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FAME FORUM IV MODERN Tobacco Sunburst Dark Back Highgloss

The Fame Forum IV Modern Tobacco Sunburst Dark Back Highgloss convinces as a versatile electric guitar with a contemporary feature set and excellent playability. The slim mahogany body with its chic flamed maple top makes for a comfortable playing position, while the generous cutaways provide unhindered access over the entire mahogany neck that is traditionally glued to the body, while the flat „D“ profile fits comfortably in the hand, so that on the ebony fretboard every riff or lick comes alive effortlessly. The tried and tested combination of a Seymour Duncan SH-2n Jazz at the neck and a Seymour Duncan SH-4 JB at the bridge position delivers versatile sounds ranging from pop, blues and rock, enhanced by authentic single-coil sounds thanks to coil splitting. In addition, the integrated piezo pickup system provides first-class acoustic guitar sounds, leaving no limits to the sonic variety and musical expression. A Tune-O-Matic bridge with stopbar tailpiece and precise locking tuners complete the Fame Forum IV Modern Tobacco Sunburst Dark Back Highgloss.

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Fat Bottomed Girls
AC/DC
Shot In The Dark
THE 1975
Me & You
Together Song
AEROSMITH
Walk This Way

WIN!
A GIBSON SG
SIGNED
BY ANGUS
YOUNG

THE
GUITARS
THAT BUILT

ROCK



...and the stars who played them
FEATURING JIMI'S STRAT, KEEF'S TELE
EDDIE'S FRANKENSTEIN **AND MORE!**

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GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER • WHEREVER

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Elixir Strings. Performance-ready with long-lasting tone.



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

EDITORIAL

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Elliott, Jonathan Horsley, Charlie Griffiths, Stuart Williams, Jonny Scaramanga, Jono Harrison, Alex Lynham, Phil Capone, Rob Laing, Trevor Curwen

Music Engraver: Simon Troup and Jennie Troup
Photography: Neil Godwin, Olly Curtis, Phil Barker

ADVERTISING

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

MARKETING

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

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller: Frances Twentyman
Head of Production UK & US: Mark Constance
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Head of Newstrade: Tim Mathers

CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 Contact the Licensing team to discuss partnership opportunities.
Head of Print Licensing: Rachel Shaw, licensing@futurenet.com

MANAGEMENT

Brand Director, Music: Stuart Williams
Head Of Design (Music): Brad Merrett
Content Director: Scott Rowley
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell

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 Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
 Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

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Welcome...



Few guitarists have had greater impact on rock than Brian May and Eddie Van Halen. And at the core of the guitar tones of these giants of rock are two very special instruments: May's Red Special and Van Halen's Frankenstrat. The former is perhaps the ultimate home-built instrument. While today, aspiring luthiers choose from countless

off-the-shelf guitar bodies, necks and hardware for their self-builds, Brian and his father had no such options – the Red Special was hewn out of wood and metal the resourceful pair had at home. Only the pickups and machine heads were bought in. Eddie Van Halen took a different approach, preferring to refine established Gibson and Fender ideas before fine-tuning his hybrid creation to arrive at his own special design.

These two hallowed instruments will be forever linked with their superstar builder-owners, but most of the guitar's innovation has been led by pioneers like Leo Fender, Les Paul, Walter Fuller, Paul Bigsby, Ted McCarty, Grover Jackson, Paul Reed Smith. There are too many to list, of course.

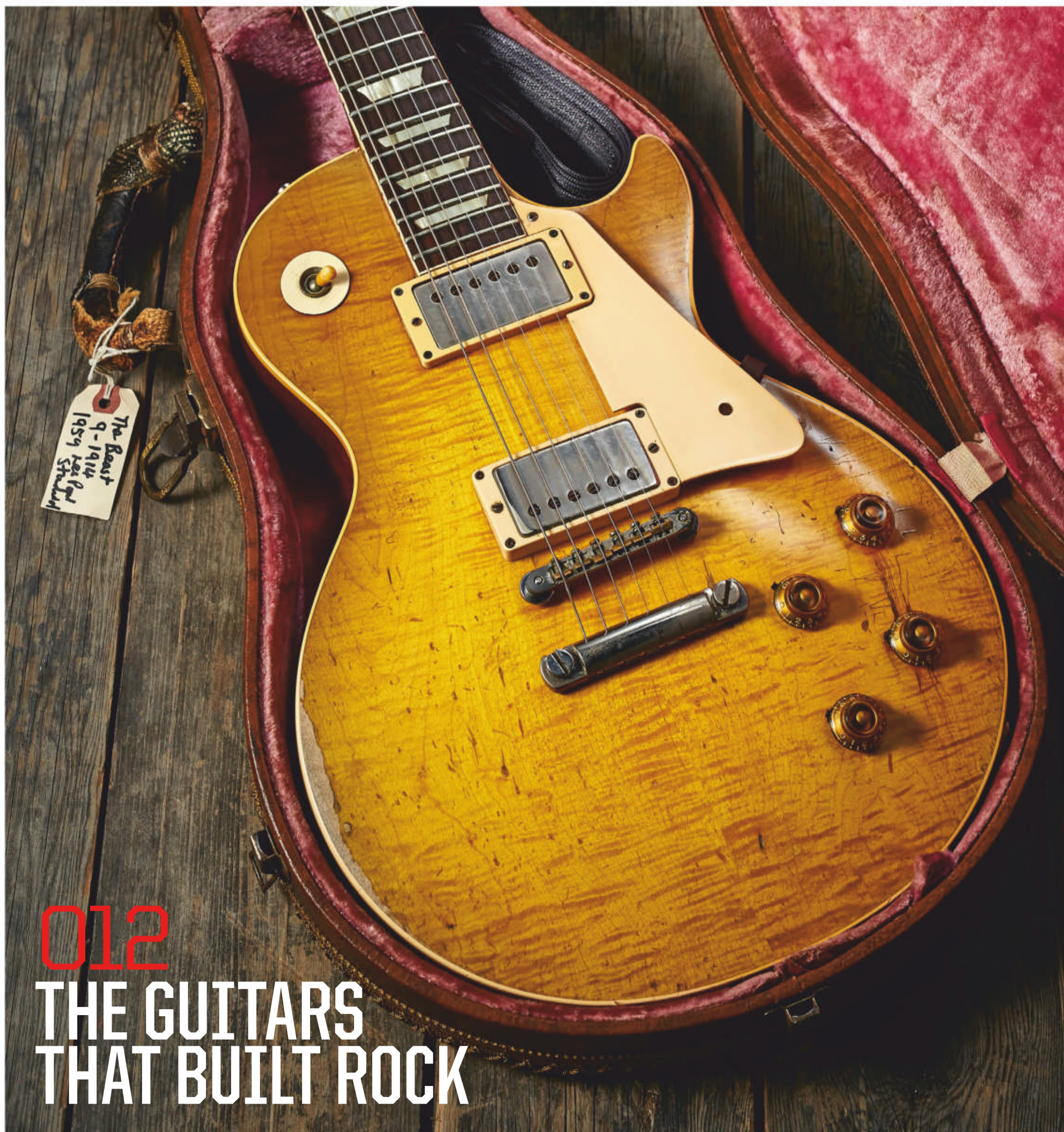
So, inspired by great players and visionary guitar innovators, this month we look at over 60 of the most influential guitars of all time, and we find out what made them great. There's something for everyone, with our potted history of the most famous guitars, plus tips and tab lessons to help you learn the styles of the stars who played the historic hardware!

Finally, make sure to head over to p16 to read our interview with Brian May, who pays tribute to his late friend Eddie Van Halen and tells us about the music they made together in their 1983 *Star Fleet Project* album. Enjoy the issue.

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

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Cover Image: Olly Curtis



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Words: Paul Elliot

EVERYTHING LOUDER THAN EVERYTHING

A

s Angus Young sees it, what the world needs now is “a good old hard shock of AC/DC”. Fortunately, said shock comes this month with the release of the

legendary band’s new album, *Power Up*.

Lead guitarist Angus had to dig deep to get this album made. Following the death of his elder brother Malcolm, the band’s rhythm guitarist, in 2017, Angus created the 12 tracks for *Power Up* from ideas that he and Malcolm had worked on in previous years.

Angus also had to rebuild the band. After the recording of the 2014 album *Rock Or Bust*, on which his nephew Stevie Young had replaced Malcolm on rhythm guitar, three members of

the band had exited at various points. But now they’re all back – singer Brian Johnson, bassist Cliff Williams and drummer Phil Rudd. And the result is an AC/DC album in the classic tradition – straight-shooting hard rock from the masters of the art.

The title of the album is perfect. “AC/DC has always been about the power thing,” Angus says. “So when ‘Power Up’ came into my head, I thought, yeah, that’s it.”

And a sense of that power is captured in this image from the video for the single *Shot In The Dark* – with Angus, the eternal schoolboy, wielding his trusty Gibson SG...

As Malcolm once said, “It’s just rock’n’roll – wham, bam, thank you ma’m!” And nobody does it better than AC/DC.





07

HOW TO

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Bluesy hammer-on phrasing
- ✓ Two easy open chords
- ✓ A three-note 'triad' A chord

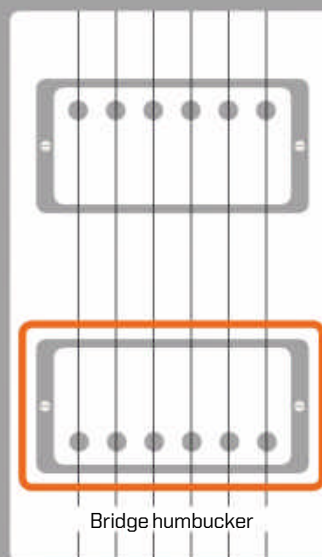


RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO
ON YOUR
CD

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



The AC/DC sound is renowned for its simplicity, consisting of Angus' Gibson SG and Malcolm's Gretsch Jet Firebird (now played by Stevie Young) both plugged into 100w Marshall heads. The beauty of the sound is the raw, dry midrange bark that this combination produces. This type of sound demands that you deliver a confident, rock-solid performance, as every nuance of your pick and fingers is directly transmitted into the tone.

AC/DC

Shot In The Dark

45

years since their debut, AC/DC return with this lead single from their forthcoming 17th album, *Power Up*. The song, of course, features Angus Young on guitar, but also Stevie Young, who stepped into his uncle Malcolm's shoes after he retired in 2014.

Based around A, D and G5, *Shot In The Dark* is a classic three-chord trick, but, whereas the

D and G5 chords are played with straight-ahead, no nonsense open shapes, you'll run into the A chord with a bluesy hammer-on phrase. Start by barring across the third and fourth strings, initially at the 7th fret, then at the 5th. Easy enough to begin with, then!

Next comes that hammer-on at the 6th fret – if you played the 5th fret barre with your first finger, your second finger should be in just the right spot. Be sure to follow our

slowed-down performance in the video on your Guitar Skills CD for a clearer idea of how this riff is played.

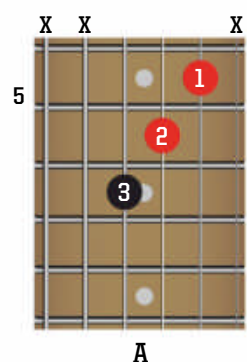
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:17

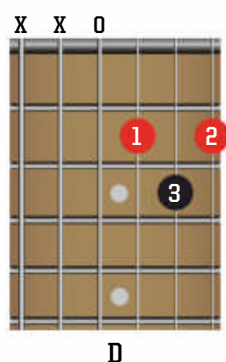
Tempo: 115 bpm

Key/scale: A Mixolydian mode

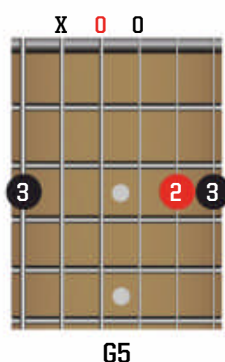
Techniques: Doublestops, hammer-ons, open chords



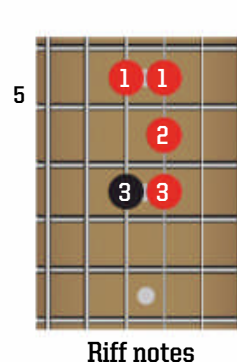
A



D



G5



Riff notes

The riff is based around three chords: an A 'triad' (a three-note shape), an open D and an open G5 chord. The rest of the riff includes two-note barres across the 7th, then 5th frets and a hammer-on at the 6th. Have a go at these shapes before you tackle the riff in full.

WIN!

A SIGNED

ANGUS YOUNG GIBSON SG

To celebrate the release of AC/DC's new album *Power Up*, we've teamed up with Gibson and Sony to offer you the chance to win a Gibson SG guitar, signed by Angus Young himself!



Power Up (out now) is the long-awaited 17th studio album from AC/DC and the first following the death of founding member and guitarist Malcolm Young. "This record is pretty much a dedication to Malcolm, my brother," Angus Young said recently. "It's a tribute for him like *Back In Black* was a tribute to Bon Scott."

All you have to do to enter is go to the web address below and correctly answer the following question:

The Gibson SG was first launched as Gibson Les Paul SG in which year?

1958, 1961, 1967 or 1971?

<http://bit.ly/angusSG>

Closing date: December 6, 2020. UK residents only.
See online for full terms and conditions.



MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

Photography: Phil Barker

RIDE THE TIGER!

Epiphone unleashes its
new Prophecy range



UP CLOSE



Fluence

Each Prophecy comes with a pair of Fishman Fluence proprietary pickups, giving you access to three voicings via the volume and tone controls



Style

The Prophecy line-up is a sharp-looking set of modern guitars. There are a number of finishes available, with the non-black finishes all designed to let the flames shine.



Extura

When is an Explorer not an Explorer? When it comes with enhanced access to the top frets: meet the Extura.



B

ack in 2008, Epiphone launched the Prophecy series – slick, modern takes on classic Gibson

outlines. Now, as we reach the end of 2020, Epiphone has unveiled a quartet of updated Prophecy models, with a raft of features that are sure to turn heads.

Starting with the shapes, there's a Les Paul Custom, Flying V and the Extura, the latter being an updated take on an Explorer with enhanced upper fret access thanks to a redesigned cutaway along with a contoured neck heel. Each model comes sporting a swanky AAA flame maple veneer, and all but the SG feature some sleek-looking binding, and even more striking finishes. Themed around 'Tiger' naming, these guitars are available in a selection of trans lacquers to allow those flames to burn through.

However, the big talking point across the board is the inclusion of Fishman Fluence pickups. As you might already know, these sets are fast-becoming a tonehound's favourite, with three voicings available at a tap of the push/pull volume and tone controls.

The Epiphone Prophecy Series is available now, starting at £799. To our eyes, these look like some serious rock machines!

GUITARS THAT BUILT

Rock



WOOD WORSHIP

Every model has its own distinct personality, but which is your favourite?

THE GUITARS THAT BUILT ROCK

TAKE A LOOK AT THE LANDMARK GUITARS THAT LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE HISTORY OF ROCK MUSIC, AND LEARN THE STYLES OF THE GUITARISTS WHO PLAYED THEM...

If there's one thing that unites guitarists, it's our love of our instruments. Yet choosing a guitar is a personal endeavour. We form special bonds with our guitars. The way your favourite guitar's unique configuration of metal and wood 'feels' affects the way you play it. Like we say, it's personal.

The history of rock is littered with such cherished instruments. And the music made with each one just wouldn't be the same played on any other guitar. Here, as we look at over 60 of rock's most revered guitars, we consider just what made them great – and you'll find some tips and lessons along the way. We're starting with two of the most iconic instruments of all: Brian May's Red Special and Eddie Van Halen's Frankenstrat.

Plug in, turn the page and let's get started!



EDDIE VAN HALEN: FRANKENSTRAT

Designed, built and modified to revolutionise the guitar

The electric guitar's inventors had little idea what they were unleashing on the world. Leo Fender could not have foreseen the noises Hendrix or Tom Morello would extract from his designs. Eddie Van Halen, though, knew exactly how he was going to use Frankie, making it perhaps the first purpose-built instrument of the rock era.

Eddie had originally played a Les Paul, but switched to a Strat because he loved the tremolo arm. His band, however, hated his Strat tone, and Eddie set about combining the tone of a Gibson with the playability of a Strat. He bought a body from Wayne Charvel for \$50, a factory reject because it had a knot in the wood, and a Mighty Mite neck. The pickup was nicked from the neck position of a Gibson ES-335, while the original tremolo system came from a 1958 Stratocaster – not a valuable guitar at the time. Eddie originally striped it in just black and white, as seen on the cover of debut album, *Van Halen*.

Eddie never did build a guitar with Gibson tone and Fender playability. A humbucker-equipped Strat doesn't sound anything like a Les Paul; it's less fat and has more immediate attack. Serendipitously, this was exactly what Van Halen needed. Frankie's pickup is a legend in itself. Eddie got more sparkle and harmonics than most humbucker players; experts like Bare Knuckle's Tim Mills believe one coil was hotter than the other. Because a Fender bridge is wider than a Gibson's, Eddie angled the pickup to make the polepieces line up with the strings, and this also contributed to the tone. He experimented with DiMarzio Super Distortion pickups, but he is on record saying he didn't like them because they didn't clean up as well.

Eddie made a second Frankenstein, the Bumblebee, but never liked it as much so he revisited Frankie in the early 80s,

adding the iconic red paint as well as the Floyd Rose tremolo he helped develop. The pickup was rewound by Seymour Duncan with more output too. This became the definitive 80s metal design and the inspiration for Superstrats by Charvel, Jackson, Kramer, Ibanez and pretty much anyone who was building shred guitars. Eddie had found ways of keeping a Strat trem useably in tune while divebombing, but the Floyd Rose meant a legion of copyists could use his techniques. Eddie had invented both a new style of playing and the perfect guitar for doing it.

RED SPECIAL

1 BODY

Mahogany veneered oak with blockboard inserts to create the chambers.

2 NECK

Mahogany neck with coated oak fingerboard, 24 frets (plus a zero fret).

3 PICKUPS

Burns Tri-Sonic pickups wired in series then filled with araldite to eliminate feedback.

4 CONTROLS

On/off and phase reverse switches for each pickup, plus master volume and master tone pots (replaced several times).

5 BRIDGE/TREMOLO

Own-design system with homemade roller saddles and tremolo arm, plus motorbike valve springs.



**FRANKENSTRAT****1 BODY**

Charvel factory reject ash S-type shape finished in black, white and red stripes.

2 NECK

Mighty Mite maple neck, with maple fingerboard and 22 jumbo frets.

3 PICKUP

Duncan-wound humbucker, replacing the original potted ES-335 neck pickup.

4 CONTROLS

Er, control, not controls! There's just one volume pot connecting the pickup to the output. The other controls are dummies.

5 BRIDGE/TREMOLO

Floyd Rose locking system, replacing Eddie's original trem from a '58 Strat.

BRIAN MAY: RED SPECIAL

The home-built electric guitar that's fit for a king

Brian May would sound unique even with an off-the-shelf guitar, but his instantly recognisable sound is thanks in no small part to his Red Special.

Brian was just 15 when he began building a guitar with his dad, and they used parts they had available at home. The neck was from a fireplace and the solid core of the otherwise hollow body was from an old oak table. These timbers aren't commonly used in guitar construction (even in later Red Special replicas) and have continually frustrated guitarists' attempts to ape Brian's tone.

So formidable were the Mays' engineering skills that they designed and built their own tremolo system from scratch, a marked improvement on contemporary designs.

Again, they scavenged parts, rocking the tremolo against motorbike valve springs and using a saddle bag support from a bike for the tremolo arm itself, keeping the total cost of parts for the build incredibly low in the process.

Even the original pickups were homemade, with an ingenious design where the pickups were placed in the circuit simply by screwing them into the guitar. Unfortunately they made a scraping sound when bending strings that couldn't be cured, so Brian bought a set of Burns Tri-Sonics. These look similar to Strat pickups, but the tone has much more humbucker fatness, although with less compression and more top end. Brian liked them because they retained clarity on chords while sounding smooth and singing for lead lines.

Brian's switching design is unique and

incredibly versatile. Each pickup has its own on-off switch as well as its own phase switch. Unusually, the pickups are all wired in series, giving a huge, thick tone. Throwing any pickup out of phase gives a thinner, hollower sound. Brian's Vox AC30 amps are always fully cranked with a Rangemaster Treble Booster (which in practice adds gain and upper mid) on full. With the guitar's knobs on maximum, this produces a wall of fuzz that Brian almost never uses. His main sound is the bridge and middle pickups in phase, which depending on the guitar's volume can take you from *Under Pressure* to *Hammer To Fall*. For the wailing lead sounds on *Bohemian Rhapsody*, he uses the middle and neck pickups out of phase. It's a tone almost no one can replicate, not only because of the unique gear but also the outrageous volume required.



IN P...
AT...



Interview Chris Bird Photography Getty Images

"IT WAS A MOMENT OF GREAT JOY, PLAYING WITH THIS GUY..."

IN 1983, TWO OF ROCK'S GREATEST GUITARISTS, **BRIAN MAY** AND **EDDIE VAN HALEN**, JOINED FORCES IN THE **STAR FLEET PROJECT**. NOW, IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TG EDITOR CHRIS BIRD, BRIAN PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIS LATE FRIEND, AND TELLS THE STORY OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC THEY MADE TOGETHER...

"H

e was the greatest," Brian May says. "There was no one who could match him, no one who could come close. There will never be another one of him."

It is just a few days after the death of Eddie Van Halen that Brian is speaking to *Total Guitar*, and as he admits: "I haven't really processed it at all. When I think about it I get this kind of physical shock. It's punched a big hole in my heart."

They had known each other a long time, first meeting in the late 70s, when Brian was already a major star with Queen, and Eddie was the new kid on the block; his explosive displays on the first Van Halen album marking him as the most revolutionary figure in guitar playing since Hendrix.

The two men had much in common, not least their self-built guitars – Brian's 'Red Special' and Eddie's 'Frankenstein'. And in 1983, their close friendship resulted in them teaming up for a remarkable one-off venture – *Star Fleet Project*, a three-track mini-album credited to Brian May & Friends.

As Brian says now: "A couple of days after I heard the news about Eddie, I went back to *Star Fleet*. I started

revisiting all the feelings I had when we were in the studio doing that, and it sort of healed my soul a bit. I thought, 'Yeah, this is what I should be doing at this time.'"

He also explains that *Star Fleet* had been on his mind only a week before his friend passed away. "I was looking at reissuing all my solo albums, and *Star Fleet* obviously is one of them. At some point it would be lovely to revisit it in depth, but at the moment I'm not. It doesn't feel right now.

"To be honest," he says, "I'm confused about what is the best thing to do. I think it needs a little time for the dust to settle. But talking with you about it in *Total Guitar*, I think, is okay..."

Let's start with your first encounter with Eddie. What are your memories of that?

I think of him as a boy back then. He was quite a bit younger than me. It was backstage in Munich when Van Halen were supporting Black Sabbath. I knew a little bit about Van Halen and luckily I got there to see them, because I was there to see Tony [Iommi, Sabbath guitarist], and usually you're late to a show if you're just going to see your mate. But I got there in time to see Van Halen and I was utterly blown away by Eddie. I just thought: I've never seen anything like this in my life. It was almost too much to take in. I remember thinking: I don't want to believe this (laughs). It was similar to watching Jimi Hendrix for the first time.

In the years that followed you became good friends. So how did *Star Fleet Project* come about? Was it always conceived as a vehicle for you and Eddie?

It was not consciously conceived. Or not premeditated. I was living in Los Angeles at the time. Queen had taken a break – we'd sort of had enough of each other for a while. And for some reason I always felt like a different person in LA. I'm naturally quite shy and retiring, but in LA I feel I can call people. And one morning I thought, why don't I call Eddie Van Halen? Maybe we could get together. So I called and Eddie said, 'What do you want to do?' And I said, 'Well, strangely enough, I have an idea in my head...' Because my little boy had been watching this science fiction series and I always thought that the theme tune for it would be a great vehicle for all-out guitar playing. And Eddie said, 'I'm up for it!' So that was the beginning. I said, 'I'll call a few people and we'll get in there...'

And then?

The next call I made was to Alan Gratzner, the drummer from REO Speedwagon, who was my neighbour in LA. I said I'd talked to Ed and wouldn't it be nice if we all got together? Alan was very enthusiastic. He said, 'It'll feel like you're cheating on your wife!' I then called Phil Chen, who was Rod Stewart's bass player for a long time, and Fred

Mandel, who'd been playing keyboards with Queen. And then I booked a studio, The Record Plant, for two days.

