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JOHNNY CASH
PERSONAL JESUS

SYSTEM OF A DOWN
PROTECT THE LAND

*Rockschool version

*Video riff

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2020
IN GUITAR
THE YEAR'S BEST
GEAR, TONES,
ALBUMS & MORE!
+ XMAS GIFT GUIDE

Yvette Young

How the
influencer became
the complete
modern guitarist

TOM MORELLO
SECRETS OF A
ROCK ICON

PLUS
TYLER BRYANT &
REBECCA LOVELL
EPIPHONE
PROPHECY
FLYING V
THE STRUTS



REVIEWED
HARLEY BENTON SC-JUNIOR
The ultimate sub-£200 singlecut?

REAL



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TUBE

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Fender
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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, Phil Capone, Rob Laing, Simon Arblaster, Amit Sharma, Simon Young

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 Managers: Faith Wardle, Sally Sebesta

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

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

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

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Welcome...



Perhaps the greatest thing about the guitar is the ease with which new players can get started. Violin? It's about 300 times harder to play. The piano? It's quite a commitment and those scales and arpeggios can be tough to grasp at first. And as for drums, well, you'll need to be on good terms with your neighbours! Yep, our instrument

of choice is easy to accommodate – especially if you start out playing an acoustic – and, with the right materials, it's easy to start to learn, too.

Which brings me on to the very issue you're holding in your hands right now, and our monster-sized cover feature. With 50 easy bite-sized lessons to try out, covering everything from guitar maintenance and pedalboard setup to blues riffs and basic lead techniques, this month's cover feature has something for everyone.

And with 'learning' being the central theme of the mag this month, I'm excited to bring you an exclusive interview with Covet guitarist, Ibanez endorsee and eternal student of guitar, Yvette Young. "My time is still very much based around improving," Yvette told TG when quizzed on her evolution from a classically trained background to becoming one of the most innovative guitarists today. For those not in the know, piano and violin were Yvette's first instruments. Respect is due!

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

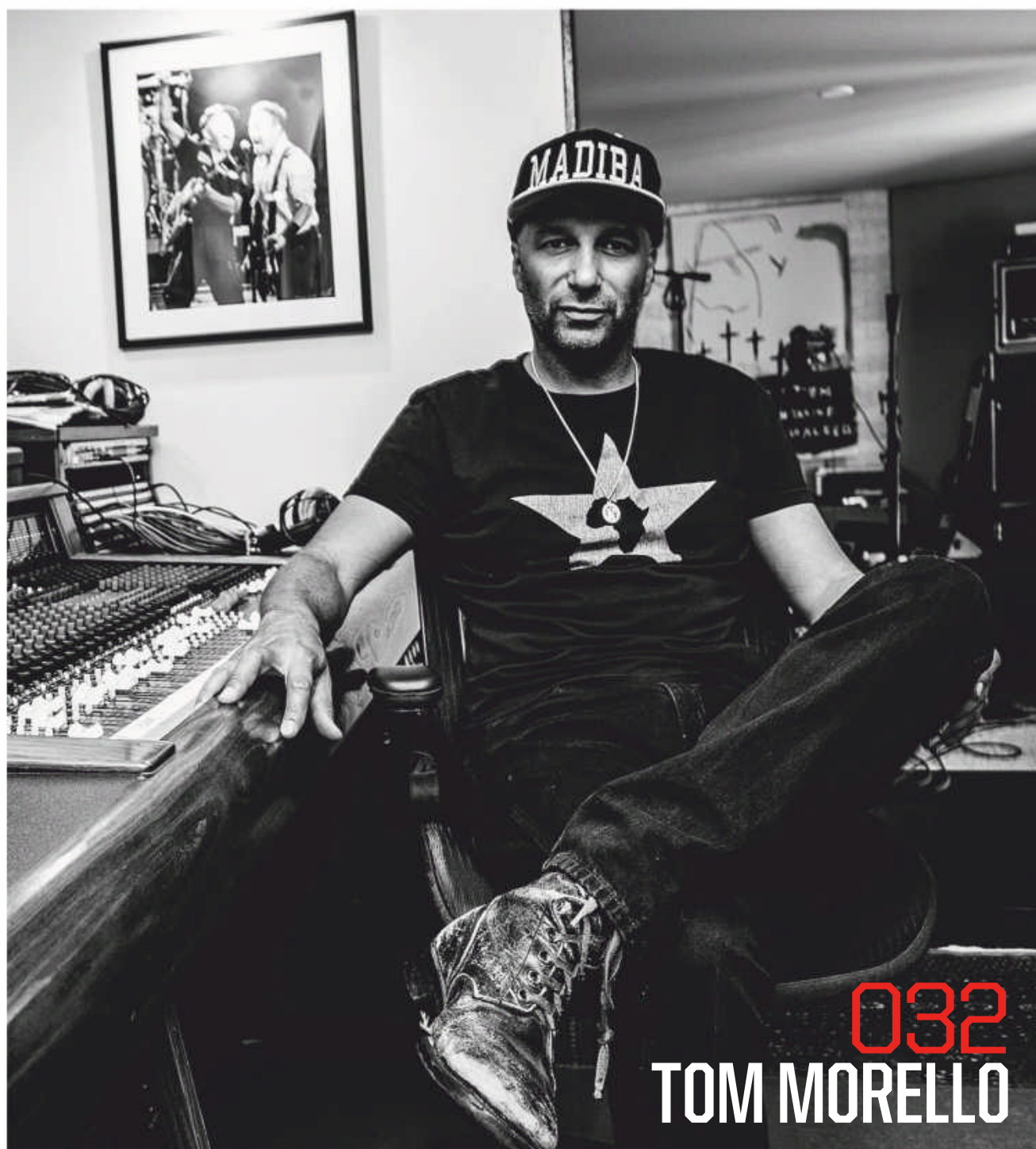
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There are two ways to access
this month's audio tracks:

1. Insert your Guitar Skills disc
into a CD drive

OR

2. Download your files at
bit.ly/tg340audio

06

Words Paul Elliott Photo Fin Costello/Redferns

EVERYTHING LOUDER

T

here were many classic albums reissued this year: Lou Reed's *New York*, full of brilliant guitar interplay from Lou and Mike Rathke; The Rolling Stones' *Goats Head Soup*, with the previously unreleased track *Scarlet* featuring Jimmy Page; and a Dire Straits box set including all of the band's studio albums, with Mark Knopfler at his early peak. But for *Total Guitar*, the best of the bunch, and certainly the rowdiest, was Motörhead's *Ace Of Spades*.

The three members of Motörhead's classic line-up are no longer with us – bassist/vocalist Lemmy Kilmister, drummer 'Philthy Animal' Taylor and guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke. But the 40th anniversary edition of *Ace Of Spades* stands as a monument to the band's awesome power, and to the talents of one of rock's most underrated guitarists.

Fast Eddie's uniquely manic style was perfectly illustrated in this album's title track, which was a top 20 hit in 1980, and would forever remain Motörhead's definitive song. This photo is from a gig in Newcastle in 1982, on Eddie's last tour with the band.

THAN EVERYTHING ELSE!

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



Jimi performing with his 1967 Gibson SG on *The Dick Cavett Show*, 1969



GEAR

BLAST FROM THE PAST

GIBSON UNVEIL ULTRA-LIMITED \$10K CUSTOM SHOP JIMI HENDRIX 1969 FLYING V AND 1967 SG CUSTOM

Gibson has announced a pair of Jimi Hendrix signature models, the 1969 Flying V in Aged Ebony and the 1967 SG Custom in Aged Polaris White. The guitars, which have been aged by Gibson Custom Shop's Murphy Lab, recreate instruments used by Hendrix at two iconic shows.

Back in 1969, Hendrix custom-ordered a left-handed Flying V direct from Gibson, which he used during the Band of Gypsys era, including his 1970 performance at the Isle of Wight Festival. It's this model that Gibson's latest effort recreates.

Just 125 right-handed and 25 left-handed Flying Vs will be made, featuring an Aged Ebony finish, gold hardware and painstakingly replicated specs, including custom-wound humbuckers,

a Maestro Short Vibrola tailpiece, and custom neck profile.

The guitar's Certificate of Authenticity includes an image of Hendrix performing at the Isle of Wight with the Flying V. The SG, meanwhile, apes the triple-humbucker SG played by Hendrix on *The Dick Cavett Show* in 1967, which was strung left-handed to perform a medley of *Izabella* and *Machine Gun*.

150 right-handed SGs will be made, complete with an Aged Polaris White finish, Long Maestro Vibrola, Kluson Waffle Back tuners and '68 Custombuckers.

The guitar's Certificate of Authenticity includes an image of Hendrix performing on *The Dick Cavett Show* with the SG. Both guitars are priced at \$9,999, and come with archival prints of Hendrix signed by engineer/producer Eddie Kramer.

For more info, head over to www.gibson.com





GEAR

LOUDER THAN BOMBS

BIFFY CLYRO UNVEIL FIRST CUSTOM EFFECTS PEDAL

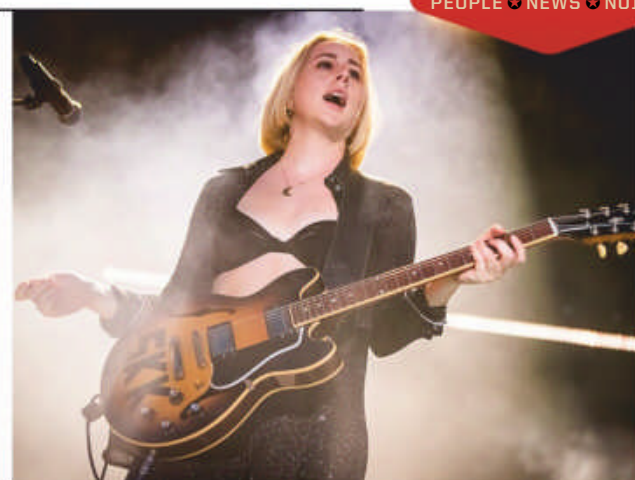
Simon Neil, best known as the heavily-tattooed singer and guitarist of Scottish power trio Biffy Clyro, has released a signature distortion pedal, created by guitar tech Richard 'Churd' Pratt. The Boooooom/Blast pedal (named after Biffy's 2009 song *Boooooom, Blast And Ruin*) was designed from scratch by Churd, with the band choosing to produce it for general release. Each model is individually painted and signed by Neil and comes with a handwritten thank-you note.

"The aim was to capture Simon's sound in a box,"

explains Churd, "so anyone can play guitar and sound like him. It was much easier said than done! It's one of the most transparent, loud overdrive pedals on the market. With so many distortion pedals you get loads of fuzz and saturation, but with this the guitar still breathes. You still hear all the notes but with the extra weight and overdrive."

Regrettably, the extremely-limited edition pedal has now sold out on Biffy's webstore, but here's hoping for a second run in the near future.

For a closer look, visit: www.biffyclyro.com



ONE THING THEY GOT RIGHT FOR THE GRAMMYS

Five killer songs from the all-female Best Rock Performance nominees

When the nominees for the 2021 Grammys were announced in November, there was an immediate backlash from artists who felt snubbed – including The Weeknd and Halsey – and fans outraged on their behalf. But if the Grammys committee got one thing right, it was in recognition of female guitarists – as illustrated by the nominees for Best Rock Performance. For the first time in history, the shortlist for this category is comprised entirely of female or female-fronted acts. And although the favourite to win is singer and pianist Fiona Apple, there are some serious guitar players among the other nominees.

KYOTO – PHOEBE BRIDGERS

Bridgers plays non-standard shapes high on the neck mixed with capo'd open strings for the jangly, propulsive chords.

THE STEPS – HAIM

Alana's clean, chorusy Tele and Danielle's fuzzed-out Strat all play supremely catchy lines entirely distinct from the vocal melody.

STAY HIGH – BRITTANY HOWARD

Howard's solo acoustic version features simple A, D and E chords, and an irresistible groove to underpin her vocal acrobatics.

DAYLIGHT – GRACE POTTER

Hints of Zeppelin in this brooding blues rocker from the Flying V-wielding Potter, with dynamics moving from silence to volcanic.

NOT – BIG THIEF

Not's throbbing chords give way to Adrienne Lenker's unexpectedly intense solo. Her thumbpick technique facilitates leaps between fretted notes and open strings.



ALBUM

“THE GUITAR IS A MYSTICAL BEING, MAN!”

...SO SAYS BLACK STONE CHERRY FRONTMAN CHRIS ROBERTSON, AS HE DISCUSSES THE GEAR HE'S USED ON THE BAND'S NEW ALBUM *THE HUMAN CONDITION*

F

or the last seven years, I've been using the Line 6 Helix, on records and live," Chris Robertson says. "But this time round there was a sound I kept hearing in my head and the only way I could get it was by setting an amp up and putting some microphones on it. So I used a '66 Bassman through a 2x12 cabinet with a set of Eminence Screamin' Eagle speakers in it. And then I used a Splawn Supersport 22 head on the standard overdrive channel... That's pretty much all you hear as far as the amps go. For effects, I used an original Uni-Vibe from the late 70s, as well as my signature Dos Fuzz by Analog Pedals, for more of a Scrambler and octave fuzz kinda sound. The only other pedals I used were an EHX Octave Multiplexer and just a standard Cry Baby wah... Oh and maybe a Memory Boy delay on a couple of songs!

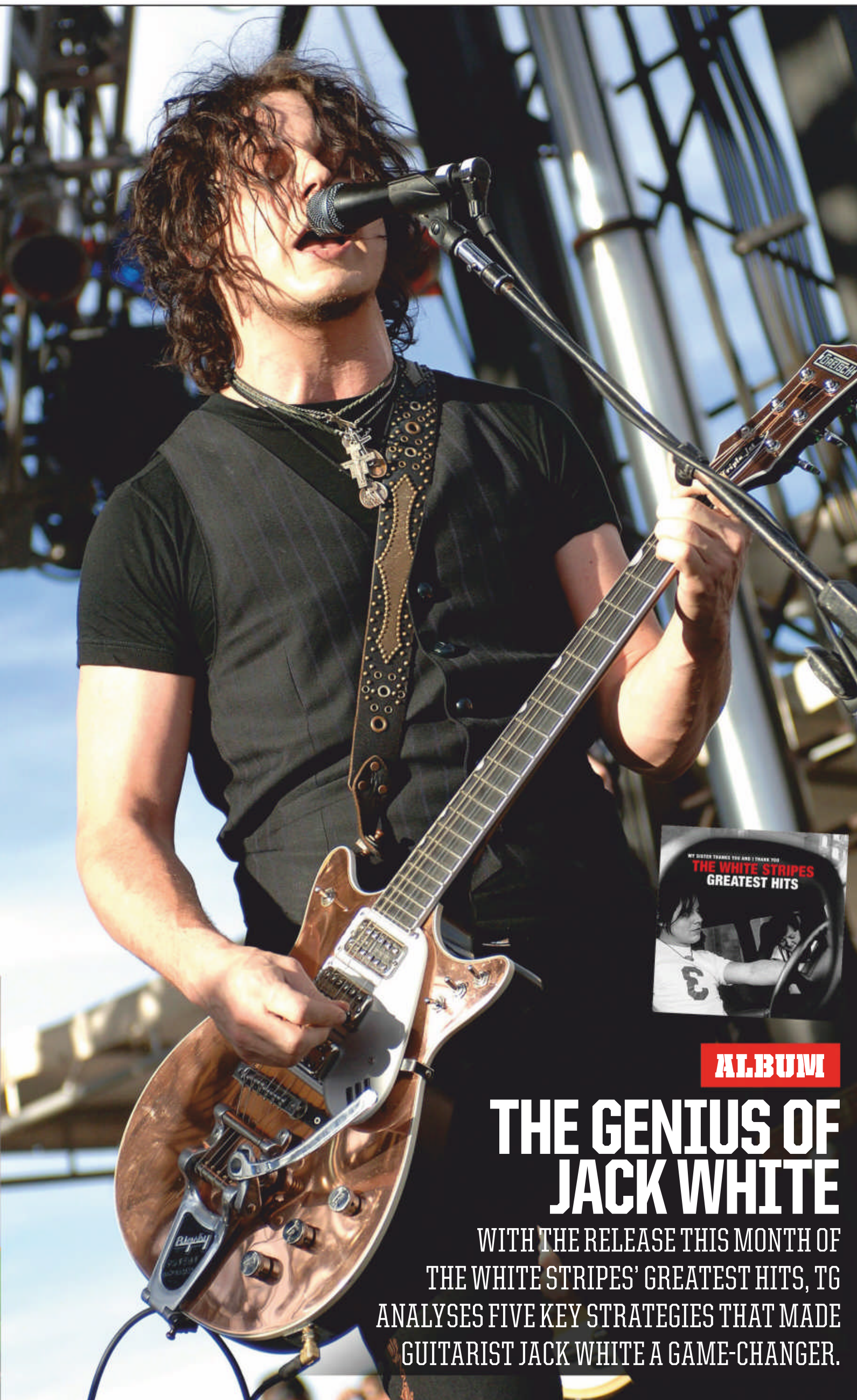
"The majority of what you hear on the record was done with one of my signature PRS guitars, one of

a limited run they released, which I put some locking tuners on. I picked that one because it was the lightest out of all of them and then put the PRS 85/15S pickup set in for a little more bite. For the solos, it was my old '88 Les Paul Standard or a '71 345 that I like to use. The only other guitar I used was a Lucky Dog Evangelist – they're just this small operation out of Tennessee, a couple of guys making some of the most amazing guitars on the planet...

"And guitars are my biggest passion. At home, I've always got a guitar in arm's reach. The guitar was my first true love that I found on my own. It's the one relationship I've had that never really gave me any grief. It's so much more than some wood, wire and magnets. The guitar is a mystical being, man!

"It's an outlet for any expression – you can feel happy, sad, p*ssed off or just kinda numb for no reason, and still turn it into something powerful and emotional. Honestly, if I didn't have guitars in my life... I'd be batsh*t crazy. And I'm crazy enough!"





ALBUM

THE GENIUS OF JACK WHITE

WITH THE RELEASE THIS MONTH OF THE WHITE STRIPES' GREATEST HITS, TG ANALYSES FIVE KEY STRATEGIES THAT MADE GUITARIST JACK WHITE A GAME-CHANGER.

1 THE DUO

Many onlookers were cynical about a rock band without a bass player, but Jack and Meg White quickly showed that a guitar-and-drums format could be more agile, spontaneous, and original. This made space for the likes of The Black Keys. Ten years later, the guitar-less Royal Blood turned the format on its head.

2 THE WALL OF SOUND

The EHX Big Muff creates a wall of sound that spans the entire frequency spectrum. A problem for busy mixes, but just the thing when guitar is the only instrument. Combined with the DigiTech Whammy, adding octaves above and below, the resulting sound left no room for a bass player.

3 BLUES-ROCK REINVENTED

It's easy to forget now how uncool classic rock was at the turn of the century, but White's Robert Plant howl and Jimmy Page riffs quickly fixed that. By combining blues-rock with a garage sound and attitude, he made rock young and energetic where it had been lumbering and irrelevant.

4 THE GEAR

Jack cleverly chose to play obscure vintage instruments, simultaneously sealing his retro credentials without imitating anyone else. His trademark Airline Res-O-Glass was unlike classic guitars in looks or construction, with a plastic body. His equally idiosyncratic amps included the Sears Silvertone (with unheard-of 6x10 cab) and RCA Clubmaster.

5 ROCKING THE WHAMMY

It's Jack's picking technique and vibrato, combined with creative use of the Whammy, that sound unique. His staccato attack gives a manic quality to relatively standard note choices. He'll often rock the Whammy pedal up an octave while playing doing a semitone trill or fast vibrato, for an arresting and unconventional sound.



Photography: Olly Curtis

POCKET ROCKET

Boss' latest box of tricks is loaded with stacks of features

UP CLOSE



Modelling

First things first: the Pocket GT is an amp modeller/FX unit loaded with GT-quality models.



Connectivity

It's got a USB audio interface and Bluetooth, plus it can interface with your phone and stream YouTube videos and music direct to your headphones.



Size

It's tiny, and can also run off battery power. Boss says the Pocket GT is "the future of learning guitar". We'll find out next month!



Have you heard?! Guitar brands are hell-bent on not only giving us a ridiculous level of quality and features packed into tiny packages, but they also want to make sure that no matter how we choose to practise, we're able to make everything talk to everything else. That's exactly what the Pocket GT from Boss does.

On the face of it, it's a pocket-size effect/amp modeller loaded with 108 different models. That in itself is impressive, given that these sounds have trickled down from Boss' GT sound engine. Then consider that it's also an audio interface for recording to your computer.

But this is a new decade, so of course it doesn't end there. The Pocket GT can also hook up to your phone, and via the free Boss Tone Studio app you can watch and play along with YouTube videos. It'll stream music into the GT so you can hear it alongside your guitar signal, plus you can control the playback from the GT itself, and Boss says it'll even cancel out guitar solos for you!

There's a lot going on here, and we'll be taking a proper in-depth look next month.

The Boss Pocket GT is available now, priced £249.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

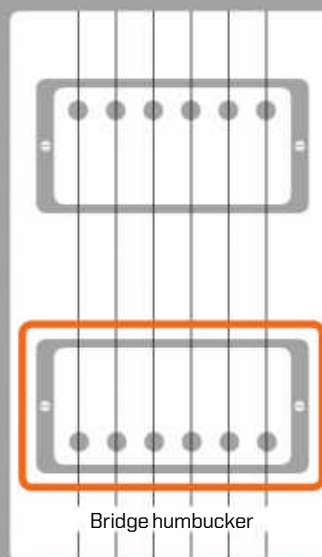
- ✓ Drop C tuning
- ✓ String muting
- ✓ Powerchords

RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO
ON YOUR
CD

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



If your guitar's kept in standard tuning it's worth trying out a set of heavier strings to counter the lower string tension of drop-C tuning. For example, if you usually use gauge 0.009s, try a set of 0.011s. Daron is known for using many different amps, particularly Marshall JMP100s and Mesa/Boogies. You'll be dialing in a high gain tone, so if your amp doesn't deliver the goods you'll need a distortion pedal such as a Boss MT-2 or HM-2. Select a bridge-position humbucker and lower the midrange on your amp a little for an old-school metal character.

SYSTEM OF A DOWN

Protect The Land

AUDIO FILES

Find your audio files at bit.ly/tg340audio

In typical System Of A Down style, the band's new single *Protect The Land* showcases Daron Malakian's knack for slick hooks. You'll be tuning to drop-C (CGCFAD) to play along – so, unless this is your regular tuning, the lower string tension will likely have an effect on your guitar's setup. Heavier gauge strings will help when downtuning and a fixed bridge guitar

is a better option than a vibrato-equipped instrument.

The riff swaps between single notes and powerchords. Simple enough in itself, but take care to keep idle strings silent. We recommend using the underside of your fretting fingers to mute out those unneeded strings but note that even this can introduce noise – Daron slides between the opening notes and the high gain tone can exaggerate it.

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

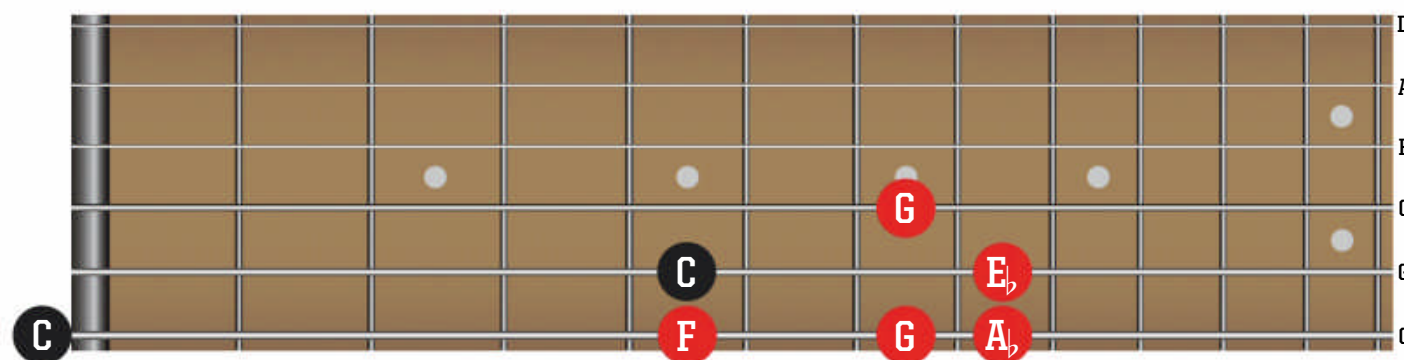
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:25

Tempo: 76 bpm

Key/scale: E natural minor scale

Techniques: Slides, powerchords, alternate picking



Thanks to the drop-C tuning, all the notes are in a different place compared to standard tuning. The three lowest notes are on the sixth string: C, F and G are used for the single-note portion of the riff. The remaining notes are played as two powerchords. C and G form a C5 powerchord, and A₁ and E₁ make up an E₁5 powerchord. Still, as long as you're tuned to drop-C, all the notes you need are shown here.



