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to Hetfield!

FOO FIGHTERS

INSIDE THE
BIGGEST
ROCK ALBUM
OF 2021



THIN LIZZY!
PLAY LIKE
GORHAM!

GROHL
& CO.

ON RIFFS,
GEAR AND
"HEAVY
F*ING**
GR00VES"

LEARN CLASSIC
FOOS RIFFS!

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Printed in the UK by: William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future
Distributed by: Marketforce, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf
 London, E14 5HU
Overseas distribution by: Seymour International
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Renewals: www.mymagazine.co.uk, customer service: 0330 333 4333,
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Welcome...



I remember the first time I heard the Foo Fighters. Or saw them on TV, more to the point. In 1996, the band's early single *Big Me* was receiving what seemed like constant airplay on MTV. No surprise there. Even post-Nirvana, Grohl was still big news and the song's waggish TV ad parody video was a big win.

I loved it, but I don't think *Big Me* (which Grohl himself described as a "candy-coated pop song") gave much away about the band's style. You had to take a listen to the album for that!

Fast forward a quarter of a century and the Foo Fighters are set to release their 10th studio album *Medicine At Midnight* – and this month we're talking to all three guitarists. Pat Smear and Chris Shiflett take us through the recording process and offer insight into the gear they used, while Dave waxes lyrical on influences and inspiration. If you fancy learning a few Foo Fighters guitar tricks, make sure to check out our three-page tutorial on the band's trademark layered guitar style, alongside video lessons for three of their best-loved riffs.

If this has whetted your appetite for riff-instruction, take a look at our huge seven-page lesson on rock rhythm playing. It's rock-focussed, for sure, but in the broadest sense, as we're covering styles spanning the last 50 years. From altered tunings and blues-rock grooves to math-metal and modern prog, I think there's something for everyone to learn here.

And with all our usual gear reviews, plus interviews with Thin Lizzy legend Scott Gorham, prog mastermind Steven Wilson and alt-rockers Lonely The Brave, it's a bumper issue. Enjoy the magazine and I'll see you next month!

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

#342

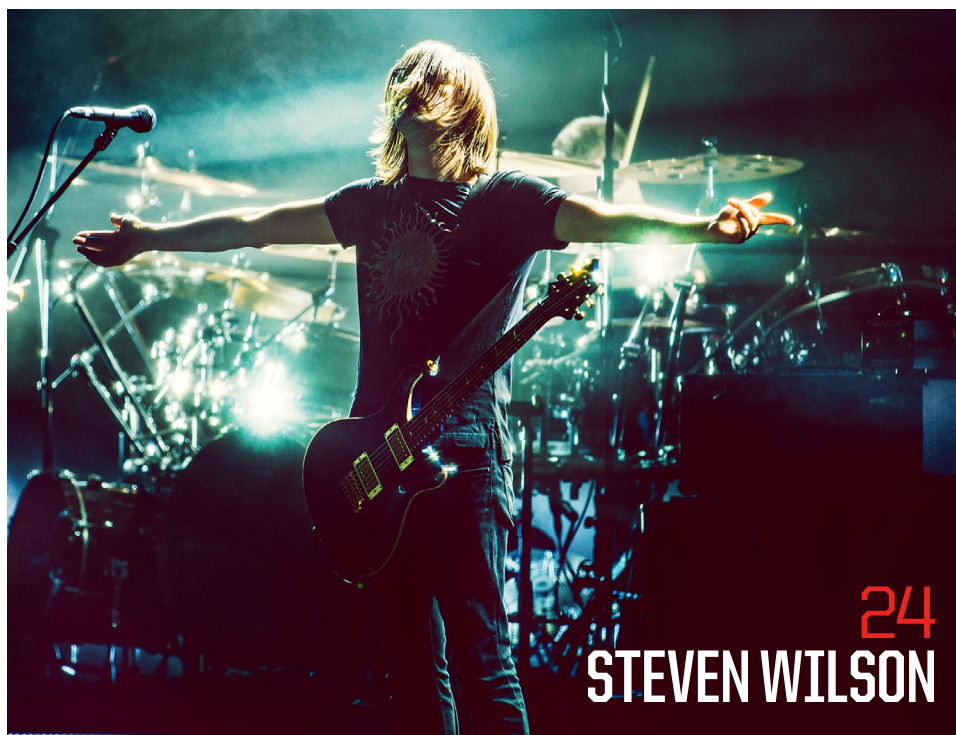
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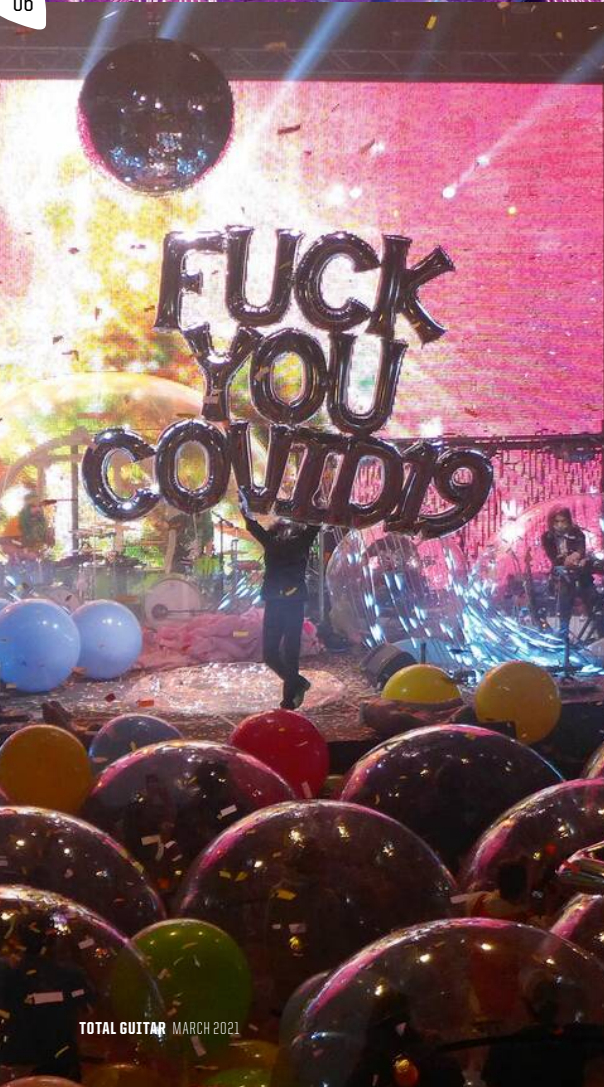
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Words Paul Elliott Photos Alexa Ace / Scott Booker

THE BOYS IN THE BUBBLES

It was billed as 'The World's First Space Bubble Concert'. On 22nd January 2021, the first of two hometown shows by The Flaming Lips at the Criterion theatre in Oklahoma City saw both the band and audience encased inside individual inflatable balls. This was not an entirely new experience for the band's frontman Wayne Coyne, who, in the carefree days before the global pandemic, had enjoyed rolling around over audiences in a Zorb ball during gigs. But this time the whole band and the whole audience shared in that experience – with each of the 100 bubbles holding up to three fans and fitted with additional high-frequency speakers to ensure maximum listening pleasure. At the end of the show, Coyne summed up the feelings of millions of people when he held up balloons bearing the message: "F*ck You COVID-19".



SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

ALBUM

THE 'LOST' QUEEN ALBUM REVEALED!

GUITARIST BRIAN MAY DISCOVERS LIVE ALBUM IN HIS ARCHIVES

In his personal archive, Queen guitarist Brian May has discovered a live recording from the band's early days. Now he tells TG Editor Chris Bird: "The world should hear it!"

"I'm going to tell you something that might surprise you," Brian May says.

"We just found – my little team down at my studio – a cassette, and it's one of the very first concerts we ever did. Nobody in the world has heard this.

"It was one of the concerts we put on ourselves in a lecture theatre at Imperial College in London. We invited the audience along, some of our friends, and some people in influential places in the music business, none of whom came!

"On this tape, you can Freddie [Mercury, vocalist] as he was at the beginning, and of course us. We're doing the very first versions that we ever arranged of these songs. It's very illuminating. There are all kinds of mistakes on it. It's us in a very unpolished form. But it's fascinating to hear.

"And now we're just trying to figure out what to do with it – whether to put it out or to keep it hidden away somewhere. It's a very rough recording, with all sorts of dropouts and distortion and changing levels. But Chris Frederiksen, my Pro Tools genius, has been sifting through it. He's been trying to clean it up. It was a bit of a mess, but it's pretty much listenable now. So I'm quite excited, really.

"I'm waiting to see what Roger [Taylor, drummer] thinks about it. So we'll figure out what we should do with it. I have a slight doubt. I don't know how Freddie would have felt about being exposed like that, but I think, the same as us, he would have this forgiving attitude towards our early stuff, as I do now. I have a feeling that maybe the world should hear it."





THE PERFECTION OF A GUITAR PLUGGED STRAIGHT INTO A GLOWING VALVE AMP

The Black Crowes' classic debut 30 years on

The Black Crowes' 1990 album *Shake Your Money Maker* is one of the all-time classic debuts in American rock 'n' roll. As a belated 30th anniversary reissue is released this month, Total Guitar salutes the brilliance of Crowes guitarist Rich Robinson and his back-to-basics approach.

OPEN TUNINGS

Rich Robinson embraced Open G (DGDGBD) for this album, prompting many comparisons with Keith Richards. While the Crowes were worthy heirs to the Stones, Robinson's use of the tuning went beyond that. His riffs attended the Jimmy Page school of heavy blues, and his slide playing had an Allman Brothers ring.

VINTAGE GEAR

Astonishingly for an album started in 1989, there was not a Floyd Rose in sight. Rich Robinson relied on a 70s Tele Custom, a '68 blonde Tele with a neck humbucker (furthering the Keith Richards comparisons), and a Les Paul Goldtop. The guitar tone was the perfect bridge between the 80s and 90s: heavy enough to swing with Guns N' Roses, but raw enough to stand beside Pearl Jam and Soundgarden.

SOUL POWER

Shake Your Money Maker is an allusion to the Elmore James song and a line from James Brown's *Sex Machine*, while breakthrough single *Hard To Handle* was an Otis Redding cover. This was a band in touch with rock's R&B roots. Such was their commitment to keeping it old school that producer George Drakoulis had to persuade them even to use a click track.

THE THREE-CHORD CLASSIC

Perfectly timed with the rise of MTV Unplugged, acoustic ballad *She Talks to Angels* was unpretentious and affecting. Performed in Open E tuning (E B E G# B E), Robinson proved what could be done with three chords and some tasteful embellishments.

THE ONE-AMP RIG

Robinson and lead guitarist Jeff Cease only had one amp between them in the studio, probably a Marshall Silver Jubilee. After a decade where guitar rigs resembled fridges, The Black Crowes reaffirmed the perfection of a guitar plugged straight into a glowing valve amp, turned up to antisocial levels.

SYLVAIN SYLVAIN

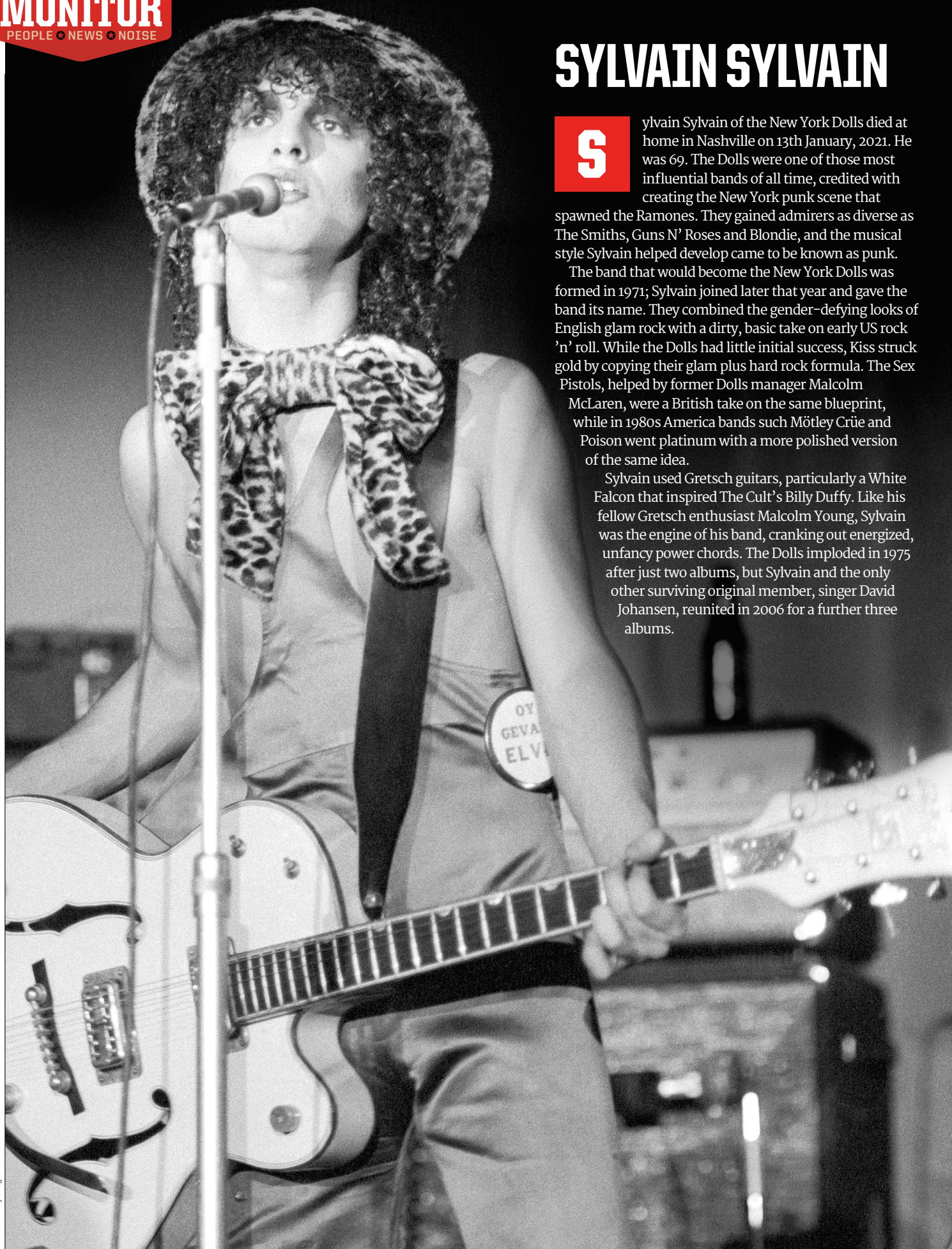
S

ylvain Sylvain of the New York Dolls died at home in Nashville on 13th January, 2021. He was 69. The Dolls were one of those most influential bands of all time, credited with creating the New York punk scene that

spawned the Ramones. They gained admirers as diverse as The Smiths, Guns N' Roses and Blondie, and the musical style Sylvain helped develop came to be known as punk.

The band that would become the New York Dolls was formed in 1971; Sylvain joined later that year and gave the band its name. They combined the gender-defying looks of English glam rock with a dirty, basic take on early US rock 'n' roll. While the Dolls had little initial success, Kiss struck gold by copying their glam plus hard rock formula. The Sex Pistols, helped by former Dolls manager Malcolm McLaren, were a British take on the same blueprint, while in 1980s America bands such Mötley Crüe and Poison went platinum with a more polished version of the same idea.

Sylvain used Gretsch guitars, particularly a White Falcon that inspired The Cult's Billy Duffy. Like his fellow Gretsch enthusiast Malcolm Young, Sylvain was the engine of his band, cranking out energized, unfancy power chords. The Dolls imploded in 1975 after just two albums, but Sylvain and the only other surviving original member, singer David Johansen, reunited in 2006 for a further three albums.



Photos: Getty Images

RIP

LOST HEROES

TG PAYS TRIBUTE TO THREE GUITARISTS WHO LEFT THEIR MARK ON THE WORLD OF MUSIC



LESLIE WEST

O

n 21st December 2020, the world lost one of the most iconic guitarists to emerge from the late 60s rock scene: Mountain's Leslie West.

Propelled to stardom by landmark tracks such as *Mississippi Queen* and *Nantucket Sleighride*, West's sound became synonymous with fat distortion, chunky riffs and sweet, soaring solos. From Eddie Van Halen to Zakk Wylde, later pioneers of rock and metal hailed West's playing as an integral influence on their own.

Like a lot of blues rock players, West's improvisational solos were rooted in the pentatonic scales, elevated by the deft mixing of major and minor phrases – a technique inherited from listening to B.B. King, Clapton and Hendrix. Unlike a lot of blues rock players, however, his lead style was characterised not by speed but by melodic phrasing and a vibrato so wide you could drive a bus through it.

Early on in his career, West settled on the Gibson Les Paul Junior as his preferred weapon of choice. Deciding that a second pickup would only get in the way of his picking hand, he squeezed mountains of rich tone out of the singular P-90 offered by the “baby brother” of the Les Paul family. He would later collaborate with Dean Guitars on two LP-esque signature models, which feature DMT ‘Mountain of Tone’ pickups (but just the one per guitar, of course!).

After West succumbed to a cardiac arrest at age 75, tributes flowed from all corners of the guitar world, with heavyweights such as Joe Satriani, Slash and Peter Frampton taking to social media to pay their respects.

And it's a heartfelt tweet from Joe Bonamassa that perhaps sums-up the guitar legend's legacy best: “Leslie West was a Rock 'n' Roll Hall Of Fame member that didn't need a statue nor ceremony to prove it. He just was and will always be...”



SCENE
PEOPLE • NEWS • NOISE

ALEXI LAIHO

A

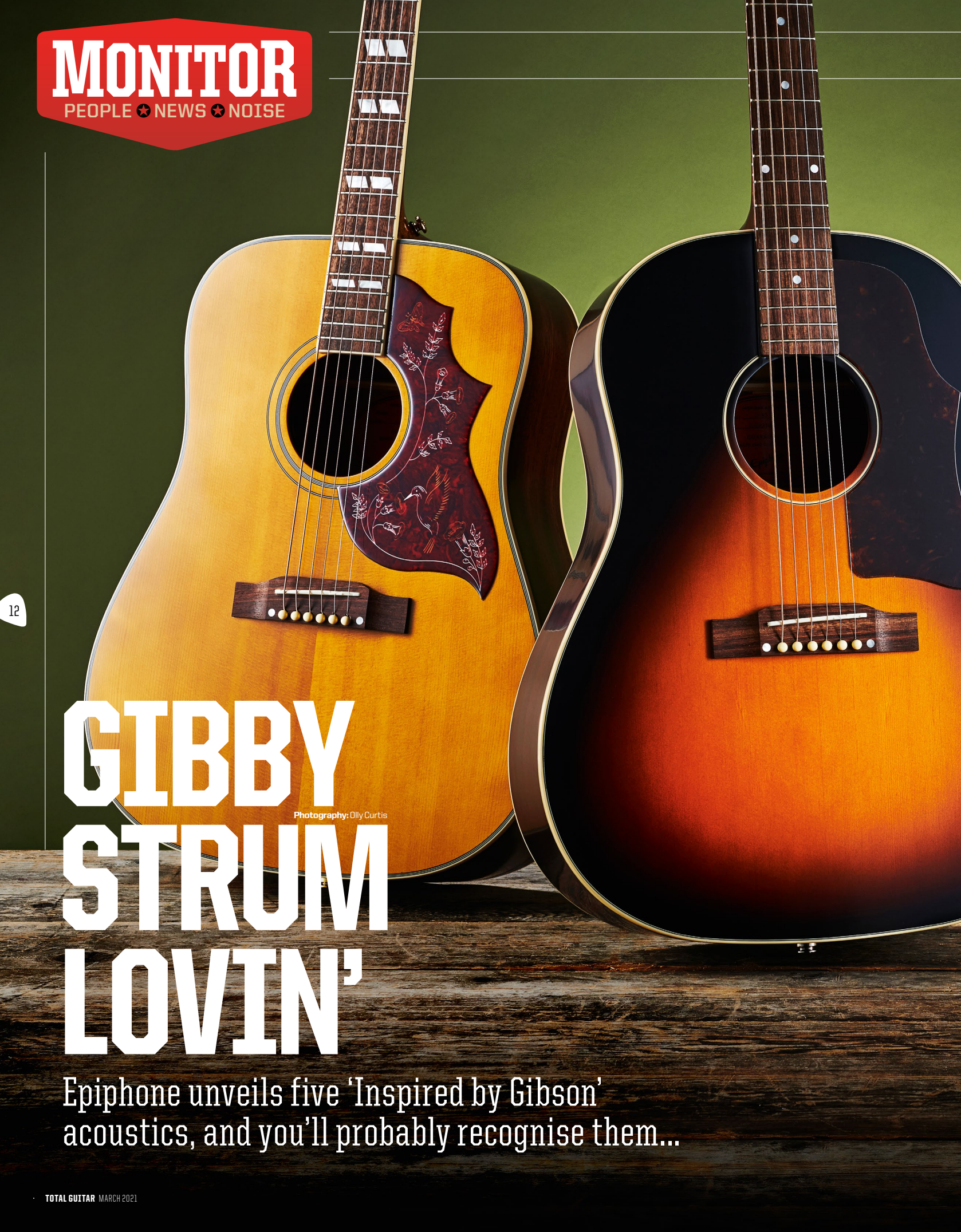
lexi Laiho, guitarist with Children Of Bodom, Sinergy, The Local Band, Kylähullut, and Bodom After Midnight, has died aged 41. At the time

of writing, the exact date and cause of his death have not been made public. A 4th January post on his Facebook page said only that he had died the previous week, and that he had “suffered from long-term health issues during his last years.”

Laiho was born in Espoo, Finland, on 8th April 1979. His breakthrough act, Children Of Bodom, was founded in 1993 as Inearthed. Their third album, 1999's *Follow The Reaper*, went Gold in their native Finland, while 2008's *Blooddrunk* confirmed their international breakthrough by charting in the US and UK. Rising to prominence during the nu-metal era, Laiho helped bring shred guitar back into fashion. Beyond his astounding creativity, Alexi's technique arsenal included devastating alternate picking, sweep picking, tapping, and whammy bar tricks.