So you had the band ready and the studio booked, but how much material did you have to work with?

I'd made a little acoustic demo of the track *Star Fleet*, which I sent to everyone, and then Ed and Phil came to my house to work on it. I'd done this whole arrangement that was a bit complex. In fact I just listened to it because I knew I was going to be talking to you, and it's really complex! I don't know what was in my head, really. But the idea was to go through a lot of changes and then arrive at a big all-out soloing section, and obviously I wanted Ed to solo.

I wanted to set him up on a platform and see what he would do.

So we ran through it a couple of times and Eddie said, 'Yeah, we can do that.' And then we discussed what else we could do. We said, we could be spontaneous – let's jam, let's play blues. And I also had this other track, an original song of mine called *Let Me Out*, which they liked.

Once you were in the studio, what was the vibe like?

We all sat around with big smiles on our faces, going, 'Yay, this is fun!' I think we'd all got to the point where we'd worked hard in the studio with our respective bands and it had almost become a job, you know? Of course we all loved music, but there are moments when you feel pressure in the studio, the album has to be made, deadlines and whatever, and sometimes it gets tense. But this was different – we're all friends, and whatever happens here is a bonus. So it was full of joy.

And you recorded the whole thing in two days?

Well, really it was one day to do the session and the second day to clean it up and sort things out. So it was basically an afternoon. And there was no pressure, but boy, was there adrenaline! It was just so exhilarating, like setting off down a big ski slope at a hundred miles an hour. It was an amazing feeling. I looked around and just smiled and smiled.

With you and Eddie playing self-built guitars, did you compare notes?

Yeah, we did. We talked about what he called 'the brown sound'. He said he'd been very influenced by the way my guitar sounded, the breadth of it and the way it spoke. And he wanted that. He said, 'I wanted that brown sound.' And it's a question of where you put the pickup, at what point under the strings – it's technical talk. Where do you put the pickup? He said none of the guitars he'd used had it in quite the right place, so he moved his pickup. His guitar looks very individual, but the thing that really made it so individual in sound is because he tuned where that pickup was – to like a hundredth of an inch – to get the right harmonics to make the brown sound. And he had to have the right amp, of course. So we talked a little bit about that. But to be honest, it was more about, 'What shall we play?'

Did you swap guitars for fun?

Yes, he played my guitar and I played his guitar. And I sounded like me on his guitar and he sounded like him on my guitar (laughs), which reassured us that it's basically all in the fingers at the end of the day. No matter what guitar Eddie picked up, it sounded like him. And I saw him pick up Phil Chen's bass, and he sounded like Eddie Van Halen on Phil Chen's bass! So, yes, it's in the fingers.

How did the *Frankenstein* feel? The tremolo – did it feel alien and unusual to you?

It didn't feel familiar, no, because his tremolo is entirely different to mine, it's loose and flops about. Mine is on the verge of being immobile, and wherever I put it, it stays. So that's very different. I'm sure I could have got used to it after a while, but we just got on with playing basically.

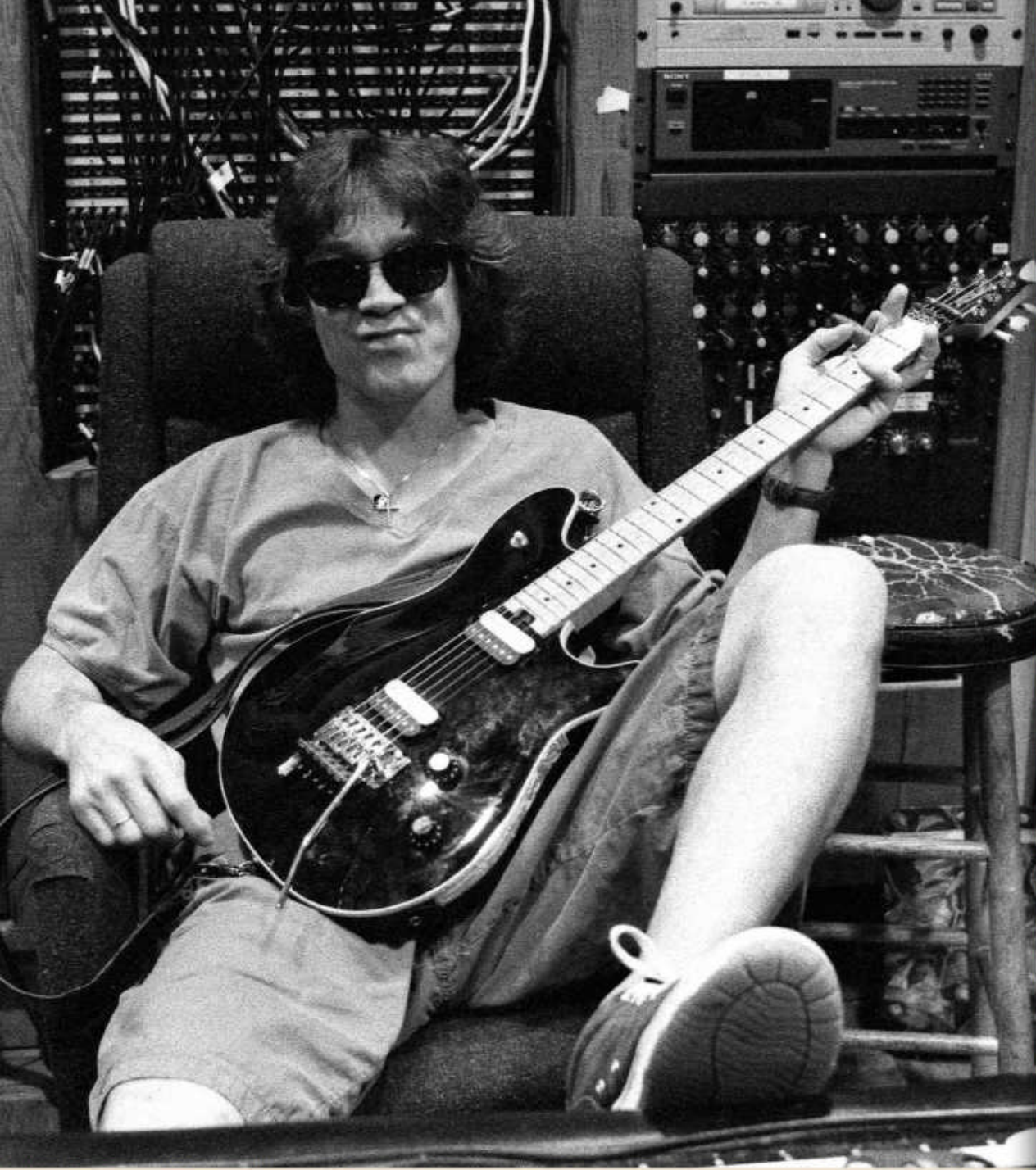
Do you remember what rig Eddie was using?

I just remember he had a big four-by-twelve Marshall cabinet. But I'm not good on gear. That's what I think I saw. And I didn't have much stuff in LA. I think I had a rented AC30 and a treble booster and my guitar. That was it. It was very basic, all thrown together in a few days.

The song *Star Fleet* has some harmony guitars, so there must have been overdubs. But was this mostly a live session?



ABOVE
The *Star Fleet Project* album, credited to Brian May + Friends, released in 1983



“IT WAS JUST SO EXHILARATING, LIKE SETTING OFF DOWN A BIG SKI SLOPE AT A HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR”

It was a mixture. Most of it was live, but the harmony guitars were overdubbed, and the vocals were overdubbed. I may have done a guide vocal but I definitely sang it afterwards to get it right, because in the moment it was all about the playing. But the stuff you hear Ed doing – the big solo which had been set up – that’s an overdub, because I wanted Ed to have a number of goes at it. He’d done the *Beat It* solo and I wanted him to have that kind of feeling about it. I think he did three different ones, all of which were utterly brilliant. Our jaws all dropped. And I remember, at the very end of the soloing section there’s a little harmony run-up so we overdubbed that together live, but as an overdub. And that was one of the great moments of my life, I’ve got to say – because we did it once and we got it right. I mean, I’m not big on chromatic runs or whatever, I’m not a great technician, but we just did it – one, two, three, go! That’s a tiny

little moment but a moment of great joy, playing with this guy. I was awestruck by his playing. He’s much younger than me, but I couldn’t believe what his fingers could do.

It sounds at times as if you’re swapping techniques together, like you’re paying tribute to each other as you play.

I think there was a bit of that. Ed sort of embarrassed me by saying I was a huge influence on him, and only recently I discovered a recording on the internet of Van Halen playing *Now I’m Here* [a version of the classic Queen song, demoed by Van Halen in 1975]. There’s a comment about Ed – that when he solos, he sounds like Eric Clapton. Well, maybe there is a Clapton influence on Ed. I know because he told me. But if you listen to what happens [on the VH version of *Now I’m Here*] when he goes into the solo section, it’s already Edward

ABOVE
Eddie (left) and Brian recording *Star Fleet Project* at Record Plant Studios, Los Angeles.

Van Halen, there’s no f*cking doubt about it. That’s the place to hear how Edward was developing as a guitar player, and it’s already awesome.

Now I’m Here is my favourite Queen song.

I think it was Ed’s favourite Queen song, too. But to answer your question – yes, I think we both played a little differently because there was the other guy in the room. And certainly on the blues track, *Blues Breaker*, he doesn’t do any tapping whatsoever. That’s a rarity, and he said to me, ‘I’m glad we’re doing this, because you’re making me go back to my roots. I love playing blues, and I love *not* doing the Eddie Van Halen stuff, I love *not* tapping and doing all the fireworks. It’s great to get back to just playing from the soul.’ So if you listen to that, he does sound much more in the Clapton mould, and we both do. You know, Clapton is a massive hero of

STAR FLEET PROJECT

mine, as are the people who influenced Clapton. There's a whole line of influence going back to the original blues players.

And how did you play differently?

There's no way I would try to play like Edward, because I can't (laughs). Nobody can. So partly I wanted to play in a sympathetic way to him, to supply the great rhythms that he could play to. I wanted to be the perfect rhythm guitarist, and I grew up as a rhythm guitarist, so that's natural to me. But when we were trading solos, yes, we were feeding off each other. And we'd never done it before. We'd never played together before, and yet the chemistry is there. In *Blues Breaker* you feel, yeah, we're not just noodling, we are listening to each other and playing off each other, as is the whole band. Alan was really in tune with it, Phil was like a rock, and Fred Mandel was doing lovely sympathetic things on the keys. It really was a session that gelled incredibly well. I don't think I've ever in my life had a session like that.

Before the session, did you take time to hone your blues chops with that track in mind, or were you looking purely for that feeling of spontaneity?

The latter. It was as spontaneous as anything could be. We knew the *Star Fleet* song and, well, I think it shows that we didn't know *Let Me Out* [Laughs], but I was able to mix it so it sounds like we knew roughly what we were doing.

So if and when you reissue *Star Fleet Project*, would you remix it?

I think we would. Things have changed, and certainly my feelings about drum sounds have changed. So yes, we have been talking about doing a new mix for it. We wouldn't mess with any of the playing, obviously. But we'd try to get the sounds a little more in tune with what can be done in 2020.

What studio techniques would you employ for this?

Well, that would be telling! To be honest, it's a question of not doing certain things. There's an awful lot of treatment on that snare, which seemed cool at the time, but I wouldn't do that now. It makes the drums sound detached from everything else. My ear is better now than it was in those days.



"I SOUNDED LIKE ME ON HIS GUITAR AND HE SOUNDED LIKE HIM ON MY GUITAR!"

What did you learn from this project?

I learned about confidence. I learned that I could make a couple of phone calls, organise a session and just go in and play. I thought until that point that I only existed, musically, as a part of Queen. So that was me seeing a door and opening it. I think I became a more interesting performer because of it, maybe a more interesting person as well. It was a good boost for me to think: 'I don't have to just be a member of a band'.

Do you feel that you learned anything from Eddie during this experience?

Not really. I don't think there was time to do that. Maybe unconsciously, but I wasn't aware of that happening. We didn't get into technicalities. We just let it happen by ear, and we were all instinctive players. There were no charts, no hard analysis going on – it's just, 'Here's a skeleton, a template, let's just see what we do when we roll tape' – and it was tape in those days.

I wonder whether Eddie may have learned something from you and the experience of *Star Fleet Project* – because Van Halen's following album 1984 was a bit of a left turn, with Eddie experimenting with synthesizers.

I don't know. I think Edward liked the melodic side of what I did within Queen.

ABOVE

May and EVH at the 1992 MTV Music Video Awards. Nice shirt, Bri...

I can remember having discussions about that. And he wasn't a person to do lots of guitar harmonies like I do, but he liked the colourful side of our arrangements. I just don't know whether that was an influence or not.

The last time you spoke to TG, earlier this year, you said you would have loved to work with Eddie again. Did you have anything specific in mind?

No. I didn't get as far as that. Actually, I'd forgotten I said that to you. It's obviously been in my mind, but I never got down to details.

Had you lost contact with him over the years?

Relationships in our business tend to be a bit patchy. I was quite close to him at one time, and then for a while not. I have a real regret that I didn't stay close in the last few years. So many times I thought, 'I should call him'.

How will you remember him?

He was always smiling. We all know he was a technical prodigy, but what he did, he did with such lightness and humour. He didn't need to take it seriously. Eddie was always generous, always fun. I miss his energy. I'm thankful I had the chance to have moments with him, but I feel so sad that he's not around. All I can say is I miss him. I miss his presence in the world.

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HOLLOWBODY GUITARS

The roots of the electric guitar

There are two main schools of hollowbody (and semi-hollow) player: those with a connection to jazz/blues roots who need smooth tone, and songwriter-guitarists who like their rounder tone and looser low end. Early electric guitar recordings universally feature hollowbodies because solidbodies hadn't been invented yet. Gibson's ES-150 ruled the roost in

the 30s, but it was a basic design; an acoustic with a pickup, if you like. In the 50s Gibson introduced new models, the ES-330, the ES-350T, the ES-355 and the standard-bearer, the ES-335 with its centre block and hollow wings striking a balance of sustain with less feedback. Gretsch's G6120 and White Falcon appeared around this time and the semi-hollow Rickenbacker 325 got big off the back of the Beatles.



GRETSCH G6120

The start of rock 'n' roll

Chet Atkins was the greatest travis picker, and, when early rock 'n' rollers wanted to fuse country and blues, they found his signature guitar was the perfect weapon. Rockabilly pioneers Duane Eddie and Eddie Cochran used them, inspiring George Harrison to try the Country Gentleman variant. The Filter'trons had more twang than PAFs but more weight than Fender's pickups, and the Bigsby tremolo allowed pseudo-pedal steel effects. Rockabilly cats like Brian Setzer still can't get enough.



GIBSON ES-350T

Johnny B Goode's axe of choice

There is no rock 'n' roll pioneer more influential than Chuck Berry, and the biting, crisp sound on his hits came from the Gibson ES-350. The early records (*Maybelline*, *Roll Over Beethoven*) were on a P90-equipped ES-350TN, and when Gibson introduced humbuckers in 1957 he switched to the ES-350T, producing the likes of *Carol* and *You Never Can Tell*. *Johnny B Goode* came out in 1957, and nerds still argue over which guitar he used. And 'T'? It stands for thinline. The T model is a slimmed down variant on the earlier (and fatter!) ES-350.



Photo: Getty Images

GIBSON ES-355

The sweetest blues voice ever

BB King's black guitar, Lucille, might be the blues' most famous guitar. Don't get emotional though. BB named most of his guitars Lucille including Gibson ES-335s and ES-345s, and the model he's most associated with, the ES-355. BB found the slim neck and body comfortable. The 355's Varitone switch offered six preset EQ settings; BB favoured position two, which cut the mids at around 1875hz (try it for yourself with an EQ pedal). The semi-acoustic's round top end enhanced BB's vibrato, with a woodier tone than a typical Les Paul. We can't imagine him playing anything else.



GIBSON ES-335

God's guitar

Although Clapton also used an SG and a Firebird with Cream, it was his cherry ES-335 that became known as 'the Cream guitar', appearing on *Badge* and at the band's Albert Hall farewell concert. Eric used it in his next band, Blind Faith, and on solo tracks like *Hard Times*. You can dial in Clapton's 'woman tone' by turning your neck humbucker tone to 0, and blend in the bridge pickup to taste. Other notable ES-335 players include Alvin Lee, Eric Johnson and Larry Carlton.



GIBSON TRINI LOPEZ ES-335

The Foo Fighters formula

Dave Grohl's ES-335 is a Trini Lopez model with a Firebird headstock, whose mass contributes to sustain, and diamond f-holes. When Trini Lopez died in 2020, Grohl posted, "Every album we have ever made, from the first to the latest, was recorded with my red 1967 Trini Lopez signature guitar. It is the sound of our band, and my most prized possession." Grohl's own DG-335 signature model is based on that guitar.



EPIPHONE CASINO

John Lennon's greatest workhorse

As the Beatles' music became more adventurous, the band searched for new sounds. McCartney bought a Casino on the recommendation of John Mayall, using it for *Ticket To Ride*, and Harrison and Lennon followed suit in 1966. It was Lennon who became most associated with the guitar, playing it on *Sergeant Pepper's...* and the White Album, before immortalising it at the Beatles' legendary 1969 rooftop gig. Lennon and McCartney both used their Casinos for the rotating solos in *The End*. Other notable users include Noel Gallagher and Johnny Marr, whose Casino is shown here.

EPIPHONE SHERATON

The sound of Britpop going supernova

Motivated by the Beatles' Epiphone obsession, Noel Gallagher got on the semi-acoustic bandwagon. *Definitely Maybe* was recorded with a Riviera, but as the band got bigger Noel reached for two Sheratons, a tobacco sunburst model and the legendary Union Jack guitar unveiled at Glastonbury 1997. Both Sheratons had mini-humbuckers, which have a brighter sound than their full-sized equivalents, helping Noel's barre chords retain clarity.



GRETSCH WHITE FALCON

All Cult followers need one

Billy Duffy's live tone is one of the most majestic in rock – a Marshall JCM800 and a Vox AC30 with just enough gain, and simple riffs being belted out on his iconic White Falcon. The Falcon had the cut to work with Duffy's earlier tone, washed in chorused delay, and his rawer AC/DC inspired tones on *Sonic Temple*. He had to stuff T-shirts in the body to control feedback, but no other guitar could do the business.

HOLLOWED OUT!

Tame your hollowbody's feedback

Hollowbody guitars are lively beasts by nature. They're louder than their solidbody brethren and this makes them susceptible to feedback at high volume. Try out our tips and beat the noise.

1. GET STUFFED!

Billy Duffy and Jack White stuffed their guitars with foam to tame feedback. Not too hard to do, but it can affect your guitar's tone and sustain.

2. TAPE UP

It ain't pretty and it could damage the finish of your pride and joy, but taping over soundholes may reduce feedback. A bit.

3. PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN!

A noise gate/suppressor pedal such as the Boss NS-2 could help you dial out those squeals. Alternatively, try cutting the feedback frequency with an EQ pedal.

4. TURN DOWN

Feedback is caused by speakers vibrating the strings, which in turn produce more signal and more feedback. Kill your volume, kill your feedback.

5. MOVE

As simple as it sounds. There's always one spot where your guitar feeds back the most. Turn around or move away from your amp.

PLAY LIKE BB KING

TRACK 07

♩=145

A⁷

BU 12 (15) 12 10 13 10 17 [17]

TAB

Take note of the BB style fast finger vibrato here. The big bend from E to G is also a King specialty. The trademark high A note in bar 2 acts as a punctuation point.

PLAY LIKE ERIC CLAPTON

TRACK 08

♩=135

D⁷ A⁷

BU 12 (13) 10 12 10 11 8 8 8 8 7 9 9 9 9 7 5 [5] 7 7

TAB

Using doublestops (playing two notes together) is a classic rock 'n' roll soloing technique – and it's great for filling out the sound in a power trio like Cream. The trick here is to dig in with your pick and give it plenty of feeling.

PLAY LIKE NOEL GALLAGHER

TRACK 09

♩=100

F[#]add¹¹ A Badd¹¹

let ring — — — let ring — let ring —

TAB 0 0 3 4 7 6 9 8 7 9 7 5

Selecting both the Sheraton's pickups provides a sweet tone, perfect for light chords and arpeggios. Our example uses F[#], A and B barre chords with the first and second strings left to ring for a spacious sound.



ECLIPSE 87 NT



M-1 CUSTOM 87



ECLIPSE 87



MIRAGE DELUXE 87



SURVEYOR 87

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GIBSON ES-150

Where it all began

When Gibson added a pickup to its L-50 acoustic in 1936, it was the first time most people had ever seen an electric guitar. The acoustic guitar had only ever been a backing instrument in swing orchestras because it wasn't loud enough to take solos. Now Charlie Christian could be heard, and he became a sensation. The ES-150 itself wasn't the very first electric guitar, but it became immortalised as the 'Charlie Christian guitar', who in turn influenced Chuck Berry and Jimi Hendrix. Quite the legacy!

CHARLIE'S PICKUP

The velvety tones of Gibson's blade pickup can still be had today. Lollar build a range of CC-inspired pickups to fit various guitars.



RICKENBACKER 360

The Beatles, bottled

Where there is jangle, there is Rickenbacker, and that goes double for the 12-string model. When the company debuted the 360/12 in 1964, they gave a pair to John Lennon and George Harrison (they already played Ricky 325 and 425 models). It immediately became the sound of 60s pop, appearing with The Who, The Byrds and The Beach Boys. The pickups, bridge, and manufacturing process were entirely bespoke, so there was no alternative for that sound. Beatle heirs like Tom Petty and REM kept it popular.

12-STRING TONE WITHOUT THE HASSLE...

No 12-string? No problem. DigiTech's Mosaic is a fine 12-string copyist in pedal form. Just place it near the start of your signal chain.



BURNS MARVIN 64

An all-British
signature model

Hank Marvin was the UK's first homegrown guitar hero, and inevitably Britain's most notable electric guitar manufacturer of the day brought him on board as an endorsee. Hank, like many guitarists since, wanted a tremolo that stayed in tune. Burns' design balanced on knife edges, like the later Floyd Rose. Each string passed through its own resonating tube for "singing strings". The guitar looked futuristic at the time, but while the Strat has remained timeless the Burns now looks its age.

HANK'S TONE

For a ballpark Hank tone, set up two delays (224 and 336 ms respectively), select a bridge single-coil pickup and use a clean amp channel with just enough gain to give compression and bite.

DOUG IRWIN WOLF

The Grateful Dead's
unique axe

An original like Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia needed an eccentric guitar, and Doug Irwin built it for him. Using laminated maple and purpleheart, an incredibly stiff South American wood, Irwin invented an instrument with a new shape, hardware, and controls. An ingenious plate system allowed pickup systems to be dropped in and out, and Garcia settled on an unusual humbucker/humbucker/single-coil arrangement. Two outputs allowed Garcia to run his effects loop separately and switch it from the guitar.

WOLF'S KEY FEATURES

25" scale length, five-way selector switch, twin-output jacks (one routed straight to amp, one through Jerry's pedalboard), Schaller machine heads and bridge, chrome/nickel plated brass hardware.



LES PAULS & SGS

The greatest Gibsons that made history

It's barely comprehensible now, but the early Les Paul Standard was something of a commercial flop, discontinued after barely three years. Some of the most famous Les Pauls, like Clapton's Beano guitar, were bought for a song in the mid 60s when next to no one wanted them. Still, the combination of mahogany, maple, and

Gibson's just-invented PAF humbuckers later proved unbeatable. In 1961, Gibson marketed the SG (Solid Guitar) as a replacement Les Paul model, but Les refused to endorse it. The difference in the guitars' tones is alluded to from their appearance: the deep-bodied, rounder Les Paul has a thicker tone with huge mids, while the SG is comparatively leaner, with a biting top end.