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2020: A YEAR IN GUITAR

Words Amit Sharma



2020
IN
GEAR

POSITIVE GRID SPARK 40

Rare is it for something to come in for review at TG and pass with flying colours across the full spectrum of criteria, leaving not even the slightest whiff of anything remotely dissatisfactory. That's how we felt about the Spark 40 – the ultimate smart amp that allows you to flick through 40 effects and 30 amps for guitar, bass and acoustic, while jamming against online backing tracks or even generating one as you play, based on what you play. Truth be told, we were amazed by it all – including the price.

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES PLUMES

Earthquaker have come long a way since starting out 16 years ago – gaining traction and turning heads thanks to their individuality rather than simply paying tribute to the famous circuits of old. Which is perhaps why we found their budget-priced Plumes overdrive such an interesting proposition – by their own admission it was “based

2020 will be remembered for many reasons – admittedly many of them bad! Perhaps it was the loss of Eddie Van Halen back in October that felt like the most devastating blow of them all, players from all genres paying tribute to a multifaceted creative visionary who genuinely smiled through his instrument. Then, of course, there's the loss of guitar shops and other guitar-related businesses around the world, many struggling to survive during lockdowns and general uncertainty around safety or income. It's not even just the smaller independents – Dawsons Music, one of the UK's oldest music retailers, rescued from administration back in May and America's

largest chain Guitar Center filing for bankruptcy not long ago in November. The live music sector has arguably been hit the hardest, with no certainty as to when performances can return to the regularity we once knew, affecting not only the artists who've relied more and more on touring in the digital age, but also the crew and personnel around them.

That said, there have also been many success stories – from the continued growth of Fender Play and the promotion responsible for a surge in creativity during lockdown, the unexpected return of AC/DC, new music from John Petrucci, Joe Bonamassa and Covet and new lines from Fender, Kramer and more. So without further ado, here's our round-up of 2020's greatest guitar moments...

WITH THE LOSS OF EDDIE, PLAYERS FROM ALL GENRES PAID TRIBUTE TO A CREATIVE VISIONARY



around that classically overdone tube-like circuit you all know” with a few improvements. And it’s plenty versatile too, with a toggle to flick through three clipping modes.

MARTIN X SERIES DX1E-04

There are always notable differences in the build quality across the various tiers in any manufacturer’s range, but what we learned this year is that even an entry-level dreadnought from Martin is not to be sniffed at. When put to test, we were pleased to find the high-pressure laminate top and sides were highly musical, as well as being more temperature-resistant and sustainable. As mentioned in our review, it raised the question if materials really matter – because, at least when Martin are involved, the results can be quite spectacular indeed.

THE RETURN OF KRAMER

The new line of Seymour Duncan-loaded Kramers under Gibson



ownership felt worthy of the brand’s legacy – which took off in the 80s thanks to an endorsement from Eddie Van Halen which resulted in his first official signature model. The Pacer Vintage, available in a classy Pure White or a more outlandish Orange Tiger Burst, proved itself to be one of the best shred machines available to those on a budget. All in all, a hugely exciting return for the iconic brand.

SQUIER STARCASTERS

Originally conceived by Fender as their take on the humbucking semi-hollows Gibson were renowned, the maple-bodied Starcaster is generally regarded as one of the underdogs in the great company’s history. It was taken out of production after six years, but rose in popularity during the 90s and 00s thanks to bands like Radiohead and The Killers. The three new models added to the Squier line-up at the beginning of the year were most impressive – which is precisely why

we labelled the Classic Vibe as the best semi-hollow out there for under £500.

The Universal Audio Ox has become one of the most popular units in recent years for silent recording, offering a complete recording system for any tube amp with no need for any speakers whatsoever. Similarly, the Torpedo Captor X is a high-performing compact reactive load box, attenuator and mic’d cabinet simulator in one – but it retails at less than half the price of the Ox.

MXR TIMMY

If there’s one thing that’s proved popular in the pedal world, it’s collaborations between boutique builders and the larger mass-production heavyweights. This new version of the Paul Cochrane Tim overdrive, used by Aerosmith’s Brad Whitford, saw him partner up with MXR for a truly jaw-dropping yet affordable drive boost.

2020 IN TONES

DEFTONES

No 2020 round-up on tones would be complete with a mention of Sacramento's finest, whose ninth full-length arrived back in September. In the video for its title track, *Ohms*, guitarist Stephen Carpenter was spotted playing a new 9-string ESP guitar fitted with some Fishman Fluence custom pickups – having signed up with the company for his own signature set back in 2016. On his Instagram page, he's also been teasing a new pink ESP 8-string, a Peavey 6505 MH Mini tube guitar amp, and some Synergy Guitar Preamp Modules – namely the Soldano SLO, a Friedman HBE, and a Fryette Ultra Lead.



STRING THEORY

Deftones' Steph Carpenter (second right), whose desire for additional strings grows with each year

ROCK ROYALTY

From top: Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil, Code Orange's Reba Meyers, Kirk Fletcher and System Of A Down



BIFFY CLYRO A CELEBRATION OF ENDINGS

Modern-age guitar heroes don't come any finer than Simon Neil. Not only does he front one of the biggest British rock bands of an entire generation, he also knows how to make a Strat sound mean. And on their eighth full-length, *A Celebration Of Endings*, there was no shortage of gargantuan sounds – Neil using his Michael Landau reissue Strat (“That thing is just perfection”), an Earthquaker Sunn O))) drone pedal (“Honestly one of the best things I’ve ever bought”), as well as an ES-335, a Black Volt amp and more.

CODE ORANGE

Underneath, the fourth record from Code Orange, arrived back in March and was every bit as devastatingly heavy as fans had hoped. In her TG feature around the release, guitarist Reba Meyers explained she'd used an ESP Custom Shop Viper in Cherry Red for the majority of her parts, and the occasional Gibson to thicken out the choruses. That was then either fed into a 100-Watt EVH 5150III 100S (“It's perfectly cutting and smooth with no need for pedals in front of it”) or the Universal Audio Engl plug-in in tandem with pedals like Earthquaker's Afterneath and Abominable Electronics' Hellmouth overdrive.

SYSTEM OF A DOWN

15 years is a long time to keep fans waiting for new music. But the two new SOAD tracks, released to raise money for the Armenia Fund following conflict over the Artsakh region, proved it had been worth the wait. Comeback single *Protect The Land* had all the head-caving detuned heaviness and heavenly harmonies that made the alt. metallers such a brilliant prospect in the first place. For the recordings, Daron Malakian used his prized 1962 LP/SG Standard mixed with his early 80s Gibson Korina Flying V into a Marshall and a 100-Watt Friedman that's tonally “very close to a Marshall JMP”.

KIRK FLETCHER

Anyone that's seen Joe Bonamassa's *Live At The Greek Theatre* set will remember the rhythm guitarist holding down the fort during some of those soaring lead breaks. Kirk Fletcher, who also appeared with Bonamassa on the middle night of his 2019 Royal Albert Hall residency, released his sixth solo album back in September, titled *My Blues Pathway*. It was recorded only using Fender Stratocasters through a vintage 1965 Blackface Deluxe Reverb, save for a few overdubs on a 1955 Bassman and Morgan PR12 recorded at Josh Smith's studio. Despite the wealth of jaw-dropping tones across the album, the only pedal involved was a Vemuram/Ibanez Tube Screamer “for a little extra grit in places”.



2020
IN
NEWS

AC/DC RETURN

Admittedly, this could have easily fit into our favourite albums and tones of the year too – but somehow the return of AC/DC felt even bigger than that. It was more than just the music and the sound of Angus Young's fingers dancing around the fretboard, his SG making those Marshalls roar loud and proud once again. Truth be told, AC/DC couldn't have timed it more perfectly – right when second waves putting an end to any notion of a moderately normal end to the year, they came out with *Power Up*. Brian Johnson was back in the band. They just sounded just as explosive as ever. It was the lift that brought reassurance and hope to pretty much every guitar player on earth.

FENDER ENJOY
RECORD YEAR

It's been an incredibly tough year for the music industry at large. Even Fender CEO Andy Mooney admitted he was terrified of the year ahead at the end of the first quarter. By October, however, things had changed quite drastically – the Big F were experiencing a record year as online tuition site Fender Play continued tapping into new streams of revenue and long-term growth for the industry as a whole. "It's always much better to be swimming with the tide

than swimming against it," reflected Mooney, heading into the year's final quarter. "You want to be in a growth industry... When I joined Fender, there was a lot of skepticism about it being a growth industry. I think we've demonstrated it can be."

THE LOSSES

Eddie Van Halen's passing on October 6th was an incredibly sad day for the guitar community. Few players had the ability to touch people's hearts in the way Eddie did, from the infectious anthems that imprinted themselves

into the mind on first listen, to the lead guitar acrobatics that left an entire world stunned. Then, of course, there were his contributions to the gear we use and play today – from helping popularise and to some level develop the Floyd Rose locking vibrato system, that unmistakable "brown sound" coloured by the whoosh of an MXR Phase 90 and, of course, the various EVH amps that have come out over the years. He will forever remain in a class of his own.

Other notable losses through the year included Fleetwood Mac legend

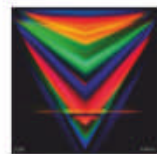
2020 IN ALBUMS

JOE BONAMASSA
ROYAL TEA

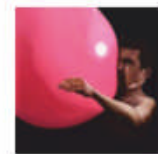
In his last TG feature, JoBo described *Why Does It Take So Long To Say Goodbye* as one of the best tracks he's ever been involved in. "It's the kind of song that would attract comments like 'Boomer!' and 'Dad rock!' on social media," he grinned. "But that's what I do. We deal with blues-rock until there's no demand for it!"

PLINI
IMPULSE VOICES

Four years after the sensation debut album *Handmade Cities*, its follow-up is the perfect extension of what made that first taste so technically dazzling and effortlessly tasteful – cementing the Australian's place as one of the finest guitar talents of the modern age.

EOB
EARTH

When TG went to visit Radiohead guitarist earlier this year, he told us he felt the guitar was "more like an oscillator on a synthesizer... The start of a sound rather than the sound itself". These nine tracks are very much indicative of that mindset, moving through ambient electronica, folk and world music.

IDLES
ULTRA MONO

In the space of three years, Idles have gone from relative unknowns to being continually written about as stars. This year's third album was the sound of them living up to the hype – guitarists Mark Bowen and Lee Kiernan dialling in some of the most twisted Fender tones we've heard in a while.

Peter Green, who passed away in July, early rock'n'roll pioneer Little Richard, classic metal producer Martin Birch [Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden], Toots Hibbert from Toots And The Maytals, Rush drummer Neil Peart, Jorge Santana, Riley Gale of Power Trip, Pete Way of UFO, Spencer Davis, Bill Withers and early Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist Jack Sherman.

THE NEW NORMAL

If there ever was a silver lining in the cloud of lockdown, it's that many musicians found new ways of keeping active – from streaming live performances in empty venues to collaboration covers. Architects, for example, came up with the idea of bringing their futuristic noise to the Royal Albert Hall in November and with great success. Other memorable livestreams included Joe Bonamassa taking over Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, giving fans the chance to hear *Royal Tea* in full ahead of release. Puscifer, on the other hand, launched their new album *Existential Reckoning* from what looked like a spaceship, providing a perfect escape into the brilliantly bizarre at a time when it was truly needed.

As for the collaboration covers, seeing William DuVall from Alice In Chains join ranks with Bill Kelliher and Charlie Benante to cover Soundgarden's *Rusty Cage* was certainly one of the bigger highlights. Then there was Phil Demmel teaming up with ex-Machine Head bandmate Dave McClain, Lzzy Hale, Richie Faulkner and Mike Inez for a storming cover of Thin Lizzy classic *Bad Reputation*. Bearing in mind it could be a while until it's safe enough for any of their bands to tour again, for many it was the next best thing.

JOHN PETRUCCI TERMINAL VELOCITY



Solo albums from the Trooch don't come often – this second release arrived some

15 years after his debut effort. The Dream Theater shredder told TG it was a welcome break from the seriousness of DT, saying "If it sounds like pop-punk, who cares... This is instrumental guitar music, you can do what you want!"



FENDER BAR STOOL £85

Even the most ambitious of guitar players need to sit down at *some* point and this 30-inch Fender Bar Stool is guaranteed to ooze class wherever you keep it. There's a Custom Shop logo version too, but we think there's something really quite classy about the fiesta red of the classic Fender design.

G7TH CAPO PERFORMANCE 3 (18K GOLD) £47

Capos have come a long way in the last few decades – in both functionality and aesthetics. Gone are the ugly metallic braces of old, some looking more like something encountered while strapped in the dentist's chair. The new flagship from G7th has their Adaptive Radius Technology which allows the capo to adapt to the curve of the fretboard. We're sure you'll agree this 18k plated edition is good as gold.

MARSHALL EMBERTON £129

It's amazing to think how popular Marshall's headphone range has become since their launch in November 2010, helping the iconic amp brand tap into new markets and with great style. The same can be said of the home speakers including this portable unit which offers 20+ hours of playtime at a surprising loud volume given its compact size. The IPX7 water-resistance rating also means it can be submerged up to a metre deep in water for half an hour. Handy if you're, er, swimming!

FOXGEAR ECHOSEX BABY DELAY £99

Launched in 2017 by the owners of Italian brands Gurus and Baroni-Lab, Foxgear's line of pedals live up to their promise of boutique tones for those on a budget, using non-SMD components and true bypass circuitry in their analogue designs. The Echosex Baby Delay – which has been spotted on the boards of tonal connoisseurs like David Gilmour and Steve Lukather – is their take on the tones made by famous by the legendary Binson Ecorec, and has no shortage of warm repeats and ethereal echoes.

PICKMASTER PLECTRUM PICK £20

Always running out of picks and hoping to reduce your own carbon footprint? Look no further. This plectrum punch can turn most pieces of thin plastic – credit cards, lids and so forth – into new plectrums, which means you'll never run out again. We're not sure how long it takes before you save money on picks, but you'll be reusing waste material in an environmentally friendly way.

JIM DUNLOP AUTHENTIC HENDRIX TTG STUDIOS GUITAR STRAP £30

In all honesty, you really don't have to be a Jimi Hendrix fan to want this strap, inspired by the one he used for his famously loud sessions at Hollywood's TTG Studios in October 1968. There's almost a stained glass effect to the design that's bound to suit just about any guitar you have in the collection...

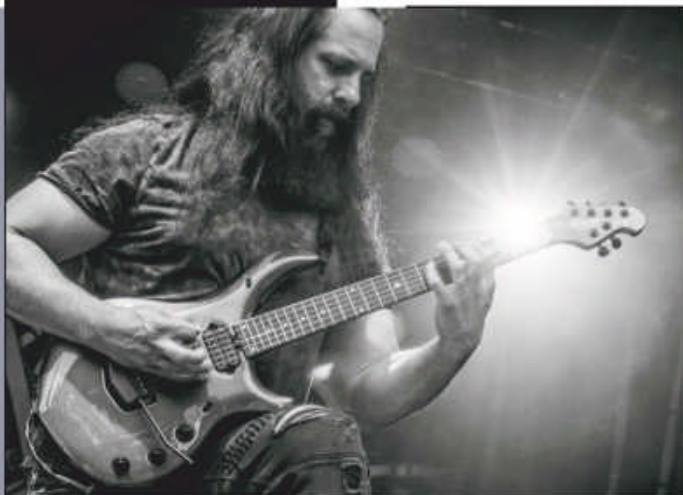
MOGAMI GOLD SERIES 5M GUITAR CABLE £35

Let's face it, when shopping for new gear, cables are pretty much at the bottom of the list in terms of excitement. But if you've invested in a high-end instrument with some custom-designed pickups, why wouldn't you protect that tone at all costs? Go for gold with Mogami, whose products carry a ultra-high density (UHD) spiral shield and conductive polymer sub-shield to help prevent excessive noise. Still undecided? Well, then there's that 'no excuses' lifetime guarantee...

CRUZTOOLS GROOVETECH GUITAR PLAYER TECH KIT £49

Cables, tools and accessories for your guitar aren't exactly the most thrilling of investments. That said, when the time comes it might be a case of having the right tools for the job and getting stuck in or no guitar time until further notice. Avoid the latter scenario by investing in this kit from CruzTools, which comes with a six-one screwdriver, a string cutter and winder plus Allen keys in metric and imperial to cover all brands.

2020
XMAS
GIFTS



SHOWSTOPPERS!

3 GREAT GUITAR TRACKS FROM 2020 – BY THE STARS WHO PLAYED THEM...

STEVE MORSE ON *THE POWER OF THE MOON* FROM DEEP PURPLE'S *WHOOSH!*

"It's so unusual-sounding with really interesting dynamics. In the choruses there are these close clusters, which are fifths with the ninth or second added, that Don [Airey, keyboards] and I are playing together. That's one of the signature things we do, sometimes we'll have a part that's almost like a sub-melody. It's a line that doesn't feel typical for guitar or organ."

JOHN PETRUCCI ON *THE ODDFATHER* FROM *TERMINAL VELOCITY*

"It has something that I really haven't done before – the middle section has a breakdown that goes into this open-string, right hand hammer-on part that is extended. It builds and builds until you get to the main solo. So in order to play that song, you'd have to work on that specific technique. It also has some very fast tremolo picking because I was mimicking the sound of a mandolin being picked – that *Godfather* kind of sound – so some people might have to work on their alternate picking to play it. You hear that technique throughout."

JOE BONAMASSA ON *WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO SAY GOODBYE* FROM *ROYAL TEA*

"It's right in the same school as Gary Moore, who did those really powerful melodic ballads, and I think it's one of the better songs I've ever been involved in. The riff was a little more straight to begin with, and it was [producer] Kevin Shirley's idea during pre-production to do the bend and give it that pull. I'd say it's the kind of song that could be a total showstopper when we play in front of a crowd. We've extended the ending for live, we're rehearsing right now. I told the band, 'I'll meet you at the end, you know what I'm doing!' That's what the fans want to hear – that unapologetic guitar playing."

MONEY FOR NOTHING

The most iconic guitars up for auction in 2020

KURT COBAIN'S 1959 MARTIN D-18E SOLD FOR \$6,010,000

Back in June, the acoustic used for that classic *Unplugged* set ended up making history as the most expensive guitar ever sold – knocking David Gilmour's \$3.95 million Black Strat off the top spot.

ELVIS' MARTIN D-18 SOLD FOR \$1,320,000

Setting a new record for Elvis memorabilia, this Martin acoustic was used extensively at Sun Studios in Memphis and on stage during the mid-50s.

ERIC CLAPTON'S 1954 FENDER STRAT STARTING BID OF \$1,000,000

Nicknamed Slowhand, this rare non-tremolo Strat was picked up by Clapton at the end of the 70s and used predominantly for slide in Open G.

PRINCE'S 'BLUE ANGEL' CLOUD 2 SOLD FOR \$563,500

Used by Prince at the height of his popularity, this guitar was seen on the *Purple Rain* and *Sign O' The Times* tours, as well as in the videos for *Cream* and *Get Off*.

GEORGE HARRISON'S BARTELL FRETLESS ELECTRIC SOLD FOR £237,562

According to Bonhams, this instrument was made in 1967 and presented to Harrison that year, and was also rumoured to have been played by John Lennon.

CHUCK BERRY'S 1967 GIBSON ES-345 STARTING BID OF \$200,000

Used, owned and signed by Chuck himself, this ES-345 – serial number 000037 – is definitely a piece of history.

PRINCE'S FENDER CUSTOM SHOP 'GOLDFINGER' STRAT STARTING BID OF \$150,000

This gold leaf-covered prototype made for Prince could possibly be the most beautiful guitar in the world...

JIMI HENDRIX'S EARLY UNBRANDED DOUBLE-CUT ELECTRIC STARTING BID OF \$50,000

According to his brother Leon, this Japanese guitar was used by Hendrix in the early 60s when he returned home following discharge from the army.



CAN'T BUY ME LOVE?
George Harrison's bizarre yet wonderful fretless Bartell electric

THE STEALTH HAS LANDED



2253101710 5150III® 2X12 CABINET

EVH® 5150III® 50S 6L6 HEAD

WITH ITS SMALLER SIZE AND PORTABILITY, THE ALL-NEW EVH 5150III 50S HEAD IS THE PERFECT AMP FOR PLAYERS WHO WANT ED VAN HALEN'S TOURING TONE AND PERFORMANCE IN A MORE COMPACT PACKAGE. SPORTING STEALTH BLACK COSMETICS, THIS SHUGUANG 6L6-POWERED HEAD BOASTS SPARKLY CLEANS ON CH. 1, INCREASED GAIN ON CH. 2, SIGNATURE EVH HIGH GAIN ON CH. 3, AND COMES WITH EDDIE'S TOURING MODS INCLUDING BIAS PORTS WITH ADJUSTABLE TRIM POT.



EVHGEAR.COM

Words: Amit Sharma

THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER...

Guitar-toting husband and wife **Tyler Bryant** and **Rebecca Lovell** are stars in their own right. “We’re the leaders of our own respective bands,” he says. But this year they’ve collaborated in each other’s music – her on the new **Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown** album, and him on **Larkin Poe**’s acoustic set. As they tell TG, it’s all about a “special connection” – and a lot of gear...



They're not a power couple in the Kim and Kanye sense, but Tyler Bryant and Rebecca Lovell are serious players with big reputations – Rebecca starring with her sister Megan in the acclaimed roots-rock duo Larkin Poe, and Tyler, with his band The Shakedown, having played on some of the world's biggest stages as opening act for AC/DC and Guns N' Roses.

So it made sense for the two of them to work together, and that's what happened this year. Rebecca plays and sings on *Pressure*, the new album from Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown. And Tyler has had a hand in the making of Larkin Poe's acoustic covers album *Kindred Spirits*.

Speaking together from their home in Nashville, they talk TG through their musical dynamic as a married couple, as well as the sounds heard on their latest endeavours...

What was it like working together for parts of this album?

Tyler: "It was awesome to have Rebecca on *Crazy Days*. She sang a little bit on *Misery* and *Hitchhiker* too. Noah Denney left the band in February, so a lot of the higher harmonies we've had in the Shakedown were now missing. I asked myself, 'Who are the best singers I know?' and Rebecca was on top of that list."

Rebecca: "I don't know if it was a case of something lacking, I was just excited to get in there and add some soulful BVs! I definitely heard a lot of the process... We have a house together and a home studio that Tyler set up with the band in the basement. So I was getting a healthy dose of rock and roll from the boys in the house! I was just excited to be a part of the process. They're incredibly self-sufficient musicians, down there rocking! They didn't need any help, but to be able to go in and contribute to the party was a real blast."

As a married couple, how exactly do you play off and inspire each other?

Rebecca: "The inspiration part is not hard at all. We're both hard workers and very dedicated to the arts. Music is a large part of our everyday lives, if we're not playing then we are listening to music or watching interviews on YouTube... So it tends to be a musical free for all! When we first got together, there was a lot of competitive spirit between the two of us..."

Tyler: "We're both very much the leaders of our own respective bands!"



Rebecca: “We’re definitely alpha wolves! We’ve learned over time and with trust, and through all the shared time together, how to make music really fun. Tyler actually helped me write one of my favourite tracks on our most recent album *Self Made Man* called *Back Down South*. Setting up gear and making music with someone I love so deeply but also respect is such a joy. Having the home studio here has been great and Tyler has taught himself how to engineer. Now we can record music as a family... It’s a pretty special connection and we are very fortunate.”

Tyler: “We recorded *Kindred Spirits* here at home. I had the privilege of engineering it. I didn’t have anything creative to say other than, ‘Maybe we should move that microphone...’ and it was cool to play a very different role to what I play in the Shakedown. I was more of a fly on the wall, experiencing their process of recording and how that goes instead of my own which is more chaotic [laughs]!”

Speaking of *Kindred Spirits*, it seems as if you are only playing acoustic guitar this time round, Rebecca...

Rebecca: “Yeah! It was all recorded live in about four or five days. That was a unique experience, because as children of the 80s and 90s, it’s always been a very isolated and pristine kind of thing. You track the vocals separately, everyone is in different rooms to eliminate bleed and so on. For this project, we wanted to be a lot more rock – just sitting in a room together and capturing the recording similarly to how we do a lot of our cover videos on YouTube and Facebook. As a player and vocalist, I learned how to find the confidence to just go for it. Previously, I would have been too nervous to commit to vocals right off the bat with my sister at the same time. But playing live together, you have to give up that control of making it all incredibly perfect. Instead of tweaking it like that, we decided to be a bit more raw. I feel very lucky to have blazed those trails in the room with Tyler as a support system as well. We’ve learned how to support each other as musicians, players and writers – as well as a married couple. Support is key to us and we don’t take it lightly.”