Children Of Bodom's fusion of power metal and melodic death metal won them fans across the world, and ESP has produced Laiho's signature asymmetric V guitar since 2006. TG readers took to him in a big way, voting him the greatest metal guitarist of all time in 2011.

Laiho's peers in the metal community were quick to post their memories of the guitarist. Lamb Of God's Mark Morton called him “a monumental talent and a genuine, caring and thoughtful person”. Gus G wrote: “One of the greatest guitarists of my generation is gone way too soon.” Summarizing what made him such a great guitarist, Testament's Alex Skolnick wrote: “Alexi Laiho created new possibilities in extreme metal with technically sophisticated solos that held their own alongside the best in more popularized metal genres.”



MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

12

GIBBY STRUM LOVIN'

Photography: Dilly Curtis

Epiphone unveils five 'Inspired by Gibson' acoustics, and you'll probably recognise them...



W

hen many of us think 'Gibson', we think of a sunburst Les Paul channelling weepy classic rock licks, but of course, long before it set out on

the PAF of rock righteousness, Gibson made more than a couple of big dents in the acoustic guitar world too.

Now, Epiphone has set about recreating those iconic strummers with a total of five new acoustics. The Inspired By Gibson range features a J-45 (£649), J-45EC (electro-cutaway, £699), Hummingbird (£749), Hummingbird 12-string (£749) and the big-bodied J-200 (£799).

Common features include solid construction throughout, with solid Sitka spruce tops and solid mahogany back and sides on all models except the J-200 (solid spruce top/solid figured maple back and sides). Likewise, all five guitars feature a rounded C-shape neck made from mahogany, apart from the J-200 – which is maple with a mahogany centre – and Indian laurel fingerboards. As well as this, each model features an under-saddle piezo and Fishman Sonitone preamp.

Meanwhile, the individual details and 'aged' (satin rather than worn) finish options have been recreated to give each model its authentic identity: the Hummingbird scratchplate and split inlays; the J-200's distinctive 'moustache' bridge and detailing, and that unmistakable profile and burst on the J-45.

UP CLOSE



Solid woods

Just because they're affordable, doesn't mean there's a compromise on build, these Inspired By... models feature all-solid tops, backs and sides across the range.



12-string and electro-cutaway

The Hummingbird is available as a 12-string, and the J-45 is offered in cutaway and non-cutaway versions.



Features

All five feature under-saddle pickups and Fishman Sonitone preamps, plus Epiphone has matched the cool visual features from the originals.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Fingerstyle riffing
- ✓ Hammer-ons and pull-offs
- ✓ Drop-D Tuning

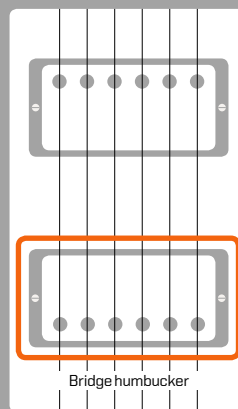
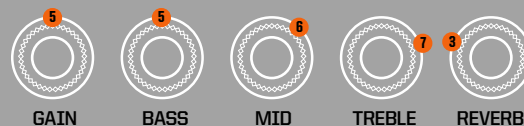


RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO
on your
CD

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



Bridge humbucker

Jake's main guitar is an original 1961 SG with PAF pickups. His amp of choice is a Marshall Astoria combo which is a modern amp that delivers vintage Marshall tone. We set the gain to five, but try cranking it up higher and rolling off your guitar's own volume. The idea is to maintain an element of the clean guitar sound so the notes cut through. We recommend dialling in a little spring reverb throughout, plus, if you have one at your disposal, a dedicated reverb pedal for the cavernous echo which opens the track and begins to fade at 0:15.

GRETA VAN FLEET

Age Of Machine

Greta Van Fleet's 2018 debut album put them firmly on the rock 'n' roll map with their 70s-inspired brand of blues-rock, and 2021 sees the band follow up with more of the same on sophomore release *The Battle At Garden's Gate*. We're looking at the latest single here.

Guitarist Jake Kiszka plays this subdued, hypnotic riff using fingerstyle to outline an

open Dm chord. The chord uses four strings, so it makes sense to assign a pick-hand finger to each string. Rest your thumb on the fourth string and your first, second and third fingers should fall naturally into place on the three treble strings.

At the end of the riff quickly, jump over to the fifth and sixth strings to play a quick powerchord slide which you can strum with your thumb or first finger.

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

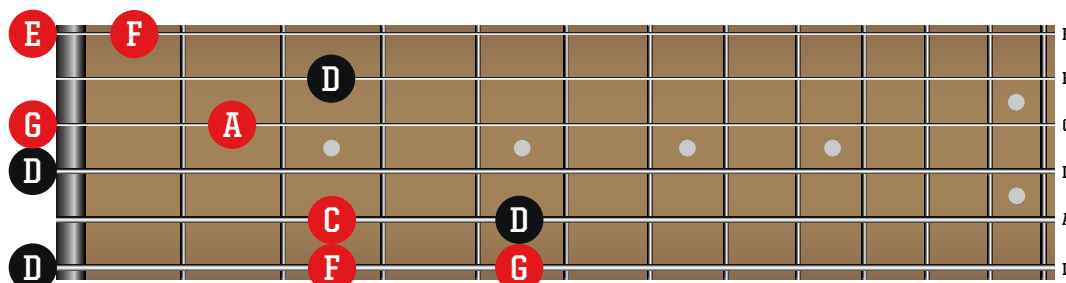
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00-1:00

Tempo: 64 bpm

Key/scale: D minor

Techniques: Fingerstyle, hammer-ons and pull-offs, drop-D tuning



This scale box shows you the notes you'll be playing. The bulk of Kiszka's riff is played using the highest four strings – essentially an open Dm chord. Get a feel for proceedings by practising lifting off your second

finger and hammering on from the open G string to the 2nd-fret A note. Also try pulling off with your first finger to play F to E on the first string. The two bass strings are used at the end of the riff for the F5 and G5

powerchords which are both played with a first- or third-finger barre. Finally, note that the riff is played in drop D tuning (DADGBE), so make sure to tune your sixth string down a tone.

IT'S IN MY BLOOD

JEFF LOOMIS
ARCH ENEMY



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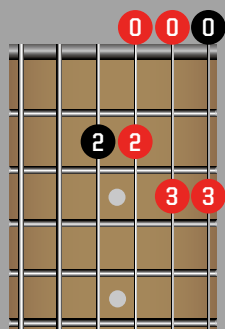
GETTING STARTED WITH...

LEAD GUITAR

Learn the best scale in the world and an easy technique for effective blues and rock solos

MINOR PENTATONIC CLASSICS...

One easy shape is at the heart of five great riffs



E minor pentatonic scale

This diagram shows you where to place your second and third fingers to play the E minor pentatonic scale. The idea is to play one note after the other – not all at once. You can hear this exact scale in these riffs:

- 1 AC/DC – Back In Black**
Listen for a run down through the scale at 0:10.
- 2 Link Wray – Rumble**
The scale kicks in at 0:28, after the main chords.
- 3 The Black Keys – Howlin' For You**
Short phrases here, but still minor pentatonic.
- 4 Johnny Kidd And The Pirates – Shakin' All Over**
A great example of a run down through our scale.
- 5 Stevie Ray Vaughan – Scuttle Buttin'**
So fast you might not realise it, but SRV's fiery lick is pure minor pentatonic.



Playing a guitar solo can seem bewildering for the less experienced guitarist. With 22 frets and six strings, how do you know where to start? Guitarists make this manageable by using scales, sets of notes that sound good together. By far the most useful scale in blues, rock, indie, and metal guitar is the minor pentatonic. It contains only five different notes. In a blues or rock context, you'll find it's hard

to go wrong if you stick to them. For authentic lead guitar, you'll also need to hammer on and pull off. To hammer on, you place your fretting finger onto the string with enough force to sound the note without picking the string. Pull-offs are similar, but in reverse: as you remove your finger from the string, pull slightly sideways, causing a lower note (either one you're fretting or the open string) to ring out. Using overdrive makes this easier.

TECHNIQUE CHECK...

Hammer-ons and pull-offs



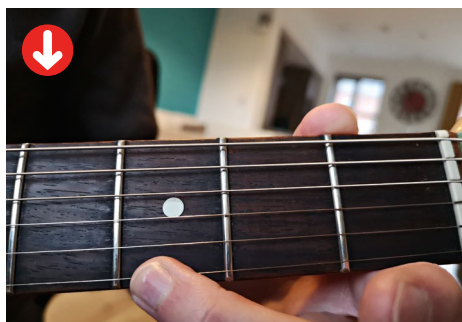
1 HAMMER-ONS: GETTING INTO POSITION
Start with your finger a reasonable distance from the string, perhaps an inch or so. As you get used to it, aim for a half-inch of run up.



2 HAMMER-ONS: LANDING ON THE STRING
Pluck the open string, then drop your finger onto the fret hard. Most of the movement should come from your knuckle, so the full weight and strength of your finger goes into the string.



3 PULL-OFFS: UPWARD MOTION
As you pull off, instead of lifting straight up, come off the string sideways. The string will bend slightly as you do, which is fine. The sideways movement plucks the string.



4 PULL-OFFS: DOWNWARD MOTION
The movement can be upwards or downwards, though be careful not to pull the string over the edge of the fingerboard.



1 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE TABBED

TRACK 07

$\text{♩} = 60$

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

It's really important to get to grips with guitar tab once soloing is on your radar. Whereas the fret box showed you what the notes are, tab can tell you which order to play them in. Just read from left to right. The lines represent strings, the numbers tell you which fret to play at. Take care to pick accurately so you don't catch the idle strings.

2 BLUESY PULL-OFF LICK

TRACK 08

$\text{♩} = 80$ E⁵

TAB: 3 0 0

Play 4 times

Greats like BB King and Albert King could play entire solos just repeating a simple minor pentatonic idea like this.

3 HAMMER-ON LICK

TRACK 09

E⁵

TAB: 0 2 2

Play 4 times

This hammer-on idea uses the same rhythm/timing as our pull-off lick – a great way to make solos sound more 'composed'. Just change the notes for variety.

Words Rob Laing

THE BEST NEW GEAR TO PLAY IN 2021!

There was no NAMM show last month, but did it stop a treasure trove of new gear being unveiled? Of course not! And we're here to filter out the very best of it for all budgets and varied tonehound tastes. Let's go!



ZOOM G6

Not to be confused with the nickname of the Gulfstream G650 often used as private jets by the extremely wealthy, this is nevertheless a multi-effects pedal that looks rich in features for a £442.80 retail price.

The G6 has the usual range of models based on classic amps and effects that are now expected but Zoom is bringing an

interesting spin on expectations; the company's engineers looked at the tonal qualities of the classic guitar amps from history and combined those signature sounds to create new amp models.

Zoom have claimed the G6 also features "entirely new distortion and never-heard-before modulation effects"; too. We'll hear the results this Spring.



WALRUS AUDIO R1

Not a week goes by without a high-end reverb pedal trying to turn our heads with its bells, whistles and multi-functionality but Walrus has form for special. And after last year's D1 Delay marking the debut of its Mako series with Analog Devices Sharc processor, the R1 has high expectations to meet.

Based on what we've heard, this High-Fidelity Stereo Reverb could be a do-it-all pedal in its class for 2021.

There's six reverb modes: Spring, Hall, Plate, BFR (Big F*cking Reverb), RFRCT (Refract), and Air. There's a volume swell effect via the effect knob that can be applied to any of the programs. It also has the X control like the Slö and Fathom reverbs for a brace of added functionality like grit and subtle reverse delays. At £349 it's a serious investment for sure – but if you want inspirational sounds with versatility, you may find the R1 is the one.



EARTHQUAKER ASTRAL DESTINY

This is the other reverb pedal that is tantalising our tonebuds already; a modulated octave reverb, to be precise.

Eight reverb modes and eight editable presets should be more than enough for most of us and in typical Earthquaker style, the Astral Destiny (£205) has some really interesting features for positively sci-fi tones.

You can add tails to the reverb sounds for natural reverb decay that will linger even when the effect is bypassed, and there's also an intriguing 'stretch' feature that doubles the length of the reverb while adding an adjustable pitch bending effect.

The reverb modes include the suitably huge-sounding Abyss, Shimmer (adds an upper octave to the reverb tail) and Cosmos – this one is ideal for chords and sustained notes as it adds a regenerating 5th to the reverb tail.





SQUIER CONTEMPORARY SERIES

They're well into old age, but the Strat, Tele and Jag are still surprising us with the ability to refresh with every passing year, and the latest Contemporary range is a case in point.

All the models feature modern-voiced Squier SQR pickups, roasted maple necks, sculpted neck heels, along with painted headstocks. While the Strat Special and

Special HT (£379) offer three single-coil pickups, the HH FR (£369) model brings a pair of FSQR Atomic humbuckers, coil-taps and a Floyd Rose trem. The Tele model (£379) offers a pair of humbuckers too but we're most excited for the Shoreline Gold Jaguar HH ST (£369) with coil-taps plus series/parallel switching on the upper control plate.



BEHRINGER HA SERIES AMPS

A trio of practice amps (£TBC, but Behringer are always affordable) with Virtual Tube Circuit technology available in 10, 20 and 40-watt options as the HA-10G, HA-20R and HA-40R. Only the latter two offer onboard reverb and the amps feature 6", 8" and 10" Bugera speakers respectively. "Designed to reproduce the saturation and compression of those larger-than-life classic tube rigs," says Behringer.

BLACKSTAR CV30

Blackstar's signature model for Bones UK and Jeff Beck guitarist Carmen Vandenberg looks like it has the makings of another winner for the Brits – a 6L6 two-channel 30-watt combo with subtle and classic art deco styling.

Channel 2 features Blackstar's Infinite Shape Feature (ISF) to cover a wide spectrum of gain, from tight and percussive to woodier and crunchy territory. Channel 1 offers Volume and Tone for a clean voice that's all about clarity and nuance for a great pedal platform if required. The CV30's speaker is a 1 x 12" Celestion Seventy-80 and will be priced at £899.



IBANEZ JGM10

When Jon Gomm collaborated with Ibanez's Japanese team on his first signature model with the company, he wanted to create a guitar for the modern fingerstyle player and the fruits are the results of "painstaking testing".

"It has the perfect scale and string spacing for modern fingerstyle playing," says Gomm. "It has a more stable neck for retuning. It has a unique triple-source pickup system by Fishman – Rare Earth humbucker, condenser mic and Powertap body sensor – wired so you can use one regular cable, or split into stereo, or even split into three."

The JGM10 (£2,779) also features Thermo-Aged Sitka spruce top, pau ferro body, five-piece mahogany/pau ferro neck and a Macassar ebony/pau ferro fretboard. "I love this guitar. I hope you will too," says the guitarist.



EVH 5150

 Eddie Van Halen's legacy goes far beyond his music – he was a maverick when it came to gear design, too. The EVH 5150 model (£899) is a testament to that; this time the modified Strat-style shred machine has a basswood body with a striking poplar burl top and a deeper upper body carve for comfort.

The bolt-on quartersawn maple neck is carved and rolled to Eddie's specs with hand-rubbed satin urethane back finish and graphite reinforcement. The ebony 'board features 12-16" compound radius and 22 jumbo frets. The EVH humbuckers are direct-mounted, just like Eddie always liked. Other features include a kill switch, treble bleed circuit, VH-branded Floyd Rose, D-Tuna and R3 locking nut.



SUPRO DELTA KING

 We were big fans of Supro's Blues King line of small combo valve amps, so what's this new 1x8, 1x10 and 1x12 range bringing to our backlines? Well, those cool stripes for starters! The single-ended Class A tube power section is voiced to recreate the rock 'n' roll tone of the 50s and 60s British Invasion.

The 15-watt Delta King 12 (\$649 / £TBC) is the flagship with FET-driven boost, a Pigtronix FAT high-gain mode, three-band EQ, master volume and an analogue spring reverb suggesting great versatility.



CHARVEL PRO-MOD DK24

 Charvel always go all-out on specs and the new Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 1 Sassafras models deliver brooding looks too for 2021.

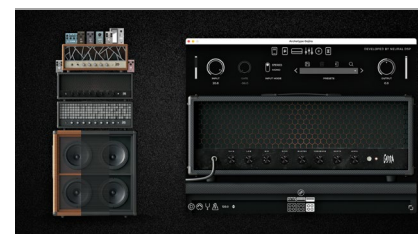
Alongside the HT E hardtail model (£959, but we're seeing preorder street prices £100 under that), there's right and left-handed HH Floyd versions as well as a maple 'board Floyd model. The bodies of all these new style 1s are all Sassafras (it bears resemblance to ash), the HT E (above left) with an ebony 'board and Seymour Duncan JB TB-4 humbucker (bridge) and two Flat Strat SSL-6 single-coils (middle and neck). Available March.

JACKSON PRO SERIES DINKY MODERN EVERTUNE 6

 The US company has a lot of additions for 2021, including new signature models for Marty Friedman, Gojira's Christian Andreu, a So-Cal for Misha Mansoor; a heap of new X, JS and Pro Series models and we've picked this model from the latter to highlight. Why?

Satin Graphite finish (we do love a grey finish) with matching headstock, Fishman Fluence Open Core PRF-CO7 humbuckers with five-way switching and an EverTune bridge – oh yes please! No more tuning woes here.

It's £1,869 and available from April, so we'll start saving/selling our guitars now.



NEURAL DSP ARCHETYPE: GOJIRA

 Unleash this plugin monster of Joe Duplantier's tones with this bundle (approx £115), including three amps (Clean, Rust and Hot) and Pre Effects comprising Overdrive pedal (OD), Distortion pedal (DRT), Phaser pedal (PHSR) and a Chorus pedal (CHR), plus Wow (a MIDI-programmable pitch shifter) and a polyphonic octaver called Oct that can add two independent octaves (-1 or -2) below your dry signal.

EPIPHONE FANATIC

With Gibson and Epiphone's new 2021 announcements featuring still unseen signature models that are likely to be pricey (Jerry Cantrell 'Wino' Custom Les Paul, Marcus King 1962 ES-345 and Noel Gallagher J-150), at least this Nancy Wilson (Heart) signature model is a palatable £469. It's a reworked Nighthawk (first launched in 1993) with ProBuckers, five-way selector and a stunning Fireburst Gloss finish – plus a hardcase.



FENDER JASON ISBELL CUSTOM TELECASTER

Back in 2016, TG met up with Jason Isbell in Bristol to talk songwriting and we were taken with his 2014 Custom Shop '60 Tele Custom at the time, a workhorse that's managed to keep its place in his rig since. So this relic'd production model is a mega-expensive Custom Shop guitar, right? No, this is a pleasant surprise for those of us usually

priced out by signature relics. It's Road Worn double-bound Tele for £1,249 in Chocolate Sunburst with custom wound pickups, 60s 'C' profile maple neck and 7.25" radius rosewood fingerboard.

The ashtray-style bridge with brass saddles is modified with its side walls machined off to enhance comfort while retaining that vintage class. Available May.

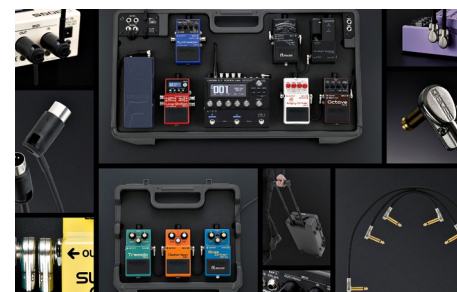
GRETSCH G2622 AND G2655-P90

It's the usual embarrassment of riches in the Gretsch 2021 lineup but the ever-evolving Streamliner series remains the company's strongest statement of value. These P-90 guitar additions bring a new kind of twang to join the ever-impressive Broad'Tron models we're consistently dazzled by for their prices.

The new G622 guitars are available as the G2622T-P90 (£609) with Bigsby in Brownstone, Forge Glow and Gunmetal finishes and the G2622-P90 (£539) with V-Stoptail in Claret Burst and Havana Burst finish options.

Both models have 16" chambered mahogany bodies with a chambered spruce centre block, 12" laurel fingerboards and 'U'-shaped profile nato necks. The Fidelity Sonic P90 pickups are complemented with dedicated volume controls, master tone control and a master volume control.

The G2655T-P90 with Bigsby and V-Stoptail G2655-P90 Jr are smaller 14" body models at the same price points. All these new guitars are available from April.



BOSS PEDALBOARD SOLUTIONS

Boss hasn't just added new BCB-1000, BCB-90X, and BCB-30X models to its long-running series of pedalboards, it's also producing BPC patch cables (from £11) with right-angle slim plugs on its cables and BMIDI-PB cables (from £15) for optimising space with your pedals' MIDI connections.

The 685 x 435 x 136mm BCB-90X (£175) sits in the middle of the new pedalboard range and the robust moulded casing contains an integrated 'board with customisable foam insert and includes daisy-chain PSB-1U power supply and adaptor.



FENDER NOVENTA SERIES

↑ Gretsch aren't the only ones giving P-90 pickups some spotlight time – Fender have just given them a whole new series. Well, the MP-90 to be precise.

This custom would take on the traditional best of both worlds single-coil promises “classic midrange bite, crisp highs and warm, smooth lows”.

A new Mexican-made Tele (£759), Strat (£759) and Jazzmaster (£899) take that blueprint and use it in very different ways with one, two and three MP-90s, respectively and options with pau ferro or

maple fingerboards. Those are 9.5” radius across all models with 21 frets, 60s ‘C’-profile maple necks and alder bodies but in typical Fender, the finish options vary across the range.

The minimalist Noventa Telecaster has a half pickguard design and is offered in Vintage Blonde, Fiesta Red and 2-Colour Sunburst. The hardtail Noventa Strat comes in Daphne Blue, Surf Green, and Crimson Red Transparent, while the Jazzmaster has Surf Green, Fiesta Red or Walnut options.



ESP KH-03 SPIDER

↑ Re-Enter Spiderman? Kirk Hammett's 1991 Black Album-era signature model is back in black with the iconic Pushead graphic. Built by the ESP custom shop in Japan, the 2021 Spider (£1,379). New features include EMG Bonebreaker pickups, scalloped ebony fingerboard from frets 17–24, neck-thru-construction and a Floyd Rose Original bridge.