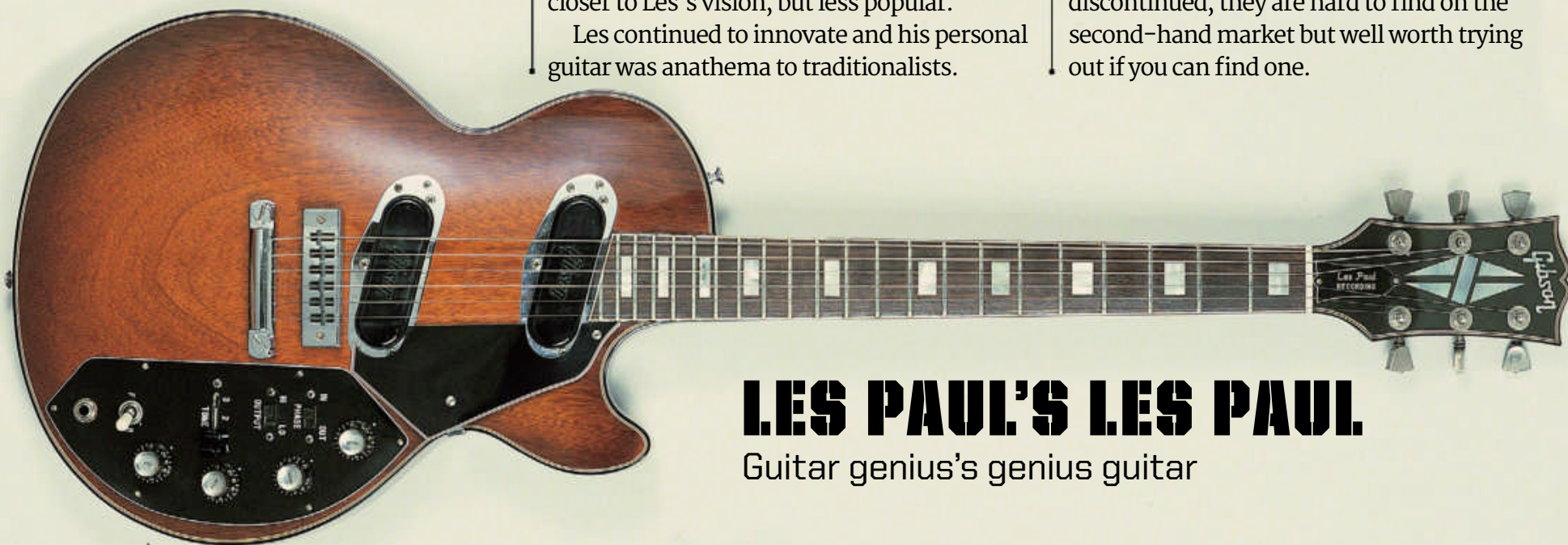
Fans of the Les Paul guitar tend to be ardent purists, always seeking the most authentic recreation of 1959. Ironically, the guitar was designed by one of the most forward-thinking musicians of the 20th century. Les had prototyped his own solidbodies in the 1930s, one out of

a railway sleeper and another, 'the Log', out of a 4x4" board with strings. He was looking to eliminate body resonance entirely to maximise sustain. In practice, the most desirable guitars are those that resonate exactly the right amount, producing long sustain with woody tone. The extremely heavy Les Pauls of the 70s and 80s are closer to Les's vision, but less popular.

Les continued to innovate and his personal guitar was anathema to traditionalists.

Called the Recording Model, it featured low impedance pickups, switchable circuits for recording direct or with an amplifier, and a complex array of knobs including a phase switch and a 'decade' switch that tuned treble harmonics.

In 2014 Gibson released an updated version of Les' original design (pictured here). Now discontinued, they are hard to find on the second-hand market but well worth trying out if you can find one.



LES PAUL'S LES PAUL
Guitar genius's genius guitar



MAGIC AKA GREENY

The Les Paul of rock royalty

Depending on who you believe, Peter Green's '59 Les Paul's spectacular out-of-phase sound was because either the neck pickup's magnet was installed upside down (luthier Jol Dantzig) or its coils were rewound the wrong way (Bare Knuckle's Tim Mills). However, Greeny's magic was not just the pickups, but its open and airy acoustic tone that translated into a beautiful amplified sound in all positions. Gary Moore owned it for 25 years, before Kirk Hammett reportedly paid \$2 million for it in 2014.



JIMMY PAGE NUMBER ONE

Everyone's number one Les Paul

Joe Perry's tobacco burst was cool, but Number One was the reason Perry – and every other rocker – wanted a Les Paul. Jimmy Page bought the guitar from Joe Walsh, and shaved the neck dangerously thin. Page's tone on *Led Zeppelin II* – Number One into a cranked Marshall Plexi – defined the sound of hard rock. It's been refinished, a phase switch added, and the bridge pickup changed to a 60s model, but it's worth more than any untouched original.

THE GRAIL CUSTOM

A Les Paul for maximum metal

Les Pauls were rare in metal when Zakk arrived, but he quickly showed how lairy the guitars can get. He traded a Gibson doubleneck for the Grail, which already had EMG pickups. Zakk felt it would be disrespectful to Randy Rhoads to play a white Custom, so he asked for an Alfred Hitchcock vertigo graphic to be applied. The tech painted a bullseye instead, with no time to change it before a photo shoot.



KRIS DERRIG LES PAUL COPY

A copy that revived Gibson's fortunes

Gibson's popularity took a downturn in the 80s, with some questionable quality control and ridiculously heavy instruments. This boosted demand for good quality replicas, and Kris Derrig made some of the best. Slash had been playing pointy-headstocked Jacksons in G N' R, but when recording they didn't sound gutsy enough, so Guns manager Alan Niven saved the day by finding the Derrig. Visually, the Les Paul separated Slash from hair metal posers, making him heir to Jimmy Page and Joe Perry.



ANGUS YOUNG'S SG STANDARD

A high-voltage rock machine

Every AC/DC album has been recorded with an SG, and although Angus doesn't know how old his favourite is, he generally favours late 60s and early 70s models. Not only do the SG cutaways match Angus's *Highway To Hell* devil horns, the tone seems purpose built for his style. Like AC/DC's songs, there is no excess fat on the SG's tone, just a razor edge for delivering precision powerchords. The neck is set out further from the body than most guitars, so Angus's wild vibrato is possible even on the highest frets.

Angus's touring SG, a Walnut model, suffered a broken truss rod in the late 70s, which was repaired with a new neck by Birmingham luthier John Diggins of Jaydee Guitars. After that, AC/DC relied on Jaydee any time one of Angus's guitars got seriously fubared. As AC/DC toured *Back In Black*, Angus sweated so profusely that he rotted the electrics of one SG. It was beyond repair, so Jaydee rebuilt it from scratch, adding the now iconic lightning bolt inlays.

It's the world's most recognisable SG and, thanks to its appearance on every subsequent AC/DC album, the one heard by the most people.

JAYDEE 'OLD BOY' SG

The metal god's number one

After much begging, Tony Iommi eventually persuaded Jaydee's John Diggins to be his guitar tech for a US tour. Diggins thought a spare guitar might be handy, so he built what was to become Tony's most iconic SG. It was also to function as a test bed for pickup designs, and Diggins came up with a number of bespoke designs. His humbuckers were narrower than Gibson's but with huge output, and Tony eventually settled on a bridge pickup with blade polepieces. Iommi had struggled with poor intonation on his SG Specials, so Diggins went for a Schaller Badass bridge. His ebony fingerboard marked a shift towards 24-fret necks for metal, and the crucifix inlays gave Iommi his visual signature.

Completed in two weeks before a tour, the Old Boy flew to America with the lacquer still soft. The paint bubbled and flaked in the US heat, creating the battered, rusty appearance all metal fans recognise. It took some time to find the pickups Iommi liked, but the guitar finally made its recording debut on *Heaven And Hell*. From there it became Tony's number 1, making it arguably the most metal guitar there has ever been.

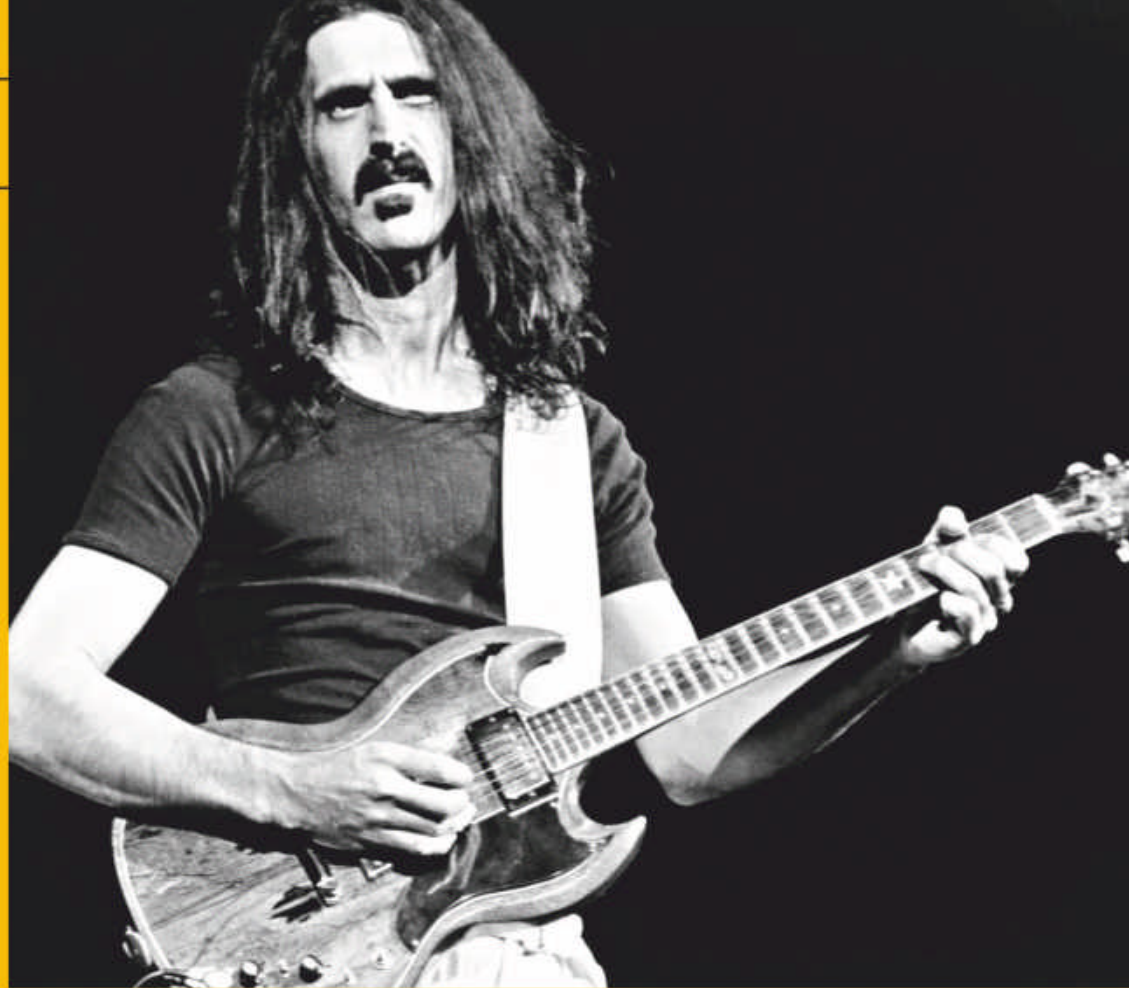




'67 SG STANDARD

An American legend

Robby Krieger played a few SGs with The Doors, but the one you hear at the start of *Roadhouse Blues* is the one to remember – a '67 SG Standard with a vibrola tailpiece. The simple combination of PAFs and mahogany gave the guitars unforgettable bite. SGs also featured on *Light My Fire*, *Love Me Two Times*, and *Love Her Madly*, the most enduring Doors classics, although sometimes Krieger chose a P90-equipped Special for extra bark.



BABY SNAKES SG

Zappa's feedback machine

Frank Zappa's guitars became test beds for his mad scientist modifications, and his son Dweezil has explained his secrets. Frank's main pursuit was controllable feedback, and he fitted his guitars with active EQ circuits offering a huge 18dB boost. At each venue he'd find the feedback resonant frequency, then boost it. You could try a parametric EQ for similar results. The Baby Snakes SG was Zappa's main 70s guitar, with details such as stylish inlays and 23-fret range proving its non-Gibson origins.



1983 SG STANDARD

Bringer of drop-tuned chaos

The SG is a potent weapon for down tuning, despite Gibson's standard fairly short 24.75" scale length. That biting treble means the guitar keeps its clarity. Mastodon's Brent Hinds exploits this ability, regularly tuning his SG to D standard (DGCFA). His favourite is a 1983 model he bought from a member of The Guess Who. As well as its cutting tone and slim neck, Brent has observed that the SG's thin, contoured body makes it ideal for the larger gentleman



'OLD FAITHFUL' LES PAUL SG

Pioneering
shred tone

Sometimes dismissed as a Hendrix clone, Frank Marino's Grateful Dead-meets-jazz improvisations featured some serious speed. His wild solos influenced Paul Gilbert, Zakk Wylde and Joe Bonamassa, and his singing SG tone was as significant as his licks. It still has its original PAFs and vibrola tailpiece, but had to be retired from touring by 2007 for its increasing fragility. Marino tried putting Strat pickups in an SG, but removing the necessary wood made the neck fall off.



SG CUSTOM

Taking gospel-blues to the masses

In 1964, Sister Rosetta Tharpe hit the UK with the Blues And Gospel Train Tour, along with blues legends Muddy Waters and Reverend Gary Davis. The godmother of rock 'n' roll had performed since the 30s, but this time she was televised by the BBC, and seen by Jimmy Page and Mick Jagger. Tharpe wielded a Les Paul Custom – as it was then called – a white three-pickup SG with sideways vibrola. Her blues-gospel fusion was explosive.

PLAY LIKE TONY IOMMI

TRACK 13

♩=125

E⁵ D⁵ E⁵ D⁵ E⁵Em⁷

PM --

TAB

9 7 9 9 7 9 12 12 12 12

0 0 7 5 7 3 0 0 7 5 7 12

0 0 7 5 7 3 0 0 7 5 7 12

To get inside Iommi's riffing style you'll be using powerchords that follow the minor pentatonic scale (E minor here). *Iron Man's* riff uses this scale (E G A B D) starting on B and adding an extra F# note.

PLAY LIKE FRANK ZAPPA

TRACK 14

♩=70

E⁷

8va

BU 15 (17) 15 BU 15 (17) 15 14 12 12 15 17 14 12 12 10 10 8

TAB

15 (17) 15 15 (17) 15 14 12 12 15 17 14 12 12 10 10 8

We've raised the mids here to ape Zappa's tone; a wah pedal in a fixed position does a similar job. We've also used a ring modulator for a random, unruly wobble!

PLAY LIKE BRENT HINDS

TRACK 15

♩=160

N.C. C⁵ D⁵ N.C. C⁵ D⁵ N.C. C⁵ D⁵ N.C. B^{b5}

PM --

TAB

D A F C G D

7 9 7 7 9 7 5 3

0 0 5 7 0 0 5 7 0 0 5 3

An SG in D standard tuning is a starting point for Mastodon style tones. Our example combines some palm-muting and sliding powerchords to create a heavy sounding, fun-to-play riff.



MOSRITE VENTURES II

Raw punk machine

Punk originator, Johnny Ramone played the Mosrite 'slab body' model exclusively: like him, it was not at all mainstream and completely without frippery. He always used the DiMarzio FS-1 bridge pickup, a snarling, angrier Strat model. The neck pickup was just for looks; Johnny eventually had it disconnected. The fixed bridge kept its tuning under Ramone's hail of downstrokes, and that was all Johnny asked of it. Johnny ran everything on 10, but if your own bridge pickup is too thin, try turning down the tone.

PLAY LIKE JOHNNY RAMONE

TRACK 16

♩=180

A D/A E/B D/A E/B D/A

	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	9	7	7	7	9	9	7
T	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	9	7	7	7	9	9	7
A	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	9	7	7	7	9	9	7
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	5	5	5	7	7	5

This riff is typical Ramones stuff, with three staple chords (from a I-IV-V progression, theory fans!) outlining the band's rock 'n' roll influences. No down-up strumming here! Stick to downstrokes instead

GIBSON EDS-1275 DOUBLENECK

Not just a gimmick

The ultimate stage prop, the EDS-1275 has rocked stadiums with John McLaughlin, Rush's Alex Lifeson, the Eagles' Don Felder, and Def Leppard's Steve Clark. In part, they all pay tribute to Jimmy Page's iconic live performances of *Stairway To Heaven*, but this guitar would've been forgotten if it were only a gimmick. Both necks on at once create a ghostly sympathetic resonance, the huge body has its own tone, and it enables instant switching from six to 12 strings





DANELECTRO 3021

Jimmy Page's secret weapon

Danelectros were budget guitars, with partly hollow hardboard bodies. Their unique lipstick pickups had a raw, ripping tone that Page loved, especially with DADGAD tuning. He reached for his 3021 on *Kashmir*, *In My Time Of Dying* and *White Summer/Black Mountain Side*, and it was backup for his main squeeze, the Dragon Telecaster, in Zep's early days. Watch Zeppelin at Earl's Court 1975 to see it in anger.

BUDGET BANGER

Sporting cheap masonite and vinyl over more desirable materials and priced under £40 when Page bought his, the 3021 proves budget guitars can be great.

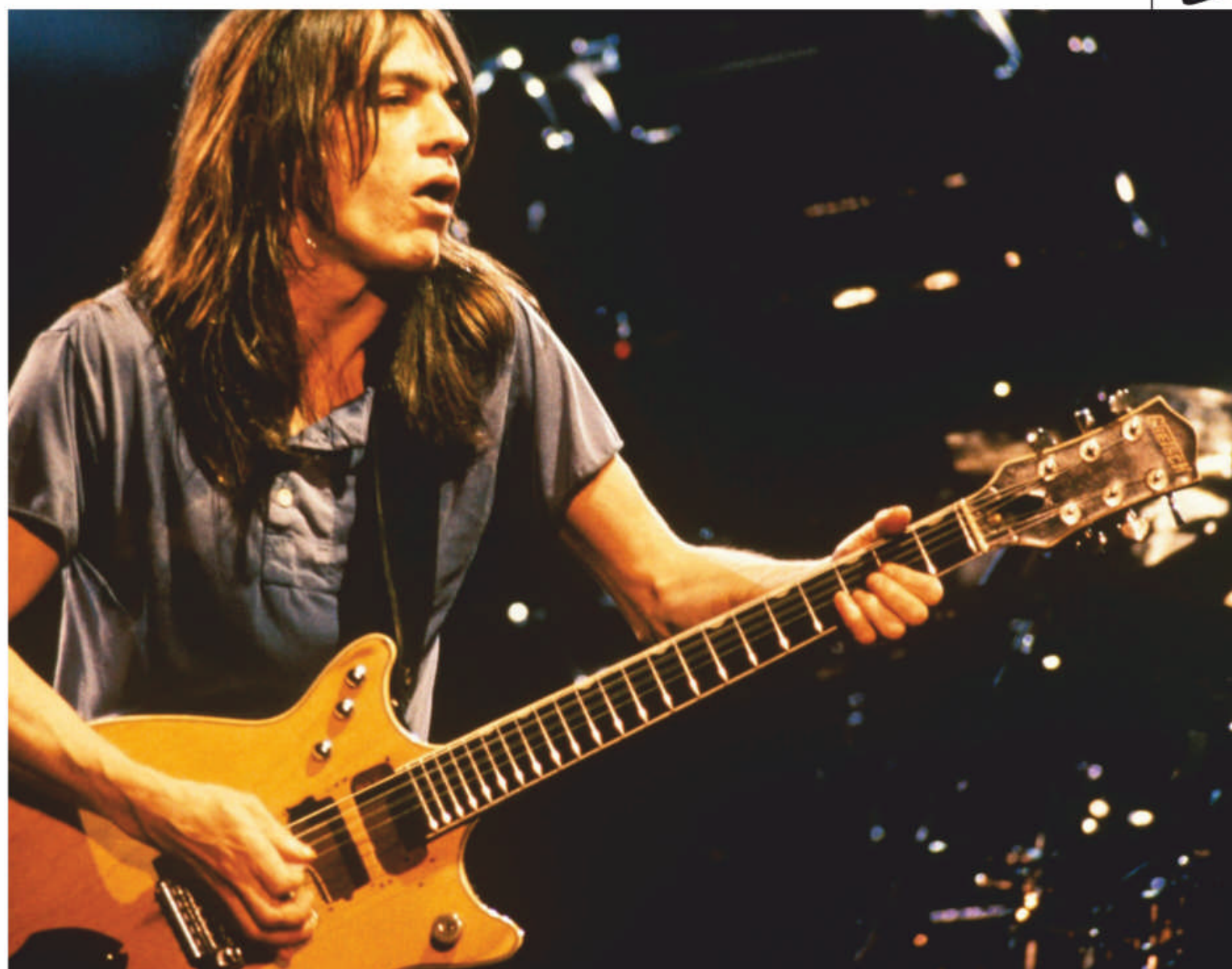
GRETSCH JET FIREBIRD

The sound of AC/DC's biggest riffs

A Gretsch might seem an unlikely choice for hard rock but it provided Malcolm Young with clarity alongside Angus's Gibson muscle. Vibrato tailpieces can flutter when you hit hard – and Malcolm hit *hard* – so he replaced it with a fixed bridge. He only needed the bridge pickup, so the others went in the bin. To sound like Malcolm, try turning the gain down, and then turning it down some more. Dig in with your picking hand until the crunch comes back.

MALCOLM'S SECRET

Planning on nailing Malcolm's rhythm style? Most of his playing is based around easy open chords. The difficult part is nailing his super-tight down-strumming.



OFFSETS & ANGLED GUITARS

The alternative choice of guitar?

Rock has always welcomed misfits and rebels, and the electric guitar has long obliged with unconventional designs. Astonishingly, the Gibson Flying V and Explorer date to 1958, closer to the start of World War II than the first Metallica album. Offset designs were ahead of their time, waiting for the right music. Some

say Fender's Jaguar and Jazzmaster didn't truly come into their own until the 1990s. As well as unusual looks, these guitars offer individual sounds. Although the Flying V and Explorer share SG hardware, their shapes mean they resonate with their own distinct voices. Fender, meanwhile, designed bespoke pickups for their offset guitars, guaranteeing a devoted fanbase.

FENDER JAGUAR

The definitive grunge guitar

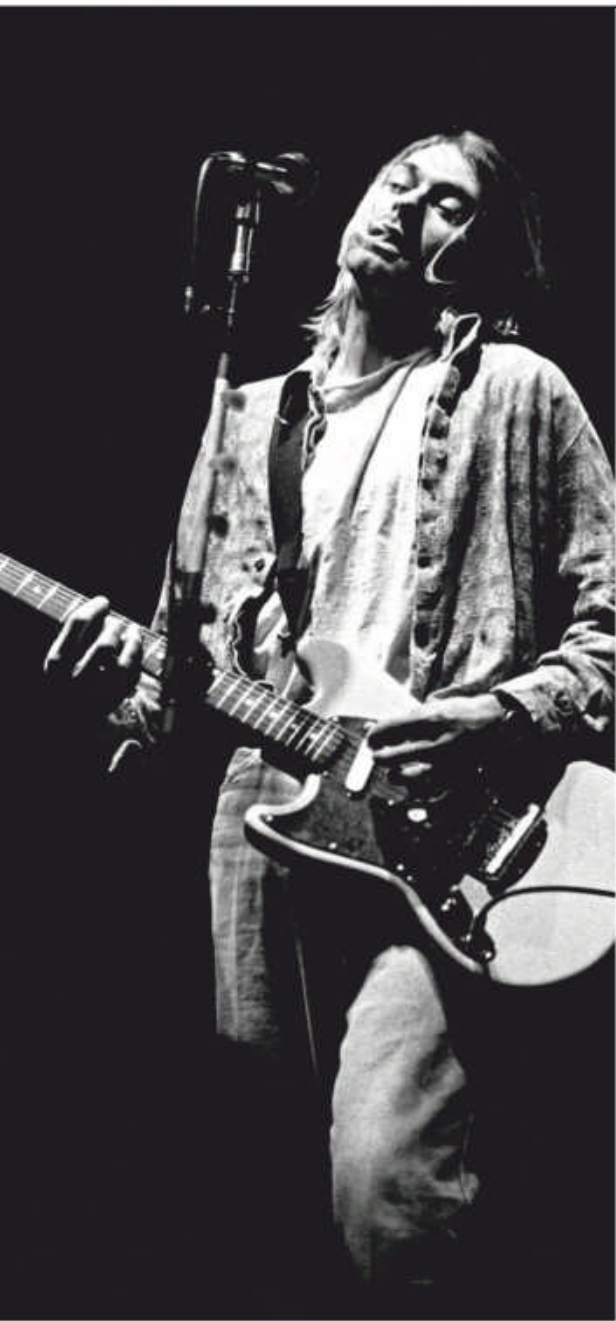
Kurt Cobain bought his 1965 Jaguar through a free ads paper in 1991. It was probably one of the few affordable left-handed guitars available to him, as Jaguars were out of fashion with collectors. In his hands, it became a Jag in shape only; the exclusive Jaguar 'rhythm circuit' controls were disconnected, and the single coil pickups replaced with DiMarzio PAF and Super Distortion models. The guitar sounded huge and powered Nirvana from *Nevermind* onwards.