ABOVE
Tyler (centre) with
his group The
Shakedown

Tyler: “We also like to make up classic country songs over a cup of coffee!”

So where exactly would you say your influences differ?

Tyler: “Rebecca comes from more of a bluegrass background. She will comfortably go to that place while I tend to go back to being a teenage punk rocker! We have different influences in that regard. I’m more steeped in heavier blues and 90s grunge!”

Rebecca: “Obviously these are rough approximations – both of our goals is to sound like unique and individual players. I definitely hear a lot of Jeff Beck and Stevie Ray Vaughan in Tyler’s playing, whereas I might err more on the side of a Doc Watson or Bryan Sutton. Those are my roots as a bluegrass player. With my sister as an incredible slide player and Tyler as this consummate shredder... I’m just buckling up and trying to hang onto the reins, baby!”

Tyler: “Yeah, but whenever I have friends over, I always try to get Rebecca to pick up a mandolin because they always freak out!”

There are some truly mouth-watering fuzz tones on *Pressure*.

What exactly did you end up using, Tyler?

Tyler: “One that ended up on every single song except for the acoustic tune was my signature pedal – the Rodenberg TB Drive. I grew up in Texas, so I was always a Tube Screamer guy. Every Texas blues player I liked had a Tube Screamer on the board. Some of them would even have two – one which was set clean and used more like a boost, then another for more gain. I was struggling to find ones that sounded exactly how I wanted. My guitar tech was on a guitar forum one day and found out about Rodenberg. He went out on a limb and bought one of the pedals, it was a dual stage overdrive based on a Tube Screamer. He brought it to me and I had a couple of thoughts on it. I reached out to Rodenberg after four years of using the pedal to say it was my favourite pedal and that I’d used it on every record, as well as potentially tweaking it out a little bit. That’s how this pedal came to be.”

And how did it end up being different to the drives you were using before?

Tyler: “It’s essentially two Tube Screamers, you have the option on one channel to kick in an extra gain

“WHEN WE FIRST GOT TOGETHER, THERE WAS A LOT OF



stage – that’s the secret to how I get all the sustain and hold notes for so long. There’s a bass boost on each channel for extra fatness... That helps me out a lot, playing single-coils or resonators. It’s a pretty versatile pedal. When I first reached out I said there was something going on with Instagram, it’s where guitar players were hanging out. I said if we could make five or ten pedals, we could sell them pretty easily. They didn’t turn the pre-order off in time and we pre-sold a hundred. It just kept going from there, I think we’re at 600 pedals now, just through Instagram alone, with no advertising.”

Talk us through what else we’re hearing on the record...

Tyler: “For the fuzz tones where my speaker sounds like it’s actually dying it will have been a number of things – I have an amplifier made by Square Amps. It’s tiny little six-inch speaker thing that runs at four watts. That amp is basically a fuzz pedal, it seems! Dunlop sent one of those new Billy Gibbons Octave Fuzz pedals, the Siete Santos. I also had a Jext Telez Dizzy Tone and ZVEX Mastotron. For *Coastin’* I used a new guitar made by Mule

Resonators in Saginaw, Michigan. It’s a shell pink tricone resonator with a maple neck that’s heavy as hell but it sounds amazing for those Johnny Winter slide licks I like to copy. My two pink Strats are all over this record – the main one has the Shawbucker humbucker in the bridge. I have this other Custom Shop Strat called The Judge, with a Tele neck pickup and Eddie Van Halen humbucker in the bridge. It’s a really wacky guitar! I’ve also got my 1960 Strat which got used on a few things, plus a Duesenberg 59er for a couple of things and this Banker Flying V Goldtop. And for amps, it was mainly a Custom 50 handwired Orange head through a Universal Audio Ox Box while simultaneously running a ’59 handwired Marshall Plexi-style thing through a cabinet in the room with mics. Oh, and a Marshall Silver Jubilee too. So, all the usual suspects plus a few new welcome additions!”

You also make and sell backing tracks for guitar players...

Tyler: “Yeah, with all of our shows being cancelled this year, I can’t tell you how grateful I am to all those kids downloading my backing tracks. It’s

ABOVE
Rebecca with her sister Megan in roots-rock duo Larkin Poe

a creative exercise for me to make them every day and I build them all from the ground up. As a guitar player, the feeling of playing over dead air is not as exciting as playing with a band or backing track. I like the structure to bounce around within.”

What do you think is the secret to great blues playing and how much do you think about moving from minor to major pentatonics and Mixolydian scales?

Tyler: “To be honest, I don’t know any scales or theory. It’s funny – when you tell me what scales are in my songs I’m like, ‘Wow, this is news to me!’ What I would say is that anyone who wants to get into the heart of blues playing needs to hear *Live Wire/Blues Power* by Albert King. It was one of those pivotal records for me as a kid – less about the notes he was playing but rather how he was getting there, how he would bend into each note and the tension it would create. Play along to your favourite records, learn the licks and figure out how you would play them. Whenever I hit walls, I just take a break or go from shredding to playing cowboy songs... That helps it all feel fresh again!”

COMPETITIVE SPIRIT BETWEEN THE TWO OF US"

REBECCA
LOVELL

STRANGE DAYS

The Struts, with guitarist Adam Slack (second left).

Words: Jonny Scaramanga

LIVE AND DANGEROUS!

The Struts are Britain's fastest-rising hard rock band, and for their new album *Strange Days*, they've pulled in some A-list guest stars including members of Rage Against The Machine, Def Leppard and The Strokes – and Robbie Williams. It was also recorded pretty much live in the studio, and as guitarist Adam Slack says, “It’s the most guitar-y album we’ve done!”

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In 2020, a lot of musicians have had a lot of time on their hands, but for The Struts, ten days was all it took to cut one of the best rock records of the year. “It was essentially recorded live,” says guitarist Adam Slack of the band’s third album *Strange Days*, for which they decamped to producer John Levine’s home studio. And as Slack explains, it was a very different experience to making their 2018 breakthrough record *Young & Dangerous*.

“Usually, in the past, I’ve done like twenty guitar tracks, harmonies galore and all that,” he says. “But this time there’s one guitar track on every song, all one live take. I did some overdubs but I didn’t go crazy. John felt we should try and make it sound as much as you can like a live band. We didn’t even double-track. John added a tiny delay panned on the other side from the main guitar. He said that’s cooler because it’s what they would have done in the 70s.”

Recording in a pandemic meant Adam didn’t have his full live rig available. “I did use a Kemper on some of the overdubs but the main amp for the whole thing was a Divided by 13 BTR 23. A lot of it is actually just straight into the amp because I’d put a pedal on and be like ‘I kind of liked it when it was just its own,’ just turning up the gain up a little bit and then EQing it myself for each song. I had my amp in the little foyer room into the studio covered in blankets because it was so loud. So I just had the head next to me and the cab was in the other room so I could just kind of tweak as I went along with my board.”

The album’s live vibe means that all the imperfections are preserved on the final recording, and as Adam admits: “I listen to it now and there’s so many things I wish I could have done that better. It’s like, ‘Oh, why didn’t I put more vibrato on that note?’ I’ll just have to get over it.”

Recording in a pandemic also meant the superstar guests recorded their parts remotely, except Robbie Williams, who came onto his porch to allow the band to record his vocals. For *Another Hit of Showmanship*, The Strokes guitarist Albert Hammond Jr. sent in his parts to take Adam’s Britpop riff to the next level. On *I Hate How Much I Want You*, Def Leppard’s Phil Collen added lead guitar. “I was p*ssed off he took my solo!” Adam laughs. “Of course he had to play the solo, I’m not going to go back and be like, ‘Excuse me, I don’t like this.’ And I actually had someone call me up and say ‘I love your solo on *I Hate How Much I Want You*!’”

Wild Child features a heavy, Zeppelin-esque riff, and the band knew immediately who they wanted to play guitar on it. “Before we went into the studio,”



“I ALWAYS TRY AND SING IT FIRST, AND TURN WHATEVER I SANG INTO THE GUITAR SOLO”

Adam recalls, “I started banking riffs. I was listening to Arctic Monkeys, stuff like *R.U.Mine?* I was like, ‘What if I tried writing something like that?’ I thought the rest of the band were all going to laugh at me because we were never going to play something that heavy. That’s why we asked Tom Morello to play on it. It felt so heavy and it had a Rage kind of vibe, so he had to be on it.”

However, Adam isn’t overshadowed by all these big names. His own lead style is extremely melodic, and he offers his thoughts on how to develop great lead lines. “Don’t just pentatonic scale it the whole time. It’s about trying to hit those chordal tones as you go through the music, and being more theory-driven, I guess. I always try and sing it first, and turn whatever I sang into the guitar solo. I always try and write more melodic licks. I love Brian May and the session

guitarist Tim Pierce, who plays on everything. I’ve just studied what he plays, how he moves over the changes and how melodic he is and that’s what I try to do.”

Melody is king, but the album still has some wild guitar wig-outs. “I like my noodle-fest at the end of *Cool*,” he says. “It literally feels like the train’s about to derail at any point. I used to listen to those old Stones songs, *Can’t You Hear Me Knocking* or *Sympathy For The Devil*”. It just feels like, ‘where’s it going?!’ I just love that uncertainty of it, so I was inspired by that.”

There’s also a Keith Richards-style looseness to his playing, an influence that shows up most obviously when he uses Keef’s favourite Open G tuning on the title track. “I’ve always listened to old records, where you can almost hear the skin touching the strings. The sloppier it is I always found it cooler. It’s not about playing bad

per se, but don’t try and play it so perfectly... which is easy for me!”

“Overall, it’s the most guitar-y album we’ve done,” reckons Adam. For all the riffing, though, there were just two guitars used. “My main Les Paul is the Mike McCready custom shop one that I’ve played pretty much every gig since I bought it. I just love it. I didn’t even know who Mike McCready was when I got it!”

“I got this custom-made Strat in February made by a guy called Bruce Nelson in LA. I found him through Graham [Whitford] from Tyler Bryant and the Shakedown. Graham’s dad is Brad Whitford from Aerosmith, and Bruce makes Joe Perry’s guitars. It’s a Strat with a humbucker in the bridge, big headstock, and a custom neck.”

To compensate for the lack of overdubs, Adam created a massive sound, but his pedalboard is surprisingly compact. “It’s pretty simple really, just overdrive, a fuzz

here and there, and delay on a solo. The reverb’s on all the time, and the Boss on every solo and most rhythm tracks.” The amp is boosted with a SoloDallas Storm, which adds compression based on the wireless system Angus Young used to record *Back In Black*. Reverb comes from a Strymon Flint’s 70s setting, delay from an MXR Carbon Copy, and for solos he often kicks in a Rimrock Mythical Overdrive. His Boss CE-2w chorus, in CE-1 vibrato mode, is on every solo and most rhythm tracks, subtly thickening the tone. But his current favourite pedal is the XTS Harlequin octave fuzz:

“A lot of fuzz pedals don’t work well with humbucking guitars or wireless systems, so I’ve just really struggled with them. This one just sounds wicked with everything that I use, so that was a real secret weapon.”

Tone hounds have praised Adam’s live sound, which comes from a blend of three amps. “It’s a Vox AC30 on top boost, a SoloDallas Black Flag, and a one-speaker, one-knob Supro. Everything goes through all of them. It covers every base, because you’ve got the Marshall kind of power from the Black Flag, the chimey Vox, and then this snotty little mid-range Supro.”

Whatever amp he’s using, Adam has a formula for an effective live tone. “I like pumping up the mids, taking down the treble, and getting the amp volume to where the clean starts to break up naturally. Then I’d whack an overdrive like my SoloDallas pedal on.”

Despite the pandemic, Adam remains motivated. “I’m picking up the guitar every day, even if it’s just working on my alternate picking technique. I’ve just got to keep playing, especially when we’re not gigging...”

It’s this dedication to improving that has kept The Struts moving upwards, and Adam is optimistic about their upcoming gigs. “We did some drive-in shows in August in Philadelphia and in Pittsburgh. I thought they’d have to stay in their cars but they managed to sit on the cars and enjoy the show. *That*,” he smiles, “was cool.”

GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER • WHEREVER

A passion for playing means that inspiration can strike anytime, anywhere. With Elixir® Strings you know that when you pick up your guitar it's going to sound great—time and time again. That's because our featherweight coating protects your strings from the elements, keeping corrosion away and allowing your tone to sound great for longer, in any environment.

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Words Amit Sharma

HIS WORK WITH **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**, **AUDIOSLAVE** AND **PROPHETS OF RAGE** HAS MADE HIM ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ROCK GUITARISTS OF HIS GENERATION. AND FOR THE READERS OF TOTAL GUITAR HE HAS A SIMPLE MESSAGE. “IT’S LESSON TIME,” **TOM MORELLO** SAYS. “SO WASH YOUR HANDS AND TUNE YOUR GUITAR. BUT IF YOU HAVE TO PICK ONE OR THE OTHER... WASH YOUR HANDS!”

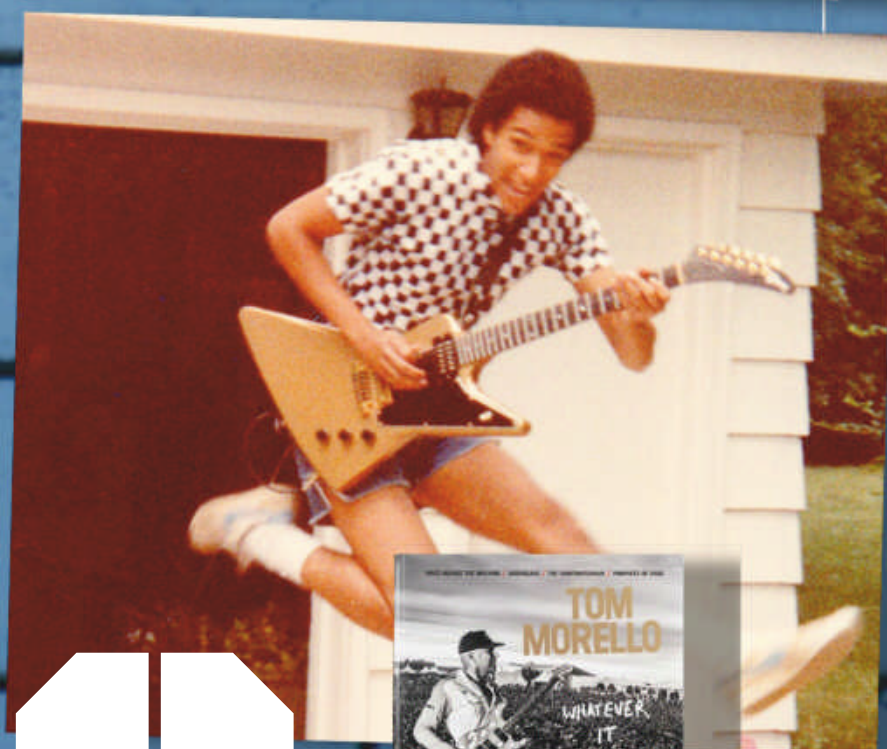
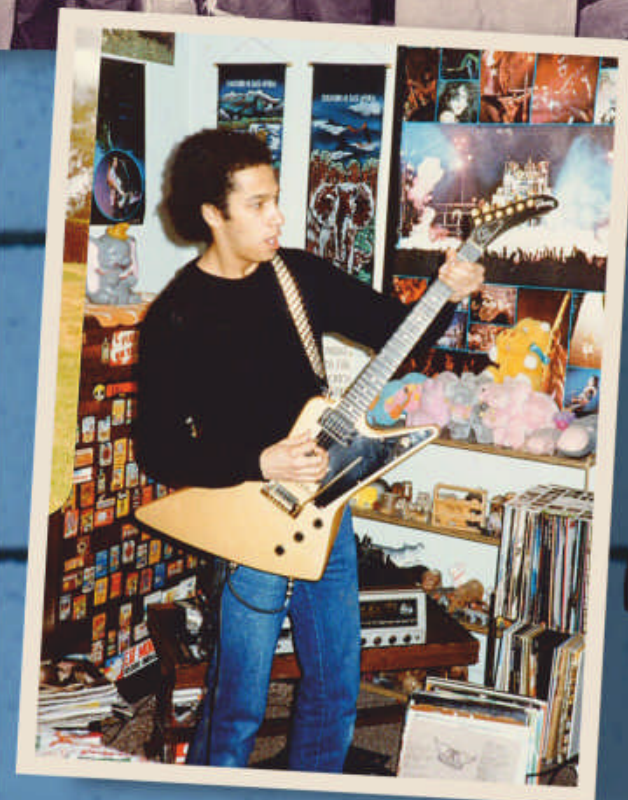


nce you can play something 150 times perfectly, you can move on... “It was a very fateful day when I learned how to alternate pick properly. While I was self-taught, I would occasionally take myself to a guitar shop in Highland Park, Illinois, if I wanted to learn a song – where a hippie stoner teacher would

show me my favourite Alice Cooper and Black Sabbath songs that I couldn’t figure out on my own. One day he was off sick and so I got sent to a room with the other guitar teacher, who was Michael Angelo Batio... The famous four-necked guy before he was famous! I had one lesson with him. He sat me down and told me to play something. I scrambled my way through some leads, trying to show off and sounding very hackneyed. He said, ‘It sounds like you want to play fast but you don’t know how!’ and I said, ‘That’s accurate, sir!’ So he wrote a series of exercises on one sheet of paper – fundamental picking exercises using quadruplets and triplets in different modes. He forced me to start slow and said once I had mastered the exercise, I could click the metronome up by one and eventually move on. I believed what he told me and it was a lesson that changed my life and led me to able to play solos like *Take The Power Back* and *#1 Zero* many years later.” 



WASTAR



WHATEVER IT TAKES
Morello's autobiography is out now, just in time for Christmas!

CLASS

PICKING IN THE NAME...

Hone your plectrum skills, Morello style

ALTERNATE PICKING SINGLE NOTES

♩=120

Play 4 times

TAB: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

Picking: V v V v V v V v V v V v

These kinds of rhythms are the kind Tom trained with. The 16th notes on beat 3 are the fastest part, so choose your picking method carefully on the preceding notes – there are several ways to pick this line!

ALTERNATE PICKING MELODIC LINES

Play 4 times

TAB: 7 9 10 7 9 10 8 10 9 7 10 9

Picking: V v V v V v V v V v V v

Tom describes using modal lines in his exercises. What's the difference? Well, now you have the challenge of changing picking direction as you cross from string to string. As Tom explains, starting slow is the way to go.

Create an alternate vocabulary of sounds to tell your own story...

"I began playing late, around 17 years old, and I'd never heard of another guitarist who made albums using noises in that way. Except for Robert Johnson, who had to sell his soul to the devil to get good! Given my Catholic upbringing, that wasn't really an option, so I had to put in my ten thousand hours. Most of that time was spent emulating my heroes like Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads, then later on Steve Vai and Yngwie Malmsteen. I realised that if you put in the hours, you can actually get into the same ballpark as those players. But what I didn't have was my own voice on the instrument. It was really in the beginnings of Rage Against The Machine where I self-identified as the DJ in the band and stopped looking at the guitar as this hallowed instrument on which there was only one way to get good. Instead, it became a piece of wood, with six wires, a few electronics, a couple of knobs and a toggle switch that could be deconstructed. Anything on that guitar was fair game, from the Allen wrench used to change strings to the guitar jack to even the pickups themselves. I started manipulating the instrument to create my own alternate universe of noise. You might not even need the guitar, like when I hit the cable against my hand going through a wah. Why not circumvent the whole thing!"



Look anywhere and everywhere for inspiration...

"Once I had the blinders off and realised the parameters of rock and roll guitar playing were not just Chuck Berry to Eddie Van Halen, I started practising sounds – whether that was DJ scratching or wild boars rutting at the zoo or the helicopters overhead. Even if I couldn't exactly mimic those sounds, practising non-guitar noises led my playing in an entirely different direction. It felt like that lane was open. There was no one else in it. I started constructing a whole sonic world out of these barnyard animal noises, old war films and Public Enemy records."

Use delay to create an infinite guitar assault...

"It was at that same guitar shop in Highland Park where I purchased a delay pedal.

I remember that feeling when you first plug in that first effects pedal you ever get, cranking all the knobs to maximum to make this wild and insane blizzard-like cacophony... It's so exciting! Then you buy the pedal and come home, dialling in a more subtle sound like a slight slapback or nuance to the mood. I never lost that original feeling. I wanted to carry cranking that shit up to see how wild it could get. On songs like *Revolver*, which has an introduction that I used to call 'The Forest Comes To Life', I had a custom-built Ibanez with this crazy noise-generating pickup in it. I would scroll through these bizarre macaws, squawks and jaguar howls using the delay cranked to maximum. The tapestry was like a forest coming to life! For *Cochise*, that was a really hard slapback delay – for each note you play, there's an instant doubling of it. By tapping a pen or pencil against the strings in rapid succession while muting them and moving the Whammy pedal up and down, I found a sound exactly like the police helicopters circling over Los Angeles."

Train your ear through random improv...

"When I was putting in my 10 or 20,000 hours, I would always use two hours out of the eight hours a day for random improvisation. I would literally take the radio dial and spin it. Whatever station I ended up on, I would try to fit into – whether it was classical, jazz, new

"I WOULD ALWAYS USE TWO HOURS A DAY FOR RANDOM IMPROVISATION"



TOM'S DJ SCRATCHING TECHNIQUE BROKEN DOWN

WHAT YOU NEED:

- A guitar with independent volume knobs for two pickups
- An amp set up with a mid-rich distortion tone
- Optional: Either a wah wah or an EQ pedal

STEP 1.

Set your tone. You'll need plenty of distortion and a biting midrange. An EQ booster or wah pedal will exaggerate the mids and get you closer to a DJ-style scratch tone.

STEP 2.

On your guitar, set one volume knob to maximum and the other to zero. A Gibson Les Paul in standard two-humbucker spec is ideal.

STEP 3.

In the *Bulls On Parade* solo, Tom scrapes the strings with one hand in a relatively slow movement. The rhythmic effect comes from toggling between the live pickup and the silent one using his other hand.

age, hip-hop or rock and roll. I spent a lot of time jamming along to John Coltrane and Charlie Parker, trying to feel my way into the vibe of those songs without any real jazz training. That's one of my favourite styles of music and it's really helped me in my playing. From Django Reinhardt to Wes Montgomery... They were huge influences on me, which is why the *Settle For Nothing* solo has so many chromatics and tabs out more like a jazz part.

Use the right tool for the job, whatever it may be...

"When we were doing the demos for the first Rage Against The Machine record, we had an engineer called Auburn Burrell and I borrowed his Les Paul for the end part of *Bullet In The Head*, the big outro section. When we were going in to make the record, I had my Telecaster and Arm The Homeless guitar and we each had \$600 to spend on gear. I wanted a Les Paul to double my principle guitars. I saw it on the wall of West LA Music in Santa Monica Boulevard and it was exactly the same colour as Taco Bell hot sauce. The



reason I know that is because Taco Bell was one of the main food staples of the squat I was living in. I thought to myself, 'That guitar looks exactly like the taco sauce we eat all the time!' and that's why I bought it. It was not a particularly expensive guitar and rarely stayed in tune, but it became the main overdub guitar for all my drop-D songs from that day forward - including *Killing In The Name*, the end of *Freedom*, the end of *Take The Power Back* and I used it just the other day on my newest recordings!"

Get to grips with music theory...

"There was a brilliant book called *The Guitar Handbook* which really helped flesh out some music theory for me, especially in terms of knowing what to call the scales I was using. I had figured out 86% of it on my own just from jamming so of course I was very surprised to find out that the feel and scales of different solos actually had names (laughs). For harmonic minor, I would say Randy Rhoads was the principal influence for me. He had one foot firmly planted in this classical minor key, almost violin-like proficiency and another in

"I STARTED MANIPULATING THE INSTRUMENT TO CREATE MY OWN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE OF NOISE"

WEE-YOO, WEE-YOO!

Tom's trademark Whammy pedal setting explained

That *Killing In The Name* solo might sound alien-like, but it's surprisingly simple to dial in the sound with a suitable pitch shifter. Tom uses DigiTech's Whammy pedal set to two octaves up – many multi-fx pedals also have suitable pedal-controlled pitch shifters though. As for actually playing the solo, again, it's not as tough as your ears might have you believe. In the main you'll be playing straightforward D minor pentatonic licks and rocking the Whammy pedal in an eighth note rhythm.



flat-out blues jamming to the nth degree. That always appealed to me.”