MARTIN DJR-10E STREETMASTER

↑ We think the Martin Dreadnought Junior range is the company's best spec Vs price offering – a solid wood back and sides Martin with a pickup for under £750 is a compelling proposition. Here the 15/16-size and 24” scale model gets the StreetMaster distressed satin finish treatment to offer a distinctive new option. But at £715, it's more expensive than the standard DJR-10E.

The top, back and sides here are sapele and the ubiquitous Fishman Sonitone USB system places Tone and Volume controls just inside the soundhole. A gig bag is included and the guitar is available in a left-handed option, too.



IBANEZ AZS

↑ With the Ibanez AZ series going from strength to strength for tonal versatility and build, the range has expanded with a new shape to woo fans of T-styles.

This AZS shape also features on Josh Smith's new signature model, the FLATV1, albeit with a non-contoured slab body, and on the new signature LB1 electric for Lari Basilio. For the AZS models, there's a forearm contour and deep belly carves on the back of the body.

Like the original AZ spec, a roasted maple neck and stainless steel frets feature but the AZS2209H (above, £1,919) features a curved control plate and the same Gotoh/Ibanez bridge system as the Smith model. There's a Seymour Duncan Magic Touch-mini humbucker in the neck and Alnico II Pro Custom single-coil in the bridge with dyna-MIX5. switching system.

Words Amit Sharma

SOUL CHASER

Progressive rock mastermind and super producer **Steven Wilson** explains his abstract approach to guitar on his new album *The Future Bites*, reveals the secrets of his studio gear, and makes the shocking confession: “I DON’T KNOW THE NAMES OF THE CHORDS I PLAY!”

When I looked at my schedule and saw **Total Guitar**, I thought, ‘Oh god, what are we going to talk about?!’” laughs Steven Wilson as he notes that his latest album, *The Future Bites*, is one of the least guitar-driven records he’s put his name to. “There are guitars on there,” he says, “but they’re being used in more of a sound design kind of way. And that goes for even the solos! They’re not conventional muso leads, they’re quite abstract and dissonant in places... More about the way the guitar sound integrates within the overall texture of the song and the rest of the musical palette.”

Though he clearly distances himself from being seen as any kind of guitar hero, the ever-evolving English singer-songwriter has become one of the biggest names in progressive pop music, in many ways a modern equivalent to David Bowie in the 70s or Prince the decade after. As well as fronting Porcupine Tree for over 20 years, and working with other musicians in projects such as Blackfield, Storm Corrosion and No-Man, he’s also been highly lauded for

producing bands including Opeth and Anathema, and remixing famous works by King Crimson, Jethro Tull and Yes.

But it’s his solo endeavours that have led to him playing multiple nights at the Royal Albert Hall and crashing into the top 10 of numerous album charts across Europe, described by mainstream broadsheets as ‘The most successful British artist you’ve never heard of’.

Speaking to TG from his home studio, he talks through the creative process behind *The Future Bites* and gets into the fine detail about his favourite tools...

You started using predominantly Telecasters for your last album *To The Bone*. It sounds like that hasn’t changed...

The Custom Shop 1963 Tele was the first thing I reached for every time. The thing about the Teles is that they have this wonderfully cutting sound that slashes through the mix. If you have a lot of bright electronic sounds going on, as

we did on this record, all these electronic drums and arpeggiators – you need a guitar that cut through all of that, whether that’s through a funky riff or solo or abstract block of sound. The Tele did that every time. I think I took all my guitars down to the studio. I had my old Goldtop PRS, my AlumiSonic guitars – which are also quite bright – and I had my Tele. I don’t think we used anything but the latter!

In your last TG interview, you mentioned that the Tele sound inspired chords you might not have otherwise used.

Very much so. The other thing of course is that you don’t need as much gain on a Telecaster for it to sound aggressive. In fact, it’s almost like you don’t need any gain. There are big blocks of dissonant chords on songs like *Self*... But there’s not much distortion being used. There’s a natural aggression that comes from that very bright pickup. The low end



that would normally woof it up is just not there. It doesn't sound like it's being scooped out, it's naturally not there. That makes a big difference. You don't have to drive the amp much to make it sound in your face.

Speaking of which, what was the main amp used on the new album?

I've been using a vintage Supro, which I was very fortunate to have been given, making good use of the built-in stuff like the reverb and tremolo. It's a classic Jimmy Page kind of amp. So I used it on the record, though some of the sounds didn't go through amps, they went through plug-ins. I am not an apologist for amps. I am quite happy to plug a guitar into a digital converter and start fucking about with plug-ins. Or even put an acoustic through my pedalboard, ramped up to maximum gain, and then into my little Hughes & Kettner practice amp – which I did for the most aggressive and angular solo on the record, on the track *Follower*. It sounds completely off the hook and of control because it was out of control. It was a bit like trying to control a wild beast! [Laughs] An acoustic guitar through an amp on 11... Of course it's going to feed back and unleash all this sh*t.

We've spotted some pretty high-end pedals on your board over the years – the Analog Man Prince Of Tone being one of them.

That particular pedal I use to get a bit of crunch. I don't use it for the real drive, I have something else for that. It's what I'm looking for out of an overdrive pedal because it sounds like an amp. It doesn't sound like a transistor-y drive thing. It's very organic, and just pushes the gain on your amp a little bit. I think that's what most people are looking for out of an overdrive pedal, which is distinct to what you'd use for more aggressive tones. The Prince Of Tone does that beautifully, giving your amp just that little bit more drive. I love it live and use it a lot for recording too, whether into the amp or into a DI to give things a little more aggression.

So which pedal gets used for your heavier driven tones?

For those, I use the Amp Tweaker Tight Rock Junior. When I get back to playing



ON CREATIVITY
"Having too much theoretical knowledge can be an obstruction to the creative impulse"

live and need to start shredding those solos, that's what I'd kick in with delay or reverb. Very often, I prefer my leads with the ambience in front of the amp for a mushy sound. Very occasionally I might want a cleaner sound, like on this old Porcupine Tree song I've been occasionally playing called *Dark Matter*. That has a more epic clean solo, with the delay after the gain stage."

Then there's boutique modulation coming from the Diamond Analog Vibrato, the Option 5 Destination Rotation and the Moog MF Trem.

I love that Diamond pedal so much. It's on every clean sound I use live, whether I'm playing chords or arpeggios, it just has to be on. I don't use it on an extreme setting, it's there for more richness and colour. I'm not a big fan of chorus pedals, they make things sound more gloopy and synthetic. This vibrato, however, is more organic and natural. You almost wouldn't know it was there! And with the Option 5, I love Leslies and use them in the studio quite a lot, this new record being no exception. It's really hard to find a pedal that can capture that sound for my live shows in a convincing way. I've tried a lot over the years, there were a few I used before but the Option 5 is the one I kept coming back to. One of the best things about it is the speed control. When you kick that in, you hear the 'Leslie' start to rotate faster and there's something about how real Leslie cabinets accelerate. It's not an immediate thing, they wind up

slowly. The Option 5 captures that so beautifully. I defy anybody who can spot it because it sounds that convincing live. The way it speeds up and breaks down again is very close!

The Origin Cali76 compressor is another pedalboard staple of yours.

The Cali 76 is an emulation of the compressor I use all the time in the studio, which is the UA 1176. It's been my standard limiter compressor for years. I'm very au fait with the sound of that thing, using it for acoustic guitars to vocals to whatever. Being able to have a pedal version of that for my guitar is great. I know how it works, how it sounds and how to get the best tone out of it. Having used a lot of different compressor pedals over the years, this one was like coming home. I saw it and thought, 'Oh, I actually know how to use this one!' It's been such a staple in my studio for so long, I was really happy to get that on the board.

And then it's generally been Strymon for all your ambience needs.

I've had the Big Sky and Timeline in my rig for a long time now. It's hard to keep up with gear, almost impossible, because every couple of years there are all these new companies coming out with new things. But I love those Strymon pedals, the Timeline can add warble, grime and grit. For me, that's fundamental to any sound – that's what gives it life. In the studio I'll use

"WHEN THE OLD CHORDS START TO SOUND BORING, TRY



analogue units too, like on the song *12 Things I Forgot*, where we re-amped my demo solo through [co-producer] David Kosten's Roland Space Echo, which is one of the original tape delays. And his one is a bit ropey but in a good way, the tapes inside it sound quite worn out! You get that wonderful glitching or warble from a classic tape-loop-based delay. Some plug-ins I use simulate old cassette tapes. You can add hiss. You can even choose the brand of cassette. Cheap Ferro, expensive Ferro, chrome or metal... You can even choose the age of the cassette – with options for the C90, C60 or C120. It's just phenomenal. Just a little bit of that age can give music so much character, making it feel more old and broken down or lo-fi. That gives it vibrancy and it sounds real.

Some of your music over the years has been quite advanced and technical. How much does music theory play a part in your creative process?

I've never been trained musically,

other than a few lessons at school which I hated. I'm not aware or conscious really when it comes to modes, scales or keys. I don't know the names of the chords I play – other than a few majors and minors. I write songs and then have to teach them to my band. Someone like Adam Holzman [live keyboards] will ask me what chord I'm playing and I'll have no idea, I'll just show him the where my hands are or play each note separately. And he'll tell me I'm playing a G flattened minor 9 with a whatever. I don't know that stuff. Is that an obstacle to creativity? Absolutely not. There is an argument to say it's actually the other way round, that having too much theoretical knowledge can be an obstruction to the creative impulse.

A lot of the world's greatest songwriters didn't come from a classical or theoretical background.

That's what I mean! I bet Bob Dylan or Paul McCartney don't know exactly what mode they're in. I'm almost suspicious of theory. Although I've

ON THEORY

"Making music shouldn't be intellectualised, in the same way Picasso didn't paint based on theory"

worked with some great musicians who know all that stuff, very few have been writers themselves. They've been more like players, and to be players at that level, you need the theory. To be someone that writes, however, you can become too self-conscious and it can become no longer intuitive. I've never had the wanting to learn more, bar the moments I'm in a session with an orchestra and felt like I'd want to communicate in their language to explain what I'm looking for and I can't! But those occasions are quite rare. And these days with digital recording and MIDI, it's all there for you. If I play a string arrangement into my computer, it will produce the music for me and tell the players what to play by putting the notes on the stave. I don't know how important or relevant it is today. What I'd say is relevant and important is knowing how to use DAWs and recording software. That's infinitely more important to a writer than knowing the name of the chord you're playing.

So when you hit a creative block on guitar, how do you get around that?

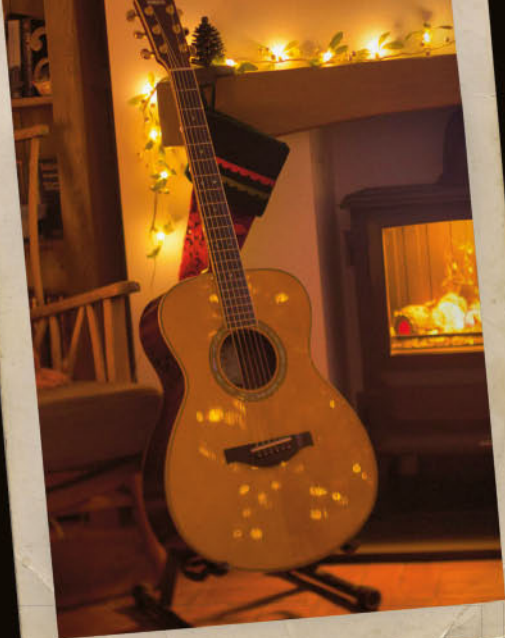
It's just a case of letting your fingers find interesting shapes. When the old chords start to sound boring, try an alternate tuning on the guitar and start discovering new shapes. Joni Mitchell did that a lot. Some of her music is hard to figure out because she was using her own tunings and until you know what they are, you'll never find the sound she had. All the regular chords go out of the window. You have to find things that sound good almost like an idiot. That's what I do in standard tuning too, because I don't have a huge idea of what I'm doing. It's an idiot-savant way of writing, but a lot of songwriters work like that. I'm the same on the piano, I'm not a proper player, but I've written a lot of songs on the piano by moving one note here and there. Making music shouldn't be intellectualised. In the same way Francis Bacon or Picasso didn't paint paintings based on theory, I don't think musicians should be making music that relies on it either.

AN ALTERNATE TUNING AND DISCOVER NEW SHAPES"



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Make Waves

Words Jonny Scaramanga Photo Carly Mundy

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Four years and a new singer since their last album, British rockers **Lonely The Brave** return against the odds with a triumphant album that captures their live sound



After two albums that topped the UK rock chart and a European tour with Biffy Clyro, there would always be pressure on a new Lonely The Brave album. Then, in 2018, frontman David Jakes left the band to take care of his mental health, and band took two years to craft an album with new singer Jack Bennett. Last year saw them making the album while two members juggled their responsibilities as frontline workers in the NHS. It would have been understandable if the resulting record sounded like a band struggling to get back on its feet. Happily *The Hope List* is a massive record that justifies all the struggle it took to make, with

guitarists Mark Trotter and Ross Smithwick delivering widescreen, atmospheric riffs.

The band live across the country and put the record together at weekend rehearsals. Despite its long gestation period, it was recorded quickly. “I think this is the first time that we actually sound on record the way that we sound live,” says Mark Trotter. “Normally we put down ridiculous layers of guitars. This time we double-tracked the parts and that’s about it. It doesn’t feel stripped back at all but it does feel rawer. We always have an ear to be able to do this live because we’re a band. That’s the whole point. It’s not karaoke.”

It’s ironic that they made their most live-sounding album in a year where

gigging was impossible, but actually the pandemic did shape the sound. The rawer sound came in part because they couldn’t return to the studio. “There are things that we would have gone back and added to if circumstances were different. My guitar parts were done in a day. That’s all the time we had, but we were able to do that because we had spent the last two years getting to a point where we knew exactly what we wanted.”

Rawer doesn’t mean small, though. *The Hope List* is full of huge, reverb-soaked sounds and spacious guitar parts. Ross explains how it’s done. “I like playing chords that sound nice and then making it a little bit ugly, throwing a discordant note in there.





When those open chords are played heavy, that's what gives it this big openness. We rarely play powerchords or chuggy stuff. Then [over the top], you can play one single note and just go back to the delay and the reverb to can make it sound absolutely monstrous."

Mark describes the writing process. "You play what sounds right. I hear in my head where that finger needs to be to get the sound I want, and I don't know what half the chords are that we're playing. There've been some guys online doing covers of our songs and actually they're playing them in a much more structured and better way than I play them! It's like 'Oh cool, instead of doing some ridiculous 12-fret stretch I could just go there. That would be much easier!'" It's interesting because that you write in the moment and that's what becomes the norm. On my side of things there's a lot of open notes. I love drone notes. I love a constant theme, so there's always some kind of drone and that that probably harks back to the first record when it was written as a four piece, just trying to cover as many bases as possible."

Both Ross and Mark reference Interpol as an influence on the single note lines they play over the top, which they call "atmospherics", or, as Mark jokes, "Just slam on every delay and every reverb pedal you can find, put them all on the same time and just hide behind that!"

DISSONANCE

Ross Smithwick: "I like playing chords that sound nice and then making it a little bit ugly, throwing a discordant note in there..."

There's a surprising secret to sounding this huge, says Mark. "I think the biggest part of why it sounds so big is that we don't try to fill every space. We always respect each other's parts, respect what's going on musically. If Ross brings in a guitar idea generally I will then end up playing a top line which will float around it. We both love film score music and anything that can conjure up an image. It doesn't have to be guitar-based stuff. My default is just trying to create a feeling. Atmospherics are key to what we do as a band."

Ross finds that his Gretsch Duo Jet is perfect for delivering those lines. "I think like eighty percent of my stuff is single-note parts, so the Gretsch was all over it. It just sounds like nothing I've played before. I used to have one of the big hollow body Gretsches. I tried to use that live a couple of times but the feedback made it just impossible. So I sold that and got this Duo Jet. It went on every song pretty much." His Manson MA-2 Classic with P-90s is his first choice for chord work. "That guitar is like a perfect cross between like a Les Paul and a Tele. It's just great for when a Les Paul's a little bit too chunky but a Tele's too twangy. Then we've got an array of Les Pauls. I've got a 2001 silverburst Custom which I thrash on to beef things up."

Mark attempted to slim down his guitar arsenal for *The Hope List*. "When we were recording before, we just had

just guitars everywhere, it was ridiculous. This time, I took five or six that were my kind of main go-tos. I've got a 1970 Les Paul Custom. That thing is incredible. I've also got a '77 Tele Deluxe with a set of wide range humbuckers. It's just got such clarity and string definition. It's got that typical 70s Fender build quality that you could probably drive a bus between the neck pocket and the neck, but it actually plays really well and sounds great. I've got an absolute road weapon of a '59 Les Paul Junior that appears quite a lot as well because it's just the most angry, evil little guitar on the planet.

"I guess the main two guitars were the '70 Les Paul Custom and a Fender Masterbuilt Stealth Esquire. Honestly if I had to have one guitar that would be it. With it being a Stealth Esquire, it's got two hidden pickups that just sound incredible. People think I'm nuts when I say this but you can actually make it sound like a 50s Les Paul, because old Les Pauls have that cut, almost like a big Tele. This thing does that in spades because it is a really big Tele!"

A secret weapon is Mark's baritone Fender Jaguar. "That's actually on most of the tracks in the record because it sits in this frequency range that isn't taken by anything else, so it'll fill out choruses or some of the bigger endings to songs."

Big atmosphere requires big pedals. Mark gets his ambience from the Strymon Blue Sky and Flint and the



"JUST SLAM ON EVERY DELAY AND REVERB PEDAL YOU CAN FIND."



Empress Superdelay, while Ross uses the Line 6 DL-4 and an original Boss CE-2 (“I nicked that off my dad”). Live, Ross uses a Marshall JTM45 while Mark’s main amp is an old 100-watt Plexi: “It’s just savage and murders the entire front row every time you turn it past one, so that always gets used with an attenuator.” On *The Hope List*, the main amps were the ones at singer Jack Bennett’s studio, a silverface Fender Twin and two Marshall-style heads built by Weinbrock amps. For dirt, Ross uses a T-Rex Dr Swamp, while Mark’s favourites are an always-on Durham Sex Drive and a Lov pedal Amp Eleven, which he sometimes boosts with a ZVex Box

Of Rock or Rockbox Boiling Point. They also experimented with digital amps. “Using Kempers for the first time was fun. I think you have to be careful though. You can disappear down the rabbit hole and not actually end up getting much done. It features across the record but it’s not the main body.”

One of the surprising things about *Lonely The Brave* is that a list of their influences leaves you little the wiser about how they sound. Ross mentions The Smashing Pumpkins and Sonic Youth, while Mark references REM and Jeff Buckley. In the past they’ve namechecked Deftones and Pearl Jam. *The Hope List*, though, sounds like *Lonely The Brave*. As Mark says:

IDENTITY

Mark Trotter:
“You don’t go,
‘Right, I want to
sound like Interpol’.
I can’t imagine
wanting to sound
like someone else...”

“When we first started, my aspiration was to be a post-rock band with a vocalist, and then we never were anything like that. I was influenced by James Dean Bradfield’s early Manics stuff. On *A Victory Line*, in my head I was trying to recreate *Motorcycle Emptiness*, but it sounds completely different. You don’t go, ‘Right, I want to sound like Interpol’. I can’t imagine wanting to sound like someone else, and if we’re lucky enough that we sound like ‘us’ then that’s great.”

“We all worked really hard on this album,” says Ross. “There’s been a lot of hurdles along the way, and we just really wanted to get it done.”

PUT THEM ALL ON AND JUST HIDE BEHIND THAT! MARK TROTTER



Interview Jonny Scaramanga

Scott Gorham

HE MADE HIS NAME IN THE 70S AS PART OF THIN LIZZY'S FABLED TWIN-GUITAR ATTACK. NOW, HE CARRIES THE SPIRIT OF LIZZY IN BLACK STAR RIDERS. GORHAM'S LICKS AND HARMONIES INSPIRED MAIDEN AND METALLICA, AND HIS TONE IS A ROCK BENCHMARK. AS HE SAYS: "IF IT DON'T SOUND RIGHT, IT AIN'T RIGHT."

G

Get a groove first.

I never start writing with the actual riffs or harmonies or lyrics. For me, the start to a song is the groove itself. If I can make myself nod my head in time and make my foot tap I know I'm onto something. You need that base right off the bat so everybody can cling onto it and start adding their parts. I don't have drum machines or anything in my office, so it's all in my head.

You don't need to work face to face anymore.

For the latest Black Star Riders album, *Another State of Grace*, we couldn't get together to write because we live so far apart. Christian (Martucci, guitarist) was on tour with Stone Sour, and he always carries around a recording system with him on the bus. He said, 'Listen, why don't all you guys send me your ideas, your riffs and your chord patterns, and while I'm out on the road I'll try to glue these things together.' I was like, 'That's not gonna f*ckin' work! We gotta be eyeballing each other.' But I sent him over 10 ideas. I have to admit, he came back with some really cool ideas with all of our parts put together.

Don't work with jerks.

I've got this mantra of 'no assholes', and no assholes get onto the same stage that I'm on. All these guys that I've played with are just great players with great personalities. When you talk about Thin Lizzy, they have a great respect for what they're

getting into, so make sure they get it absolutely right. I don't think I've ever had to tell any of those guys, 'Hey man, you're playing that wrong.' It wrecks the whole chemistry of everything on stage if you're always worried about one guy. If they're a total jerk but 'oh my god

can he play the hell out of his instrument,' after a while that's going to detract. You know at some point he's probably gonna start giving up on the song. You have to be able to trust everybody up on the stage to do what they say they're going to do.

Don't let your fears hold you back.

I try to have a sound of my own, but it comes out the way it comes out and you just hope to god somebody out there is going to like what you do. I think we all have these insecurities bubbling up underneath. You're walking out on stage, you're naked, and you're not quite sure if the audience is there for you or for somebody else. Our whole thing in Thin Lizzy was never ever give up, because you never know who's out in the audience. You might be







THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN
Gorham [right] onstage with Thin Lizzy at Wembley Empire Pool

influencing somebody else to get up there and do what you're doing because it looks like a lot of fun. But you're always aware that at some point you could mess the song up and all fingers are going to point at you.

