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LA GRANGE

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* Video riff

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2021 CHRISSIE HYNDE TELECASTER

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Ed Sheeran

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS
Paul Elliott, Jonathan Horsley, Charlie Griffiths, Stuart Williams, Jonny Scaramanga, Jono Harrison, Simon Young, Rob Laing, Amit Sharma, Steve Allsworth, Ellie Rogers, Dave Everley, Jamie Hunt
Music Engraver: Simon Troup and Jennie Troup
Photography: Neil Godwin, Olly Curtis, Phil Barker

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

MARKETING
Head Of Marketing: Sharon Todd
Subscriptions Marketing Managers: Faith Wardle, Sally Sebesta

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION
Production Controller: Frances Twentyman
Head of Production UK & US: Mark Constance
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CIRCULATION
Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

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

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Welcome...



Technically, I've never actually owned a Telecaster. I did have a Squier Tele on loan from the mag a few years back, I once built a T-style guitar from a kit (though not 100 per cent successfully!), and I did pick up a used G&L ASAT Classic early last year. Still, I do love Fender's original solid-body electric. The Tele might just be the ultimate rock rhythm machine. A guitar for hard riffing and punk-rock, whose workhorse simplicity means you can beat all hell out of it without worries of knocking a tremolo arm out of tune. Of course that's just my own assessment – the Tele is a versatile beast, and countless players have made it their main squeeze since Fender's original solidbody hit the streets over seven decades ago.

And that brings me on to this very issue of *Total Guitar*. To mark 70 years of the Telecaster, this month we're looking at some of the most important T-style players of all time, from the legions of Tele-toting country stars to rock and blues icons. We've interviewed a raft of greats, including Johnny Marr, Francis Rossi, Jason Isbell and more, who talk about how they used Teles in their music – and you can pick up some technique tips too with our tab lessons.

Moving away from the Telecaster theme, Michael Schenker gives us his tips for becoming a better player. We catch up with Architects guitarists Josh Middleton and Adam Christianson who tell us about expanding their musical horizons on their most ambitious album to date. And Adrian Smith and Richie Kotzen tell us about their recent *Smith/Kotzen* collaboration album. Enjoy the magazine, and I'll see you next month!



Chris Bird Editor

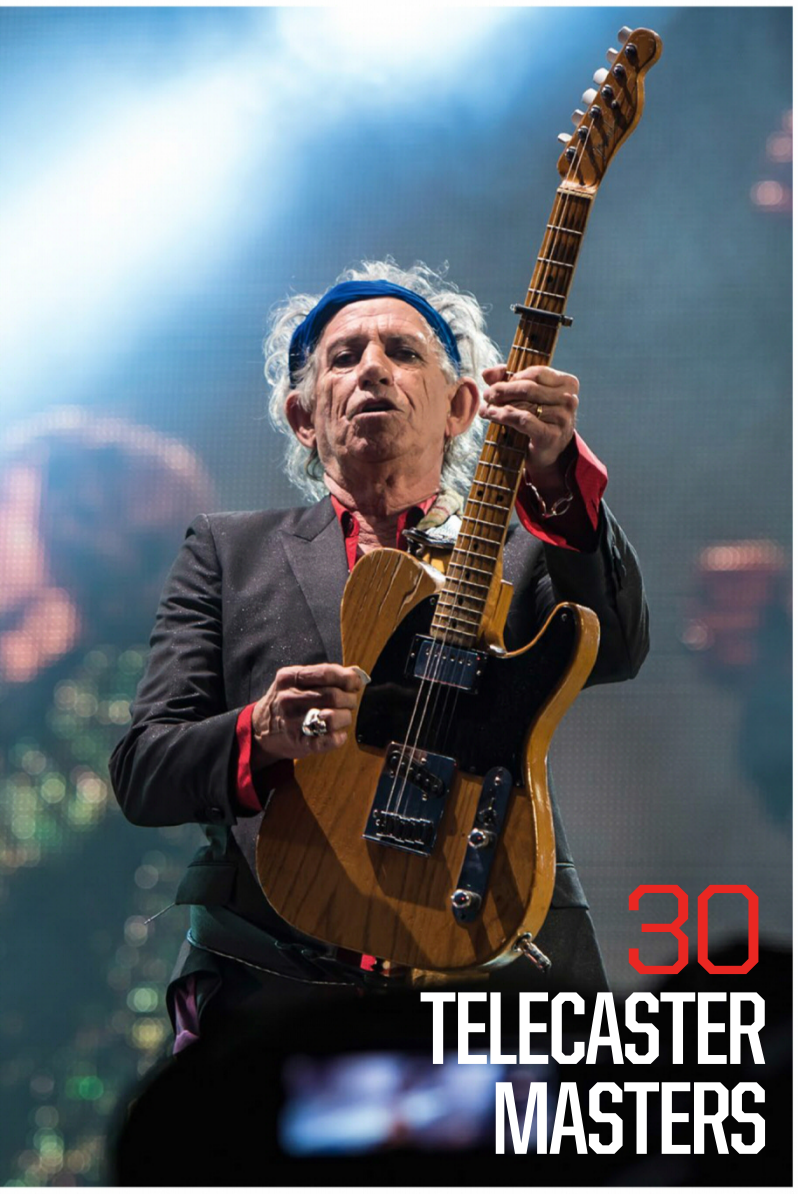
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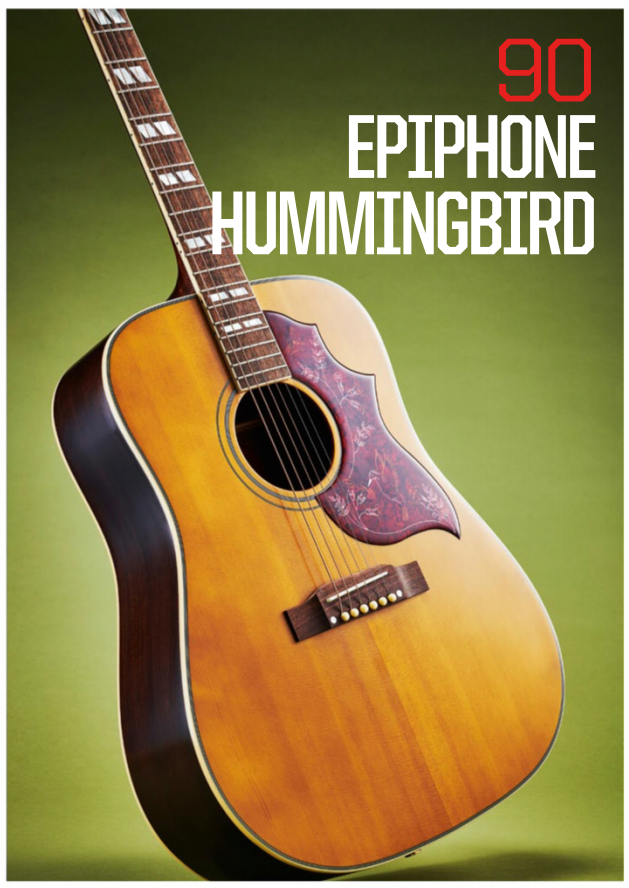
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TOTAL Guitar

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MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE



"LIKE TWO GUITARS PLAYING AT ONCE..."

Words Paul Elliot **Photo** Fin Costello/Redferns



In recent weeks, former Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson has spoken in public for the first time since the death of the band's drummer Neil Peart about what the future holds for himself and his fellow band member since the early days of Rush, bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee.

The Canadian trio had split up years before Neil's passing, but as Alex revealed, he and Geddy are considering making music together again, albeit not under the Rush name. "We're eager to get back together," he said, "and get back into that thing that we've done since we were 14 years old that we love to do."

Alex also said that he is planning to auction off a large part of his guitar collection for charity. "I think that would be really a great way for these fabulous instruments that have been so sweet and dear to me to carry on and do something very powerful and positive for the world."

These revelations coincide with a significant anniversary, for it is now 40 years since the release of the biggest selling album of Rush's career, widely considered their masterpiece, *Moving Pictures*.

As Alex told TG's Paul Elliott back in 2012: "That record changed our lives." And in that album's opening track and pivotal first single, there was one of Alex's most brilliant solos.

For *Tom Sawyer*, Rush avoided their usual tactic of filling space by covering the guitar in Echoplex delay. Instead, a combination of reverb and Boss CE-1 chorus gave Alex's tone huge width, sounding like two guitars playing at once. Lifeson used the Marshall 2x12 Club & Country combo, Marshall's answer to the Fender Twin, "almost exclusively" on *Moving Pictures*.

The guitar was a Gibson semi, probably his white ES-355. Lifeson delivered a handful of improvised takes ("I like to surprise myself," he told MusicRadar), mainly in E Mixolydian, flavoured with occasional pinched harmonics and the odd 'outside' note which Lifeson said complemented the song's rebellious lyrics.

Tom Sawyer became the band's signature song. As Foo Fighters drummer and Rush fanatic Taylor Hawkins said: "It's their *Hotel California*. Their *Bohemian Rhapsody*."

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



ALBUM



"THE FIRST THING I DIAL IN? THE GUITAR RESPONSE"

LAMB OF GOD GUITARIST MARK MORTON TELLS TG ABOUT HIS RIG AHEAD OF NEW ALBUM, *LIVE IN RICHMOND, VA*

What rig did you use for the livestreamed shows?

I ended up going back to the Mesa/Boogie Mark IV. I had been using the V for a while and to be honest they're both great. The V has a more expansive and present low-end which is nice, but the IV has this special gain structure. The way it breaks up is so silky, I ended up missing that. And I had my Jackson Dominions with my signature DiMarzio pickups, going through a Sennheiser wireless system. I like the tiny bit of compression that the wireless provides, it works in a pleasant way that I just don't get with other systems. It's subtle but when I switch to a cable I miss it! There's this compression that I notice on a response level…

Well, it's often said Angus Young's secret weapon is his Schaffer-Vega wireless!

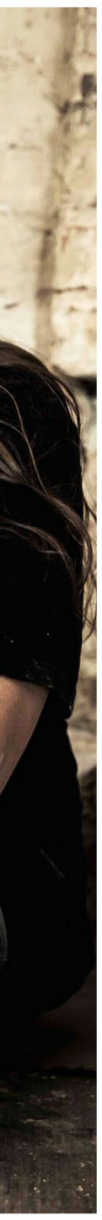
Exactly! So much of my tone comes from how my guitar reacts to what I'm asking it to do. That's the first thing I dial in… the response of the guitar. Obviously within a window of tolerance based on whether it sounds good! But I dial it in so it does everything I need. That might not always be turning the gain up, sometimes I'm turning it down because I need more dynamics. Once I have it reacting how I like, then I will start playing with the EQ to have it sounding as pleasant as possible. That's always been my tone strategy – let's get me, the instrument and the amp talking together in a conversation we are all engaged in, and then start to define the parameters of that conversation to make it sound better.

So what else did you have in the chain?

I had a Carbon Copy delay and the EVH Phase 90. I like that phaser for a subtle kick, so I keep it dialled down and it gives this little swirl to whatever I do. I use it a lot, any single-note stuff will usually have it on. I also had the original Cry Baby, just the OG classic one. I'm kinda funny when it comes to overdrive pedals, I'll just use whatever – this time I think it was the MXR GT-OD – and only kick it in during leads for a line boost and some added sustain, with the gain at a quarter or less. I genuinely believe that cleaner is heavier, because it allows for a fuller sound. I'm sure there will be frequency geeks that read this and think, 'Mark doesn't know what he's talking about!' But to my ears, when you started padding sh*t with extra gain, it gets smaller. My ability to recognise the range of frequencies seems to narrow. When the guitar is clean, I hear this big bloom of all the guitar's tonal qualities. The more you start layering on drive, the thinner the sound gets…

Photo Travis Shinn









GUITAR

"THE RED SPECIAL IN A PARALLEL UNIVERSE"

WITH THE HELP OF BRIAN MAY, AMERICAN GUITARIST ARIELLE IS LAUNCHING A NEW SIGNATURE MODEL

Guitarist Arielle – a former protégé of Nuno Bettencourt – has teamed up with Brian May Guitars to create an eye-catchingly asymmetric signature model. The BMG Arielle is the first original instrument build the Queen guitarist has actively contributed to since he and his father constructed his now iconic guitar almost 60 years ago. May describes it as "the Red Special in a parallel universe."

In the looks department, the guitar is likely to be as divisive as it is itself divided: it's half orange and half blue, with a raised centre-strip, two-piece pickguard, chrome hardware and contrasting switch plate. Flashy and flamboyant, it's visually reminiscent of a 50's American muscle car, pressed into the shape of a guitar.

Employing Dr. May's 3-a-side headstock and the same short 24" scale of the original Red Special, the guitar is composed of a mahogany neck, ebony fingerboard and solid Limba body – an African tonewood chosen for its ecologically sustainable credentials. Tonally, the guitar is fitted for a great many possibilities. It has three BM branded Tri-Sonic style single coil pickups – modern replicas of the '60s Burns units in the Red Special. They have the same series wiring, retro-styling and magnet alignment as the originals.

The Arielle has a unique Brian May designed switch system with six DPDT switches that engage each pickup individually, as well as providing dedicated phase reversal for tonal dexterity. Grover 406 Series Mini Locking Rotomatic tuners with internal 'Locking Cams' are designed for tuning stability, even with heavy use of the Wilkinson WVP 2-point tremolo. Additional features include a stamped steel top plate, solid stainless-steel saddles, and a 'stagger-drilled' solid steel sustain block.

Arielle's new album *Analog Girl In A Digital World* features her self-built guitar, 'Two-Tone,' and the new Brian May Guitars signature.

The BMG Arielle guitar is available from Brian May Guitars via shop.brianmayguitars.co.uk



Photos Caitlin Brady/Barry Moorhouse



ALBUM

"THE WAY I BEND FROM ONE NOTE TO THE NEXT – THAT'S WHAT DRAGS PEOPLE IN"



MARTY FRIEDMAN'S LEAD WORK WITH MEGADETH SET THE BENCHMARK FOR TASTEFUL METAL SHREDDING. BUT ON HIS NEW SOLO ALBUM, *TOKYO JUKEBOX 3*, HE IS ONCE AGAIN REINTERPRETING JAPANESE POP IN HIS OWN INIMITABLE WAY

Tokyo Jukebox 3 is part of an ongoing series. How did you go about choosing the covers for this one?

It was a long process! I try to demo the songs I like before I even ask for permission to release them. That way I can see whether I can make it cool. Just because you like a song doesn't mean you can definitely take it somewhere good. Some songs should be left the way they are. After making the demos, I would know if I could really make the melody sing.

The way you bend into the right notes has always been a big part of your identity, almost similar to Jeff Beck in ways...