FENDER JAZZMASTER

For alternative rock connoisseurs

Kurt's Jaguar sent aspiring alt-rockers to pawn shops in pursuit of the Nirvana look, and many discovered that the Jazzmaster's fat, aggressive pickups were ideal for lo-fi rock. The Jazzmaster's alt-rock cred was furthered by associations with Sonic Youth and Dinosaur Jr, who'd used theirs since the 80s, and shoegazers like My Bloody Valentine. They were very conspicuously not neon pink superstrats, and they sounded awesome with fuzz pedals. Job done.



FENDER MUSTANG

Kurt's choice for *In Utero*

As the *Nevermind* tour concluded, Cobain fancied a change and ordered a bunch of Mustangs. Fender's Custom Shop weren't tooled up for lefty Mustangs, so they gave the job to Scott Zimmerman, a prototype builder for Fender Japan. One of these, a sky blue model known as the Skystang III, became Kurt's favourite guitar from *In Utero* onwards. His tech changed the pickup to a Duncan JB and added a Tune-o-matic bridge, making another grunge legend.



HETFIELD'S 'EET FUK' ESP

Defining the sound and look of thrash

The sticker James Hetfield originally made said "EET FUK SLEEP" in reference to his three favourite activities (playing guitar presumably being fourth), but had to be cut down to fit on the body. ESP built it for James in 1987, replacing his Gibsons, and it was his main guitar through the *Black Album* period. Pivotal, it marked James's switch to active EMG pickups, which, largely thanks to his and Kirk's endorsement, became the industry standard for extreme metal.



DEAN ML

The only choice for cowboys from hell

Flying Vs are quite metal, Explorers are quite metal, and if you combine the two you have an axe fit for Dimebag Darrell. Dime won his ML in 1982 but didn't like it, passing it on to a friend who changed the pickups, added a Floyd Rose, and resprayed it with the legendary lightning bolt finish. When he gave it back in 1987, Dime didn't recognise the guitar, but as Pantera exploded it became his signature model, aka the Dean From Hell.

Photos: Getty Images



GIBSON FIREBIRD

Gibson's Fender beater

In the early 60s, Gibson's designs looked a bit stuffy next to the Stratocaster, so they hired car designer Ray Dietrich to shake things up. The Firebird had to sound unique too, so it got its own pickups. Contrary to popular belief these were different from the later mini-humbuckers, and a good Firebird sounds more like a Telecaster on steroids than a Les Paul. Johnny Winter discovered this stinging sound was ideal for slide, often using his in open tunings.



PLAY LIKE JOHNNY WINTER

TRACK 17

Our Johnny Winter-style lick is in 12/8 time, which means the rhythm notation can look a bit more intimidating than it actually is to play. Take it slow and absorb some classic blues vocabulary.

PLAY LIKE MICHAEL SCHENKER

TRACK 18

[illegible]

Few players are as synonymous with Gibson's Flying V than Scorpions and UFO legend, Michael Schenker. He'd often use a wah pedal for solos, keeping the treadle stationary in his chosen sweet spot to act like a filter and provide Schenker's unique lead tone.



GIBSON FLYING V

Not just for metal

It's hardly surprising the Flying V was commercially unsuccessful in 1958; there's no way a pre-Hendrix world was truly ready for its radical looks. But years before Hendrix made the V into a rock legend, Albert King discovered it was a surprisingly subtle blues guitar. A lefty playing upside down, Albert found the 24.75" scale helped his incredible string bends, and he produced all kinds of delicate tones by balancing the pickups with the Flying V's independent volume controls.

PLAY LIKE THE EDGE

TRACK 19

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 4/4 time. It features a melody of eighth notes with a tempo marking of ♩=138. Chord symbols Em, G, D, and C are placed above the staff. The bottom staff is a fretboard diagram labeled 'TAB' vertically on the left. It shows fingerings for each note: 10, 10, 8, 10, 10, 8, 8, 10, 10, 8, 10, 10, 8, 10, 10, 8, 10, 10. Fingering numbers 11 are also present under some notes.

An Explorer player since age 17, The Edge's dotted eighth note delay rhythms are the core of the U2 sound. The trick is to play straight eighth notes – when set up correctly, the delay effect adds notes in between the notes you're playing. Here, at 138 bpm, 326 ms is the correct delay time.

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2 FENDER UNIVERSAL A-FRAME GUITAR STAND £29

With adjustable arms and extra side support, Fender's universal stand should suit Jazzmasters, Explorers, V shapes and more.



3 HERCULES GS526B PLUS GUITAR STAND
£99

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MANSON GUITARS

Hi-tech wizardry behind the Muse sound

Matt Bellamy is perhaps the only guitarist since Tom Morello to coax radically new sounds from six-string guitars. Where Morello took a novel approach with largely stock instruments, Matt Bellamy has embraced technology to create effects impossible with only a piece of wood and regular pickups. Matt's vision was brought to life by Exeter luthier Hugh Manson and his colleague Tim Stark.

The first Muse Manson was the DeLorean, with an aluminium finish and a ZVex Fuzz Factory built into the guitar. The feedback effects on *Plug In Baby* are the Fuzz Factory, and having the pedal's main controls on the front of the guitar enabled Matt to manipulate the feedback sounds while still playing. A Roland synth pickup could trigger any synth sound imaginable, like the trumpet solo on *Darkshines*.

Subsequent Manson-Muse collaborations have been even more ambitious. The Kaoss Manson incorporates a touchscreen for real time control of almost any effect parameter (see the DJ scratching sounds on *Supermassive Black Hole*) and a Sustainiac pickup (used on the intro to *Invincible*) for infinite control of sustain and feedback. His latest innovation has an Arturia software synth built into the guitar so he can play it live without a laptop.



AIRLINE RES-O-GLASS

Jack White's garage rock machine

Not only does the Res-O-Glass make the perfect visual partner in the *Seven Nation Army* video, it has a lo-fi tone that screams garage rock. The big pickups might look like covered humbuckers, but they're actually an unusual single coil design. The body is semi-hollow with fibreglass front and rear sections surrounding a maple core, and the wooden bridge floats above the body. The acoustic tone is boxy and resonant, and wound up it sounds like... The White Stripes.

GET THE SOUND: SEVEN NATION ARMY

As it turns out, Jack didn't use the Res-O-Glass to record his biggest hit – that honour goes to an early-60s Kay K6533 archtop hollowbody with single Kay 'cheese grater' single-coil neck pickup. He used fuzz distortion courtesy of an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff Pi (with the sustain set high and other controls at a little over 50 per cent). The most essential item is a pitch shifter. Jack used a DigiTech Whammy set down one octave.





GRETSCH TWANG MACHINE

Rock 'n' roll rhythm in a box

Bo Diddley helped turn the blues into rock 'n' roll, influencing Buddy Holly, Elvis, and the Beatles. To do it, he built his own guitar with a rectangular body and a pickup he made from parts of an old turntable. Gretsch made the Twang Machine based on his design, and Diddley's eye-catching design encouraged rock 'n' roll's burgeoning showmanship. It also established DeArmond single coil pickups' place in the rock pantheon, and everyone had to have that twang.

Photos: Getty

FIVE SONGS THAT RIPPED THE BO DIDDLEY RHYTHM...

Bo Diddley will always be associated with the signature rhythm of his own self-titled song. And, as it turns out, quite a few other artists have used this rhythm too. Here are five of the best:

1. Duane Eddy - *Cannonball*
2. Johnny Otis - *Wille And The Hand Jive*
3. Guns N' Roses - *Mr. Brownstone*
4. Primal Scream - *Movin' On Up*
5. U2 - *Desire*



PRS SINGLECUT

The choice for modern metal

The PRS Custom 24 offered a best-of-both approach to Fender and Gibson ideas, but back in 2000 the Singlecut saw Smith trying to move closer to classic Les Paul territory. The 25" scale length worked better for heavy riffing than Gibson's 24.75", and PRS' efficient tremolo design meant whammy users could access Les Paul fatness too. As a result, modern rockers like Mark Tremonti and Story of the Year couldn't get enough. Gibson sued but PRS won, only gaining more attention for the Singlecut models.

Words Jonathan Horsley

40 YEARS OF JACKSON GUITARS

As Jackson celebrates its 40th anniversary, we chart its history from custom repair shop to the number one supplier of rock and metal guitars



The evolution of Jackson Guitars goes hand in hand with that of rock and metal itself. There has always been a symbiotic

relationship between the design of the electric guitar and the scene it serves, but come the end of the 70s, that was to become ever more pronounced.

Guitar playing was on the cusp of radical change. After a febrile period during which the big beasts of rock barrelled into long-form progressivism, their ever more ambitious compositions expanding upon rock's template, guitar culture was intensifying. Rock was intensifying. Metal was becoming a culture. Stratocasters were still cool, but players were now learning that they, indeed, had limitations.

The players of the 60s and 70s used workarounds to get the sounds that they wanted. Treble boosters and fuzz pedals were essential ingredients in getting the gain needed for a harder brand of rock; the next generation were no different, only their demands were about to met by the new generation of high-performance electric guitars with thinner necks, compound radius fingerboards, super-hot pickups and floating vibratos from Kahler and Floyd Rose.

Of course, it was only logical that the guitars had to change. Where better place than a mod-shop to make that change happen?

Picture the scene: a small guitar repair shop on the border of Glendora and San Dimas, California. Hitherto it had been located in Azusa, repairing and putting custom appointments on guitars, Fenders mainly. You needed a neck shim for your '62 Strat? You needed a single-coil cavity rerouted for a humbucker? You took it to Charvel's Guitar Repair, run by Wayne Charvel. Pretty soon Charvel was making his own parts for Fender and Gibson guitars, but he wasn't the only one in the game as the aftermarket for parts heated up.

The likes of Eddie Van Halen would visit the shop. His DiMarzios were squealing – could Charvel fix it? Sure, and in a trick learned from Bob Luly, the man who made the Rolling Stones their first sound system, Wayne Charvel potted Van Halen's pickups in wax. These mods were groundbreaking but typical of an era in which there was no shortage of expertise and imagination.



ABOVE
Dan Spitz and Scott Ian of Anthrax on stage in the 90s

Grover Jackson had plenty of both. Jackson had joined the Charvel shop in 1978 – the same year that Charvel made Van Halen his famous Bumblebee electric – and by the year's end he had taken over the business and the Charvel brand.

If the first generation of Charvel instruments were the archetypal Superstrats, their DNA recognisably Fender, the first Jackson model torched the rulebook. Ozzy Osbourne's new guitarist, Randy Rhoads, was a rising star and looking for a second V to complement a polka-dot model that Karl Sandoval (another Charvel alumnus) had built him. Rhoads had even sketched out an outline and given the guitar a name, the Concorde. The first version was on the heavy side; take two hit the bullseye. The Concorde's asymmetrical V-shape was revolutionary, and this weaponised descendent of Gibson's Flying V was the first to take the Jackson name on the headstock, launching the brand.

THE FIRST WAVE

Was Concorde the first Jackson guitar, though? Yes and no. Officially – ie, by serial number – that honour goes to a more symmetric V with a conventional arrow-head headstock, the J0001. Like the Rhoads, this design had been seen on custom-built prototypes J0001 was built in 1983, listed as a Pointy V and reportedly built for KK Downing of Judas Priest. Featuring an un-recessed double-locking Floyd Rose vibrato, a dual-humbucker format with a single volume control and three-way pickup selector, it was being developed around the same time as Rhoads' Concorde, and similarly features a neck-through construction. The V shape catches the eye, but it's the neck-through fundamentals of the Rhoads and J0001 that is of most interest, drawing a clear line between the bolt-on build of Charvel and the novel Jackson approach.

KK Downing never played the J0001, but it resurfaced in a Japanese guitar magazine circa-'85, brandished by

BY THE END OF HIS FIRST YEAR AT CHARVEL, GROVER JACKSON HAD TAKEN OVER



But they also helped sell the brand. To root around on the digital archives of Jackson catalogues, it is striking to see the brand's evolution from niche custom shop concern to production line behemoth. Designs came and went. Who remembers the mahogany-bodied Fusion Series of '94? Those took a bolt-on build, a double-cutaway Dinky-esque body and shrunk the scale to a Gibson-esque 24.75". Or the JTX STD and its shred T-style look?

The 90s had some strange designs for Jackson, such as the JJ doublecut, a blocky, traditional signature instrument for Scott Ian, and the Outcaster, which evolved out of the Surfcaster and had a lipstick single-coil in the neck position. Volbeat's Rob Caggiano later appropriated the body shape for his Shadowcaster signature model. Metal was having a difficult time in the mid-90s with the rise of grunge and alternative rock – that went some way to explaining Jackson's design choices of the time.

Charvel/Jackson was acquired by Fender in 2002, but it has lost little of its original ethos in the years that followed. Looking at its 2020 lineup, you'll see many of the same design principles that were developed in the early 80s. Today's artists are similarly important. Periphery's Misha Mansoor is in some respects like a djent Phil Collen, revising the double-cutaway S-style for a contemporary style, with sharper horns and Bare Knuckle pickups.

Indeed, one of 2020's most out-there body shapes, the Star, dates back to 1979, when the name Charvel was still above the door. It's now Gus G's latest signature model. That it looks retro despite its complex geometry is a sign of Jackson's success in changing how we look at the electric guitar, what we expect from it, and how it might look and play. Some things have changed. The Custom Shop order forms have moved from the back of the catalogue to the Jackson website. But you can still get a double-necked Soloist with a Mick Thomson-approved carbon fibre finish, just so long as your budget will stretch to it.

Jay Reynolds of Malice, which is uncanny considering his band's schtick was a little too close to Judas Priest's for comfort. It was one of a dozen custom models unveiled at NAMM 2020 to celebrate Jackson's 40th anniversary, and was built by Jackson Custom Shop master builder Mike Shannon.

Subsequent Rhoads prototypes followed, with the finished guitar boasting a V cutaway that was more pronounced than the Concorde. The Rhoads model – a body shape that remains in the catalogue to this day and is exceptionally well-balanced – was something to build on. Not all designs were as out there as the Rhoads. More often than not, they were inspired by artist feedback. Def Leppard's Phil Collen was one of Jackson's first endorsers. His PC1 Dinky took the compact double-cutaway format and Strat-style headstock from the Charvel line and appropriated it with the Jackson logo. Again, the cross-pollination of ideas and spec between Jackson and Charvel lines made innovation second nature.

Through the early 80s, the new designs kept coming. Arguably, the most significant, the Soloist, did not look all that different from the Charvel Superstrats, but its pointed headstock gave it a more aggressive vibe, and the build – a maple through-neck centre block with poplar wings – gave it an all-new tone. "It just had a slightly richer sound," said Phil Collen, speaking to *Guitarist* magazine in 2014. "It was the

first kind of hybrid, if you like, of a Strat and a Les Paul. And that really was the sound and the feel that I was actually always looking for."

With the popularity of thrash metal, the shapes got sharper. In 1983, Jackson launched the Kelly, a sharp-pointed offset that once upon an event horizon could have been an Explorer, but like the Rhoads before it, this was a totally different strain of modernism than that which was guiding Ted McCarty's hand in the Gibson workshop of the 50s. Megadeth's Marty Friedman was the Kelly's most-famous player. The mid-80s saw the arrival of the King V, a symmetrical, long-winged V favoured by the likes of Megadeth's Dave Mustaine, Anthrax's Scott Ian and, later, Trivium's Corey Beaulieu. As thrash accelerated into death metal, Jackson's R&D kept pace, debuting the Warrior in 1989, a specialist's instrument – metal or GTFO – and another neck-through.

JACKSON GUITARS: HOT-RODDED ELECTRICS FOR THE PEOPLE

Jackson's artist collaborations were invaluable when spec'ing out the future for high-performance electric guitars.

ABOVE

Jackson greats: Def Leppard's Phil Collen and Sepultura's Andreas Kisser

JACKSON EVOLVED FROM NICHE CUSTOM SHOP TO PRODUCTION BEHEMOTH

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JACKSON CONCORDE

Randy Rhoads' gift
to guitar design

Shortly after joining Ozzy, Rhoads had an idea for a radical guitar design. Wayne Charvel had sold his business to Grover Jackson, so Rhoads went to Jackson to build the guitar, a white, pinstriped asymmetrical V with a Strat tremolo system. It would have neck-through construction like a Gibson Firebird, where the neck and centre of the body are one piece of wood, with 'wings' glued onto the sides to make the rest of the shape. The entire guitar was made of maple. Grover didn't think the design fitted the Charvel brand. Instead, they designed a new headstock, an angular take on the Gibson Explorer, and made the first Jackson.

The first Concorde was impractically heavy, and fans thought Randy had just taken a saw to a Flying V. Rhoads and Jackson collaborated again, producing a smaller, more radical body shape for the second prototype, which had a black finish and Jackson's soon-to-be-famous sharkfin inlays. The humbuckers they chose, Seymour Duncan Distortion and Jazz models, became Jackson mainstays. Randy only performed with the revised Concorde a few times before his death, but he had set the direction for 80s metal guitars.

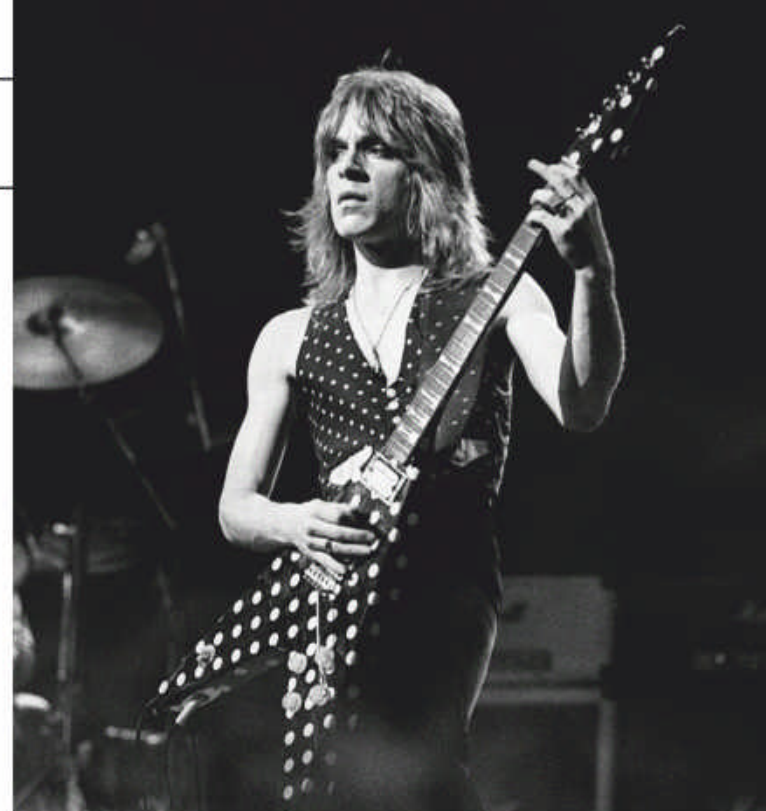
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Photos: Getty Images / Fender



KARL SANDOVAL V

Randy Rhoads on stage with his iconic pre-jackson 'dot' V



WIZARD OF OZ... THE MAGIC OF RANDY RHOADS' PLAYING STYLE

Jackson's early pioneer is best known for playing on Ozzy Osbourne albums *Blizzard of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman*, as well as Quiet Riot Albums from '77 and '78. Riffs like *Mr Crowley*, *Crazy Train* and *I Don't Know* are all-time classics and feature his assured, fiery technique coupled with an astute musical knowledge – no doubt the product of his classical guitar background. Add to this his iconic lead guitar style in which he fused blues-rock licks with classically inspired scale runs; it's a style which has influenced a generation of guitarists such as Zakk Wylde, Jake E Lee, Gus G, Alex Skolnick, Steve Vai and more. We're looking at a some of his staple techniques and licks here. Get these ideas down and you'll be on the Rhoad to guitar greatness!



PLAY LIKE RANDY RHOADS POWERCHORD RIFFING TRACK 26

♩=120

A⁵ C⁵/G G⁵ A⁵ G⁵/D D⁵/A

PM PM PM PM PM 3 3

TAB: 2 5 5 3 2 3 1 0 4 2 0

This riff uses aggressive alternate picked open A pedal notes with powerchords from the key of A minor, in the style of tracks like *I Don't Know* and *Suicide Solution*.

PLAY LIKE RANDY RHOADS BLUES & CLASSICAL STYLE TRACK 27

Em D C B^{sus}⁴

8^{va}

TAB: 12 12 12 12 15 14 12 15 14 12 17 15 14 19 17 15 20 19 17 22 20 19 22 (24)

BU BU BU BU BU

This lick starts with a bluesy bend figure Randy used in iconic solos like *Mr Crowley* and *Believer*. In bar 2 use three-note-per-string scale shapes to ascend the string.

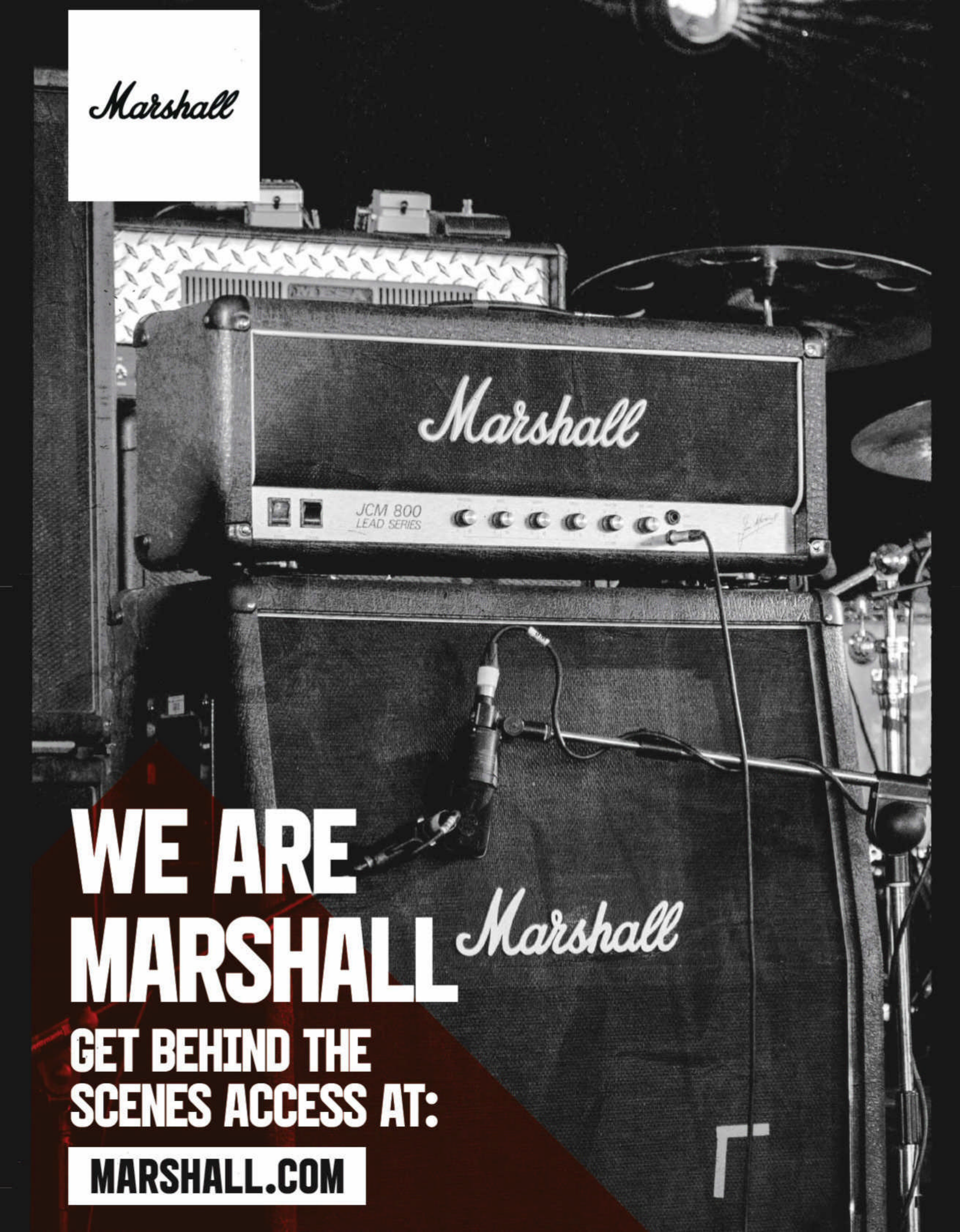
PLAY LIKE RANDY RHOADS PEDAL TONE IDEAS TRACK 28

♩=80

F[#]m

TAB: 2 2 2 4 2 5 2 4 2 2 2 5 0 2 4 5

Randy's most famous riff is probably *Crazy Train*, but he used a similar pedal tone concept in *Diary Of A Madman*. Use your first, third and fourth fingers throughout.