Get a light guitar and save your back.

I'm using a Les Paul Axxess now. It's got the vibrato arm which I got really used to having because I played Strats for about 10 years, and my style altered quite a bit. The other big difference between this Les Paul and the ones back in the 70s is the weight. It's a thinner guitar and it's so much lighter. I was starting to get a pretty bad back and when I got that Axxess the relief was



unbelievable. From that point on I got all my guitars chambered. There's no way I would swing 30 pounds around my neck for two hours a night anymore. I tried one of Zakk Wylde's guitars. It must have weighed like 50 pounds and he's got that strap with the spikes on it that adds another 20 pounds. I'm thinking 'Shit man, how does this guy wheel this guitar around for two hours?' Unbelievable.

Stompboxes changed the game.

People say, 'Isn't it the density of the wood that gives you the sound?' But like Billy Gibbons says, the wood doesn't make any difference these days. Back in the 70s, we had no stompboxes, but

now there are stompboxes for days and we can get any kind of sound we want. You don't even take the density of the wood into consideration any longer, unless you're a jazz guitarist or your main instrument is an acoustic guitar.

Find the right guitar for you.

I started off in Lizzy with this really sh*tty Les Paul copy that didn't even have a brand on it. Phil Lynott went 'guitar' and I immediately went straight for a Les Paul Standard. I looked over at Phil and he went, 'no, I don't think so.' Eventually I went to the little Les Paul Deluxe stand, and he said 'yeah man, now that's cool!' It was all to do with price, because we just didn't have enough money at that point for the Les Paul Standard. I got as much out of that as I possibly could for my talent at that point but as soon as we started to make money I was onto bigger and better things.

You get what you pay for.

I bought this 1957 Les Paul in Boston. We were at a soundcheck and the security guy knew this vintage guitar dealer who came to a lot of the shows. They had six guitars with them all in their flight cases, flipped the lids and my eye immediately went to this 1957. He told me it was a '59 which didn't make any difference to me, it was all down to the feel and the sound. I picked this guitar up and absolutely just fell in love with it. After we played a song, Phil said, 'yeah man, that sounds great.' Pete, our sound guy just said two words: 'buy it.' So the dealer looked at me as if to say 'well, there's no negotiating on the price now!' It was \$2300 at the time.

DESCENDING SEQUENCE OF THREE

TRACKS 14-15

"The descending pattern is in *Chinatown* and that kind of thing. I don't know where that came from. I think it was from the very

beginning when I was trying to work out the difference between a major chord line and a minor chord line. I figured out you could

actually do both with the same line as you know as long as you don't hang on the non-major note for too long."

♩=120

We've recorded this descending sequence twice. First in F# minor, and second in A major. In F# minor, you should land on F# (the final bar), and in A major land on A (the final bar). You'll see how almost identical licks can be major or minor depending on the harmony and the root note. A typical harmony guitar approach for this Gorham-inspired lick.



Master volumes save your ears.

We were doing this tour with Deep Purple, and Steve Morse was sponsored by Engl. His tech worked for Engl. Every soundcheck the tech stood right with me and says, 'Hey, you're sure you don't want to try the Engl?' I'm like, 'no really, I'm good.' One night a tech somehow blew up all four of my Marshalls. The Engl guy's going 'well, should we throw an Engl up there?' I kind of had no choice now, but it sounded great right out of the right out of the cellophane. I ended up getting endorsed by Engl for 10 years or something. Then I had a jam session somewhere with Marshalls up there. I fell in love with Marshalls all over again. I prefer the new Marshalls to the old ones because of the master volume. You can get that sound without blowing the audience's heads off. In the old days, you'd be up to nine on the amplifier, but now it's like two and a half or three and you're still getting the sound. I love the Marshall cabs too, with the 25 watt Greenback Celestian speakers. You just can't beat it.

Find a guitar tech you can trust.

Casey is my guitar tech. He's a young kid, a really good player, and he knows exactly what I want every night, pedal wise, sound wise, volume wise. Even if there's no official soundcheck he'll get out there and he'll make sure that he gets you know some sort of sound check out of those things, make sure everything's coming through my monitors really pristine. You're not going to get a whole lot out of me about the details of my rig. I haven't seen my pedal board for over a year now.



"THE FIRST COUPLE OF YEARS OF THIN LIZZY WERE MY SCHOOL OF ROCK."

Develop your own style.

It's always a learning process every time you go up on stage. Hopefully you're gonna start learning things from different guys who are on stage. They're gonna do something that makes you say, 'Holy crap I didn't even think about that! Hey man, how do you how do you do that?' or you just eyeball the neck and see how they're doing it. I don't think I've ever stolen anything from anybody. What I'll do is take a hint of what they're doing and apply it to my own style. I think that's important. If somebody wants to play like me, my advice would be: don't do it. Maybe take a couple of tips from my playing. Take a lot of tips from

ABOVE

Gorham in Thin Lizzy with Guns N' Roses guitarist Richard Fortus

everybody. But don't flat out try to copy anybody.

Find musicians who will push you to improve.

I'm not this real technical guy. I never had a lesson. When I got in the band with Brian Robertson, his father was the second saxophonist with the Art Blakey jazz band and his mother was a piano teacher. He knew all the scales and the names of everything. The first couple of years of Thin Lizzy were my school of rock. Everybody that went through that band did the same thing - everybody walked out a better player. It was kind of demanded of you. There was always a lot of pressure to be better, larger, louder...

VIBRATO

TRACK 16

"I've kind of based my vibrato around what singers and horn players do. They'll hit that note dead straight and then you get to that feel point and that's when you start to

vibrate it. I didn't even realize I was doing that until a few people pointed it out. I've listened to a lot of violin players and saxophone guys especially. They'll hit that note and then get

to the feel point, then they start to vibrato. Gary Moore would vibrato straight off the bat. I'll make that note soar and add vibrato later."

♩=120
E⁵

TAB

BU 12 12 BU BD BU BD BU BD BU

14 (16) 15 (17) [17] (15) (17) (15) (17) (15) (17)

This is a very precise exercise to build Scott's trademark way of holding a note before adding vibrato. The idea is to rapidly bend the string up and down with the strict rhythm of the notation shown in bar 2. Aim for perfect timing - no cheating! By bending between two notes from the key, you'll always sound in tune.

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Portrait Jennifer Rosenstein

TIMES LIKE THESE...

To celebrate 25 years as a band, **Foo Fighters** made “a party record” in the era of no parties. Stranger still, they recorded it in a haunted house. In TG’s 16-page Foos extravaganza, Dave Grohl reveals all about his life as leader of one of the world’s biggest rock bands, and guitarists Pat Smear and Chris Shiflett tell the story of the album’s creation. Plus: your guide to playing three all-time classic Foos riffs...





Words Jonathan Horsley

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY

In a spooky old house – believed to be haunted – the **Foo Fighters** channeled the spirit of David Bowie on their “weird” new album. Guitarists **Pat Smear** and **Chris Shiflett** discuss the making of *Medicine At Midnight* and the inner workings of the Foos’ three-guitar team

How a record sounds is a product of the time, the place and the people who made it. And few appreciate this symbiotic relationship between place and sound as much as Dave Grohl. The Foo Fighters frontman and guitarist directed the 2013 documentary *Sound City* about the LA studio of the same name. A year later, he created the HBO series *Sonic Highways*, which explored the cities, venues and stories behind America’s music culture. And this sense of place has played a key role in Foo Fighters’ career.

In 1995, for the Foos’ self-titled debut – a solo project in all but name – the location was Seattle’s Robert Lang Studios, a home venue to get Grohl back in the game after the death of Kurt Cobain brought Nirvana to a tragic end. In 2001, when the Foos were coming apart at the seams, with the sessions for *One By One* stuttering to a halt, Grohl taking leave to play drums on tour with Queens Of The Stone Age, what saved the record – and perhaps the future of the Foo Fighters – was taking the whole production back to Grohl’s home studio in Alexandria, Virginia. In Studio 606, they got their groove back, thrashing it out in a week, those pent-up tensions turned into the white light and cleansing heat of rock ‘n’ roll.

But for the making of the band’s new album, *Medicine At Midnight*, they chose a most unusual setting – in Encino, Los Angeles, a 1940s house that is said to be haunted, and where Grohl even set up a baby monitor to find evidence of the paranormal.

“You’ve seen *Poltergeist*, right? It was *exactly* like that!” laughs Chris Shiflett, one of the band’s three

guitarists alongside Grohl and Pat Smear. “One night, a weird little Southern lady came in, quoted the bible, and I got spit out into the living room covered in goo!”

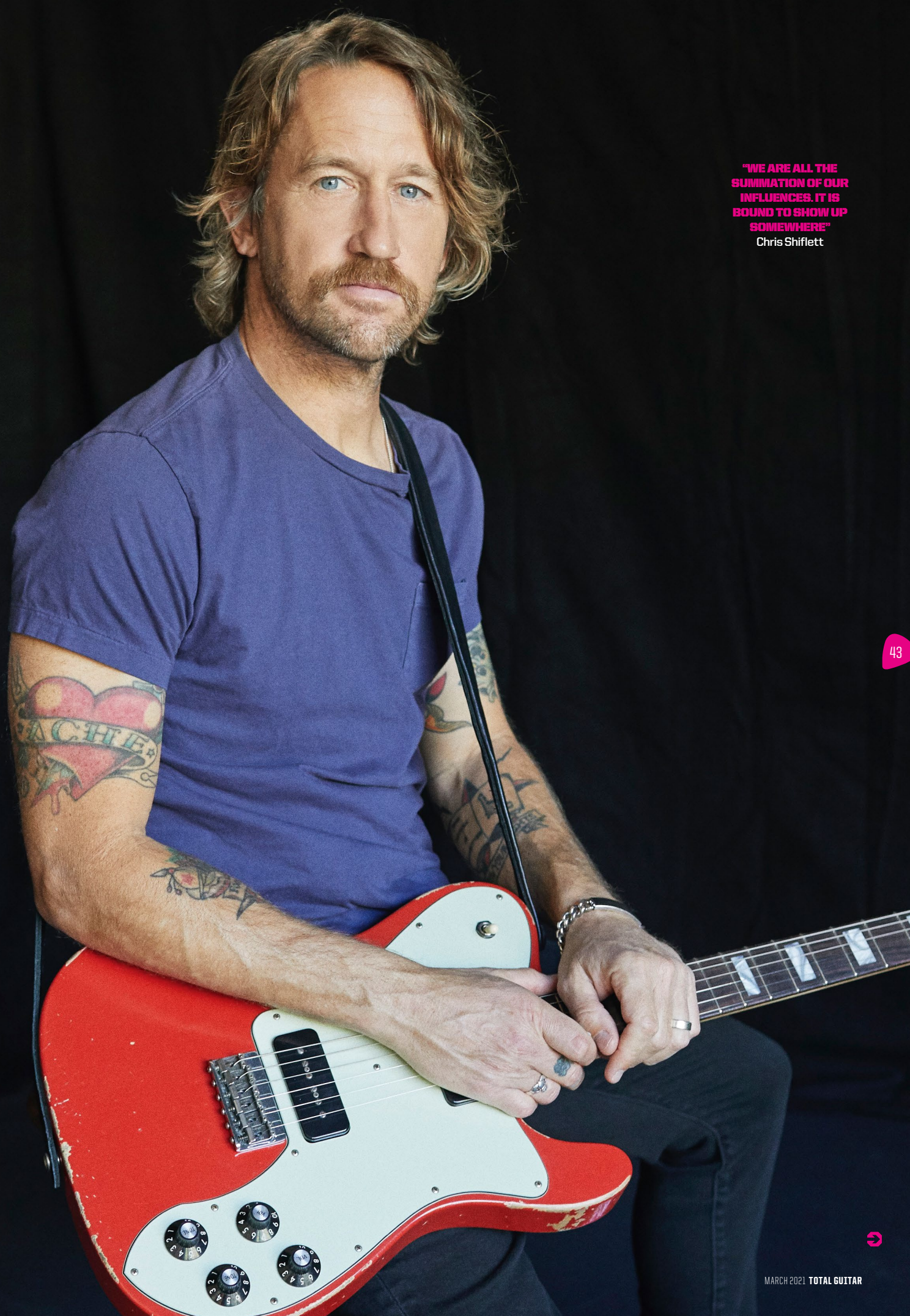
But as Smear adds, a little more seriously: “It was definitely weird and creepy. I’ll tell you that much.”

And along with those strange vibes, the place also offered amazing acoustics. Grohl had rented the house in the summer of 2019, a home from home for the band to work out some ideas on how best to follow 2017’s *Concrete And Gold*. “Dave just wanted to throw a little demo rig in there and make some demos, write some song ideas,” says Shiflett. “I think he just liked the sound – of the drums or whatever – and we ended up moving in the real recording gear and setting up shop in there, and it was great.”

Taylor Hawkins’ drum kit was set up in the living room. Grohl’s vocals were tracked in the bathroom. An upstairs bedroom was converted into a studio space, another requisitioned for guitars. Vans full of guitars, amps and equipment came and went. Tracking started in September 2019. By January 2020, *Medicine At Midnight* was in the can. For a band who have become the box office blue-bloods of their generation, that’s pretty quick – but that throw ‘n’ go approach is most probably an impulse reflex for a bunch of musicians who, no matter how blue chip they are now, cut their teeth in the American punk and hardcore scenes. Some habits die hard, no matter how many toys you have to play with in the studio.

“It is all done very fast,” explains Smear. “From picking what we are going to play instrument-wise, amp-wise, to actually writing and recording the song, it is all done very quickly. We don’t like to overdo, over

**"WE ARE ALL THE
SUMMATION OF OUR
INFLUENCES. IT IS
BOUND TO SHOW UP
SOMEWHERE"**
Chris Shiflett



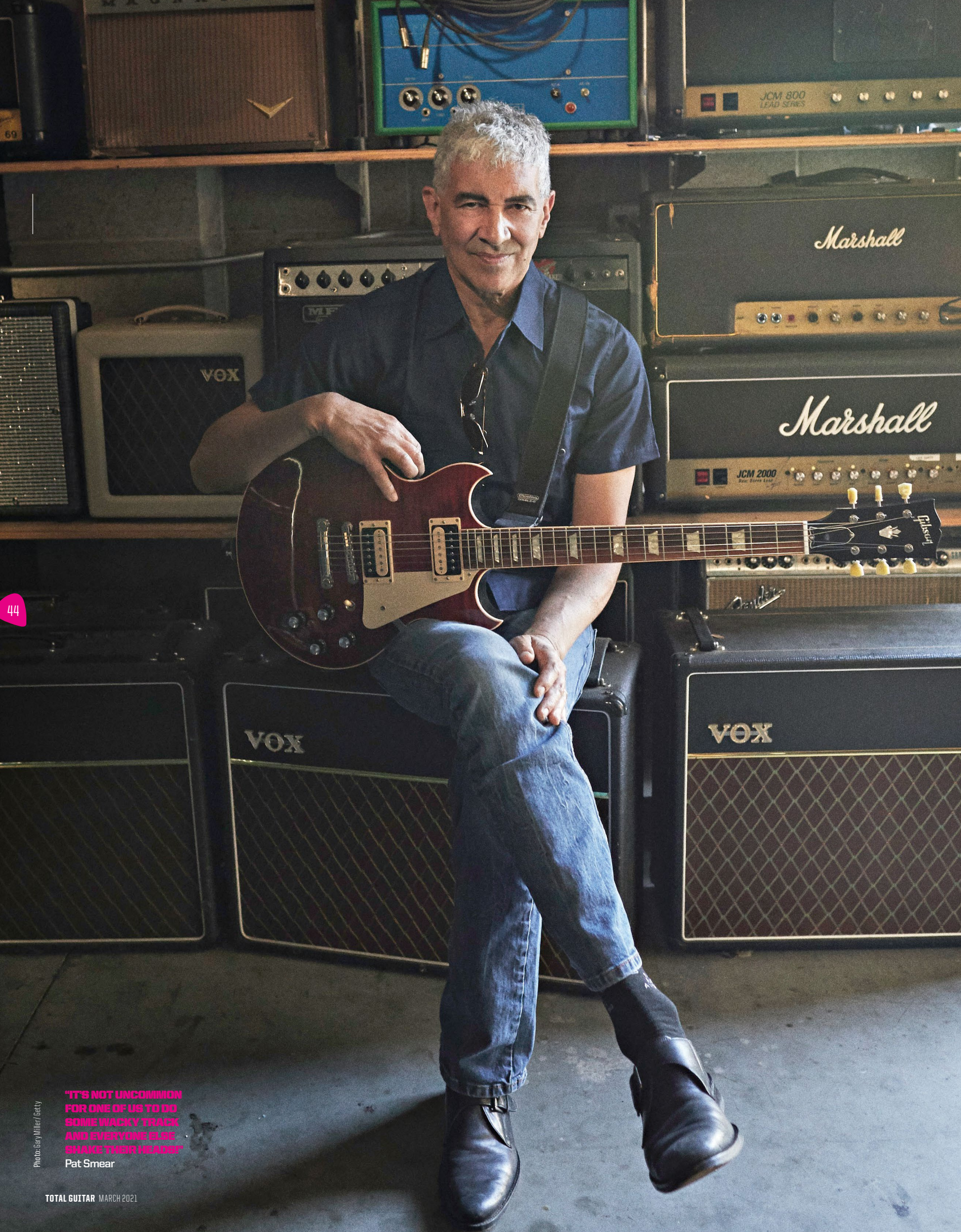


Photo: Gary Miller/Getty

**"IT'S NOT UNCOMMON
FOR ONE OF US TO DO
SOME WACKY TRACK
AND EVERYONE ELSE
SHAKE THEIR HEADS"**
Pat Smear

➔ rehearse, overwrite anything. We don't like to labour over things. If something starts going that way, it gets abandoned. Dave has this slogan for the band which is, 'If it gets any better it's gonna get worse,' so we just get it, get it fresh, and do it."

Having brought Grohl's pop sensibility to the fore on *Concrete And Gold*, producer Greg Kurstin returned for the *Medicine At Midnight* sessions. His influence on the recording can't be underplayed. It's part of the reason why this album has its share of curveballs, secondly, why they work, and thirdly how the Foos cultivated a sound that Grohl likens to David Bowie's monster hit 1983 album *Let's Dance*. *Shame Shame*, the first single from the album, which was released in November and performed on *Saturday Night Live*, showed where the material might be headed, or at least how much distance the band could put between the foundational alt-rock of *Monkey Wrench* and their most outré 2020 compositions. The words 'Justin' and 'Timberlake' don't readily come to mind when talking about Grohl's writing – even at his most FM-minded, the guitars typically serve as a prophylactic, keeping Foos on-message. But as Shiflett says of *Shame Shame*: "That is like a looped drum thing, and that is definitely one of Dave's. He loves that style of music and certainly Greg Kurstin knows it well. When you talk about a pop sensibility, that's totally his wheelhouse. That song is definitely pretty sparse. It's kinda different dynamically to anything that we have done before."

"Greg is always there to nudge you, to help you into a new direction," says Smear. "It was the same thing with the last record. We worked on all the songs and thought we have to go out of the box sometimes."



It didn't start out like that. *Medicine At Midnight* was shaping up as a straight-ahead hard rock record. A number of songs were written then scrapped as the recording progressed. *No Son Of Mine* was one of the first, all big physical guitar and bass thump. As Smear saw it, *Medicine At Midnight* was going to be "a regular Foo Fighters record" when the wind changed.

"Dave started making the songs weird," he laughs. "It went in another direction. And y'know? It was all part of the house! There was the effect on the songs that you were alluding to earlier, about the environment having an effect on us. It just kinda got all weird. And we chose some songs from the first half, which was like the Foo Fighters, and the other half which was like, 'Wow! That's weird.'"

What Smear calls weird, Grohl calls danceable, a descriptor that calls to mind The Cars, Badfinger, The Guess Who, The Knack, all those Friday night FM radio rock artists. Opener *Making A Fire* has a groove that's like the Steve Miller Band under a glitterball,

complete with hand-claps.

"I always think of that as the Michael Jackson song," chuckles Smear. "That was my first take and I am sticking with it."

It is one of the tricks of the trade, however, that the Foo thumbprint is all over each track, whether they're taking the acoustics out of the case for that pseudo-Laurel Canyon vibe they bring on *Waiting For A War*, or building a complex three-guitar rock song such as *Holding Poison* that seems free and easy but on closer inspection reveals itself to be more Rush than Ron Asheton. "Well, we are all the summation of our influences," says Shiflett. "I know most of us, as kids, spent a lot of time listening to Rush's *Permanent Waves* and *Moving Pictures*, so it is bound to show up somewhere."

It is one of the gifts of the Foo Fighters' writing machine that

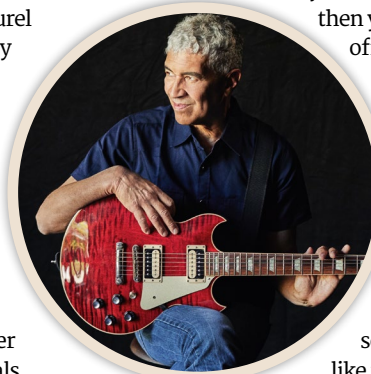
they can take musically complex arrangements and cook them up in a way that's easily digestible for their audience.

"Everybody has a free hand to do what they want to do," says Smear. "It is not uncommon for one of us guitarists to go in and do some wacky track and then everybody in the room will go in and shake their head. 'Nope. That's not gonna make it! [Laughs] Get the hell out!' And then we will come up with something else. There are a lot of happy accidents and surprises."

That *Medicine At Midnight* came together without much preproduction helped keep its shape loose right through the process. Songs were sketched out in 30 minutes or less before being jammed and thrown onto tape. "Usually, the things that are working are pretty obvious to everyone in the room," says Shiflett, "The things that Dave gets excited about, and is motivated to write some words for and finish, that's what's going to make it on the record. You have what you want to play and

then you bounce that off Dave and Greg, and everybody else in the room, and it evolves and becomes something else. I don't get too wrapped up in, 'Oh, we've gotta make this sound more like the B-52s or whatever.' These things just come together."

