, playing just a handful of shows before Jimi decided to reform the Experience with Cox remaining on bass. They had been working on his fourth studio album *The Cry Of Love*, and touring, before the night Hendrix was taken to St Mary Abbot's Hospital in Kensington. He was pronounced dead at 12:45 on September 18th 1970, after asphyxiating while intoxicated.

"After Jimi died, I was angry," remembered Clapton during an emotional television interview in the months that followed, mourning the loss of someone who was more friend than rival. "I was incredibly angry. I thought it was, not selfish on his part but just, um, a lonely feeling – to be left



BURNING THE MIDNIGHT LAMP

"If there is something to be changed in this world, it can only happen through music..."

alone, you know? And after that, I kept running into people who kept shoving him down my throat 'Have you heard this one he did, this one's never been on record before?' To see these young kids playing the guitar coming up and saying 'Have you heard this one?' or 'I can do all this'. Forget it, mate. It's been done."

James Marshall Hendrix's legacy has continued to resonate through the 70s, 80s and 90s right up to the present day. His influence would echo in the music of countless other guitarists such as Eddie Hazel (Parliament/Funkadelic), Prince (who recorded in his own tributes in *Purple House* and *Habibi*), Slash, John Frusciante and Kurt Cobain, who once proclaimed, "I'm gonna be a superstar musician, kill myself and go out in a flame of glory, just like Jimi Hendrix."

Now, with the 50th anniversary of Hendrix's death approaching, he remains one of the most common influences for guitarists of just about any genre: a true game-changer who reinvented the instrument in ways no one else could have possibly conceived.

As Grammy-winning virtuoso Joe Satriani tells TG: "Jimi was an

"A TRUE GAME-CHANGER WHO REINVENTED THE INSTRUMENT"

unbelievably accomplished player, and yet he always sounded like he'd never practised a day in his life... Which we know he did. There's been many times where Billy Cox has told me Jimi never stopped playing, he was always practising. But it all sounded so natural, like it just came into his head and he was figuring it out for the first time. That's why normal people – not guitar geeks like us – love his music, too. It sounds like music, not somebody practicing or displaying what they've practiced. Sure, we can always organise things better, clean up the nasty bits and noise, but that doesn't necessarily make it better. I'm always keen to remind myself of what Jimi accomplished in that area [feel] and how I should always try to strive for it myself."

Modern blues hero Eric Gales concurs. "Jimi was so innovative, man," Gales says. "He was doing things that other people weren't doing. I guess it probably felt pretty normal to him but to the rest of us it was completely revolutionary. I don't even think he knew how mesmerising he was. And he still is so inspiring to players today – from his tone to his songs to his licks, it was all awesome. That's what I took from him, trying to be the full package, to rewrite the rules. *Castles Made Of Sand* blew my mind when I first heard it. That whole concept of playing melodies within the chord is something I took a lot from. You can learn a lot from that track in particular. *Little Wing* has that too. I think a lot of it came down to Jimi's influence from guys like Curtis Mayfield, Bobby Womack and all them soul cats from way back."

And among the new generation of guitar stars are many who have been deeply affected by a man whose life tragically ended decades before they were even born. It's a list of names that spans far and wide – from Hertfordshire's James Bay, American R'n'B artist Melanie Faye and Australian bassist/guitarist Tal Wilkenfeld through to Brazilian Instagram hero Mateus Asato and German fusion shredder Manuel Gardner Fernandes. Mdou Moctar, the 34 year-old singer/guitarist born in Niger and hailed as 'The Hendrix Of The Sahara', has even drawn links to the sounds Jimi popularised and his own style of Tuareg Berber music. "I didn't listen to or have any idea who Jimi Hendrix was until about 2012," he tells TG. "The more I listen to him, his guitar



playing reminds me so much of the Tuareg guitar style. My bass player Mikey brought *Band Of Gypsies* to Niger with him the first time he came to visit and we listened to that album very loud driving round Niamey. The music felt very familiar. Later, I was informed Jimi was inspired by African music."

In journals, interviews and diaries published long after his death, Jimi Hendrix weighed up his own legacy and pondered on mortality. Those notes would prove to be some of the greatest insight into the mind of an icon. "I'm not sure I will live to be 28 years old," he prophetically stated, "but then again, so many beautiful things have happened to me in the last three years. The world owes me nothing." Perhaps most poignantly of all, he stated mourning was a burden only for

VOODOO CHILD

"When I die, just keep on playing the records..."

the living ("the dead ain't crying") and how sadness should be saved for "when a baby is born into this heavy world" – before going on to share what he hoped to achieve when his own journey came to an end. "I tell you, when I die... I'm going to have a jam session," he said. "I want people to go wild and freak out. And knowing me, I'll probably get busted at my own funeral. The music will be played loud and it will be our music. I'll try and get Miles Davis along~if he feels like making it. For that, it's almost worth dying. Just for the funeral..."

"It's funny the way people love the dead," he concluded. "You have to die before they think you are worth anything. Once you are dead, you are made for life. When I die, just keep on playing the records..."

THE GENIUS OF JIMI

IN HIS 20 GREATEST SONGS

Words Jonny Scaramanga,
Amit Sharma, Jonathan
Horsley, Chris Bird

“In that moment, he showed us how you can play rhythm, riff and melody at the same time, blending with a band and how to tie all these motifs together. Using the whammy bar to connect one section to another, playing around with major and minor in a third generation electric blues context. Even if you forget about the wah-wah, Uni-Vibe and Octavia, what he did was ground-breaking. I know this from experience, when you stand in front of an audience, you can’t just recite what you’ve rehearsed. You have to dig deep and tell a story that gets everybody hanging on every note. There are no words or phrases that can describe what he accomplished with that song.

“So, when you sit down and remember what year it was and the fact it was a live recording, it makes you think ‘Oh my god!’ Because everyone copied it and used it as the yardstick. We’re not even talking about an eight-bar solo, or a 32-bar solo... It’s not two-hand tapping. It was a human being stepping on stage in the middle of a show and pulling out this new magic trick. Digging deep into their heart and taking the most ridiculous chances.

He put his guitar so out of tune, there was no locking system back then. When I think about it now, I still can’t believe it – almost like trying to fathom the people who built the pyramids or first railroad or the Wright brothers getting in the plane for the first time.”

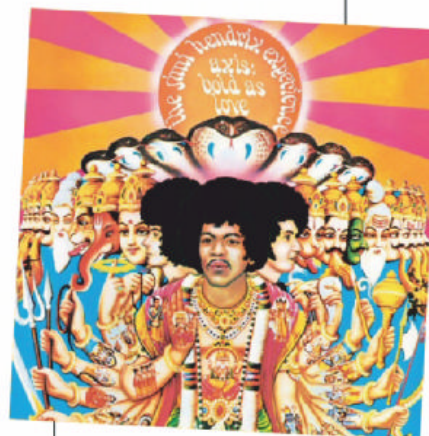
Machine Gun

(Band Of Gypsies, 1970)

Joe Satriani: “Jimi’s greatest song, without a doubt, is *Machine Gun* from the *Band Of Gypsies* live album, recorded at Filmore East in 1969/70. Let’s just start from the top – it was improvised in front of an audience by a trio, and he’s playing a Fender Stratocaster, a couple of pedals and three Marshall half-stacks. Anyone that’s ever done a live album like that will know how you get butterflies in your stomach and sweaty hands just thinking about the anxiety of recording a live album that way. These days, everyone has an Axe-FX, massive pedalboard and they know they can record it six times, plus options to overdub, retune or retighten it later.

We’re talkin’ reality here...

“Then you have to think about the time it happened – there was all this political and social upheaval in the US and around the world. Then, an African American famous for playing with two British guys shows up with two other African Americans as a brand new band. They played a set that was so mindblowing and then came out with one song that rewrote electric guitar for everybody from that moment on. It was like him saying, ‘This is the way you’re going to do it from now on... This is the way it’s going to be!’ But he wasn’t thinking that, it was innocent Jimi trying to make some beautiful music and a political point. He was 27 years old and trying to do something unique.



Voodoo Child (Slight Return)

(Electric Ladyland, 1968)

Kenny Wayne Shepherd: “My favourite guitar song of all-time – the biggest guitar anthem ever written – is *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*. When I put my own band together at the age of 16, that would always be the last song of show. There’s that bend on the second fret of the G string and he’d flip through the different pickup positions... It just sounds like someone dropping bombs and

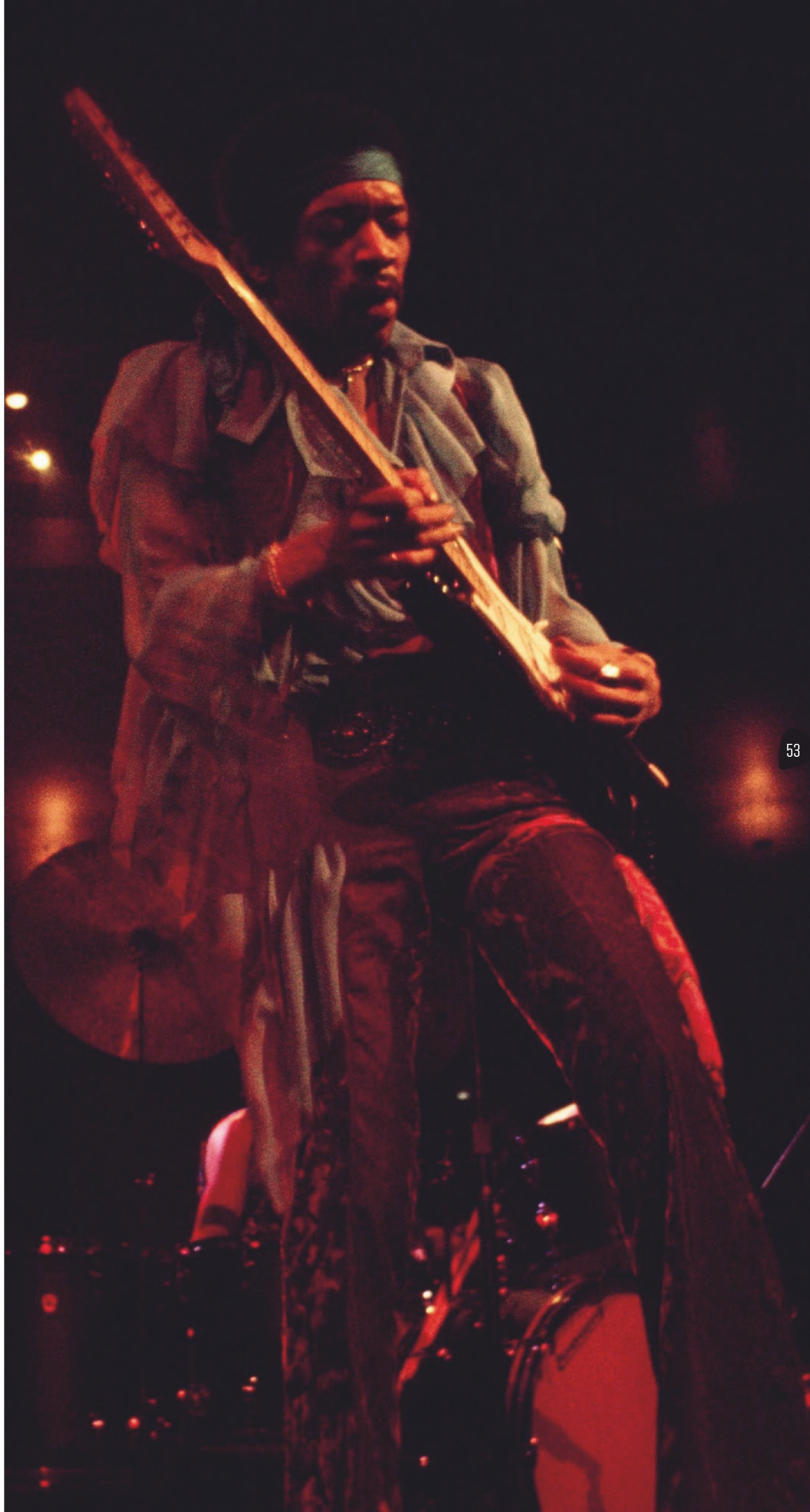
planes flying by. It's so crazy! And that's a sound he created. Supposedly he was trying to actually recreate the sounds he heard jumping out of planes when he was in the air force. It's such a powerful way of bending and making his instrument sound otherworldly. There are so many moments in that particular song that I feel are simply incredible."

Little Wing/Castles Made Of Sand

[Axis: Bold As Love, 1967]

Cory Wong: "My dad saw Hendrix a dozen times in concert. My dad's a Jimi Hendrix freak! He put me on to Hendrix for my entire life. I love Jimi Hendrix, but the [songs] of his that I just felt like I really connect with were *Castles Made Of Sand* and *Little Wing* because they had such a signature sound to the guitar and to the playing that was so musical. It felt off the cuff but clearly 'parts' at the same time. A lot of what I do and what makes a part of my signature sound is harmonising and trills and taking chord voicings and not just playing a chord straight down but picking out certain notes from the chord and making lines from them. Holding the chord shape, making the line, you know, like [Jimi] does.

"Keeping the left hand holding a chord and having your right hand making it feel different and then adding trills and ornamentation – it's getting so much mileage out of a single chord voicing. It was a huge learning curve and it was a classic example for me of "don't just learn the part". Learning the part's great – you could play *Little Wing* and that's awesome! But what's cooler than learning *Little Wing* is deconstructing *Little Wing* enough to know why he did those things and why when it moves up from G major to A minor what those moves are and how he was looking at those chord voicings and how he's developing them. Oh! He's thinking of the same voicing when he goes B minor, B_b minor, A minor! And then hearing some of those things that are signature Hendrix moves – where did those come from and





a lot of Jimi's songs that I could call amazing, and having to pick one over the other is a little unfair because there are so many. There is, of course, on the same album, *Little Wing*, which is a close contender. And there is *All Along The Watchtower*, *Machine Gun*, *Gypsy Eyes* – you name it, I could just rhyme them off. But if you ask me for the one and only one it is *Bold As Love*.

"It is his most beautiful guitar solo, if not *the* most beautiful solo of all time. I approach [playing] it with reference. I would not change a single note. Though I might do tiny variations. Being a European player, my approach is maybe slightly different to the execution of the song, but other than that, why should I change something that is perfect? And how am I to do that. I would play the intro pretty much note for note, and that's what I do. Although I am

going to integrate that into my solo tour in America as one of the encores and I am using a seven-string, so that is a slight advantage – although it is more difficult to play a Hendrix style on a seven-string because you can't use the thumb [on the fretting hand] but I am tuning my bottom note for that song

to D flat so I can actually create a support bass which is not possible on a six-string guitar. It sounds maybe a little more round...

"What can we learn from this song? We can learn the simple realisation that the greatest songs of all time have always not followed the established patterns – very rarely have they followed established patterns, and *Bold As Love* is in that league – as are many of the greatest Beatles songs. So, that's a lesson to learn right there."

Hey Joe

(Single, 1966)

Something of a mid-60s rock standard, *Hey Joe* had already been recorded by big acts like the Surfaris and the Byrds when Hendrix got his hands on it. After Jimi, though, all other versions were forgotten.

how can I come up with my own moves based on a chord shape.

"To me, what I connect with Hendrix so much is that he's a great example of getting a lot of mileage out of specific chord voicings and finding a signature fingering."

Manic Depression

(Are You Experienced, 1967)

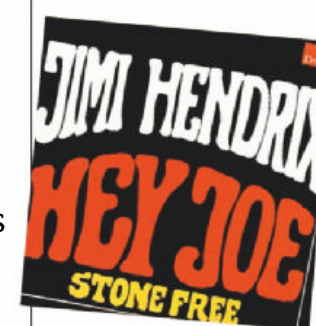
Robby Krieger (The Doors): "Murray the K was a big DJ in New York at the time, and we were doing a video with him for *People Are Strange*, which was going to come out as a single, and he had took me up to his studio and said, 'Hey I want you to hear something! There's this new guy, Jimi Hendrix, from London, and he played me a couple of songs from the first album and it turned out my favourite one was *Manic Depression*. I played on a number of these Jimi Hendrix tours with Experience Hendrix, with all these guitar players together, and that was the one I was liked to play. It's got that three-quarter time. It's different. That's why I like it, just the way Jimi came up with those lines."

Bold As Love

(Axis: Bold As Love, 1967)

Uli Jon Roth: "*Bold As Love* is not really a rock song; it's just a masterpiece, an artistic masterpiece of the first order. It is completely unconventional. Everything about that piece is unconventional. It doesn't follow any established pattern. It is a complete one-off, which is the hallmark of quite a few of Hendrix's best pieces. It has got magical chord changes and a magical key and even more magical guitar solo at the end, and the lyrics are amazing, too. So I think it's a 10 out of 10 song. I can't put it into any category; it starts like a ballad with which is very lyric-based. A little bit of his story has been told but there is also an enigma about it, especially with the colours of the rainbow and all the different meanings of that, and that seven colours which could also be the main colours of music, like the major scale. He put that beautifully.

"It is the kind of song that, for me, will never get old, and it's just amazing. Having said that there are



POP ART

The LP covers of *Are You Experienced* (1967) and *Hey Joe/Stone Free* (1966)

His take has been covered by both Slash and Mercury prize-nominated post-punks *Black Midi*, demonstrating the breadth of its impact. The guitar/bass unison line after the solo and on the fade out makes both an awesome riff and a perfect warm-up exercise, because it's musical and uses all four fingers. Unusually for a Hendrix riff, you'll need a low thumb position to manage the stretch across four frets, and it will develop your fretting and picking accuracy.