A black and white photograph of a Marshall JCM 800 Lead Series amplifier head and a guitar. The amplifier is the central focus, with the Marshall logo prominently displayed on its face. Below the logo, the text "JCM 800 LEAD SERIES" is visible. The amplifier is connected to a guitar, with a cable and a microphone stand visible. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a stage or rehearsal space.

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ACOUSTIC GUITARS

Not just for singers-songwriters...

Rock couldn't happen until the electric guitar was invented. Pickups and amplifiers meant the guitar could be heard with a drum kit, and they made distortion possible. Yet the electric guitar didn't bury the acoustic, and almost every great rock album is full of both. Sometimes they're double-tracked with distorted riffs for depth and clarity, sometimes

they're songwriting workhorses, and sometimes they provide contrast to the onslaught of electrics. Lists of all-time greatest rock songs are dominated by acoustics: *Stairway To Heaven*, *Hotel California*, *Hey Jude*, *Brown Sugar*. Strumming just isn't the same on electrics, and sometimes a mix just needs an acoustic. Here are the acoustic guitars that rock couldn't live without.

GIBSON J-160E

One of the first electro-acoustics

The J-160E was Gibson's first attempt at putting a pickup in a full-size dreadnought, and the musicians of the day immediately saw the need. George Harrison's J-160E is the only guitar which appears on every single Beatles album, and John Lennon's was not far behind. The P90 pickup didn't sound much like a true acoustic, but it was a useful sound that gave the likes of *Norwegian Wood* a fighting chance of being heard live.

Photos: Getty



Knopfler's 1937 National Style O Resonator, shot for *Guitarist* magazine in 2018



NATIONAL STYLE O

The acoustic guitar, louder

Mark Knopfler's 1937 National appears on the cover of *Brothers in Arms* and was used most notably on *Romeo And Juliet* and *Telegraph Road*. Before electric amplifiers, resonator guitars were a solid way to make your guitar louder. The sound is transferred through the bridge to metal cones that project the sound forward. They're not just loud, they also have a distinctively metallic tone that suited both Knopfler's fingerpicking and slide playing by the likes of *Son House*.



This is a later 1971 Sovereign. Page plays a natural finish mid-60s model

HARMONY SOVEREIGN

The guitar that wrote Zeppelin...

Songwriters have always known an acoustic guitar is the perfect vehicle. Jimmy Page bought his spruce-topped Harmony Sovereign H1260 in the mid 60s and loved it so much he wrote the first four Zeppelin albums on it. It was even used to record *Stairway To Heaven* and much of *Led Zeppelin III*. If that's not enough to convince you of its place in rock history, a Sovereign was also Syd Barrett's first guitar.

MARTIN D-18E

MTV Unplugged history maker

While purists argued whether it was really unplugged if Kurt used a fuzz pedal, the rest of the world was just amazed by Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged In New York*. Kurt wasn't limited by convention or genre, and his D-18e let him straddle the acoustic and electric worlds easily. Factory-fitted with DeArmond pickups popular in early Gretsches, Kurt's D-18e added a Bartolini soundhole pickup for more typical acoustic tones. The guitar in question fetched \$6m at auction in 2020.



FENDER STRATOCASTER

A true American icon

Vintage Strats were not always objects of desire. Clapton bought six in 1970 for a few hundred bucks, and EVH thought nothing of cannibalising a 1958 for the Frankenstrat. It took the likes of Hendrix and Blackmore revealing a Strat's potential for the public to catch on. Strats require some finesse. Jeff Beck proves the tremolo can stay in tune, but a poorly set up one can be a nightmare. Still, the Strat's pickups cut through like little else, the tremolo was radically more efficient than previous designs, and it was light years ahead on playability and comfort. Even now, the Strat is still the benchmark electric guitar.

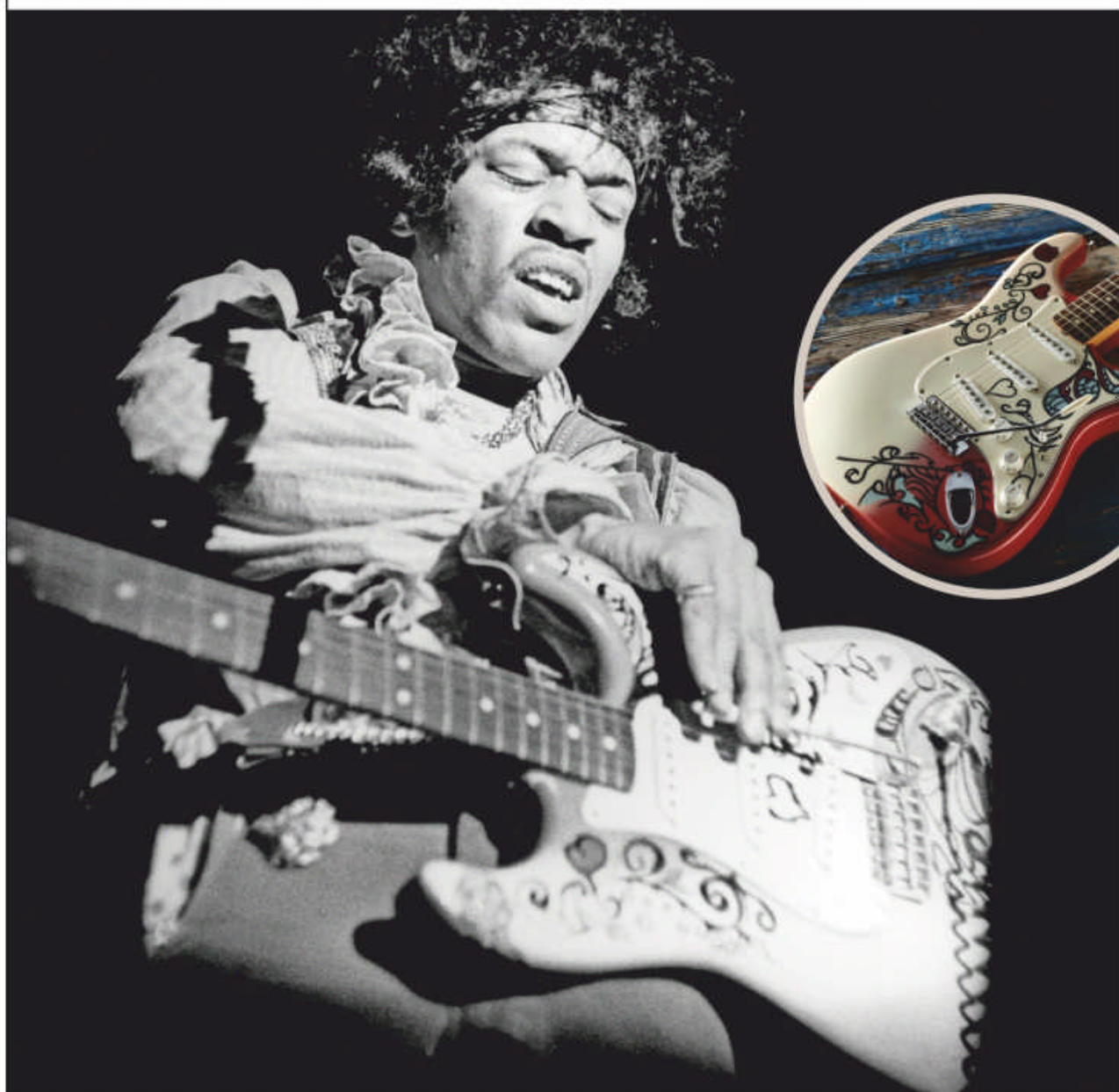


Photo: Getty Images

MONTEREY STRAT

Hendrix changed the world. This guitar was there...

Strats were not cool when Hendrix rocked up at 1967's Monterey Pop Festival, associated with such achingly white acts as Buddy Holly and the Beach Boys. As he climbed on stage and reinvented the guitar, the Strat's possibilities expanded in infinite directions. In the wrong hands, a Strat was thin and weedy, but Hendrix wrangled an almighty roar. Amateurs struggled with feedback at high volume; Hendrix turned it into music. Hank Marvin used the tremolo arm for tasteful bends; Hendrix was an alien invasion.

Rock 'n' roll was invented by black artists but recent developments had been by white people. Now, here was a black guitarist wrestling back control of rock, dancing through every other genre en route, from BB King blues to Bob Dylan folk via Curtis Mayfield soul. The versatile Strat was equally adept at all of it, keeping pace with Hendrix's constant innovation. Guitarists have searched ever since for the right Strat to give them the Hendrix tone. Ironically, Jimi didn't care at all, destroying his handpainted Fiesta Red Strat at the end of the set in the sure knowledge he could get that sound again. *He* was the Hendrix tone.



THE BLACK STRAT

Pink Floyd's main axe

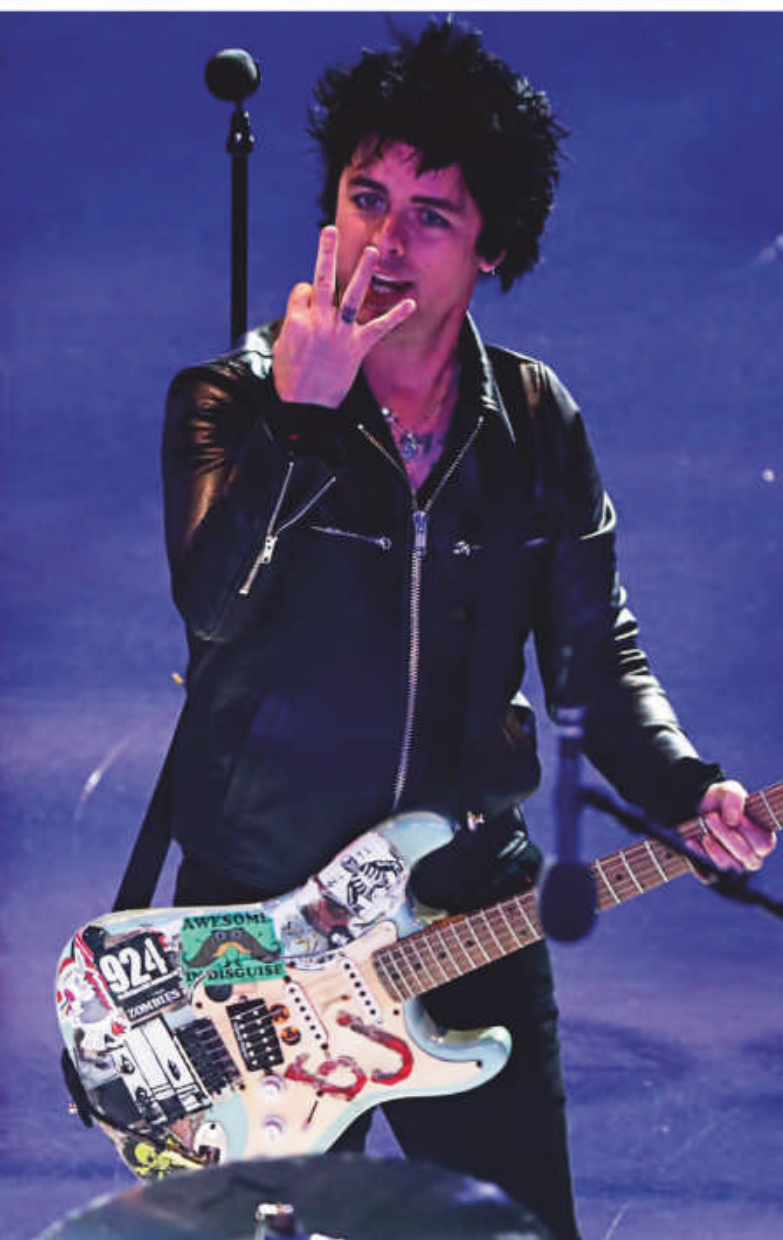
David Gilmour's main guitar from 1970–1986, this is the sound of the *Comfortably Numb* solo. Much messed about, the guitar rocked a Kahler trem and a Gibson PAF at various points, but was returned to something like stock form. Gilmour's shorted tremolo arm allows for more subtle control of vibrato. He overcame the Strat's sometimes weak bridge pickup with overwound alternatives, trying a DiMarzio FS-1 before settling on a custom Seymour Duncan now sold as the SSL-5. It was sold at auction in 2019 for an astonishing £3,975,000.



NUMBER ONE

The sound that everyone wants

Contrary to popular belief, the pickups on Stevie Nicks' Number One (aka the 'First Wife') were not overwound. That massive push to his amp came from huge strings, an unbelievably heavy picking action and unsafe volume levels. Plus a little help from an Ibanez Tube Screamer. Stevie kept the action high (another tone saver) making it probably the least playable guitar on this list. It had jumbo frets not because Stevie preferred them, but because his tech was sick of re-fretting every six months. This has been the benchmark Strat tone for virtually everyone since.



Photos: Getty Images

BLUE

Pop-punk's most recognisable guitar

Collectors recognise that 80s Japanese Strat copies can be superior to their US counterparts, but Billie Joe Armstrong's Fernandes is arguably the most famous in its own right. Like EVH's Frankenstrat, the neck and middle pickups are disconnected and the single bridge humbucker is angled; Billie Joe's tech believes this is crucial to the sound. For most of its life it's rocked a Seymour Duncan JB, but in the 90s Billie Joe tried a Dimebag-style Bill Lawrence pickup.



BLACKIE

A beautiful mongrel

Clapton wanted a Strat, so in 1970 he bought the entire stock from Sho-Bud in Nashville. He gave away three to George Harrison, Pete Townshend and Steve Winwood, leaving himself with three. He liked the black body on the '56 but preferred the '57's V-profile neck. He put them together with the electrics from guitar three, which had two 50s pickups and one from 1970. The resulting guitar was magic, singlehandedly ending Clapton's Gibson phase. In 2004, like Gilmour's Black Strat, Blackie was auctioned off, fetching a cool \$959,000 for charity.



'61 SUNBURST STRATOCASTER

The world's most abused guitar

If Rory Gallagher's Strat had been a child, social workers would have taken it away from him. It was once found in a ditch, and whenever the neck came out of alignment, Rory would wrench it back into place with a sickening crack. There is footage of the Irish great dragging his guitar frontside down across the stage – antics that would damage the neck pickup. Gallagher's Strat is, along with SRV's Number One, the reason why vintage Strats are commonly imagined as having barely any paint left on them. But Gallagher shared Hendrix and SRV's knack for making a Strat sound huge.

PLAY LIKE **RITCHIE BLACKMORE**

TRACK 20

♩=120

G⁵ F⁵ G⁵ D^{b5} G⁵ C⁵ B^{b5} G⁵ B^{b5}

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	5	3	0	3
0	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	5	3	0	3

Deep Purple and Rainbow guitarist Ritchie Blackmore is best known for playing large-headstock Strats with a dummy middle pickup (and he'd only select the bridge or neck pups, not both) and a scalloped fretboard. Our example uses two-note powerchords played with the fingers for that Blackmore feel.

PLAY LIKE **MARK KNOPFLER**

TRACK 21

♩=140

G D

TAB

BU	12	12	15	12	14	12	14	12	14	12	12	14
14(16)												

p i m p p i p p p i m p

This lick is pure early Dire Straits-era Knopfler when he would've been playing his '61 Strat set to the bridge and middle pickups together. Our example showcases a classic descending pentatonic run, and the fingerpicking here is very specific, so we have notated it for you.

PLAY LIKE **STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN**

TRACK 22

♩=60

Emaj¹³ Am¹³

TAB

9	9	9	11	12	11	9	11	5	7	5	7	9	9	(10)	(9)
8															
6	9	11	11					0	7						
0								0							

BUBD

The main concept for our SRV example is a simple chord fingering answered by some Hendrix style embellishments. Both the Emaj¹³ and Am¹³ have an open-string root note, which can be left to ring on.

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FENDER TELECASTER

The ultimate workhorse?

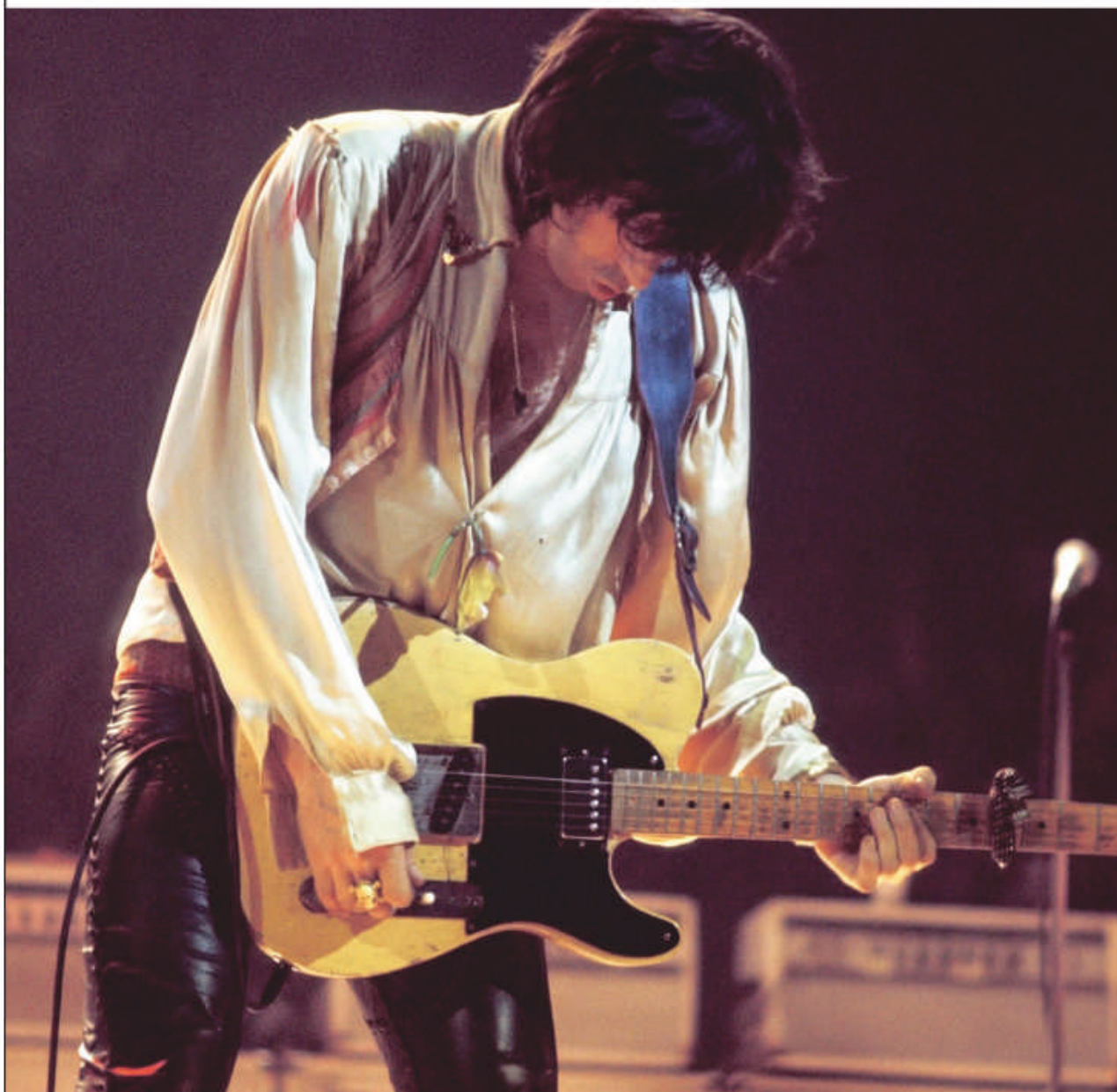
The Telecaster was the first solidbody electric guitar in production, and for many players it's never been improved. Even in stock form, there's still no type of music the Tele can't make a convincing stab at, and no genre where it can't look at home. Country, soul, and indie are its mainstays but Tom Morello, Jim Root and Richie Kotzen show how far it can travel. Leo Fender saw what needed to be done and did it: the Tele offers solid tuning, great sounds, and playability. Its few shortcomings, like the difficult-to-intonate three-saddle 'ashtray' bridge and single-coil pickup hum, can be improved but not without compromising the classic tone. It is the ultimate workhorse guitar.

MICAWBER

Rolling Stones' prolific riff machine

Eric Clapton gave Keith a 1953 butterscotch blonde Telecaster for his 27th birthday – which makes him a pretty good mate in our books. Nicknamed Micawber, it quickly became the Stone's most famous guitar. Keith's tech switched the neck pickup to a Gibson PAF (with magnets turned backwards), and the bridge pickup was changed to a lap steel pickup similar in design to the pickups on the earliest Telecasters. Keith opted for individual saddles for better intonation. Micawber is usually tuned to open G (DGDGBD), but with the lowest string removed, turning up on live versions of *Brown Sugar*, *Honky Tonk Women* and others. Open G was a slide tuning, and Keith developed a unique rhythm style with it. The Tele is one of the few guitars that will give you more the harder you hit it, and this was ideal for his loose approach.

The fact you can find Telecasters in virtually every subgenre is largely thanks to Keith Richards. From Slipknot to indie kids, Zeppelin to country stars, Keef is the one name they all respect. Like its owner, Micawber is still at the top of the rock 'n' roll game long after most of its peers have retired.



Photos: Getty Images



PAGE'S DRAGON

The original Zeppelin guitar

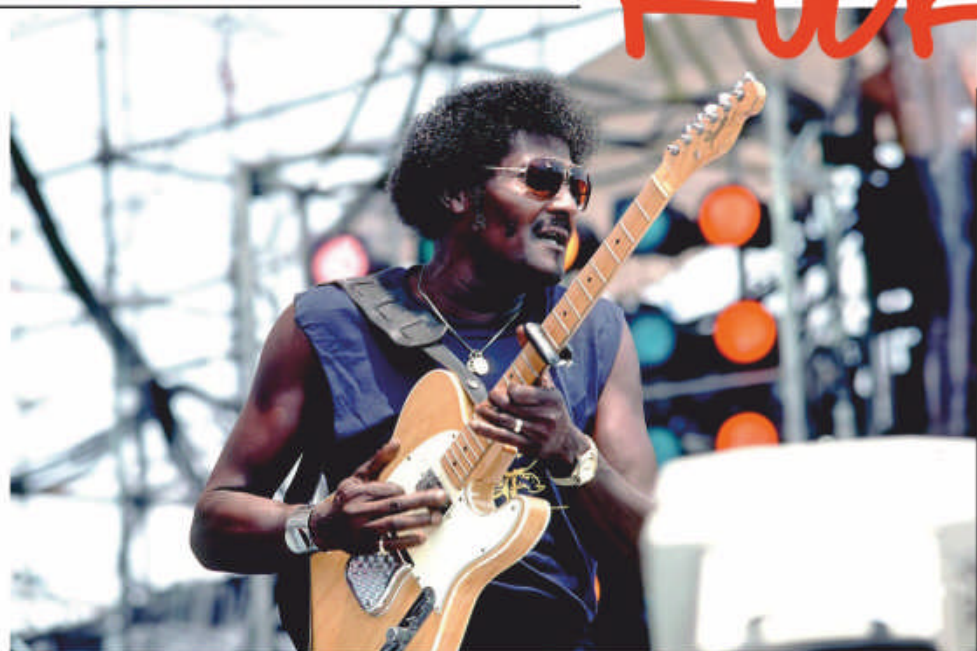
Jeff Beck was not getting on with his Burns Trisonic, and bagged a blonde Telecaster from his Deltones bandmate John Owen. He used it with the Yardbirds before giving it to Jimmy Page in 1968 as thanks for getting Beck the Yardbirds gig. It became Page's favourite guitar, used for all of Led Zeppelin's debut album and the *Stairway To Heaven* solo. Page first decorated it with circular mirrors (shown left), but later created its most famous incarnation by painting on his own psychedelic dragon design.