Love Dies Young is a case in point. That started out as a joke, with Shiflett's modulated intro riff – reminiscent of Heart's *Barracuda* – bouncing around the studio before taking flight. "I remember recording that and thinking, 'Ah, that's going to be a bitch to play



"THIS ALBUM IS LIKE VAN HALEN IN THAT IT HAS THAT PARTY VIBE"
PAT SMEAR

live!” laughs Shiflett. Having Kurstin on hand helps with the efficiency. Besides his intimate knowledge of the innermost workings of pop composition, he knows how to find tones on the fly – an invaluable skill for a band with three guitar players in it, each trying to find some space in the mix. Grohl goes first, then Shiflett takes a swing at it, before Smear adds his parts on last. “Well that’s always a challenge,” says Shiflett. “You’ve got the drum track, then Dave throws his guitars on it, then usually it’s me up next, and that is part of the puzzle, y’know, finding the right tone for the right part. Is it just something as simple as drums, guitars and a chorus, or are you coming up with another part that bounces off what the first guitar is doing? It’s different for every song. Greg is so good. You can point to a tone on a record and say, ‘I want to do something like that.’ And he will know how to get there.”

Getting three guitars to work on a rock record requires a little finesse. It’s not necessarily like Lynyrd Skynyrd; the Foos are too tight for that. It was around 2011’s *Wasting Light* that Smear felt he had it worked out. To find a spot in the mix, they just had to dig deeper into the record collection for inspiration and bring something different to the table. As for finding the tones, it’s a free-for-all, with Kurstin directing traffic. “I used an old Tweed Champ and an old Tweed Vibrolux that I put an old Greeback [Celestion G12M 12” speaker] in,” says Shiflett. “And a bunch of Marshalls, and some weird shit! One of the guys who was working on the record had a bunch of trippy amps, just weird stuff, and I used a lot of that on the record, too.” Up last, Smear used whatever amp would complement Grohl and Shiflett’s parts, and whatever guitar was at hand – typically

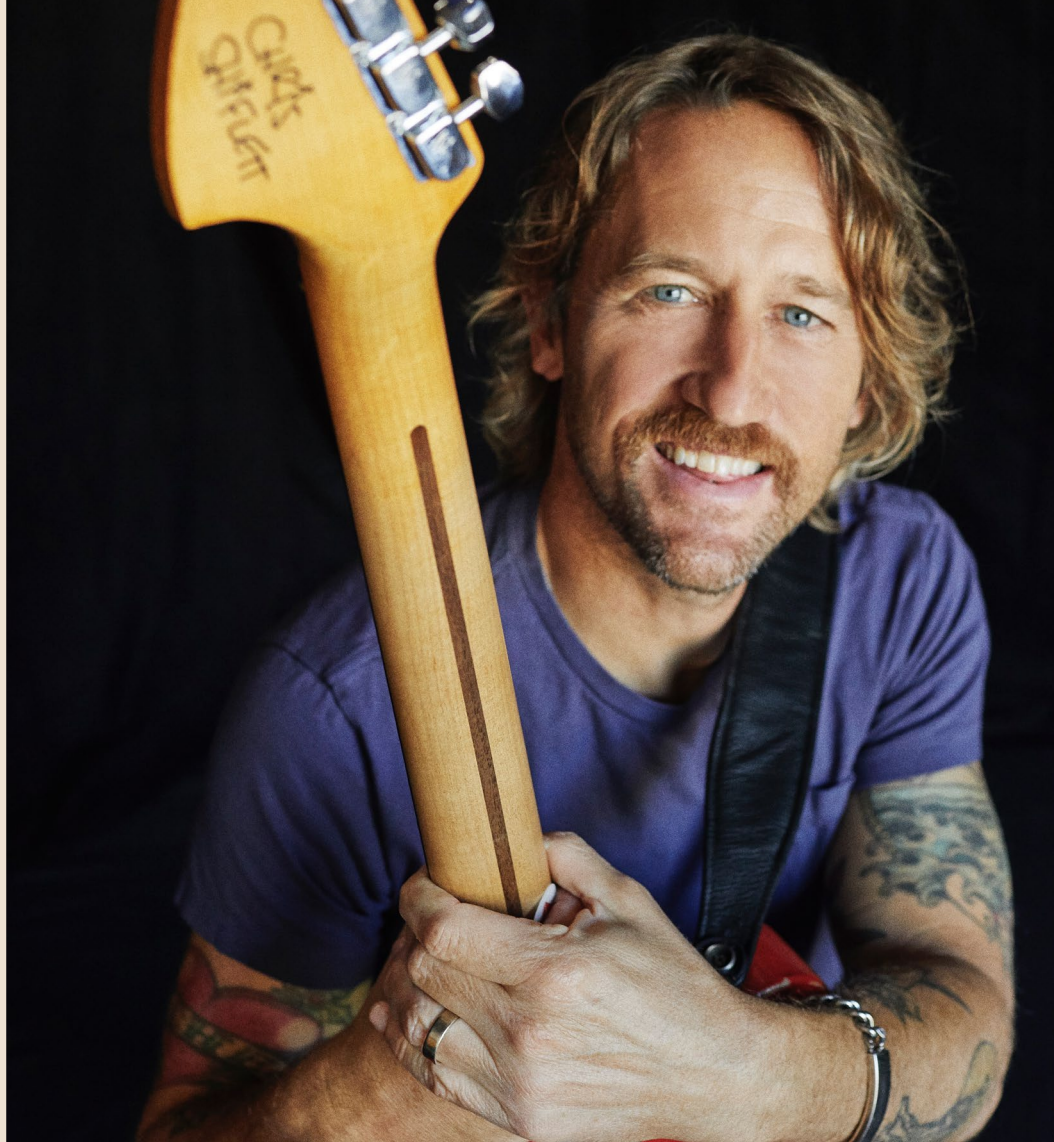
a Hagstrom. Shiflett was on his signature master-built Fender Telecaster, which is like a Deluxe but with P-90s. A regular Tele, a Strat and his ’57 Les Paul Goldtop also saw some action. “Somebody somewhere down the line took off the gold finish, but that really is what it is,” says Shiflett. “It has got those beautiful original PAFs in it, and it is fucking amazing. I used that a bunch.”

For effects, Shiflett recalls using Kurstin’s Roland Space Echo. “It’s got a very specific sound. you hear it and it is just that *Know Your Rights* Clash sound. You get that right away, that spooky 80s thing.” As for Grohl, Shiflett says his Gibson Trini Lopez was in the

mix – it’s why Shiflett principally uses P-90s, to complement the Trini’s humbuckers – but with everyone running to different rooms, it’s difficult to keep track. And that’s the thing: *Medicine In Midnight* was done, ready to ship in February 2020. Then the pandemic started and it got put on ice. Now it’s here. Is the timing right? Grohl thinks so. There are no tour dates in the diary but screw it. “We don’t just make it so we can hit the road,” he told New York radio station Q104.3. “We write these songs so people can enjoy them and sing along, whether it is in their kitchen by themselves with a bottle of Crown Royal, or in a stadium bouncing around, singing

the choruses. Right now, more than ever, people need something to lift their spirits, to give them some kind of release or escape.”

Smear agrees. When the time comes to party again, he sees those stylistic choices – guided by instinct, made in the moment – finally paying off. “This has nothing to how the way the record sounds, but I would compare it to a Van Halen album,” says Smear. “The thing about Van Halen was that they were a hard rock band, almost a heavy metal band, but every song was a song that you would want to play at a party. People would dance to it. I feel that it is like Van Halen in that it has that party vibe.”



“PART OF THE PUZZLE IS FINDING THE RIGHT TONE FOR THE RIGHT PART”

CHRIS SHIFLETT

Marshall

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CHAPTER ONE

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“IT WAS A PUNK ROCK SHOW. I WAS THIRTEEN. IT WAS RAW AND IT WAS LOUD. PEOPLE WERE BEATING THE SH*T OUT OF EACH OTHER, THERE WAS SPIT AND PUKE AND GLASS FLYING EVERYWHERE, AND I THOUGHT, THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO DO FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!”



Raised on classic rock and fired up by punk, **Dave Grohl** would emerge from the turmoil of Nirvana's heady rise and tragic end to become the frontman of one of the world's biggest bands. In this revealing interview, he explains how he has steered the Foo Fighters through good times and bad, and says: **"I hope that we can somehow inspire the next generation of musicians..."**

Early last year, when the world stopped, so did Dave Grohl's plans for celebrating 25 years of Foo Fighters. "We had finished all of our work with our album," he says. "We had mixed it and mastered it and we had the artwork and everything was ready to go. And then it got taken away."

But now, at last, that album, *Medicine At Midnight*, is released, and as Grohl speaks to *Total Guitar* from his home in Los Angeles, he's in typically ebullient mood as he hails it as a radical departure for the band, inspired by 80s classics by Bowie and the Stones.

He also promises: "There's still a few things that will be coming in the next few months that kind of celebrate that 25th anniversary." And he adds, with a note of humility uncommon among rock's major players: "At the end of the day, I'm incredibly shocked and proud that we lasted this long."

In an hour-long conversation, Grohl traces his journey from teenage punk rock drummer to stadium rock superstar. But he begins in the here and now, with what he describes, only half-jokingly, as "a disco record..."

***Medicine At Midnight* is a very different sounding Foo Fighters album. What was the thinking behind it?**

Knowing that this would be our 25th anniversary and this would

be our tenth album, we sort of felt obligated to stretch a little bit. There were different directions we could go. We could make a beautiful, sleepy fireside acoustic record, or we could make a really noisy, chaotic punk rock-sounding record. We've done everything in between. But the one thing we haven't done yet is make a party album.

Meaning what, exactly?

I thought about some of my favourite albums from the 80s, which were rock bands that made music that you could dance to. Whether it was The Rolling Stones' *Tattoo You*, or David Bowie's *Let's Dance* or *The Power Station*, there were these really heavy grooves that I loved. A lot of my favourite heavy music is kinda groove-oriented, like the Pantera stuff. Vinnie and Dimebag had this thing that was more of a ZZ Top southern boogie, but they would incorporate that into their really f*cking heavy riffs.

And what you've ended up with is a very different sounding Foo Fighters album.

For me, it's about pushing things into further territories that we haven't really approached yet. And that's been important to me since the first record. On the first record you have *Big Me*, which is this bubbly, candy-pop song, like a Teenage Fanclub song. And then you had *Weenie Beanie*, which is like a Ministry song, and *Wattershed* is just an old school

punk rock thing. Even on that first record, I was trying to broaden the playing field. And if you do that over 25 years, it's time to make a fucking disco record!

Seriously?

I've always been a sucker for disco. Even the drumming for Nirvana was based on riffs from The Gap Band, Cameo and things like that. All of those flams as you hear in *Come As You Are* and *Teen Spirit*, those were disco riffs.

And on this album?

Making A Fire, that's rooted in some old Sly & The Family Stone shit. *Shame Shame*, that has this rolling PJ Harvey/Tom Waits groove to it. *Cloudspotter*, that's a groove from the Dazz Band, and that riff I'd had for four years. I'd been telling (producer) Greg Kurstin, 'Oh my god, it's kind of like LL Cool J's *Going Back To Cali*, you gotta hear this.' He's, like, 'No way, are you kidding?' So I sat on it for a long time, and we had finished the record, but I thought, OK, let's take a stab at this thing, this riff that I've been taking about forever...

Have you always had such a broad taste in music?

To me, musicality has always been my love, whether it's something as advanced as a Rush record, or something as dissonant and chaotic as a Flipper record. There's something about the musicality and expression of those completely opposite things that

I love. A lot of my favourite punk rock bands were the ones that were a bit more technically inclined, or musically inclined – like Bad Brains. They were raw and they were playing what seemed like simple music, but those guys were technically proficient, they were fucking amazing musicians. Or NoMeansNo from Canada, they could do a jazz set if they wanted to.

As a kid you loved all the big rock bands of the 70s – Zeppelin, Rush, KISS. What made you gravitate to punk?

There was that rebellious spirit that I attached to – feeling like an outsider, feeling different or feeling misunderstood. That's where I really connected to the punk rock music scene. Feeling like I belong. I didn't necessarily feel like I belonged in the high school I went to, I didn't necessarily feel like I belonged in the suburban neighbourhood where I grew up really. But when I went downtown to Washington D.C., surrounded by two or three hundred other little misfits like me, I felt comfortable, finally. I found my tribe. I'd found my scene. And Washington D.C. was a very politically motivated punk rock scene, as well as being very emotionally motivated – it's where that emo thing began.

Were there other people in that scene who also loved classic rock as you did?

I once did a big long interview with

Ian McKaye (leader of DC hardcore legends Fugazi), where he was trying to convince me that Ted Nugent was a fucking genius: 'Wait? You? Ted Nugent? What?'

Ted Nugent is a divisive figure these days...

He's got some good riffs. Let's leave it at that.

So what were the ambitions of the teenage Dave Grohl?

I think with a lot of musicians, you try to prove it to yourself first. There is something about that sense of personal achievement. Like, I'm gonna sit down with this Beatles record and I'm gonna figure out *Blackbird*. That's gonna be the next five days of my life. And once you do it, there's a sense of accomplishment that can sometimes be the most gratifying. I remember when I was playing drums with my friends' bands when I was a teenager, and I could play guitar, I could play bass, I could play the drums. It wasn't until I was about seventeen that I realised I could record songs all by myself. And I really didn't want anyone else to hear them. I didn't think my voice was very good, in didn't think my songs were any good, but I did love the experiment of putting this thing together and bringing it home and listening to it myself: 'Wow, I did this!'

How did you overcome that sense of insecurity?

I think over time you grow more comfortable doing things. And with that, you also relieve yourself of some of the insecurity. Now, when I walk up onstage, I know I'm not gonna sing like Jeff Buckley. I fucking wish I could. But it's just not gonna happen. For years I would torture myself with that. And then I just thought: let it go, man! Just get up there and do your thing. And the more comfortable you feel, the more



comfortable the audience will feel with you. So of course I had incredible insecurities about being a performer, but after a while I sort of let that go. The vibe reigns over all. You get onstage, and you're there to do your thing. You get everybody right there in the palm of your hand, and you bring them with you, and you've got yourself a fucking rock show! Jumping onstage with your band and seeing people bounce around... I love that!

So after all the success you've experienced in your career, first with Nirvana and then with Foo Fighters, you haven't forgotten what it felt like to be a kid starting out?

In all honesty I think those early experiences do lay some sort of foundation, or something to keep as perspective for the rest of your life. When I left school at 17 and was touring the world, we were playing squats and sleeping in vans and sleeping in the clubs we had just performed at, and living off seven dollars a day. To this day, when I go to sleep at night, if I'm having a hard time

going to sleep, I just remember what it's like to be in a sleeping bag on a stranger's couch, in Des Moines, Iowa, after playing a hardcore show for two hours, completely exhausted, with a no money, far away from home, and there's some comfort in that, so I just go straight to sleep.

Was your attitude always to take everything one step at a time?

Sure. And still to this day, that runs as a thread through my entire career. Let's see if I can actually be the singer of the band. Let's see if I can actually play a f*cking festival. Let's see if we can play Wembley Stadium. Every step of the way, I just want to see if we can do it. And once you achieve that, you just push it out the way and go, What's next?

And the band has achieved all that you dreamed of.

It's been f*cking heaven, the whole time!

Really? If you had to draw the pie chart of fun versus not fun, what would it look like?

Fun is 99.9 per cent. You have to understand, this band was not meant to be a continuation of Nirvana. It was meant to be a continuation of the spirit that drove us to play music in the first place. We don't do things that we don't want to do. The band is on Roswell Records, it's our own record company, we distribute through another major label, and when it's time to make a record, we decide who, what, where, how to do it.

Is the bond between you all still strong?

Everyone knows they're allowed to leave any time. If you don't want to be here, you don't have to be here. We've had that conversation a couple of times. Every band has that moment, where they think, 'God, should we still be doing this?' We had the seven year itch, where we thought, maybe it's time to stop...



That was back in 2002, when you put the band on ice and played drums on the Queens Of The Stone Age album *Songs For The*

Deaf. How serious was that? How close did the

Foo Fighters come to splitting?

As close as you can get without breaking up. Basically, 'F*ck this, this isn't fun anymore, play this one last show and then call it quits'. That should be OK, it should be OK to do that. It's not like a divorce. If you don't feel great about playing music together,

"THIS BAND WAS NOT MEANT TO BE A CONTINUATION OF NIRVANA. IT WAS A CONTINUATION OF THE SPIRIT THAT DROVE US TO PLAY MUSIC IN THE FIRST PLACE" ➤

FLYING HIGH...

The evolution of Foo Fighters guitar tone in five classic tracks

I'll Stick Around

(*Foo Fighters*, 1995)
Dave Grohl used a variety of Gibson electrics, most notably his mid-60s Gibson Trini Lopez, which has featured on all Foo albums, but also Les Paul Customs, too. Indeed, at the 1996 Phoenix Festival, *I'll Stick Around* was performed on a black Custom LP. Either way, the recipe is to throttle the amplifier – a Marshall JCM900 preferably – don't scoop the mids, and use heavy strings so you can hit those chords as hard as you can.

Generator

(*There Is Nothing Left To Lose*, 2000)
There Is Nothing Left To Lose saw the Foo going

back to basics in the studio, with producer Adam Kaspar setting up mics, turning up amps and songs captured in as few takes as possible. But this time the Marshalls were replaced by Vox AC30 combos, with the occasional Pro Co Rat for drive/fuzz. Thereafter, the Foo would look to the classic British all-valve combo as the key constituent of their guitar tone. Bass would be set high, around 8, treble at 6 or 7. On *Generator*, Grohl used a talk box – a classic rock manoeuvre pioneered by Joe Walsh on *Rocky Mountain Way*, and a subtle tell that the Foo would soon augment their alt-rock sound with all kinds of influences.

Friend Of A Friend

(*In Your Honor*, 2005)
Written in 1990 about flat-sharing with Nirvana before the atomic success of *Nevermind*, *Friend Of A Friend* was rerecorded for *In Your Honor*'s acoustic side. Grohl has used Martin and Taylor acoustics in the past but his Gibson Elvis Presley Dove is the number one. Here, he'd cut it straight into the Neve or API console via a Neumann mic and Martech mic preamp. It was the first acoustic song Grohl ever wrote, but a good number of Foo Fighters tracks start out on acoustic before going electric.

Arlandria

(*Wasting Light*, 2011)
Recorded at Grohl's Studio 606 with Butch Vig (*Nevermind*) producing, *Wasting Light* showcased just how three guitars could be used to redraw the boundaries of the Foo's guitar tone. Again, there are the Vox AC30 combos, with Smear also going through a high-gain Peavey 6505 or super-clean Roland Jazz Chorus with an MG Music Lexotone in front of it, and Grohl favouring a Fender Tonemaster for his Trini. On *Arlandria*, Grohl's Trini Lopez is complemented by Shiflett's P90-loaded Tele with Smear on a baritone built from a Hagstrom body and Allparts neck.

Run

(*Concrete & Gold*, 2017)
The Foo threw the kitchen sink at *Concrete & Gold*. The big change guitar-wise was that Smear use Les Pauls. Shiflett had his P90-equipped Non-Reverse Firebird. And there were lots of stompboxes in the mix. If you hear modulation, it's likely an EHX Memory Man. Auxiliary crunch came from Shiflett's Klon Centaur and a JHS Pedals Muffuletta, which houses six different flavours of Big Muff fuzz under the hood.

Let's just not do it. Let's find other things to do.

So, what changed?

Honestly, when the band got back together and started working again, I realised I how much I appreciated the guys in the band and our connection. I know some bands that have been around for 25 or 30 years, not all of them get along as well as the Foo Fighters. We genuinely like being in the same room with each other. And that's something that the last year has given me, a new appreciation for not just the music and the career and the band, but the connection I have to these people. It's f*cking real. My connection to Pat (Smear), oh my god, we've been to weddings and funerals and f*cking court cases

and been bailed out of jail! Our lives are f*cking connected in a way that's more than most.

If you had to pick one Foo Fighters song that showed everything about the band, which one would it be?

Times Like These comes to mind, because it's a hopeful song. There's some optimism to it. I've always considered myself an optimistic person. And hopeful. But, also, it's introspective.

Over the years, you've met many of your heroes – Lemmy, David Bowie, Prince... When you've talked about them in the past, it seems you were in awe of these people when you met them?

Oh my god, yeah. Still. When you meet a hero, the anxiety and that

nervous energy that you conjure is based on how deeply that person has touched your life. If I was to meet one of my punk rock heroes that has maybe only has sold four hundred records in his life and nobody knows of his band, but he was hugely influential to me, I'd be a nervous wreck. You know, I remember meeting the guys from Supergrass, they are one of my favourite bands of all time, and I felt like I was meeting an iconic classic rock band.

Do you have those moments when you realise just how famous you are?

It happens when I see someone shaking and crying and I immediately want to diffuse that nervous energy, because to me it makes no sense. I've noticed what

Paul McCartney will do. I happen to think he's the most influential human being alive today, and when you see him or meet him in person for the first time, you're faced with your entire life of memories that he's helped build. But he's a good man, he just wants to make you feel like you're two human beings just saying hello. You know, I'm sitting here in sweatpants and a sweater, drinking a cold cup of coffee, not unlike anyone else reading this magazine right now. I don't consider myself on the same level as the heroes I grew up listening to. I just don't. But I can tell when people get a little nervous around me. The one-dimensional is turned to the three dimensional, and that's just f*cking weird. But just imagine if you turned the corner and you saw Bigfoot standing there. What the f*ck would you do?

Have you embraced the idea that you're a major rock star? You've seemed resistant to the idea sometimes...

"SOME OF MY FAVOURITE ALBUMS FROM THE 80S WERE ROCK BANDS THAT MADE MUSIC THAT YOU COULD DANCE TO"





What was that?

It was a punk rock show, Naked Raygun, in Chicago, when I was 13. I'd never seen a rock band onstage before, and my cousin took me to this little club. Naked Raygun jumped up onstage and they had three or four chords, and they played fast and it was raw and it was loud, and people were beating the sh*t out of each other, there was spit and puke and glass flying everywhere, and I thought, 'This is what want to do for the rest of my life!' And seeing how simple and human it was, that's what made me feel like I could do it.

Do you still believe in the romance of rock 'n' roll?