All Along The Watchtower

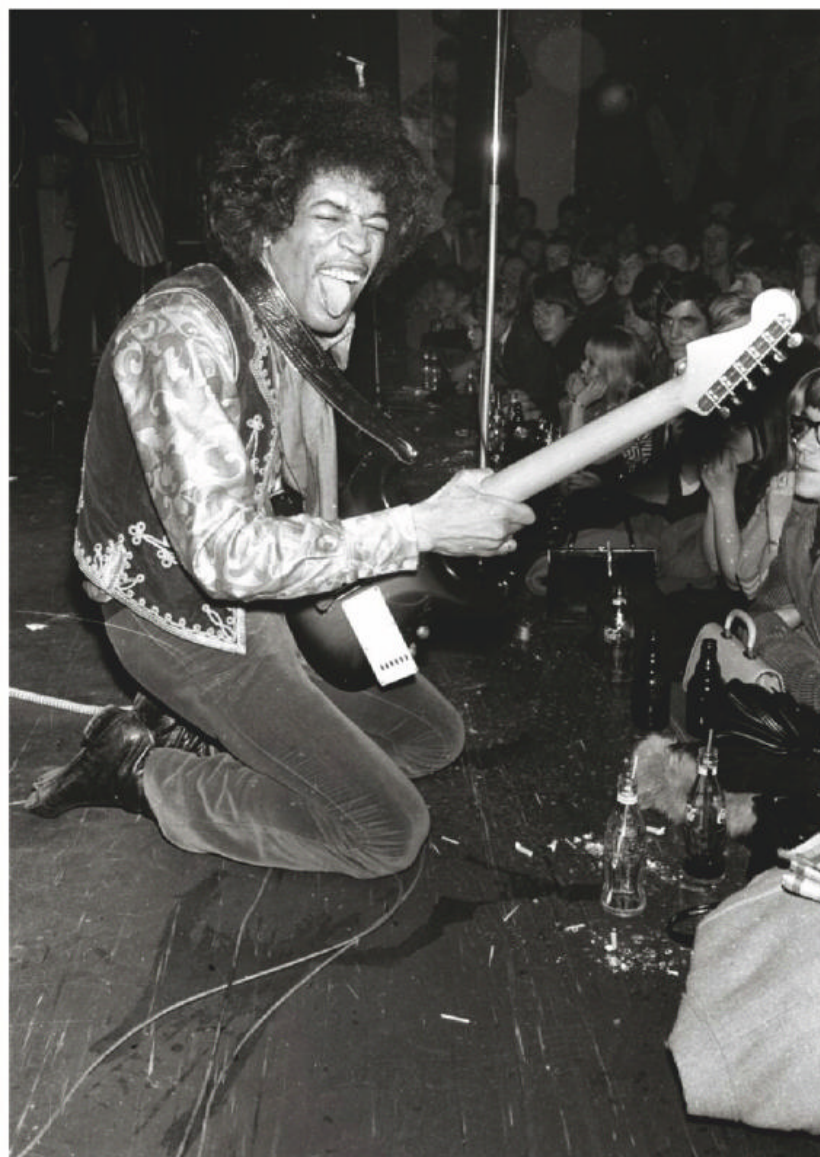
(Electric Ladyland, 1968)

This song tops any list of covers that are better than the original. Bands performing it live – like Mumford & Sons duetting with Portugal. The Man in 2019 – invariably refer to it as a Hendrix cover rather than Bob Dylan. Jimi's rhythm playing is astounding, both on the intro and the deft chord/melody work of the verses, and the four guitar solos are if anything even more memorable. At 2:32, the main solo explodes into a trademark combination of rhythm and lead, plus funky scratching on muted strings. It's worth playing along with the scratches, trying to keep a loose wrist and consistent down-up strumming. Those few beats will teach you a lot about Jimi's groove and feel.

Red House

(Are You Experienced, 1967)

"The beauty of Jimi," says Lamb of God's Mark Morton, "is that he was so strongly rooted in the blues but he had a very innovative approach to playing the guitar." It is impossible to imagine the modern electric blues scene without Hendrix, but this song's influence is not limited to that – it's been covered by Imagine Dragons and Prince. The opening lick uses descending 6ths, starting at the 11th fret on the G and E strings and moving down one fret, showing how 'wrong' notes can add excitement to the blues.



Also check out the four-note motif that appears at 0:21, returning at 0:51, 1:36, and regularly after that. It's a perfect combination of bends and slides.

Purple Haze

(Are You Experienced, 1967)

It's tempting to play the G and A chords in the riff as barre chords, but that's not how Jimi did it. Instead, he used his thumb to fret the low E string and mute the A string, fretting the other notes with his first three fingers. That left his fourth finger free to play melodies on the B string. In other songs, he used the same technique on the G and E strings as well. If you Google 'the new Hendrix', the top result refers to Gary Clark Jr., and the Austin bluesman is quick to recognise the influence: "When I heard *Purple Haze*, I knew that was my thing."

Foxy Lady

(Are You Experienced, 1967)

This track opens with an essential

LIVE AND DANGEROUS

The master at work – note the trem cover hanging off!

Hendrix innovation: the ability to coax a note into life using only vibrato. Without picking, Hendrix builds tension simply by rubbing the string against the fret. It's achievable at any volume, although Jimi's cochlea-frying levels help produce the ensuing burst of feedback. Every guitarist should also nail the first-finger vibrato immediately after the chorus. Jimi pressed his finger against the bottom of the neck as a fulcrum and produced vibrato from his wrist. The song's enduring appeal is evident in Sing Again Syren's 2020 single *Run On Home*, which makes major nods to the riff and solo. Meanwhile, shred titan Nita Strauss has been covering *Foxy Lady* on tour with Alice Cooper.

If 6 Was 9

(Axis: Bold As Love, 1967)

Listen to the lick at 0:51. It starts with Hendrix picking hard enough to push the amp into overdrive, while the last three notes are so soft they're almost inaudible. These are the details that make Jimi better than everyone else and give his music such enduring appeal. Let's face it: most of us guitarists only think about dynamics long enough to make sure we're louder than everyone else. Practising what Jimi does, playing your scales so that they can fade from thunder to whisper and back again will make you sound ten times more interesting without needing to learn any expensive new notes.

Crosstown Traffic

(Electric Ladyland, 1968)

People talk a lot about Hendrix the guitar god and not enough about Hendrix the writer of banging pop songs. There have been entire albums released with fewer hooks than the first half of *Crosstown Traffic*. Jimi's use of dominant 7 and minor 7 chords in this song helps to set him apart from heavy rock guitarists who are limited to power chords. You will probably find some 7th chord shapes sound cluttered and unpleasant with an overdriven guitar, though. Be like Jimi and

select just three notes that capture the flavour of the chord. It'll sound better and be easier to play, which is clearly a result.

Drifting

(The Cry Of Love, 1971)

Drifting is another example of Jimi blurring the line between chords and lead playing. Polyphia's Tim Henson cites this approach as an inspiration, and it's appropriate that a guitarist who is reinventing guitar music for 2020 is inspired by the man who reinvented it a few generations ago. Meanwhile in the mainstream, John Mayer has made heavy use of this technique, including on occasional guest spots with Ed Sheeran. Although we doubt Jimi ever heard the term, the CAGED system can be a good route into this style. Each chord has a scale shape that fits around it (e.g. Em7 and E minor pentatonic). If you know both, you can embellish the chord with notes from the relevant scale.

Fire

(Are You Experienced, 1967)

Everyone who was there agrees Arctic Monkeys covered Hendrix at their first gig, but no one remembers which song. *Fire* is a good guess though: the octave blues scale riffs and string bends are part of Alex Turner's songwriting blueprint. R&B superstar Bruno Mars also performed the song in Radio 1's Live Lounge, mentioning elsewhere that he started playing because of Jimi. Jimi used octaves to fatten up his riffs without needing a second guitarist. For *Fire*, he frets the A string and two frets higher on the G. The tip of his first finger muted the low E string. The underside of that finger muted the remaining unfretted strings, allowing him to pick aggressively.

The Star-Spangled Banner

(Woodstock: Music from the Original Soundtrack and More, 1970)



Photo: Gettyx2



or doing musically,” says Skindred’s Mikey Demus. The freewheeling improvisation influenced bands like Snarky Puppy, who have directly quoted Hendrix in their material. Backwards guitar is obviously impractical live, but some delay pedals have a backwards setting that will let you create those effects on the fly.

Freedom

(The Cry Of Love, 1971)

This track features some of Jimi’s most obvious funk influences. If you’re from a punk or metal background, you might be surprised at how loose Jimi’s wrist is. Possibly because of the whammy bar sticking out from his upside-down bridge, Jimi rarely palm-muted his riffs. His picking hand floated freely over the strings, allowing for the fast strumming you hear in Freedom. The motion is similar to flicking a wet towel or (for readers who remember late-90s TV) the Ali G finger snap. If your wrist or arm is tight, it won’t happen. Upstrokes are most people’s weak point, so concentrate on making them sound as good as your downstrokes.

Ezy Rider

(The Cry Of Love, 1971)

The licks here make an excellent starting point for rock improvising, because they make frequent use of core techniques like bending and pull-offs without reaching ridiculous speeds. Some of the bends are extremely wide, though, with Jimi regularly bending a minor third (three frets) or more. To achieve this, you’ll need to take Jimi’s posture of putting your thumb over the neck so you’ve got something to push against. Then you’ll need what Paul Gilbert calls The Giant Finger: three fretting hand fingers pressed up together on one string, so you can use the combined force of all three to support the bend – an easy Hendrix-ism to adopt.

Greta Van Fleet guitarist Jim Kiszka had his life changed after learning this tune in school. “I remember tearing up because it was so emotional, so for the next three years I was obsessed with Hendrix – meticulously trying to figure out what he was doing.” Jimi’s unprecedented use of feedback and the whammy bar had an equally formative effect on Muse’s Matt Bellamy. The trick to getting musical feedback rather than an uncontrollable squeal is to make sure any strings you don’t want to ring are muted. Use spare fingers on either hand to dampen the other strings. If the feedback doesn’t bloom, move around until you find the sweet spot.

Stone Free

(b-side of Hey Joe single, 1966)

You can hear echoes of Hendrix’s rhythm style in modern players like Mateus Asato, whose riffs incorporate chord fragments alongside pentatonic single note lines. Stone Free has a great riff for mastering the ‘Hendrix chord’,

because you have to switch rapidly between that and the repeating pentatonic lick that surrounds it. What makes the riff work, though, is Jimi’s impeccable groove. Like many of his parts, this riff is highly syncopated. Work on tapping your foot on the beat, and watch that you don’t shift. Getting your foot tapping consistently will let you feel the rhythm in your body and produce a convincing groove.

1983... (A Merman I Should Turn To Be)

(Electric Ladyland, 1968)

This is some of Hendrix’s most psychedelic output, inspiring the contemporary psych scene exemplified by Tame Impala and Psychedelic Porn Crumpets. According to producer Eddie Kramer, Jimi could record backwards guitar with an uncanny ability to know how it would sound, a skill strongly in evidence here. “People still haven’t caught up with what that guy was capable of playing

STRIKE A POSE

Above: The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Below: Covers for *Electric Ladyland* (1968) and posthumous album *The Cry of Love* (1971)



SPLURGE, SAVE, STEAL...

Or just pick and choose from our gear picks to help you nail the Hendrix tone!

SPLURGE

01 FENDER CUSTOM SHOP JIMI HENDRIX STRATOCASTER IN OLYMPIC WHITE

£6549 street

The acme of Hendrix guitars for deep-walleted players – the “Izabella” Woodstock Strat – has been meticulously recreated by the Big F. Those hand-wound '69 single-coils will electrify your ladyland with premium tone voodoo.

02 MARSHALL 1959HW PLEXI HAND-WIRED SUPER LEAD HEAD + MARSHALL 1960AHW HAND-WIRED 4X12 ANGLED CAB

£2337 street

Ideal for those home practice situations when you keep on screwing up *Little Wing* and need to vent your fury by turning all the way up, Jimi-style, and clearing the neighbourhood with volume.

03 FULLTONE MDV MKII MINI DEJA VIBE

£255 street

Get that super-psychedelic warble with this photocell, all-analogue UniVibe clone. Now rehoused in a more pedalboard-friendly chassis, the Deja Vibe is an awesome recreation of a classic tone.

04 DUNLOP MC404 CUSTOM AUDIO ELECTRONICS WAH

£172 street

Sure, there is a great Hendrix signature Dunlop model but let's get the best wah on the market. Built by Bob Bradshaw, super-tweakable with a wide range of tones and an on-off boost, this is a doozy.

TOP TIP

Volume was a massive part of Jimi's sound. If you have the opportunity, play loud and walk around your amp until you find the sweet spot for feedback





TOP TIP

Use the tap-tempo on the Unicorn to get your warble in time with the beat



SAVE

01 FENDER JIMI HENDRIX STRATOCASTER IN OLYMPIC WHITE

£799

Okay, it's not the Custom Shop, but this Mexican-built Strat has heaps of period-authentic tone, with courtesy of a trio of American Vintage '65 singlecoils. The reverse headstock is *so* cool.

02 MARSHALL STUDIO VINTAGE 20W 1X10 COMBO

£759 street

More manageable than the full stack and boasting plenty of vintage Marshall tone, there is a lot to love about experiencing the 1959SLP in a more portable combo format. It's a great amp, full-stop.

03 JIM DUNLOP JIMMY HENDRIX CRY BABY WAH

£132.99 street

Based on the Thomas Organ Company design that was first popularised by Hendrix and housed in a hard-wearing chassis, this serves up all the *wah-kah-chooka* of *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* and then some.

04 MYTHOS ARGO OCTAVE FUZZ

£179

This turquoise little box has tones like those of vintage C.O.B. fuzz tones that sell on Reverb.com for nigh-on a grand. It's more tweakable than many vintage units and will work well with a modern setup.

NO MONEY? NO WORRIES! FOLLOW OUR TIPS AND TWEAK YOUR TONE TO GET CLOSER TO JIMI'S SOUND

• Jimi's raw amp sound is fairly balanced. If you're using a Strat dial in a little extra bass (around 7), keep the mid-range at 5 and experiment with a treble boost. Not using fuzz distortion? Wind up the treble a bit to simulate the unruly top end of the Fuzz Face.

• Turn your humbuckers to single coils. Using humbuckers? This EQ trick may get you closer to Jimi's single coils. Switch to a middle pickup position, roll the bass down to about 2 (instead of Jimi's higher setting), keep the mids high, say 7 or 8, and treble at 8 or 9. Instant single coils! Well, roughly!

• Okay, you'll need the price of a set of strings here, but Jimi famously used ultra-light gauge strings in the bass. Either mix and match from a set of .010s and .008s or buy Fender's own 'Voodoo Child' set specially made for Jimi fans (.010, .013, .015, .026, .032, .038).

TOP TIP

Think of the guitar's tone and pickup controls as an extra effect and tweak them as your playing



STEAL

01 SQUIER CLASSIC VIBE '60S STRATOCASTER

£339 Street

The Classic Vibe sees the R&D boffins at Fender's entry-level brand pore over the catalogues to spec up an affordable Strat with a vintage feel and tone. Great for the price.

02 MARSHALL ORIGIN 5C 5-WATT TUBE COMBO

£289 street

Its low wattage makes the Origin 5C an excellent choice for playing at home. It makes a good pedal platform and has emulated outputs for silent recording. An excellent first valve amp.

03 IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUDE JIMI HENDRIX SOFTWARE SUITE - ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

£109 street

A digital solution that captures Jimi's setup in one convenient software package authorised by the Hendrix estate. It has JTM45 and Sunn 1200s amp models, fuzz, wah, UniVibe, and it is available as a plugin or standalone version for PC/MAC.

04 FENDER JIMI HENDRIX VOODOO CHILD CABLE

£29.99 street

There's little point in getting the guitar, learning the songs, setting the tap-tempo on your 'vibe only to run a straight, boring cable. Don't be a square – get a coiled cable!

SPANISH CHORDAL MAGIC...

Get experienced playing like Jimi with a look at the legendary guitarist's trademark chords

Though often remembered for psychedelic showmanship and onstage pyrotechnics, Jimi was also an amazing songwriter who would craft delicate, weaving chord parts into every

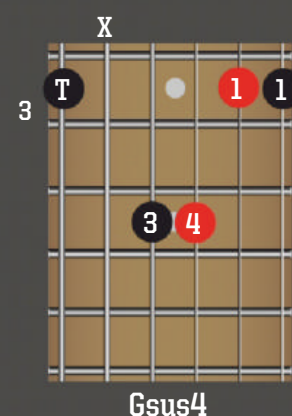
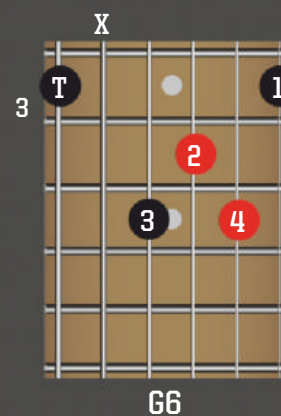
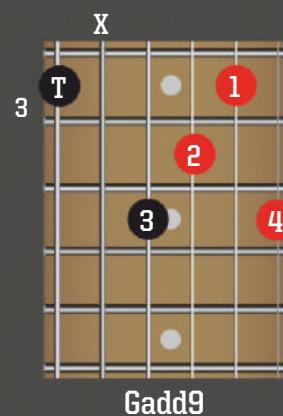
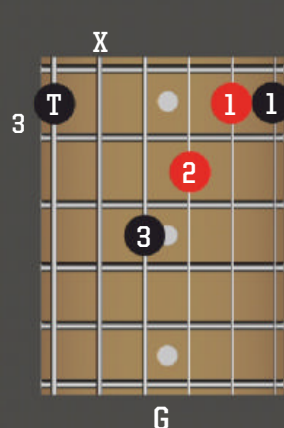
piece he played. Learn some of his signature shapes here and you'll start to get a feel for his playing.