1983 FENDER TELECASTER

An unpopular guitar touched by grace

When Jeff Buckley's guitar was stolen in 1991, his friend Janine Nichols lent him her 1983 Telecaster. Early 80s Teles don't have the best reputation. The top-loading bridges have less sustain, and the guitars tend to be heavy and uncooperative. It's unclear if this was an exception or whether it was the genius of Buckley's hands, but Jeff found beautiful tones in it. He and the guitar were inseparable thereafter, and today it is owned by Muse's Matt Bellamy.



'66 TELECASTER CUSTOM

The Iceman's blues weapon

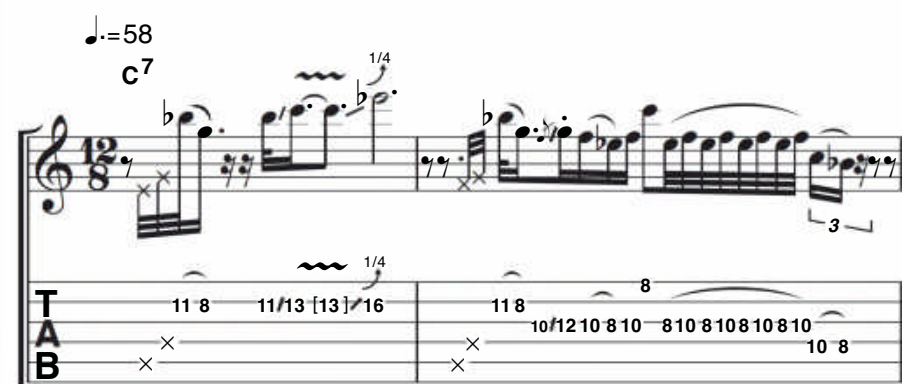
The Master Of The Telecaster Albert Collins (aka The Iceman) had one of the most distinctive voices of blues guitar. Tuning to Open F minor and using an idiosyncratic fingerstyle attack, he maximised the Telecaster's bite. His '66 custom had a Gibson PAF in the neck, but his signature model features a more obtainable Seymour Duncan 59. An overlooked aspect of his tone was his incredibly long cable. Beyond facilitating stage shenanigans, the cable's capacitance rounded off some of the Tele's razor treble.



FENDER TELECASTER/ESQUIRE HYBRID

From *Born to Run* to *Nebraska*

The guitar Bruce Springsteen bought in 1973 had a neck from a 1957 Esquire, and a body routed for four pickups and four outputs (part of a scam certain session players employed to earn four times union rate for playing four 'tracks'). The resulting guitar was feather light and rang like an acoustic from all the wood removed. Bruce used it in continuously from 1973-2012, and still records with it.



SENDERO LUMINOSO

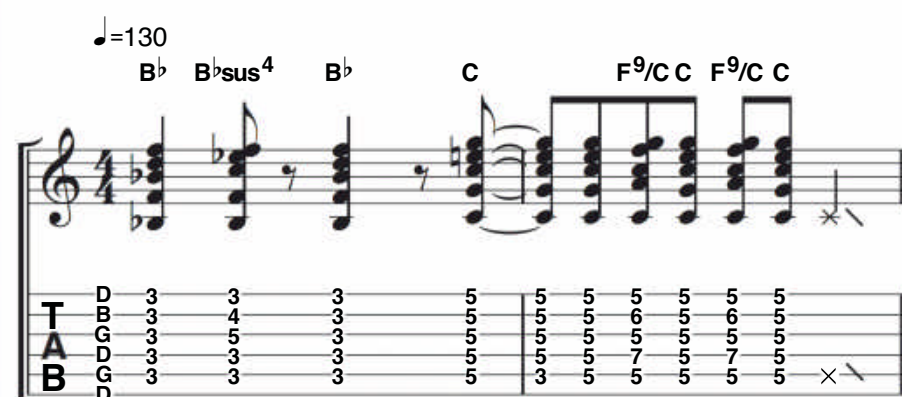
Tom Morello has recorded every drop D riff in his career with one guitar – a stock 1982 Telecaster he got when Tool frontman Maynard James Keenan showed him the tuning in 1991. Where some rockers disconnect their neck pickups, Morello uses his exclusively, describing the resulting riffs as springier and funkier. “I think the heaviness of the riff hasn’t got anything to do with the amount of distortion on the guitar,” he told *MusicRadar*.

TELE-VISION...

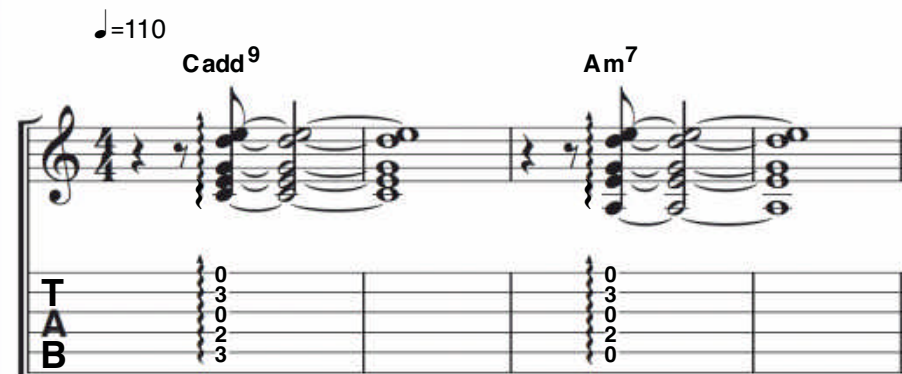
The origins of Leo Fender's design

A Fender Telecaster guitar with a blonde body and black pickguard, standing in front of several vintage guitar cases. The guitar has a maple neck and a white pickguard. The background shows a row of dark brown, worn guitar cases with metal latches.

TRACK 24



TRACK 25



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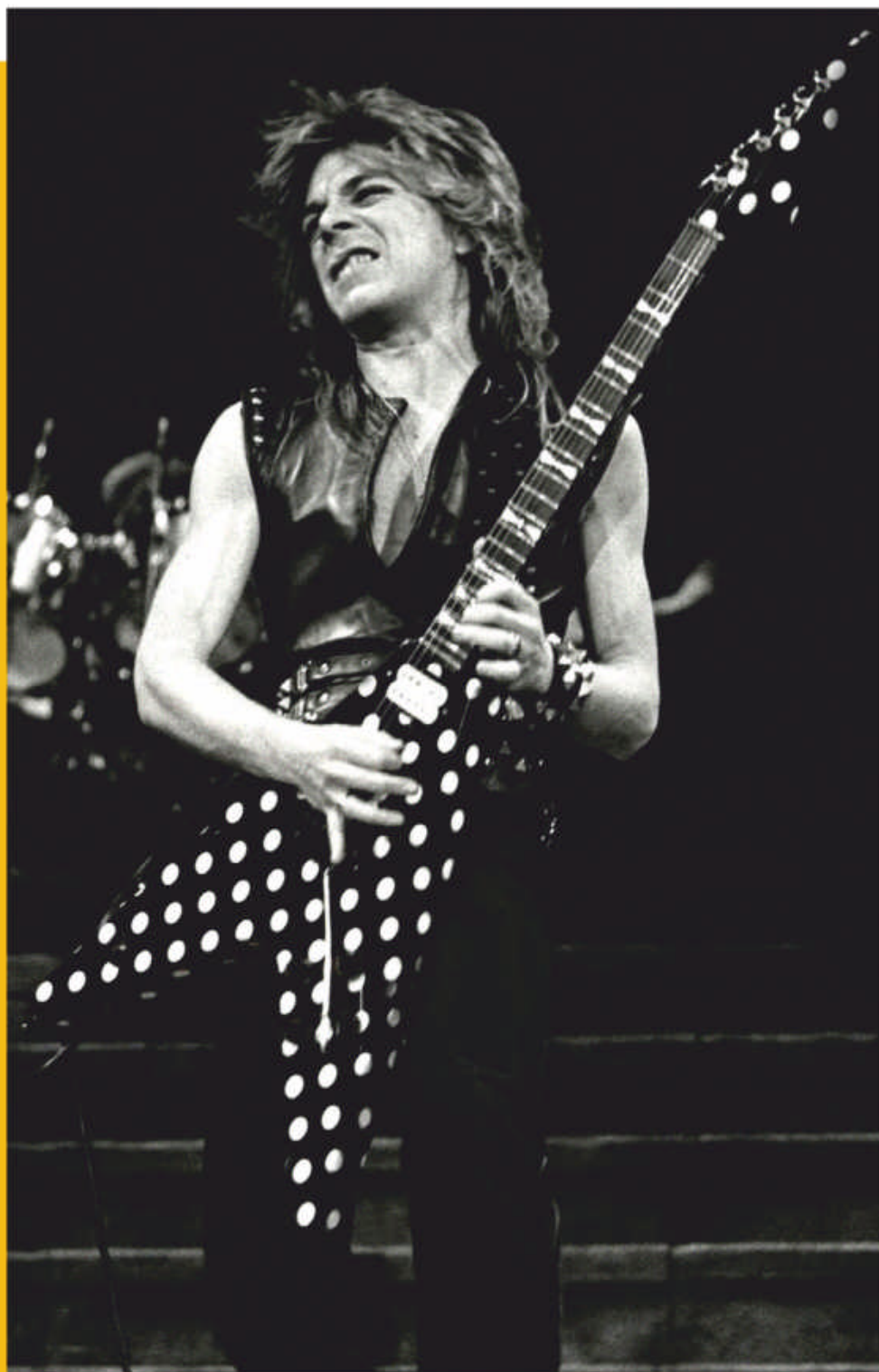
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KARL SANDOVAL FLYING V

The most memorable Flying V

While slogging round the LA club circuit with Quiet Riot, Randy Rhoads met a young George Lynch and was immediately taken with his custom Flying V. Late-70s proto-shredders all wanted Gibson tone with a Fender tremolo and Strat playability, and Randy was amazed to see these worlds collide in Lynch's guitar. George encouraged Randy to seek out Karl Sandoval, a luthier working in Wayne Charvel's custom shop building guitars with flat fingerboard budget Danelectros – ideal for Randy's style.

Rhoads wanted a Flying V, and Sandoval overlapped the neck and body more than usual to produce an extremely strong neck joint. Randy picked the instantly recognisable polka dot design and DiMarzio PAF and Super Distortion, then the only hot pickup on the market. The body had to be deeper to accommodate the tremolo block. Relative to the slim neck, the Danelectro truss rod was big, and this gave the guitar a metallic attack beefed up by the deep body. Although Randy's main contribution to guitar design was still to come Jackson model, the Sandoval remains a metal legend.

Photos: Getty



IBANEZ JEM

The modern shred machine, idealised

In the mid 80s, Japanese manufacturers were known for high-quality copies, but their original designs weren't always taken seriously. Collaborating with Steve Vai changed that in a flash. The JEM became the basis for the RG550, the definitive late-80s shred guitar. The neck was paper-thin, built for sweep picking, and the bright finishes could be seen from the back of an arena. The Edge tremolo was arguably even better than a Floyd Rose, and help from DiMarzio put paid to any complaints about Japanese OEM pickups.



CHARVEL SAN DIMAS STYLE 1

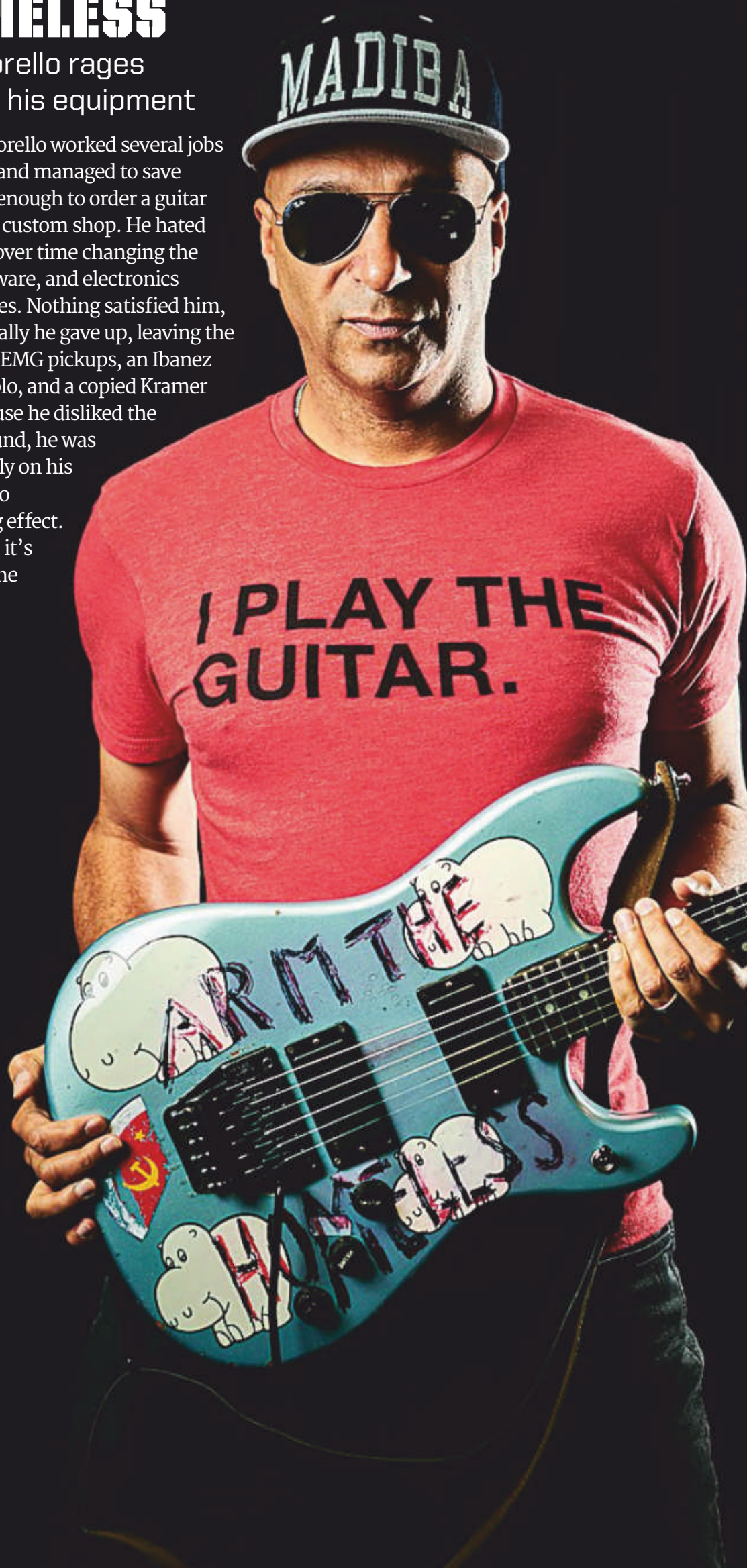
Hair metal's chosen hot rod

Wayne Charvel's California custom shop sold EVH the body for his Frankenstrat, and EVH soon created a market for humbucker-equipped Strats that Charvel was uniquely positioned to fill. Steve Vai played a San Dimas as Jack Butler in the movie *Crossroads* and in David Lee Roth's solo band, confirming Charvel as the brand of choice for Eddie's heirs. Their custom necks with compound radius fingerboards were built to shred, and the LA crew bought them en masse.

ARM THE HOMELESS

Tom Morello rages against his equipment

Morello worked several jobs and managed to save enough to order a guitar from an LA custom shop. He hated the result, over time changing the neck, hardware, and electronics several times. Nothing satisfied him, and eventually he gave up, leaving the guitar with EMG pickups, an Ibanez Edge tremolo, and a copied Kramer neck. Because he disliking the guitar's sound, he was forced to rely on his creativity, to devastating effect. Sometimes it's not about the gear.



WASHBURN N4

Nuno Bettencourt's Extreme axe

Ibanez and Kramer proved you could build a guitar brand by association with big name players, and Washburn struck gold when they enlisted Nuno shortly before *More Than Words* became a worldwide smash. It was the early 90s, hairspray was giving way to grunge and the N4's natural finish looked more contemporary than Charvel and Ibanez's neon flash. Cutting edge shredders demanded flawless top-fret access, and the Stephens Extended Cutaway took this to the extreme with no neck heel whatsoever.

EXTENDED-RANGE GUITARS

When six-strings ain't enough

Like so much else, the seven-string came to rock via jazz, with George Van Eps pioneering the idea in the modern era. As with the six-string, modern guitarists have found creative outlets their inventors never imagined. Korn and Periphery are even further from Van Eps than Zakk Wylde is

from Les Paul. While seven- and eight-strings are obviously useful for drop tunings, they're not just for outrageous chug. They open up chord and arpeggio voicings that aren't available with six strings, and their huge range allows for contrasting light and shade. That makes them popular with some of today's most innovative musicians.



IBANEZ TAM100

For the discerning djentleman

The TAM100 wasn't Ibanez's first eight-string, but in Tosin Abasi the brand found an ambassador who demonstrated its creative potential. Guitarists had tried bass-style slap and pop techniques before, but huge strings and 27" scale meant Abasi could do it with more authority. His stunning applications for tapping and rhythmic displacement made his music even more original, embracing both ends of the guitar's extended range. Abasi silenced critics who thought eight strings were a gimmick.

FOUR EIGHT-STRING CHORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. DJENT-Y CHUG: G5

Use powerchords on the bass strings for prog-metal chug.

2. TWO-PART HARMONY: A7sus4

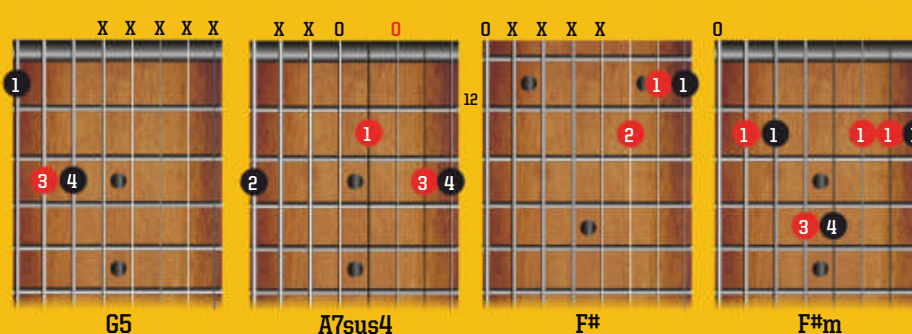
Target the high *and* low strings for distinct bass and treble parts.

3. PIANO EFFECT: F#

A high-fret chord shape over an open bass string gives piano-like range.

4. ALL-OUT ASSAULT: F#m

Play all eight-strings for the thickest, densest possible sound.



MODERN DESIGN

The future of guitar innovation

It's too early to say what the classic guitar of the 2020s will be, but headless guitars have made a comeback. These offer superb balance, strong sustain with no headstock to absorb string vibration, and unrivalled tuning stability. To facilitate technical playing, ergonomic body designs and active pickups are common. Check out Yvette Young's Strandberg, Lee McKinney's Kiesel, or Tosin Abasi's own Abasi Concepts to see the frontiers of guitar playing and design.



IBANEZ UNIVERSE

The birth of extended-range metal

Steve Vai got his seven-string prototype just in time for Whitesnake's *Slip Of The Tongue*, using it on every song, as well as on *Passion And Warfare*. Hear it clearly on *Judgement Day*, *The Audience Is Listening*, and *I Would Love To*. Steve made his powerchords crunch harder by barring the low B string, creating a crushing second inversion. Thanks to Vai's influence, the Ibanez Universe became the first mass produced seven-string. Then Korn got a pair, changing metal permanently.



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

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

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

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QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS

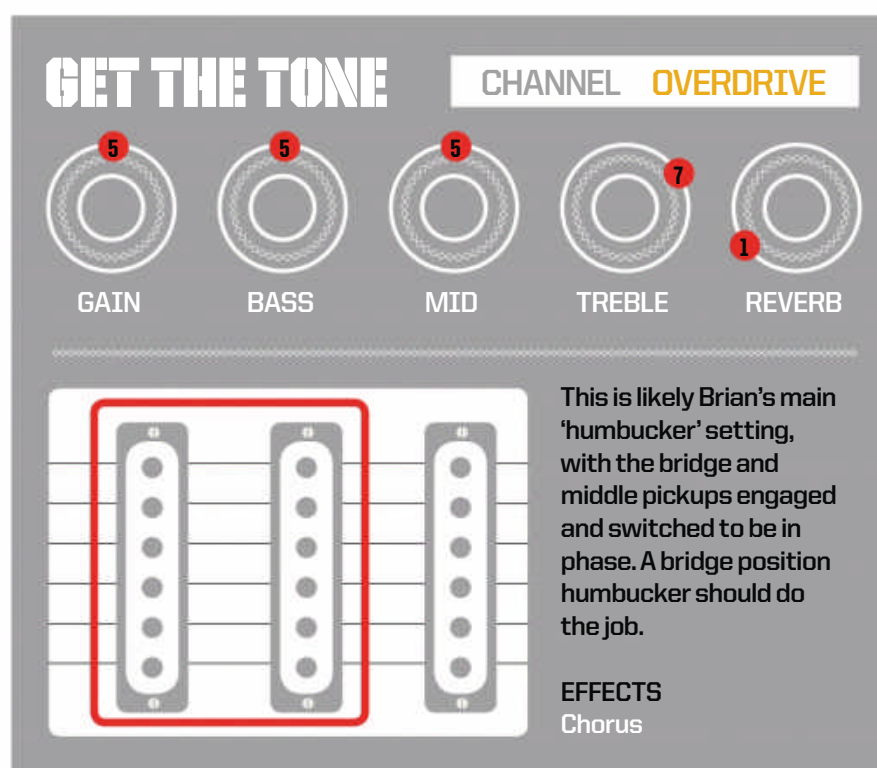
Make your rockin'
world go round with
Queen's drop-D
tuned, fat bottomed
guitar anthem

By Queen standards, the arrangement of *Fat Bottomed Girls* is a stripped down affair, with just drums, bass and a couple of guitar tracks. Instead, the trademark Queen multi-tracking is reserved for vocals rather than the guitars. The song is based around open chords, mainly using D, G, F and A. The chords are linked together using 3rd-fret-to-open-string pull-offs on the two bass strings. Add some bluesy quarter-tone bends and you have all the ingredients for Brian May's cool, sleazy hard rock riff.

Practise the riffs slowly while focussing on accurately fretting the chord shapes. Although the song sounds loose with a relaxed strumming approach throughout, Brian has immense control over his parts. Although there isn't a solo as such, there are some string bends accompanying the vocals in verse 3 and a short burst of lead guitar during the outro. And, just a reminder, we're looking at the album version from *Jazz* rather than the shorter single and *Greatest Hits* edits.