Embrace your limitations instead of fighting them...

“One thing I’ve been falsely accused of doing over the years is using a million effects pedals. That’s not true. I use four... And one of them, rarely! It’s basically the Whammy, the boost to go to 11 when I need to, the delay and the wah – and actually just the other day I released my signature Dunlop Cry Baby, which looks all revolutionary with red stars and sloganeering. It’s the exact internal workings of the pedal I bought when I was 18 years old and ended up on every single recording and live show I’ve ever played. And that’s it. Every crazy sound came from those. At first it was a matter of financial expediency. I didn’t have the money for pedals. When I got my first record deal in a band called Lockup prior to Rage Against The Machine, I bought some expensive rack gear that I didn’t understand how to use. It was very complicated. By the time someone explained how to use it, I felt like it made my guitar sound worse rather than better. I thought, ‘Screw it, I’m just going to stick with what I’ve got!’ I enjoy embracing limitations. I’ve had the same guitar setup, the exact same amplifier and pedals for the entirety of my career. I decided this would be my setup and I wouldn’t go crazy with buying new pieces of gear to seek sounds but rather

plumb the depths of my imagination and creativity to take this limited setup and get the maximum I can out of it.”

The more you practice, the more you will enjoy practising...

“All I can do is pass along the information and inspiration that was given to me. If you want to get good – you have to practice at least an hour a day every day without fail. All three parts of that are important. It doesn’t matter if you are sick or have an exam in the morning, you have to do it without fail. I found when I did that, I noticed my playing improving so much that it encouraged me to practice two hours a day every day without fail. Then four. Then six and eventually eight. Maybe my obsessive compulsive nature helped...”

Learn from and in front of others...

“You have to play with other musicians. That is key to learning and not becoming another YouTube basement shredder. Interacting with others will mean you will grow and learn a lot. Playing live is also very important. Once my punk rock band in Illinois had practised our songs to a tee, we felt very confident. Then we stepped in front of an audience and our combined abilities plummeted about 45% because we were so nervous. There’s nothing like live bullets firing to reveal what you can improve upon and provide that connection with the audience – which is the most important thing to create future inspiration.”

“ONE THING I’VE BEEN FALSELY ACCUSED OF DOING IS USING A MILLION FX PEDALS”



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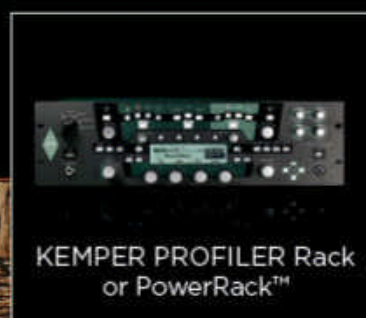
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Words Amit Sharma

Photography Howard Chen

THE EVOLUTION OF... Yvette Young

ONE OF THE MOST GIFTED AND INNOVATIVE GUITARISTS OF THE MODERN ERA EXPLAINS HOW SHE DEVELOPED A UNIQUE STYLE THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION, INTUITION AND PLAIN OLD-FASHIONED HARD WORK. AS YVETTE YOUNG SAYS:

“MY TIME IS STILL VERY MUCH BASED AROUND IMPROVING”

The last few years have witnessed the rise of some truly astonishing guitar talents from around the world – each striving to carve out their own identity through the instrument, in the hope of telling stories that have never been told.

Few, however, have felt as exciting as Yvette Young.

The Californian Ibanez endorsee and founding member of Covet is someone who plays by her own rules, using alternate tunings, fingerpicking, two-handed approaches as core fundamentals to bring out the ethereal and progressive sounds in her mind. Having started out on classical piano and violin and later taken heavy influence from the more ambient soundscapes of shoegaze, she once jokingly described her genre as “detail rock”, though in all fairness it’s a term that fits quite spectacularly.

In this conversation with TG, she looks back on her journey so far – the main challenges starting out, the secrets behind her most complex passages, tips for the pedalboard and what the future may hold for her own sonic evolution...

ng

➔ **When you were starting to get more creative with guitar, what felt like the biggest hurdles?**

"This is so funny, but I never really felt like I got good on guitar. The way I spend my time is still very much based around improving. When I think about the term 'good guitar' I end up thinking about total virtuosic shredding. I admire that stuff a lot but I can't do a lot of the things all these monster players do. When I think about getting, it's more about getting faster at conveying what I hear in my head and translating it to the fretboard. For me, that's when I feel like I'm good at guitar... When I can translate that vision instantaneously rather than sit around and dick around for a bunch of time!"

Is there anything you stumbled on that helped speed up that process?

"Well, it all comes down to experience. I could view that question a bunch of ways. For example, with my tone it came down to playing around with lots of gear and getting to know the nuances of different pedals, amps or simulators. So tonally, that will come from spending more time with my toys and amp. It's good to know how each knob will affect your tone. In terms of melody, translating those melodies from my mind to the instrument – that came from a lot of ear training. And my classical background played a big part there. I also think playing in so many different tunings, rather than sticking to standard, made it difficult for me to memorise shapes because I'm constantly changing the notes of each string. But it comes with time... The more I get used to every tuning, the quicker I get at remembering where certain intervals are."

Then, of course, there's a lot to be said for humming and singing notes as you play them...

"Yeah, one hundred per cent! That's how I write everything, I sing it first and that way I'm not letting convenience or habit dictate what I write. Instead, I'm writing intuitively with my voice and sense of melody. I feel like if you get good and stick to the shapes you know, stuff starts sounding the same. I prefer to sing and find the chords and melodies on the fretboard after."



Do you remember the first time you tuned differently and how you got around the challenges presented in doing that?

"I think the first time I did that was to learn a song by the Japanese band Toe. It was the song *Two Moons* that I was trying to learn. I found out they were using a different tuning, which to my ears sounded like FACGBE... Thank you, ear training! And yeah, I just did it all by ear. I just sang each note until I found it. So that was my first experience and from then on I started understand the tuning more and finding my own melodies."

As for the more intricate aspects of your style, what would you say are the main challenges on the technique side?

"I think the most daunting thing is thinking about music totally polyphonically, which is when I'm doing the more elaborate tapping and fingerstyle stuff. There are so many voicings within them. Sometimes when I go from really chugging chords to hearing that, even I'm wondering how the hell to play it all at once. The answer is always breaking it down into little

digestible parts. Because people always ask me how I write and memorise phrases that are not only intricate and long but also in compound time with meters that aren't in straight 4/4. That's a lot of stuff to think about while you play! And what works for me is breaking it all down into little pieces, even if it means going note by note and then stringing it all together. That's still my process to this day. It's like I just pick up the guitar and immediately play long phrases. Every part is really thought-out and deliberate. Maybe for other guitarists it's more improvisational or simpler chord structures, but with my stuff you can't do it all at once. It's one step at a time and then linking it all up at the end."

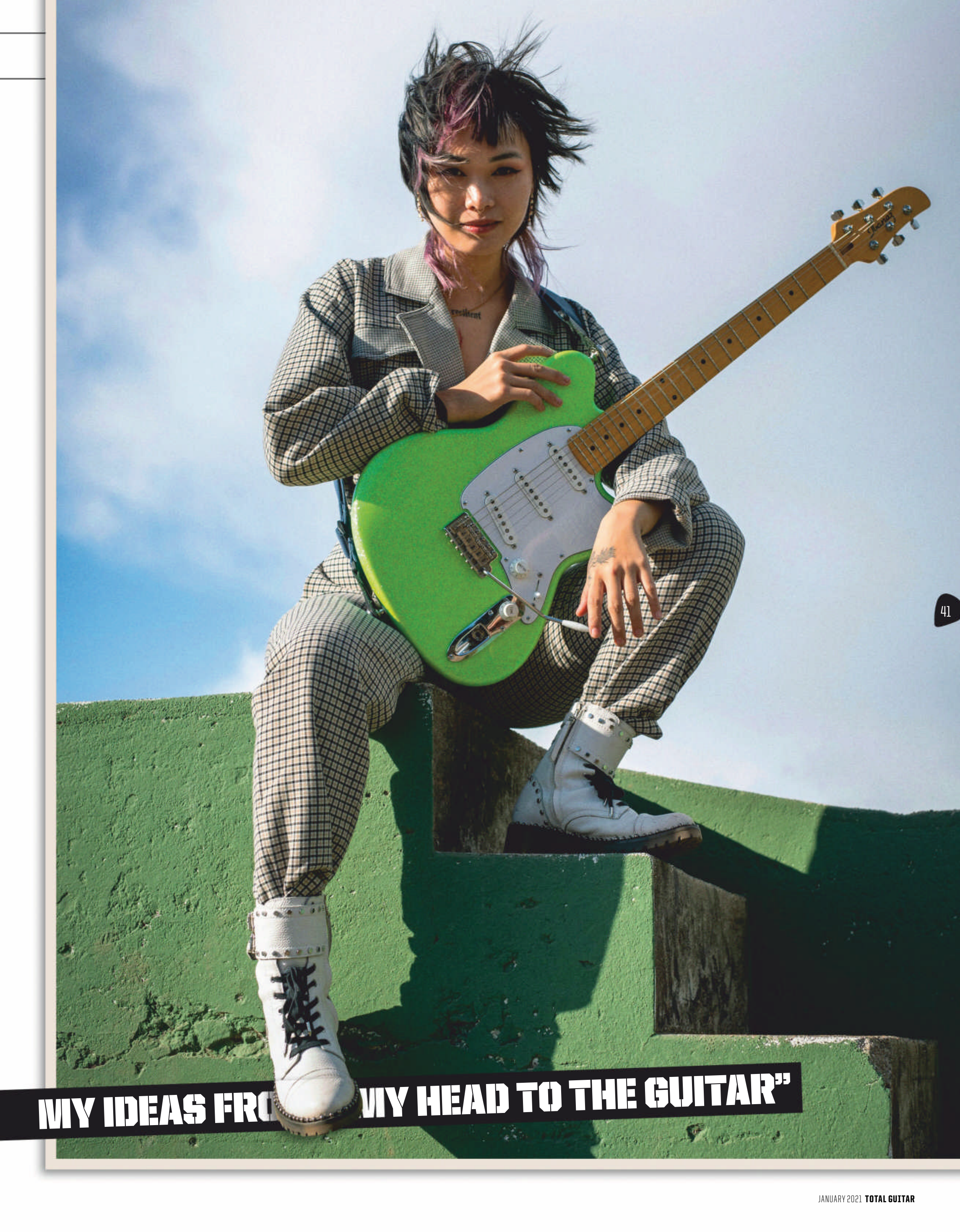
You have so many different licks under your belt, of course, but if there was one signature Yvette Young lick, what would it be?

"I guess the lick I'm most known for is the one in my song *Shibuya*. It's that tapping part – and when I wrote it, I had no idea it would become one of my most popular pieces. For starters, you have to tune to D A D F# A E with a capo on the second fret. The best tip I can offer for learning that is getting used to fingerpicking on the fretboard, rather than where your pickups are. That's because when you combine fingerpicking and tapping you don't want to travel the extra distance, with your picking hand jumping back and forth. You need to get used to it being one fluid motion and basing your picking hand around the 12th fret. A lot of my stuff is combining two-handed tapping with fingerpicking and chords. It's like combo-moves all the way [laughs]!"

Though you play through a low-watt British valve combo, your sounds are incredibly expansive and experimental. What advice could you offer someone setting up their first pedalboard to explore time and space Yvette Young style?

"Ooh, that's a great question! I would say a lot of the breakup you can actually get by playing with a compressor and pushing the tubes. It depends what kind of amp you have,

"I HOPE TO BECOME EVEN QUICKER AT TRANSLATING



MY IDEAS FROM MY HEAD TO THE GUITAR”



but if you're using a Vox AC30 or AC10 like me, a compressor can really help a lot. I use The Warden by Earthquaker and the sustain can really help with overdriven sounds by pushing your clean tone. Then I would say you need a chorus pedal, for sure. I use the Walrus Julia – they just came out with a stereo version called the Julianna, which is amazing as well. For the newer stuff that I've been writing for the next record, it's all been chorus-drenched [laughs]! Let's see, perhaps after that you'd want a nice delay for stereo-sounding passages. I use the Earthquaker Avalanche Run or my personal favourite which is the MXR Carbon Copy Deluxe, always running in the loop. But I have to say, for future stuff with the stereo rig I'm currently working on, I might actually play around with where things go in the chain. Delays are cool because you can actually use them a bit like a reverb, they can multi-task to some extent. As a final recommendation, maybe something like the MXR Bass Octave Deluxe. I used that a lot to add girth and weight to certain sections, it's a really fun pedal. Actually, maybe instead of that – a lot of people know me for a really warbly lo-fi sound so I have to mention the Caroline Guitar Somersault Modulator or the VZEX Lo-Fi Junky, which I think is

great for making your guitar sound like old tape."

So when a new pedal arrives, what exactly are the first things you do with it?

"I'm pretty intuitive in that way; I sit around and explore first and worry about what it sounds like later. I'll open a new pedal and just go for it, maxing out every dial and isolating each one so I know exactly what it does. You want to know how each parameter works in isolation but also how they interact with each other. Eventually I find a couple of settings that are very musical and

EFFLORESCE

"I definitely haven't put out my best material yet..."

usable, things that will inspire me. Honestly, sometimes I hear a tone and the melody comes immediately because the sound is so colourful, rich and inspiring. To me a great tone feels like a story waiting to be told... I know that sounds really cheesy! Sometimes I plug into gear and a song just happens. That actually happens about 70 per cent of the time. I might plan to play around with it but instead I ended up writing songs! If I want a challenge, I might actually look for a setting that I find cacophonous and unusable and then try to turn it into something melodic."

"I'LL OPEN A NEW PEDAL AND JUST GO FOR IT, MAXING

Speaking of which, how much do you think about music theory when composing or improvising?

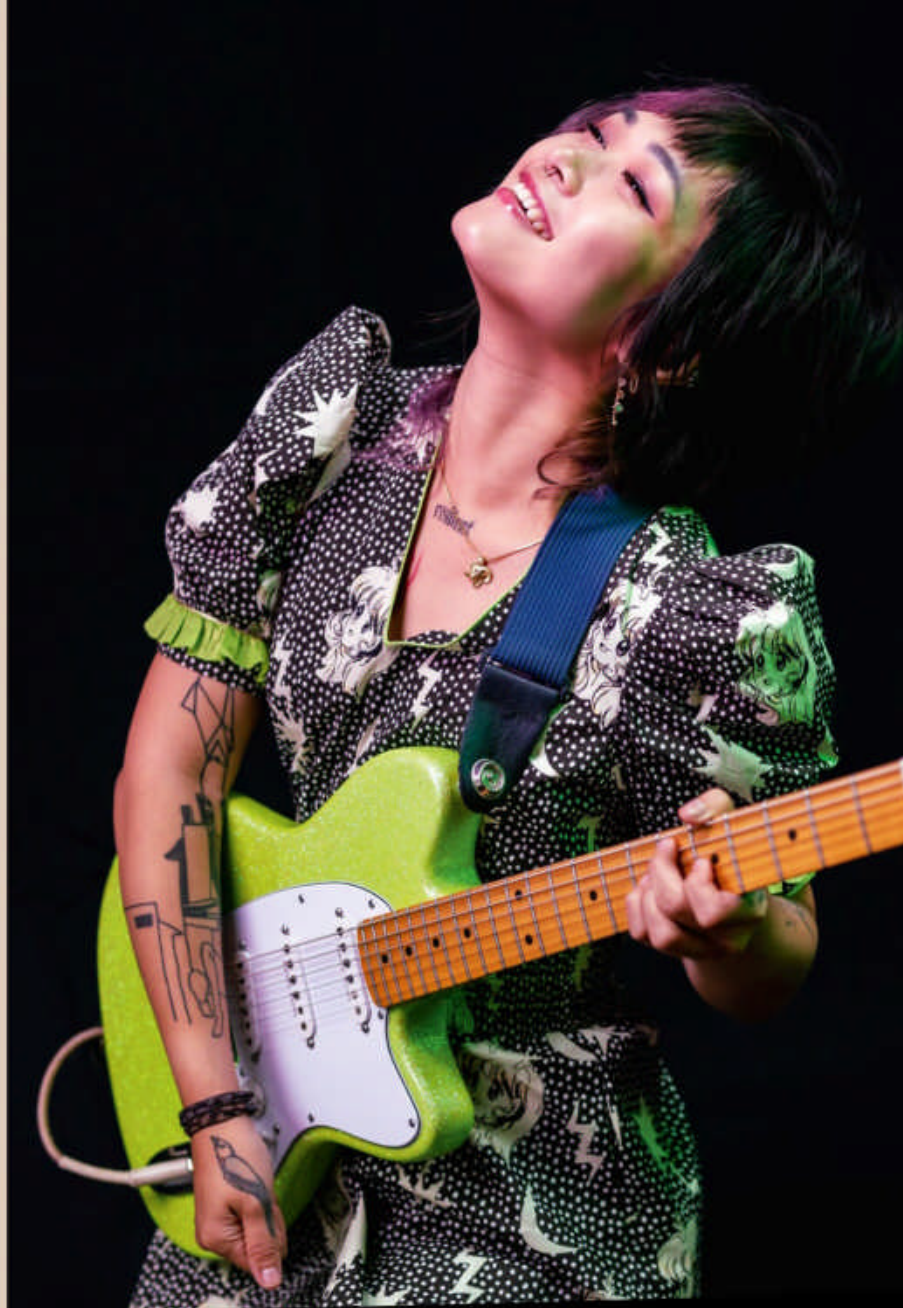
“Although I grew up with theory, I hardly ever think about it. I don’t really think about modes or anything because it’s so intuitive. This goes back to the ear training – it’s all there to help you get sounds out of your head and into the real world. In my childhood, I spent a lot of time studying different types of music and understanding how different notes relate to each other, identifying those intervals and learning the rules of harmony and dissonance. So it was the ear training specifically that benefitted me the most. Oh, and being exposed to music that was more freeform in meter rather than 4/4 like a lot of pop music. That’s where it all grew from. If you expose yourself to different things, it will naturally come out. Get really good at knowing the intervals in your head before you’ve even played them. And having a long musical memory really helps too, because I can store those phrases in my head without having to constantly refresh. If you want to build up the strength of your ear, instead of looking up tabs try to do everything by ear! See if you can actually hear it.”

What kind of ear training exercises helped – did you ever try using one of the apps?

“I never had an app but I did have this scary Russian person screaming at me [laughs]! So get yourself a teacher who terrifies you and then every time you get the interval wrong, you’ll get a slap on the wrist! I’m just kidding. I went to a music academy where I would get tested every day and have to identify different intervals and scales. I hope my conductor doesn’t read this, but even in the orchestra back in the day, somehow I finessed my way into being concert master on violin and I literally didn’t practice a single note because I hated it! Then the day before the audition I would just listen to the song and memorise it that way. I didn’t read the music. I mean, I could, but I was really slow at reading and found my ear was way faster. I’m quite impatient. That helped me survive the orchestra years... Pretending I was reading but actually using my ear.”



OUT EVERY DIAL ONE SO I KNOW WHAT IT DOES”



➔ **A lot of musicians use reference moments to remember different intervals – *Jaws* and the minor 2nd being one classic example...**

“For sure, and the same can be said with modes, and I’d use things I knew like *The Simpsons* theme to remember that was the sound of Lydian Dominant. Having reference points like that really helps, that’s how I knew different songs in different keys would have the same sound even if it’s in a different context. People use the same themes and motifs constantly, they just find clever ways to re-contextualise things. Isn’t it cool how certain modes and scales are evocative of certain feelings? I’m so fascinated by it all. Why is one scale so universally depressing to everyone, and another one so tense or another one sounding so outer space? It’s funny how certain intervals hit everyone in the same way.”

How would you explain tapping to someone who’s never tried it before?

“The first thing I would say is check your gear. A lot of people who ask me about tapping always wonder why my tone is so strong and good, while they find it sounds weak and sh*tty when they try it. Quite often, the action will be too high and they’ll be playing really thin strings like nines. So I always recommend lowering the action while also getting some heavier gauge strings. At first it will feel uncomfortable. I used to play 13s because I’m a psycho, but now I’m back at 12. I would say 11 is a perfect gauge for people who still need to bend and fingerpick as well as tap. Because of my piano background, I do this intuitively, but I feel like the way you hit the strings is important, the lift-off is just as important as when you tap down. It’s like pressing a button down really quickly but gingerly lifting off so the decay of the note still sounds smooth. You need to do it at the exact right time so you don’t mute your own tap. It’s kinda tricky to explain, but also try tapping within each fret to find out where you get the best tone. I tend to

quicker at translating my ideas from my head to the guitar. That will only come from practising. You need to spend a lot of time with it to get there... I don’t feel like I’m there yet. I’d also like to get more comfortable with jamming with all kinds of musicians, because right now I’m such a private person when I compose. There isn’t anything necessarily wrong with that, when I write I have to be in my own headspace. I can’t have any other energy there, pulling my brain in a different direction. It’s truly meditative. But that said, I’d like to get more comfortable around others and more open in my process, allowing myself to vibe off someone else’s energy. Jamming might not be the best way for me to write, but I’d still like to improve there. It’s just another skill, right?!”

So what do you think the next *Covet* record will sound like?

“I was actually thinking about that just the other day. I definitely haven’t put

out my best material and I’m sat on a load of new songs that I’m really excited about – I hope that feeling stays. I want it all to come out in the best way possible. I’ve been writing a lot during quarantine. Whatever I put out next will be even more intentional and musically stronger as a result.”

Finally, what would you say is the one thing every guitarist should avoid?

“It’s almost paradoxical. The way I write and my general style is all based on things that excite me but don’t sound like anyone else. So you have to figure out what excites you. Of course, learn other people’s styles but at the end of the day don’t try to be anyone else. Take that information but carve your own path. You’ve got to find your own sound. You’ll know when you do, because when you play, you will feel something very special. That’s how I know I’m doing something right – when I literally start glowing from the way it makes me feel.”

“IF YOU WANT TO BUILD UP THE STRENGTH OF YOUR EAR, INSTEAD OF LOOKING UP TABS TRY TO DO EVERYTHING BY EAR!”

find it’s the upper half, closer to the next fret. Check to see when you lift up what is still ringing out, if there are any overtones or noises. You need to get used to that motion and strengthening every finger – you want them all to sound nice and even.”

Tuning to obscure chords also frees up more open strings, which can often catch the listener off-guard and, in your case, add to the progressive charm...

“Definitely. I also sometimes tune pairs of strings as an octave, so you have this constant drone. Open strings are cool because you can use them to harmonise automatically in key to whatever you are playing. The same goes for capos, they can help diversify your palette.”

What would you like to accomplish as a guitar player over the next five years?