If there's a 'trick', it's to treat each chord as the basis for an improvisation rather than

a 'stay-on-one-chord' kind of jam. Aim to include an occasional variation or riff idea around each chord and you'll be in the ballpark. Pentatonic scales, both major and minor, are bang on the money here.

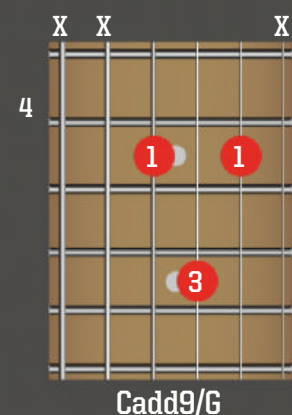
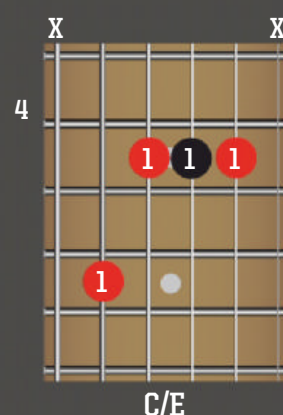
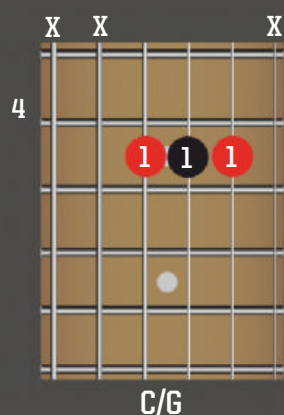
THUMB OVER THE NECK SHAPES

Don't worry about 'traditional' technique! Jimi made use of all the tools at his disposal – especially those long fingers which allowed him to reach around the back of the neck. Just wrap your thumb round and fret the sixth string. It opens up a world of chord embellishments that just aren't on offer if you only use your fingers. Try the G chord then hammer on with extra notes for a *Little Wing* vibe.



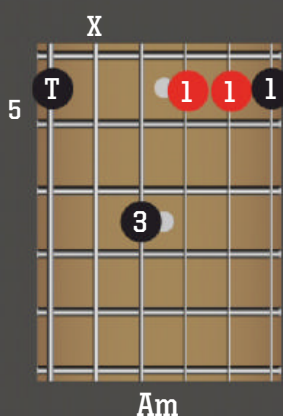
JIMI'S FIRST-FINGER BARRE TRICK

Another Jimi trick is using a simple barre chord like this C/G shape as the basis for dozens of fresh sounding other chords. Just hold down C/G then let your second, third and fourth fingers run wild. You're bound to find some new shapes. We're only scratching the surface here but there really are countless chords to be found using this method.



MINOR SHAPES

Both the 'thumb over the neck' and first-finger barre techniques also apply to minor chords and we've given you a few here. Remember, Jimi would often play only two or three notes from each shape – an idea that allows you to ditch the occasional note you can't easily reach and focus on cleanly fretting the more colourful extensions.



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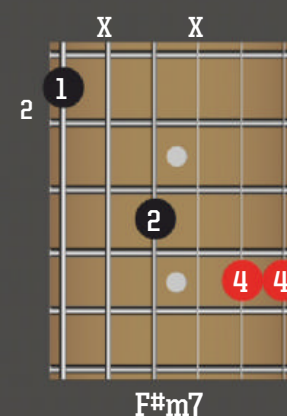
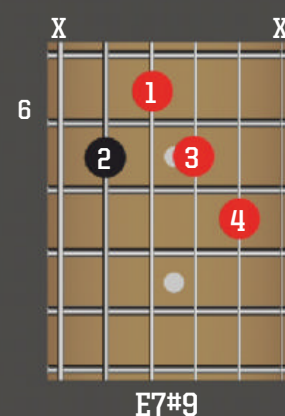
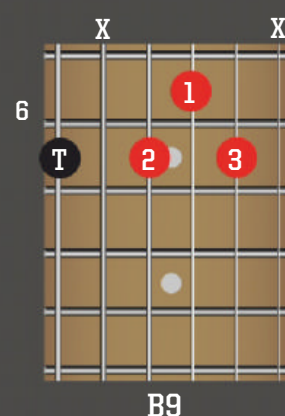
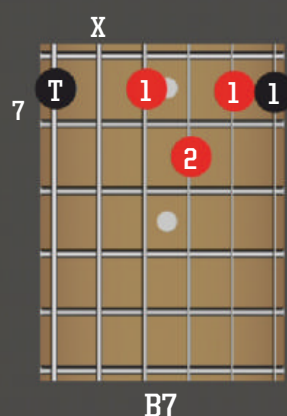
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FUNK CHORDS

Get your fingers round these shapes and you'll be part way to nailing Jimi's aggressive funk-rock stylings. The 7#9 is the shape Jimi is most associated with – so much so that it's usually referred to as the Jimi Hendrix chord. Shown here in E, the 7#9 (seven sharp nine) chord has an inbuilt clashing harmony (the #9 and the major 3rd are the culprits, theory fans!), but erring on the side of edgy and funky rather than harsh and dissonant. Try it out with some, er, edgy funk?



MANIC TRANSCRIPTION...

See why Jimi's innovative playing still sounds so fresh with our easy tab lessons

We're looking primarily at Jimi's rhythm style here. More of a lead guitarist? No worries! Jimi never really followed conventional rules,

and his playing would flit between chords, repeating riffs and leads. That means there's something for everyone to take away from his style, vintage- or modern-leaning players alike.

These tab lessons will help you get to the heart of Jimi's playing on songs like *The Wind Cries Mary*, *Red House*, *Night Bird Flying*, *Foxy Lady*, *Purple Haze* and *Third Stone From The Sun*.

01 BLUES CHORD RIFF

TRACK 14

Obviously we're calling up *Red House* here. More important is how the C minor pentatonic scale matches up with the C7 chord in bar 2. It's a neat, bluesy mix.

02 7#9 - THE HENDRIX CHORD

TRACK 15

This is a variation on Jimi's better known trademark 7#9 chord shape. It's basically the same as playing his signature shape with the root note on the 12th fret of the fifth string.

03 PEDAL TONE AND OCTAVE LICK

TRACK 16

The ringing notes in bar 1 have bit of a *Hey Joe* vibe, though it's a technique Jimi would use a lot. Just like the octaves in bar 2, it's a great way to fatten your sound.

04 DIADS AND INVERSIONS

TRACK 17

These two-note diads are a typical Hendrix high-up-the-neck idea – use it to embellish chords or in a more melodic lead guitar context. Jimi always blurred those lines!

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE

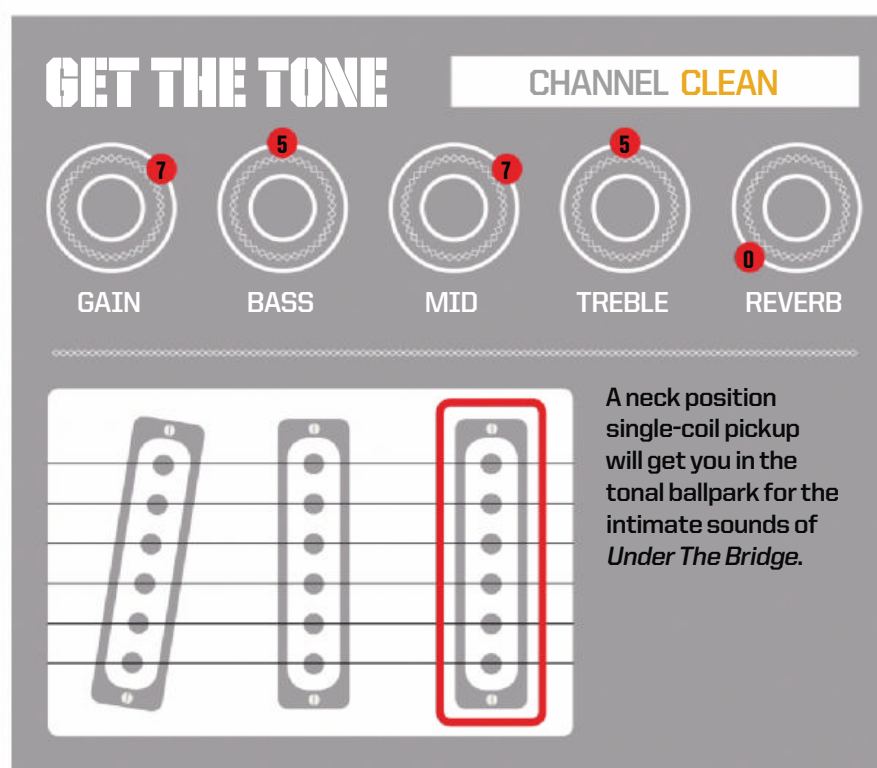
Learn this 90s alt-rock classic from RHCP's
breakthrough *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* album

Still need convincing just how deep Jimi Hendrix's influence runs? Well, as it turns out, the guitarist who's recently returned to the Chili Peppers fold, John Frusciante, is a massive Hendrix fan. And *Under The Bridge*? Frusciante has said publicly how the opening lines draw inspiration from Jimi's classic *Little Wing*. You don't need to be a guitarist to hear the influence. The major chords, the little flourishes and ad libs, the break up in the 'just-off-clean' guitar tone...

You do need to be a decent guitarist to tackle the tab, however! We'd describe this tune as deceptively tricky. Sure, there's no widdly solo, but Frusciante's fingerstyle lines have their own challenges. If there's one tip to take onboard, it's to learn the chords first. That might sound obvious, but Frusciante's melodic fills are phrased around fairly conventional shapes. Get them down and the flourishes should make more sense and be easier to play. Read on as we break down the track piece by piece.

GET THE SOUND

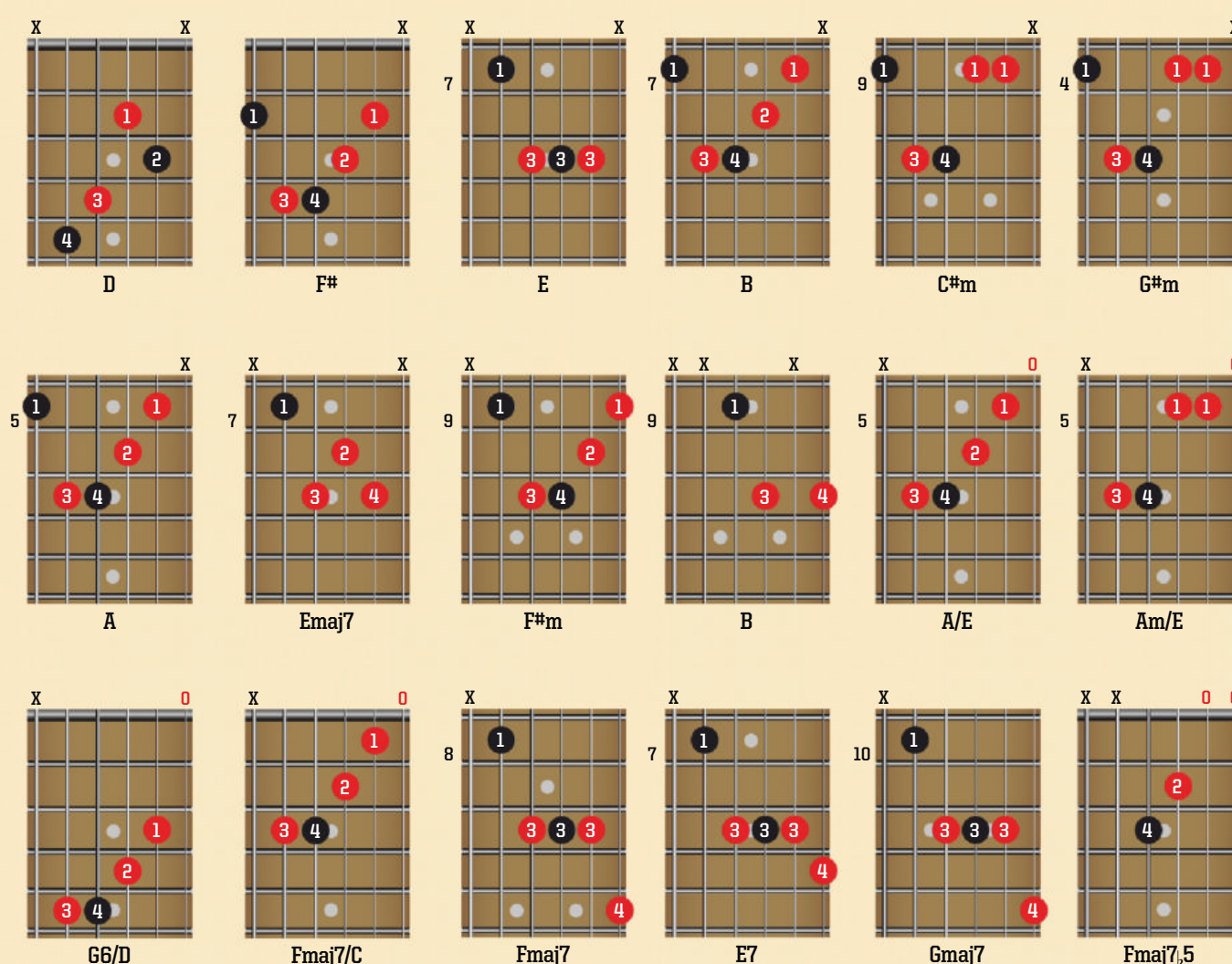
Everything you need to know before playing 'Under The Bridge'



In live shows, Frusciante plays *Under The Bridge* on a Fender Stratocaster set to its neck position pickup (position 5). Select a clean channel but keep the gain fairly high so you get a little bit of break up in your sound. If your amp won't naturally do this, try using an overdrive pedal with a low drive setting. The real secret weapon, however, is a compressor which gives you that classic 'squashed' sound. Don't know what we mean? Well, it'll just smooth out the 'peaky' sound that single coils sometimes have and accentuate the breakup in that light drive tone. Finally, kick in a chorus effect when you reach the outro.

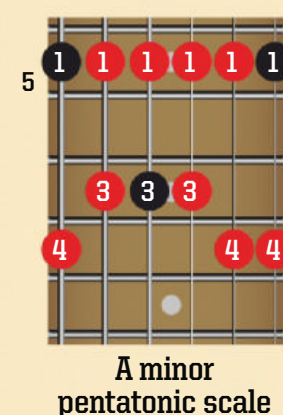
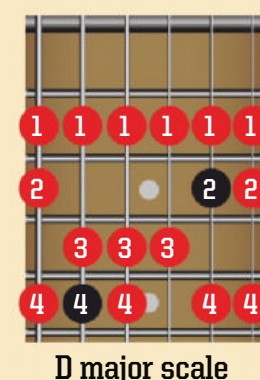
CHORDS

There are a lot of chords here, but they fit together in logical progressions, which means learning them in context isn't such a challenge. The song starts in D major with repeated D and F# chords using the D major scale to pass between them. The bulk of the tune is based on variations around an E-B-C#m-A progression (the sequence from *Axis Of Awesome*) however, with a switch to the key of A minor in the outro.



SCALES

There aren't any solos here, so the only scales of note are the short runs on the intro in D major and the simple A minor pentatonic line on the intro that's provided by an overdubbed guitar. Still, it's worth learning the shapes so you understand how the guitar part is put together.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

UNDER THE BRIDGE

UNDER THE BRIDGE
Words and Music by Anthony Kiedis, Flea, John Frusciante and Chad Smith
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RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE INTRO

♩ = 69

1

3

6

Although the chord shapes are fairly straightforward, the small flourishes in bars 3 and 7 will prove most challenging. With the opening slide from C# to D, the secret is to fret the high D and execute the slightly awkward slide your fourth finger, all without the high D being muted. Similarly, the triplet hammer-on/pull-off needs to be done whilst holding the D chord.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE VERSE 1

♩ = 80

1

4

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE VERSE 1 (cont'd)

Chord progression: E, B, C#m, A, Emaj7

TAB: 9 9 7, 8 9 7, 9 11 9, 5 6 7 5, 9 8 9 7

These chords should be played fingerstyle with your thumb, first, second and third fingers picking as one 'block' rather than strumming. There are quite a few rests here too, so keep those strings as dead as you can by minimising any fret-hand movement. Remember, a compressor will exaggerate string noise - but it's vital to the tone.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE VERSE 2

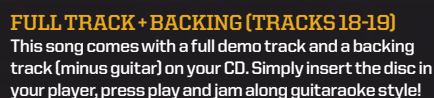
Chord progression: E, B, C#m, G#m, A

TAB: 9 9 7, 9 9 7, 7 8 9, 7 8 9, 7 8 9, 7 8 9, 9 11 9, 9 11 9, 4 6 6 4, 6 7 5, 5 7 5, 5 6 7

let ring

Emaj7

This verse contains more movement and loads of Hendrix-style fills. Identify the chord shapes, however, and the details should fall into place. It's all based around the E, B, C#m, G#m and A shapes shown in the chords boxout. Use the right fingering for each chord and those fills should be easier to manage.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE VERSE 3

Bar 1 opens with an 'inversion' of an E chord, where the major 3rd G# is the bottom note of the chord instead of the more obvious E. Just like the earlier verses, if you can identify the main shapes then the details will fall into place and you'll soon be able to improvise your own fills and licks. Try using your thumb to fret the sixth string to facilitate those ad libs if you like.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE **MIDDLE 8**

MAY 2020 **TOTAL GUITAR**

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE MIDDLE 8 (cont'd)

7

Fmaj⁷ **E⁷** **Gmaj⁷**

7

The A/E to Am/E change is surprisingly tough because that first string should ring out over both chords. For the sake of learning the part, we recommend keeping the troublesome string muted until you've got the change down - then try bringing it back in. Practise the outro chords one at a time to develop your stretch.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE OUTRO RIFF 1

68

A/E **G⁶/D** **Fmaj⁷/C** **A/E** **Am/E**

3:13

1

G⁶/D **Fmaj⁷/C** **A/E** **Am/E** **G⁶/D** **Fmaj⁷/C**

4

A/E **Am/E** **G⁶/D** **Fmaj⁷/C** **A/E** **Am**

7

Play 3 times

7/14

This variation on the middle 8 features a nice overdubbed A minor pentatonic line which we've included here (in bars 2, 4, 6 and 8) as a composite part. You could add a bit of light overdrive to enhance the lick or continue to use your core clean sound throughout. It's up to you!