GET THE SOUND

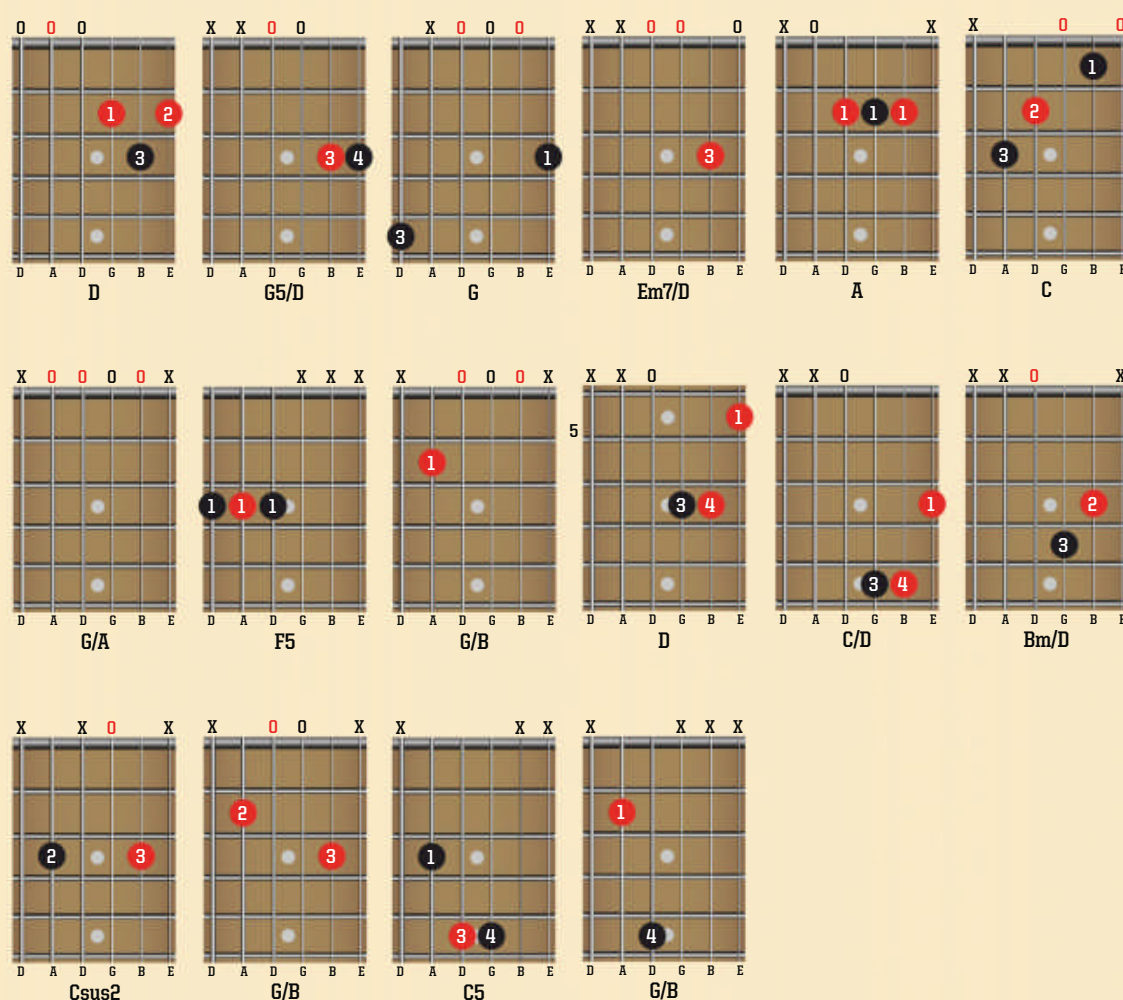
Everything you need to know before playing 'Fat Bottomed Girls'



Brian May's setup is simple, but, thanks to his home-built guitar, unique. Essentially though, he's using the Red Special guitar through a Dallas Rangemaster treble booster into a Vox AC30 amp. The chances are, you don't own any of these, but any blues-rock-oriented amp will get you a usable overdrive tone. Dial in enough gain to allow the single notes to sustain, but not so much that the chords become mushy. Brian also uses the guitar volume pot to clean up the sound in the intro of this song, so check that your tone cleans up too. Brian's pick of choice is an old English sixpence – a modern five pence will suffice for that clink of metal on metal. You can also add a subtle chorus effect to give the tone some added Queen character.

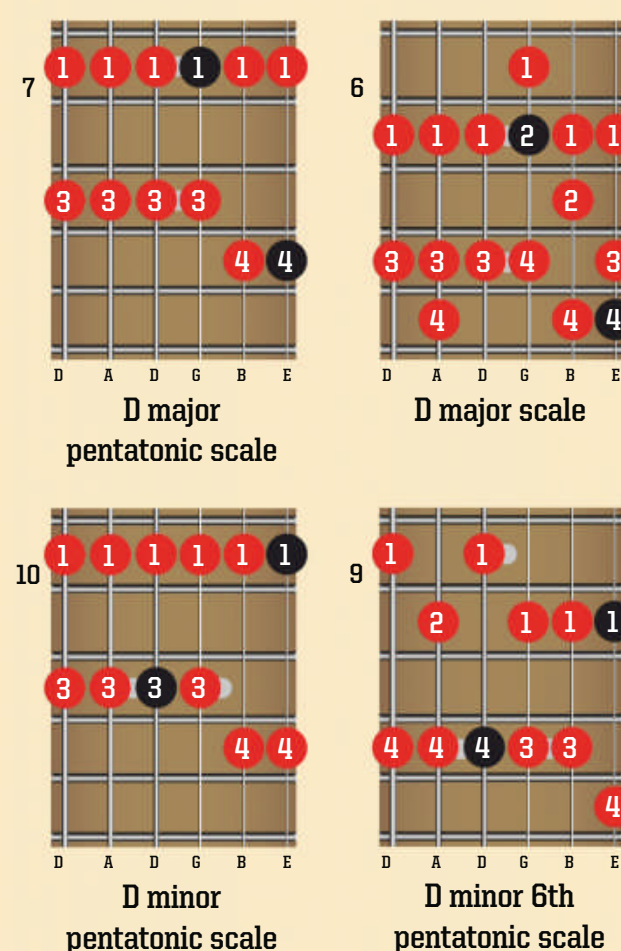
CHORDS

As the song is in drop-D tuning, notes found on the sixth string are found two frets higher than in standard tuning. This is helpful when playing powerchords, but other chords such as the open G become trickier. A lot of the open chords have third finger on 3rd fret, second string. Keep this digit anchored to the fretboard whenever possible for smoother chord transitions.



SCALES

Brian uses the D major pentatonic scale (D E F# A B) for the licks in verse 3 and subtly adds the 4th and 7th intervals from the major scale (G and C#). For the licks in the outro, Brian moves the same shape up three frets making it D minor pentatonic (D F G A C). Introducing the 6th interval (B note) adds a Dorian modal flavour to the scale.



QUEEN

FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS

FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS
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QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Intro

♩=90

0:22

D

1/4

TAB

5

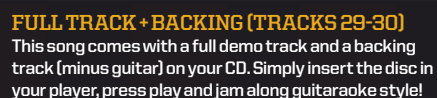
G⁵ F⁵ D⁵

D

G⁶

7

Roll off your guitar volume to clean up the tone and lessen the amount of gain. Hold the chord shapes and use your pick (or coin) to strum the strings as transcribed. Sometimes hit four, three or two strings of the chord to add dynamics to the part. Strumming all the strings all the time sounds too one-dimensional.



QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Verse 1

Roll up your volume a touch to increase the dynamics a little and continue to play the chords in a loose strumming style. Keep your picking hand moving down and up continuously throughout and hit the rhythms with down and upstrokes as they naturally fall.

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS **Guitar Break**

DECEMBER 2020 **TOTAL GUITAR**

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Guitar Break (cont'd)

Chords: D, Em/G, D, C/D, Bm/D, D⁵, D, C/D, Bm/D, G⁵, D⁵, D, D⁵

Chords: D, G⁵/D, D⁵, D

Now roll your guitar volume up to maximum and leave it there for the rest of the song. This instrumental part uses the open chord shapes as well as some sliding triad shapes on the highest three strings. Once again keep your strumming hand moving down and up for a consistent feel.

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Verse 2

Chords: D

Chords: A

Chords: D, G⁵, F⁵, D⁵

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Verse 2 (cont'd)

This verse has some slightly different rhythmic accents to verse 1, the reason being that Brian is changing his part to better support Freddie's vocal. Singing along to each verse will help you understand the rhythmic flow of the guitar parts and get a better feel for the song.

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Chorus

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Chorus (cont'd)

Chords: C_{sus}^2 , A^5 , D^5 , D

The chorus is the dynamic peak of the song, so play this part with more energy. Throughout the song, use the rhythmic transcription as a guide and feel free to approximate the rhythms here and there, rather than memorising every detail. Brian doesn't play it the same way live himself.

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Guitar Break 2

Chords: G^5/F , G/B , D^5 , D , D_{sus}^2 , A , D , G/B , D , D_{sus}^2 , A , G^5

Once more we use our trusty open chord shapes, with the first G^5/F chord sounding a little out of the ordinary. Who knows? This could be a little magical mistake that Brian decided to keep. This is the signature guitar moment of the song, so play it loud and with confidence!

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Verse 3 Bends

Chords: D , A , D , A , D^5

For this verse, we take a break from rhythm guitar and play some sustained bends. Use your first, second and third fingers on the string and turn your wrist to control the string bend. Once you've bent the string, add vibrato to bend down slightly and back up to pitch. This 'reverse' vibrato is a Brain May signature technique.

QUEEN FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS Outro (cont'd)

11

D C/D D C/D Bm/D G D

TAB

13

D C/D D C Bm/D G D⁵ D C/D Bm/D D⁵ G⁵/D G⁶ D

TAB

15

D C^{sus2} G/B D^{sus4}/A 1/4

TAB

17

D C^{sus2} G/B D^{sus4}/A 1/4

TAB

19

D

TAB

The outro has a band jam vibe and uses elements from the main verse open-chord riff for the first four bars. Next, we have four bars of bluesy pentatonic licks and unison hammer-ons, then some triads and diads on the higher strings. Finish the song with three short, accented six-string D chords in unison with the whole band.

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AEROSMITH & RUN DMC WALK THIS WAY

TG and Rockscool throw the spotlight on axe-slinger Joe Perry's inimitable swagger, in this Grade Seven arrangement

Initially inspired by the funk sound of The Meters, *Walk This Way* started life as a soundcheck jam before being completed for Aerosmith's 1975 release *Toys In The Attic* then later re-released in a collaboration with hip-hop group Run DMC. The song's riffs are largely based around single-notes in E (the chorus) and C (the verse), punctuated by occasional A5 powerchords.

Those riffs are relatively easy to play slowly, but their catchiness relies on

a mysterious swagger in the 16th notes – not quite swing, but not quite straight either. You'll need to be very precise with your picking, and a constant alternate picked approach is probably the best way to keep that 16th note groove in check.

Have a listen to both the Rockscool recording and the original track to zone in on this feel. You'll need a distorted tone, but be judicious with this. Too much saturation will muddy the sound and the impact will be lost.



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Awarding the Contemporary Arts

Whether you're taking your first steps on guitar or moving into further/higher education, a Rockschool 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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Words: Jono Harrison
Photography: Getty

WALK THIS WAY
Words & Music by Joe Perry & Steven Tyler
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AEROSMITH & RUN DMC WALK THIS WAY

TRACKS 31-32

♩=120

E⁵

A⁵

TAB

1

0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0

4

0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 31-32)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

AEROSMITH & RUN DMC / WALK THIS WAY

AEROSMITH & RUN DMC WALK THIS WAY

TRACKS 31-32

§

C⁷

PM

TAB

7 8 8 8 10 10 12 10 8 10 10 8 10 12 10

A⁵

PM

TAB

11 8 8 8 10 10 12 10 8 10 10 7 7 5

E⁵

TAB

15 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 x x x 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 3 0 2

A⁵

TAB

17 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 x x x 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 2 2 0

C⁷

PM

TAB

19 8 8 8 10 10 12 10 8 10 10 8 10 12 10

To Coda $\oplus$
A⁵

23

27

31

33

35

AEROSMITH & RUN DMC WALK THIS WAY

TRACKS 31-32

37

E⁵

A⁵ D.%. al Coda ⊕

TAB

0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 0 x x x x 0 1 2 2 0 1 2 2 2 0

⊕ Coda

C⁷

F⁷

TAB

10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8

39

C⁷

F⁷

C⁷

TAB

10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8

41

F⁷

C⁷

F⁷

TAB

10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8

44

C⁷

3

PB 7

TAB

10 10 9 8 10 8 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 7 (8) (7) 5 BU BD 8 5 5 5 7 7 (8) BD (8)(7) 5

slow BU

47

49

TAB 3 3 7 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 8 5 8 5 8 7 5 7 7 (8) (7) 5 7(8) 5 8

51

E⁵

TAB BU BD 2 (4) (2) BU BD BU 4 (6) (4)(7) BU BD 2 (4) (2) BU BD BU 4 (6) (4)(7)

55

TAB BU 10(12) BU BD BU 12 (14) (12)(15) BU 10(12) BU BD BU 12 (14) (12)(15)

59

TAB 12 15 12 BU BD 15(17) (15) 12 BU 11 15(17) BU BD 15(17) (15) PB 14 12 BD (15) (14) 12 14(15) BD (14) 12 14 14 14

61

E⁵

TAB 12 14 12 12 16 15/17 12 15 12 12 13 15 14 12 BU 14 (15) 12 BU BD 14 (15) (14) 12 14 14 14 12 14 14

AEROSMITH & RUN DMC WALK THIS WAY

TRACKS 31-32

63

E⁵ 8va

A

BU 17 20(22) BU 20(22) 20 12 BU 15 (17) 12 17 17 (18) (19) (17) BU 15 15(17) BD (17) (15)

17 19

65

E⁵ A⁷

12 15 12 BU BD 14(15) (14) BD BD 12 14 (16) (14) 12 14 12 14 13 12 11 12 11 12 12 11 12 11 12

7 13

BU BD 12(14) [14] (12)

67

E⁵ A⁵

BU BD 2(4) (2) 0 2 2 BU BD 2(4) [4] (2) 0 2 2 BU 2(4) [4] (2) 0 2 2 0 2 BU BD 2(4) (2) 0 2 2 0

69

E⁵ 1/4 A⁵

1/4 3 0 BU 0 3(5) 0 0 3 0 0 3(5) 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3(5) BD (3) 0 2 0 2 0 0

71

E⁵ A⁵ E⁵

BUBD 2(4)(2) 0 2 BU BD 2(4) (2) 0 2 2 0 2 0 2 1 0 1/4 3 0 2 0 2 2 0 0 0

Lead guitarist Joe Perry's solo is brimful of attitude: check out bar 47, where we see bluesy minor and major 3rds (E^b and E notes) alongside major 6th A notes bringing a funky Dorian mode flavour to proceedings. Bars 59 to 62 are in the same vein, as Perry uses these occasional outside notes to build on a minor pentatonic base.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

THE 1975
ME AND YOU
TOGETHER SONG

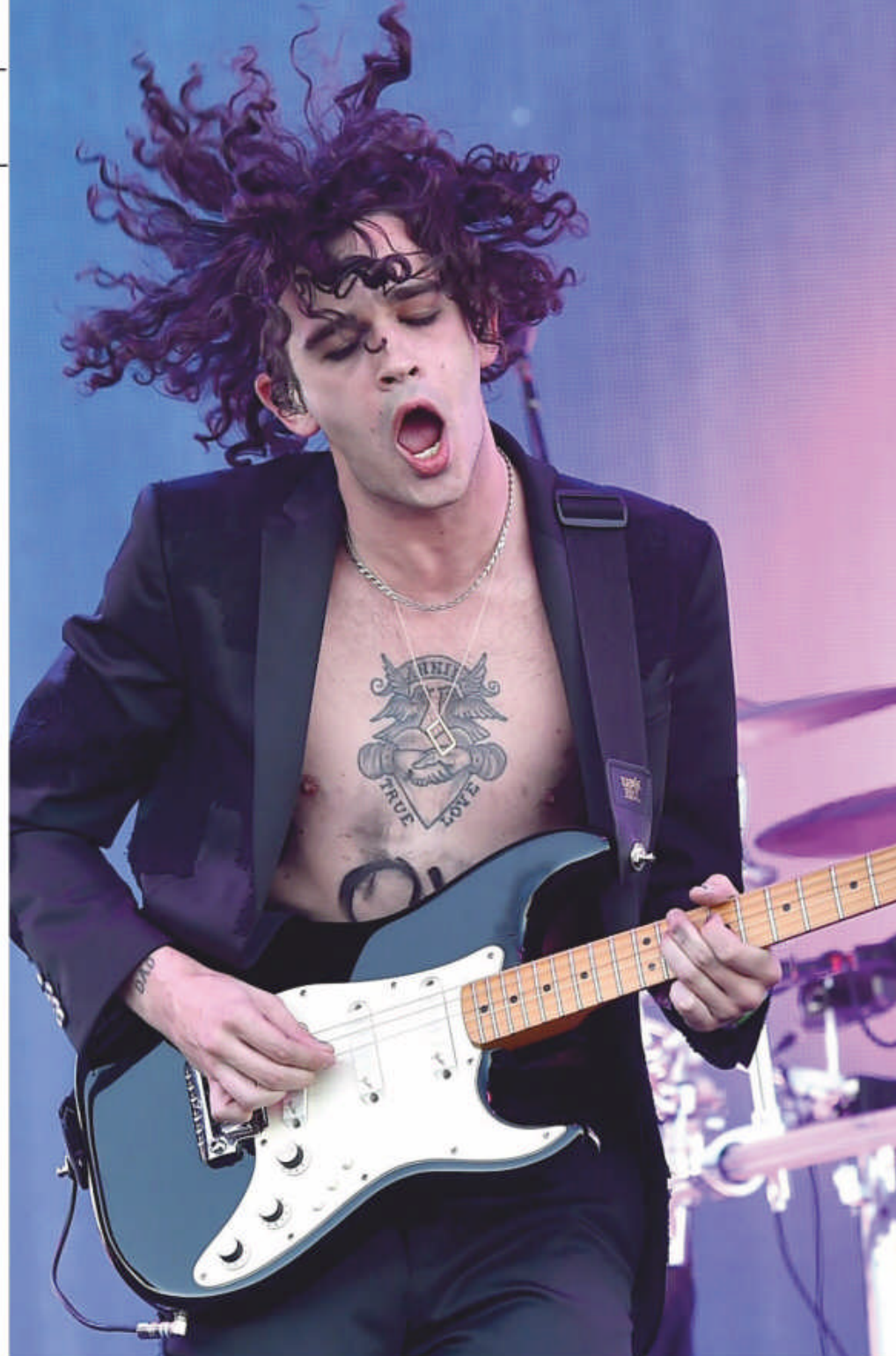
It's a jangle pop riff-fest as we show you how to liven up your chords with a descending bassline and swing feel strumming

We And You Together Song features on The 1975's fourth album *Notes On A Conditional Form* released earlier this year. The track features simple yet effective guitar work courtesy of singer/guitarist Matty Healy and lead guitarist Adam Hann. The result is an intoxicating mix of retro indie rock and 60s jangle pop, never overplayed and always supporting the song.

You'll need a capo on the 7th fret to play the track in its original pitch.

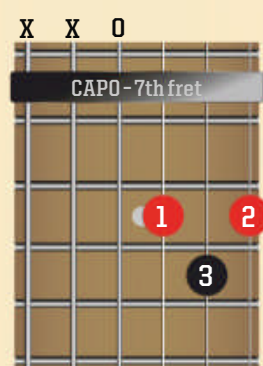
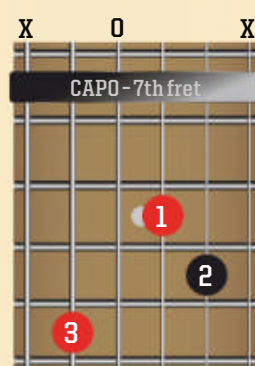
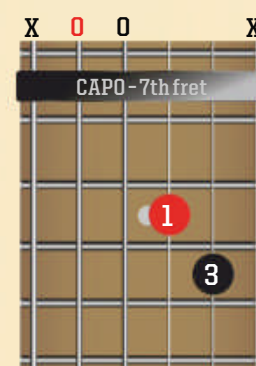
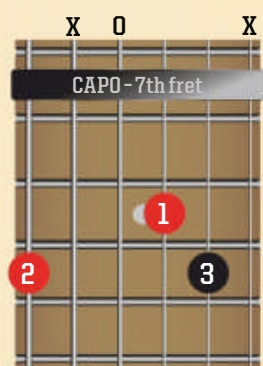
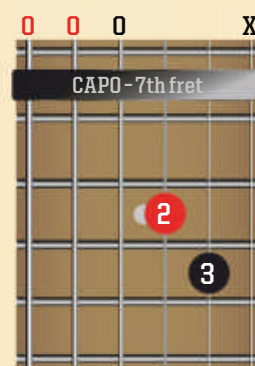
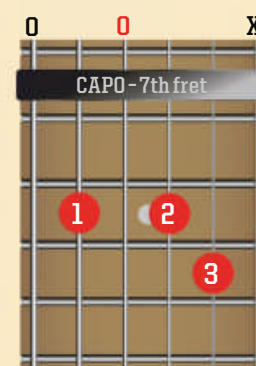
For the uninitiated, a capo is a device that clamps across the strings at your chosen fret, raising the pitch of your guitar. Our tabbed section tells you to play with a swung 16th note feel. Say 'humpty dumpty humpty dumpty' and you'll get the idea of swing feel timing – you'll just need to play a bit quicker than you speak.

As you progress on to the chords, take note of the lowest note in each one. These form the all-important bassline underpinning the song. Read on and we'll explain more.



CHORDS

These shapes allow you to play chords and bass at the same time so you can create your acoustic version of the song. There's a neat trick here, too: you'll be holding down the A5 chord throughout, using your free fingers to fret the bass notes. Sure, it's a handy way to fret the chords, but, more importantly, it's an interesting harmonic idea – the two constant notes provide a kind of musical link common to all the chords, and it's something you can try in your own chord progressions. It works well with open C or G shapes in particular. Finally, notice how the capo on the 7th fret turns the pitch of the open D shape into an A – that's why there are two names under each chord.

A
(D)A5/G#
(D5/C#)A5/F#
(D5/B)A5/E
(D5/A)A5/D
(D5/G)A5/C#
(D5/F#)A5/B
(D5/E)B11
(E11)

ME AND YOU TOGETHER SONG
Words and Music by Matthew Healy, George Daniel,
Adam Hann and Ross McDonald
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**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 33)**

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!

SONGSHEET

Me And You Together Song

Verse 1

A A5/G# A5/F#
I can't remember when we met
A5/E A5/D
Because she didn't have a top on
A5/C# A5/D A5/C# A5/B
...
A A5/G# A5/F#
I improvised a little bit
A5/E A5/D
She said my references were spot on
A5/C# A5/D A5/E
...
A A5/G# A5/F#
"Can I take you for a drink?"
A5/E A5/D
She said, "Oh God I'll have to think."
A5/C#
Because we're mates
A5/D A5/C# A5/B
it doesn't feel right"
A A5/G#
And I said "It's cool"
A5/F#
And "I was messing"
A5/E A5/D
But it's true, yeah it's you
A5/C# B11 A5/E
You're the one that makes me feel right

Chorus

B11 A5/C# A5/D
...
B11
I've been in love with her for ages
A5/C# A5/D
...
B11
And I can't seem to get it right
A5/C# A5/D
...
B11 A5/C#
I fell in love with her in stages
A5/D A5/E
My whole life

Verse 2

A A5/G# A5/F#
I had a dream where we had kids
A5/E A5/D
You would cook, I'd do the nappies
A5/C# A5/D A5/C# A5/B
...
A A5/G# A5/F#
We went to Winter Wonderland
A5/E A5/D
And it was shit but we were happy
A5/C# A5/B A5/E
...

A A5/G# A5/F#
I'm sorry that I'm kinda queer
A5/E A5/D
It's not as weird as it appears
A5/C# A5/D
It's just my body doesn't stop me
A5/C# A5/B
...
A A5/G# A5/F# A5/E
Oh it's ok, lots of people think I'm gay
A5/D A5/C#
But we're friends, so it's cool
B11 A5/E
Why would it not be?

Repeat chorus**Outro**

A A5/G# A5/F#
And there's been no way
A5/E A5/D
for me to say
A5/C# A5/D A5/C# A5/B A
That I've felt a cer - tain way
A5/G# A5/F#
In stages, oh
A5/E A5/D A5/C#
I think our story needs more pages

A5/D A5/E
'Cause I've been in love with her
A A5/G# A5/F# A5/E
For ages
A5/D A5/C# A5/D
And ages
A5/C# A5/B A A5/G#
I've been in love with her for ages
A5/F# A5/E A5/D A5/C# B11
And ages... And ages
A5/E A A5/G#
I've been in love with her for ages
A5/F# A5/E A5/D A5/C# A5/D
And ages... And ages
A5/E A A5/G#
I've been in love with you for ages
A5/F# A5/E A5/D A5/C# A5/D
And ages... And ages
A5/E A A5/G#
I've been in love with you for ages
A5/F# A5/E A5/D A5/C# A5/D
And ages... And ages
A5/E A
I've been in love with you for ages

THE 1975 ME AND YOU TOGETHER SONG Intro (Guitar 1)**TRACK 33**

♩=110 $\frac{3}{4}$ = $\frac{3}{4}$

Capo 7th fret

A sus² (D sus²)

A sus² A (D sus²) (D)

A sus² (D sus²)

Play 24 times

Listen out for the 'bounce' of the shuffle feel and try to time the changes to and from the sus2 chords just right. Tab numbers are relative to the capo, not the guitar nut.