“I guess I hope to become even

TECHNICOLOR
“I know I’m doing something right when I start glowing from the way it makes me feel”

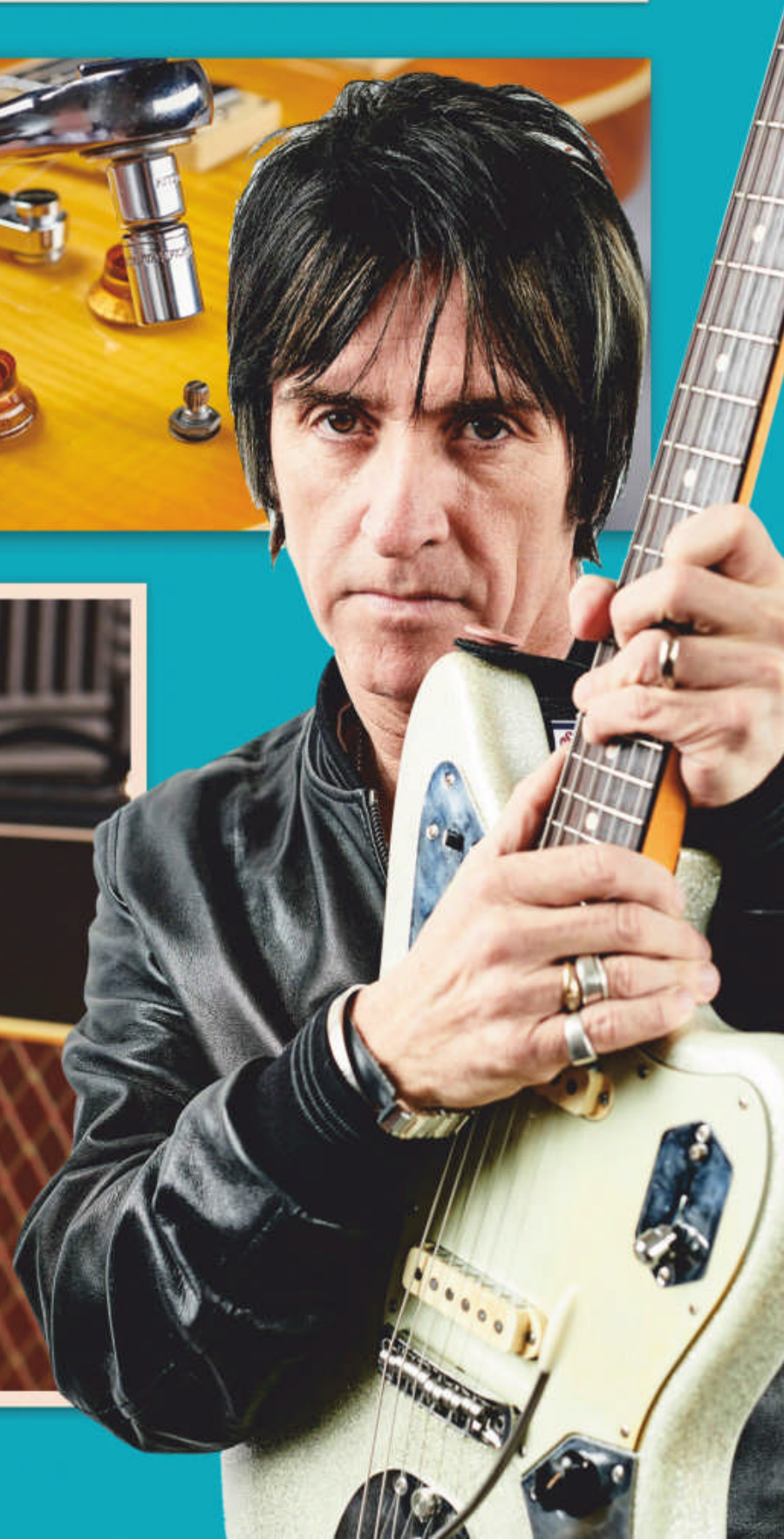


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EASY GUITAR LESSONS

JOIN US AS WE PRESENT 50 BITE-SIZED WAYS FOR YOU TO IMPROVE YOUR PLAYING, EXPLORE NEW GUITAR TONES AND GET MORE FROM YOUR GEAR!

We live in a world where we're always looking for shortcuts to help us make the most of the limited time we have. It's no different with the guitar – we all want to take the time to do things the right way, but sometimes you just want to get on and play. After all, the best thing about playing the guitar is the time you spend actually jamming the riffs, songs and solos you love.

So, over the following pages, you'll find 50 lessons to help you do just that – easy, quick shortcuts and simple lessons to help you play better, sound better and get more from your gear. There's something for everyone to learn and hopefully it's all good fun too.

Turn the page and let's get started!





GEAR, TECHNIQUE AND RECORDING LESSONS

Let's kick off with an assortment of easy tips



EQ and compression pedals. Next are distortion/overdrive effects, then boosts, then modulation effects (chorus, flangers, phasers etc). Delay comes next, before reverb at the end. Don't forget, experimentation with effects is half the fun, so don't be afraid to break the rules and see what happens!



LESSON 04 Get more from your multi-effects unit

The mythical four-cable method could give your multi-effects unit extra versatility. All you need is an amp with an effects loop, a multi-effects with send, return and input sockets, and four cables.

1. Plug your guitar into the your effects unit's instrument input.
2. Run a cable from your effect's output to the amp's effects in/return socket.
3. Connect a cable from the amp effects send into the pedal's effects return.
4. Finally, connect the pedal's effects send to the amp's main input.

This will enable you to place effects in the amp's loop as you would with physical pedals. Most modern multi-effects units allow you to choose where the loop occurs in the signal chain, giving you the option to bypass your amp's preamp all together. It might take you an afternoon of fiddling, but the results can be spectacular!

LESSON 05 Overdrive, distortion and fuzz. What's the difference?

This trio increase your gain in different ways. All create distortion, so the lines between them can be blurred – the sound of many pedals genuinely overlaps between the three.

AMPS, PEDALS & EFFECTS

LESSON 01 Set your amp tone up for the stage, not the bedroom

We hate to say it, but all those hours you spent painstakingly tweaking your amp to sound perfect when you're rocking out at home were fun, but they're not necessarily going to help you very much when you come to play in a live environment. To make your amp sing in a gig or practice, you have to think about your place in the mix. So, for simplicity's sake let's say the bass and drums take up the low frequencies, while the cymbals and vocals occupy the highs – where does that leave you? The middle! So, when you're setting your amp's eq at a gig, give the mid control a twist to the right and notice how all of a sudden you hear yourself cutting through!

LESSON 02 Keep your pedals going in emergencies

If you ever find yourself with a dead battery-powered pedal and no time to replace it mid-set, this one's for you. Keep a standard nine-volt battery in your gig bag, along with a nifty battery clip with the right sized power jack on the end (most electronics stores sell them). It's an instant power supply you can buy for a couple of quid!

LESSON 03 Get your pedalboard in the right order

The order you place your pedals in your signal chain has a significant impact on your tone, and, while there are no ultimate rules, there is a generally accepted order that will get the best out of your effects. The start point is wah then

TO MAKE YOUR AMP SING IN A GIG OR IN PRACTICE, THINK ABOUT YOUR PLACE IN THE MIX



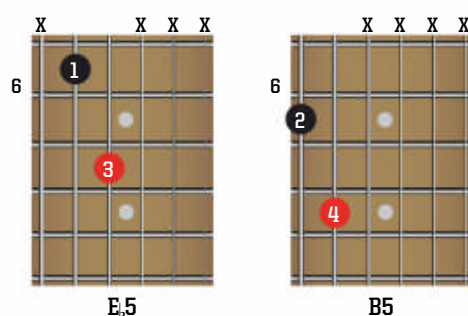
TECHNIQUE

LESSON 07 Practise fast, play better

Whether you're interested in playing fast or not, you can use speed and tempo training to help you learn new music. Here's how it works. All you need is a metronome or drum machine app and your guitar.

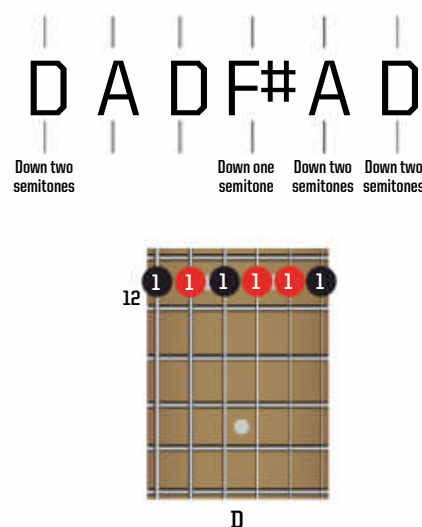
1. Choose a short passage of music to practise.
2. Set your metronome slow enough for you to play the passage without mistakes.
3. Repeat your riff over and over for 60 seconds.
4. Raise the tempo by two or three beats per minute then start again.
5. Keep increasing the tempo, before trying your starting speed again. It should feel easier now.

LESSON 08 Friedman & Mustaine's spider powerchord fingering



Back in Issue 171, Marty Friedman told TG about his 'spider' fingering for powerchords, explaining that this four-fingered approach allows him to play faster, cleaner changes. The first/third finger shape is the obvious fingering, but if you add in a second/fourth finger shape you can cross the strings and cover the fretboard swiftly. Try alternating between the two shapes shown here, paying close attention to the fingering.

LESSON 09 Use open D tuning for one-finger major chords

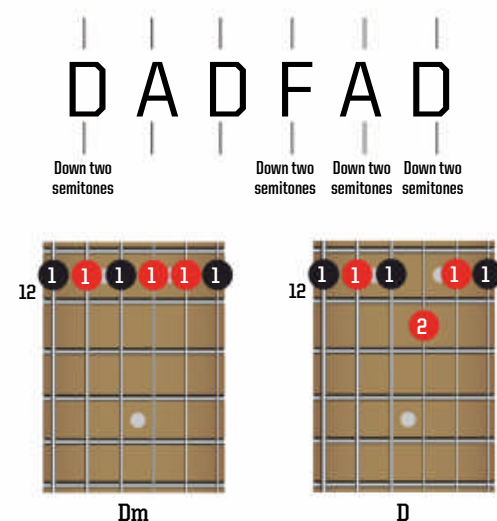


Change your tuning from standard to open D (D A D F# A D) and your guitar's open strings produce the bright sound of a D major chord – that's because the notes of the tuning are the same as the chord's notes. It also means you



can play major chords by barring across all six strings with one finger. Easy! Retune the first, second, third and sixth strings. The other strings are the same as standard.

LESSON 10 Open Dm. Like open D, but easier



Open D has one key drawback: if you're playing one-finger major chords it can be difficult to adapt the shape when a minor chord crops up. The solution? Try open D minor instead – this allows you to play one-finger minor chords that are much easier to adapt to play a major chord. If you're in open D, lower the third string a further semitone to D minor.

Generally, overdrive is mildest and will drive a valve amp into smooth distortion. Most overdrives use gentle 'soft clipping', unlike distortions, which use harsher 'hard clipping' to flatten the waveform's peaks and create increased harmonics with lower dynamic range. And what makes fuzz fuzzy? The clipping threshold is even lower than a distortion pedal – and the resulting wave can be almost totally square. With that comes a series of strange, abrasive harmonics, and in extreme effects an almost synth-like squarewave sound.

LESSON 06 The key to harmoniser mastery

Harmonisers blend your signal with a pitch-shifted interval to imitate dual-guitar lines. Think *The Boys Are Back In Town* and you'll get the idea. Most units operate in similar ways. Simply set the interval you want the pedal to create, and blend the direct and harmonised signals together. However, you'll get more from your harmoniser if you know about key signatures. Let's say you're playing in C major (C D E F G A B) and you set your pedal to harmonise four semitones up. Play a C note, your harmoniser will give you an in-key E. Hooray! Trouble is, you won't always get an in-key note – and that's a problem. The solution? 'Intelligent' harmonisers such as the Boss Harmonist PS-6 can be set to stay in key. Tell it your root note and whether you want major or minor. Job's a goodun!





HOME RECORDING

LESSON 11 Play the same parts in different tunings

Layering multiple takes of the same part and placing them in your mix can make you sound huge, but why not take it a step further? If you're laying down chords, try playing the same part using different inversions, either with alternative shapes, tunings or a capo to increase the depth of your multitracked parts without just creating a wall of the same noise.

LESSON 12 Create a fake acoustic sound

A great way to add depth and texture to your electric guitar recordings is to capture the acoustic sound of your strings. This is less of an 'acoustic' guitar sound than it is percussive, but you'll be able to layer it amongst your tracks to give extra character to your recordings. Just place a condenser mic near the fingerboard.

LESSON 13 Use your pedal as a recording interface

You can spend a lot of money on an audio interface to record with, but before you drop your hard earned, check out your multi-effects pedal! Multi-effects have included USB audio outputs for many years now, and it's the simplest way of getting your guitar signal into your computer. Same goes for modelling amps – just hook it up to your computer, and you're recording for free!

LESSON 14 Tuning trick: more accurate intonation

Due to some very complicated physics, no guitar is ever 100 per cent in tune at every note on the fretboard – and when you tune your guitar at the 5th fret you may find the higher notes on your instrument sound less 'in tune'.

If a song you play is based higher up the neck, try tuning with notes in that range of the fretboard for more accurate intonation. Your tuner picks up the notes whichever fret you're on.

LESSON 15 Tuning trick: a fatter sound

Double-tracking will get you a bigger sound. It's a simple idea. Just record the same part twice and pan hard left and right. So where does tuning come in? Well, try this. Record one part in concert pitch and double-track a second guitar tuned a fraction lower. Pay attention to your tuner, though – we're only talking about four or five hundredths of a semitone here. It's a great way to create a pseudo-chorus effect, great for jangly cleans but perhaps not so good for tight, thrashy, distorted powerchords.

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TONE HEROES

Get the secrets behind the sounds as TG dials in 10 of the most iconic guitar tones of all time

PHIL COLLEN

A snapshot of Leppard's axeman playing his Jackson PC1 Au Natural

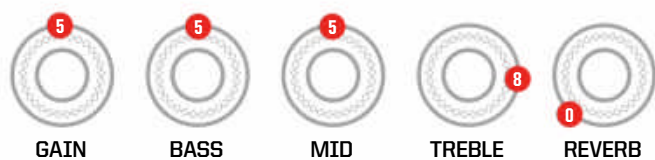


AMPS, PEDALS & EFFECTS

Steely Dan – *Reelin' In The Years*

Elliot Randall attributes the tone on *Reelin'* to his 1963 Fender Strat equipped with a retro-fitted 1969 Gibson humbucker in the neck position, which he played through a cranked 400 watt Ampeg SVT bass amp. Not exactly a traditional rig, and, unsurprisingly, an unusual guitar sound. To get close to Randall's tone, select a neck humbucker and set your amp's EQ on the trebly side. A fuzz pedal may help you get closer to the sizzling highs of that dined Ampeg.

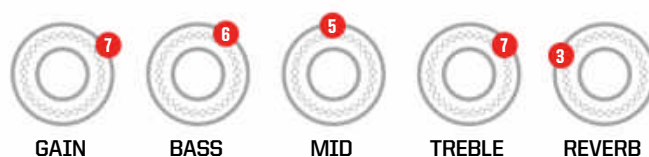
CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



Def Leppard – *Photograph*

Phil Collen used his black Ibanez Destroyer alongside Steve Clark who played a Les Paul XR-1 (the forerunner to the Les Paul Studio). Still, these particular guitars aren't essential – just make sure to use a bridge humbucker for the dirty sounds and solos, but switch to the middle position for the sparkling cleans. A dash of compression and chorus will help your cleans cut through and give you some of the classic glossy 80s production sound.

CHANNEL: DISTORTION



Van Halen – *Ain't Talk' 'Bout Love*

The swirly sound in the solos came courtesy of Eddie's MXR Phase 90 pedal (don't mistake this for the left-panned electric sitar!) set to a slow, low-in-the-mix sound. An Echoplex delay was used throughout, set roughly to a dotted eighth note repeat (about 320 ms at 138 bpm). Finally, kick in a flanger at the end of bar 2 of the main riff. Eddie used a Marshall Super Lead amp coupled with an H&H power amp to help create his trademark 'brown sound'. Many modelling amps will have a suitable preset.

CHANNEL: DISTORTION



ZZ Top – *Gimme All Your Lovin'*

This track was cut using Billy Gibbons' custom Dean Z guitar with a bridge position DiMarzio Super Distortion pickup. The Dean was recorded dry with a Legend 50-watt hybrid unit with valve preamp and transistor power amp. For best results, use a humbucker-equipped guitar, select the drive channel on your amp and keep the treble and mids high and the bass low. If you're using single coils, increase your gain and maybe dial in a little more bass to compensate for the thinner sound of this type of pickup.

CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



Dire Straits – *Brothers In Arms*

You probably think of a Fender Stratocaster when you think of Mark Knopfler, but he recorded this track with a Gibson Les Paul Standard with neck pickup selected and plugged into a Marshall JTM45 amp. The swells were created using an Ernie Ball volume pedal – a crucial part of the sound! Dial in enough gain on your amp for the loudest licks in the outro solo and back off your guitar volume to reduce

HOW SOON IS NOW? IS REGARDED AS A TREMOLO CLASSIC, BUT IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT

the distortion on the earlier, cleaner sounding lines. Use a neck position humbucker and a moderate amount of amp gain.

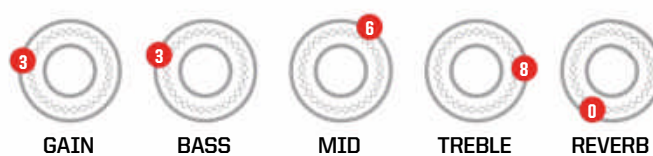
CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



Queens Of The Stone Age - Little Sister

Live, Josh Homme usually uses a humbucker-equipped Motor Ave BelAire with Ampeg and Greedtone amps. We recommend dialing in a very light overdrive sound on your amp and using a fuzz pedal (Josh likely used his Stone Deaf PDF-1 drive pedal) with the treble set fairly low to get a ballpark tone. Choose a guitar with a humbucker and experiment with bridge and neck positions – you may find the neck gets you closer to Josh’s treble-light tone.

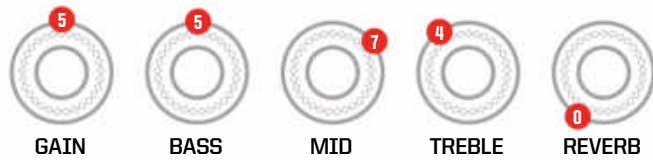
CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



Led Zeppelin - Communication Breakdown

The whole of Led Zeppelin’s debut album was recorded with Jimmy Page’s Dragon art Fender Telecaster with a Supro Coronado 1690T amp, a Sola Sound Tone Bender overdrive, an Echoplex EP-3 tape delay and a Vox wah-wah. A bridge position single coil pickup on a T-style guitar will get you most of the way, but check out Boss’ new Waza Craft TB-2W Tone Bender pedal for authentic Led Zeppelin fuzz tones.

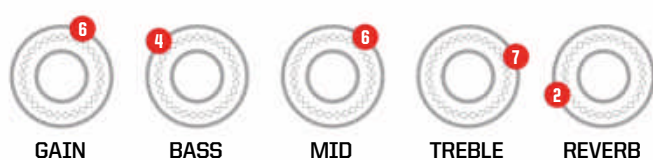
CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



The Police - Message In A Bottle

In the early days of The Police, Andy Summers played this track on his Fender Telecaster Custom, usually set to its bridge position single-coil pickup through Marshall 1959 Super Lead heads and Marshall cabs. Ideally set your amp quite loud but without much preamp gain. A flanger gives you Andy’s rounded glassy tone (he used an Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress), and dial in a little compression to increase the sustain.

CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



ANDY SUMMERS

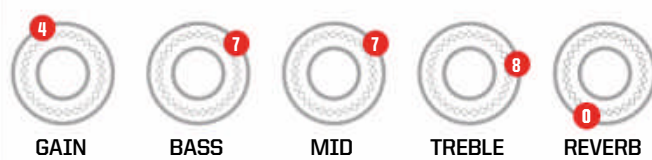
No chorus, but some flanger cleans on Message In A Bottle



Soundgarden - Black Hole Sun

The wobbly-sounding intro line is played using an EBow and a long stereo delay through a Leslie speaker. A rotary speaker emulator is just the ticket to recreate the signature warble. Kim Thayil most likely used his humbucker-equipped Guild S-100. You need clarity on the low arpeggios so dial in plenty of treble on your amp. A Mesa/Boogie-style distortion works well for high-gain sounds. Take care not to use too much gain, though; much of that muddy, ‘grungy’ sound comes from downtuning to drop D, not purely from high gain.

CHANNEL: OVERDRIVE



The Smiths - How Soon Is Now?

Johnny Marr’s crowning achievement in The Smiths soundscapery is often heralded as a tremolo-pedal classic, but the actual recording is far more complex than that. The original track features an Epiphone Casino running through a Fender Twin, which was then played back through four Twins set to the vibrato channel. Johnny Marr and producer John Porter struggled to keep the parts vibrating in time, which resulted in the pair recording the riff in 10-second bursts. Thankfully, nowadays you can get a remarkably similar effect using a square-wave tremolo, with tap tempo to sync it to the track’s bpm.

CHANNEL: CLEAN





MAINTENANCE AND MODIFICATIONS MADE EASY

Your guitar's performance will make or break your sound. Keep the most important parts shipshape with our easy tweaking tips

LESSON 16 Reduce nut friction

If you're finding that a string suffers from erratic or unstable tuning, it might well be because the string is catching in your guitar's nut. Sometimes this can necessitate the nut being filed, or even replaced, but before you get extreme, try lubricating your nut slots. You can buy bespoke nut lubricants to do this of course, but a quicker, easier method is to use a pencil in the nut slot of the problem string – the graphite in the pencil lead should smooth up the travel of the strings on the nut. It'll give you steadier tuning and smoother string bends.



LESSON 17 Improve tuning stability

Did you know that having too much string wrapped around your tuners can cause tuning stability issues, and so can having too little? To reduce the risk of the string slipping when brought up to pitch, aim to have between two to five turns of string on each tuner post: two or three turns for wound strings, four or five turns for the thinner strings.

LESSON 18 Intonate your guitar

Having your intonation set right is vital – playing up at the dusty end will just sound bad! Thankfully, it's a simple enough to do yourself, provided your electric has adjustable saddles. Get your guitar and a tuner, then play a harmonic at the 12th fret. Compare the harmonic's pitch to the note produced when you fret it normally – if it's sharper, move the saddle backwards slightly, if it's flatter, move it

forwards (remember FFF: fret, flat, forward). Repeat for the other strings and you'll be intonated perfectly!

LESSON 19 Make strings last longer

To a greater or lesser degree, we all sweat from our hands when we play guitar, and over time if left untouched, this will corrode your strings into a dull, lifeless mess. So, whenever you finish playing, take a dry cloth and rub down your strings to get rid of any moisture, and notice how your strings now stay bright and zingy for longer.

LESSON 20 Beat signal breakup

Cables are the main offenders here, so your first port of call is to check yours isn't a dud. If you're sure the problem is with your guitar start by checking that the jack socket nut is tight and holding it in place: if not, tighten it up with pliers or a spanner. CruzTools makes the brilliant Guitar Jack And Pot wrench, which will fit every fixing on your guitar. Next, you need to look at the actual jack itself. Assuming your wiring is sound, the problem most likely lies in the terminals. The sprung steel can bend out of position over time, but it needs to be in contact with the tip and barrel of your cable for your signal to flow. Plug the lead in and gently bend



it back into position, so you get a tight fit when plugging in.

LESSON 21 Fix crackly pots

Your guitar's control 'pots' (short for potentiometers) are mechanical, and have a limited lifespan. However, before you change them, it's worth giving them a clean, as dust is often the crackly culprit. You'll need to get into the control cavity and locate the dodgy control. The metal casing for your control is exactly that – the hard work goes on inside, and that's what we need to clean. Take a look at the back of the pot, and you'll notice a small hole. Get a can of compressed air, attach the straw to the nozzle of the spray can and squirt it into the guts of the pot. Give the pot some vigorous turns for 10



HAVING TOO MUCH STRING WRAPPED AROUND YOUR TUNERS CAN CAUSE STABILITY ISSUES



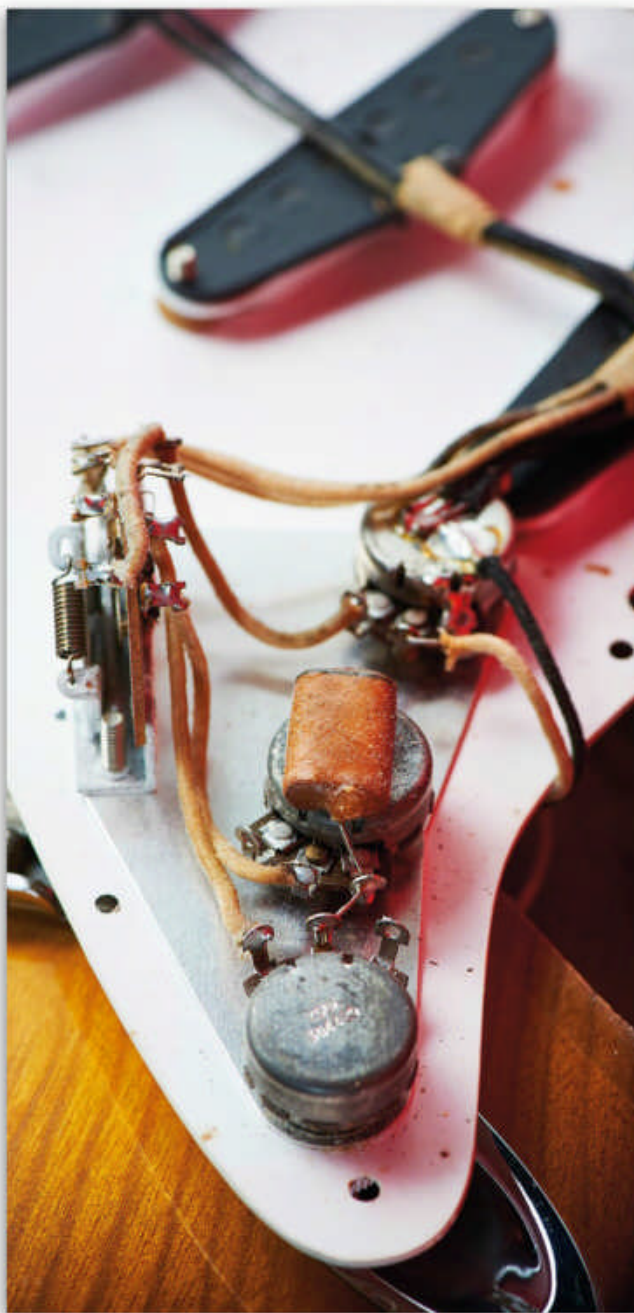
seconds or so, and you'll hopefully find any dust has been dislodged. No luck with compressed air? Try the same process with a can of electrical contact cleaner.