I don't what to say, to be compared with someone as fantastic as that is a wonderful honour. What I find with Jeff Beck is that the content is brought out by the phrasing. It might be a very simple motif but what drags you into it is the phrasing and delivery. In my case, it's a lot of bending – the way I bend from one note to the next or just hang on one for a while. That's what drags people in, but the idea itself is often quite simple. You have to sing it. The greatest vocal songs usually have a singer who can suck people in – you won't sit there thinking that's a C, G, A and E. You hear the melody and the words. If you were to analyse it, you might think it's no big deal, just a straightforward melody. But then you listen to it being performed and it's the interpretation dragging you in, not the sheet music notation.

You have a new cracked purple mirror Jackson MF-1 out this year. Is that what we're hearing on the album, through your signature Engl Inferno?

That's it, all my signature stuff. They are always the easiest things for me to work with and a godsend for me. It's all very meat and potatoes but that's what I like. Occasionally I might pick up a Strat, Fender and Jackson do a lot of stuff together, so I ended up doing something with Fender. I loved one of their guitars, it was a Modern Tele, so I played that on a couple of things. But it was mainly my Jackson MF-1, the Engl Inferno and maybe a couple of plug-in things like the IK Multimedia stuff and Gamechanger's trippy effects.



Were there any stomp boxes in the chain?

The only effect I used a lot of was my Maxon Auto Filter. I have so many of them if I reach out anywhere in my house, I can usually find one of these things. I keep everything on zero. It's gotten to the point now where I think my playing has adapted to the sound of the effect so much that even when it's off, my tech says it sounds like it's on! I guess that can happen over time. If you use something for so long, and especially something this subtle, it will start to mesh. I make sure it's on when I want a big expression for a certain note because it gives this extra human-ness. All the other effects and modulation came during the mixing stage from Jens Bogren.

Your signature EMG pickups have been out for a few years now and strike a perfect balance between passive touch-dynamics and active power...

"That's a better explanation than the one I'm about to give! All I asked them for was something that didn't need batteries – with the same power all the time – and something that didn't squash the sound. My playing is erratic, there are a lot of nuances that I don't want to compress down. I just wanted to keep the human-ness of my phrasing. If I play strong, it's strong. If I play light, it's light. You can hear if I use my finger, my pick or my nail... It's all different. Some pickups don't allow those differences to exist, they just give you one good sound without the nuances. That's literally all I told them: no batteries, very human, with notes ringing forever. But I prefer your explanation!

And after all these years, what's the secret to pushing yourself as a guitar player?

"What has improved over my career is being able to express exactly what I want to express. Getting out what I have in me and making it sound more interesting than whatever I was doing last year. I can't say I've mastered it because next year I have to try even harder... That's all I shoot for. I want to find cooler things to say, and say them better, with more ease and less blockage in between my mind or my heart and what people hear. Most people have music inside of them but getting that out there can seem like an impossible feat of magic. After a couple of years, some of the clouds lift and you realise what you were trying to say. When you become a professional and start making records, it's something you have to do because you are putting your name on it. That's the only technique I ever concerned myself with and it's my biggest challenge – finding better things to say and having more fun saying them.

Photos: Susumu Miyawaki

Photography Olly Curtis

NEW WAVE

Yamaha's flagship Pacifica 612 gets a facelift

Yamaha's Pacifica series has been a workhorse punching far above its price point ever since its launch in 1990, and now, the guitar that was originally designed to capture the spirit of the LA custom shop scene has had an overhaul.

The alder-bodied Pacifica 612 VII builds on the bolt-on maple neck/rosewood fingerboard design that we're used to, and comes in two flavours: the flamed-maple 612 VIIFMX (available in Fired Red) and three non-flamed 612 VIIX models in Matte Silk Blue, Teal Green Metallic and Yellow Natural Satin, and all of the new additions are decked-out with matching headstocks.

Keeping with the versatile west coast custom vibe, both versions include some top-flight hardware and features – Seymour Duncan SSL-1 single coils, and a TB-14 Custom 5 humbucker, (complete with push-pull coil split), Graph Tech TUSQ nuts and string trees, Grover locking tuners and Wilkinson VS50 bridge/vibrato units.

The Pacifica 612VIIFMX and 612VIIX should be making their way to shops as you read this, priced at £886.

UP CLOSE



Pickups

Yamaha has opted for Seymour Duncans in all three positions: SSL-1 single coils and a TB-14 bridge humbucker. There's a push-pull coil split switch, too.



Finish

The difference between the two models is the finish, with the flamed-maple 612 VIIFMX or non-flamed 612 VIIX versions.



Features

In-keeping with the golden age of the late 80s/early 90s custom shop trend, the guitars feature some premium hardware across the board from Graph Tech and Wilkinson.

HOW TO



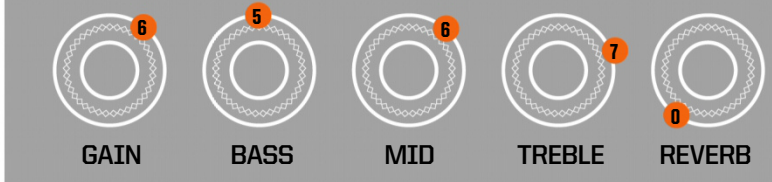
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ A blues-scale based riff
- ✔ Easy one-finger powerchords
- ✔ Drop C# tuning

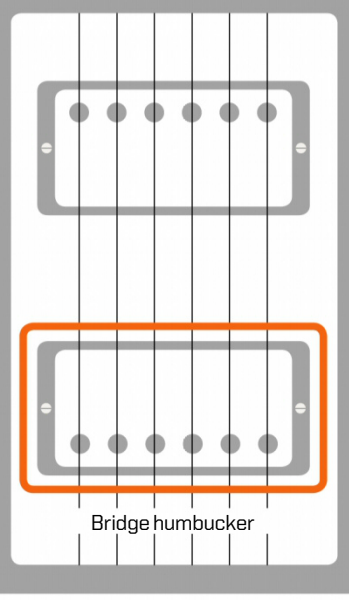
RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO ON YOUR CD

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION





Ben Phillips plays Gibson Les Paul and ES-335 guitars, but we suspect he donned his humbucker-equipped Fender Telecaster here. Phillips' Orange amp tone is dry with no effects and a fairly flat, even EQ. Resist the urge to dial in too much gain. The tone should be a fat hard-rock drive, rather than a saturated heavy metal distortion.

THE PRETTY RECKLESS

And So It Went (feat. Tom Morello)

And So It Went features on the latest Pretty Reckless album, *Death By Rock And Roll*. With the song's lyrical themes of civil unrest, the addition of Tom Morello on an unmistakable Whammy pedal-infused solo makes perfect sense, after having a history of political commentary with his band Rage Against the Machine. Morello's influence can also be heard in Ben Phillips' main guitar riff shown in our video lesson. The ingredients of the classic RATM riff approach are there: big powerchords, a heavy groove, a repetitive hook, all based in the blues scale. And the riff sounds heavier thanks to the guitar's drop C# tuning (C# G# C# F# A# D#) – perfect for the one-finger powerchord shapes played on the bass strings.

We've played slowly through the riff for you in our video, and the diagrams below will help you get to grips with the chords. Take it slowly at first, particularly during the offbeat change in bar 2 where it's easy to make a mistake.

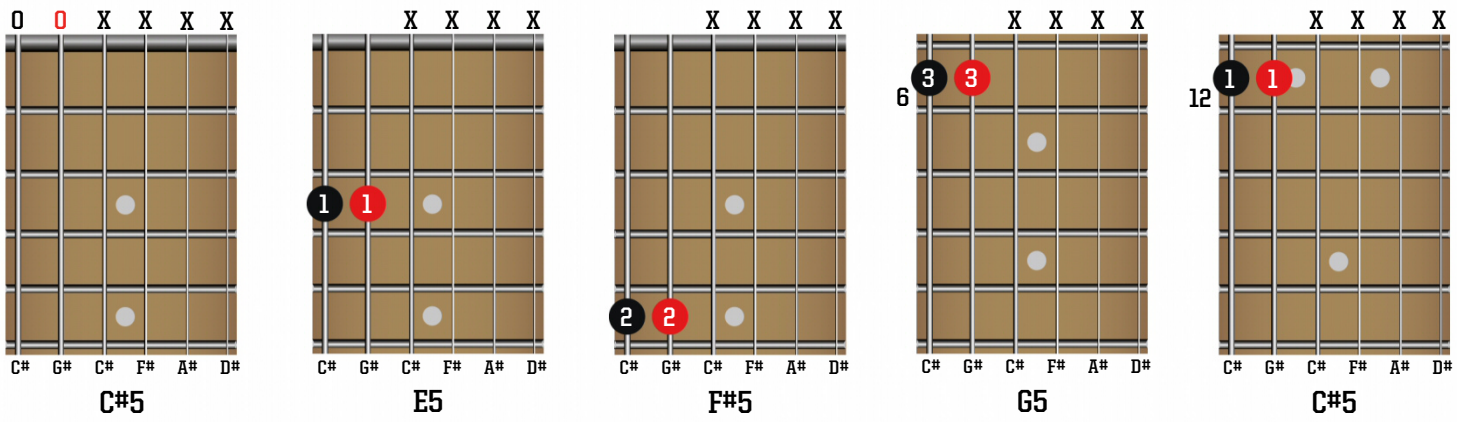
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:25-0:35
Tempo: 92 bpm
Key/scale: C# blues scale
Main techniques: Drop C# tuning, powerchords









Chords don't get much easier than these two-note shapes. There are some percussive muted strikes to contend with too. Muting the strings is easy (just lay a fretting finger across the strings) but practise slowly and take care with the timing. The mutes are on the first two eighth notes of the riff's third bar. Simple enough in itself, however, the mutes give a slightly weird sense of de-emphasising beat 1 – usually the strongest beat in the bar.

Photo: Getty Images

IT'S IN MY BLOOD

JEFF LOOMIS
ARCH ENEMY



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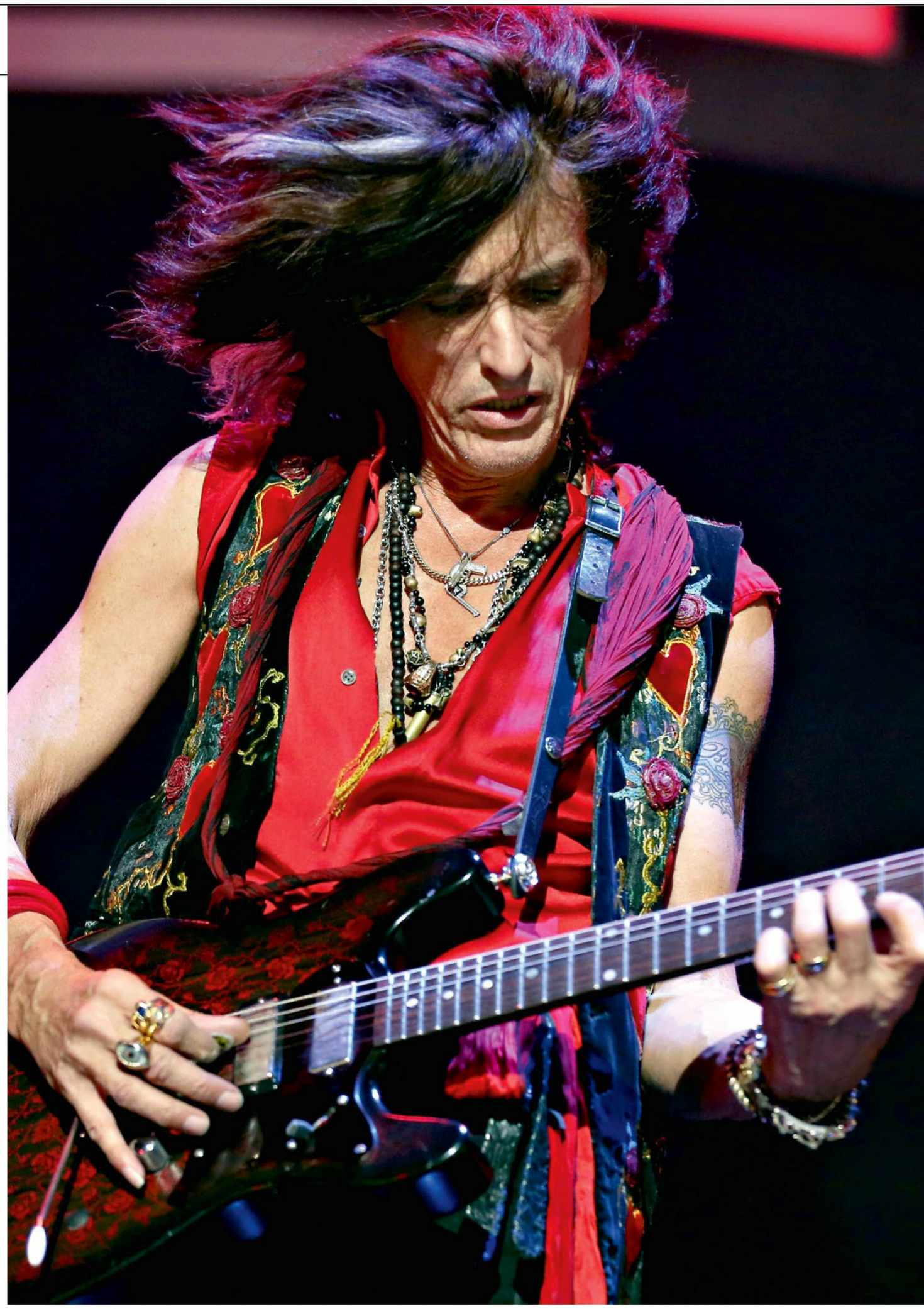
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GETTING STARTED WITH...

BLUES SCALE RIFFS

Add one note to the minor pentatonic scale for funk tones and filthy riffage



Last month, we looked at how to play lead guitar using the E minor pentatonic scale. Here, we extend the idea, add the octave below and introduce a new note.

This variant of the scale might just be the basis for more classic rock, blues and funk riffs than all other scales combined! Single-note blues-scale riffs are especially popular with funk-influenced rock bands from Wild Cherry to Extreme, who take funk basslines and convert them into hard grooving guitar parts.

By adding one vital note to the E minor pentatonic scale (a B♭ note: 1st fret, fifth string) you get the E blues scale, a nastier, dirtier beast. It's remarkable how much difference adding one note to a scale makes. This note is dissonant, so don't land on it for long periods unless you want a deliberately harsh effect. As a passing note between A and B though, the B♭ sounds great. Read on and we'll explain all...

TEN OF THE BEST

These classic riffs show you what the blues scale is all about

1 Gary Clark Jr. – *When My Train Pulls In*
This riff is pure E minor pentatonic. No need for that pesky blues-scale B♭ note just yet!

2 Aerosmith – *Walk This Way*
Joe Perry's riff starts on the open A string, but it is E blues scale, we promise!

3 AC/DC – *Beating Around The Bush*
Though recorded half a semitone below standard tuning, this uptempo rocker is all E blues scale.