Absolutely! If there's one thing I was never concerned with, it was f*cking fashion. The other day, someone sent me a picture of my Battle Of The Bands in ninth grade, when I was 13 or 14 years old, and I was wearing the same f*cking sh*t as I wear now as a 51-year-old man! I was wearing flannel shirt, camouflage pants, and chequered Vans. Clearly my sense of fashion has been frozen in time. I don't think that rock 'n' roll is as fashionable as some people do. I think rock 'n' roll is more than visual, it's more than something sonic or more than audio. It's a spirit.

Can you elaborate on that?

Well, of course you would consider Little Richard and Chuck Berry the originators. Of course, you would consider them rock 'n' roll. Some people might not consider Motörhead rock 'n' roll, but I do. Some people might not consider The Prodigy rock 'n' roll. I do. There's something about the spirit that connects all of those things together. Listen, man, I'm raising three kids who are discovering rock 'n' roll now. My 14-year-old is already so deep in a Bowie phase that she shaved her f*cking eyebrows. My eleven-year-old is obsessed with The Beatles. I've watched them discover music, and it's based on that spirit. So I don't consider rock 'n' roll out of fashion, because I never, ever considered it one.

Most of my days are spent with my kids. They're 14, 11 and six - Violet, Harper and Ophelia. They remind me, quite often, that I'm just their f*cking sweatpants-wearing dad. And they're right. I understand that I've done a lot in the last 30-odd years, and I'm very proud of that. But I do still consider myself a working-class musician in a lot of ways. When I was making that *Songs For The Deaf* record with Queens Of The Stone Age, I loved it, because I was a short-order cook. The producer would say, 'Hey, in this section could you try this, this and this.' 'Okay, I got it.' Josh (Homme, QOTSA leader) would say, 'In this section, do this.' And I f*cking loved doing that.

Why do you and him work so well together?

Josh and I have a very beautiful musical connection. There's something about his riffs and my drums that just go together well. He could start playing something and I will play along with him. And it only takes a second for it to lock

in. Plus he and I, when we write music together, we're trying to make each other laugh. It's, like, you're gonna set up the joke, I've got the punchline. And the more ridiculous we can make it, we come up with ideas while we're recording, on a whim or as a joke, and we decide to keep it. Unnecessary, that's the word!

In 2008, when the Foo Fighters played London's Wembley Stadium, you jammed with Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones on a version of Led Zeppelin's *Rock And Roll*. In that moment, what going through your head?

I don't think the weight of the situation really hit until afterwards. It's like jumping out of a fucking airplane. OK, here's the two guys from Led Zeppelin, I'm onstage at Wembley... It's funny, my monitor guy, Ian Beveridge, he's from Scotland, he's been my monitor guy for 30 f*cking years. He knows when I get choked up because my voice does a specific little thing. I try to keep it from cracking while I'm singing, but

if there's one person who can tell when those moments sink in, it's Ian.

In the past few years we've lost so many legendary musicians. Is there responsibility for you to step up and fill that breach?

I don't know if it's a responsibility or obligation. But I do hope that we can somehow inspire the next generation of musicians to do the same. If there's any responsibility I feel, it's that. Often, people imagine that we live a total fantasy life that is not a bunch of people playing instruments. It's important for to humanise it so people realise it's available to them as well. So, when I jump out onstage and I see a ten year-old kid waving at me, saying, 'Hey, I want to play guitar!', I know that by handing him my guitar, it will inspire him to keep on playing. And if there are other ten year olds in the audience that see him doing it, they'll think, 'F*ck! I can do that too.' And that's what happened to me at my first concert...



SONIC HIGHWAYS

Learn the Foo Fighters' trademark layered guitar style

Musically speaking, you could say Foo Fighters are underrated. Yeah, we know the band is a world-famous rock behemoth, and no one's going to make a case for great virtuosity, but we'd argue that the band's trademark layered chords, arpeggios and hard riffing style are greater than the sum of its parts. There's certainly plenty to learn from the way those multiple parts lock together. It's

clever stuff, and interesting for anyone thinking about arranging parts for two or three guitarists – which is what we're looking at in this lesson. If there's a general principle, it's to complement and contrast. So, if one guitar plays, say, an arpeggio, the other guitar could add powerchords, or target another pitch/area of the fretboard. Hopefully our lessons will inspire you to explore some textural playing, Foos-style.

1 ARPEGGIOS & POWERCHORDS (GUITAR 1)

TRACK 17

♩=120

Cadd⁹ **A⁷sus⁴** Play 8 times

let ring throughout

TAB: 0 3 0 3 0 2

3 2 0 2 0 2

These add9 and 7sus4 chords will give you a typically Foos-style flavour, and the warm but cutting light overdrive tone is authentic too. Just let all the strings ring together.

2 ARPEGGIOS & POWERCHORDS (GUITAR 2)

TRACK 18

C⁵ **E⁵** **A⁵** Play 8 times

TAB: 5 3 2 0 2 0

3 0 0 0 0 0

This part supports the more intricate guitar 1 with some contrasting, simpler powerchords. If you're taking frontman/woman duties, it's often best to take on a simpler guitar part like this.

3 PUNKY RIFFING (GUITAR 1)

TRACK 19

♩=150

E⁵ **G⁵** **B⁵** **A⁵** Play 4 times

TAB: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Play these punky powerchords with downstrokes to maintain a consistent sounding attack. Try to avoid tension in your arm though, moving from your wrist and not your elbow.

4 PUNKY RIFFING (GUITAR 2)

TRACK 20

E⁵ **G⁵** **B⁵** **A⁵** Play 4 times

TAB: 9 9 9 9 9 9 7 7 7 7 7 7

7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 5 5

These octaves give focus to the powerchords you just played. There's not much movement in the octaves, with those fast-changing chords providing the interesting harmonic backdrop.

5 TIMINGS LIKE THESE (GUITAR 1)

TRACK 21

♩ = 90

Play 8 times



VIDEO LESSON

Best Of Foo... Three of Grohl & co's greatest riffs broken down



1 EVERLONG (INTRO)

Possibly the Foo Fighters' biggest and best-known song, *Everlong*'s intro is a game of two halves. First up are the powerchords rooted alternately on the fifth and sixth strings. The trickiest aspect is the two-bar rhythm applied to the first, second and fourth chords of the sequence – and it means the part is seven bars long, rather than the more standard eight. Needless to say, it's best to learn each bar

separately and gradually piece it all together.

TG TIP

Rotate your pick hand outward as you down-pick to help prevent collisions with the idle treble strings

Ignoring the ringing overdubbed chords, the second section features short, snappy stabs. It's an easy technique – just relax your fretting fingers halfway

through the beat. It should sound like each chord is 'on' for the first half of the beat and then turned 'off' during the second half.

The first, second and fourth chords include a simple melodic variation. Use your fourth finger to fret the 'extra' note and target your upstroke on the third string. This avoids unwanted notes from the treble strings.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:32

Tempo: 158 bpm

Key/Scale: D major

Main Techniques: Powerchords over bass notes, fret-hand muting



2 THE PRETENDER (VERSE)

The Pretender's verse riff is built around a looping two-bar phrase. The melody notes are played on the first string while the 5th fret of the second string is played throughout. This small fact is the key to mastering Shiflett's riff. Simply keep the crucial 5th fret note pressed down with your third finger and the notes on the first string should fall into place – albeit with a bit of a stretch to the 2nd fret.

Check out our video play-through to see the fingering you'll need to use. There aren't really any alternatives, but if that stretch really is too much to manage, you could get away with ditching the held 5th-fret note

momentarily.

Use alternate down-up picking throughout, with the exception of the two open E notes played at the mid-point of the riff. Here, you'll play two upstrokes before returning to alternate picking.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:32–0:58

Tempo: 173 bpm

Key/Scale: A minor

Main Techniques: Strumming across two strings, fret-hand stretches, diads



3 MONKEY WRENCH (INTRO RIFF)

This intro riff features a repeated, descending melody line on the second and third strings. Each accompanied by the adjacent higher open string – so, where the melody is on the third string, you'll also pick the open B note; where the melody is on the second string, you'll add the open top E. Simple!

Watch out for the semitone bend at the 2nd fret at the end of the main lick. Bending at the lower frets can be trickier to control, due to the added

string tension. So, use your second finger to bend the string and make sure to add support with your first finger, too. The rhythm is based on a driving eighth-note feel.

Use alternate down-up picking to keep momentum and fluidity. This will also help to maintain consistent tone, timing and pick attack while repeating the riff for each cycle.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:12

Tempo: 176 bpm

Key/Scale: B Mixolydian

Main Techniques: Position shifts, strumming across two strings, diads



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TAB

MINISTACK

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MINISTACK-IRON

MINISTACK-LION

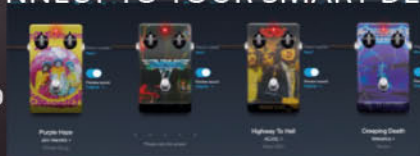


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Guitars & Backing Steve Allsworth Photo Adam Gasson

ROCK RHYTHM LESSON

TG takes a look at the rhythm guitar styles of some of the greatest rock guitarists of the last half-century

The conventional idea of what makes a 'great' player is often centred around the expectation of blazing solos and guitar pyrotechnics. Of course, experienced guitarists know there's more to it than that. Think of your favourite players. Whoever they are, even if they're better known for blistering solos, we'd lay odds that

they have razor-sharp rhythm skills to match.

When it comes to rock music, rhythm playing is a particularly broad church. It's not enough to just be a competent strummer. You could be tackling single-note pentatonics, chords and arpeggios of all flavours, countless altered and drop tunings, and rhythms ranging from straight eighths to syncopated math-rock in whacky time signatures. Like we say,

there's a lot of ground for the well-rounded guitarist to cover.

Here, we're taking a look at the styles of some of the greatest guitarists of the last 50 or so years. There's plenty to learn from each example – you'll learn how individual players have approached rhythm guitar and you'll also pick up some broader genre-based tips along the way. We'll kick off with a look at a well-used altered tuning...

1 OPEN-G BLUES-ROCKER

TRACK 26

♩=120

G C/G G C Dm/C B^b5 A⁵ G⁵ G (Play 4 times)

Open G tuning (DGDGBD) is used by everyone from the Rolling Stones to the Black Crowes. The open-strings major chord is great for slide and for first-finger barre chords. Adding your second and third fingers into the mix allows for some great riffs that would be otherwise impossible in standard tuning.

2 HAZY BLUES RIFF

TRACK 27

♩=130

Gm D7#9

Classic Hendrix meets modern blues-rockers, Josh Smith, Philip Sayce and Orianthi here in a syncopated blues riff. The D7#9, though not the full Hendrix shape, is a classic chord that sounds great with overdrive. Combined with simple lead phrases, it extends the sound of the G blues scale without sounding like lead guitar.

3 DADGAD ROCKER

TRACK 28

♩=80

D Dsus² Dmaj⁷ B^b maj⁷/D (Play 4 times)

Although Jimmy Page helped put alternate tunings on the rock map, our DADGAD-tuned riff is more about helping you to visualise the fretboard a little differently. Because all the fingerings you're used to sound different, you can create new ideas just by using your ears and letting your fingers run wild.

4 PUNKY BARRE CHORDS

TRACK 29

♩=175

E^b E A G (Play 3 times)

The one-semitone 'approach from below' riff in bar 1 is pure punk-rock fare à la Ramones, Sex Pistols, the Clash and so on. The barre chords in bar 2 are more broadly suitable for punk and garage rock – everything from Joan Jett to The Hives. Down-pick in bar 1, then switch to looser strumming in bar 2.

5 POP-PUNK POWERCHORDS

TRACK 30

♩=150

G⁵ D⁵ C⁵ D⁵ G⁵ D⁵ E⁵ C⁵ D⁵

PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM

TAB

3 3 5 3 5 5 5 3 3 5 3 5 5 7 5 5 7 5 5 7 7 7 9 9 9 5 5 7 7 5

cont. sim.

In the 90s and 00s, acts like Green Day, Sum 41 and Blink-182 brought old-school punk up to date with high-gain tones, polished production and a new slacker/skater vibe. Feel-good chord sequences like the I-V-VI-IV-V (G-D-Em-C-D) in bars 3 and 4 differentiates their output from the more po-faced early punk.



RABEA MASSAAD

Rhythm is a drummer

I try to treat the [picking] hand almost like a hi-hat. It's the time-keeper. Even when it comes to playing alternate-picking stuff, I try to stay really relaxed in the wrist so it's almost floating above the strings. Different techniques work for different people but I find it's a motion almost like whisking some eggs in a bowl... That repetition of a whipping feeling. When it comes to strumming and funky stuff, the right hand becomes more of a snare with dynamics. It's like playing a drum track on guitar..."

ECG SAYS

Equating the guitar to a drumkit can help you write riffs. Think of the low strings as the kick, the middle strings as a snare and the high strings as hi-hats or cymbals

6 AUSSIE ROCK CHORDS

TRACK 31

♩=110

A⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵ G⁵ D/F[♯]

PM - - - - - PM PM PM PM - - - - -

TAB

2 2 0 3 2 0 2 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 3 2

Play 4 times

We're unashamedly in the style of the late AC/DC rhythm legend Malcolm Young here, though acts like The Darkness and Greta Van Fleet are also in our sights. The essential riffing elements are offbeat chord changes, a mix of palm-muted and un-muted notes and the two-chord turnaround at the end. Instant 'DC!

7 PURPLE OSTINATO RIFF

TRACK 32

♩=110

Gm⁷ N.C.

PM PM PM - - - - - PM

TAB

3 3 0 3 5 5 3 5 3 5

† w/thumb-fretting

Play 4 times

Think of players like Ritchie Blackmore, Lita Ford and K.K. Downing and you'll likely come to an ostinato riff like this. The trick is to wrap your thumb around the neck to fret the low G note without interfering with the fretting of the other chords. Aim for some juicy vibrato on the last diad, using your third and fourth fingers for maximum wiggle.

8 BLIZZARD OF 16THS

TRACK 33

♩=140
N.C.

Am⁷ G/A Am⁷ G/A G⁵/A A⁵

PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - -

Play 4 times

Ozzy's guitarists (think Randy Rhoads, Jake E. Lee, Zakk Wylde) have recorded countless examples of this type of riff. The rapid-fire 16th notes that underpin the chords need steady palm-muting to keep things tidy but the two- and three-note shapes should ring out cleanly.

9 TWO-GUITAR GALLOP

TRACK 34

♩=150

PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - - PM - - - - -

Play 4 times

Bands like Iron Maiden and Heart may have pioneered this galloping rhythm and harmony in 3rds, but modern players like Nita Strauss love the high energy and technical precision, too. We've shown the high harmony notes in our riff as a separate part for a second guitar in red here. Try both parts out!

10 HAIRY METAL LEGATO RIFFING

TRACK 35

♩=240

N.C.

Play 4 times

80s shredders such as Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, Jennifer Batten and Paul Gilbert loved this super-fast swing style. The secret is to focus on your alternate picking. Keep it strict throughout, so when you execute a pull-off you're still making a picking motion. The timing is a challenge at this speed, so slow down while you practise.



TOSIN ABASI

The metronome is king

"Use the metronome for a lot of your practice and start with tempos you can pull off without much strain, and then you increase it from there. I honestly believe the metronome is central to producing good technique. Start doing cycles of five, quintuplets, or triplets in four-note scale fragments. That will displace every fourth note and help you tap into polymetric ideas that you can later use when playing over odd-meter music or when you want your phrasing to run over the bar."

66TG SAYS

Tosin's idea is to play straight eighth or 16th notes but to try accenting every third or fifth note. You can apply this to rhythm guitar or to lead phrasing

TRACK 36

TRACK 37

TRACK 38

TUNE-UPS!

Your guide to five essential altered tunings

1 DROP D: DADGBE

AS HEARD ON: LAMB OF GOD - *MEMENTO MORI*
Tune your sixth string down a tone (the same as two frets) to D. Job done!

2 DADGAD

AS HEARD ON: LED ZEPPELIN - *KASHMIR*
A staple in acoustic folk and great for experimentation thanks to its 'neither major nor minor' open-string voicing.

3 SEVEN-STRING STANDARD: BEADGBE

AS HEARD ON: DREAM THEATER - *JUST LET ME BREATHE*
Think of this as standard six-string tuning (EADGBE) with a low B on the seventh string.

4 DROP C: CGCFAD

AS HEARD ON: BIFFY CLYRO - *NORTH OF NO SOUTH*
Identical to drop D, but with every string tuned two semitones lower. Go down another semitone for drop B (B F# B E G# D#).

5 OPEN DADD9:

D A D F# A E
AS HEARD ON: COVET - *SHIBUYA*
D-F#-A-E spells out the notes of a Dadd9 chord, hence the name given to this tuning much loved by Yvette Young.

14 SOUTHERN METAL SYNCOPATION

TRACK 39

♩=110 N.C.

The late, great Dimebag Darrell was famed for his syncopated, brutal riffs. Developing the 80s thrash theme, but at a slower tempo allows for more rhythmic complexity and Dime's trademark sense of groove. Use alternate picking throughout (you'll hit a lot of upstrokes here!) and use your fret hand to keep the idle strings muted.

15 KORN BIZKITS

TRACK 40

♩=105 N.C.

The late-90s seven-string explosion was dominated by Limp Bizkit's Wes Borland and Korn's Munky and Head. If you want that sound, you've gotta tune *low*! Borland favours B F# B E G# C# C#; the Korn pair go as low as ADGCFAD. Try tuning a six-string guitar set to the lowest notes of these tunings; we've opted for BEADGBE here.

16 MATHS HOMEWORK

TRACK 41

♩=120 N.C.

Math-metal is characterised by complex rhythms. Think of our Polyphia/Meshuggah-inspired riff as a variation on 4/4 time, with an extra eighth note added to beat 4. It's tricky to get the feel, so count '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 8' to keep time. Practise by playing each 'beamed' group of notes on its own before jamming with our audio track.

17 EMO-TIVE CHORDS

TRACK 42

♩=115

Bm Gsus² Dsus⁴ D D⁵ N.C.

let ring - - -

cont. sim.

Whilst drop-D tuning adds heaviness and some easy first-finger barre chord shapes, it can also inspire sweeter sounds. Think early-00s emo and post-grunge and you'll get what we're driving at. It also shows that hard rock doesn't have to be in angsty minor keys. A mix of major, minor and sus chords sounds fresh here in our riff.

18 GRUNGEY FIVES

TRACK 43

♩=160

D D^{9#11} Dmaj^{7add13} D^{7sus2}

cont. sim.

This riff is inspired by Jeff Buckley, Radiohead, even Soundgarden – acts that employ a left-field songwriting approach, using odd time, complex chords and non-standard tunings. Here, everything is based around an open D drone, but the key isn't set in stone. The chords move in and out of different modes, giving a slightly psychedelic vibe.

19 GOLDEN RULES

TRACK 44

♩=80

N.C.

Play 4 times

We're taking inspiration from Biffy Clyro and Royal Blood here as we exploit the clarity of single-string riffs and octaves rather than 'denser' powerchords. The octaves can be as melodic as you like, so experiment by moving them around the fretboard. The 16th notes in bar 2 are all about consistency, so use steady alternate picking.

20 PROG AND MATH-ROCK

TRACK 45

♩=120

Capo 2nd fret

Asus^{2/#4} N.C. F^{#7sus4} F^{#add11} N.C.

Play 4 times

Plini and Yvette Young often shun the distorted tones of traditional shred, delivering complex rhythm work that takes up where math metal leaves off. Rich fingerpicked chords with melodic lines and Satriani-esque tapping are essentials. Get to grips with the (relative!) basics in bar 1, with a capo'd chord groove followed by tapping in bar 2.

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MUSIC TRUMP(ET)'S WAR

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

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

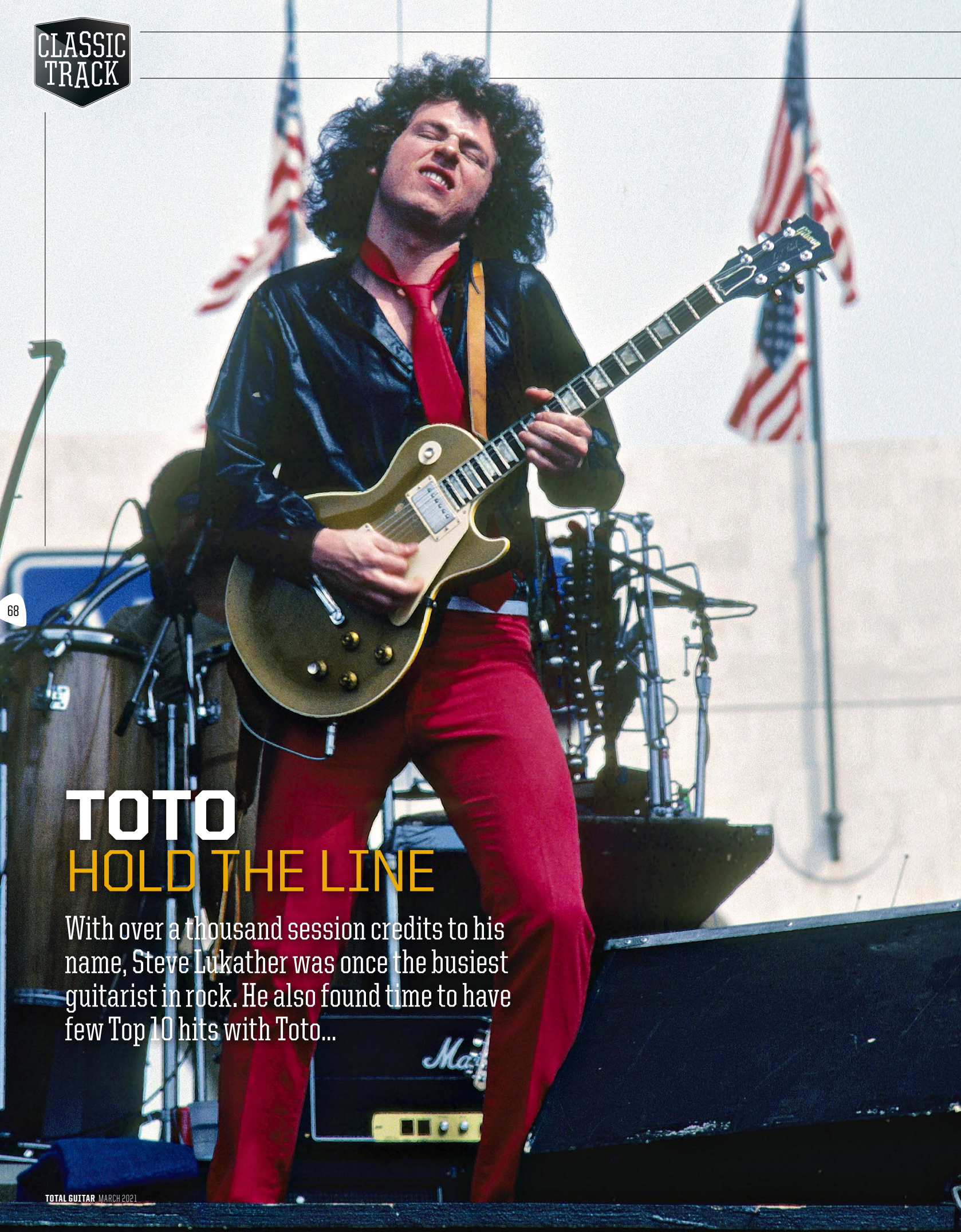
couldn't use my gun any more." The man with the trumpet was called Jack Leroy Tueller. And though it may sound like a fairy tale, this is a true story. A story only music can write.