LESSON 22 Make new strings stay in tune

How often have you restrung a guitar only to find that the damn thing won't stay in tune properly? Well, it's because strings need to stretch and settle for a bit. Annoying, but good news – you can speed the process up yourself easily! Starting with the low E string, simply grip the string about half way along its length, and pull it up off the fretboard – not too much, it's not a bow and arrow, just until you feel it get taught – release, and repeat! Do this a few times on all your strings, and you'll find your tuning much more stable.

LESSON 23 Stiffen your controls' motion

There's nothing more frustrating than accidentally knocking your control knob mid-song and mucking up your tone – or worse, cutting it altogether! If your knobs are so easily turned that this is a regular problem, there's an easy fix. Simply remove your control knob and slot a rubber washer or O-ring (available from any DIY shop) over the post. Pop your knob back on and the washer will cause the friction between your guitar's body and the knob, making it much harder to turn. A word of caution – if your guitar has a nitrocellulose finish, the rubber washer



could potentially mark or even damage the finish, so do this at your peril!

LESSON 24 Give your Strat a bridge position tone control

The Stratocaster bridge pickup is an immensely versatile beast, but one that's caged thanks to the lack of a tone control in Leo Fender's original configuration. Thankfully, changing this is a very simple if you're not intimidated by a simple soldering job. First, locate the wire connecting the Strat's second tone pot to the pickup selector switch (it'll be connected to the middle pickup at this point). Unsolder this, and move it one tag towards the middle of the switch and solder it back up.

Done! Want to test it out? Crank up your gain and knock the tone down to about halfway, and you'll find that polite single coil sounds suspiciously like a humbucker!

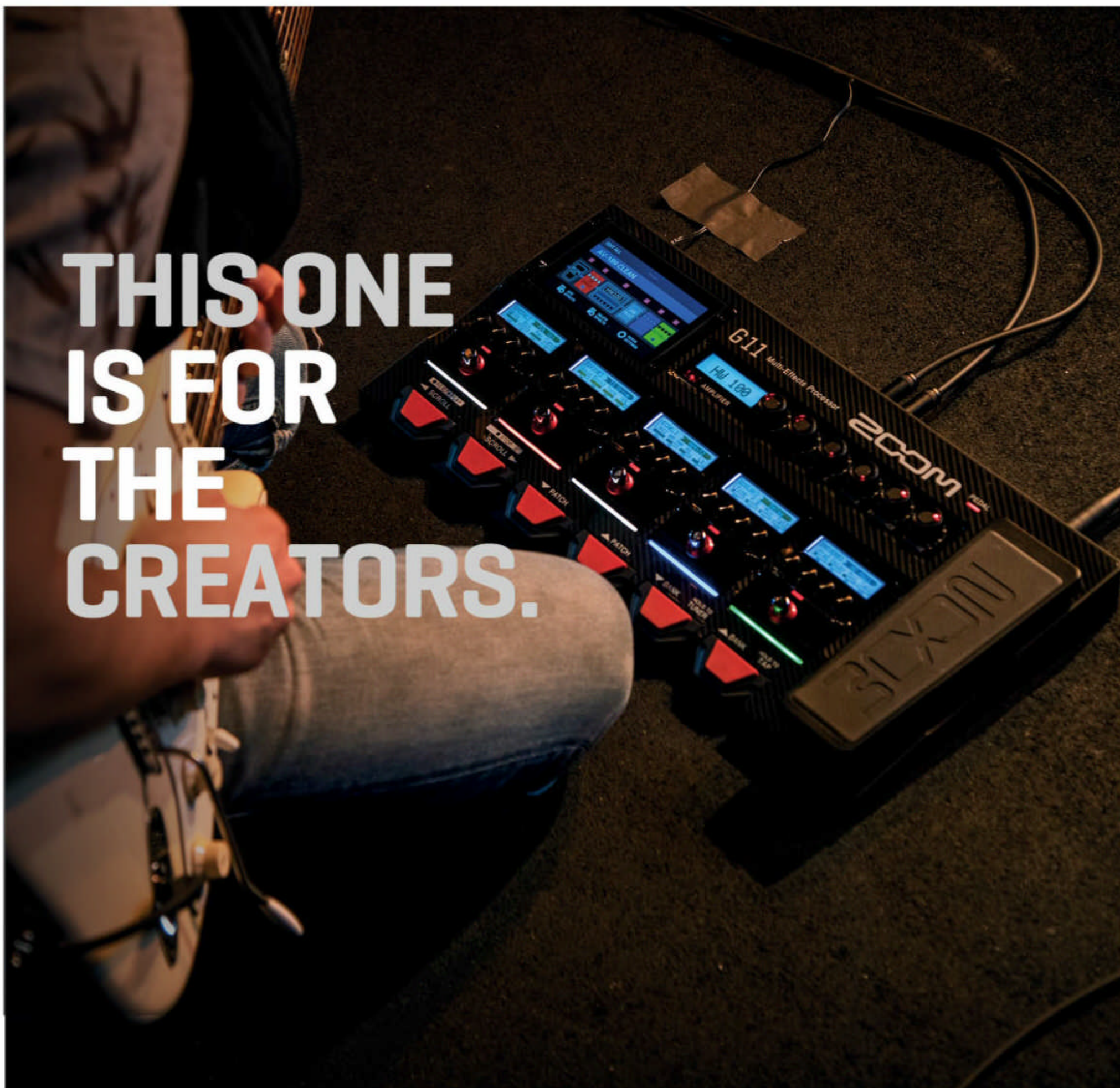
LESSON 25 Top wrap your Les Paul bridge

Joe Bonamassa is the king of the modern Les Paul, but he also does something unconventional with his bridges. JoBo, like many other LP users, thinks that they sound better with the Tune-o-matic tailpiece screwed all the way down, improving the connection between wood and strings, and in theory making the guitar more resonant. However, doing this creates a steep break angle between the bridge and the tailpiece, making bending harder. The solution is to string the tailpiece 'backwards' as if it's a wraparound bridge – known as 'top wrapping', this decreases the break angle, leading to easier bends and (allegedly) increased resonance. Simple!



HAVING INTONATION SET RIGHT IS VITAL – PLAYING AT THE DUSTY END WILL JUST SOUND BAD!

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EASY RHYTHM GUITAR

CHALLENGE!

Apply all three strumming patterns to all three examples

Strumming is all about steady timing. Usually, you'll be locking in with a groove laid down by the rhythm section, and, of course, you'll be using a mixture of down- and upstrokes. And if you ever find your timing going a bit wayward, well, it's usually offbeat upstrokes that throw players off. Follow our simple tab and audio examples to hone your timing. If we have one tip, it's to keep your strumming hand moving down and up constantly without speeding up or slowing down.

LESSON 26 EASY DOWN-UP STRUMMING

TRACK 7

♩=100

Cadd⁹ **Cmaj⁷** Play 4 times

TAB: 0 3 0 2 3 | 0 0 0 2 3

Strumming: ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Start with this easy strumming pattern which is played: down, down up, down, down up. The chord change from Cadd9 to Cmaj7 is easy and shouldn't affect your timing at all.

LESSON 27 EASY DOWN-UP STRUMMING

TRACK 8

♩=110

G⁵ **C⁵** Play 4 times

TAB: 5 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 5

Strumming: ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Here, the first half of the strumming pattern is the same as before but the chord change comes on an offbeat upstroke. Keep a constant down-up motion going to keep your timing tight.

LESSON 28 EASY DOWN-UP STRUMMING

TRACK 9

♩=120

E7#9 Play 4 times

TAB: 8 7 6 7 7 | 8 7 6 7 7

Strumming: ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

The first half of this Hendrix-inspired pattern is a straight down-up approach. The second half is played with two upstrokes – not necessarily difficult, but the timing is a bit more of a challenge for most.



THREE WAYS TO USE YOUR VOLUME CONTROL

The volume knob on your guitar is a powerful expression and tone shaping tool. You can use it to gradually fade notes in and as a way to reduce/increase your gain level. Ideally you want to be able to adjust the volume knob on the fly rather than stopping to do it. Depending on your guitar, the volume knob might be placed near to where you pick the strings or it may be further away. Wherever it is, get used to finding it by feel rather than by sight. This'll help make it more automatic.

LESSON 29 NOTE BY NOTE VIOLINING

TRACK 10

♩=60
Am⁹ Play 4 times

Vol. <Vol. <Vol. <Vol. <Vol.

TAB: 5 7 5 7 7

Start with your guitar's volume at zero, then play the note either by picking it or hammering-on with your fretting hand. Once the string is ringing, gradually roll the volume up to create a fade in.

LESSON 30 GRADUAL FADE IN

TRACK 11

♩=80
E⁵ G⁵ A⁵ Play 4 times

Vol. PM

TAB: 2 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 7 5

File Date: 07:53 20/11/2020

This riff incorporates the volume knob on the first chord which is played as a fade in, followed by the G5 and A5 powerchords played at full volume. It's tricky at first, but play it slowly a few times and it should start to flow.

LESSON 31 TWO GAIN SETTINGS

TRACK 12

♩=80
A⁵ D/A Play 4 times

TAB: 7 5 5 7 5 5 5

For this riff, you will need a guitar with two pickups, each with their own volume knob, such as a Les Paul Standard. Play the opening chord with the bridge pickup, then switch to the neck pickup set at roughly half volume. It's a great way to switch between two gain settings.

AUDIO FILES

Find your audio files at
bit.ly/tg340audio



LESSON 32

TARGETING STRING BEND INTERVALS

String bending is a feature of guitar playing that sets it apart from other instruments. An expressive and musical way to move between notes, the more you practise the technique, the more expressive your playing will become. You probably

already use bends in your solos, but following our short example here will help you improve your accuracy for four different intervals. Before you tackle the solo take a look at the tab and practise each bend on its own, aiming to hit the right target note each time.

TRACK 13

♩ = 100 ♩ = ♩♩

A⁷ **D⁷** **F⁷** **E⁷**

TAB

1/4	5	5	7	BU	7 (8)	5	7	BU	7 (9)	5	7	BU	7 (10)	10
-----	---	---	---	----	-------	---	---	----	-------	---	---	----	--------	----

First up is a quarter tone – a very slight bend played with the first finger in this case. Next is a semitone bend (a one-fret pitch change). The third finger is probably the best here but practise with your second and fourth fingers too. The tone bend (two frets) comes next followed by a minor 3rd (three frets) in bar 4. Remember, the bigger the bend, the more fingers you'll need to push the string.



LESSON 33

BLUES GUITAR TECHNIQUE CHALLENGE

It's easy to forget that most popular music styles owe a debt to the blues. And it's especially true for the guitar – a staple instrument in early blues, and, more importantly, whose musical development since the 50s has imparted blues phrasing into the heart of rock and metal. Hell, you don't even have

CHALLENGE!

Try playing the 'wrong' licks in the gaps

to like blues, but learning some fundamentals will give you a broader musical base to work from, whatever music you're into. Listen to the audio track we've provided and try out the six blues ideas we've tabbed here. You'll hear each line played twice followed by a two-bar space for you to repeat the riff or lick.

1. Start with this blues shuffle riff on the bass strings. It's a good stretch workout for the fret hand as well as being a test of your sense of groove.

2. This riff is based around the notes of an A chord and is best played with downstrokes throughout. It's an authentic rock 'n' roll and rockabilly riff, too.

3. He might be a rock 'n' roller, but Chuck Berry-style licks have blues at their core. Get to grips with his signature string bend move here.

TRACK 14

♩ = 80 ♩ = ♩ = ♩

A⁵ **A⁶** **A⁵** **A⁶** **A⁷**

TAB

1 7 5 7 5 9 5 7 5 9 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 7 7 4 7 4 BU 8 (10) 5 5 8 (10) 5 5 8 (10) 5 5 8 (10)

4 5 7 7 5 7 8 7 7 7 (9) 10 (12) BU BU 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8

4. Two notes played at the same time is called a 'doublestop'. Use your first or third finger to barre across two strings.

5. An extension of the Chuck Berry bend, these unison bends are a great way to make your guitar wail. Hold the second string steady and bend the third.

6. Repeating hammer-ons and pull-offs are a great tool for building tension and driving solos forward. Practise with strict timing but more freely in solos.



FOURTH-FINGER WORKOUT

Guitarists often complain that their pinkie finger feels weak and difficult to control. For most players this crucial digit lags behind the other fingers in terms of strength and dexterity. If this sounds like you then take a look at these exercises

TO TIP!
Don't quit!
Repetition is the key
to progress here

which are designed to improve both your soloing and chord playing. Not feeling it? We hear you, but the improvements you'll see are worth the time. Spend a couple of minutes on these exercises whenever you first plug in to see results without too much grind.

LESSON 34 EASY DOWN-UP STRUMMING

TRACK 15

♩=100

E⁵ E⁶ E⁵ E⁷ E⁵ E⁶ E⁵ Play 4 times

TAB

9 9 11 9 12 9 11 9

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

Play the E⁵ with your first and second fingers and use your fourth finger to reach to the 11th and 12th frets. Too much of a stretch? Try playing higher up the fretboard. Or go lower for a challenge.

LESSON 35 CHORD COORDINATION

TRACK 16

♩=90

Em E⁷_{sus}⁴ Em⁷ Esus⁴ Play 4 times

TAB

7 7 10 7 7

8 10 8 10 10

9 7 7 9 9

7 7 7 7 7

The challenge in this funky chord exercise is to keep your first, second and third fingers in place, while your fourth finger moves to form each chord. Great for finger independence and accuracy.

LESSON 36 SPIDER EXERCISE

TRACK 17

♩=80

E⁵ 8va

Play 4 times

TAB

15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 14 12

■ V ■ V cont. sim.

Placing your fingers at consecutive frets is the idea behind the classic 'spider exercise' and this is a variation on the theme. Practise slowly, only speeding up gradually. It's just as much a picking exercise.

LESSON 37 USE HAMMER-ONS AND PULL-OFFS

TRACK 18

♩=90

E⁵ 8va

Play 4 times

TAB

15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12

Playing hammer-ons and pull-offs is a great way to exercise your fretting muscles. You don't need to smash the strings with your hammer-ons; stay loose and let momentum do the work.



FIVE VIBRATO PHRASES

TG TIP!
Higher gain tones will help you make your vibrato sustain

The perennial unsung hero of lead guitar, vibrato is the secret sauce that'll take your soloing to the next level. Sure, tone, timing, technique and, er, timbre, amongst other things, all count – but when a solo 'feels' good, it's usually the subtle micro-timing of vibrato that's done the job. And although we're talking about the 'feel factor' here, you can still break vibrato down into its constituent parts and practise it. Essentially it comes down to two elements: how much you vary the pitch and the speed at which you do it.

LESSON 41 HOLD, THEN VIB

TRACK 22

♩=100
Am⁷

Play 4 times

TAB: 7 [7]

Let's start with the basics. Hold the note for one beat, then move your hand from the wrist to lever the string up and down. Experiment with increasing or decreasing the intensity.

LESSON 42 BEND, HOLD, THEN VIB

TRACK 23

♩=100
Am¹¹

Play 4 times

TAB: BU 7 (9) [9]

This is tougher because you're applying vibrato to an already bent string. The trick is to bend up to exactly the same pitch with every pulse of your vibrato movement.

LESSON 44 DAVID GILMOUR STYLE

TRACK 25

♩=80
Am

Play 4 times

TAB: 8 5 8 5 8/10

David Gilmour's vibrato is subtle, classy and quite shallow with only a little pitch change and at a fairly slow rate. This creates a smooth, relaxed feel, perfect for his trademark melodic style.

LESSON 43 BB KING STYLE

TRACK 24

♩=80
D/A

Am⁷

Play 4 times

TAB: 7 5 8 5 5 5

With some basics covered, now try BB King's fast, shallow vibrato, shaking your hand to create a fluttering effect. Get this down and you're halfway to being able to play authentic classic blues.

LESSON 45 ZAKK WYLDE STYLE

TRACK 26

♩=80
A⁵

Play 4 times

TAB: 7 5 7 5 7

Zakk Wylde's vibrato is famously wide in pitch and aggressively fast – perfect for high-octane metal. Aim to bend the string a tone or even a minor 3rd for the full Zakk effect.



**CHALLENGE!**

Apply this technique to our Blues Technique Challenge

**LESSON 46****TONE TIP**

Alter your tone simply by changing where on the string you pick. Pick near the fretboard for a warm, round tone. Closer to the bridge gives you a twangy, trebly tone. You probably already know this, but how often do you exploit the effect? Combine near-the-neck picking with a neck pickup and a clean tone and you'll have a warm bell-like sound suitable for jazz. Switch to picking near the bridge for country and surf style twang. Jam along with our one-note audio example to get a feel for it.

TRACK 21

♩ = 80
Em

Play 4 times

TAB

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2



ESSENTIAL CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Chord progressions are the basis of songwriting and also the key to learning the songs that you want to play. Whatever the style, be it rock, pop, folk, metal, and so on, there are plenty of chord sequences which are used time and time again. If you're writing your own music you'll no doubt be looking for flashes of inspiration for

your own brand new chord sequences, but these standards can serve as a great starting point too – just try a sus chord or a major/minor variation to make each progression your own. Here are four classics, complete with simple backing tracks to get you underway.

LESSON 47 TRACK 28

THE THREE-CHORD TRICK

E A B

The three-chord trick is commonplace in blues and can also be heard regularly in punk and country music, too. All three chords come from the same key (E major in our backing track) and they're all major chords. You could also experiment and play them as minor chords. It'll have a darker mood that's great for slow ballads.

LESSON 48 TRACK 29

THE 50S PROGRESSION

C Am F G

This sequence was used extensively in the 50s and 60s in songs like *Blue Moon*, *Stand By Me*, *Unchained Melody* and more, earning this run of chords an unofficial moniker of 'the 50s progression'. Although the chords are the same (albeit in different keys), the melodies, tones, tempos, arrangements and rhythms make all these songs feel distinct.

LESSON 49 TRACK 30

THE POP PROGRESSION

E B C#m A

Though known as the 'pop progression', this sequence is found in various genres – generally when a song demands a driving, uplifting feel. Journey's *Don't Stop Believin'*, Aha's *Take On Me* and Ed Sheeran's *Photograph* are just a few examples. Toto's *Africa* and Lady Gaga's *Pokerface* start the progression on the third chord in the sequence (C#m in the key of E).

LESSON 50 TRACK 31

STARTING ON 'THE FOUR'

C G C D

The notes G, C and D appear as the first, fourth and fifth in a G major scale (G A B C D E F#). In fact, they're a three-chord trick in G. If you've written, say, a verse around G–C–D, a great way to mix it up in a chorus is to start on the fourth chord, instead of a predictable return to the root on the opening chord. We're in the key of G here, but, as with all our progressions, it applies to all keys.

DEATH 081 ELVIS

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

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

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

**THE POWER
OF MUSIC!**



NIRVANA LITHIUM

TG takes a look at Kurt Cobain's powerchord-fuelled anthem for the dispossessed in this month's easy Classic Track

Seemingly written through the eyes of a character, *Lithium* is a song that evolved lyrically to reflect Cobain's own dark feelings. It was "some of my personal experiences, like breaking up with girlfriends and having bad relationships, feeling that death void that the person in the song is feeling – very lonely, sick," the frontman related to *Musician* magazine.

If its subject matter is bleak and morose, it's contrasted and lifted by an ironic, celebratory pop chorus. Instrumentally, a knowing light and shade approach was becoming a calling card of Cobain's songwriting on *Nevermind*. The structure of *Lithium* is an example of the influential quiet/loud dynamic Nirvana were spearheading, and it can also be heard on fellow singles *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and *In Bloom*.

What all three songs share, then, is the requirement for two guitar tones: clean and distortion. That means you'll need either a two-channel amp or a distortion pedal. Read on as we break the whole track down for you.

GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'Lithium'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION

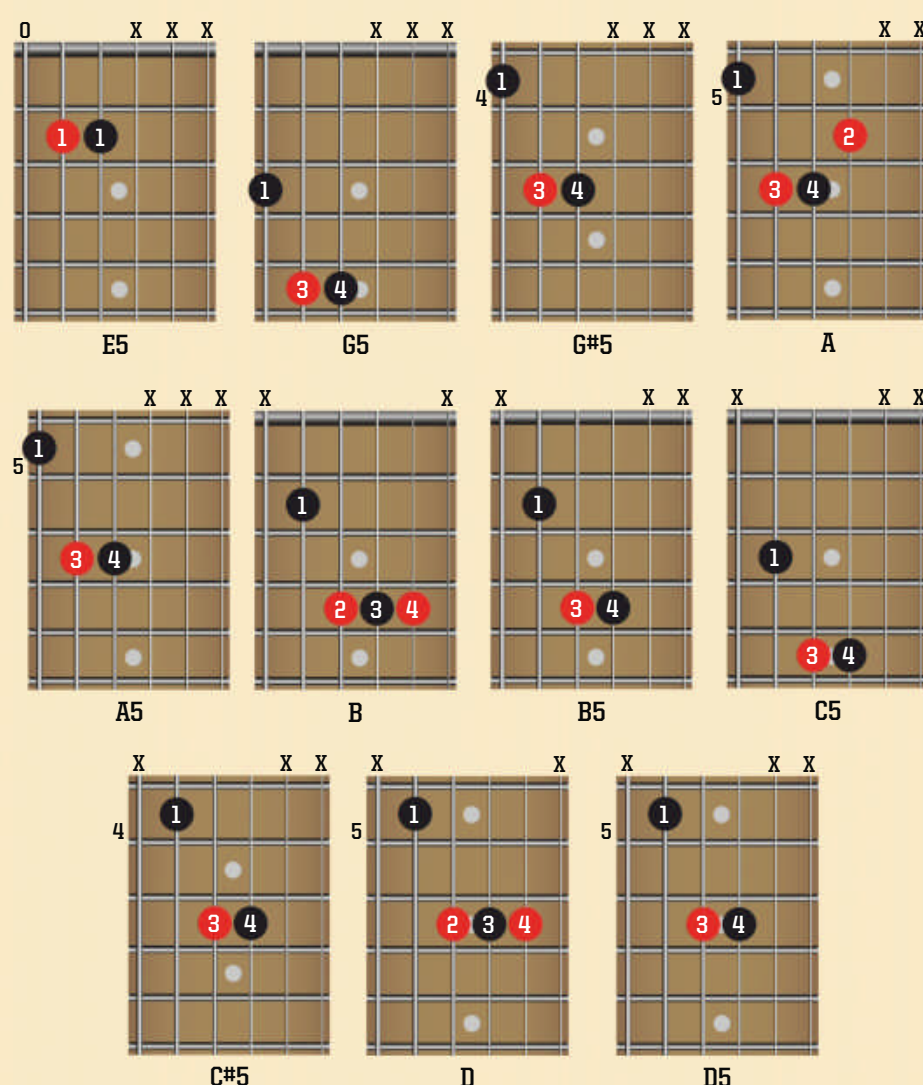
Use a bridge-position humbucker throughout or switch between neck and bridge pickups if your guitar's equipped with single-coils.

EFFECTS
Distortion
Level: 5
Tone: 4
Drive: 8

Kurt began the *Lithium* sessions with a Fender Stratocaster, before smashing it when the session broke down into *Endless*, *Nameless*. The intro and verse sections sound best played with a neck-position single-coil or a warm sounding bridge humbucker, with your amp set to a clean sound. The original guitar tracks were recorded through a Fender Bassman, and *Lithium* is the only track on *Nevermind* that uses an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff. To replicate the thick layers of distortion, we'd suggest switching channels on your amp or using a dedicated drive pedal. Just make sure to switch on the distortion at the right time (on the B chord) to coincide with the drum fills leading into the chorus.

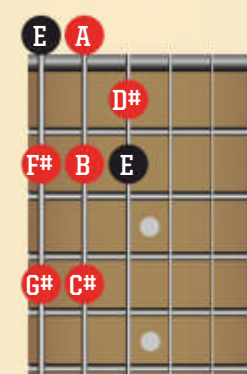
CHORDS

All the chords that end in a '5' are powerchords. These are simpler versions of harder-to-play barre chords. Compare the A, B and D barre chords with the powerchord voicings and you'll notice that they share a number of notes – this gives you a clue as to which fingers to use. Aside from the A, you can play all these chords using just your first and third fingers if you prefer not to use your fourth finger.