4 Black Sabbath – *Into The Void*
Another open-position E blues scale riff, although Iommi added a D♯ note into the mix.

5 Tom Petty – *Running Down A Dream*
Mike Campbell's riff moves the blues scale notes up to the 5th, 6th and 7th frets of the sixth string.

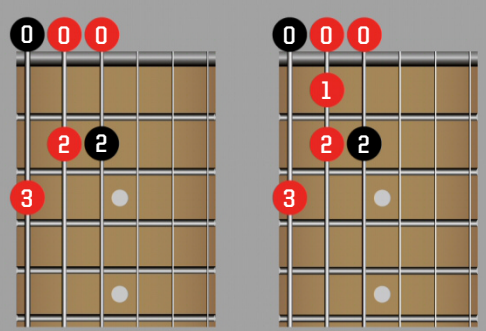
6 The Doors – *Roadhouse Blues*
Another riff played above the 5th fret instead of staying within the open-position shape.

7 Red Hot Chili Peppers – *Good Time Boys*
Lots of higher notes to filter out here, but the lower part of the riff is based in the E blues scale.

8 Led Zeppelin – *Heartbreaker*
Page's legendary A blues scale riff is tricky to pick up by ear. The first note is a low G, not a root note.

9 Stevie Ray Vaughan – *Life By The Drop*
SRV's intro lick is played in the same A blues scale shape as Page's masterpiece.

10 Cream – *Sunshine Of Your Love*
This classic riff is played up at the 10th fret in the D blues scale. Like an A shape, but 10 frets higher.



Essential scales
E minor pentatonic and E blues scales

Photo: Getty

TECHNIQUE CHECK...

Finger positioning and blues bends





1 THE "BLUES CURL"
Technically known as quarter-tone bends, the idea behind this bluesy technique is to bend the string slightly, but not enough to sound like the next fret. Played on the 3rd fret G note, you'll create a sound halfway between G and G♯.



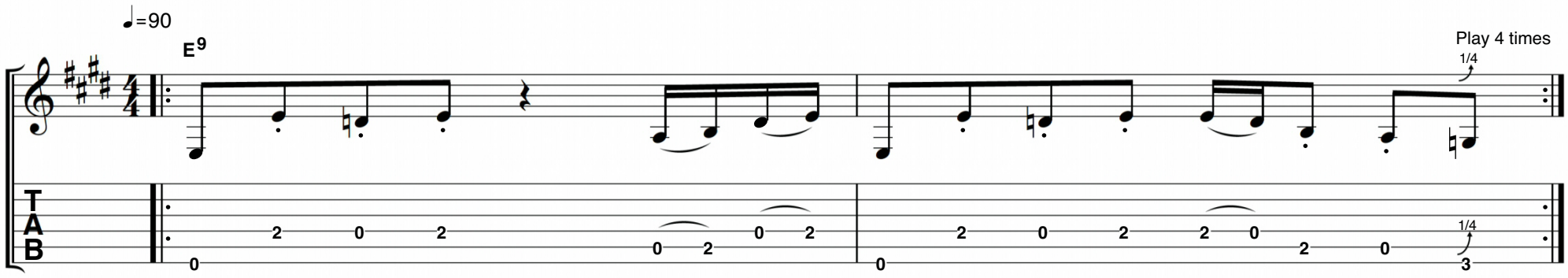
2 FINGER POSITION: E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE
Play the E minor pentatonic scale with your first and second fingers if you need to play notes higher up the fretboard...



3 FINGER POSITION: E BLUES SCALE
...but use your first, second and third fingers for the blues scale so your first finger can play the extra B♭ note.

1 MINOR PENTATONIC FUNK-ROCK

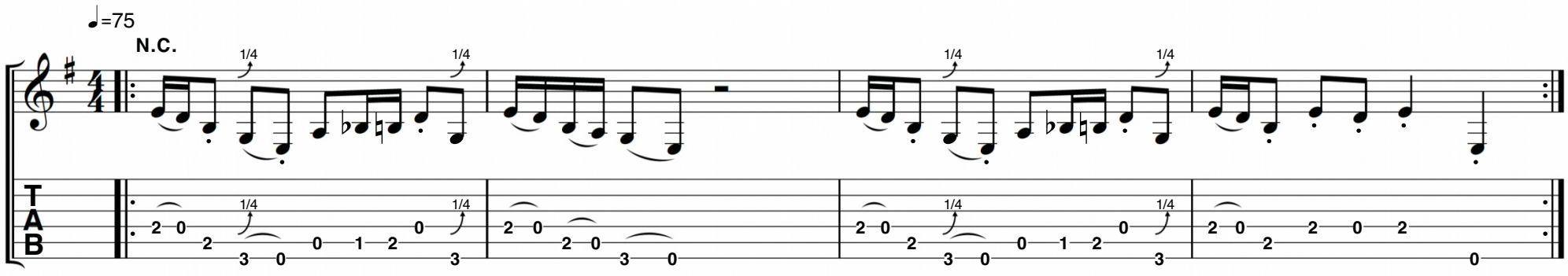
TRACK 07



This is a funk-rock riff with hints of the Chili Peppers, or, if you use more overdrive, Aerosmith. Without a B♭ note, this line is pure E minor pentatonic. Feel free to use hammer-ons wherever you need to: picking every note is harder and can sound too rigid.

2 BLUES SCALE ROCK

TRACK 08



This is a Led Zeppelin-influenced riff. You can hear how the blues-scale B♭ note at the 1st fret makes the riff sound meaner. Not convinced? Try playing this vital note over the audio track to hear the clashing harmony. Finally, take care not to speed up here. Slower is heavier.



Words Amit Sharma Photos Ed Mason

"WE WANTED THIS TO BE UNIQUE"

The new album from Architects sees the British metal heroes expanding their horizons for their most ambitious work to date. Guitarists Josh Middleton and Adam Christianson discuss the creative process for an album that sets the bar high for 2021...

For Architects, one of the most powerful and inventive British metal bands of modern times, new album *For Those That Wish To Exist* represents a subtle yet significant evolution. As Josh Middleton describes it, he and fellow guitarist Adam Christianson are now "striving to tread new ground" and pushing into more "quirky and cinematic" sonic territories.

From a band renowned as tech metal masters, *For Those That Wish To Exist* is more direct and streamlined than previous albums, with less busy lines and straight 4/4 rhythms. And yet, the overall production and instrumentation makes the new music feel more expansive than anything they've created before. "We weren't looking for generic metalcore riffs or anything too similar to what we've done in the past," Josh says. "We wanted this to be unique."

When Josh joined Architects, it was in the most difficult of circumstances – replacing founding member Tom Searle, who passed away in 2016. Since then, Josh has also remained committed to his other role as leader of Sylosis. But if his first album with Architects, 2018's *Holy Hell*, was the sound of him settling into a new role alongside Adam, their partnership has truly blossomed on an album which also features guest appearances by Simon Neil of Biffy Clyro and Mike Kerr of Royal Blood.

Speaking to TG, Josh and Adam explain the thinking behind the album and where their search for new sounds has led them...

What was your approach to guitars this time around?

Josh: It's definitely a bit more straightforward guitar-wise, though the songs are still quite dense with a lot going on. It's more of a textural thing, using different noises and synths rather than cramming loads of notes into every riff. I really like the riff in *Black Lungs* for that. I'm not saying we reinvented the wheel. It's just a fun catchy riff. *Animals* is another one, it's really industrial and cold, and *Demi God* is another favourite. I didn't know if the chorus was too Sylosis-y for Architects, it has two major chords a semitone apart. I'm a huge fan of Nine Inch Nails and Trent Reznor, so that was me trying to mimic his sound!

Adam: The last track *Dying Is Absolutely Safe* is very different for us. It's orchestral and more of a melancholy thing, and not a guitar song at all. I like the acoustic style of that one, it's a bit more 'out there' for us.

Although you've continued to evolve over the years certain key elements of the Architects sound, like slow pre-bends, are still very much present...

Josh: For sure! That just comes from listening to a lot of Pantera growing up.



That definitely rubbed off on me. Tom had done a lot with pre-bends before I joined, too. It almost doesn't come to mind, it just happens when I'm sat around writing riffs."

Adam: "Some of our heaviest stuff tends to be like that. There are those in-between pitches that live in that grey area that isn't quite in tune. I think they help the riffs sound more interesting and unique."

What did you use for the synth sounds on the album?

Josh: A lot of that was done by Dan [Searle, drums]. He's written more on this record. He can play guitar and piano but he predominantly writes using synths and programming stuff on Kontakt. I do a lot of sound manipulation, too. For example, there's this part in *Discourse Is Dead* with vocals from an older song, *Holy Hell*, that I chopped up and made glitchy. I like the idea of using weird vocal stuff. There's a really thick distorted bass drum in *Animals*, going though the whole track, and it's not even a drum… It's literally me beatboxing and then distorting it!

And then songs like *Dead Butterflies* and *An Ordinary Extinction* feature actual guitars effected to sound more like synths…

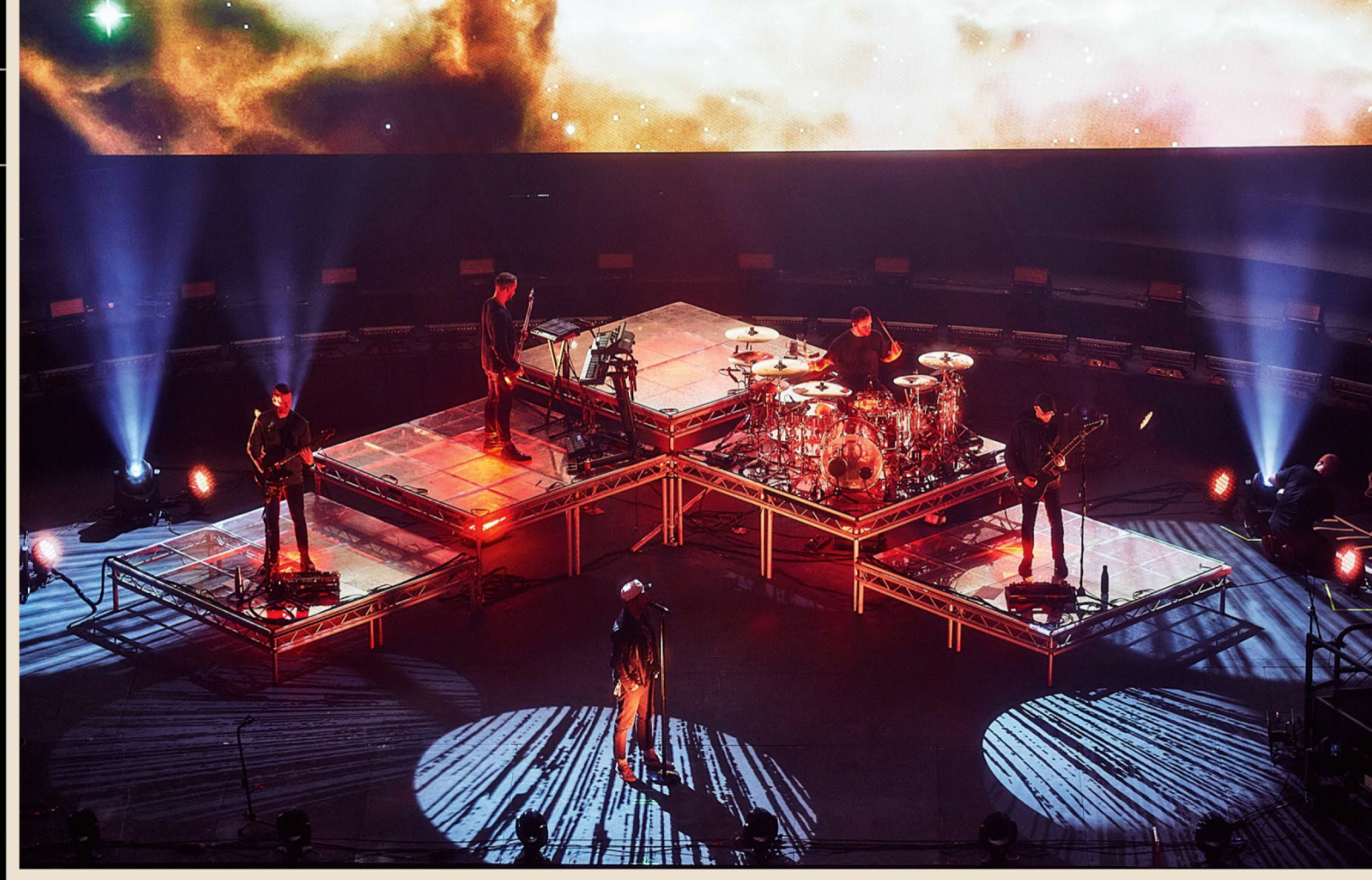
Adam: For a lot of those sounds, we'd use a pitch shifter effect on the Kemper. We'd dial in an octave down for some sub-bass underneath the guitar.

Josh: "It has that 70s Moog kind of sound to it. You can control the amount of low octave, so it was used in varying degrees depending on the riff or the song. And it got used quite a lot on this record! In terms of the lead sounds, for the wailing distorted tones in *Dead Butterflies* or the end of *Animals*, we were using delay pedals in front of the amps, as opposed to in the loop. You end up sounding really fluttery and messed up.

Adam: It definitely gives you more of a vintage vibe doing it that way.

Josh, you recently unveiled your new LTD JM-II. What exactly did you have in mind for your first signature?

Josh: I own quite a few LTDs and ESPs. I have this [Queensrÿche guitarist] Michael Wilton model that I bought years ago, it came with skulls all over it… Which is not why I bought it! I liked it for the classic Strat shape and look, so I had it repainted black. I didn't buy it specifically because of the wood, it's an alder body with a bolt-on neck, though I also had another ESP M-II from 2007 which had the same configuration. And I always gravitated to the tone of both those guitars. When I did the first Sylosis record, I took about five guitars to the studio and the Michael Wilton won. Alder felt like a tried and tested combination for me. You get a bit more mid-range, as opposed to mahogany, which is darker and thicker. And with a bolt-on neck, you get a sharper pick attack which is great for articulate picking and riffing. The quilted maple top is mainly for aesthetics! I haven't really shot out guitars based on their tops, but I guess it's another mid-rangey and hard-sounding wood.
I wanted the finish to be as dark as possible, for it to look black unless it was under lights. There is natural binding too, which nods back to the first ESP/LTD I got in 2003, which was a MH-301 in See Thru Black with the same binding. It's a throwback to my youth!



You've occasionally played Les Paul-style guitars. What makes the Superstrat body shape work better for you?