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNDER THE BRIDGE OUTRO RIFF 2

3:57

A/E Am G⁶/D Fmaj⁷_{b5} Fmaj⁷

TAB 0 5 6 7 5 5 5 5 0 3 3 3 3 0 0 1 0 1

A/E Am G⁶/D Fmaj⁷

TAB 0 5 5 6 5 7 0 5 0 3 0 0 5 0 0 3 3 3 3 0 2 1 2 1 3 1 2

A/E Am G⁶/D Fmaj⁷_{b5}

TAB 0 5 6 6 6 7 5 5 3 0 5 0 3 3 4 0 2 3 0 0 0 0 2 3 3

A/E Am/E G⁶/D Fmaj⁷_{b5} A

rall.

TAB 0 5 6 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 0 3 4 5 0 2 3 0 1 2 2 2 2 0

The stretch to the 3rd fret G can be a challenge in bar 3. Make sure your finger is arched nicely in order to avoid accidentally muting other strings. Play the notes of the fills, then the notes of the chords one at a time first to ensure that this isn't happening. In fact, this is a good practice tip to apply throughout the song!

AC/DC HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE

Take your guitar playing to a great place with Rockschoo's tab of this Angus and Malcolm classic

At the heart of the AC/DC rock machine is Malcolm Young's pounding downpicked rhythms and younger brother Angus Young's slightly more fluid style. The surprise element in the equation is the duo's preference for easy open powerchords. So much riffage from such modest chords – and this month's Rockschoo track from the band's 1977 *Let There Be Rock* album is a great example.

Rockschoo's arrangement differs from the original recording a little,

halving the intro and making a bit more of the 'pedal tone' technique during the verse. It's all to suit the requirements of the Grade Five exam, but there's enough info in the tab for you to learn most of the song.

A lot of guitarists fall into the trap of adding too much distortion when playing AC/DC. Both Malcolm and Angus young have their guitar amps set to be just breaking up round the edges, not fully distorted. Just kick on an overdrive pedal when you reach the solo.





Awarding the Contemporary Arts

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

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HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE

Words & Music by Angus Young, Malcolm Young & Bon Scott
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AC/DC HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE

TRACKS 20-21

♩ = 130

G⁵ D/F# G⁵ D/F# G⁵ D/F#

1. A

2. A

5

Words: Mike Goodman Photography: Getty Images



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 20-21)
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-oke style!

AC/DC / HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE

AC/DC HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE TO BE (cont'd)

TRACKS 20-21

Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A G⁵/A A⁵ G⁵/A A⁵

Lightly palm mute

TAB

9

Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A G⁵/A A⁵

TAB

13

G⁵/A A⁵ Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A

TAB

16

1. **G⁵/A A⁵ G⁵/A A⁵** 2. **G⁵/A A⁵ G⁵/A A⁵**

TAB

19

D G⁵/D D

TAB

23

26

G⁵/D D E A

29

E G⁵

To Coda

32

Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A G⁵/A A⁵

35

G⁵/A A⁵ Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A

38

G⁵/A A⁵ G⁵/A A⁵ Dsus⁴/A D/A Dsus⁴/A D/A

JAM TRACK PLAY GUITAR WITH A BAND!

US PUNK

Think punk started in the UK in 1977? Think again, as you jam over TG's early US punk-style backing track

In the early 70s, bands such as The Stooges, New York Dolls, MC5 and the Ramones pioneered a US-centric kind of punk, later influencing acts like Green Day, Rancid and Guns N' roses. US punk was different from its UK counterpart: these trendsetters were inspired by the blues and rock 'n' roll bands of the 50s and 60s, and, although many tracks feature the high tempos and aggression generally associated with the punk genre, many of the songs sound quite different to what we

know from a modern interpretation of the word.

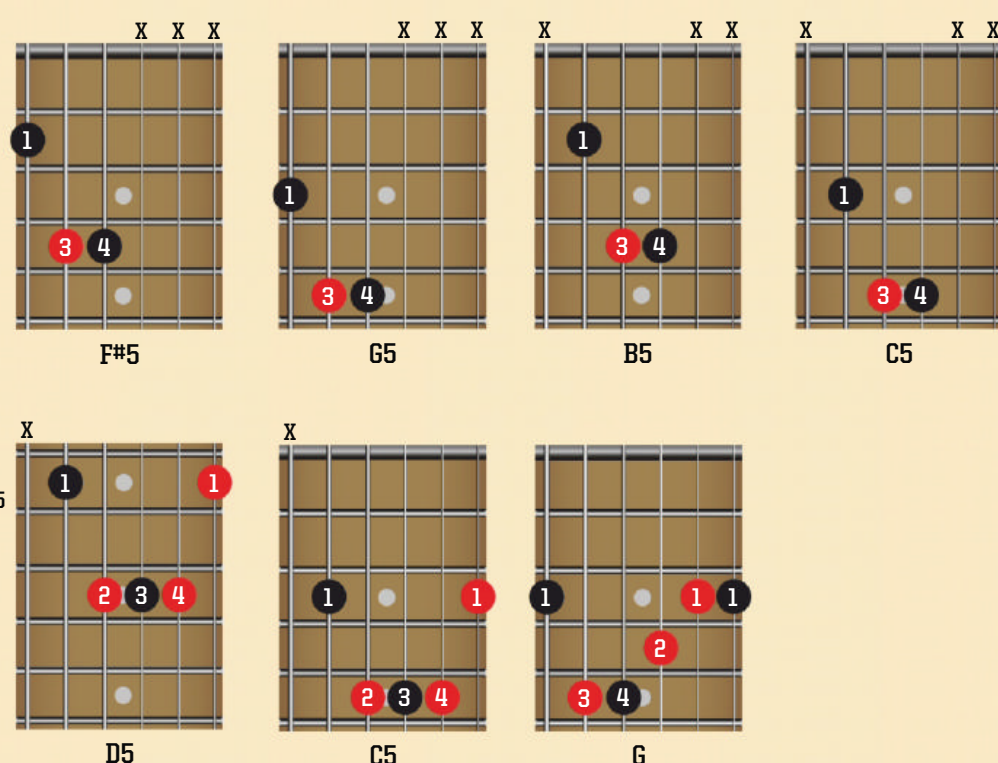
Tone-wise, aim for a hard-edged overdriven sound that isn't too distorted. Avoid modern high-gain sounds associated with metal. Punk is all about attitude and delivery, so worry less about accuracy and concentrate on playing hard!

This month's Jam Track takes influence mainly from the Ramones. They'd often use basic melodies and rhythmic ideas, so aim to keep things simple as you play along.



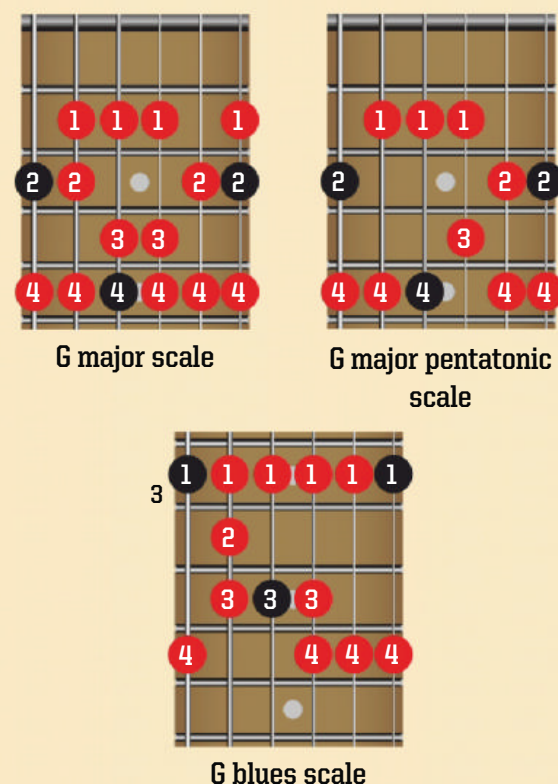
CHORDS

In typical punk style, these are all simple major shapes and powerchords – nothing too difficult. Still, take the opportunity to have a look at the shapes before you jam along with the track so that you're prepared for any possible changes that might come up.



SCALES

The track is in G, so arrange your solos around the major and major pentatonic scales. Beware, though, – these two scales are great for simple melodic lines but they can sound a bit twee. Switch to the G blues scale for a sound with more tension and, yes, a *bluesier* vibe.



**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 22)**

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 / US PUNK**JAM TRACK****CHEAT SHEET**

Tempo: 167 bpm

Time signature: 4/4

Key/scale: G major

Fringes Cut With Rulers

VERSE

| F#5 G5 / / / / / / / / | B5 G5 / / / / / / / / |
| F#5 G5 / / / / / / / / | B5 G5 / / / / / / / / ||

CHORUS

| D / / / / | C / / / / | D / / / / |
| C / / / / | G / C / | G / / / / ||

BRIDGE

	G / / / / / / / /	C / / / /	D / / / /
G / / / / / / / /	C / / / /	D / / / /	
G / / / /	C / / / /	G / / / /	C / / / /
G / / / /	C / / / /	D / / / /	/ / / / / .

At a tempo of 167 bpm, the track races along - and that means the chord changes come thick and fast. Have a quick read through the chart, and, if you've already got your guitar in your hand, just make sure you can play each change comfortably and cleanly.

THE TURNAROUND

LICKS AND TRICKS OF THE BLUES GREATS

SHUFFLE FEEL

Put a swing in your step with our detailed look at a rhythm that's at the heart of blues

Swing feel (aka 'shuffle feel' or the 'blues shuffle') is a core blues rhythm groove. Sure, there's plenty of non-swing 'straight' feel blues around too, but you can listen to practically any artist to hear a shuffle in action.

A great place to start is with the man who supposedly sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his guitar talents, Robert Johnson – check out *Cross Road Blues* or *Sweet Home Chicago*. Other legends include BB King (*Every Day I Have*

The Blues) and Stevie Ray Vaughan (*Pride And Joy*). Looking for contemporary players? Check out Erja Lyytinen (*It Hurts Me Too*), Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram (*Outside Of This Town*) and Ana Popovi (*Fearless*).

All these songs share that shuffle feel. The explanation is simple too. Straight feel music usually has eight even notes in each bar – two for every time you tap your foot. Shuffle feel makes the first of each pair longer than the second. Read on and we'll explain all.



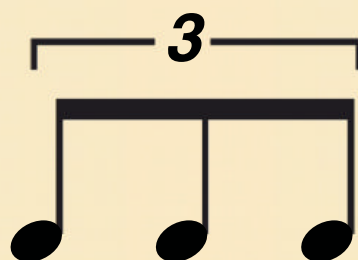
SHUFFLE FEEL NOTATED... GET TO GRIPS WITH THE NOTATION AND THE MUSIC WILL MAKE MORE SENSE TOO



1

STRAIGHT EIGHTHS

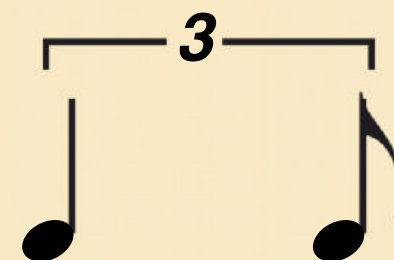
Here are two eighth notes (aka quavers) 'beamed' together (beaming just keeps the notes tidy!). In most music there are eight eighth notes in each bar of music. Count '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' for an eighth note pulse.



2

'TRIP-A-LET' FEEL

Unlike eighth notes, triplets have three notes for every beat instead of two. Try saying '1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a' to count out the rhythm. Some people say 'trip-a-let' instead.



3

SHUFFLE FEEL

The blues shuffle is based on triplet feel, but using only the first and third notes of each triplet (the number and the 'a'). Say 'humpty dumpty humpty dumpty' to get the feel.

12-BAR BLUES



We've played this month's tabbed licks over a 12-bar blues backing track in C. Try out the licks one by one or jam along with some chords if you prefer.



FULL TRACKS (TRACKS 34-38)
These tab examples come with audio tracks on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

THE TURNAROUND

1 ERIC CLAPTON-STYLE RIFF

Listen out for the 'bounce' of the shuffle groove in the audio track and try to lock in

$\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$

C⁷ **F⁷**

This is a simple shuffle feel riff notated with straight eighth notes – the marking at the top tells you to play with swing feel. Why? Well it's just neater and easier to read the music this way! The alternative would be to use triplet-based notation which gets a bit much after a while.

1 JOE BONAMASSA-STYLE LICK

Practise switching between shuffle feel and three-note triplets. The change should be seamless

C⁷ **F⁷**

Loosely inspired by Joe Bonamassa's gentler blues playing, the rhythm of this lick is a little more complex than in our first riff. Remember, triplets are at the heart of shuffle feel so it's easy to add one or two in for a bit of variation. Hint: look at the start of bar 2!

1 ANA POPOVIC-STYLE LICK

This is a prime example where practising slowly will help you get your ear in!

C⁷ **F⁷**

It can be tough to nail the swing timing here – that's because, unlike our first riff, you don't get much opportunity to repeat any part of the lick and get a feel for it. Take a close look at the tab first and take note of which notes are on the beat and which are not.

C⁷

F⁷

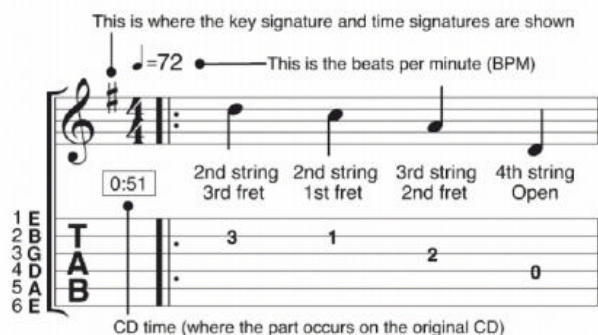
G⁷

Use these three chords to jam along with this month's backing music. Together they make a 12-bar blues in C (C⁷-F⁷-G⁷).

TAB GUIDE

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

What is tab?



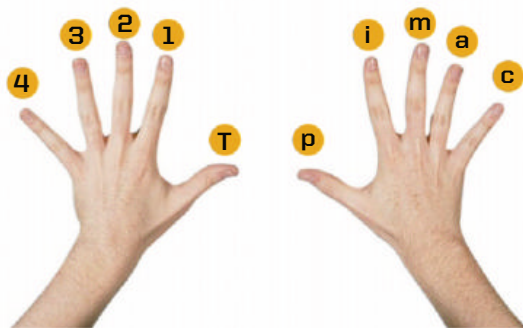
Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the

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.

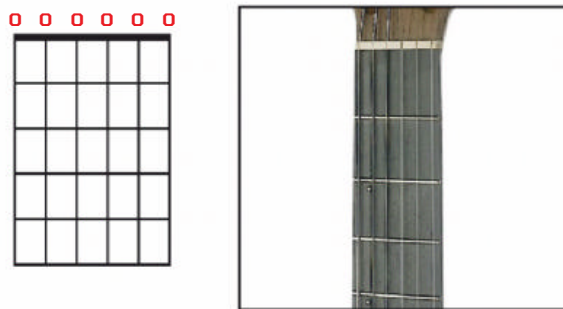
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



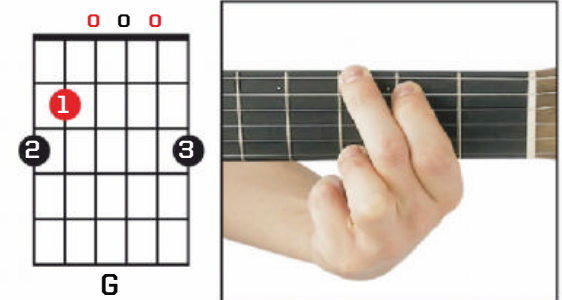
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: **1, 2, 3, 4, (T)**
Picking hand: **p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)**

NUT AND FRETBOARD



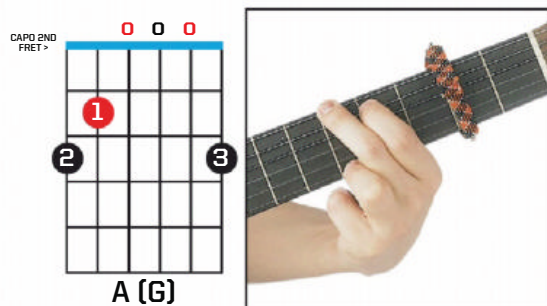
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



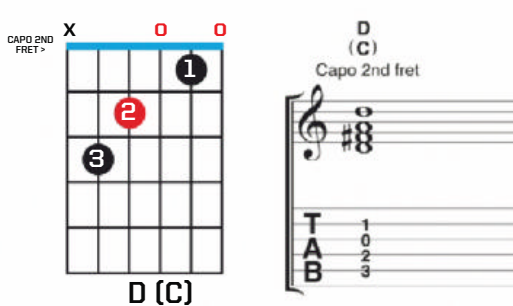
This diagram represents a G chord. The 'o's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black 'o' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



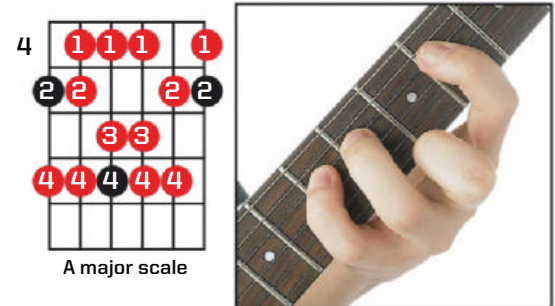
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo. For this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

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



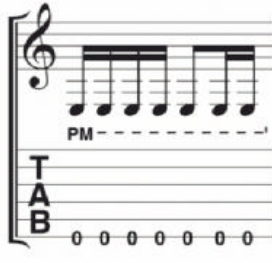
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



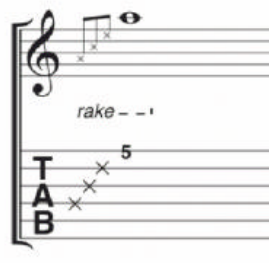
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

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



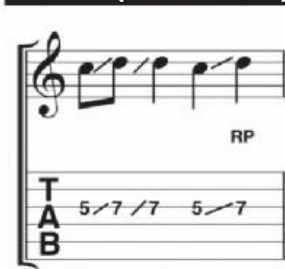
Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS



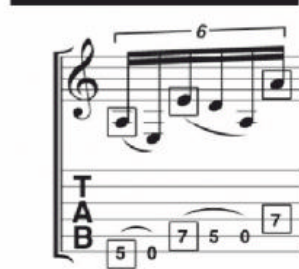
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



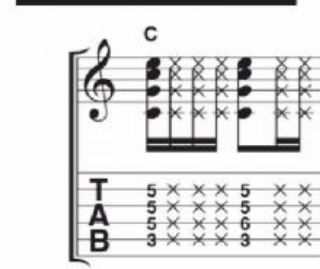
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

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.