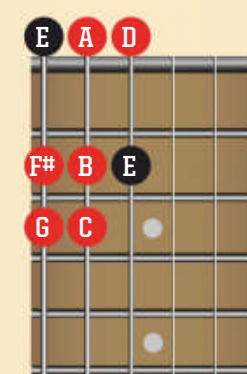


SCALES

There's no solo or scale-based playing in *Lithium*, but Kurt's songwriting magic is exposed if you compare the notes in the chords to those of the song's key – the E major scale (E F# G# A B C# D#). If you use *only* the notes from E major you can expect a safe, stable ordinary sound. G5, C5, D and D5 all include 'outside' notes – from E minor (E F# G A B C D) it turns out. Switching between two keys is something you can try out in your own songs.



E major scale



E natural minor scale

NIRVANA

LITHIUM

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NIRVANA LITHIUM Intro

♩=124

PM

PM

1

3

Fret these powerchords with your first and third fingers, except the initial E5, which you should fret with your first finger only. Use alternate picking in bars 1 and 2, but downstrokes in bars 3 and 4. Bounce the side of your hand on the strings as you pick to palm-mute the strings.

NIRVANA LITHIUM Verse 1

0:07

PM

PM

1

3

Play 4 times

Verse 1 is a slight variation on the intro part. The chords and rhythm are essentially the same, although you will need to fret full B and D chords in bar 4 instead of powerchords. We've tabbed the part accurately here, but it's more important to maintain the groove than to slavishly copy the exact notes.

NIRVANA LITHIUM Chorus

0:39

PM

1



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 32-33)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

NIRVANA / LITHIUM

NIRVANA LITHIUM Chorus (cont'd)

Chorus (cont'd) musical notation and guitar tabs. Chords: C⁵, D⁵, B⁵, D⁵. Includes a "Play 3 times" instruction.

Fret both 2nd fret notes of the E5 powerchord in bar 1 with your first finger. This leaves you in the best position for efficiently moving to the G#5 that follows. The open-string chords give you an extra moment to get your hand in position for the chord changes that follow.

NIRVANA LITHIUM Verse 2

Verse 2 musical notation and guitar tabs. Chords: E⁵, G#⁵, C#⁵, A⁵, C, D⁵, B, D⁵, C, D⁵, B⁵, D⁵. Includes a "1:02" time marker and a "PM" (pick mute) instruction.

This is another variation on the main intro riff, so the same rules apply. The grace note in bar 2 is almost certainly a mistake and was probably meant to be played on the offbeat of beat 3. You can ignore this note entirely if you prefer and just focus once again on maintaining the groove.

NIRVANA LITHIUM Bridge

Bridge musical notation and guitar tabs. Chords: A⁵, C⁵, A⁵, C⁵, G⁵, D⁵, B⁵, G⁵. Includes a "1:57" time marker and a "Play 8 times" instruction.

Bash out these powerchords with loose alternate picking throughout, fretting them with your first and third fingers. Cobain makes subtle changes on subsequent repeats of bar 2. In one repeat, he plays the C5 on the first quaver of beat 4. In another, he adds a G#5 on the offbeat of beat 4. Try improvising with these ideas.

ERIC CLAPTON

LAY DOWN SALLY

TG and Rockschoo! take a look at the country crossover hit from Eric's album *Slowhand*

AUDIO FILES
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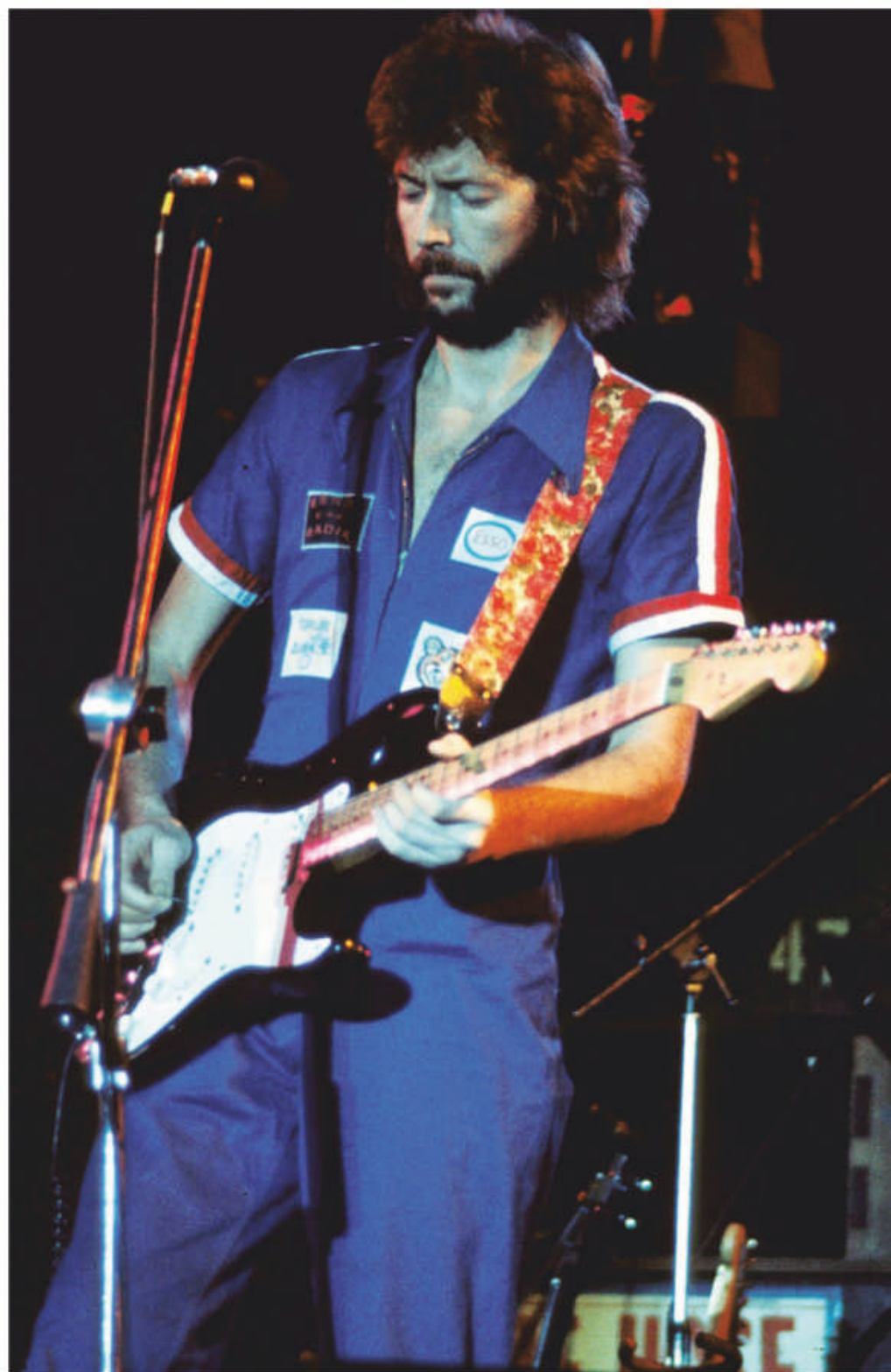
Lay Down Sally sees Clapton blending country and blues flavours in a style influenced by the great J.J. Cale. You'll find the track on Eric's fifth solo studio album, *Slowhand*, released over seven years after he switched to playing Fender Strats – a key part of Eric's tone here.

The infectious groove is made up of syncopated patterns (placing emphasis on the offbeats between each main beat) mixed with straighter rhythms. Learn these by going through each section in isolation, counting the

eighth note subdivisions (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &) in each bar as you go. The parts should require only small fretting and picking hand movements, so keep your movements economical.

Once everything is settling you can work on nuances such as the whole- and quarter-tone string bends, the slides, hammer-ons and the pull-offs in the solo.

As always, take a listen to both the original recording and Rockschoo!'s audio track on your CD for help capturing the feel.



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Words: Jono Harrison
Photography: Getty

LAY DOWN SALLY

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ERIC CLAPTON LAY DOWN SALLY

TRACKS 34-35

$\text{♩} = 189$
A7

TAB
0 2 x 2 2 0 4 0 4 0 4 2 0 2 BU 3 (5) 0 2 0 2 2 4 2

1

TAB
0 2 x 2 2 0 4 0 4 0 4 2 0 2 BU 3 (5) 0 x 2 2 4 2

5



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 34-35)
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!

ERIC CLAPTON / LAY DOWN SALLY

ERIC CLAPTON LAY DOWN SALLY

TRACKS 34-35

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers (0, 2, 4) and a 'BU' (bend) instruction.

9

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers (0, 2, 4) and a 'BU' (bend) instruction.

13

Musical notation for measures 17-20. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers (0, 2, 4) and a 'BU' (bend) instruction. The measure number 17 is indicated above the first measure.

17

Musical notation for measures 21-24. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers (0, 2, 4) and a 'BU' (bend) instruction. The measure number 21 is indicated above the first measure.

21

Musical notation for measures 25-28. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers (0, 2, 4) and a 'BU' (bend) instruction. The measure number 25 is indicated above the first measure.

25

E **A⁷**

Chicken Pick -----|

TAB

0 2 4 2 2 4 2 0 2 0 2 4 2 0 2 0 2 2 0 2 2 0 2 4 2

29

D **E**

TAB

2 0 2 0 4 0 2 0 2 0 4 0 2 0 4 0 2 4 0 2 2 0 2 4

33

A **A⁷**

TAB

0 2 4 0 2 2 0 2 4 0 2 2 4 2 2 2 2 0 4 0 4 0 4 0

36

A⁷ **D**

Chicken Pick -----|

TAB

0 2 2 0 2 2 0 2 2 2 2 4 2 2 0 2 4 2 0 2 4 0 2 0 2 4 0 2 4 2 0 4

39

E **A** **A⁷**

TAB

0 2 4 0 2 2 0 2 4 0 2 4 0 2 2 0 2 4 0 2 2 2 2 2 0 4 0 4 0 4 0

43

ERIC CLAPTON LAY DOWN SALLY

TRACKS 34-35

1. **A7**

The first system of music for 'Lay Down Sally' features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The tablature includes fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 4, 5) and specific techniques labeled 'BU' (bend) and '(5)' (fifth). The system is marked with the number 47 at the beginning of the tablature line.

47

The second system of music continues the melody from the first system. It includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a guitar tablature with fret numbers and techniques like 'BU' and '(5)'. The system is marked with the number 51 at the beginning of the tablature line.

51

2. **A7**

The third system of music begins with a second ending bracket labeled '2.' and 'A7'. The melody is more complex, featuring slurs and wavy lines indicating bends. The guitar tablature includes fret numbers (5, 7, 8) and techniques like 'BU' and '(9)'. The system is marked with the number 55 at the beginning of the tablature line.

55

The fourth system of music continues the melody with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The guitar tablature includes fret numbers (5, 7, 8) and techniques like 'BU' and '(9)'. The system is marked with the number 59 at the beginning of the tablature line.

59

The fifth system of music concludes the piece with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The guitar tablature includes fret numbers (7, 8, 9, 10) and techniques like 'BU', 'PB 7' (pull-off), and 'BD' (bend). The system is marked with the number 63 at the beginning of the tablature line.

63

67

Tablature for measures 67-70:

- Measure 67: 8 9 8 8 8 7 5
- Measure 68: 7 5 7 7 7 5 7
- Measure 69: 5 7 6 5 3 5 3 (4) 5
- Measure 70: BU 8 (10) 5

71

Tablature for measures 71-74:

- Measure 71: BU 8 (10) 5 8 5 5 8
- Measure 72: 5 5 5 8
- Measure 73: BU 8 (10) 5 8 5 8 5
- Measure 74: 8 10 BU 10 (12)

75

Tablature for measures 75-78:

- Measure 75: BU BD 10 (12) (10) 8
- Measure 76: BU 10 (12)
- Measure 77: 8 10 8 10 8
- Measure 78: 10 8 9 7 5 7 5 [5] 7 5 7

79

Tablature for measures 79-82:

- Measure 79: 5 BU 7 (8) 5 5 8 5
- Measure 80: BU BD 7 (8) (7) 5 7 5 7 5
- Measure 81: BU 7 (9) 5 8 5 BU BD 7 (8) (7) 5
- Measure 82: BU (6) 5 7 5

83

Tablature for measures 83-86:

- Measure 83: 7 7 slow BU 5 (6)
- Measure 84: 7 5 4 7 5 7 5
- Measure 85: 5 3 5 BU 3 (4) 5 3 5
- Measure 86: 5

A mix of plectrum work and hybrid picking (using pick and fingers together) will lead you to an authentic sound with the rhythm parts. In the solo, make sure you are accurate with the pitch of each string bend and the timing/placement of slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs, as these are characteristic of Clapton's blues phrasing.

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JOHNNY CASH
PERSONAL JESUS

TG breaks down the riff and chords for this late-career cover version from the *Man In Black*

By the time he came to record *American IV: The Man Comes Around* in 2002, Johnny Cash had long since established a reputation for playing cover versions. Incredibly, this was Cash's 85th album in a career spanning almost 50 years, and covers had featured on his recordings since day one. However, this predominantly covers release would define the *Man In Black*'s legacy, and it's considered a seminal work to this day.

Putting this all to one side, the track we're looking at this month is an unusual one. A cover of Depeche Mode's synth-rock number and featuring John Frusciante on acoustic guitar, *Personal Jesus* is all about that guitar riff. Depeche Mode's original recording follows a shuffle feel, but here Frusciante plays it dead straight and the track is in the friendlier key of E minor (compared to the original F# minor), which keeps you playing mainly in the open position.

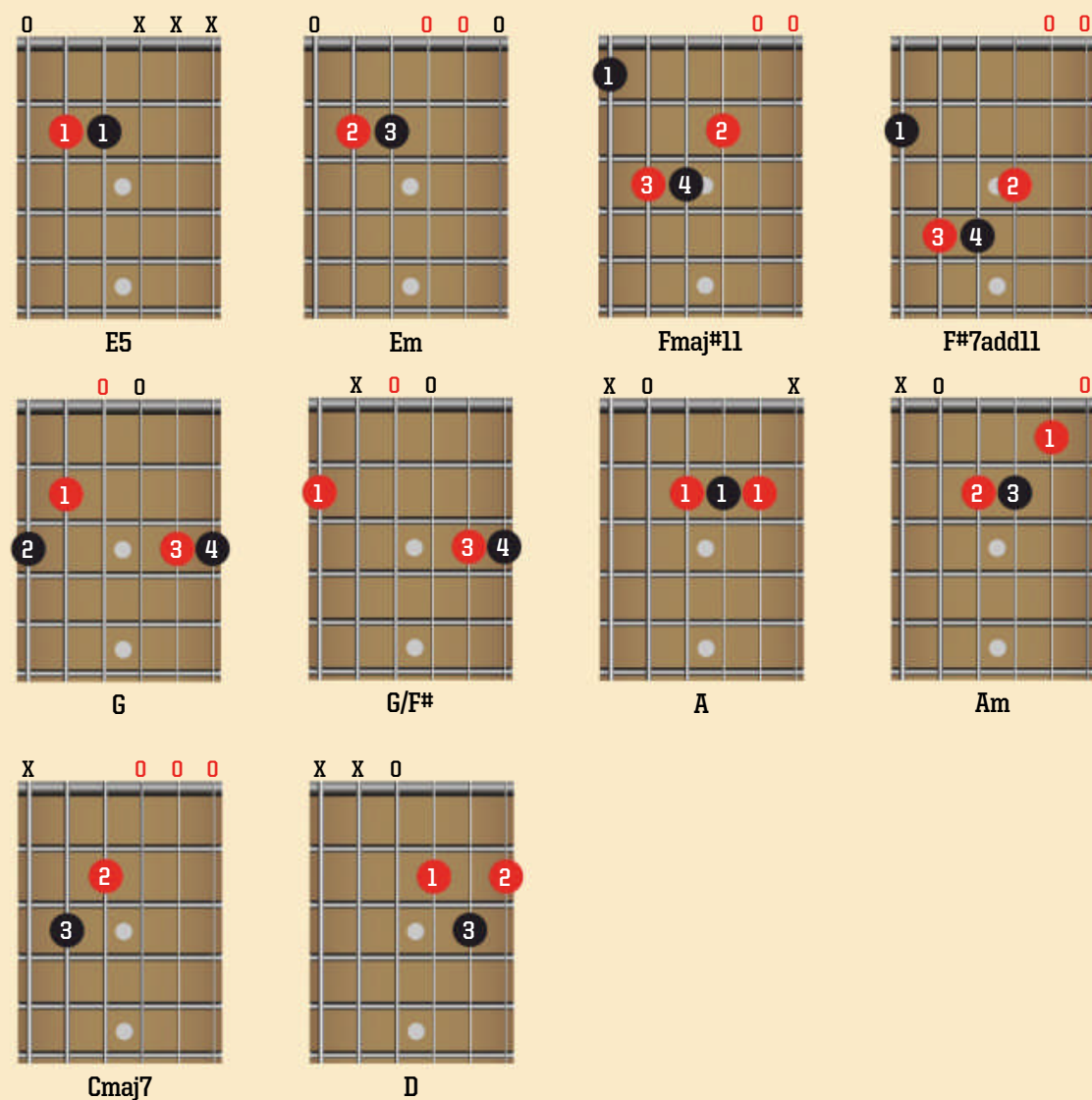


CHORDS

The chords are simple open shapes – even the exotic sounding F#7add11 and Fmaj#11 chords are pretty easy to play. You can also play the intro riff whenever you see the Em chord written in the chart, but if you're singing then you may find it easier to strum an Em chord

AUDIO FILES

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PERSONAL JESUS

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**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 36)**

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

SONGSHEET

Personal Jesus

Intro

E5 / / / / / / / x4

Chorus 1

Em

Your own, personal, Jesus

Someone to hear your prayers

A G G/F#

Someone who cares

Em

Your own, personal, Jesus

Someone to hear your prayers

A G G/F#

Someone who's there

Repeat intro (4 bars)**Verse 1**

Em

Feeling unknown and you're all alone

G

Flesh and bone

D

By the telephone

Am

Lift up the receiver

Em

Cmaj7

I'll make you a believer

Repeat intro (2 bars)**Verse 2**

Em

Take second best, put me to the test

G

Things on your chest

D

You need to confess

Am

I will deliver

Em

Cmaj7

You know I'm a forgiver

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Repeat intro (2 bars)**Chorus 2**

Em

Your own, personal, Jesus

Someone to hear your prayers

A

G

G/F#

Someone who cares

Em

Your own, personal, Jesus

Someone to hear your prayers

A

G

G/F#

Someone to care

Repeat intro (4 bars)**Verse 3**

Em

Feeling unknown and you're all alone

G

Flesh and bone

D

By the telephone

Am

Lift up the receiver

Em

Cmaj7

I'll make you a believer

Repeat intro (2 bars)

Am

I will deliver

Em

Cmaj7

You know I'm a forgiver

Outro

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Em

F#7add11

Reach out and touch faith

Em

Reach out and touch faith

JOHNNY CASH PERSONAL JESUS Intro**TRACK 36**

Fret the E5 by barring across the 2nd fret with your first finger. Keep this finger in position while adding the 3rd fret G note with your second finger. This riff sounds best when played with a firm pick, digging in nice and hard to accent beats 2 and 4 to make it really groove. Accents are marked > in the tab.

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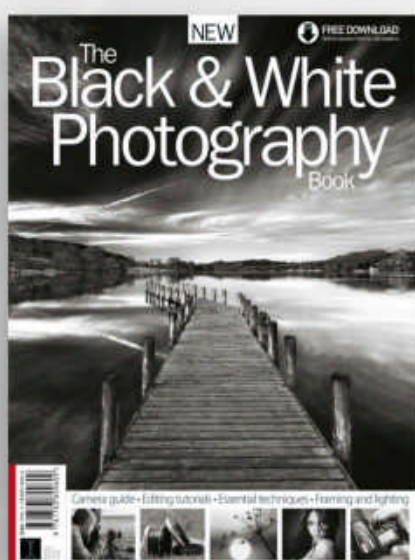
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THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE
BEST NEW GEAR

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

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

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

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

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

*WHAT IS GAS?

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

NO SNAKE OIL

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

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

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



BEST FOR...

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



86



92



084 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

086 CHARVEL JOE DUPLANTIER SIGNATURE PRO-MOD SAN DIMAS STYLE 2 HH MAHOGANY

A more 'vintage' model from the Gojira frontman

090 HARLEY BENTON SC-JUNIOR

An affordable guitar worth more than its pricetag

092 EPIPHONE PROPHECY FLYING V

2020's best metal guitar?

094 DUNLOP CRY BABY Q-ZONE FIXED WAH

A worthwhile solution to a distinctive sound



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



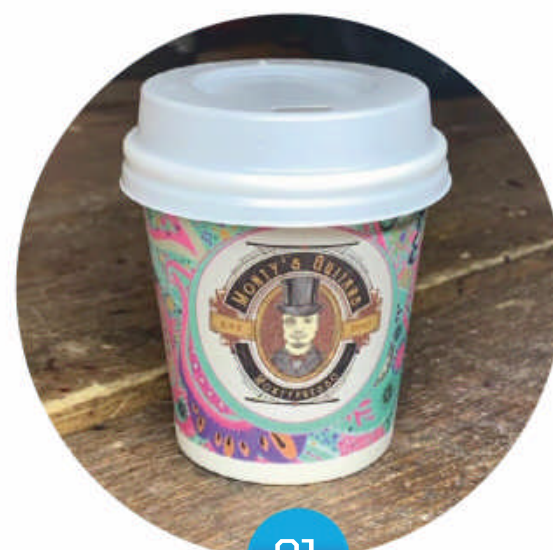
02



03



04



01



05

START ME UP!

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

MONTY'S MONTY PRESSO GUITAR RELIC WAX

1 Well this is something different! But not coffee... When applied to open grain woods – your guitar's body, neck or fretboard – this darkens and gives the impression of ageing with a "smooth, gloriously, grubby finish." Could be ideal for that pau ferro neck or makeover project you've mean meaning to start. Leaving the wax on for longer before buffing has different effects so we'd advise checking out the helpful videos on Monty's Instagram [**£16 plus 20% off if bought before the end of 2020, montysguitars.com**]

DUNLOP GBJ95 CRY BABY JUNIOR

2 A medium-sized wah that sits between the popular Crybaby Mini and the Original, the 8" long Junior was designed with Pedaltrain to fit on its 'boards. But with top-positioned input and output jacks, plus three selectable voices, the potential appeal is clearly wider. The H setting gives you the aggressive modern sound of the Original GCB95, M offers vintage midrange growl and L is darker and richer. [**£154.99, jimdunlop.com**]

ORIGIN EFFECTS MAGMA57 AMP VIBRATO & DRIVE

3 All the goodness of a landmark vintage amp inside a pedal; here the UK builder channels Magnatone's 1957 vibrato-equipped 200 series amps. The theoretical combination being offered is compelling with "lush, shimmering vibrato" coupled with smooth and clear overdrive tones. You can alter the speed, intensity and modulation and there's a trip of presets tailored to running through different kinds of amps – Blackface, Plexi and flat-response. [**£385, origineffects.com**]

EPIPHONE WILSHIRE

4 If 2020 has proved to be a vintage year for Epiphone, it's not done yet, and keen to take the term seriously with the return of three cult favourites; the Wilshire, Crestwood and Coronet. All three share the same 1958 body shape; the Crestwood offers mini humbuckers and vibrato tailpiece, the Wilshire has a pair of P-90s and the Coronet offers a single P-90. [**Coronet £349, Wilshire £399, Crestwood £489, epiphone.com**]

KEELEY HYDRA STEREO REVERB & TREMOLO

5 The temptation of another reverb pedal is always around the corner, and Robert Keeley now has a reputation for superb stage-friendly two-in-one stompboxes. With three types of reverb and tremolo here, the HYDRA certainly delivers on versatility. Spring, Plate and Room reverb (with infinite hold too) with tap-tempo enabled Harmonic, Vibrato, or Sine Wave Tremolo. Alt controls enable you to dial it all to your needs fast. [**£249, robertkeeley.com**]



JOE DUPLANTIER SIGNATURE PRO-MOD SAN DIMAS STYLE 2 HH MAHOGANY

£719

Another Signature model from the Gojira frontman, but this time he's gone vintage

What do you do when you're a huge fan of Fender and Gibson guitars? Well, you take your favourite bits of both to create one super-guitar, of course. At least that's the case with the latest signature model from Charvel and Gojira frontman Joe Duplantier. And you just have to take one look at this new Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 2 to realise that. Having already gone for very clean and modern finishes with his two previous signature models, Joe sought to go down a more vintage route and "wanted the colour of the guitar to look like your grandmother's table". A lovely thought, although we're

The vintage/modern combination is perfectly summed up with the pick-up choice, a DiMarzio PAF 36th anniversary edition in the neck and Joe's own signature DiMarzio Fortitude in the bridge are paired to perfection. In fact, the latter can be considered a beefier version of the PAF, especially in the low-end department. This is where the guitar really earns its personality. The Fortitude has been voiced to Joe's own specifications after being so impressed with the PAF 36, he knew he wanted to take it further and with the help from the folks from DiMarzio, the result is vintage warmth and clarity with bags of bottom-end heft.