Josh: I think Les Pauls can actually sound a bit too thick when you are playing loads of notes or writing really articulate ideas. I had one that was weight-relieved and chambered, it was an Axcess Custom. It looked cool but just sounded too muffly. I also prefer longer scale guitars because of the tension, this new signature is only 25.5" which is standard but still longer than Les Pauls. There's something about the tone... It just feels tighter and snappier. I shot out a few different bridges. The first one I tried was a Hipshot one and though it was really comfortable against the body, it sounded really brittle and thin, just way too quacky with this harsh attack. I actually think Tune-o-matic bridges sound the best but wanted a low profile, so ESP said they would recess it, and I think it's the only guitar they make built like that, with the bridge sunk into the body.

And you've been using Fishman Fluence Modern humbuckers for a while now. What made you want to switch over from EMG?

Josh: For my style of playing, these are the best pickups I've ever had. I like the active mode because it's a very even and slightly compressed sound for riffing. I want every note to sound exactly the same. I don't get why guitarists want dynamics when they play metal rhythms. When you layer up two guitarists live or four tracks in the studio, any inconsistencies will throw you off. It's really annoying when you have really dynamic pickups and you want high gain tones that are tight and solid. So I've always preferred the active sound. The passive mode is there, I can switch to it for clean stuff if I want, or even some solos. James Hetfield always had the greatest tone but people just read stuff on the Internet about actives sounding too compressed and rehash that as their own opinion. And I don't trust most opinions on tone because the majority come from bedroom players who don't work professionally. It's one of those things that gets perpetuated and I disagree... The active compressed sound is ideal for heavy music. And the great thing about the Fishmans is that you have both voicings in one, but I will always defend the active pickup sound.

ADAM CHRISTIANSON
"There are those in-between pitches that live in that grey area that isn't quite in tune. I think they help the riffs sound more interesting and unique"

Adam, you also have your own LsL signatures. What were you looking for with these models?

Adam: The older one is very similar to Josh's – it has an alder body, roasted maple neck and ebony board. Alder is a pretty balanced wood I would say, you get this nice midrange without it being too overwhelming. The roasted maple and ebony combo is always great for bunch and articulation. I use Bare Knuckle Pickups made by Tim Mills in the UK. The ones I use for this guitar are Josh Smith from Northlane's signature Impulse set, which were loosely based on the Black Hawk model.

And how about your newest model?

Adam: The butterscotch one is a little different – it's a 24-fret version with an ash body and maple for the neck and board. I use the Bare Knuckle Misha Mansoor Ragnarok set in that guitar for a slightly different flavour. Both signatures are baritone because most of our material before this new album was in a low G# or F# tuning and I tend to prefer the baritone scale. It feels like a similar tension to a regular guitar in standard tuning. Many baritones are 26.5" or 27" in scale, and mine are 27.5", so a little longer which I find helps maintain the pitch of the string when I play. I also use Mayones guitars too, I first got introduced to them by Tom Searle, who started playing them in 2013. It's a very different vibe – the LsL guitars are more traditional and typically Fender-style builds, more of a boutique thing, and the Mayones are way more modern and precise. The LsL guitars are like muscle cars and Mayones are like Ferraris!

Josh, you have your own STL Tones pack. How close has digital come to analogue when it comes to 'real' amp sounds?

Josh: I used to be a bit of a dinosaur with it all, only liking real gear. I was adamant on never getting an Axe-Fx or Kemper and then in 2015 I realised it would be so much easier, not having to worry about earth issues or buzzing on stage or my tone changing every night. I totally get both sides of the argument. I love real amps and will always try to use them where possible, but digital is so convenient for [playing] live! For the STL stuff, I guess a lot of the nailing amp tones came down to them and their technology. My aim was to capture every amp and cab I had in my home studio, mainly to use in mixes and have all the options there without needing to plug anything in. I have about five cabinets and nine heads, so it was all about sharing the different tones as well as using different boost pedals in front. I wanted as much diversity as possible – having said that, they're all designed for heavy rhythm playing. It's dedicated to really good metal tones.

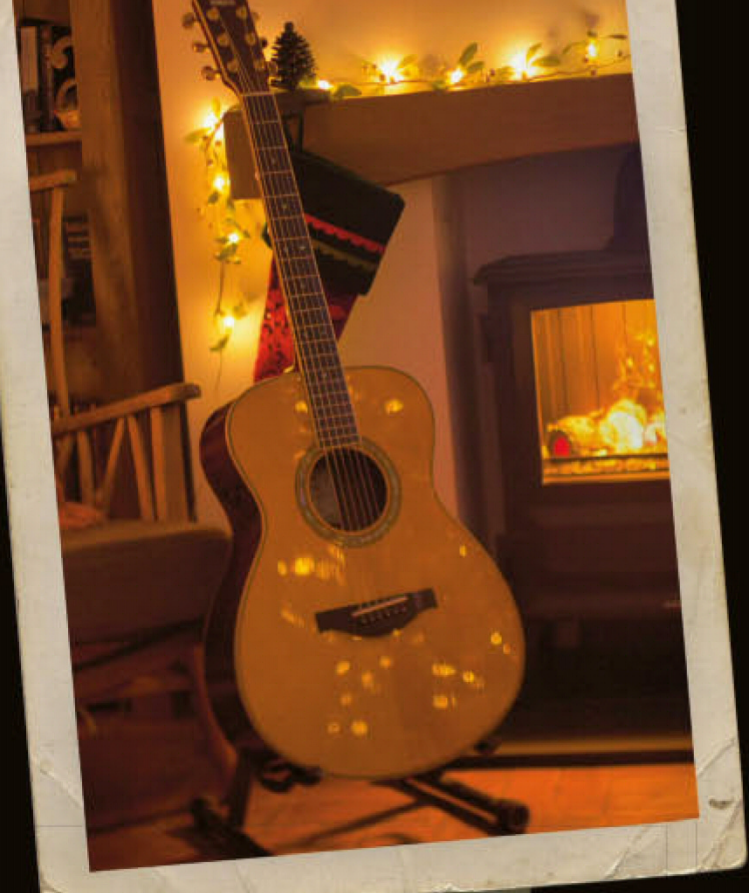
"JAMES HETFIELD ALWAYS HAD THE GREATEST TONE" JOSH MIDDLETON

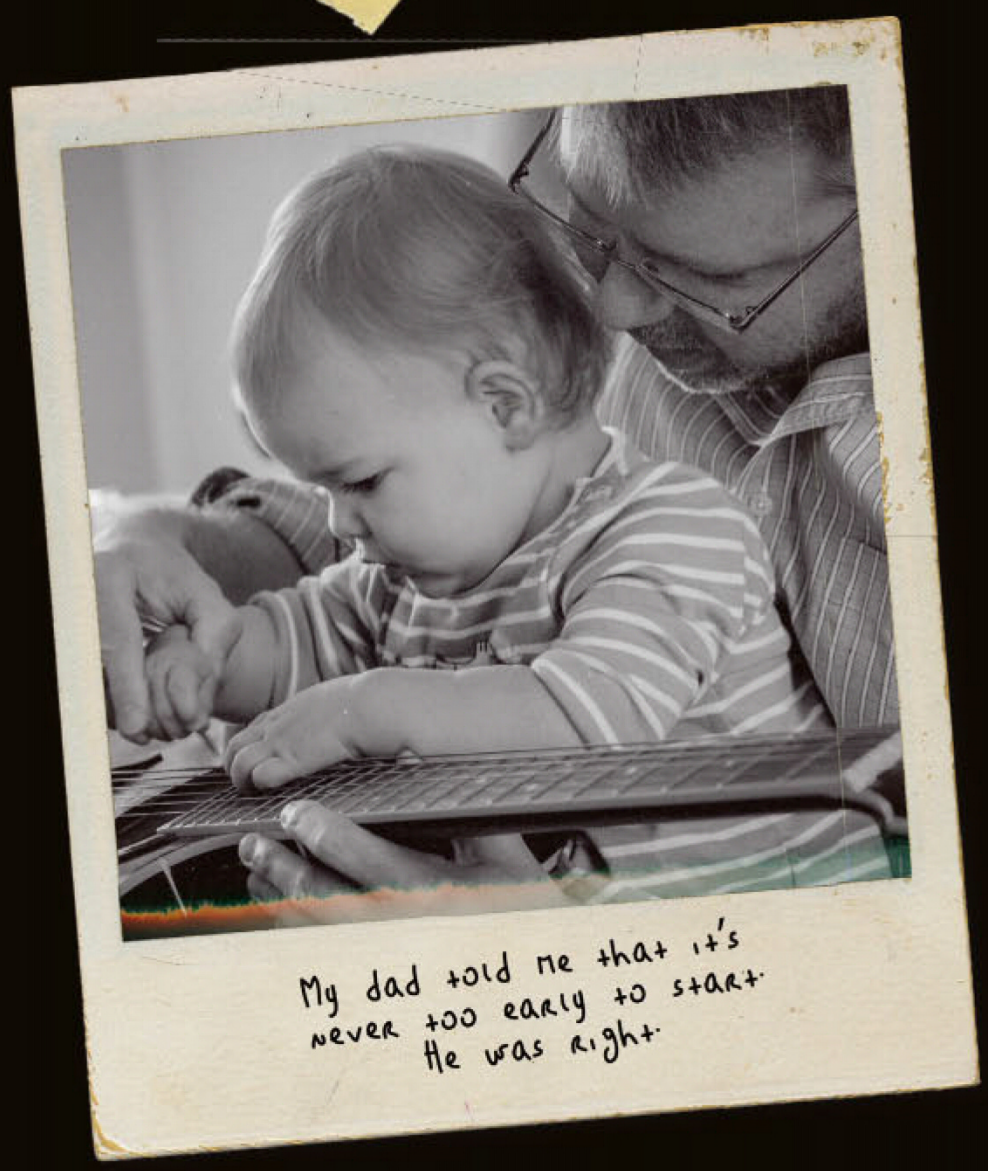
Photos: Hajo Mueller

TONE FROM HOME



a lifelong friend





My dad told me that it's never too early to start. He was right.



wherever it feels right



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Michael Schenker

Interview Amit Sharma

IN THE 1970S, MICHAEL SCHENKER EMERGED AHEAD OF EDDIE VAN HALEN AS A GAME-CHANGING GUITAR HERO WHOSE GENIUS WOULD INFLUENCE GENERATIONS. BUT AS HE REVEALS THE SECRETS OF HIS UNIQUE STYLE AND CREATIVE APPROACH, HIS MESSAGE IS SIMPLE: "BE YOURSELF. DON'T TRY TO BE ANYBODY ELSE"

Just as Eddie Van Halen was the American pioneer of shred guitar in the late 70s, so Michael Schenker was his counterpart in Europe. The German guitarist started out early – he was just 16 when he played alongside his elder brother Rudolf on the Scorpions' debut album *Lonesome Crow*, released in 1972, six years before the first Van Halen album. It was with British band UFO that Michael made his reputation as a guitar hero. But in his quest for what he calls "pure artistic expression", he formed The Michael Schenker Group in the 80s, and has remained his own master ever since.

It was Schenker's sense of timing, vibrato and feel that set him apart early on, and made him an inspiration for metal players such as Metallica's Kirk Hammett, Judas Priest's Richie Faulkner and Opeth's Fredrik Åkesson. And now, at the age 66, Schenker's chops are as finely tuned as ever, his new album, *Immortal*, full of hair-raising fretboard pyrotechnics.

"I'm an inventive person," he tells TG as he explains how he found the right vocabulary for many a classic recording…

Develop all aspects of your technique, especially vibrato...

"On the album version of [UFO classic] *Doctor Doctor*, that was the sound of me developing. You can hear it in the vibrato, particularly. Back then, every day of my life felt like a tone quest! I started sounding more and more the way I wanted to in my head. The main thing about *Doctor Doctor* is that it started off as an instrumental. [UFO singer] Phil Mogg heard it and said, 'Michael, this is great… Can you get rid of the instrumental part, leave me the rhythm chords and I can do something to it?' So my instrumental would turn into a lead break or refreshment after each verse of chorus. I was always very fascinated by vibrato, so it's something I naturally wanted to work on and improve. When we got to [1979 live album] *Strangers In The Night* and started touring, I was the only guitarist in the band so had to figure out how to play the harmony guitar part at the same time. I made it my mission to play both parts in one go… and I managed! Up to this day, that's exactly how I play it."

Remember to play and discover...

"On songs like *Captain Nemo*, I was using a lot of open-string pull-offs. I broke a string while I was recording it, and that made me jump! I had to discover and develop something on the spot… Maybe without that broken string the song wouldn't have happened! I like to play around. That's when unusual things happen out of the blue – like my

Photo: Will Ireland


MICHAEL SCHENKER



'Howler' technique using a different kind of pick. I'm an inventive person. I always do things on the spot – that's why I call guitar practice 'play and discover'. The two go hand-in-hand. And quite often I'll be left there thinking, 'Wow, this is unique and different!'

Experiment with how you attack the strings...

"When I wrote *Into The Arena* [from The Michael Schenker Group's first album] I was plugged into my Marshall amp trying to find new ideas. As guitar players develop, they start automatically understanding when to mute and when to open up... Because when it sounds ugly, you have to do something! It's all about what works best in terms of how you strike the strings. I liked the attack from muting and then opening up for more of an 'Arrrgh' sound, which is more like a saw [laughs]. It all comes from practice, learning and developing. When you find sounds that you like, you start to use them more and more. It might be a technique or scale or sound, but it's something that your ear gravitates towards. Eventually, you know exactly what to do and when to do it. Try playing an open string and changing how much you mute it... I find that is a great exercise in itself."

Don't feel forced to accept the sounds you don't like...

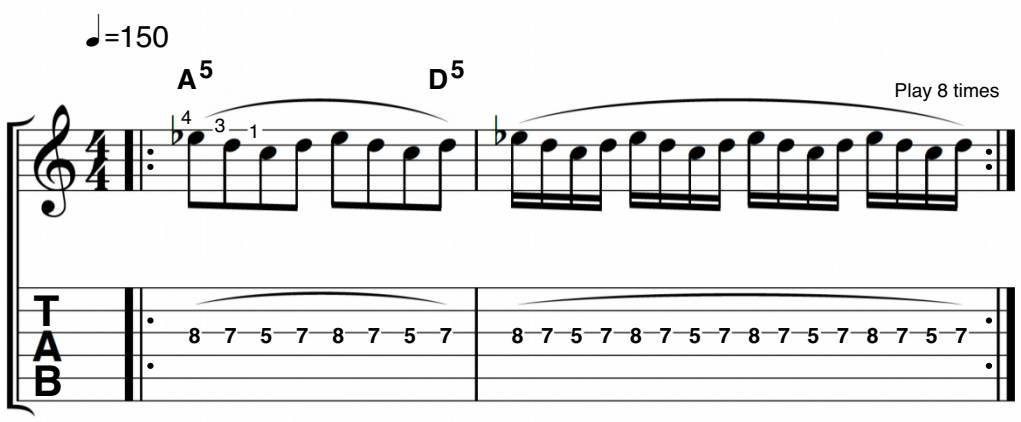
"Originally I got a wah pedal because of Mick Ronson. Listening to what he was doing, I really heard something that I liked. The first time I tried one out, I plugged it in the wrong way and it went off like a siren (laughs). Then after plugging it in the right way, I soon discovered there was a particular frequency that was speaking to me. I tried to figure out a way to get that particular sound by having the wah pedal all the way down so I didn't have to search for it in between treble and bass. I didn't want to have to find it and then keep it in position... I'm not a technician. I knew nothing about what the wah pedal looked like inside but tried to see if there was a way of making that sound more accessible. I opened it up and there was a wheel, so I unscrewed it and moved the wheel – which looks like something you'd find inside a clock – and then screwed it back together. And now I had the sound I wanted, by simply clicking the wah on and keeping it always down!"