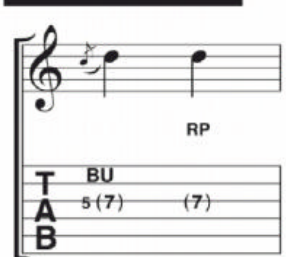
BENDING AND VIBRATO

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



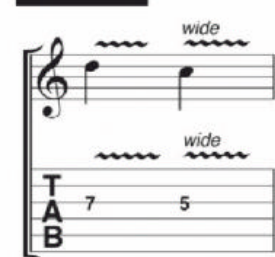
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

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



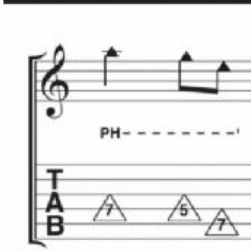
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



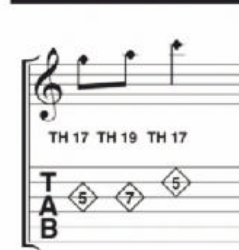
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



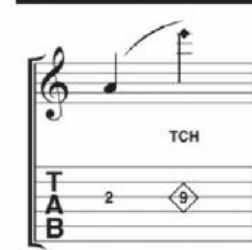
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

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.

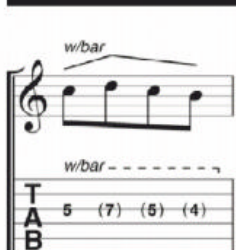
TOUCHED HARMONICS



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

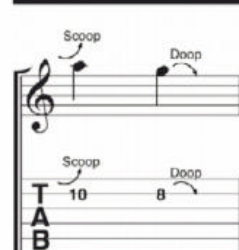
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

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



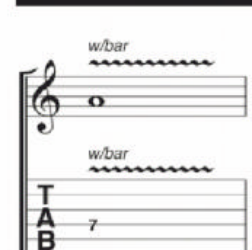
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



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

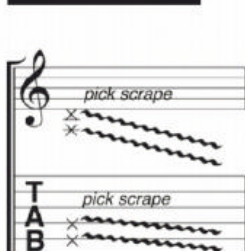
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



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

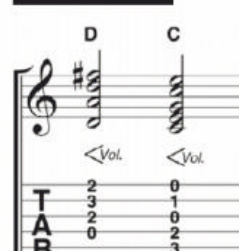
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



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

VIOLINING



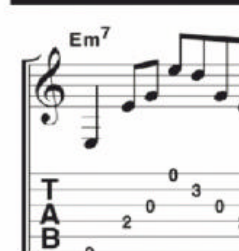
Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

FINGER NUMBERING



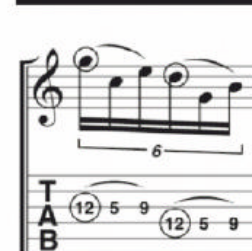
The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fingers required to play each note.

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'.



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ACOUSTIC



Unplugged

YOUR MONTH IN THE ACOUSTIC WORLD

083

ACOUSTIC NEWS

084

FRANK TURNER

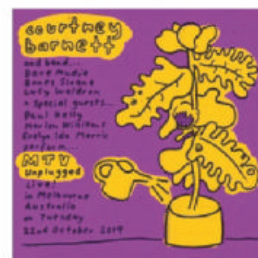
086

ACOUSTIC TAB:
HYPERSONIC MISSILES



COURT AND SPARK

AUSTRALIAN INDIE ROCKER COURTNEY BARNETT HAS SHARED A NEW ACOUSTIC LIVE ALBUM



Back in October, Courtney Barnett played a special set for MTV Australia in her hometown of Melbourne. The “Unplugged” performance was more intimate than usual for Barnett, who was joined by her usual band of Dave Mudie and Bones Sloane, as well as cellist Lucy Waldron. The eight-song set was played for a few lucky fans and included *Depreston*, *Avant Gardener* and *Sunday Roast*.

Barnett also invited some of her favourite musicians to collaborate including Paul Kelly, Marlon Williams Evelyn Ida Morris. The performances included covers of Leonard Cohen, Archie Roach and Seeker Lover Keeper, as well as brand new original track *Play It On Repeat*.

Speaking about the performance, Barnett said: “I love playing to Melbourne crowds. I wanted to have a mixture of old songs, new songs and covers, and tracks that we don’t perform all

the time – it’s been interesting to see the songs through a different filter, and it brings out this other emotional side to the music and the lyrics.”

She continued, “Unplugged is so nostalgic for me. We had two Unplugged Records in our CD collection growing up and I know those records inside out because we listened to them every day.”

Courtney Barnett – MTV Unplugged Live In Melbourne is out now on Milk! Records.

IMPERIAL BLUE

GODIN INVITES YOU TO DIVE INTO ITS STRIKING NEW BLUE ACOUSTIC

Godin has announced the Imperial Laguna Blue GT EQ acoustic guitar, a dreadnought-shaped model with concert hall depth.

The new acoustic sports a solid Sitka spruce top, solid mahogany back and sides, mahogany neck and Richlite fingerboard. Electronics are an LR Baggs

Anthem system, and the guitar is finished in a Laguna Blue gloss. There’s also an ebony bridge, Graph Tech nut, custom 12th fret inlay and Godin acoustic pickguard with matching headstock.

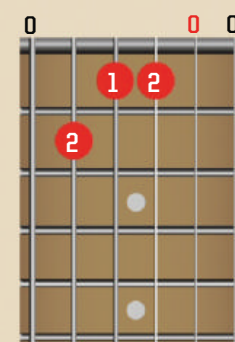
The Imperial Laguna Blue GT EQ comes with a Deluxe TRIC case for \$1,395. For more information, head to www.godinguitars.com



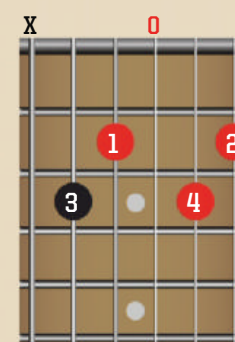
TRACKS 26-30

FIVE OPEN CHORDS

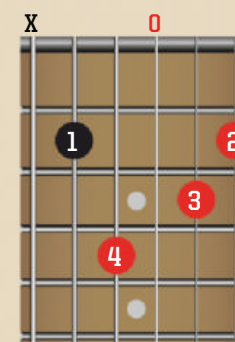
Essential chords to fuel your creativity



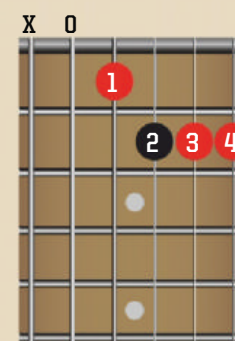
Emaj7



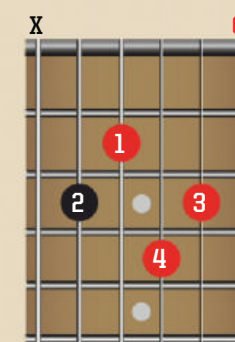
Cadd9#11



Bm,6



A6,5



Cmaj9

Frank Turner

HE STARTED OUT AS A PUNK ROCKER, BUT NOW FRANK TURNER IS TAKING INSPIRATION FROM OUTLAW COUNTRY LEGENDS, WRITING SONGS ABOUT POWERFUL WOMEN AND PLAYING ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH HIS ACOUSTIC

Performance can be the hardest skill for a musician to master. No matter the size of the venue or the occasion, there's an emotional intimacy to performing that you will have to reconcile with. There is an immediacy, too, an ephemeral, protean energy that's impossible to replicate. As Frank Turner describes it, there is an art to performing that's distinct from the ability to play.

Turner came out of the UK post-hardcore scene at the turn of the century with Million Dead, going solo in 2005 once the band split, putting a folk spin on his punk sensibilities and embracing his acoustic as the primary medium for his message. He says you can tell which artists have played their share of bad shows and pushed through to the other side.

"It took me a few years to figure out that performance is a different skill to musicianship," he says. "There have been plenty of shows where I have come off thinking, 'Why did I even fucking bother?' You go onstage, pour your heart out, and no one gives a toss, but that comes with the territory. If you are going to try and make a living jumping around the world and emoting at people, you have got to be prepared for the idea that not everybody is going to be interested."

Turner is checking in from his UK tour, having recently returned from West Africa, where he played a string of shows in Sierra Leone. As patron of the charity Worldwide Arts for Youth (WAYout), it is a part of the world that Turner has visited regularly since 2017, and playing sets at correctional facilities, to audiences who might never have heard of him save for a clip on YouTube, are exactly the sort of life experiences that inform his idea of performance. "It makes you very aware of your privilege in life," he says. "But it has changed my way of thinking about music in a sense, because you are standing on an upturned crate in the

middle of a slum, and you are trying to play songs that you wrote, growing up in suburban England. That shines quite a harsh light on your songwriting, lyrically and musically. What gets the crowd going; people who are of a completely different musical culture to you?"

Turner's latest album *No Man's Land* chronicles the lives of remarkable women whose histories have either been forgotten or rarely shared, such as rock 'n' roll pioneer Sister Rosetta Tharpe and the Byzantine composer Kassiani. Does the moral urgency of his songwriting translate to kids who are into

Afrobeat? Maybe. Maybe not. But the song can work nonetheless. In Turner's mind, it should. "Some of the best songs are songs that don't mean that much," he says. "*Hey Ya!* by Outkast, which is a killer fucking song. I would struggle to tell you what that song is about, but I love putting it on. The world of songwriting is an incredibly broad church. I grew up as a punk. In my older days, I have become terminally obsessed with country music because that is a genre that is focused on the song to an almost bizarre degree. Recently I have been buried in Merle Haggard because that motherfucker could write a song."

The mechanics of songwriting and performance might not have changed over the years but perhaps how we experience them as the audience is changing. The bootleg recording was popularised in the 1960s but in 2020 it's democratised and almost mandated by smartphones. Turner believes we are losing something intangible but nonetheless vital when we commit the shared physical experience of a performance to anything other than our memories. "I am really glad that I was not taking photos at some of the most important moments of my life," he says.

"I have got pictures in my head and they will do me just fine. I think that a show is a magic thing that happens once, in one place, and once it is finished it is over, and if you weren't there then bad luck. There is something almost shamanistic about that magic. It is about the moments. It is about the crowd. And it is about the performance, and this groove that you cook up only once."

Perhaps that's the most important step in learning to perform – recognising these moments and making them count. "That is partly what keeps me on the road," says Turner. "It keeps me interested in the challenges."

Frank Turner's *No Man's Land* is out now on Universal.



BUILT TO LAST

In the Martin D-12, Turner has finally found the guitar that could withstand his live show

"On tour, my acoustics are Martin D-12s. I've had this long-running problem in my career, which is, while I am an acoustic guitarist, I tend to beat the living shit out of the instruments that I play. Even in a solo show, I play hard and I slap the guitar around. For a long time, I found myself just going through guitars – beautiful instruments that sounded great, but they couldn't take a beating. These days, I am really settled down on Martin; they just handle it and always sound and play great. When it comes to the electric world I am still a Gibson guy, with my hollow-body white Les Paul.



MY FAVOURITE
Hendrix
SONG

"I have always enjoyed Jimi Hendrix's music, but *Crosstown Traffic* is the closest he got to funk. It just has a really funky little groove, and I always loved that."

"I TEND TO
BEAT THE
LIVING SHIT
OUT OF THE
INSTRUMENTS
THAT I PLAY."

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

SAM FENDER HYPERSONIC MISSILES

Jam along with Sam Fender's jangly arpeggios. Plug in or go acoustic. It's up to you!

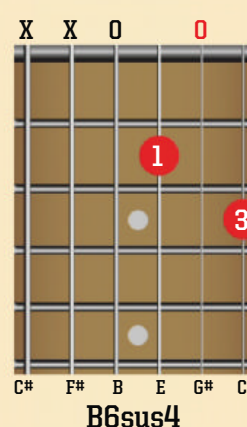
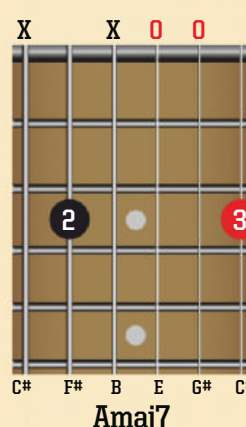
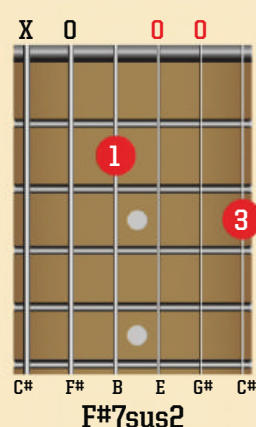
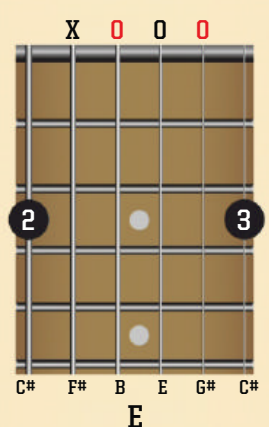
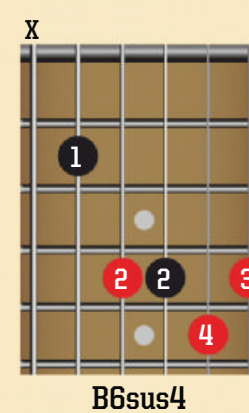
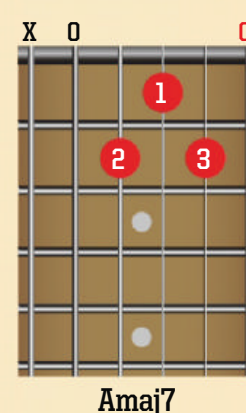
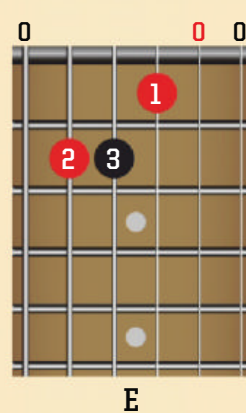
The title track from Sam Fender's 2019 debut album, *Hypersonic Missiles* tackles the spoils of consumerism, overpopulation, war, and the potential end of the world whilst also alluding to the themes of a love song. Clearly the North Shields guitarist has the songwriting chops to match his tidy playing, then. Though this month's tune is primarily an electric guitar song, those jangly arpeggios are ripe for an acoustic arrangement.

You'll need to detune your guitar by three semitones to C# standard to play along with the original recording as Sam himself did. It does make learning the chords a bit of a bind; they're not hard to play, but, of course, when you change your tuning all the chord names are different. Focus on learning the shapes though – like we say, they're pretty easy. We've shown Sam's original C#-tuned chords below, as well as some generic shapes in standard tuning in case you don't want to retune.



CHORDS

There are two sets of chords here: some generic standard-tuned shapes and Sam's original C#-tuned ones. Don't be put off by the complicated names. They're all easy to play. Just make sure you've got the shapes down before you worry about the chord names or detuning your guitar. Remember, *Hypersonic Missiles* includes a lot of arpeggios, so every string needs to ring out cleanly. Fret right on the tips of your fingers to achieve this.



**HYPERSONIC
MISSILES**
Words and Music by Sam Fender
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Hal Leonard Europe Ltd.

Guitars and backing: Phil Capone Photo: Getty Images

**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 31)**

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!