THE 1975 ME AND YOU TOGETHER SONG Intro (Guitar 2)**TRACK 33**

A sus² A A sus² A A sus² A A sus² A A sus² Play 6 times

No capo needed here for guitar 2. Fret these octave shapes with either your first and third, or first and fourth fingers, making sure to mute out the idle strings as you go.

A PERFECT GIFT FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST*

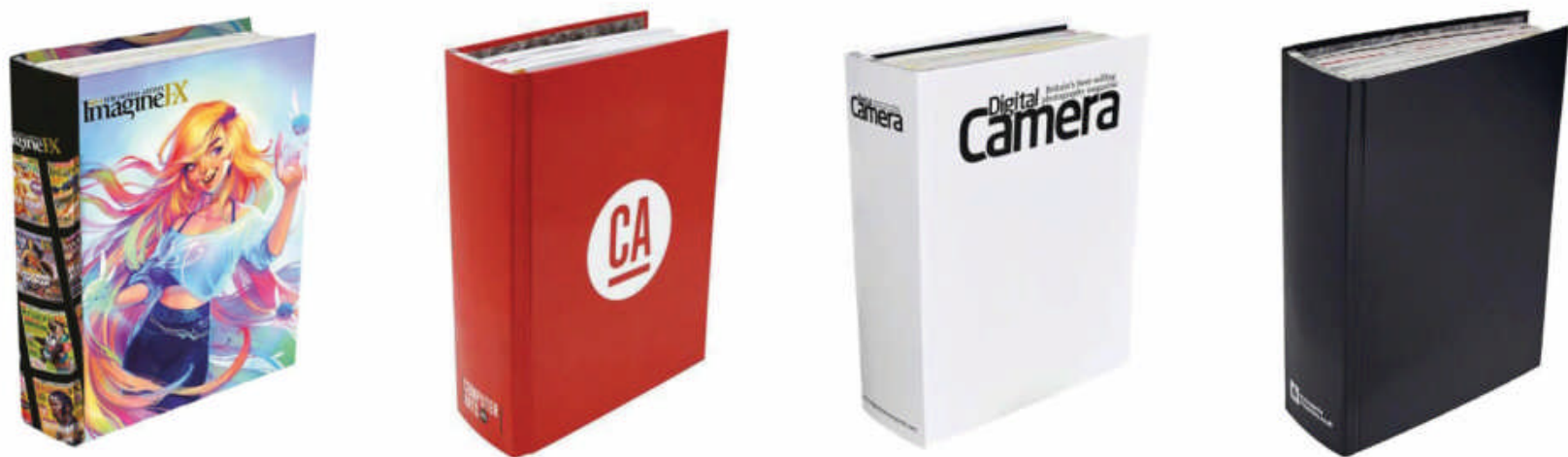
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THE GAS STATION

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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



90



92



085 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

086 FRACTAL FM3 AMP MODELLER/FX PROCESSOR

Fractal's affordable, instantly stage-ready amp and effect modelling unit

090 EPIPHONE LES PAUL STANDARD 50S

Is this Goldtop Epi LP a new gold standard?

092 TC ELECTRONIC PLETHORA X5

A smorgasbord of tonal options from TC Electronic

094 BLACKSTAR LIVE LOGIC

An Ableton-approved MIDI controller



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



01



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02



05



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START ME UP!

Five awesome new products to get your gear engine revving this month...

MONTY'S '54 P90

1 The British crew headed by Matt Gleeson continues to affirm its position as one of the finest pickup builders in the world – the reputation of Monty's PAFs are well-earned. These are the P90 channelling of that golden era vintage mojo; modelled on examples from a '54 Gibson Les Paul and a mid-60s Epiphone Century. Less mid honk, more clarity and versatility from "airy mids and plenty of bite". We're sold! Bridge (£77k) Neck (£71k) £200 set or £105 each (dogear, soapbar, black and cream options), www.montysguitars.com

EPIPHONE 1959 LES PAUL STANDARD

2 The limited edition guitar that raised our eyebrows at NAMM is finally surfacing – the ultimate Epi LP? Well, 1959 hand-rolled neck profile with long neck tenon, aged VOS-style finish, Gibson USA BurstBucker 2 and 3 humbucker pickups, Switchcraft CTS pots, '50s era wiring and Mallory capacitors suggest it is likely. Epiphone have proved they can make a viable Gibson LP alternative (see page 90), so we want to play this. £749, www.epiphone.com

THE GIGRIG G3 AND G3 ATOM

3 How can Dan Steinhardt top his acclaimed 2013 effects pedal-switching system? Well, there's 12 programmable true-bypass mono effects loops, up to six for stereo effects and 99 banks of presets, but now there's improved signal output options, app integration via Bluetooth for changing setlists of pedal settings. The more affordable G3 Atom model offers six programmable true bypass effects loops. G3 £1,095 / G3 Atom £795, www.thegigrig.com

CAPTAIN FAWCETT JOHN PETRUCCI NEBULA SIGNATURE SERIES

4 You may never have a beard as mighty as Dream Theater icon John Petrucci's, but you can do the next best thing – use the same beard Captain Fawcett face follicle conditioning products. The Nebula series features a beard balm, moustache wax and two sizes of beard oil (10ml and 50ml). All faces covered then. The first 1000 50ml beard oils also include a Nebula edition Petrucci Dunlop Flow guitar pick. From £11, www.captainfawcett.com

SOLID GOLD FX NU-33 VINYL ENGINE

5 There's often beauty to be found in imperfections when it comes to guitar, and the "warm and gooey" chorus/vibrato tones here embrace that – sounds that will "warble, glitch, bend and break in all the right ways". The NU-33 stirs filters and waveshapes into the sonic brew for lo-fi goodness that you can shape with six knobs, four toggles and two switches. Control parameters including tap tempo, momentary speed ramping and even triggered vinyl skips. \$250, www.solidgoldfx.com



86



FRACTAL FM3 AMP MODELLER/FX PROCESSOR



€1266

Instantly stage-ready high-end amp and effect modelling

In terms of modelling amp and effects processors Fractal is pretty much at the top of the tree with their rackmount Axe-Fx III. That said, it's probably also fair to say that it's out of the financial reach of most of us, especially if you add in the cost of a FC-6 or FC-12 controller for a fully functional setup that'll work on stage as well as at home or in the studio. Now,

sonic clout when the settings are the same. Some of the less essential Axe-Fx III effects are absent (Vocoder, anyone?), but there's still a massive variety of amps, cabs (including 1024 User Cab memory locations for your own IRs) and effects available to build rigs to fill the 512 onboard preset slots.

Some excellent, instantly-usable factory-programmed

much more, including some cool wahs to be exploited by plugging in an expression pedal. Besides those, two send/return loops will let you add your existing pedals into the signal chain. When it comes to creating and fine tuning your sounds there's plenty of editable parameters to get into, easily carried out from the unit's front panel but even easier via the FM3's associated computer-based editor.

The smart move when using the FM3 is to footswitch between 'Scenes' which is much more seamless than switching between presets. Scenes are effectively presets within a preset, basically a range of alternative versions of the preset's rig. Each preset can have up to eight Scenes, each of which stores whether each block in the chain is active or bypassed and which of its four channels is active. Those four channels in each block open up real flexibility – you can have four different amps in the amp block or perhaps the same amp with four different gain levels. Likewise, each of the two drive blocks could host four different overdrives.

A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO GET SOME OF THAT FRACTAL MOJO

though, you can buy into the Fractal experience with their FM3, a relatively compact stage-ready floor (or tabletop) unit – still not exactly cheap but a lot more affordable than a full Axe-Fx III rig and competitive with floorboard rivals. The FM3 has about half the processing power of its larger sibling and less blocks in the signal chain from which to build your rig, (you are limited to one amp rather than two), but does feature the same ARES amp modelling and algorithms so can have the same

presets explore the range of the 269 onboard amps incorporating classic, mainstream and obscure boutique models. These are among the most realistic amp models out there, responsive to guitar dynamics and capable of authentic clean and just-breaking-up tones as well as all shades of driven. There are also presets for huge ambiences and off-the-wall FX as well as the more traditional. The effects selection covers all the bases with classy reverbs, delays, modulations, pitchshifts and

1 FOOTSWITCHES

Only three footswitches but many ways to use them. The function of each is illustrated through its variable-color LED ring and mini LCD display.

2 DISPLAY & SOFT KNOBS

The informative 800x480 color display is bright and clear – the five rotary push-knobs perform different functions that relate to whatever is above them in the display.

3 REAR PANEL

All the connectivity you could need including external loops, headphone output, USB, and a FASLINK II port XLR connection for FC-6 or FC-12 foot controllers.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: 3-Core 'Griffin' DSP with one ARM and two SHARC+ cores, 4-in/4-out audio interface, tuner, looper, MIDI, 512 preset slots

CONTROLS: Level 1, Level 2, footswitches x3, soft knobs x5 (A, B, C, D, E), Value knob, 4-way cursor, buttons x4, ground lift switch

CONNECTIONS: Standard guitar input, standard stereo phones output, XLR Main outputs (L&R), standard Out 2/FX Send (L&R), standard In 2/FX Return (L&R), Pedal 1, Pedal 2, FASLINK II, MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru, USB x2, S/PDIF digital out

POWER: IEC mains supply

DIMENSIONS: 281 (w) x 236 (d) x 103 mm (h)

CONTACT: G66

PHONE: +49 461 1828 066

WEB: www.g66.eu/en
www.fractalaudio.com

Playing footsie with FX

How to do it all with just three footswitches

The FM3 might only have three physical footswitches but it supports a series of 'Layouts' which are basically presets that bring in different functions for the footswitches. A Layout actually defines roles for 12 accessible footswitches – a press and hold on the left or right switches can take you to the next set of three footswitches in the 12. The first three factory Layouts place Presets, Scenes or Effects across the switches and a press and hold on the central switch will take you to the Master Layout where the three switches let you choose between those three Layouts. One way of working might be to select a preset between songs in the set and then make your changes during the song by switching Scenes or by switching effects individually.

The upshot of this is that you can use scenes to turn multiple effects on and off and much more, although you can also have the more conventional option of assigning individual effects to footswitches in a preset. Okay, there might only be three footswitches, but Fractal have built loads of functionality into them, making them multi-tasking with fully-customisable tap and hold functions for each, so there's loads of flexibility in how you use them, plus there's the option of adding up to 24 additional footswitches via Fractal's FC controllers if desired.

The FM3 is nothing if not versatile; the inclusion of a headphone output makes it ideal for some silent practice, perhaps taking advantage of the onboard looper, while the onboard 4x4 USB audio interface cements its potential as a comprehensive guitar recording toolkit. Furthermore, a rugged build quality makes it ideal for stage work either as an easily transportable 'fly rig' to run a fully-processed signal into the PA or, leaving the amps and cab IRs out of the equation, as a source of quality effects to complement your amp, either

standalone or integrated into your pedalboard. If you are lucky enough to own an Axe-Fx III, and have cash to spare, the FM3 provides a viable gigging option for leaving the rackmount at home. For everyone else, it represents the most cost-effective way to get some of that Fractal mojo.

Trevor Curwen

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



ALSO TRY...

£1389

KEMPER PROFILER STAGE

In the high-end modelling world, Kemper and their profiling technology are Fractal's obvious rival. Their Kemper Profiler Stage floorboard unit is the FM3's nearest equivalent.



LINE 6 HELIX FLOOR

£1632

Line 6 is the popular choice in modelling processors and the Helix Floor, their flagship floorboard unit, has a street price just north of £1200.



HEADRUSH PEDALBOARD

£899

The Headrush Pedalboard is a little further down the price scale and offers a decent array of amps and effects with plenty of footswitching capability.





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£549

A gold standard from a golden era of inspiration?

It's been quite a year for Epiphone; starting strong at January's NAMM with a tour de force in the shape of the Inspired By Gibson range, we're now able to take stock of models in isolation. And if we're talking Gibson legacy, its 1950s Les Pauls don't get much more hallowed in the halls of legendary guitars. Alongside the Standard 60s, Custom, Junior, Special and higher-end 1959 model in the Original Les Paul Collection, the range allows players to hone in on the specific Les Paul experience they want. But what is a 50s LP, and does Epiphone deliver it here?

Firstly, like the era of models it takes inspiration from, there's no weight relief body chambering here (you'll need the Modern and Muse moderns for that). This

60s model is a SlimTaper 60s C. It's a significant difference. This is meaty, clubby – but that doesn't mean uncomfortable, especially with the low action out of the box here. Neck and fretboard radius is a very personal choice and we can't recommend comparing and contrasting Epiphone's '59, 60s and 50s models in person enough to find your vintage preference.

Neck profiles are subjective but the build quality here is not. We have no complaints; this is a wonderful example of Epiphone QC in 2020. But the real joy is plugging in. This is what we want from a Les Paul and it's Gibson-worthy – a huge gamut of tone to cover with two versatile ProBuckers and four controls. Touch sensitivity, midrange bite, singing highs – it's all here!

GIBSON-WORTHY MIDRANGE BITE AND SINGING HIGHS

weighs in at 9lbs. That kind of weight is an accepted part of the LP experience (we've heard of examples going up to a whopping 11lbs!) and it feels balanced in play, but we'd advise investing in a padded strap with 3" width or above for comfort.

The more specific point of distinction here is the neck, the general perception is the Les Paul necks of the 50s were fatter in profile, while the 60s examples were slimmer. Except '58 and '59 examples are feted for their goldilocks position between the two, but even the details of this is debated as the carve would vary between individual instruments.

Here though, Epiphone's neck is a 'rounded medium C', and the

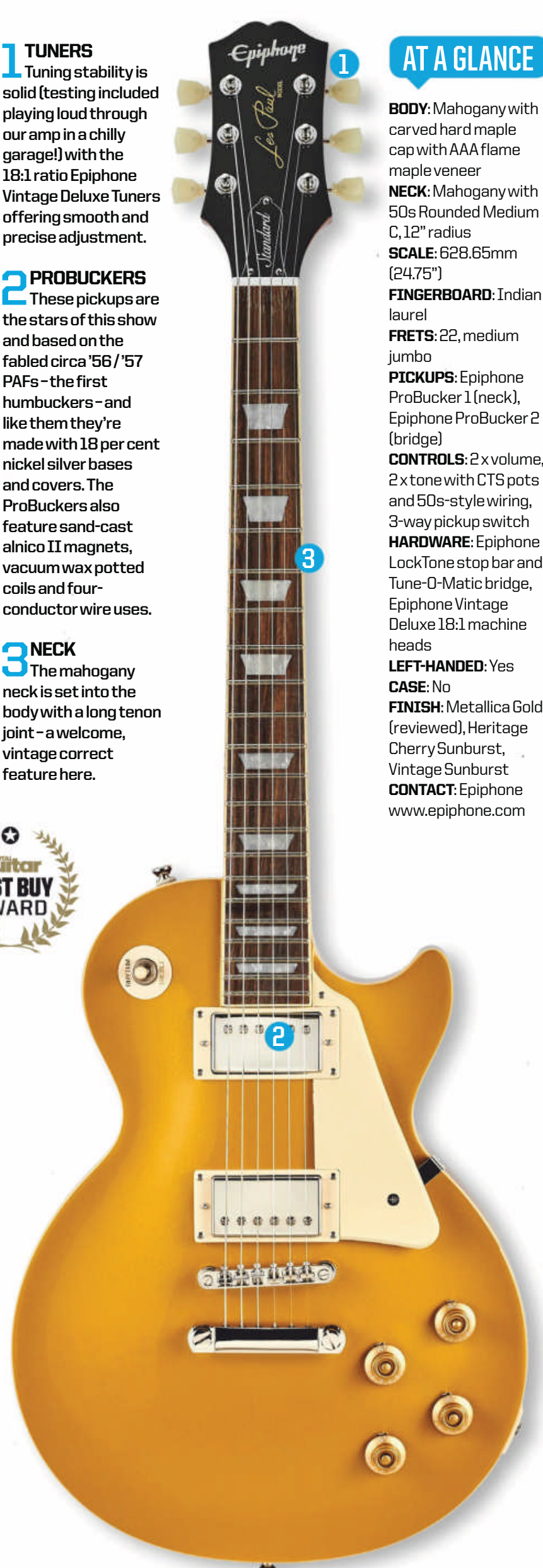
1 TUNERS Tuning stability is solid (testing included playing loud through our amp in a chilly garage!) with the 18:1 ratio Epiphone Vintage Deluxe Tuners offering smooth and precise adjustment.

2 PROBUCKERS These pickups are the stars of this show and based on the fabled circa '56/'57 PAFs – the first humbuckers – and like them they're made with 18 per cent nickel silver bases and covers. The ProBuckers also feature sand-cast alnico II magnets, vacuum wax potted coils and four-conductor wire uses.

3 NECK The mahogany neck is set into the body with a long tenon joint – a welcome, vintage correct feature here.

AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Mahogany with carved hard maple cap with AAA flame maple veneer
- NECK:** Mahogany with 50s Rounded Medium C, 12" radius
- SCALE:** 628.65mm (24.75")
- FINGERBOARD:** Indian laurel
- FRETS:** 22, medium jumbo
- PICKUPS:** Epiphone ProBucker 1 (neck), Epiphone ProBucker 2 (bridge)
- CONTROLS:** 2 x volume, 2 x tone with CTS pots and 50s-style wiring, 3-way pickup switch
- HARDWARE:** Epiphone LockTone stop bar and Tune-O-Matic bridge, Epiphone Vintage Deluxe 18:1 machine heads
- LEFT-HANDED:** Yes
- CASE:** No
- FINISH:** Metallica Gold (reviewed), Heritage Cherry Sunburst, Vintage Sunburst
- CONTACT:** Epiphone www.epiphone.com



The taper of the controls here allows you to really clean up with the volume while retaining clarity and treble; if you're skipping this you're really missing out on the versatile vintage LP experience that legends like Clapton capitalised on. Crucially, the neck humbucker is spot on; muscular with broad singing sustain, and all this combines to give you a huge palette for far more than classic rock.

Robert Laing

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





TC ELECTRONIC PLETHORA X5 £399

MASH to the future

Living up to its name, the TC Plethora offers a smorgasbord of options. It takes the algorithms and functionality from TC's excellent TonePrint-enabled pedals and combines them into a workhorse unit. The Plethora's large screen and on-board editor make it easy to build custom signal chains of TonePrint patches. The connectivity options at the rear of the unit leave no stone unturned,

a good way. Consider the case of two adjacent banks. We set up a traditional chain of delay, reverb, compression, chorus, and TC's excellent MimiQ double-tracker effect on one. Then, we set the bank below to pitch shift and delay effects with MASH-controlled parameters – pitch up and runaway oscillations. This ability to alternate the sensible and the madcap is available on a whim. The amount of fun you can have

Our gold standard for a pedal is generating new riff ideas, and several arrived as we experimented with the stereo effects on the Plethora.

The only real negative we found is that to get the most out of the pedal, we had to run a drive in front of it. As a result, the Plethora is best seen as replacing several pedals on your board, rather than as an all-in-one pedalboard solution. Luckily there's a send/return loop on the rear, so you patch your favourite drive into a custom chain. A less serious issue was that the signal chain seemed to be very particular about order. Some combinations worked better than others, and differences in wet-dry volume resulted in volume drops. In the end, we had to do quite a bit of adjusting to avoid volume jumps when engaging or disengaging effects.

Alex Lynham

AT A GLANCE

- POWER:** 9VDC (provided)
- SWITCHES:** 5, with MASH functionality
- INPUTS:** Mono/stereo in, mono/stereo out, insert send/return, expression, MIDI in/through, USB

IT NEGATES THE NEED FOR AN EXPRESSION PEDAL

as you'd expect for a flagship unit. Though there's an expression input, this went unused during testing, thanks to the USP of this pedal – TC's MASH technology. On individual pedals, this pressure-sensitive switch negates – to some extent – the need for a traditional expression pedal.

The Plethora has a huge range of effects, and parameters are assignable via the unit rather than software. In this context, the five MASH switches can turn this from a workhorse to a freakshow – in

chaining Whammy pedals is a niche amusement, granted. Yet, it's just the sort of thing that could make or break a studio session if you're in search of that little extra nugget of inspiration.

The user interface isn't immediately as intuitive as some of its competitors. It did at least meet our minimum standard for quality, though – we didn't need to reach for the manual to work it out. The TC algorithms are of a high quality and manipulating and using the effects is intuitive.

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



BLACKSTAR LIVE LOGIC

The logical choice for er, Ableton



£129

For a compact MIDI controller, the Blackstar is hard to beat at this price point. It's a flexible and well-thought out piece of kit that even has decent software – normally where equipment manufacturers trip up. It's built like a tank, and ships with Ableton Live 10 Lite, since it's an Ableton-approved device. After some fiddling with the editor, getting it to control Ableton is straightforward. Moreover, for heavy pedal users, the footswitch MIDI controller is a natural fit. Perhaps an engineer or producer would find it less

intuitive, but for a guitarist it makes sense. Of course, it can be used as a general-purpose controller to manage any MIDI-enabled devices or even amps, live or at home. Though its capabilities as a live looper controller are touted by Blackstar, it's not an area we can comment on. Ableton tends to fill the DAW niche for us rather than as a live scratch-pad. Once we've got a track down, we bounce out a backing track version as a WAV rather than leaving things too much to chance. One of the Live Logic's less obvious features is the ability to

accept two expression pedal inputs. This allows for continuous control over midi parameters. It requires a little bit of setting up to get the real value from, but having real-time control over a VST parameter at your feet is definitely underrated. All in all, there are no downsides other than the number of footswitches, should you need more. It's affordable, robust and – for something this powerful – surprisingly straightforward. **Alex Lynham**

AT A GLANCE
POWER: 9VDC
SWITCHES: 6, assignable to momentary or latching
INPUTS: Midi in/out, **EXPRESSION** 1/2, Mode, USB

AFFORDABLE, ROBUST AND STRAIGHTFORWARD...

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

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Words: Jonny Scaramanga Photo: Alysse Gafkjen

JULIEN BAKER

Armed with just a Telecaster and a monster pedalboard, Julien Baker can take her songs to the kind of anthemic heights that normally require full bands. There's no drummer on the two albums she's released so far, so the songs feel like they're floating, untethered to ground. While there is occasional support from strings, clarinet, and saxophone, on the whole Baker fills the entire sonic range with just a clean guitar and her stunning vocals.

The tone comes from a Fender Blues Deluxe and a Fender Twin Reverb run at the same time, often with shimmer reverb from a Strymon Blue Sky and Walrus Audio Fathom, and analogue delay from a Walrus Audio Bellwether. She gets phenomenal dynamic range from this ambient core tone, so that when songs like *Turn Out the Lights* hit

their climactic crescendos, you don't miss other instruments. This provides a bed for her to express her rawest emotions, singing with flooring honesty about growing up queer in the US Bible Belt, coming out to her parents, and her struggles with OCD and depression.

Live, she has both the Boss RC-300 and RC-3 loopers, enabling her to trigger sub bass and occasional percussion as well as layering her guitars. The Twin functions as the main amp, and the Deluxe can be brought in as a boost, or different parts from loops can be sent to each amp.

As well as her solo output she also performs with boygenius, a supergroup with fellow singer/guitarists Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus. Here, Baker employs grittier guitar sounds, drawing on the ZVex Fuzz Factory, Emerson Custom Paramount

overdrive, and Old Blood Noise Excess distortion/chorus/delay for crunch sounds.

Her current main Telecaster is a butterscotch example with a P90 neck pickup. Her first touring guitar, a Mexican Tele in Lake Placid Blue, has Lollar pickups and a four-way switch mod. This gives the option of both pickups in series for a darker, fatter sound, or parallel for the classic Tele tone. This lets the guitar go from Tele spikiness to a much murkier affair, useful when the guitar provides all the musical textures.

She's open about her depression, Baker took time off in 2020 for therapy. One of her few streamed performances in lockdown was for a mental health awareness event. With a new album scheduled for February, her return is welcome, and her guitar continues to express pain and hope in equal amounts.



RABEA MASSAAD

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