ON LEGATO...
"Quick legato is a very valuable thing to have in your arsenal"

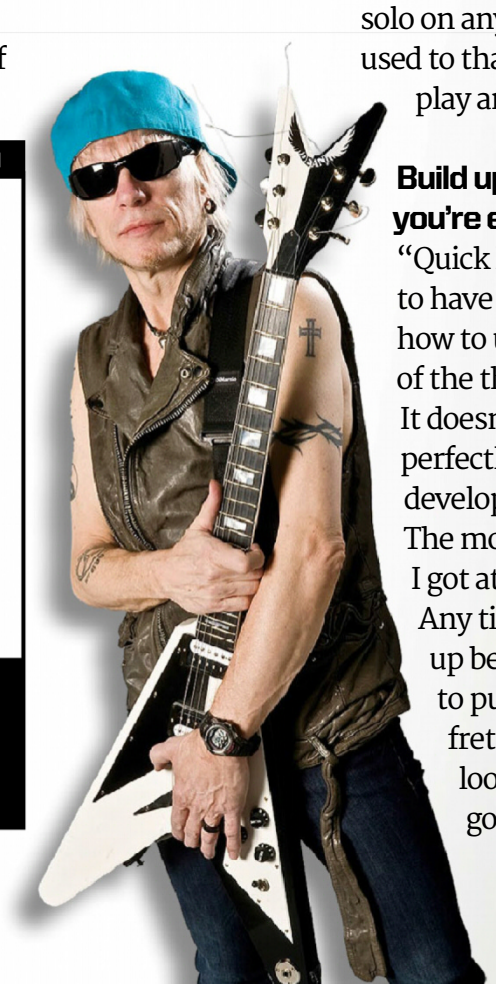
If one guitar makes you play better, why not stick with that?

"My favourite guitar is my very first Dean that was built for me. I even recorded my entire new album *Immortal* with it! Instead of bringing 15 or 20 guitars to the studio in order to choose from, that one was all I needed. I always use that guitar live for *Rock Bottom*. It plays very well and is more suitable for having an adventure. It has a really warm sound and for some reason I've been using it more and more in recent years, especially for that solo. Of course, I can play that solo on any guitar, but I've gotten so used to that specific guitar, so why play anything else?"

LEGATO PRACTICE TRACK 09



As Michael says, legato is a valuable technique, and it's easy to practise too. Our UFO style lick is based on a repeating four-note melody. You'll be using your fourth, third and first fingers in a cycle of pull-offs and hammer-ons. Bar 2 is double-speed compared to bar 1 – a great way to develop your technique step by step.



Build up legato power almost like you're exercising at the gym...

"Quick legato is a very valuable thing to have in your arsenal, and learning how to use quick legato lines is one of the things I stumbled on early on. It doesn't come out of nowhere perfectly, you have to keep developing it step-by-step. The more I played live, the better I got at legato. It's a bit like exercise! Any time you play the guitar ends up being like exercise, so you need to put in the time to build on fretting hand fluidity. I like to loosen up my fingers before going on stage. The tendons

Photos: Kevin Nixon

need to be warmed up just like any sports person. You need to get loose. Of course, things like fast picking are also very important to be on peak level when you get out there. Make sure you do a bit of work on picking hand to get in shape. The right hand is as important as the left, after all. Every player is different and will know what they need to work on most."

Don't let yourself get too caught up in scales...

"You have to remember that music is basically a language. Different players have different accents. For example, in a lot of Spanish music, they go from the E major chord to the F major chord. But I don't work like that. I break out of things before they become a pattern. It's a personal expression of how I feel and what I want to do right there and then. It's never based on any structure. Once a person repeats a scale too often, especially one that already exists going all the way back to Mozart and those guys, the more you become that scale. The longer you do it, the deeper the groove and the less chance you have of breaking out of it."

Ask yourself how to find the notes that please you...

"If your note choices end up pleasing anyone else, that's the icing on the cake, but always start with you. When I taught guitar, I used to tell people to sing something from the heart and make that their scale – at least for that moment in time. Then you have a scale that nobody else has played and if you keep repeating it, people will still find it original. My favourite way of creating is finding three simple notes that could create goose pimples. That's always been my fascination. So if you feel like you have to play scales, make sure they are your own and not someone else's. Make your own melodies from inside your head, that way it's not something that someone else has already done a million times. Be yourself, don't try to be anybody else."



"EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE FELT LIKE A TONE QUEST!"

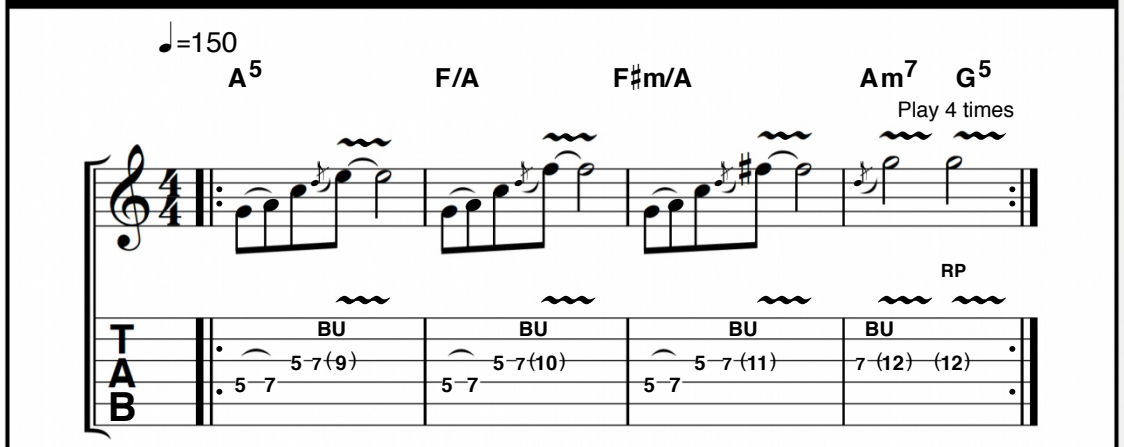
ON NOTE CHOICE...
"If your note choices end up pleasing anyone else, that's the icing on the cake, but always start with you"

You'll know when you've found your signature tone...

"Here's a weird story for you. My main amp that I used in UFO broke down in 1983 while I was in America, it came back from the repair place and I think they'd stolen everything out of it. What I got back was a completely different amplifier that was unusable. I had to start from scratch and find something. I looked at 20 or 30 different types of amps and ended up with a JCM800. Some guy in New York told me that I actually designed that particular amplifier and I said, 'You must be joking!' But then I remembered in 1980, I was invited by Jim Marshall to go to the factory and design a Michael Schenker signature. It was never completed. Those papers had been lying around, stored somewhere. At some point later, someone found it and they must have decided to make that amplifier. The strangest thing is that I chose the amplifier without knowing! It was my sound. Remember that deep down inside you must also have your own sound, too."



ALIEN BENDS TRACK 10



Develop Schenker-esque string bends with our simple lick, which starts with a two-fret bend, then three frets, four frets, and finally an extreme five-fretter! Use all available fingers for strength and stability, and, depending on how you're guitar is set up, consider using a light gauge set of strings (and/or down-tuning) to prevent breakages.

It's telling that the new collaboration between Iron Maiden's Adrian Smith and genre-hopping virtuoso Richie Kotzen was one born out of friendship. On the pair's new album, titled simply *Smith/Kotzen*, the way their vocals and guitars trade off is much like a conversation, each telling their own bluesy chapter in the unfolding story.

Adrian is often considered the most technically driven of Maiden's guitar trio, and has played a central role in evolving the metal genre into what it is today, while Richie has progressed from his roots as an 80s shredder and one-time member of glam rock stars Poison to make a series of modern soul-tinged solo albums in which he marries his sky-scraping voice with finger-twisting fusion lines and improv blues to stunning effect.

As fate would have it, Adrian buying a house in close proximity to Richie's is what got the pair initially acquainted...

"I bought a place in California seven or eight years ago," Adrian explains. "And obviously there's a great music scene in LA and everyone knows everyone. I was vaguely aware of Richie from the early bands he played in, but hearing him do all this bluesy rock and sing was very cool. I think maybe 20 years ago someone brought one of his solo albums to a barbecue and I was impressed then. It was actually Pat Cash, the tennis player, who is a big fan of Richie's! We met a lot later through mutual friends and got to know each other a bit, doing Stevie Ray Vaughan and Bad Company songs in my jam room. My wife said we should get together and try to do some writing, see what happens..."

For Kotzen, who once told TG he wore his Iron Maiden shirt to school like it was uniform, it's been quite an experience. "To now have an album out with someone like Adrian is pretty darn cool," he says. "I would have *The Number Of The Beast* as my wake-up song in the mornings, 'Woe to you, oh earth and sea!' I would start every day like that. Over the years we've had various jam sessions and dinners, just socialising whenever Adrian would be in Los Angeles. There was a lot of common ground to build a foundation from, everything just fell into place..."



California Jam

Words Amit Sharma
Photo John McMurtrie

As neighbours in LA, Iron Maiden guitarist Adrian Smith and virtuoso fusioneer Richie Kotzen have been jamming together for years. Now, they've created a new album together, sharing a mutual love of the blues, and swapping guitars whenever the mood took them...

You've both mainly played in standard tuning over the years, so it's interesting you chose to record this half a step down...

Richie: That's an interesting point. And yeah, I'm generally in 440, although there was one album I did called *Get Up* that had some songs a whole step down. It just happened out of picking up a guitar and it already being tuned to that. On this album I guess being a semitone down gave it a heavier tone...

Adrian: And some tracks like *Running* have the E-string tuned down even further. It is a driving rock song but having that low string in it gives a bit of a modern twist. It does sound a bit more metal, yeah, which is great! Of course, it was also helpful for the singing because it gives you a bit more range.

What were the main amps used during the sessions?

Richie: My new 100-watt Victory signature ended up being the main one for most of the record, we were plugging into it quite a bit. For me, it was 100% Victory. It's loud, powerful, clean and sings well. I've really fallen for this amp.

Adrian: To be honest, because of how we recorded, I didn't have access to all my gear. It was in a warehouse in England and getting it out of storage would have been a real pain. I used Richie's Victory and my Marshall DSL a bit too, you always get a good sound out of a Marshall. I had a wine-red Les Paul Standard and my favourite green Jackson, the new one I used on the last Maiden tour... And that's it! I didn't have any effects so I ended up going through whatever Richie had. He ended up using more and I kept it pretty straight. I did use a bit of wah on *Taking My Chances* and chorus on *Scars*, where I was trying to get that eerie Soundgarden-y effect. I didn't have a lot to choose from, but in some ways keeping it simple is good. After all, it should mainly come from the fingers!

So your prized '72 Goldtop didn't make the record?

Adrian: No, sadly that one was also over in England. I just didn't have access to it, but it's still one of the best guitars I've owned. I bought it as a teenager and when I first got home with it I was frustrated because I didn't immediately sound like Gary Moore [laughs]. I was only 19, I quickly realised there's a lot more work in between getting a Les Paul and making it sound good. But that guitar has aged really well. I think when guitars are new, it takes a while for the wood to settle down. You get intonation and tuning problems, which I've had with the Goldtop, but now it just never goes out of tune. The wood is seasoned! I had the same problem with a new Les Paul Custom, the intonation and tuning was terrible but 10 years on that guitar plays like a dream.

Richie, you've used Leslie sounds in the past – but it sounds like you kicked in the rotary mode on your Tech 21 Fly Rig quite a bit more this time round...

Richie: Yeah, I guess I went a little berserk with it [laughs]. And you nailed it, the Fly Rig is what you're hearing. In the old days, I would have had the Leslie mic'd up and I also had this Mesa/Boogie rotating speaker cabinet. But on this album, I actually used the pedal. Maybe

subconsciously, I may have wanted to mix the tones. I tend to go back and forth between the Tele and the Strat, this one was pretty down the middle. The Telecaster can be a very versatile guitar, especially my signature – you can really do a lot of damage with that thing because of the bridge pickup. The Strat is expressive in a different way, because there's the option of the tremolo. And interestingly, towards the end my brain was moving faster than my body so rather than setting up my own guitar, I ended up grabbing Adrian's Jackson! He already had a tone dialled in so I did a couple of leads using that. Listening back to those leads, I felt like I was hearing the 18 year-old Shrapnel-era Richie Kotzen because I got a little crazy with the tremolo arm. You can do things on that which you can't with a traditional Strat. I was digging the way it played, it's badass!

Adrian: It was quite something watching him do that close up [laughs]. I think because of that whammy bar, he really got into using my guitar...

Adrian, there's a really powerful rhythmic delay at the beginning of the *Running* solo – which nods back to some of your late-80s tones...

Adrian: We had the chord sequence for that breakdown and I just thought of this guitarist called Pat Thrall who used to play with Pat Travers. He used to do a lot of things with delay – this was back in the day before U2 – with all these repeating lead lines. It's great on record but it can be very hit or miss live. I did it on a Maiden track called *Moonchild* many years ago and to recreate it live you have to play at exactly the same tempo... which, as any player can imagine, can be very difficult – especially when you're in a band and everyone's getting carried away. When we recorded that track with Maiden, the way I had my rig set up at the time was one cab dry and one wet. Of course, they didn't mic the wet one, so for my solo, there was no delay on it. I guess it was a bit like that Bill Bailey sketch, where he plays The Edge without effects! [Laughs] It can be a bit like that when you're not careful. But when it works, it's a great little trick.



ABOVE
Adrian Smith [left]: "I have tried to get into jazz, but to me it's like mathematics!"

***Taking My Chances* features some great cues, like the opening tapping riff and the unison line before the solo section...**

Adrian: The intro I play is actually a pretty simple part. We already had the riff but put that intro on afterwards, thinking it would set it all up nicely. Especially as it was the first track on the album, we almost wanted a bit more of an overture.