SAM FENDER / HYPERSONIC MISSILES**SONG SHEET**

Hypersonic Missiles

Verse 1

E
Dutch kids huff balloons in the parking lot

The golden arches illuminate the business park
F#7sus2
I eat myself to death, feed the corporate machine

I watch the movies, recite every line and scene
Amaj7 **F#7sus2**
God bless America and all of its allies

E
I'm not the first to live with wool over my eyes

Verse 2

E
I am so blissfully unaware of everything

Kids in Gaza are bombed and I'm just out of it
F#7sus2
The tensions of the world are rising higher

We're probably due another war with all this ire
Amaj7
I'm not smart enough to change a thing
F#7sus2
I've no answers, only questions
E
Don't you ask a thing

Chorus 1

Amaj7 **F#7sus2**
Oh, silver tongue suits and cartoons
Amaj7 **E**
They rule my world
B6sus4 **F#7sus2** **Amaj7** **E**
Singing, it's a high time for hypersonic missiles
B6sus4 **Amaj7**
And when the bombs drop, darling
F#7sus2 **Amaj7** **E**
Can you say that you've lived your life?
B6sus4 **F#7sus2** **Amaj7** **E** **B6sus4**
Oh, this is a high time for hypersonic missiles

Verse 3

E
The cities lie like tumours all across the world

A cancer eating mankind, hitting it on blindside
F#7sus2
They say I'm a nihilist 'cause I can't see

Any decent rhyme or reason for the life of you and me
Amaj7
But I believe in what I'm feeling and I'm falling for you
F#7sus2
This world is gonna end but 'til then
E
I'll give you everything I have
Amaj7
I'll give you everything I have

Instrumental chorus**Bridge**

E
Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh
F#7sus2
Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh

Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh
Amaj7
Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh
F#7sus2
Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh
E
Oh - oh - oh, oh - oh, oh - oh... C'mon

Repeat chorus**Outro**

Amaj7 **F#7sus2** **Amaj7**
Then you'll do the same, only the names change, honey
E **B6sus4**
You can join their club if you're born into money
F#7sus2 **Amaj7** **E**
It's a high time for hypersonic missiles
F#7sus2 **Amaj7** **E**
And, oh, this is a high time for hypersonic missiles
F#7sus2 **Amaj7** **E**
And, oh, this is a high time for hypersonic missiles
F#7sus2 **Amaj7**
Oh, this is a high time for hypersonic missiles

SAM FENDER HYPERSONIC MISSILES CHORUS

♩ = 132

Amaj7 **F#7sus2** **Amaj7** **E** **B6sus4**

0:56

let ring - - - - -

let ring - - - - -

let ring - - - - -

TAB

String	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	3	3	3	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

We've only shown the first four bars of the chorus here; on the second time through, just flip the order of the first two chords - i.e., play **F#7sus2** then **Amaj7** this time.

SAM FENDER HYPERSONIC MISSILES SOLO

Amaj7 **F#7sus2** **Amaj7**

1.3. **E** **B6sus4** 2.4. **E** **B6sus4**

1:54

w/bar

w/bar

w/bar

w/bar

TAB

String	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
4	2	0	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The last note of the solo alternates between the open fourth string (a B note in this tuning) and the open third string (E), on each repeat.

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



106



96

090 POSITIVE GRID SPARK 40

Your first look at the most hyped-up amp of the year, with nearly 25,000 preorders and counting

094 BALAGUER ESPADA

The next generation of offset guitars

096 ORANGE TERROR STAMP

Great Orange tones at your feet!

098 TG TEST: GIBSON SOLIDBODIES

Three Les Paul Tributes and an SG Special are the Big G's latest offering. Which will be the one for you?

104 AMBIENT EFFECTS ROUND-UP

Take your sound in bold new directions with our guide to the essential ambient pedals available right now

106 KORG NU:TEK OVERDRIVE

Korg's noisy little build-it-yourself box



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



01



02



03



04



05

START ME UP!

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

IK MULTIMEDIA IRIG PRO DUO I/O

1 As the iRig celebrates its 10th birthday, this feels like the ideal landmark for the mobile recording interface – it's two-channel for audio and MIDI with new and improved mic preamps offering more gain with reworked volume controls. There are two analogue combo 1/4"/XLR inputs for simultaneous recording and dedicated PC drivers to improve performance on laptops and Surface tablets. But, of course, it can also be used on iPhone, iPad, Android and Mac devices. [£209 www.ikmultimedia.com]

DANELECTRO 3699 FUZZ

2 Danelectro owner Steve Ridinger has revived his FOX 3699 Tone Machine fuzz from the 70s and given it a whole new lease of life. This reissue with 'wear and tear' finish includes independent octave that's foot-switchable with a more pronounced shift. A new mini-toggle switch also brings a boost to the mid-range and counteracts the mid-cut of the original Foxtone pedal. Of course, you'll still get the thick, vintage bottom end that made the original so renowned. [\$199 www.danelectro.com]

ERNIE BALL EVERLAST PICKS

3 If we can have longer-lasting guitar strings, why not longer-lasting plectrums, too? Ernie Ball's new Delrin material answers the call by offering high durability and a non-slip surface for a compelling combination. The eight-thickness set ranges from the blue .48mm to teal 20mm. Their longevity is only threatened by whether you'll lose them, but their vibrant colours and packs of 12 will certainly reduce that risk. [£5.99 for 12 www.ernieball.co.uk]

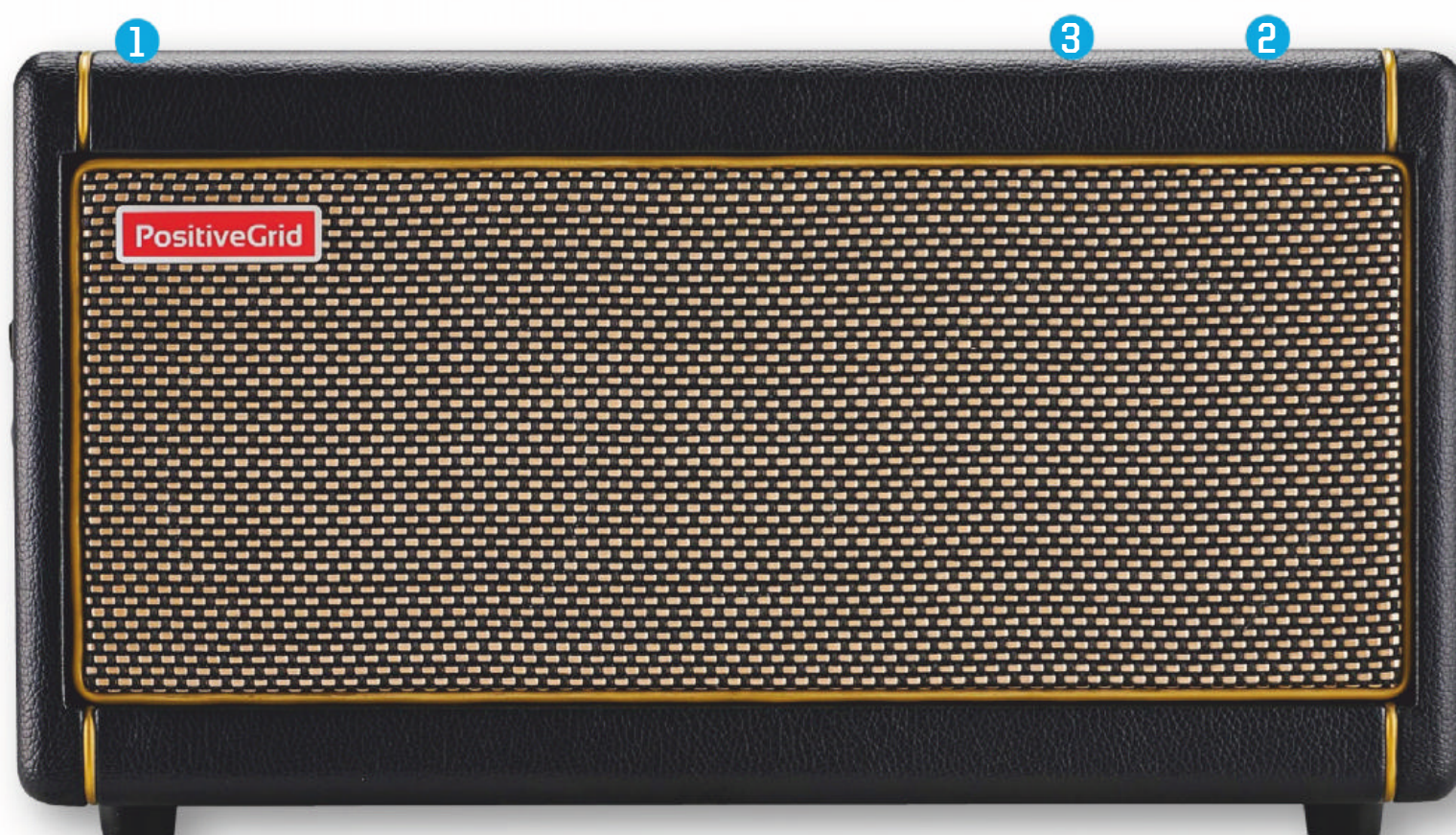
HARLEY BENTON EX-84 MODERN

4 Looking for ...*And Justice For All*-era Hetfield thrills on a strict budget? Enter Thomann brand Harley Benton with a head-scratching good spec for the money. Available in black or white with a mahogany body, ebony fingerboard... Grover tuners?! The active humbuckers are a Harley Benton Roswell LZ51 in the bridge and a Roswell LZ56 in the neck. You'll just need some tape, permanent marker and an older Jagermeister label to pay tribute to Papa Het's old 'More Beer' Explorer. [£260 www.thomann.de]

TC ELECTRONIC PLETHORA X5

5 If you've been impressed by TC's range of TonePrint pedals, prepare to be dazzled by the Plethora. It lives up to its name by including every unit released to date, including the Flashback delay and Hall Of Fame reverb, and you can programme 75 different TonePrints for each of them. Then, you can combine them as a pedalboard on your five-switch Plethora and store up to 127 of these pedalboards, too. There are near endless possibilities here and hours of fun to be had. [£395 www.tcelectronic.com]





POSITIVE GRID SPARK 40

Can nearly 25,000 guitarists be wrong?



\$299

In the worlds of smartphones and video games, 25,000 isn't a big number when it comes to preorders. But in the world of guitar amps, it is huge. So how did the Positive Grid Spark manage to convince so many people to lay their money down without even trying it?

Firstly, the tone engine behind this amp is a known quantity to anyone who has tried the

bluetooth audio streaming yada yada... Yes, it does all that, but it can also listen to a song of your choosing from Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube and transpose its chords for you to play along with. Fancy a jam? Pick a tempo, play a riff or a chord progression, choose the genre you want and it'll play you a whole backing track to jam over. Surely a cynic would be raising an eyebrow by now?

and reverb controls are a simple but canny inclusion that means you can quickly dial an organic blend of effects in and out to your taste. Indeed, the amp is ready to roll, and rock, as soon as you plug it in – no app setup needed. You can get a taste of what's on offer straight away. And it is an addictive recipe – we lingered at this stage for a long time, simply having too much fun playing.

The Spark sounds like the little amp that could; and did. It is 40 watts with a stereo speaker and makes it count for a lot. Yes, you can play at house-friendly volumes or through headphones, but this thing can really sound expansive and loud, combined with modelling that feels like valve response in a practice amp. Turn it up when you can.

Coupling with the Spark app via bluetooth opens up the possibilities. For your tones, that equates to 30 different amps (see boxout), five compressor pedal models, nine overdrives, 10 modulation pedals, six delays and nine reverbs. Make your signal chain and save your choices into one of the seven amp voices across the four preset banks. And that's going to take a while, not because

BELIEVE THE HYPE... THE SPARK IS FANTASTIC

company's BIAS modelling software or heads. And it's very good. That is really the main event, as we'll discuss in more detail. But we think there's more to it than that; the desktop amp market that Spark is gunning for the hearts of recognises one central truth about guitar players; most of us play at home. Then, there's the price – even at full price it hits an 'I could justify this' sweet spot for buyers. But then there's another factor; the Spark isn't just an amp.

Yes, you've heard it before – amp integration blah blah,

First up, it looks like an amp; while the dimensions are certainly table-friendly, the Spark isn't trying to look like anything else in an effort to appeal to home gadget fans. But that's not to say it doesn't look good; the black and gold, from piping to grill and controls should look reassuring to any guitar player. The general outer is high quality with a handy leather removable carrying strap.

There's seven channels to choose from; including bass and acoustic. Then, familiar controls with three-band EQ, gain, master and output. The modulation, delay

1 AMP TYPES

The four banks of presets are arranged into seven amp types: Acoustic, Bass, Clean, Glassy, Crunch, Hi-Gain and Metal. You can override the factory models with your own choices but the categories are useful for getting a taste of the Spark's quality and versatility with BIAS straight out of the box.

2 MUSIC VOLUME

You'll be using this control with the Output knob a lot when you start playing a long to streamed audio through the app and getting the mix right between your guitar level and the song. If you're playing along to YouTube through the app, you'll get to see the video alongside the transposed chords to keep you entertained.

3 TUNER

The Spark's tap tempo button doubles as a tuner if you hold it down for a few seconds.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE Digital modelling combo for guitar, bass and acoustic with BIAS Tone Engine and app integration for jamming

OUTPUT: 40 watts

SPEAKERS: 2x4" custom designed

TOP CONTROLS: Amp Type, Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble, Master, Mod, Delay, Reverb, Output Volume, Music Volume, four programmable Preset buttons, Tap/Tuner button

ONBOARD EFFECTS: 30 Amp Models, 40 Effects

SOCKETS: 1/4" guitar input, 1/8" aux input, 1/8" headphone, Bluetooth audio, USB connectivity for recording

2 In x 2 Out

DIMENSIONS: 350mm [w] x 180mm [w] 190mm [d]

WEIGHT: 5.2 kg



A Home For Tone

Getting to grips with the BIAS bonanza

There's no initial up-selling going on here; with 30 amps included for guitar, bass and acoustic it's pretty easy to get lost in the Spark's BIAS engine straight out the box. As usual with modelled amps, there's a familiar array of classic Orange, Marshall, Fender and Mesa/Boogie. We found ourselves gravitating to the rock versatility of the Plexiglas and JM45, especially when we were playing with the Smart Chords or improvising. High-gainers will find plenty to enjoy here with the Treadplate and 5153 leading the charge. But Positive Grid go further with the Tone Cloud community – users can post their tones for download/uploads via the Spark app. There's 10,000 so far – plenty to keep you inspired.

it's a difficult process but there's so many great tonal possibilities here to get carried away with.

In addition to control over your tones, the Spark app offers two key features; Smart Jam and Auto Chords. In addition to a range of backing tracks that can be streamed from YouTube inside the app, the 'smart' part generates a backing track based on what you're playing, detected by your smartphone or tablet's mic. April will bring more genres in addition to the existing pop and rock genre choices for it so far. While it's nice to have, we think Auto Chords is a



much bigger deal here; it listens to a song you choose within the app and if it doesn't have the chords for it transcribed in its database, it evaluates the song and transposes the chords in minutes for you to play along. Yes, it can miss chords from time to time, but is generally accurate and it opens up the Spark for you to learn whatever you choose. Vitally, it makes learning fun.

For us, the quality of a piece of gear can be honed to one question; does it make you want to play? This does, a lot. Believe the hype; the Spark is a fantastic practice and

recording amp at a competitive price. It lives up to the term 'smart amp'. To be honest, we'd recommend the Spark at this price if that's all it delivered as a combo, but the developing features that encourage solo players to learn songs and stay inspired make this an absolute home run.

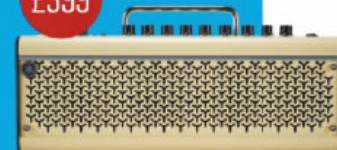
Rob Laing

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

ALSO TRY...

YAMAHA THR30II

£399



The original THR introduced the concept of the 'third' amp in desktop-friendly dimensions. This MKII introduces refined modelling, optional battery power and bluetooth connectivity

BLACKSTAR ID:CORE BEAM

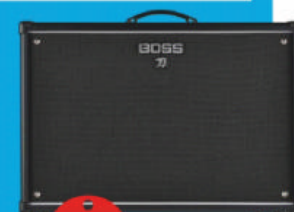
£229



Blackstar's 2x10W desktop amp is an overlooked gem with dedicated channels for electric, acoustic and bass, as well as bluetooth playback.

BOSS KATANA AIR

£400



A fully wireless 30-watt amp that includes a bluetooth transmitter for your guitar. Boss's Tone Studio app offers 50 effects with COSM modelling and impressive amp voices.

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- JAZZ CHOPS Dominant modal Pentatonics
- FRETBOARD FLUENCY Exploring Phrygian Dominant
- CREATIVE ROCK Pentatonics within Mixolydian
- 30-MINUTE LICKBAG Eric Idle, Steve Cropper, Angus Young, Al Di Meola, Steve Vai

JOHN MAYER
Play some of the coolest licks from this superstar pop-blues musician

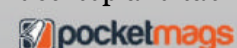
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Add a powerful baseline to your picking fingers

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BALAGUER STANDARD SERIES ESPADA £699

This tricked-out electric rewrites the offset formula for the modern era

It may have taken six decades, but offset guitars have finally come of age. From global awards ceremonies to your local pub, there are just as many Jazzmasters and Mustangs hitting the stage as Strats and Teles. But offsets were never exactly designed for more technically-demanding playing styles... Enter Balaguer Guitars. The Pennsylvania, USA firm has spent the past six years equipping familiar outlines with ergonomic tweaks and contemporary features at attractive price points. Now, these finely appointed guitars have finally landed in the UK, thanks to GuitarGuitar.

The Espada is Balaguer's take on modernising the Jazz, most

pickups thrive with a good high-gain amp or plugin, yielding singing sustain, chunky chugs, and all the pinched harmonics you can handle from the bridge 'bucker. However, the neck position is a little wooly for our tastes, and the clean tones, while pleasingly touch-sensitive, aren't much to write home about – but that's where the handy coil-split comes in. Tugging on the tone control brightens up that neck position wonderfully, yielding fat single-coil tones that provide the perfect neutral platform for adding a liberal splash of stompboxes. In that sense, the split sounds embody one of the Jazzmaster's most enduring qualities, albeit with a higher output that also

1 CONTOURS
The Espada has clearly been on a body sculpt workout, with an almighty forearm contour, plus rear belly and heel cuts.