**THE POWER
OF MUSIC!**





th.mann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION



68

TOTO

HOLD THE LINE

With over a thousand session credits to his name, Steve Lukather was once the busiest guitarist in rock. He also found time to have few Top 10 hits with Toto...

By the time Toto had formed in 1977, the band members were already seasoned regulars on albums by Steely Dan, Boz Scaggs, Sonny & Cher and several other popular artists of the time. Having played many sessions together, drummer Jeff Porcaro and keyboardist David Paich brought in bassist David Hungate and guitarist Steve Lukather, who had played in Scaggs' band.

Soon after, Paich began composing their eponymous debut album, which features this month's track, *Hold The Line*. According to Paich, the writing process was fairly straightforward: "It started out with the piano riff that is in the intro. I started playing this riff and I just couldn't stop playing it. I played it for days, and I started singing, 'Hold the line, love isn't always on time'. It was a phrase that just came into my head... It was a blessing".

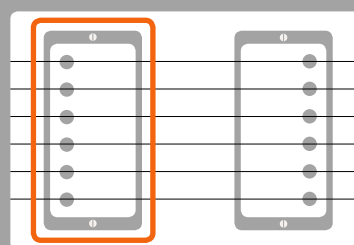
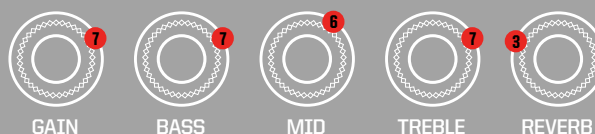
Turn the page as we take you through Lukather's parts as well as a guitar arrangement of Paich's blessed keyboard part!

GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'Hold The Line'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION

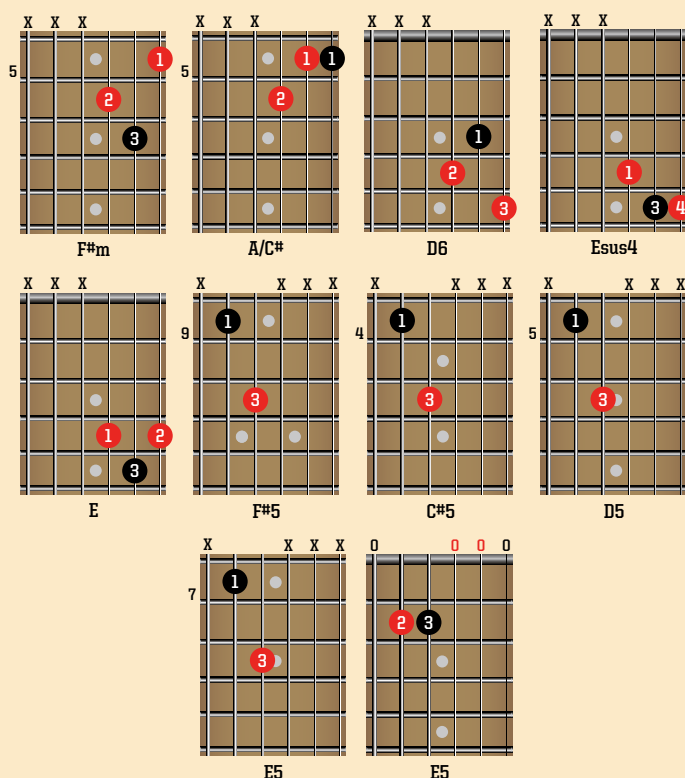


A bridge humbucker is the best option here, but Steve has been known to switch to a neck pickup for the solo on occasion.

Although best known for his signature Music Man guitars (now in Luke III incarnation), Lukather actually played a Les Paul Goldtop on *Hold The Line*, plugging into a Paul Rivera-modified blackface Fender Deluxe Reverb for amplification. Humbucking bridge pickups and rich valve distortion are your ballpark tone for the choruses, with less gain in the verses. Dial in plenty of distortion in the solo with plenty of delay for a rich ambience.

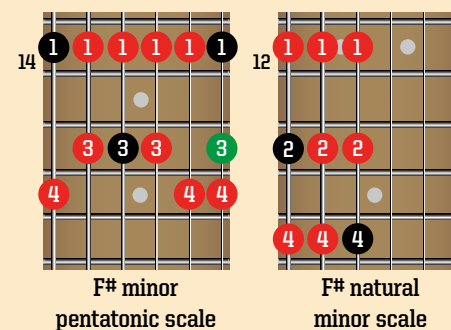
CHORDS

You'll spend most of your time playing just four easy powerchords: F#5, C#5, D5 and E5. These form the song's main chorus riff and the backing for the solo. If you want to attempt the opening piano line there are a handful of other shapes to learn (F#m, A/C#, D6, E and Esus4). Again, these are easy shapes but the changes are fairly quick. Elsewhere in the tab, you'll see Bm7, Cm7 and C#m7 chord names, but these aren't played by the guitar.



SCALES

These are two key shapes in Steve Lukather's arsenal. The first is the minor pentatonic scale with an added 2nd (aka 9th) interval – which we've coloured green. Without the 2nd, this is probably the most commonly used scale of them all, so make sure you know it. Later in the solo, Steve shreds a few rapid scale runs using the F# natural minor scale. It's trickier to play than the pentatonic scale but the three-note-per-string structure facilitates the considerable speed demanded by these licks.



TOTO

HOLD THE LINE

HOLD THE LINE
Words and Music by David Paich
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TOTO HOLD THE LINE Piano Intro

♩ = 97

F#m A/C# D⁶ E Esus⁴ E

Keyboards arranged for guitar

TAB

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 4 4 4
7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5 3 3 3 3 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

If you don't have a keyboard player on hand to play the intro, try our guitar arrangement using your fingers and thumb with a chiming clean tone and light chorus effect. Listen carefully for the change to D6. This little blighter is on the third note of its grouping which can throw off your timing.

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Riff

F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ E⁵ F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ F#⁵ C#m⁷ Cm⁷

0:10

TAB

11 6 7 7 9 11 6 7 7 9 5/7 9 8
9 4 5 5 7 9 4 5 5 7 7 9 8

Although these powerchords aren't difficult in themselves, trying not to rush the rhythms should be your focus. Try to keep the idle strings quiet too. There's a lot of space in this part of the track, so you don't want to hear any extraneous string noise. Stub a free fretting finger up against the unused strings to keep 'em quiet.

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Verse

Bm⁷ C#m⁷ F#m⁷ C#m⁷ Cm⁷ Bm⁷ C#m⁷ F#m⁷ C#m⁷ Cm⁷

0:20

TAB

1 7 7 8 9 9 7 9 9 7 9 8/9 8 7 7 8 9 9 7 9 9 7 9 8/9 8

Bm⁷ C#m⁷ Dmaj⁷ E C#m⁷ Cm⁷ Bm⁷ C#m⁷

TAB

5 7 7 7 9 9 9 10 10 10 7 9 8 7 7 7 9 9 9



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 46-47)
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-axe style!

TOTO / HOLD THE LINE

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Verse (cont'd)

Chords: Dmaj⁷ E C#m⁷ Bm⁷ C#m⁷ D⁵ E⁵

This part uses a cleaner sound so either switch to a less gainy amp channel or quickly pull down the volume on your guitar to reduce the distortion level. Palm-muting (indicated with PM... in the tab) is used to control the dynamics here, so you'll need to rest the side of your hand against your guitar's strings beside the bridge.

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Chorus

Chords: F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ E⁵ F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ E⁵ F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ F#⁵ C#m⁷ Cm⁷

This is a straight repeat of the riffs played before the verse, but with two 'connecting' phrases at the end of bars 4 and 8. And if you want to jam along with the chords during the solo, this is the part to follow, but without the connecting phrase in bar 8.

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Solo

Chords: E⁵ F#⁵ C#⁵ D⁵ E⁵

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Solo (cont'd)

4

F#5 C#5 D5 E5 F#5 C#5 D5

PB16 PB16 PB16

BU (17)(18) (17) (18) 14 16 16 14 16 BU BD 13(14) (13) 14 16 14 17 16 16(19) 19 (16) 12 14 [14] 14

grad. BU BD 14 17 14 16 BU

7

E5 F#5 C#5 D5

8va

14 14 14 14 17 14 BU 14 17 14 BU 14 17 14 BU 14 17 (19) BU 17 (19) 17 14

(18) [17] [18] 16 16(18) 16(18) 16(18)

9

E5 F#5 C#5 D5 E5

8va

wide

BU BU RP PB19 BU BU BU BU wide PB16 BD

17 17 17 18 17 (19) 19(21) (21) (22) 19(22) 19(22) 22-19(22) 19(22) [22] 14 16 (17)(16) 14 16 14

† fret hand slide

12

F#5 C#5 D5

4:3 3 3 3

13 14 13 14 13 16 15 13 16 15 14 12 11 14 12 11 12 11 14 [14] 12 14 16 12 14 16 12 14 16

13

E5 F#5 C#5 D5

3 3 3 3

wide

BU BU BU BU

12 14 16 12 14 16 14 16 17 14 16 13 16 16 13 14 16 14 17 (21) 17 14 17 (19) (21) 17 14

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Solo (cont'd)

15

Steve's initial ideas are based in the F# minor pentatonic scale (F# A B C# E) with an added 9th interval G# note. It's a great way to bring life to pentatonics – just ask Joe Bonamassa and Eric Johnson, who both use this trick. Later on, you'll find a slew of three-notes-per-string passages. It's more important to understand the concept than to recreate the parts note for note, so spend time working out the shapes. Practise slowly, and wherever a lick is too fast, try leaving one or two notes out all together.

TOTO HOLD THE LINE Outro

1

4

7

10

Once again, you'll be playing the main riff, this time including a section where the bass guitar drops out (bars 8 and 9) and with a loosely tremolo picked final E5 chord to round off the song. If you've got this far you've probably already mastered the riff, so it's just a matter of keeping track of the variations.



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 48-49)
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-axe style!

METALLICA / HOLIER THAN THOU

METALLICA HOLIER THAN THOU

TRACKS 48-49

Musical notation for measures 7-9. Treble clef, key of E major. Chords: N.C., E⁵, N.C., E⁵. Rhythm: eighth notes. Pedal point (PM) indicated. Tablature below shows fret numbers: 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 3, 2, 0.

Musical notation for measures 10-12. Treble clef, key of E major. Chords: N.C., E⁵, N.C., G⁵. Rhythm: eighth notes. Pedal point (PM) indicated. Tablature below shows fret numbers: 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 2, 0, 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 5, 3.

Musical notation for measures 13-15. Treble clef, key of E major. Chords: N.C., E⁵, N.C., G⁵. Rhythm: eighth notes. Pedal point (PM) indicated. Tablature below shows fret numbers: 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 2, 0, 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 5, 3.

Musical notation for measures 16-18. Treble clef, key of E major. Chords: N.C., E⁵, N.C. Rhythm: eighth notes. Pedal point (PM) indicated. Tablature below shows fret numbers: 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 2, 0, 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 3, 1.

Musical notation for measures 19-21. Treble clef, key of E major. Chord: E⁵. Rhythm: eighth notes. Pedal point (PM) indicated. Tablature below shows fret numbers: 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 3, 2, 0, 0, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0.

N.C. G⁵ N.C. E⁵

TAB

25 0 1 3 0 1 5 3 0 1 3 0 1 2 0

N.C. G⁵

TAB

28 2 0 0 1 3 0 1 5 3

N.C. E⁵ N.C. E⁵

TAB

31 0 1 3 0 1 2 0 0 1 3 0 1 3 1 1 1 1 0 3 0

N.C. E⁵ N.C.

TAB

35 0 1 3 0 1 3 2 0 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3

E⁵ N.C. E⁵ N.C. E⁵

TAB

39 0 1 3 0 1 3 2 0 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3

METALLICA HOLIER THAN THOU

TRACKS 48-49

[illegible]

The musical score for 'E5' is written for guitar and bass. The guitar part is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of a single melodic line with various note values and ties. The bass part is in the same key and time, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The score is divided into four measures, each containing a measure of guitar and a measure of bass. The guitar part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The guitar part is labeled 'E5' at the beginning. The bass part is labeled 'T' and 'B' at the beginning.

61

F#5 G5 G#5 E5

TAB

5 7 4 5 7 5 7 9 6 7 9

12 12

65

G5 A5 Bb5 E5 G5

TAB

14 14 12 14 (16) (14) 12 14 14 (16) (14) 12 14 14 (16) (14) 12

BU BD BU BD BU BD

68

8va A5 Bb5 E5 G5 A5 Bb5

TAB

15 (17) 17 12 12 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 15 (17) 15 (17) 15 (17) 15 (19)

BU BU BU BU

71

E5 8va G5

TAB

15 12 12 12 15 12 12 12 12 15 12 12 15 12 10 10 12 12 11 12 10

METALLICA HOLIER THAN THOU

TRACKS 48-49

77

81

84

N.C. G⁵

PM - - - - -

0 1 3 0 1 5 3

2 2 2 2
0 0 0 0

101

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IGGY POP THE PASSENGER

TG takes a tour of the strummed chords in this proto-punk ode to the nomadic rock 'n' roll lifestyle

In 1974, punk forerunners The Stooges called it a day after revolutionising the rock 'n' roll landscape, cutting three killer albums and producing some of the most exhilarating and crazed live shows the world had ever seen.

Come 1977, explosive frontman Iggy Pop was recording his sophomore solo album *Lust For Life*, aided and abetted by close friend David Bowie on production duties, and Edinburgh-born guitarist Ricky Gardiner, who would pen the song's cyclic four-chord progression,

complete with alternating endings on G and E.

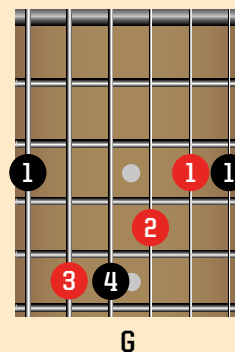
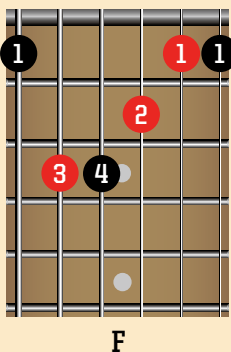
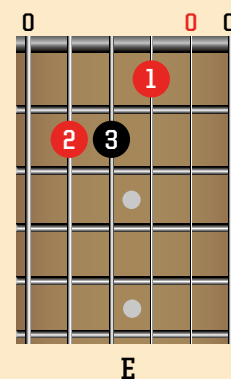
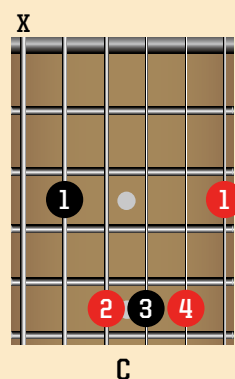
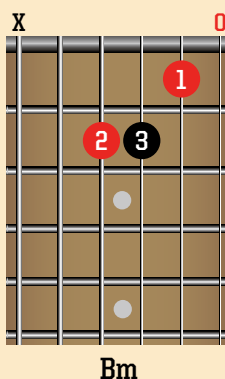
Those chords are easy to play, but, as Gardiner related to TG in issue 230, "It becomes a kind of torture because there's no variation and there's no middle eight. It just goes on doing that, and that alternating has to keep going... I'm not sure it's completely correct on the record. I haven't checked, but Iggy never looked for refinement anyway."

Read on as we take you through all you need to know to strum along. And, as Ricky says, don't worry too much about refinement.



CHORDS

This track essentially boils down to a two-bar chord progression (Am-F-C-G), with the final chord swapping between G and E chords on each repeat. With two chords per bar, there are just these five simple chords to learn. If you struggle with barre chords, you could use standard open position C and G chords instead. F can be simplified by playing just the top four strings, so you don't have to play a full barre across all the strings.



THE PASSENGER

Words and Music by Iggy Pop and Ricky Gardiner
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**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 50)**

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

SONGSHEET

The Passenger

Intro

Am F C G Am F C E x3

Verse 1

Am F C G
I am the passenger
Am F C E
And I ride and I ride
Am F C G
I ride through the city's backside
Am F C E
I see the stars come out of the sky
Am F C G
Yeah, the bright and hollow sky
Am F C E
You know it looks so good tonight

Bridge 1

Am F C G Am F C E

Verse 2

Am F C G
I am the passenger
Am F C E
I stay under glass
Am F C G
I look through my window so bright
Am F C E
I see the stars come out tonight
Am F C G
I see the bright and hollow sky
Am F C E
Over the city's ripped back sky
Am F C G
And everything looks good tonight

Bridge 2

Am F C E

Chorus 1

Am F C G
Singing la la, la la, la-la-la la
Am F C E
La la, la la, la-la-la la
Am F C G
La la, la la, la-la-la la, la la

Bridge 3

Am F C E Am F C G

Verse 3

Am F C G
Get into the car
Am F C E
We'll be the passenger
Am F C G
We'll ride through the city tonight
Am F C E
We'll see the city's ripped backside
Am F C G
We'll see the bright and hollow sky
Am F C E
We'll see the stars that shine so bright
Am F C G
Stars made for us tonight

Repeat bridge 3 & bridge 2**Verse 4**

Am F C G
Oh, the passenger
Am F C E
How, how he rides
Am F C G
Oh, the passenger
Am F C E
And he rides and he rides
Am F C G
He looks through his window
Am F C E
What does he see?
Am F C G
He sees the sign and hollow sky
Am F C E
He sees the stars come out tonight
Am F C G
He sees the city's ripped backside
Am F C E
He sees the winding ocean drive
Am F C G
And everything was made for you and me
Am F C E
All of it was made for you and me

Am F C G
But it just belongs to you and me
Am F C E
So let's take a ride and see what's mine

Repeat bridge 1, chorus 1 & bridge 3**Verse 5**

Am F C G
Oh, the passenger
Am F C E
He rides and he rides
Am F C G
He sees things from under glass
Am F C E
He looks through his window side
Am F C G
He sees the things that he knows are his
Am F C E
He sees the bright and hollow sky
Am F C G
He sees the city sleep at night
Am F C E
He sees the stars are out tonight
Am F C G
And all of it is yours and mine
Am F C E
And all of it is yours and mine
Am F C G
So let's ride and ride and ride and ride

Repeat bridge 3**Chorus 2**

Am F C E
Singing la la, la la, la-la-la la
Am F C G
La la, la la, la-la-la la
Am F C E
La la, la la, la-la-la la, la la

Repeat bridge 2, then chorus 1 to fade**IGGY POP THE PASSENGER Intro (strumming)****TRACK 50**

♩ = 135

Use a relaxed alternate strumming motion here, starting on an upstroke on the first Am chord. Keep a constant alternate-picking rhythm going, so that you 'ghost' a downstroke on the rests between the chords (rests are shown as 'x' symbols in the notation) without hitting the strings.

IGGY POP THE PASSENGER Intro (arpeggios)**TRACK 50**

These arpeggios are played along with the strummed part. They loosely follow the chords but there are some other notes, too, so you can't just hold down the chord shapes here. Try to identify the notes that aren't in the main chords and devise a suitable fingering to play them.

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE BEST NEW GEAR

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

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

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

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

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

*WHAT IS GAS?

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

NO SNAKE OIL

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

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

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



BEST FOR...

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



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An new take on the popular pitch-shifter



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



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5



3



4



1

START ME UP!