Richie: The line before the solo is a bit left-field! We wanted to do something a bit crazy to open the solo. I got into that stuff back in the day when I was listening to David Lee Roth's first record [*Eat 'Em And Smile*] with Steve Vai and Billy Sheehan doing all these amazing unison licks. That specific line is quite interesting, because if you were to write it out, it would be quarter-note triplets. But because of how it's phrased, we're really pulling it back. It became this really feel-oriented thing, in order to create this musical tension.

Adrian, this is quite possibly the bluesiest album you've put your name to. Which players left the biggest mark on you?

Adrian: When I was a kid, it wasn't so much the original ones, but more the people who were influenced by them. Players like Gary Moore, Pat Travers, Johnny Winter, Brian Robertson, Scott Gorham. They were sort of second-generation, influenced by the old blues guys but passing it on. That's just the way it goes. But I went back and listened to the originals and was blown away. BB King was amazing, lovely playing just because of the phrasing of the notes. Eric Clapton, too – if you think about him versus Eddie Van Halen, you'll probably think Van Halen was a far superior guitarist, but Clapton's phrasing is perfect. He puts every note in exactly the right place, which is really difficult to do. I've been trying for years, aspiring to that idea of clean phrasing and maximum effect.

But as for the busier lines, what's the secret to getting so much mileage out of the humble blues scale?

Adrian: It's interesting, I think it's a scale that hit you in the gut and will always be the simple go-to. But it depends how you play it, one person might play a lick and it will sound okay, someone else might play it and it might sound fantastic. It comes down to feel and where you place the notes, what you're playing over and so many other things. I feel like I've almost gone back more to playing pentatonics these days. I do like to use other scales and mix it up, but that's always the main attack. You just know, that's the blues scale, that's the one that hits you in the chest. I have tried to get into jazz, but to me it's like mathematics!

"KEEP IT SIMPLE... AFTER ALL, IT SHOULD MAINLY COME FROM THE FINGERS!" ADRIAN SMITH

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TELECASTER MASTERS

Words Amit Sharma, Chris Bird, Ellie Rogers, Grant Moon, Jonny Scaramanga, Rob Laing, Steve Allsworth, Stuart Ryan, Stuart Williams

It's time for some Telecaster tuition as the world's biggest T-style players tell TG about their affinity for Fender's classic singlecut and the tones, songs and performances it has inspired

No electric guitar is as important as the Fender Telecaster. A bold claim perhaps? Well, maybe, but the guitar that started out as Leo Fender and George Fullerton's single-pickup Esquire prototype in 1949 would go on to become the world's first commercially successful solid-body electric. And that means we all owe a debt of gratitude to these pioneers. Today, over seven decades on, Fender's workhorse six-string stays true to Leo's original formula, albeit with limitless spec options to consider, and a whole marketplace of manufacturers willing to sell you their own versions of a T-style.

Here we're taking a look at some of the most important Telecaster players of all time, from the legions of Tele-toting country superstars to rock, soul and blues greats who made the Tele their main squeeze or a studio secret weapon. Hopefully you'll learn something along the way! We've interviewed a raft of players who tell you how they've used Teles in the music they've made and we've profiled a selection of greats who are no longer with us. Let's start with the man known as the Master Of The Telecaster, the Ice Man, Albert Collins…



Words Grant Moon

"FIERY TONES, INCREDIBLE BENDS, WILD VIBRATO..."

The art of blues great Albert Collins, aka 'The Master Of The Telecaster'

If they call you The Master Of The Telecaster, you know you're doing something right. Also nicknamed 'The Iceman', Albert Collins (1932–1993) was a blues legend and natural showman, an impassioned player whose unique, often-copped tones stemmed from his unconventional technique, and his guitar of choice.

Growing up in Texas, Collins (born Albert Drewery) dabbled in jazz piano before his cousin Willie Young showed him some guitar licks, and his blues education began. Taking his cue from John Lee Hooker, Guitar Slim, T-Bone Walker and BB King, Collins found a real talent for the form. He'd started out on an Epiphone but, on seeing Clarence Gatemouth Brown wailing on a Fender Esquire, promptly switched brands, discovered the Tele and, ultimately, his go-to instrument – a Fender 1966 Custom Telecaster, with ash body, maple fretboard, ashtray bridge, Gibson humbucker at the neck.

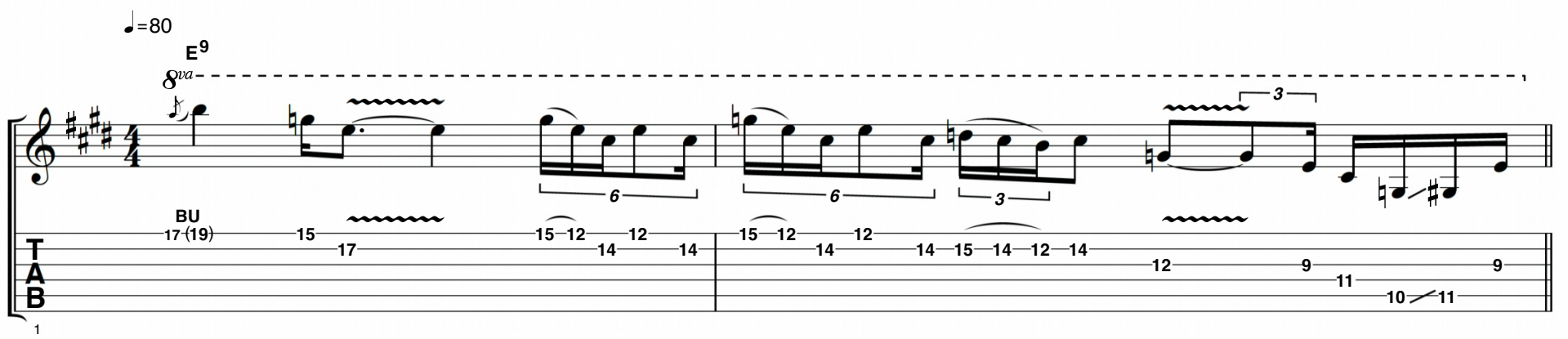
Have a listen to some of his signature moments – the uptempo shuffles *Frosty* and *I Ain't Drunk*, the downbeat 12-bar *Dyin' Flu*, his Grammy-winning album *Showdown*, made with fellow greats Robert Cray and Johnny Copeland. He could've only made these fiery, wiry tones with a Telecaster.

Though he could get throaty warmth from the neck pickup, much of Collins' sound came from his favoured bridge pickup. He'd been taught early on to tune his guitar to a highly idiosyncratic open F minor (low to high: F C F A♭ C F), and stuck to that most of his life, using a capo to adjust his guitar's key for each song. So if the song was in D, he'd wrap the capo around the 9th fret (not the usual 10th, that F minor tuning having already pushed the guitar up a half-step). He could then play his quirky blues, those retuned fifth and fourth strings offering note choices beyond the more orthodox blues scale shape. His lines were emotional and tasteful, packed with incredible bends, often wild vibrato, slurs and slides and speedy hammered-on/pulled-off licks.

Collins' right hand was key to his unmistakeable phrasing and tone. He eschewed the precision of a pick and played his Tele with his fingers, his thumb and forefinger doing most of the work. One trademark was his juicy 'double octave' move. Say he was capo'd for D: he'd pop the low E string with his thumb for the tonic note and immediately follow that with the D two octaves up – 14th fret of his second string – played with his forefinger. Then he'd shake that sucker for every ounce of feel it had in it. His preference for pick-hand upstrokes meant the flesh of his fingers tempered the twang of his Tele, usually amped to eye-watering volume by his 100w Fender Quad Reverb (bass dialled to zero, everything else cranked).

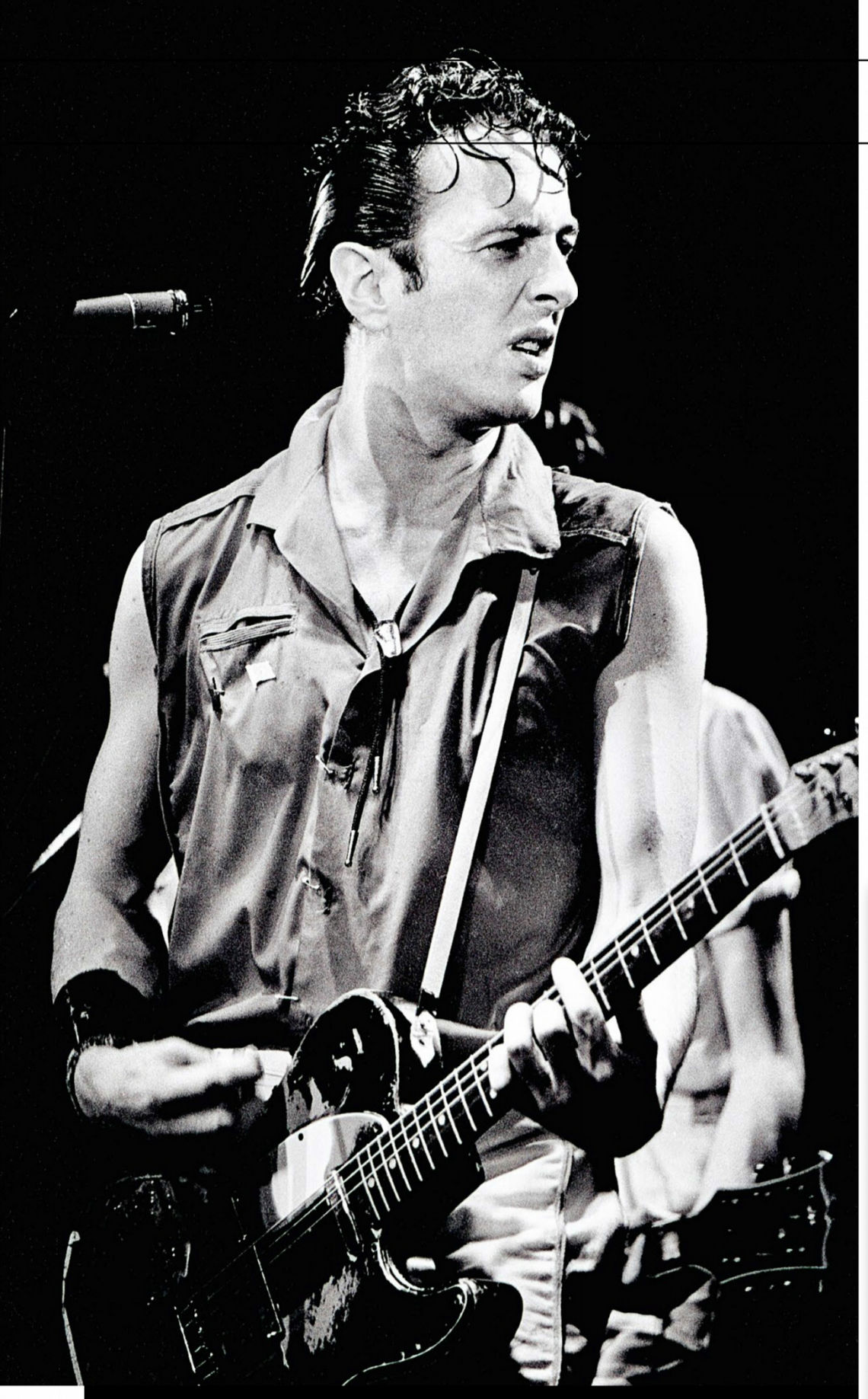
Sometimes the cable connecting Tele to amp ran to 100 feet long – the story goes he could leave the venue mid-show, go next door to order pizza, and come back without even missing a note. Cool? They didn't call him The Iceman for nothing...

ICY T-STYLE TWANG TRACK 15



Albert's raucous sound comes as much from the Tele's twangy bridge-position pickup as his aggressive picking. Like a lot of bluesers, he's fond of 'milking' his licks by repeating the best phrases. Here we see his twist on the E minor pentatonic scale, bringing in the C♯ note at the 14th fret of the second string and instantly brightening the sound of a blues in E.

Photo Getty



JOE STRUMMER

The Clash's charismatic co-frontman once dropped his beloved 1966 Telecaster off the stage and flat onto the hard venue floor, face down, and it was recovered unscathed. Joe Strummer always admired the Tele's rugged build, its deceptive simplicity – qualities you could also ascribe to this punk legend's playing style. Starting as a kid on the uke, the young John Mellor was a left-hander who played right-handed guitar, and called himself 'Strummer' as he knew his right hand was no good for arpeggiating. But, who cares? Maybe bandmate/Les Paul fan Mick Jones was the superior player, but just think of the Em and F chords on the intro to the classic *London Calling*. There was era-defining power in Strummer's tough, choppy rhythm style – only a Tele would do. He played his favourite '66 model on every album, and at nearly every gig, until his death in 2002.

JOE'S FAMOUS TELE

With its black paint job and 'Ignore Alien Orders' sticker, Strummer's battered, often-modded 1966 US Tele was his trademark guitar.

Photos Getty

JONNY GREENWOOD

Radiohead's maverick multi-instrumentalist played a pivotal role in the 90s Telecaster revival, though he generally stuck to a handful of choice models rather than having ten new ones on the rack for each tour. Early albums *Pablo Honey*, *The Bends* and *OK Computer* were more guitar-dominated than the experimental releases that followed, and tracks such as *Creep*, *Just* and *Airbag* make good use of that jangly Telecaster bite. Jonny's love for effects like the DigiTech Whammy and Electro-Harmonix Small Stone, coupled with some pretty extreme ambiences, helped set his work apart – more often than not approaching the six-string more for texture rather than anything conventional. Similar things can be said of his leads, which tend to sound more frantic and 'scratchy' – harnessing his guitar's punk rock noise factor in place of anything remotely slick or blues-based.

JONNY'S FAMOUS TELE

His Tobacco Burst Telecaster Plus, modded with a kill-switch, has been used on almost every Radiohead album and tour since 1995.



CHRISSIE HYNDE

The Pretenders' leader Chrissie Hynde has been playing the same 1965 Fender Telecaster for the best part of 40 years. Bought in NYC circa 81, the Iced Metallic Blue Tele has been on all The Pretenders' records and is her go-to live guitar. Reissued for 2021 in a Road Worn finish. With its six stainless-steel barrel saddle bridge and 7.25" radius fingerboard, the spec is faithful to the original except for locking tuners. A mirror pickguard completes the look and gives Hynde's Tele an automobile vibe, and like the best Teles, it wears its mileage well. "I just really dug it so I stuck with it," says Hynde. "My guitar tech, David Crubly, convinced me to launch a Fender Signature Telecaster by telling me it might encourage more people to get into bands and music."

CHRISSIE'S FAMOUS TELE

1965 Fender Telecaster in Ice Blue Metallic with mirror 'guard and six stainless steel barrel saddle bridge.

Interview Jonathan Horsley

"THE FIRST TIME I EVER USED A TELE WAS THE DAY I RECORDED *THIS CHARMING MAN*..."