2 PICKUPS
Expect wild tones from the bridge 'bucker, with warmer tones from the neck.

3 NECK
A 16" radius fingerboard and contoured neck heel make the Espada a great potential shred machine.

AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Alder
- NECK:** Maple
- SCALE:** 25.5"
- FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, 16" radius
- FRETS:** 22
- PICKUPS:** 2x Balaguer Feral humbuckers
- CONTROLS:** 1x volume, 1x tone (w/ push/pull coil-split), 3-way pickup selector
- HARDWARE:** Locking tuners, Graph Tech graphite nut, hardtail bridge
- LEFT-HANDED:** Yes
- FINISH:** Gloss Metallic Silverburst, Gloss Shell Pink, Gloss Sky Blue, Satin Black, Gloss Vintageburst (reviewed)
- CASE:** Padded gigbag included
- CONTACT:** GuitarGuitar, balaguerguitars.com



THE ESPADA REINVENTS THE OFFSET FOR A NEW GENERATION

notably with that almighty top carve, which not only makes a dramatic visual impact, but also a comfortable resting place for your forearm during extended playing sessions. This kind of performance-focused ethos is carried throughout the rest of the instrument: it's in the satin-finished C-shaped neck, 16" radius and the smooth-playing ebony fingerboard. There's also a contoured heel for those dusty-end pyrotechnics, a through-body-stringing hardtail bridge and locking tuners.

As you'd expect, the Espada shoots for modern sounds in the tone department, too; Balaguer has equipped it with its highest-output own-brand humbuckers, the aptly named Ferals. These

works well for classic rock tones, and can even handle some Strat-style middle-position funk.

Besides reinventing the offset for a new generation, Balaguer has offered some serious value for money here, from the spec to the tones and even the heavily padded gigbag, which ranks among the best we've seen thrown in with a guitar. It's not without its faults, but these pale in comparison to the outstanding playability and versatility the Espada espouses.

Michael Astley-Brown

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







ORANGE TERROR STAMP

The tiniest Terror yet...



£149

The emergence of pedalboard-based amps isn't just significant for portability, it's also a huge development for accessibility. If you've lusted after a company's valve-driven heads in the past but have been priced out, or can't justify the outlay to try an extra amp to add to your arsenal, these things are very good news. A prime example is how Victory's range of preamp pedals

Micro Terror and Dark – a potent combination if it can pull it off. Orange deliver the all-analogue design by combining valve and solid state elements; an ECC83 (12AX7) valve preamp with a 20W Class A/B solid-state power amp. The layout is simple, especially so compared to the likes of Blug and Victory, with a switchable master volume offering an instant boost for your leads, alongside a shape control that is key to shaping your

It's gain range plays very well as a pedal platform; namely the overdrives we tried out with it (including the Korg OD-S reviewed on page 106) that enable more gain voices for your palate, and you'll need one to get it into those scoopy metal chug realms. And while the stamp is loud with gain, dialling back to crystal clean might see you struggle in a band mix.

It feels like Cliff Cooper's company have packed a lot into the little Stamp – great Orange tones at a great price and all at your feet. Some players may not appreciate Orange's aversion to three-band EQ controls, the shape control is very sensitive and versatile, and you can further tweak by aligning the Terror Stamp with other pedals. Whether it's your backup amp, introduction to Orange, portable rig or a power amp for a modeller, this is one of the best gear buys of the year.

Rob Laing

ORANGE TONES AT A GREAT PRICE AND ALL AT YOUR FEET

brought the tones of three of its most popular £1,000 heads to your feet for £349. Now, Orange are combining a preamp and power amp in an even smaller package. Surely something's got to give?

Orange were at the forefront of the lunchbox heads movement that's still going strong, eventually sizing down to Micro Terror and Micro Dark that this is the logical next step from. Small stompbox-sized and weighing under a pound, the Terror Stamp is titchy. The company claim it combines the

tone and the all-important gain. No bass, middle or treble here. The streamlining is actually liberating.

It may be small, but the Terror Stamp is LOUD. People are going to be surprised by how loud it is. It also becomes apparent this sounds like an Orange amp – articulate, full... Did we mention loud? On its own, the Terror Stamp is versatile and based in the Micro Terror's territory; from rolling back to a light chimy gain to Orange mid spank and poke and fuller bore fuzz-tinged heavy rock.

1 SHAPE CONTROL

The shape control here feels very much in the Dark Terror's wheelhouse, and it's vital to tweak it for your pickup and cab type – we found it very effective for bringing out the best of our Tele's neck humbucker and keeping our bridge's single coil tamed.

2 OUTPUTS

As well as a line out and speaker output for 8 or 16 ohms, the pedal also offers a headphone output with a 4x12 cab emulation for going to PA or cans.

3 EFFECTS LOOP

Orange even give you an effects loop just in case you forget this is indeed a tiny amp!

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE** Class A/B pedal amp
- OUTPUT:** 20 watts
- CONTROLS:** Volume 1, Volume 2, Shape, Gain
- SOCKETS:** 1/4" guitar input, buffered effects loop, cab sim output, speaker output (8/16 ohms)
- POWER:** DC15V power brick
- DIMENSIONS:** 130mm [w] X 41mm [h] X 95mm [d]
- WEIGHT:** 0.8lbs
- CONTACT** Orange Amplification orangeamps.com

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

Words: Jonathan Horsley / Photography Will Ireland

GIBSON'S 2020 SOLIDBODIES

Three variations on the Les Paul format and one special-run SG to convince non-believers that Gibson is back



After Gibson emerged from its financial travails with a change of ownership, the company hit the reset button. Quite literally, Gibson was restored to factory settings. Large sums were invested in quality control. The collection was simplified. The brief was simple, too: put pro-quality, aspirational instruments into the hands of players who have always idealised the brand. One of the most significant changes to Gibson's lineup is the split in the production line range between the Original Collection and the Modern Collection.

This month's SG Special in Faded Pelham Blue is from the Original Collection; the Les Paul Tribute and the Les Paul Special Tribute with dual-humbuckers and dual P-90 options are from the Modern Series. Retailing for under a grand, the Tribute models potentially represent the best of both worlds – an American-built Gibson that won't break the bank. The spec options look neat, too. The big news with the SG Special is that finish, yet under the hood there are 500k audio taper CTS pots and hand-soldered Orange Drop capacitors. The Tribute models pare back the spec a little but they still offer plenty of guitar. Yeah, choosing between these is gonna be excruciating.





GIBSON SG SPECIAL

Our kind of blue...

£1199

That finish is amazing...

It is. It is Faded Pelham Blue, and it dates back to the early 60s when Fender was taking inspiration from classic automobiles and rolling out a host of cool solid-block colours, and Gibson wanted in on the action. Introduced on the budget Gibson Melody Maker line of SGs, it's now a cult favourite, championed by the likes of John Shanks and Dave Grohl.

You mentioned 500k CTS audio taper pots. Why is this good?

One of the coolest feature of any guitar – and one that is still



criminally under-explored by so many of us – is how tweaking your tone and volume controls unearths all those extra magical tones. With inferior pots, you are lucky if there are two usable tones. Here you'll find new tones on 1 through to 10 on the dial.

What's the difference between this and an SG Junior?

So you noticed the white button tuners and dot inlay – that's the same, but the Special has two P-90s and a binding on the neck. Yeah, sure, it's stripped down – kinda – but there is some luxury there.



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany, set
SCALE: 24.75"
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo
PICKUPS: 2x P-90
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way selector switch
HARDWARE: Chrome, Compensated Wraparound
FINISH: Faded Pelham Blue [reviewed], – Metallic Burgundy

GIBSON LES PAUL SPECIAL TRIBUTE WITH HUMBUCKERS

£899

Zero per cent fat

What's the difference between this and the Les Paul Tribute?

Here, there is no maple cap. This saves the maple for the neck, which is glued to a solid mahogany body. Both have a satin finish in a nitrocellulose lacquer that on this review model still feels a little oily, and this will settle down as you rub the 'new' off it.

We've seen those pickups before, right?

These open-coil Gibson 490 humbuckers have been kicking around



since the mid-to-late 60s. They feature an Alnico II magnet and were wound to create a more versatile PAF 'bucker that could work better with high-volume amps and new rock styles, and were often wired so they could be coil-tapped. They have a soupçon more upper-mids than the PAF.

A maple neck? That's a bit weird.

We'd always associate Gibson guitars with mahogany necks but through the 70s it was not uncommon to see maple necks as standard. Besides, it's nice to see some variation on the theme.



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, set
SCALE: 24.75"
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood with acrylic dot inlay
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo
PICKUPS: 490T humbucker (bridge), 490R humbucker (neck)
HARDWARE: Chrome, Compensated Wraparound
FINISH: Natural Walnut [reviewed], Worn White Satin, Ebony Satin, Vintage Cherry Satin

GIBSON LES PAUL SPECIAL TRIBUTE WITH P-90S

Mountains of tone...

£899

This is the same guitar, but with P-90s. Does that make much difference?

Massive. Where the 490 humbuckers offer you enough rounded PAF cream to cause an arterial block, the P-90s are a more about being all sharp and vinegarish top-end and a pugnacious mid-range. You'll get a lot of joy from blending these together and playing around on the tone controls. There's a lot of tone here.

Won't they be noisy?

They might not be as quiet as humbuckers but they are wax-potted



to kill microphonic hum, which is the worst. Don't be put off by the fact they are singlecoils; these are totally mean. If you are looking for a rock 'n' roll machine...

So this is just a rock guitar?

It could be. The P-90 and mahogany slab body combo is a classic pairing; it's cheese and burger, a tone combo that the likes of Leslie West would wield judiciously. But here's the thing: P-90s clean up beautifully. Roll back some of that back pickup's top end and the cleans are worthy of a chef's kiss before getting down to some jazz.

GIBSON LES PAUL TRIBUTE

£999

Modestly radical, effortlessly classy

A Les Paul, made in the USA, and you'll get change from a grand?

Yes, there's no catch. You might even find these discounted online. The Les Paul Tribute is kind of somewhere between a Standard, a Classic and a Studio. Like the Studio, there's no binding on the neck. Like the Classic, this has 490 humbuckers and it has extensive chambering to make it lighter. And you've got the chrome-covers on the pickups to give it that Standard vibe. It's classy.

Tell us more about the weight relief...

Gibson's Ultra-Modern weight relief process is an evolution of its



nine-hole and chambering patterns that have been used on guitars such as the Les Paul classic. It features a number of chambers around the body's perimeter. If you're playing live a lot you'll appreciate it.

What else is new?

The satin finish is something we haven't really seen before and it might take a bit of getting used to. Some will love it. It's tactile and more subdued than the high-gloss. The body isn't bound but the maple top gives a similar effect.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany

NECK: Maple, set

SCALE: 24.75"

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood with acrylic dot inlay

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

PICKUPS: 2x P-90

HARDWARE: Chrome, Compensated Wraparound

FINISHES: Worn White Satin [reviewed], Ebony Satin, Vintage Cherry Satin, Natural Walnut

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany w/maple top

NECK: Maple

SCALE: 24.75"

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood w/trapezoid inlay

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

PICKUPS: 2x Gibson 490 Humbuckers

HARDWARE: Aluminium Nashville Tune-O-Matic

LEFT-HANDED: Yes

FINISH: Satin Tobacco Burst [reviewed], Satin Honeyburst, Satin Iced Tea, Satin Cherry Burst

CONTACT: Gibson.com



HEAD TO HEAD

A closer inspection of these four new models. Which will take your fancy?

Across the board, the Tribute Les Pauls have rounded, C-profile maple necks that feel like a fair compromise between the thicker 50s profiles, those bats you'd get on vintage Explorers, and the slim-tapered necks of the 60s SGs. We would have liked a little more meat on the bones, but that is the thing with neck profiles, preferences differ, and they change over time, sometimes within hours. And these Tribute Les Pauls, dammit, sure offer a comfortable ride.

Switching from the LP to SG always requires some adjusting to the fretboard geography; the scale length is the same but there just feels like there is so much neck on the SG as it joins the body at 22nd fret. It's fast, with a nice taper going on with the neck. It's super-easy to get up the dusty end of the fretboard. If the Les Paul Tributes feel ostensibly the same, albeit with

“IT'S SUPER EASY TO GET UP THE DUSTY END OF THE FRETBOARD ON THE SG SPECIAL”

less bulk on the Specials, plugged in there is enough variance to give you pause for thought.

The LP Special with humbuckers has a real gutsy tone. There is plenty of midrange to chew through rock riffs, and the 490 humbuckers have a Pavlovian response to more gain, letting you easily find that singing sweet spot for your solos, and crunch for digging in. On the Les Paul Tribute, there's a little more high-end, more noticeable in the bridge 'bucker, but there is so much play on the Les Paul's controls that finding the right blend is easy.

The P-90 equipped LP Special has more high-end still but it is tempered by the hot-mids these soapbars are renowned for. They are deceptively versatile. For a stripped-down singlecut experience, it is hard to beat. But for a few dollars more, the more refined experience of the SG might be more your speed. It too can perform as a rock machine, with similarly hidden depths there, and an all-time classic finish.

Let's be honest, who doesn't like this finish?



The Worn White Satin finish on the LP Special Tribute looks even better up close



FINAL VERDICT

How to decide on the right guitar for your desired sound

Gibson's idea of splitting its collection into the Modern and Original makes sense. It keeps the purists happy while giving the company room to evolve. One sign that it is working is that on first impressions it was only the fact that the SG Special arrived in a Gibson hard case that distinguished it from the others, which arrived in padded gig-bags. Any gap in quality is incremental. All the guitars here are immaculately finished. The question is which serves your needs the most?

Those looking for a more stately Les Paul experience should plump for the Tribute. The 490 humbuckers are so underrated, and tone-wise this has the most 'Standard', most stereotypically Les Paul tone here. But then there's the brawny cool of the humbucker-equipped Special. With its five-ply guard and white button tuners, the no-fuss dot inlay, it's a gnarly slap of mahogany that's ideal for rock, blues, maybe even metal, too, and the brown finish is 100 per cent schwing!

And so, we are left with two guitars that support the hypothesis that says the P-90 soapbar is pound-for-pound the best pickup. Either way, they make the LP and SG Specials so persuasive, running the gamut from blues-rock nirvana to smoky bar jazz. Many will go for the singlecut, the weight, the extra oomph of sustain, but the SG Special in Faded Pelham Blue is just the sort of get-it-while-it's-hot guitar that will age beautifully, and will reward you with a supremely playable instrument and, possibly, a future classic.

GIBSON SG SPECIAL



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

GIBSON LES PAUL SPECIAL TRIBUTE WITH HUMBUCKERS



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

GIBSON LES PAUL SPECIAL TRIBUTE WITH P-90S



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

GIBSON LES PAUL TRIBUTE



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



AMBIENT EFFECTS ROUND-UP

No matter what type of guitar player you are, there will most likely come a point where you'll require some ambient effects in the form of reverb, delay or both. While years ago, delay types came in a limited choice with analogue or digital being your main options, today delay pedals are often fully-loaded with multiple delay types, from simple analogue echoes through to ethereal, pitch-shifted and filtered repeats, taking in all kinds of vintage emulations along the way. It's the same story for reverb – gone is the sparse selection of spring, hall and studio, replaced by long, icy 'verbs that allow you to create huge soundscapes. Here, we have four pedals that will offer you ambience in spades.

Fender Tre-Verb

TRES COOL

£199

Fancy, long-tail ambience is all good, but what if you want simplicity? Well, Fender's Tre-Verb takes a different approach by basing its architecture around vintage amp reverb and tremolo. You get three types for each effect: Opto, Bias (valve-style) and harmonic vibrato and three reverbs: '63 (Fender reverb tank), '65 (Blackface amp spring reverb) and Plate (based on vintage studio-style plate reverbs). There's a load of control to hand, with the usual rate/depth/level controls for the trem, and blend/tone/dwell controls for the reverb. It's full of lush-sounding dreamy reverbs, and with both effects applied and some experimentation, it covers a lot of ground.

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

TC Electronic Hall of Fame II Mini

£95

HALL ABOARD!

The Hall Of Fame offers the same infrastructure as its delay counterpart – toneprints, utilitarian controls and a MASH footswitch for additional expression. On this pedal, the three controls are in charge of decay time, tone and reverb mix, with the MASH button assignable in the same way as with the Flashback. As with the delay, TC has made use of new pitch-shifting algorithms to add pitch effects to the reverb, in this case, the new Shimmer setting. It's a divisive sound, but one loved by many, and TC has nailed it here with a spooky glassiness. Sonically, it's a no-brainer.

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



Whether you're composing or playing live, why not explore new sounds by dipping your toe into the world of ambient effects?

TC Electronic Flashback II Mini

£95

RETURN OF THE 'BACK

Another of TC's recent additions to its 'Mini' line of pedals is an updated Flashback. As with its predecessor, the Flashback II Mini relies on TC's Toneprint library to unlock the sounds inside its brain. As such, don't be fooled by the sparse control layout – you get delay time, feedback and level controls, plus TC has added its assignable MASH footswitch. This allows you to use the switch as a continuous control rather than simply on or off. Ideal if you want to, say, fade in the level of your repeats. With so many sounds, the Flashback Mini is a delay fan's dream, and offers amazing value for money.