☞ SAILS THE VINTAGE/MODERN VIBE WITH APLOMB... ☜

not sure our grandmother's table looked this good.

The mahogany finish with a black pickguard is familiar territory for any Telecaster fan, but slap on a Tune-O-Matic bridge and cover the fretboard in pearloid big block inlays and you're in Gibson country. On paper, this shouldn't work, but it does. Combined with the worn nickel finish on the DiMarzio pickup covers and you can consider the vintage aesthetic nailed. It's not all vintage, though, as the twist is that this model is equipped with some thoroughly modern essentials. Locking tuners, a graphite-reinforced neck and a heel-mount truss rod adjustment wheel firmly bring this model bang up to date.

1 NECK Big pearloid block inlays, luminlay side dots, graphite-reinforced, truss rod with heel adjustment, 12"-16" compound radius, ebony fingerboard with rolled edges and a natural oiled finish all make for a very swift and comfortable neck.

2 PICKUPS Joe's own DiMarzio Fortitude signature pickup makes its debut in the bridge and paired with a DiMarzio 36th anniversary PAF provide enough dynamism, warmth and guttural punch to make you turn your nose up at active pickups for good.

3 BODY Natural Mahogany in a satin finish is as unpretentious as you can get, and fully sets up the workman-like vintage vibe that is so easily partnered by the sound and feel of this guitar.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany

BRIDGE PICKUP: Joe Duplantier Signature DiMarzio Fortitude

NECK PICKUP: DiMarzio PAF 36th Anniversary

CONTROLS: Volume

PICKUP SWITCHING: 3-Position Toggle

BRIDGE: Charvel Fully Adjustable Radius Compensated Bridge with Anchored Tailpiece

HARDWARE FINISH: Chrome

TUNERS: Charvel-Branded Die-Cast Locking

NECK MATERIAL: Mahogany

NECK CONSTRUCTION: Bolt-On with Graphite Reinforcement

NECK FINISH: Oiled

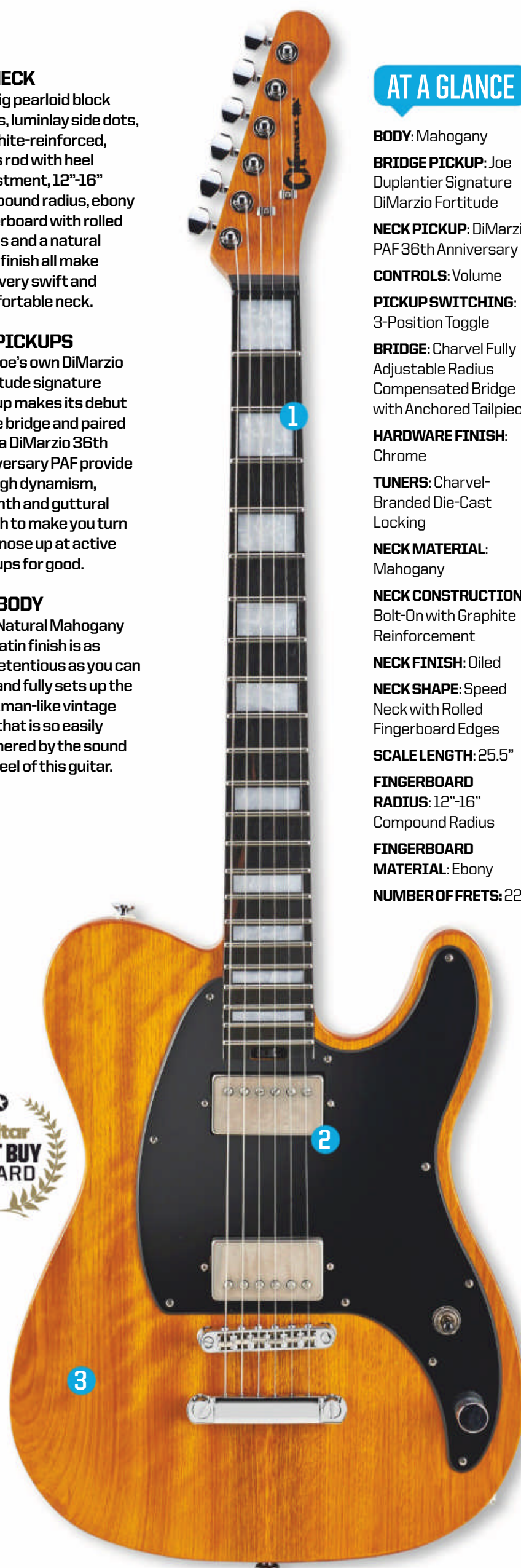
NECK SHAPE: Speed Neck with Rolled Fingerboard Edges

SCALE LENGTH: 25.5"

FINGERBOARD RADIUS: 12"-16" Compound Radius

FINGERBOARD MATERIAL: Ebony

NUMBER OF FRETS: 22





For the love of PAF

The story behind the pickups, in Joe's words

“Wilson from DiMarzio lives right next to my studio in NY and brought a panel of pickups so I could compare them whilst recording. I realised when using old gear that it’s not too hot. For instance, passive pickups versus active pickups. The passive pickup has more dynamics, it’s not compressed, it’s not powered or whatever, whatever is going on in there. So already, I knew that I liked old stuff. When I tried the PAF in a guitar, I did some takes and I thought, ‘Okay, I want to go down that road for my signature pickup.’ I basically A/B’d all DiMarzio’s pickups and chose my favourite one, and did a twist on that for the bridge pickup. As for the neck pickup, which I use so rarely anyway, I decided to keep the PAF 36.”



the PAF 36 and Fortitude pickups combine for a useful palette of tone to suit those blues meanderings should the mood take you.

One thing that impressed us the most on unboxing the JP San Dimas 2 was how comfortable it immediately felt. The setup was nigh-on perfect; the intonation, tuning and action are at the level that we’ve become accustomed to from Charvel and it’s parent company, Fender. With all the vintage and modern touches, we’re glad to see that Charvel and Joe have plumped for a natural-oiled finish on the neck and it feels like

you’ve been playing this guitar forever. And above all else, it is lightning quick, all thanks to the 12”-16” compound radius and ‘Speed Neck’ with rolled fingerboard edges. It’s these touches that most guitarists would instantly reach for when modding a guitar. It’s well-considered and, most importantly, neat.

We have to say that the Joe Duplantier Signature Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 2 HH Mahogany nails the vintage/modern vibe with aplomb. Well-pointed finery is meticulously laid out with a finish that not only looks the business

but also feels like you’ve owned this guitar for years. That feeling of comfort is backed up with a very confident pickup pairing that doesn’t sound like every heavy-tinged axe going but brings with its own personality and a platform for you to explore yours, all at a fair price, too.

Simon Arblaster

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

ALSO TRY...

CHARVEL PRO-MOD SO-CAL STYLE 2 24 HH HT CM

£799

Charvel’s other T-style guitar is positively dripping in modern touches. Definitely, something to think about if you’re not feeling the ‘vintage’ thing.



FENDER VINTERA ’70S TELE DELUXE IN MOCHA

£799

And on the flip side of the same coin, should you want to drop those modern touches for something a little more authentic, then the Vintera is where it’s at.



CHAPMAN GUITARS ML3 MODERN

£639

Lovers of heavy tones should definitely check out the Chapman ML3. It’s cheaper, but not as well finished as the JD signature.





YAMAHA'S TRANSACOUSTIC WILL REDEFINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR

Yamaha's TransAcoustic models offer a new kind of inspiration to players via their groundbreaking technology; generating reverb and chorus effects inside the guitar without needing to plug in.

TransAcoustic guitars use an actuator that is installed on the inner surface of the instrument's back. This actuator vibrates in response to the vibrations of the strings as you play. The vibrations of the actuator are then conveyed in and around the Yamaha TransAcoustic guitar's body to generate incredibly authentic reverb and chorus sounds. Wherever you are with a TransAcoustic, it will enhance your creativity.

Having these onboard effects whenever you need them makes TransAcoustics go-to guitars for songwriting and any player looking for more from an acoustic.

The effects are easy to control and shape to your needs on the fly. Tailor your acoustic tone as you move from organic room to lush hall reverb, blend in shimmering chorus or use each effect separately at the touch of a dial. You can transport yourself from a dry room to new sonic spaces, bringing whole new dimensions to your playing.

The current range of Yamaha TransAcoustic models offers a variety of tonewoods, shapes and styles at accessible price points; covering everything from classical to parlor and dreadnoughts. There's a TransAcoustic waiting for you.



HARLEY BENTON SC-JUNIOR

£177

More than the sum of its parts?

Single pickup guitars occupy a strange space; limited? Misunderstood? Well, they look certainly cool. There's something utilitarian, no-nonsense but self-assured and classic about a Junior.

The Gibson Les Paul Junior may have been designed as an entry-level model back in 1954, but it's won favour for good reasons. One P-90 pickup can do a surprising amount of things with the right tone and volume – and player, of course. There's no doubt that is where Harley Benton's SC-Junior is drawing its influence. And at a price to tempt even those who have hesitated to travel down One Pickup Avenue before. But

The neck profile is very much a slimmer C as opposed to a clubbier vintage 50s affair, and after a quick truss rod tweak we find the action surprisingly fast and springy in all the right places. We're pleased to see an angled neck heel for improved upper fret access and though we'd prefer a satin finish at the back of the neck for speed, that would be an easy fix with a couple of minutes, some care and 0000 ultra fine steel wire wool.

It's nice to see a combination wraparound bridge here, too, as, unlike the 'lightning' variety, the saddles allow you to intonate the individual strings. But there's a rub; the bridge profile and those saddles raise the strings a little too far above the Roswell (another Thomann

A GOOD GUITAR BUILD THAT'S WORTH THE INVESTMENT

how good can it be for £177? Well, it's light. For a mahogany single cut guitar 6.8lbs is good news. And the general build standard here is testament to Harley Benton's Indonesian manufacturing. The exception is the fretboard dye merging with the black gloss finish at the top of one side. That 'board is amaranth (aka purpleheart) and it feels akin to ebony to our hands. Most importantly, the frets are polished and level with no sharp ends.

There's Vintage Sunburst and even a Silver Sparkle option in the SC-Junior range (the Thomann brand's double cut DC-Junior range offers even more spec choice) but there's something about the black / red tortoiseshell contrast here that has a punk rock vibe we love.

brand) P90D pickup for our liking. Nevertheless, it gives a good enough account of itself, even if we don't get to judge it at its clearest capacity.

It's a good introduction to a P-90 and shows off the resonance of this guitar, too – single notes sear with sustain, chord work can be beefy; but back off on the volume and it cleans up well.

There's room for upgrading here on a good guitar build that's worth that investment, but the remarkable out of the box value is undeniable. Bravo to Benton!

Rob Laing

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

1 FINISH AND SHAPE

Despite the influence of Gibson's Les Paul Junior here, the SC's upper horn is notably sharper. But even Epiphone don't currently offer a black single cut Junior... And an Ebony Gibson is £1300 street price.

2 TUNERS

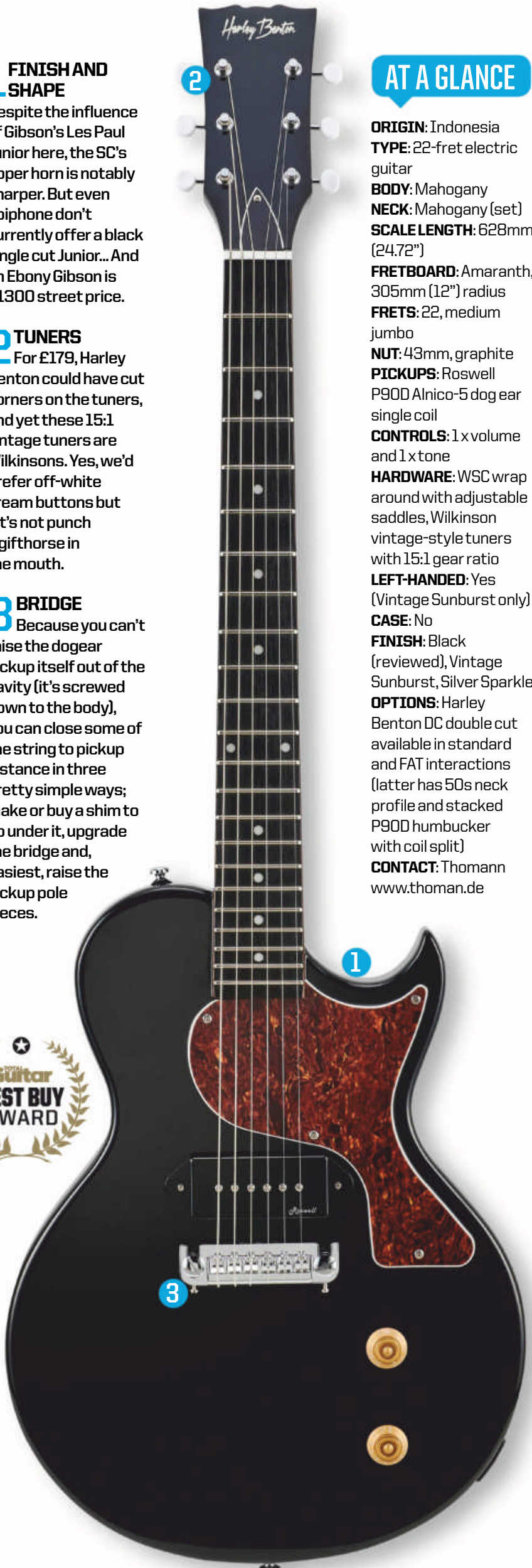
For £179, Harley Benton could have cut corners on the tuners, and yet these 15:1 vintage tuners are Wilkinsons. Yes, we'd prefer off-white cream buttons but let's not punch a gifthorse in the mouth.

3 BRIDGE

Because you can't raise the dogear pickup itself out of the cavity (it's screwed down to the body), you can close some of the string to pickup distance in three pretty simple ways; make or buy a shim to go under it, upgrade the bridge and, easiest, raise the pickup pole pieces.

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: Indonesia
TYPE: 22-fret electric guitar
BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany (set)
SCALE LENGTH: 628mm (24.72")
FRETBOARD: Amaranth, 305mm (12") radius
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo
NUT: 43mm, graphite
PICKUPS: Roswell P90D Alnico-5 dog ear single coil
CONTROLS: 1 x volume and 1 x tone
HARDWARE: WSC wrap around with adjustable saddles, Wilkinson vintage-style tuners with 15:1 gear ratio
LEFT-HANDED: Yes (Vintage Sunburst only)
CASE: No
FINISH: Black (reviewed), Vintage Sunburst, Silver Sparkle
OPTIONS: Harley Benton DC double cut available in standard and FAT interactions (latter has 50s neck profile and stacked P90D humbucker with coil split)
CONTACT: Thomann www.thomann.de





EPIPHONE PROPHECY FLYING V

£799

With top-dollar spec and classy finish, is this 2020's best metal guitar?

The distance between Gibson's entry-level US build and a top-of-the-range, Chinese-built Epiphone is closing all the time. Take the Epiphone 1959 Les Paul Standard, a quite stunning collaboration with the Gibson Custom Shop that is arguable better dressed than a Les Paul Tribute. Or take this Prophecy Flying V, which takes the high-road when it comes to spec.

Here we've got a mahogany body with a AAA flame maple veneer – like the '59 LP – though it is also available in Aged Satin Black. The Prophecy V has a set, mahogany neck, carved into Gibson's Asymmetrical Slim Taper profile. Originally the

Now, if you're thinking that this spec is pretty darn pro, then the two Fluence Custom Voiced humbuckers should confirm your suspicions. Very much the 21st-century pickup, the active Fluence 'buckers are multi-voiced and powered by 9V battery that's hidden in a compartment on the rear of the instrument. Engage the push-pull on the volume control to toggle between a high-output modern humbucker and a classic Burstbucker/PAF-style voicing, while a push-pull on the tone control activates a single-coil mode.

If you've tuned in for the high-gain humbucker, you'll be pleased to know that it lends itself to some ripping metal tones. Indeed, the Fluence skews modern.

MORE WAR ENSEMBLE THAN WATERLOO SUNSET...

asymmetrical carve was an accident, with variances on hand-carved necks meaning some had an ever-so-slightly fatter profile on the bottom-strings' side and a thinner profile down under the top strings. But then it became a feature, offering the best of both worlds, speed and comfort

The multi-play cream and black binding, MOP block with abalone triangle inlay, and the diamond inlay on the headstock lend the Prophecy V a Custom Shop vibe, its satin finish making it one tactile instrument. The hardware is quality, too. There's a LockTone tune-o-matic and stop-bar tailpiece, locking Grover tuners; both finished in brushed nickel, matching the volume and tone controls. The Graph Tech NuBone nut is perfectly cut.

Those weaned on Sabbath and Priest might prefer the more open PAF tones, which go very nicely with some JCM800 crunch or fuzz box and clean up nicely, while the single-coil mode is a good option. What more could you need?

Remember, however, that the Flying V design is exceptionally balanced on the strap but is awkward when played seated. Just don't jam your elbow into it like Dave Davies would have – this one's more *War Ensemble* than *Waterloo Sunset*...

Jonathan Horsley

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

1 ASYMMETRIC NECK PROFILE

The Slim Taper neck is one of the fastest we have played on an Epiphone... Or indeed a Gibson.

2 LOCKING TUNERS

The Prophecy Flying V's Grover Locking Rotomatic tuners are a welcome sight, keeping things stable for players with aggressive styles.

3 FLUENCE CUSTOM VOICED HUMBUCKERS

Push-pull functions on volume and tone controls offer you three voices: modern high-gain humbucker, vintage humbucker and single-coil.



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with AAA flame maple veneer
NECK: Mahogany with Asymmetrical Slim Taper profile, 12" radius
SCALE: 628mm (24.72")
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 22
PICKUPS: 2x Fluence Custom Voiced Humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume with push/pull, 1x tone with push/pull, 3-way pickup switch
HARDWARE: LockTone Tune-O-Matic with LockTone stop-bar, Grover Locking Rotomatic tuners, brushed nickel
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Yellow Tiger Aged Gloss (reviewed), Black Aged Gloss
CONTACT: Epiphone www.epiphone.com





DUNLOP CRY BABY Q-ZONE

£169

Cocked and loaded

The trusty wah pedal has many uses, from the percussion of clean mutes to full on expressive wailing distortion with your foot rocking. But, despite its versatility, there will come a time where you discover your wah pedal also sounds great ‘parked’ in a fixed position. Think the intro from *Money For Nothing*, and you’ll understand what it’s doing. Essentially, it turns your expressive wah pedal into a highly resonant filter, allowing you to really home in on certain parts of your guitar’s frequency in the same way as an EQ, but more pinpointed.

That’s what the Q-Zone is all about. It comes equipped with three controls: Volume, Q Zone and Peak. Volume is simple – it’s obviously the output level of the

pedal, but what about the other two? Well, the Peak control sets the centre frequency of the effect, much like rocking your toe on a wah pedal does. All the way to the left and you’re accenting the bass frequencies, then it moves across the spectrum as you turn it clockwise. Meanwhile, the Q Zone control decides what happens to the frequencies either side of the Peak setting (aka ‘Q’). To the left you’ll get the widest Q – that is, the effect is less pointed and works on a wider set of frequencies outside the bracket you’ve set the Peak control to focus on. Crank it up though and it narrows, effecting a tighter range. It’s on this setting where the effect is at its most noticeable, perfect for achieving greater isolation of your guitar in a cluttered mix.

Sweeping the Peak control is the easiest way to set it: with a note or

chord ringing out you’ll quickly find the sweet spot for your guitar’s pickups with an audible ‘biting point’.

It’s the type of effect that is slightly ‘Marmite’, and even if you do love it, it’s unlikely to see action on every song you play. But, it is a sound in its own right, and once you’ve set it, you can bring it in and out without having to find your sweet spot each time. It’s a worthwhile solution to getting a distinctive sound. At this price, we’d like to see the option of an expression pedal connection to make it better value.

Stuart Williams

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

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Fixed wah
- CONTROLS:** Volume, Q zone, Peak, Footswitch toggle
- SOCKETS:** Inout, Output
- BYPASS:** True hardwire
- POWER:** 9v battery/adaptor (not included)
- CONTACT:** jimdunlop.com

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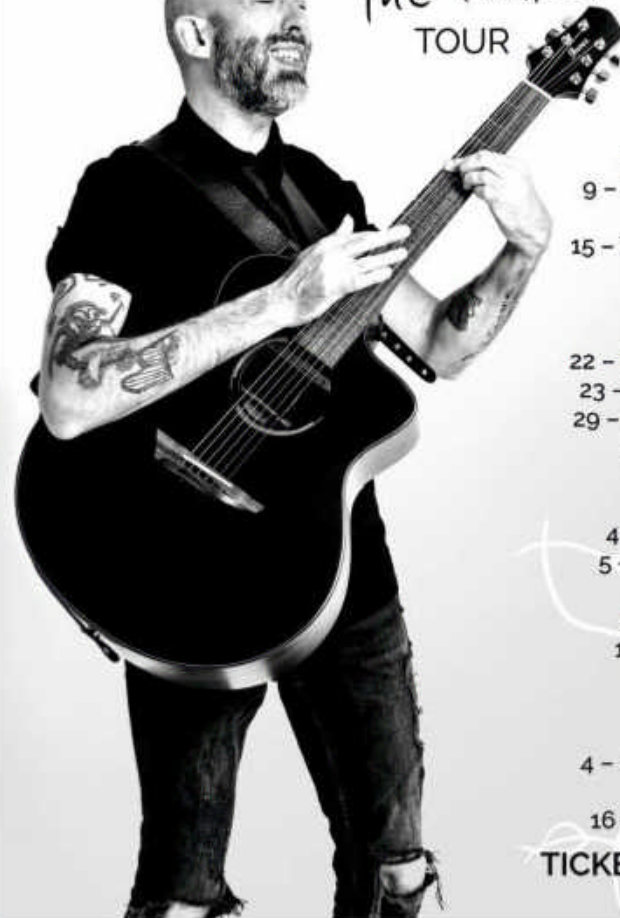
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DON'T WALK AWAY
The Heavy Hours, with
guitarist AJ Yorio (right)

Words: Johnny Scaramanga Photo: Devyn Glista

AJ YORIO (THE HEAVY HOURS)

“We assumed we would just be four friends making music in a basement forever. One day we get a phone call from a booking agent in Nashville. A week later he says, ‘Hey, Dan Auerbach wants to get lunch,’” says Heavy Hours guitarist AJ Yorio, explaining how they came to co-write with the Black Keys frontman. “The way we’re used to writing songs, the music takes about a month and then the lyrics take another month. Dan was like, ‘Alright, let’s try and write a song before lunch,’ so that was wild.”

The Black Keys connection began a whirlwind that has seen the band collaborate with Simon Felice (The Lumineers, Bat For Lashes) and

David Rhodes (Peter Dinklage). Their third single, *Desperate Days* has been released to streaming ahead of a forthcoming album. The singles have a plaintive, acoustic feel, so AJ has to use his electric guitars creatively, layering parts and adding tasteful slide. “I love my volume pedal. I’ve been concocting a recipe there because I love having those swells, acting as a synthesizer almost. It’s this misty vibe that sort of floats throughout the song.”

At the same time, AJ isn’t afraid to pile up the guitars. “For these singles, I recorded probably nine guitars on every song because I love the sound of four different acoustics and three different electrics. I got into this habit of in laying down a lead part, going back for a solo and then adding some of swells and feedback. The producer said,

‘It’d be really cool if you could play every part on this album with one guitar,’ so that challenged me to compose and arrange the parts that way.”

AJ’s main weapon for this purpose is a Telecaster Deluxe, retrofitted with Seymour Duncan Phat Cat P90 pickups, through a silverface Fender Vibro Champ for small gigs or a 1969 Super Reverb when serious volume is required. His pedalboard takes from out-of-control to tasteful: “I’m always trying to figure out how to harness the Big Muff’s power and weirdness. But when Mike is singing, I don’t want to overpower it, so I try with the combination of the guitar and the volume pedal to make it sound like a pedal steel, just have some bends running into each other, never letting the audience hear the pick strike the string.”



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