Johnny Marr on the making of The Smiths' classic, and the dark "clang" of his beloved '64 Tele

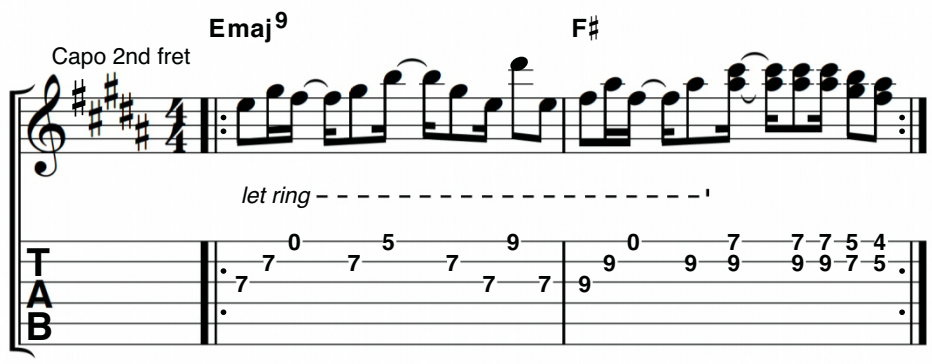
"My most famous one is my green sunburst Roger Giffin. My wife, who was then my girlfriend, very kindly wanted to get me a gift and the great Alan Rogan [Pete Townshend's guitar tech] tipped her off to this one-off that Roger Giffin had made. A lot of people remember it because it is very distinctive looking, but Alan recommended it to me because it sounded very unusual. It's maple, so it weighs an absolute ton, and it has a lot of brass on it. It has a very distinctive sound. I was only a little slip of a thing when I got it [laughs], so I could only play two songs with it before I had to go and lie down.

"I still have that guitar. It has a coil-tap on it, which I disabled. To this day, I do not know what the pickups are on there. They might be really early Seymour Duncans – knowing Roger. The first time I ever used a Telecaster was the day I recorded *This Charming Man*. The sound of that intro was always assumed that it was a Rickenbacker because that is what I was most known for at the time, but it is actually – mostly – a '54 Tele, maybe '53, that belonged to the producer [John Porter] tracked with a Rickenbacker, so it is quite an interesting sound. That was a refinished '53 or '54 Tele and it was the first time I had used one. It really suited my super-clean sound. But it still had plenty of attitude.

"The combination of that 50s Tele sound and the Rickenbacker was perfect for what I was looking for. That was my first experience with a Tele. Quite quickly, I was lucky enough to acquire a few different guitars, but I made it my business to get a Tele. That's why Angie knew I needed one. The green one I used mostly on *Meat Is Murder* – *Nowhere Fast* and the title track. I guess by the time of the last [Smiths] album, I acquired a mid-60s Tele which had been customised with a humbucker in the neck position.

"Right now I have got four or five Telecasters, mostly 60s models. I've got a '64, and I really like that period, because I want that clean, classic Tele thing but they're just slightly darker. It's a combination of the bodies and the fingerboard being rosewood. I like that darker clang. I've still got the black and white Custom one, and in the 2000s, Fender gave me a Custom Shop early 60s reissue, Olympic [White] with the black guard."

THIS CHARMING TWANG TRACK 12



Johnny's surprising West African influences come out in arpeggio riffs like *This Charming Man*, and our riff will help you get the idea. The essential part is the complex rhythm – there's much to be learnt by experimenting with other chords/arpeggios but using the same rhythm.

Photo Joby Sessions



Interview Jonny Scaramanga

"NO ONE'S GOING TO NICK THAT, IT LOOKS LIKE A SACK OF SH*T!"

Status Quo's Francis Rossi reveals the secrets of his famous green Telecaster – endlessly modified to create its "unique tone"

For much of Quo's career, you and Rick Parfitt had the two-Tele setup. Whose idea was that?

I started with a Gibson and Rick had an ES-335. Then I got the Tele. Rick being who he was wanted to get a Tele but early on he had an SG. A lot of the stuff that we recorded on *Piledriver* and *Hello* was an SG, not a Telecaster. Later on he got carried away that people were going, 'Oh! The Telecasters!'

Where did you get your Tele?

I swapped my Gibson Stereo 335 for a Les Paul copy with a guy from Badfinger. Within a few months the bridge collapsed into the body, so someone sent me two Telecasters to try, and I kept a sunburst one. I painted it black but when I got to the gig, where it dried out in the case, it looked f*ckin' 'orrible. I was painting furniture at home with this green paint where you could see the grain underneath – quite phenomenal at the time! So I repainted the guitar and realised I was late for a gig. I put it back together quickly and just never got to paint the other side of it. One night someone got backstage and nicked the two guitars either side of my Tele. That's when I thought 'No one's going to nick that because it looks like a sack of sh*t!'

What was with the hole in the body?

I kept ripping out guitar leads. I thought I'd drill a hole in it and slip the guitar lead through the hole first. That kind of worked, but really I should've replaced the jack input.

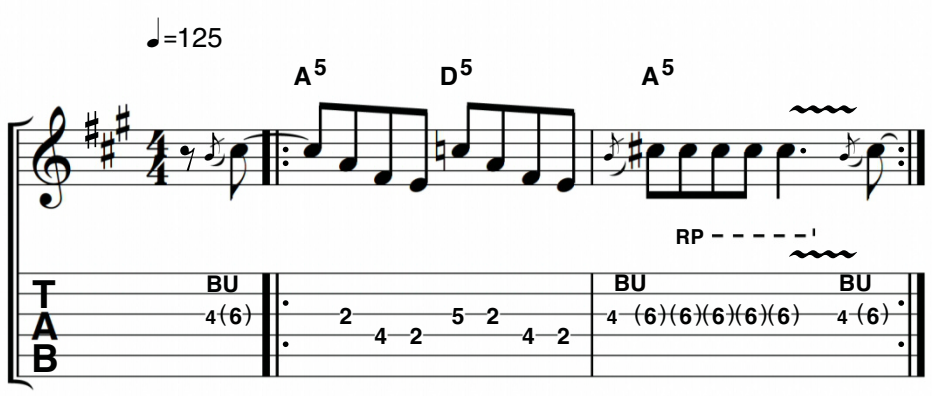
Why did you change the bridge?

If it's a traditional Tele bridge, people go, 'You gotta have that!'. Well, you don't like your guitar in tune then, do you son? What a stupid design. I put a tune-o-matic bridge on it like the old Gibsons. I think all that stuff, and taking off the lacquer, added to the tone. It did sound quite unique.

How come you changed the pickups in the 90s?

I went for Lace Sensors, then later I changed the neck pickup for one of those Hot Rail things. I suppose I always wanted to get a sort of humbucky, Gibson-y noise because I started on Gibsons, and we would get a lot of interference with the single coils, particularly in English venues. People were like, 'Don't like the Lace Sensor! If only you'd played that on the original…' When people talk about guitar tone, I always ask, 'Do you like the song?'

QUO-TELE AWESOME! TRACK 13



Get a flavour of Rossi's lead style here with a lick that targets the I and IV chords (A and D), rather than a 'one scale fits all' approach that's typical of a lot of blues-rock. We're playing a C♯ note to imply an A chord (A C♯ E) followed by a bend down to C to imply D7 (D F♯ A C). A neat way to spell out the changes.

Photo Getty

Words Jonathan Horsley

THE GAME CHANGER

Inaugurating the electric guitar as a consumer product, Leo Fender's Telecaster was the bolt-on from the blue that changed the world with a tone that could fight its way through any mix...

Photos: Gary

The Fender Telecaster was the Big Bang moment for electric guitar. The world's first mass-produced solidbody electric, it has had an immeasurable impact on popular culture. What is the secret to its success? Simplicity is one factor. The best designs have simplicity baked-in. The 21st-century Telecaster assumes many forms, and yet, whether you are talking about the vintage-inspired instrument from the American Original or Vintera series, or a flagship US build from the American Professional II lineup, the design principles behind Fender's workhorse electric have remained largely unchanged. Occasionally, you might find one with a surreptitious body contour, such as the belly cuts on the Deluxe, the modernistic American Ultra Tele and 2010s American Standard. But ultimately, with a Telecaster you've got a slab-bodied singlecut, a bolt-on neck, and you can argue the toss over the rest of the spec.

The Telecaster was prefigured by the single-pickup Esquire but would soon usurp it. Similar in build, the Esquire applied some of the components of Fender's lap-steels at the time – the ashtray bridge, the single-coil pickup seated as part of the bridge. Two knurled knobs controlled volume and tone. The neck – maple, one piece – was Leo Fender's power move. The four-bolts and steel neck-plate design were easier to replace than glued-in necks if damaged. They also made the guitars easier to manufacture. Bodies were pine but ash was on the menu, alder, too. Whatever Leo could get a hold of, he used. The single-ply black phenolic pickguard and six-in-line headstock, inspired by 19th-century Stauffer acoustics, gave the guitar a unique look.

As with all revolutions, there were bumps on the road. Leo Fender sailed close to the wind financially, investing heavily in cutting-edge tools equipment so that his paradigm-shifting design could be produced at pace. Also, what to call this guitar? The new two-pickup version of the Esquire was originally named the Broadcaster, but Gretsch claimed trademark infringement relating to its Broadkaster drum set. Fender simply snipped the decal logos on the headstock in lieu of a new name. The so-called Nocaster offered a taste of things to come; within months it was renamed the Telecaster.

Unlike Les Paul, Leo was not a player. He relied on feedback to refine his instruments. Then, as now, artist endorsement was vital. When players saw the hot-shot Jimmy Bryant playing a Broadcaster, everyone wanted in. In 1954, Fender started producing Teles with a white pickguard. The Telecaster has seen a lot of firsts; Nat King Cole guitarist Oscar Moore's Ermine White '51 Nocaster with gold hardware debuted the Fender custom colour. By 1958, all players could pay five per cent extra for a custom colour of their own. The Tele player's options increased a year later with the Custom Telecaster; its double-bound body and rosewood fingerboard a classy update.

In the hands of players such as Bryant and James Burton, the Telecaster quickly established itself. Burton's playing on Dale Hawkins' *Suzy Q* scored a hit. The likes of Don Rich were giving country a jolt from the electric rush of rock 'n' roll, and by the early 60s, session kings such as Phil Baugh had made the instrument their own. Baugh's 1965 album, *Country Guitar*, showed the direction of travel, and it was south of the Mason–Dixon. The Telecaster's sharp treble twang became the de facto country sound. Think of a Tele plus Dyna Comp compression and a Fender tube combo and it you think of Nashville. It's ironic that Telecaster would evolve out of the electric lap-steel guitar only for players to later incorporate pedal steel bends and volume pedals to mimic its forebears.

Blues players such as Albert Collins took to them. The Ice Man's most famous Telecaster was a 1966 maple-cap model with a PAF humbucker in the neck. Collins would use a variety of alternate tunings – open F minor, open D minor tunings – and a capo for an instantly recognisable sound. Rock players such as Keith Richards, Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton embraced Leo Fender's spirit of open source design, customising theirs. Richards applied a reverse-mount PAF humbucker to his, later modding the hardware. Page applied mirrors and used a top-loading bridge that allowed for easier string bends. Clapton took the neck off his 1956 'Brownie' Strat and bolted it to the alder-body of a Telecaster Custom, consecrating the 'Blind Faith' Telecaster at the supergroup's 1969 Hyde Park show.

The late 60s was a febrile time. Fender had been experimenting with weight-relieved Teles, developing a rare hollowbody 'Smuggler's Tele' before launching the semi-hollow Thinline Telecaster in 1968 to compete with likes of Rickenbacker and Gretsch. The popularity of humbucker pickups saw many players migrate to Gibson. In 1970, Seth Lover, now of Fender having designed Gibson's storied PAF humbucker, developed Fender's response: the Wide Range Humbucker. Featuring CuNiFe magnets, it was brighter than the PAF, distinctly Fender, and from 1971 the Wide Range Humbucker was used on the Thinline and at the Custom Telecaster's neck position from 1972 onwards. The dual-humbucker Telecaster Deluxe – complete with belly contour, Strat headstock and choice of hard-tail or tremolo – arrived in '73.

"The Telecaster was the Big Bang moment for electric guitar"

LEFT
A '51 Fender Nocaster, '54 Fender Telecaster and a 1958 Fender Bassman amplifier

This was a big year for the Telecaster. Its distinctive twang, fast attack and playability had ingratiated it to country, rock, and blues players. But its contribution to music history was just getting started. That same year, Bruce Springsteen has just exchanged $185 for his mongrel Tele with the Esquire neck. Punk was coming around the corner. Joe Strummer of The Clash and Brian James of The Damned would electrify the youth with a Telecaster. The likes of Prince, The Smiths' Johnny Marr and The Cars' Elliot Easton (most notable models a Nocaster and Pink Paisley) kept the T-style paradigm alive through the 80s. Players such as Brent Mason and Brad Paisley would guarantee its preeminence at Music City country venues for decades to come, while the likes of Blur's Graham Coxon and Black Francis of The Pixies showcased how this utilitarian electric guitar – simple, designed for western swing players – retained its cutting-edge, a tool for chiselling out a path for indie and alternative rock.



Words Grant Moon

"HE BROUGHT THE VOLUME AND TONE KNOBS UP FULL, AND LEFT THEM THERE"

With his trusty Tele in hand, the man they call The Colonel remains a towering (six foot one, in fact) figure in the history of popular music. Steve Cropper's soulful, spare and deeply musical guitar style was a cornerstone of the gritty 'Memphis Soul' sound of the 60s. As a member of the Stax label's de facto house band, Booker T. & The MG's, he appeared on countless 45s, playing on – and regularly co-writing – hits by soul giants. Later he'd find fame with a new generation, as a Tele-brandishing member of the band in cult 1980 movie *The Blues Brothers*.

Back in '62 Booker T. & The MG's cooked up their much-replicated hit instrumental *Green Onions* on the Stax studio floor while killing time between sessions. This infectious 12-bar blues in F was characterised by Booker T Jones' burbling Hammond M3 organ, but also Cropper's two-man approach to guitar. He supplies twangy-yet-warm bluesy lead lines and funky rhythm, creating a cool intro hook by countering the song's F/B♭/C structure with choppy, syncopated fragments of B♭, E♭ and F.

In these early days, Cropper would run his Fender Esquire – the Telecaster's single-pickup close ancestor – through a Fender Harvard 10-watt amp. Studio engineers, he maintains, love the Fender Telecaster for its clean signal. When Cropper graduated to the Tele, he put the pickup selector in middle position to blend the neck and bridge coils, brought the volume and tone knobs up full, and left them there. As with all the best players, his cultured, warm tone has always come from his hands.