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

ERNIE BALL LIMITED-EDITION SLASH SIGNATURE STRINGS

1 After decades as a loyal Ernie Ball user, this signature Slash set sees his favoured 11-48 gauge strings Power Slinky preference (Slash often tunes down a semitone in Guns) receiving some additional tweaks. The Slash sets feature a Paradigm core wire with plasma-enhanced nickel-plated steel wrap wire for strength. Additional tuning stability is provided by heavier brass wire reinforcement at each of the ball ends. **£44.95 set of three in a collectable box, ernieball.com**

JACKSON AUDIO FUZZ

2 The only fuzz pedal you'll ever need? This modular fuzz with octave brings can deliver recreations of the most desirable fuzz units on the planet with Fuzz Classic/Modern (blue Fuzz Face), Fuzz Page Mark II (Tone Bender MK II) and Goat Head (Big Muff) and Modern Fuzz Deluxe (adding additional clipping options). How is this voodoo achieved? Swappable plug-in circuit boards. It comes loaded with Jackson's Modern Fuzz circuit with a Classic/Vintage Fuzz board in the box. **£279 / additional boards £49 each, <https://jackson.audio>**

FENDER JOE STRUMMER CAMPFIRE

3 Available in March, the new Strummer Campfire is inspired by the fondly-remembered communal campfires the late Clash icon held at Glastonbury Festival in the Strummerville area. This small-body electro-acoustic shares aesthetic DNA with the California Series introduced in 2018 with the distinctive Strat headstock. It features laminated mahogany back and sides with a solid spruce back and sides. The matte black finish, nickel hardware and star inlays nod to Strummer's tastes. **£499, fender.com**

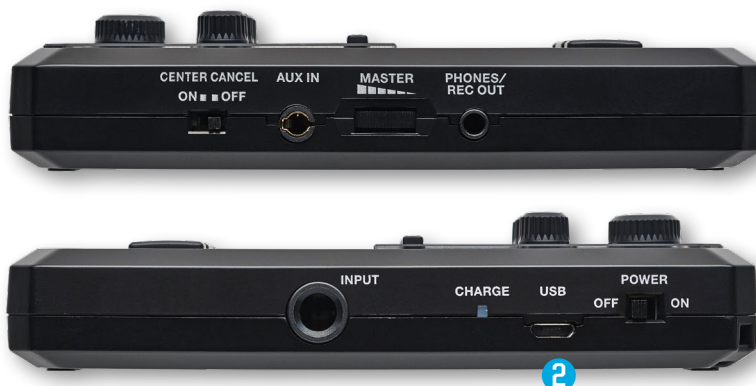
BOSS TU-02

4 How many clip-on tuners do you need? One for every guitar of course! Not to be confused with the company's industry standard TU-2 pedal tuner, the TU-02 joins Boss's every expanding range of headstock tuners. And it's towards the cheaper end of the scale while still delivering what you need; a bright colour display with chromatic, guitar, bass and ukulele options. It can also tune flat up to two semitones lower. **£14, boss.info**

BLACKFIRE PICKUPS IMMORTAL AND PROTEUS

5 Firewind firebrand Gus G now has his own company, making the Blackfire pickups you can find on his Jackson signature models available to buy separately for your own guitars. There's two high output humbucker models available at launch; the Immortal passive with Alnico 5 magnets and a "powerful midrange boost", and Proteus actives offering "well-balanced EQ and rich harmonics that respond perfectly to picking attack and dynamics." **£95, blackfirepickups.com**





1 AMPS AND EFFECTS

The pocket GT is loaded with over 100 models from the Boss GT-1 sound engine.

2 AUDIO INTERFACE

There's a USB socket, giving you an audio interface for recording your guitar into your DAW software.

3 YOUTUBE INTEGRATION

When used with the Boss Tone Studio, you can stream YouTube videos on your mobile device, control them from the Pocket GT and blend the audio with your guitar signal for jamming.

BOSS POCKET GT £219

The pocket-sized amp modeller that unlocks YouTube

If smart-home tech is the Internet of Things, then we reckon we're currently witnessing the Internet of Strings unfold. From interfaces and mobile devices to amps that figure out chords for you to computer-based plug-ins that all overlap with multiple duties and communicate with the outside world in some way, we've never had so many options when

trifecta of sound, USB and wireless is Bluetooth connectivity, allowing you to hook the Pocket GT up to your phone.

As we've already established, this is fast becoming the standard for many do-it-all products, so what's different here?

Well, once you hook it up to your mobile device, you'll need to download the free Boss Tone Studio app to unlock the jewel

Starting with the sounds, it seems almost complacent to brush over the fact that we have access to so many great-sounding tones coming from a rechargeable battery-powered box the size of – you guessed it – an iPhone.

But, here we are: they're great, with plenty of useable presets straight out of the box you've got enough clean/crunch/hi-gain amps, as well as a whole host of drive, modulation, pitch, filter and time-based effects to play with. Boss has even included some digitised versions of old classics such as the Slow Gear and Feedbacker pedals. But the big sell from Boss is the connectivity and integration with YouTube.

First, we made the mistake of loading the app and connecting to the MIDI side (used for sending control messages between your phone and the Pocket GT) of the Bluetooth connection before the audio.

Don't do this, unless you want to find yourself in a tedious spiral of resetting/switching off Bluetooth and rebooting your device. Connect to the audio side,

A LOT TO GET YOUR HEAD AROUND; IT DOES SO MUCH

it comes to sounding like AC/DC, playing along with songs and recording ourselves at the tap of a screen.

With this in mind, the new Pocket GT from Boss is a practice tool designed for now. At its core, it's a compact effects processor/amp modeller offering over 100 models derived from the Boss GT-1, but the Pocket GT is also equipped with USB in order to work as your audio interface for recording your guitar to a computer. Completing the

in the GT's crown. The app acts as a gateway to a world of additional features: additional, touchscreen tone editing, sound management and preset downloads from Boss' tone library.

But the big one is its ability to connect to YouTube and other streaming services. The end result is that you can hear your guitar and song audio in your headphones, as well as watching video and controlling the Pocket GT: all with minimal cabling and without latency.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Compact amp modeller

MODELS: 108 amps and effects

FEATURES: YouTube and audio streaming via Boss Tone Studio app, Bluetooth, audio interface, centre-cancel function

CONTROLS: Value, 3x rotary controls, model select switches, centre cancel, play/pause, fast-forward, rewind

SOCKETS: Input, headphone/line out, aux in, USB

POWER: Internal rechargeable battery, mains (via USB port)

CONTACT: Roland, www.roland.co.uk



Sweet Streams

It doesn't start and end with YouTube...

As well as the integrated YouTube functionality, the Pocket GT's Bluetooth connection basically routes any audio from your phone into your headphones so you can hear it alongside your guitar while you play. This means that your native music library, Spotify, Amazon or any other service can be played over the connection. The Pocket GT's transport buttons can also serve as play/pause [etc.] controls in these settings, as well as YouTube. Boss has included a centre-cancel function that knocks out anything panned to the middle of the recording you're playing, and while this means you'll likely lose some other elements of instrumentation, it also means that you'll make a space where the solos and possibly some rhythm tracks used to live, turning your songs into partially guitar-less backing tracks.

and it's plain sailing. The phrase 'RTFM' springs to mind...

Once you're hooked up properly, though, the Pocket GT is a breeze. You can edit and store presets a lot easier than using the GT's on-board controls, manage and download presets, and most importantly add videos to the Session section by pasting-in the video URL.

We loaded up a number of TG's own YouTube lessons and tracks and got busy learning and jamming, just as promised! What's more, you can set up markers within the song that can in-turn be



used to create looped sections, and can even act as switching points. This way, the Pocket GT will take you from, say, a clean sound to screaming lead automatically as you play through the track without you needing to take your hands off the guitar.

It's a well thought out way of allowing you to practice, and actually, could serve as a performance tool for buskers or guitarists performing to backing tracks. The internal battery time is a solid four hours, which means you'll probably be charging this every other day or so, but

fortunately you can still use the unit while it's charging (it's a micro-USB socket). There's a lot to get your head around because it does so much. We're not complaining, though. If extended home-time is in store for us all, products like this are sure to make it more bearable.

Stuart Williams

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

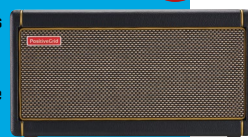
ALSO TRY...

POSITIVE GRID SPARK

£218

Positive Grid has shifted over 100,000 of its Spark amp in the year or so since it launched.

Smart Chords, a ton of sounds and similar connectivity to the GT means that this is the smartest practice amps on the planet.



IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUDE iOS

£13.99

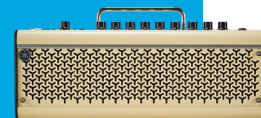
The latest version of IK's amp modelling plugin is ridiculously spec'd. You'll need to add in an iRig interface to connect, but it does give you the mobile modelling side of what the Pocket GT does.



YAMAHA THR II

£295

If wireless, home-friendly jamming is what you're after, the THR II is another winner. You can Bluetooth your phone into its great-sounding speakers, and the guitar tones are great.



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LANEY CUB-SUPER12

£399

A wolf in cub's clothing

In this strange kind of lockdown normality it's easy to forget what a valve amp sounds like; no practice rooms or stages but families hunkered down at home often means headphones, software and digital modelling for us guitarists. Boy, does the arrival of this Cub feel welcome right now.

But first, a quick recap. Laney are a British amp institution – the Black Country brand that won a young Birmingham lad called Anthony Iommi over from his

removed for any valve replacement, which isn't ideal, but on that subject – three 12AX7s for the preamp and pair of EL84 power tubes offer a tried and true formula in a portable, medium-weight package.

The control panel is refreshingly simple for a plug-in and play aesthetic; white chicken knobs with a red one for the onboard boost, 1-watt and full 15-watt Class AB outputs make this a potential home and away combo. The 1-watt setting shines in

basks in it. Crank the gain and add in the boost for articulate alt and heavy rock with harmonic detail and girth that belies this 'small' amp. Leads ascend with the boost, but when we rolled back on the guitars' volumes, there's real sensitivity in the responses. Yes, this feels like a boutique rock amp and there's much to enjoy without a pedal in sight.

Having said that, the boost, that is thankfully more hot-rodged Tube Screamer than metal mode, isn't much use on-the-fly without a footswitch that we feel should have been included here, but is available for around £20 separately.

Nevertheless this is a versatile UK-built amp that is home-friendly for practice and recording while also being more than capable for the kind of gigs (remember those?) most of us will ever play. A timely reminder of the addictive power of a valve amp and under £400? It's super alright!

Rob Laing

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

PRACTICE FRIENDLY AND MORE THAN CAPABLE FOR GIGS

50-watt Marshall half a century ago. Much has changed since then, but Iommi still writes righteous riffs and Laney still builds superb amplifiers. The Cubs are its mini valve combos and head line and this single-channel 1x12 model is the largest combo of two.

The Lionhearts may be Laney's boutique line but this looks the part. Black and dark grey livery with a diamond pattern grill confidently striding the minimalist and classic spheres. Closer inspection reveals that the whole chassis would need to be

delivering this Cub's palette of tones at manageable volumes with an impressive low end response too. And that palette is a rich one.

We test with a Texas Special-loaded Tele, Gibson SG Special and an LP Junior-style single cut with Monty's superb vintage recreation 54 P-90 to experience the wide gamut of what the Cub-Super12 can offer.

Rather than glassy, the cleans here move from slightly hot and compressed to crunchy when gain is dialled in. It's wonderful blues territory and the P-90 absolutely

1 REVERB
The digital spring reverb is excellent here, and without undesirable hiss. Laney's Black Country Custom Secret Path pedal is the inspiration.

2 OUTPUTS
The lack of headphone and auxiliary-in is slightly puzzling for an amp that's so suitable for the home as well as small gigs.

3 OPTIONS
If you want to expand your headroom horizons, there's the external speaker jack and Laney's 1x12 and 2x12 speaker cabinets (£159 and £199).

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Valve preamp and power amp with digital reverb

OUTPUT: 15W or 1W

VALVES: 3x 12AX7, 2x EL84

CONTROLS: Gain, treble, mid, bass, volume, reverb level, boost level

SOCKETS: External speaker jack, series effects loop, line out

WEIGHT: 12kg

DIMENSIONS: 399 (h) x 430 (w) x 233mm (d)

RANGE OPTIONS:
Non-reverb
Cub-Super10 1x10 10-watt combo (£319) and the Cub-SuperTop 15-watt head (£349)

CONTACT: Laney Amplification, www.laney.co.uk



JACKSON PRO SERIES SIGNATURE JEFF LOOMIS KELLY ASH

£1429

The Arch Enemy lead virtuoso unveils his new weapon of mass destruction...

Not many people can say they auditioned for Megadeth at the tender age of 16, but then again Jeff Loomis is far from your average guitar player. Deemed too young at the time, he later went on to form Seattle-based progressive metallers Nevermore before eventually joining Swedish metal giants Arch Enemy in 2014. He switched from Schecter to Jackson four years later, resulting in the arrival of two signature Kelly models – this more affordable Korean-produced

versatile than the standard Blackouts, using Alnico 5 magnets instead of hotter ceramics. As a result, the clean tones are less compressed and more open-sounding, while maintaining the high-headroom and low noise metal players tend to prefer.

The double-locking Floyd Rose tremolo feels sturdy and reliable, which is exactly what you'd need to even try to attempt those extreme dive-bombs or squeals and still have a fighting chance of finishing the song in tune. It holds exceptionally well, though on the

ONE OF THE BEST METAL SIGNATURES IN RECENT YEARS

version costing roughly one quarter of its American-made counterpart with very little in terms of difference.

Before it's even plugged in, the sandblasted Ash top is the kind of finish that will stop people dead in their tracks – looking more like an IKEA shelf from hell than the often-mundane flat blacks synonymous with metal axes. That already gives it some sense of depth from the off, but more importantly does it sound actually like a war machine? Thanks to the high-quality build, the neck through body for increased sustain and the ear-flaying active Seymour Duncans, very much so. While the signature pickups sounds mighty thunderous on high gain settings, they're also noticeably more dynamic and

other hand doesn't feel too tight or stiff, providing a more natural and fluid whammy bar experience compared to other metal machines. The majority of the components, such as the bridge and pickups are exactly the same as the USA model.

All in all, as one of the best metal signatures we've seen in recent years, it's really hard to see where you can go wrong with this one. If you're on the hunt for the right tool to inspire your own anthems for rebellion, look no further.

Amit Sharma

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

1 HEADSTOCK

We love how both ends of the fretboard are decorated with sandblasted ash – Jackson could easily have cut corners here and chose not to.

2 NECK

Luminlay dots on the side of the neck emit a soft fluorescent glow to guide the player along the fretboard, no matter how dark it gets on stage.

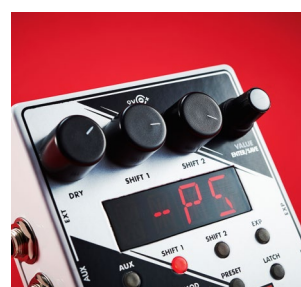
3 PICKUPS:

The Loomis signature Blackouts have a mid-range bump for a more earthy and organic attack compared to the scooped and less versatile originals.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Basswood with a Sandblasted Ash Top
NECK: Maple
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 24
SCALE LENGTH: 25.5"
FRETBOARD INLAYS: Pearlloid Sharkfin
PICKUP: 2x Seymour Duncan Jeff Loomis Signature Blackouts
BRIDGE: Floyd Rose 1500 Series Double-Locking Tremolo
CONTROLS: Volume, 3-Way Toggle Pickup Switch
FINISHES: Black





ELECTRO-HARMONIX PITCH FORK+ £159

Worth forkin' out over the original?



The Pitch Fork from Electro-Harmonix wowed us back in 2015 with its polyphonic pitch-shifting, dual-harmonies, Whammy-style bends and more. Now, EHX has added to the Pitch Fork line-up with the Pitch Fork+. The big difference here is that the Pitch Fork+ offers two independent, but identical pitch shifting engines, but the price isn't doubled – with the + only costing around £30-40 more. This means that rather than EHX's preset dual-shift options on the original, you can now set the two pitches to any of the available intervals across the +/-3-octave range simultaneously. Other new features include an aux out (assignable between the engines/dry signals), user and factory presets, an external footswitch socket as well as the expression

pedal input and the new X-Mod mode for giving you ring mod/FM-style modulation effects.

Our first question when we plug into a pitch-shifter is about the handling. Here, the tracking is rock solid without any jumping/wavering pitch wobbles. While there is a slight latency at higher tempos, we found that the Pitch Fork+ was more than capable of detuning our guitar for us, allowing us to play in lower standard and drop-tunings with stability.

It's great if you need a low-tuned or 12-string effected guitar, or even if you want to add basslines to your recordings without a bass. Plus, the dual outputs have serious scope for Royal Blood-style double duty, allowing you to shift and split your signals into different chains when they leave the pedal.

The pitch bend and harmony settings are near indistinguishable from the famous red pitch effect, too. Out of the box you can use the footswitch either in latching (for fixed pitch shifts) or momentary modes (ideal for instigating those Morello-style glides). Meanwhile, the X-Mod effects are going to be Marmite: they add to the already-versatile offering of the pedal, but you may find that these aren't the go-to modes you find yourself in.

It's a great pedal that reveals a whole load of uses once your imagination kicks in and worth the comparatively small price tag.

Stuart Williams

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

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Polyphonic pitch shifter/harmoniser pedal

CONTROLS: Dry, shift 1 & 2 levels, value selector, 8x mode selector switches, bypass/control switch

SOCKETS: Input (mono and stereo), expression pedal input, footswitch, main output, aux output

BYPASS: Buffered

POWER: 9v PSU

CONTACT: www.ehx.com



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Words: Ellie Rogers Photo: Maryam Wilcher

JOANNA CONNOR

First seen by many shredding, sliding and tapping her way through an electrified version of *Walking Blues* in a viral video, Joanna Connor is a powerhouse. Her recently released 14th album, *4801 South Indiana Avenue*, produced by and featuring Joe Bonamassa, features ten tracks that Connor describes as “obscure covers from various blues greats”.

Fiery slide is the trademark of this Chicago-based virtuosa, and there’s plenty of it on the record. Rapid runs lead to languid sequences and there are some astonishing, spontaneous-sounding leaps that halt right at the squealing edges of the final frets.

While recording, Joanna was invited where many guitarists can only dream of going: Bonamassa’s museum-like collection of vintage gear. She recalls feeling like a “kid in a candy store”, but employed more self-restraint than any wide-eyed kid on a sugar high ever could: “We kept it simple – a 1955 Fender Deluxe. A 2018 Les Paul Custom Mickey Baker with flat wound strings, and my 2019 Les Paul Modern.”

Her live rig is similarly utilitarian. Armed with the same Les Paul Modern and a minimal pedal selection consisting of a Boss Chorus, Boss Blues Driver and “a delay of some sort”, she uses little else to bolster her raw sound. She opts for a transistor amp – an Orange Crush Pro 120 combo – noting “I like an amp with enough clean power because many venues we play there is a possibility I won’t even be mic’ed and my rhythm sections slam”.

When it comes to slides, Joanna is unfussed by brands but tends to go for metal over glass. Again, this is for practical reasons: the metal ones don’t break. During recording she did however find a new favourite: “Joe has his own slide he makes... It was a perfect fit for me, perfect weight. So, I guess you could say that is my slide of choice now.”

Although it wasn’t quite off the luthier’s bench in time for recording, Joanna recently collaborated with Delaney Guitars on an interesting signature model. Her custom ‘LaGrange’ has a Les Paul shape, but delivers Strat-like tones thanks to its Stetsbar Trem System and trio of Denali pickups. And it comes in what Joanna laughingly describes as a “girlie colour... it’s a pretty red”.



RABEA MASSAAD

S I G N A T U R E S I L O H U M B U C K E R S



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Rabea

launch your tone into the ambient-sphere

Photo: Max Taylor-Grant

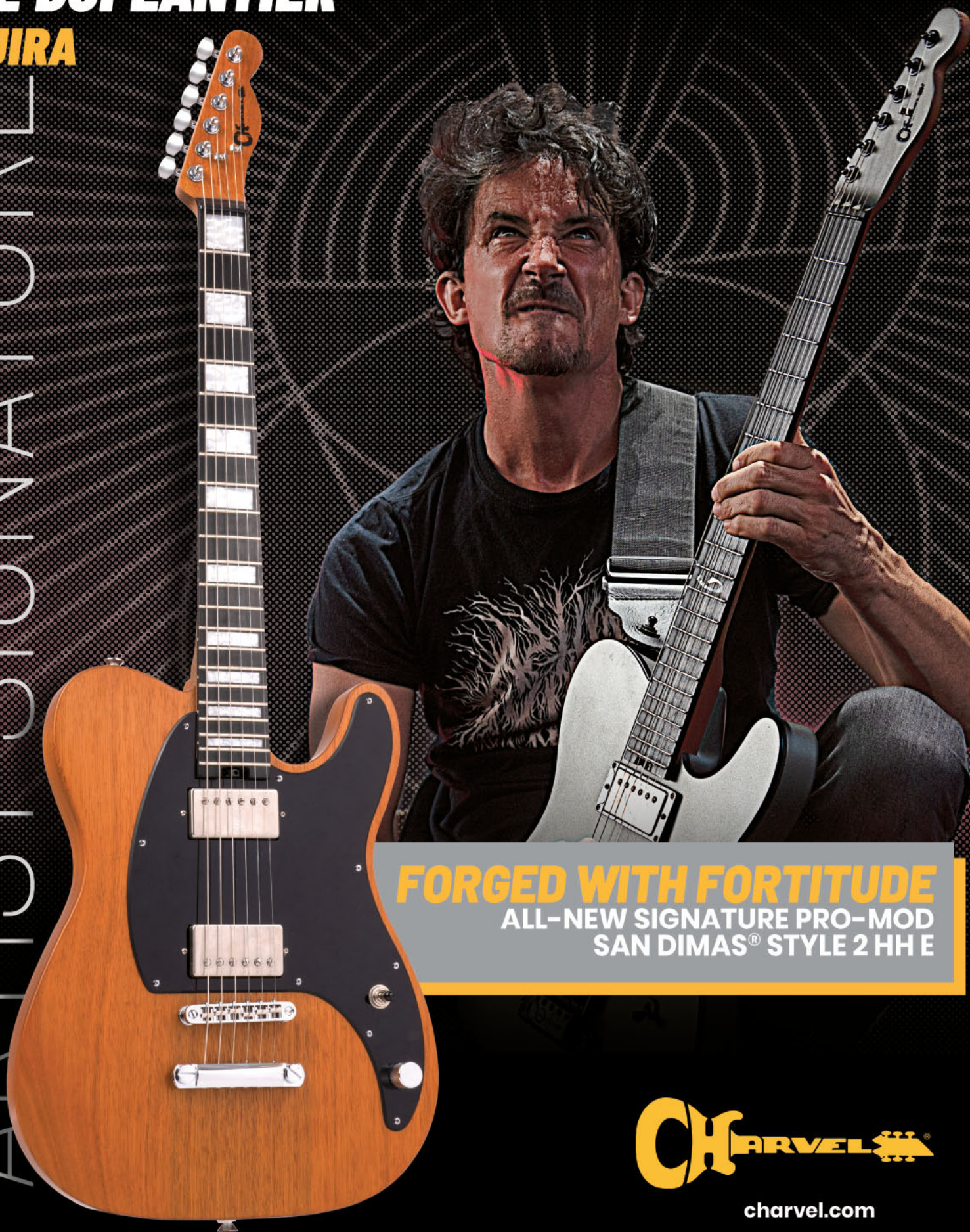
Bare Knuckle

bareknucklepickups.co.uk

JOE DUPLANTIER

GOJIRA

ARTIST SIGNATURE



FORGED WITH FORTITUDE

ALL-NEW SIGNATURE PRO-MOD
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