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

Source Audio Collider

FEELIN' SOURCY

£359

If you're looking for a no-compromise solution, Source Audio's Collider is a bright, flashing behemoth of an ambience solution. Combining the company's Nemesis Delay and Ventriss Dual Reverb, it's home to five delay types and seven reverbs, 128 presets, and a whole lot of control. The Collider really does have you covered for all outcomes – simple, yet great-sounding room, hall and plates through to modern shimmer and swell reverbs. The delay side is no less limited, with the vintage 'oil can', tape, analogue meeting reverse delay. If reverb and delay are the cornerstone of your sound, the Collider allows for some extremely creative sonic experimentation.

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



KORG NU:TEKT OD-S OVERDRIVE KIT

DIY for tonehounds



£229

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Overdrive pedal self-assembly kit
CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, Tube Gain, Gain, Wide Switch
BYPASS: True bypass
SOCKETS: Input, output
POWER: DV9V
CONTACT: Korg korg.com

If you're looking at the price tag, you may be wondering why a pedal you have to assemble yourself costs over £200. A fair question – though the assembly part is a lot of fun if you like the idea of Lego for effects fans. Soldering isn't required but a screwdriver and socket set is. It'll take you 45 minutes at most. While Korg are making synth and headphone amp kits like this too, here your end result is an overdrive. And plugging in, we were intrigued as to what we'd just made.

This is a very good overdrive pedal. Clarity and articulation are

gain buzzwords that really do apply here with an easy-to-dial, versatile character – as opposed to idiosyncratic vintage-flavoured.

The OD-S is packing Korg's Nutube 6P1 analogue triode vacuum tube – and we're crediting it for the harmonic detail. It really brightens open chordwork around eight o'clock that will hold its weight in a band setting. It can be taken up to thicker tonality that feels punchy and detailed for alt-rock and progressive fare, as opposed to chunky for older-school metal.

The Tube Gain control is the most intriguing feature in a pretty

straightforward set of controls elsewhere; we dialled in subtle warmth for rhythm, and breakup for leads that does indeed sound valve-like. Inside the pedal there is a 'Wide' switch too to turn off for a more cutting character.

It's a little noisy, but the only real snag here is the price; the OD-S is entering a market with dual circuit competition from big names costing less, which may deter players from this pedal's sonic qualities that it deserves to reach.

Rob Laing

A LITTLE NOISY, BUT THE ONLY REAL SNAG IS THE PRICE

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

THE UK'S NUMBER 1 BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE



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FIX YOUR GUITAR

HOW TO INSTALL A NEW
HUMBUCKER PICKUP

Our guide to soldering in your upgrade pickup all by yourself

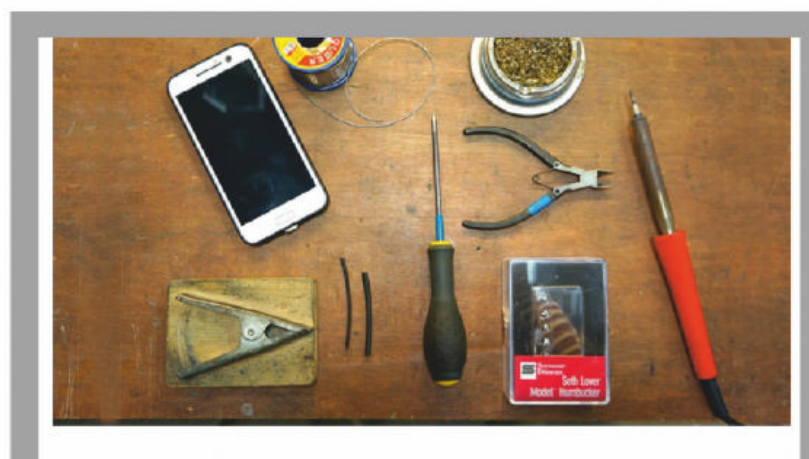
Words: Jack Ellis

You know how it's acceptable to have loads of guitars? We all know that's because they all feel, look and sound different. So maybe swapping an old guitar's pickup out would be a great way to rejuvenate and cure guitar acquisition syndrome for at least a while...

Whilst pickups can't change the acoustic sound of a guitar, they're primarily responsible for the tonality and output level of your guitar when plugged in. In this article we'll cover how you install your own

pickup without having to pay someone else to do it.

Which pickup though? There's way too many pickups to choose from and it can be very hard to choose because of this! Our criteria was humbucker sized and a traditional sound. Today, we're fitting a Seymour Duncan Seth Lover Model P.A.F humbucker into a Hofner Shorty, it's true to say there's not much body to this guitar so this pickup will be a welcome upgrade and the owner's made a fine choice. Let's hop to it...



WHAT YOU NEED

- ▶ New pickup
- ▶ Pickup springs
- ▶ Pickup bolts
- ▶ PH1 Screwdriver
- ▶ 40 Watt

- ▶ Soldering iron
- ▶ Solder
- ▶ Soldering iron tip cleaner
- ▶ Wire cutters
- ▶ Soldering handy helper clip

- ▶ Camera Phone
- ▶ Wire strippers (for other wire types)
- ▶ Shrink tubing (for some pickup types)

SKILL LEVEL
Medium

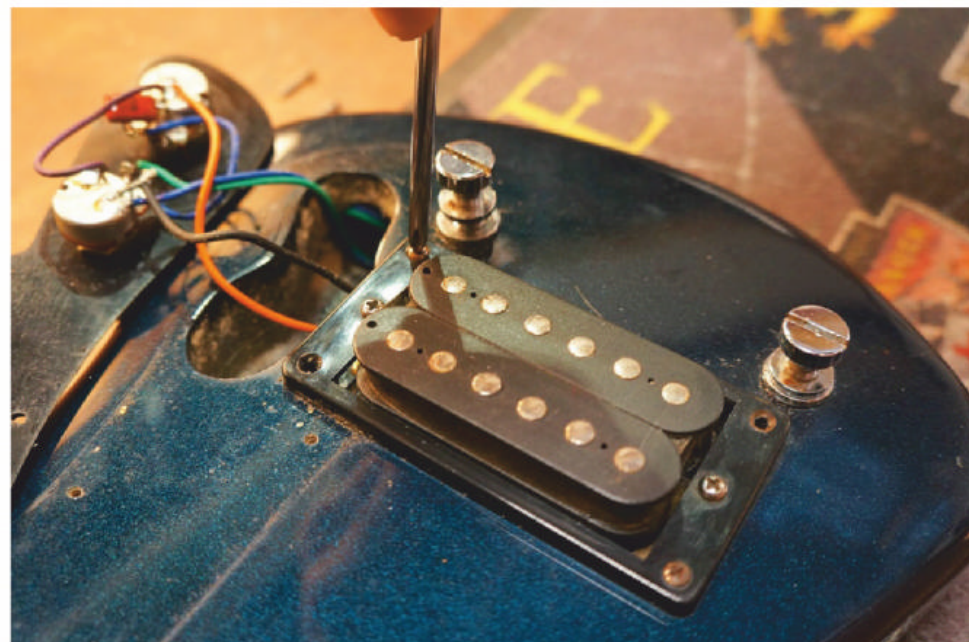


MEET YOUR EXPERT

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



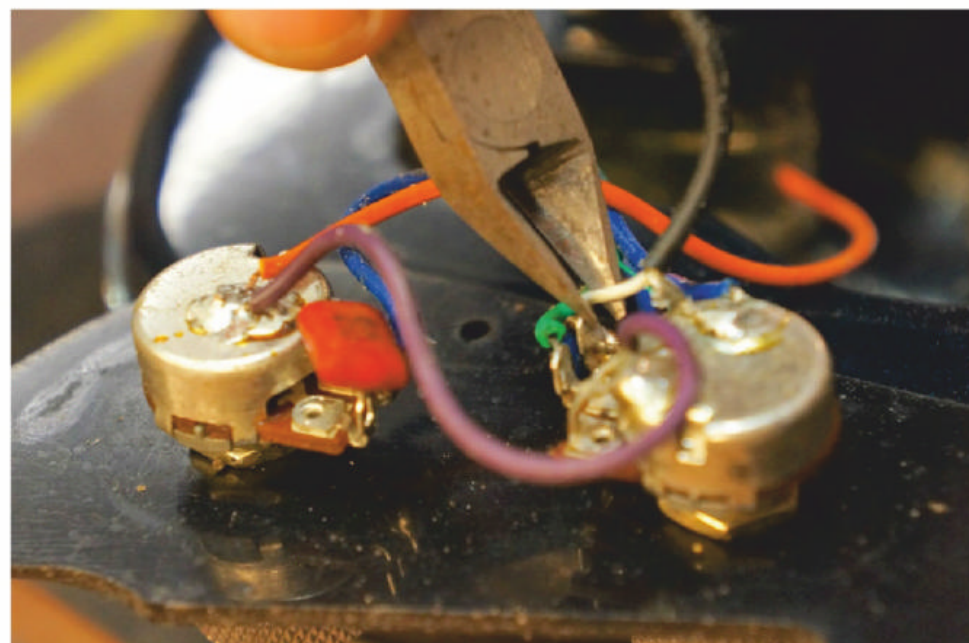
1 First up, let's get into the control cavity. This Hofner Shorty has a front mount scratchplate with the controls on it; the guts are in there. We have a master volume and a master tone with wires from the pickup to the jack socket and to the tailpiece ground – a pretty simple circuit.



2 Now, let's whip out the old humbucker. This one, as with most humbuckers, is held in place with a pickup ring. It has four screws around the edge of it which all need un-screwing and safekeeping. Take a look to see if some are longer than others – this is needed if the pickup ring tilts like ours.



3 Arrange the wires nicely so you can get a good look at it. Take a picture of the current wiring. This will do for our restore point in case something goes wrong or another wire comes off by accident. Even better would be to sketch out a wiring diagram for it on paper. Better safe than sorry!



4 Now's time to play bomb disposal – cut ONLY the pickup wires! Carefully trace them back to the pickup. Our single pickup guitar has one cable that has two wires inside (a screened cable). It carries the 'hot' signal (white in our case) and the ground signal which is woven around the 'hot' wire. Chop them off and remove the old pickup.



5 Unbox your lovely new pickup. Here we have a Seymour Duncan Seth Lover SH-55B humbucker to install and it's delightful. You may have new springs and screws in the pack – check the screws are suitable. Our pickup came with a nice new pickup ring but unfortunately it's suited to a Les Paul and not this flat-top Hofner.



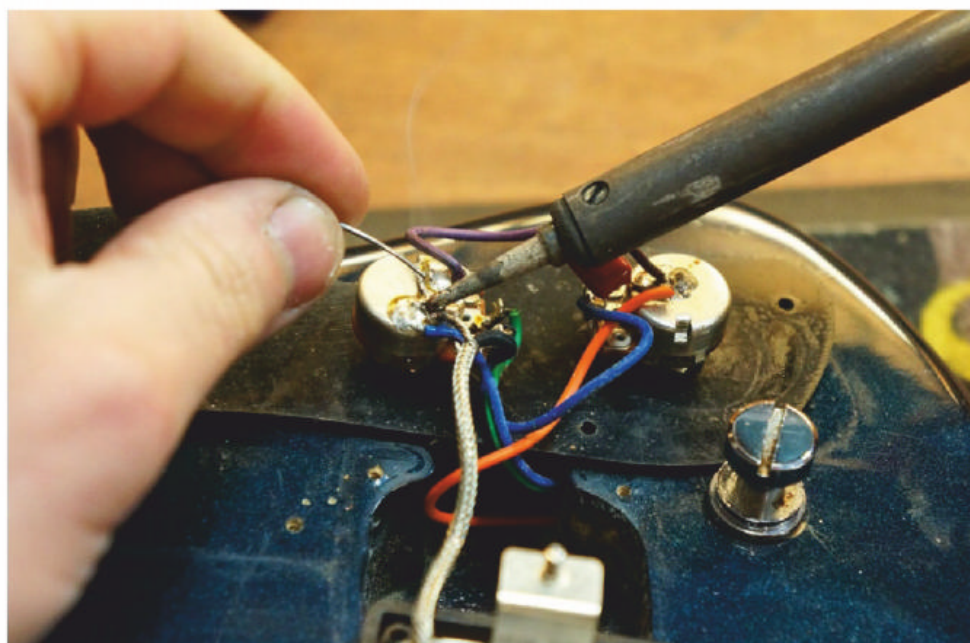
6 Lay the new pickup in place and see how much cable you need. Our pickup has another screened cable coming from it; however, the outer ground wire is exposed, and will be a problem if it touches other parts of the circuit. A shorter cable reduces capacitance anyway, so this will cap unnecessary treble attenuation.



7 Here's how you prepare the Gibson-style braided cable. Poke the woven ground wire and un-pick part of it away - this reveals the cloth centre with the hot wire inside. The cloth wire can be pushed back with just your fingers. Heat up the soldering iron and tin the tips of the prepared wires.



8 Orient the pickup the right way round according to the polepieces and the slant on the pickup ring. Put one bolt through the pickup ring hole. Load on the spring and compress it with a fingernail. Hold the pickup, ring and screw all with one hand compressed, then you can line up the tiny bolt thread with the humbucker.



9 Now, go and pick up the spring from wherever it twanged off to and try again! Loading the humbuckers is always fiddly. It's time to solder it in. Solder the hot wire to the left hand leg of the volume pot and the woven ground wire to the can of the pot. Because we've tinned the new pickup wires already, this is a simple operation.



10 Before we get any further, let's test it. It would be annoying to have to un-screw everything to solve a silly mistake. Plug in and turn on your amp, turn up the guitar's volume and tone controls and gently tap on the pickup with a screwdriver. This should make a noise through the amp. Volume and tone will work too.



11 With that working, let's fasten stuff back up, re-fit the control scratchplate with its million little screws and install the humbucker ring screws, too. We use the nice new black ones as the drill holes in the timber were accepting. Fit some strings and then take off the protective peely layer from the pickup. Lovely!



12 Don't play it yet! You may be disappointed until your pickup height is set right! The height drastically changes the tonality on some pickups; roughly 3.5mm from the strings is a good start point. Some more powerful magnets can pull the string in, so use your ear and be wary of that setting. Strum and enjoy your new pickup!

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The Playlist

Justin Hawkins of **The Darkness** on being guitar-shamed in front of Nuno Bettencourt, and the genius of Mark Knopfler

The riff that made me want to play... *Walk This Way* - Run-DMC feat Aerosmith

In 1986, when I was 11, my grandmother bought me a Phillips ghetto blaster and some money to spend on tapes, so I bought Run DMC's *Raising Hell* and a Huey Lewis & The News album. *Raising Hell* is a really rocking album, but of course the real highlight guitar-wise is *Walk This Way*, which got me into Aerosmith and got me into rap as well. And when I was 14, and Aerosmith's *Pump* came out, that changed everything for me. Oh my God, I listened to *Pump* all the time...

The riff I want to be remembered for... *I Believe In A Thing Called Love* - The Darkness

Most of the riffs in The Darkness come from Dan (Hawkins, Justin's brother). But the intro to *I Believe In A Thing Called Love* is one of the few riffs I've come up with that I ended up playing on the record. It sounds like I'm in the bath, and in the video I'm actually in a bath. Brilliant! And in my capacity as a writer for other people, I did come up with a really good riff for a Meat Loaf song, *Love Is Not Real*. That's got me playing in one channel and in the other it's Tim Pierce, a session guitar legend, who played for Bon Jovi before Richie Sambora.

The riff that excites the crowd...

Black Shuck - The Darkness

I always think that whenever Dan starts up *Black Shuck*, that's a good moment. People come to a show to stop engaging their brain, and in that moment, that riff is the only damn thing that makes sense.

The song that is a big challenge live...

Barbarian - The Darkness

The solos in *Barbarian* and *Easter Is Cancelled* have slightly Eastern scales with some fast bits, and with *Barbarian* it has gone wrong. One time we were playing Sweden Rock festival and we knew that Extreme were in the house and Nuno (Bettencourt) was watching, and then my tech gave me a guitar that didn't work, so after that I fired him.

The best tone on record...

The quest for tone... I just don't get it. But from a lead playing perspective, you want someone who has access to the whole spectrum of tone, and is using their fingers to create something with finesse that sounds like it's speaking to you, and for that, there aren't many people than Mark Knopfler. It's dad rock, but in terms of expressive tone, he's the guy. If you want loud, in-your-face, maximalist tone, it's Malcolm Young, especially on *Powerage*, when their amps were old. And I still think the greatest fast lead player is Eddie Van Halen. It still sounds like a guitar but he's doing stuff that you've never heard a guitar do before.

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

Tunnel Of Love - Dire Straits

That solo makes me feel like I'm a child, Mark Knopfler is my father, and he's showing me an empty field... The chords are repeating, but he plays so many different melodies, so many ideas, and all of it really iconic sounding. It's really a journey, and I've always thought that he's showing us that you can do anything with these chords. It's really up to your imagination.

My guilty pleasure... *Together In Electric Dreams* - Philip Oakey & Giorgio Moroder

It is a horrible production from a guitar point of view. There's a solo that can only have been played on guitar and then destroyed by going through so many filters. But it's a great song, it's as 'rock' as synthesizer pop gets, and whenever I DJ, I always play that song - or 'drop' it, as we say in the business.

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

Kashmir - Led Zeppelin

I would enjoy playing *Kashmir* with Jimmy Page, but it's such a boring song to play live. It's an amazing riff, a totally atmospheric recording, but playing that riff in a band is as dull as anything. I did, however, jam on *Big Bottom* with Spinal Tap at Wembley, playing my Bass Shuttle, the bass that's in the shape of a Space Shuttle. So that takes a lot of beating.

The song I'm most proud of...

Confirmation Bias - The Darkness

Confirmation Bias is one of the additional tracks on *Easter Is Cancelled*, and there's not much of my guitar playing on it, but lyrically it's one of the bravest things I've ever written. "I love your eyes when they gaze upon me/I love your hands when they're applauding my achievements..." It's showing a vacuous, narcissistic quality, which is a bit of self-realization happening in real time during a song.

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