When Sam And Dave shout 'Play it Steve!' in the middle of their 1967 classic *Soul Man*, it's him they're looking at. Cropper plays the intro chords – G, F, B♭, C, D – using their D shapes, but for more control over the articulation he only uses the notes falling on his Tele's G and high E strings: D/B (G string, 7th fret/E string, 7th fret); C/A (sliding the previous shape down to the 5th fret); F/D (up to 10th); G/E (to 12th) and A/F# (to 14th).

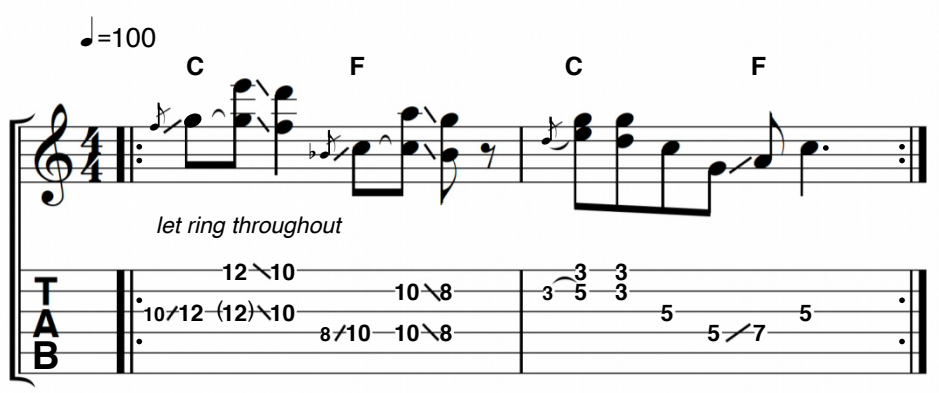
This elegantly simple and highly memorable motif is typical of the Cropper approach.

Part of Cropper's appeal is this blend of pragmatism and instinctual feel for melody. He co-wrote and produced Otis Redding's *(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay*, writing the signature, G/G/D/D/G bass intro, then overdubbing the song's sweet Tele lines and seagulls/ocean sound effects. Cropper later employed a foolproof, 'follow-the-dots' approach when working on Eddie Floyd's *Knock On Wood*. Stuck for an intro, he thought back to *In The Midnight Hour*, the timeless soul side he had co-written with Wilson Pickett. Following the fret markers on his Tele, he reversed *Midnight Hour*'s intro chords (D/B/A/G/E) to come up with the new tune's unmistakeable, yet strangely familiar, upwards progression (E/G/A/B/D/B).

These days this consummate, hugely influential musician favours a Telecaster copy custom made for him by Peavey. He's 79, still gigs, and this year released a new solo album, *Fire It Up*. The Colonel marches on.

Steve Cropper's twangy leads made him a pivotal figure in 60s soul music – the Tele being a key ingredient in The Colonel's secret recipe

SOUL MAN TRACK **14**



The king of soul and RnB was famed for his use of two-note chord shapes, sliding 6ths and simple melodic embellishments, all of which are used here. The 6th chords in bar 1 treat each chord as if they're in two different keys (C major and F major). The B♭ in the last shape could also be thought to come from C Mixolydian (C D E F G A B♭) for a bluesy twist on a standard major scale.

Photo: Getty

MAKING HISTORY SINCE 1958



Dennis Dunaway with Alice Cooper Manchester Arena, 2017 ©JodiPhotography

Legendary tone starts with authentic strings...
That's why Dennis Dunaway still uses Rotosound strings and why we continue to use the family-made machinery that wound the original **Swing Bass 66** strings played on Alice Cooper's *School's Out* in 1972.

The story goes that after fitting the strings for the first time, Dennis declared that he had to rerecord his bass parts because he was so in love with his new Rotosound strings!

@rotosound_uk



POLLY'S FAMOUS TELE
Her favourite '67 Tele belonged to her friend John Parish. "I used to nick it all the time," she said.



COURTNEY BARNETT

Known for her frank approach to playing guitar and penning lyrics, Barnett is a slacker-rock queen – minus the regal bling. So far she's released two acclaimed albums: 2015's *Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit* and 2018's *Tell Me How You Really Feel*. As a lefty, she learnt to play on "upside down" acoustics, borrowed from friends. Nowadays, she's often seen with a left-handed American Standard Telecaster which she bought from eBay so she could retire her previous workhorse: a Harmony Rocket. Robust and unflashy, the Telecaster provides a blank canvas for layers of fuzz and jangly effects. In Courtney's hands, the trademark Tele twang is softened by her idiosyncratic pickless playing technique which uses the thumb and fingers, yet doesn't quite resemble "traditional" fingerpicking.

PJ HARVEY

Harvey didn't actually own a Telecaster until she bought one with the proceeds of her Mercury Music Prize in 2001. Despite this, Teles were essential to her 90s sound. Harvey's determination not to repeat herself musically suited the Tele, which is equally at home with all her styles. That said, Harvey was too interested in diversity to use the same gear all the time, and too interested in expression to agonise over details of gear. She found the Telecaster a convenient outlet for her ideas, which is really the best thing a musical instrument can be. On an iconic 1993 performance on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, an almost-unknown PJ Harvey performed *Rid Of Me* alone on her Telecaster. It was a daring move from a new artist.

GEORGE HARRISON

Despite being part of the biggest band the world has ever seen and having a successful solo career, George Harrison isn't always given the kudos he deserves as a guitarist. His melodic soloing and un-bluesy slide, however, signal a harmonic knowledge far beyond that of many of his contemporaries. Early on, the 'quiet Beatle' would have been seen with Rickenbacker and Gretcsh guitars, but after some persuasion from Don Randall, the then sales manager at Fender, Harrison added a unique prototype Telecaster to his arsenal. Constructed from a thin layer of maple, sandwiched between a rosewood top and back and with a rosewood neck and fingerboard, this was a seriously weighty instrument. George received the now iconic Tele at the end of 1968, and played it on the *Let It Be* sessions as well as during the Apple HQ rooftop gig that would famously become the band's last performance.

Photos Getty



Interview Jonny Scaramanga

"SCREW YOU AND YOUR METAL GUITARS!"

Slipknot's Jim Root explains why the Telecaster is his weapon of choice, and how its clean tones fit into the band's super-heavy sound

What made you gravitate towards Telecasters?
Growing up in the 80s I was really enamored by the imagery of Fender style guitars. On the cover of *Long After Dark*, Tom Petty is holding a Tele, and it's just such an iconic image to me. In the early days of Slipknot, everything was like 'molten metal god' and big pointy guitars – BC Rich Warlocks and Ironbirds. I wanted to do the absolute opposite. Maybe it's a bit of an indignant punk rock attitude, like, 'Screw you and your metal guitars – I'm going to play this Tele!' If you stick with the classics they're never going to go out of style. You can make them your own and they're always going to have a level of validity, whether it's a pair of Ray-Bans or a Tele.

Tell us about your signature Telecaster.
The reason I chose mahogany was when we were recording, the mahogany guitars were sitting in the mixes a lot better than the alder ones. The alder ones seemed brighter and snappier. You'd think that would cut through all the instruments on a Slipknot record, but for some reason the mahogany guitars just sat better.

My apologies to all the Tele purists, but I don't play in a country band so it's not like I can use single coil pickups and have it cut through.

Some people think EMG pickups sound the same regardless of the guitar. What do you say to that?
I've been in a studio with 20 of my guitars all loaded with EMGs and they all sound drastically different. Shooting out my signature pickups in the studio, I could actually look at the waveform from the pickups in whatever guitar. Not only did they sound drastically different in each guitar but you could also see the thickness of the wave file, how much output and what frequencies they were hitting.

Do you ever use a traditional single coil Telecaster?
I have a couple. They're great for clean tones and layering. There's not a lot of clean tones in Slipknot but we do a lot of layering. I've been writing more experimental, cleaner stuff at home and those guitars come in very handy for that.

Your Teles must have survived some battles, too.
We were shooting a video for *Disasterpiece*, and for some reason I was mad at [drummer] Joey Jordison and heaved my Tele at him like a spear. I threw it probably twenty feet. I thought for sure that I broke the hell out of it, but the only thing wrong was an imprint of his drum riser at the very end of the headstock. My tech just retuned it and I finished the show with the same guitar.



JEFF BECK

Beck began using a Telecaster in the Deltones, his first band. He hated the controls on his Burns Tri-Sonic and persuaded bandmate John Owen to swap for his ash blonde 1959 Tele. Beck had worshipped Fenders since seeing *The Girl Can't Help It*, a 1956 movie in which members of Gene Vincent's and Little Richard's bands are seen wielding Teles. Beck bought his 1954 Esquire from John Walker for £75 in 1965, preferring its maple fingerboard to the rosewood on contemporary Telecasters. With the Esquire he recorded pivotal Yardbirds moments such as *Over Under Sideways Down*, *Shapes of Things* and *I'm A Man*. Beck kept the Deltones Tele but barely used it. It's often reported that in 1966 Jeff gave it to Jimmy Page as thanks for getting him the Yardbirds gig. In 2005, however, Beck gave a less romantic version of events, saying he'd simply left the guitar behind after quitting the Yardbirds "in a huff". In 1974, Beck traded his Esquire for pickup guru Seymour Duncan's Tele-Gib, a Tele modified with Seymour's prototype JB humbucker. To this day, Duncan will tell you with a wink that JB stands for 'Jazz Blues'. Beck used it to record *Cause We've Ended As Lovers*.

JIMMY PAGE

On Jeff Beck's departure from the Yardbirds, Page inherited his 1959 Tele and moved the group in a heavier direction. Anticipating Led Zeppelin, he combined the Tele with a Tonebender fuzz and Vox Grey Wah, and even experimented with a cello bow. In 1967, inspired by Syd Barrett, Jimmy covered the front of the guitar with eight circular mirrors. Later that year, he stripped it entirely and painted on the psychedelic dragon that became his early Zeppelin trademark. On Led Zeppelin's first album, Page used only the Dragon Tele, Sola Sound Mk II Tone Bender fuzz, and Supro amp. The Tele's top-loaded bridge, as opposed to through-body stringing, facilitated Page's lairy bends. It's a sound that still makes fellow axe gods weak at the knees. As Def Leppard's Phil Collen says: "People think of Jimmy Page's Les Paul, but all the really cool stuff was a Tele." Page used Les Pauls from *Led Zeppelin II* onwards, but the Dragon returned for the *Stairway To Heaven* solo. For *Hot Dog* and *Ten Years Gone*, Page used a 1953 Telecaster equipped with a B-bender. The Dragon, meanwhile, met a sad demise: a friend refinished it, ruining the electrics, as a 'surprise' while Page toured with Joe Walsh.



Photos Getty

Words: Amit Sharma

15 BEST TELES



Shopping for a T-style? Take a look at our rundown of the best options available now



Paoletti Nancy Lounge 2P90 Surf Green

£2799

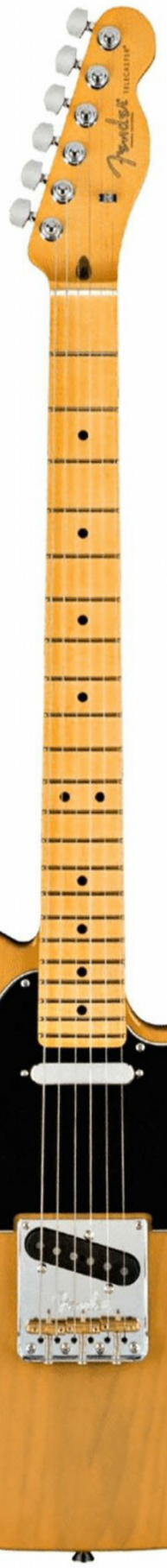
It's almost guaranteed – the more you read about Paoletti guitars, the more you will need to own one. The Tuscany-based company was founded by Fabrizio Paoletti in 2005 with the aim of reclaiming 150 year-old chestnut from his family's wine barrels and transforming the wood into stunning works of art, like this P90-loaded 'Nancy' from the Lounge series.



G&L ASAT Classic

£499

Not only were the Californian company founded by Leo Fender himself, he even went as far as claiming 'G&L guitars and basses are the best instruments I have ever made'. The ASAT Classic, found in their Tribute Series, is an affordable take on the Tele, with classic colours like Butterscotch Blonde, Gloss Black, Clear Orange and Tobacco Sunburst and options for either a swamp ash or basswood body.





£1549

Fender American Professional II

Considering the American Professional series ended up accounting for over half of Fender's instrument sales, big things were expected from last year's revamp. The models now feature a deep C neck, the new V-Mod pickups with push-pull switching and are available in new finishes including Miami Blue and Dark Knight.



Suhr Classic T

£2799

Few have managed to recreate Leo's designs to the same degree as John Suhr, but it is worth remembering the man once worked as the Senior Master Builder in Fender's Custom Shop. The Classic T models feature a Swamp Ash body, a Tinted Maple neck and fingerboard, plus Suhr's own pickups with the Silent Single Coil System, offering traditional single-coil tone without the 60 cycle hum.



Tom Anderson Top T

£2699

Tom Anderson's guitars have been seen in the hands of Kirk Hammett, Keith Richards, Neal Schon and David Crosby – which goes to prove just how versatile his instructments can be. And they're also highly customisable – this Top T, for example, being available in Mahogany, Alder, Basswood or Swamp Ash with options for a solid or hollow body.



ESP E-II T-B7 Baritone

£1999

Looks can be incredibly deceiving sometimes. This Tele-of-sorts by ESP is actually a seven-string baritone, offering some serious extended range wizardry in a very classic design. It features a 27" scale length, a neck-thru-body construction, a 24-fret ebony fingerboard and high-output EMG pickups for unparalleled metallic destruction.



Friedman Vintage-T

£2399

Dave Friedman's amps have become the stuff of legend in recent years, used by rock royalty such as Jerry Cantrell and Bill Kelliher. But in 2015, he decided to blow our minds even more and announce the Friedman guitar line. This Vintage-T, made-to-order in partnership with Grover Jackson, is available in an array of tonewoods with options for Friedman's Classic 90 or Classic Humbucker pickups.



Squier Classic Vibe '70s Telecaster Thinline

£399

This '70s Thinline is so affordable, it will leave you wondering how they're making any profit whatsoever. But that doesn't mean it's a low quality instrument – in fact, the Fender-Designed Wide Range humbucking pickups, Soft Maple body and C-Shape Maple neck ensure it sounds and feels every bit as good as it looks.



Charvel Joe Duplantier Signature Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 2 HH Mahogany

£719

The Gojira singer/guitarist once described his signature as "a killing machine with class". We certainly wouldn't argue with him there – and though this latest version may look like a natural finish Tele, you actually get a mahogany body and neck, a DiMarzio 36th Anniversary PAF in the neck and Joe's new signature DiMarzio Fortitude in the bridge.



Fender Player Telecaster

£649

The Big F launched the Player series back in 2018, effectively taking over from the Mexican Standards. It was a wise move – bringing high-quality instruments to those on a budget or just starting out. Truth be told, the Fender made-in-Mexico range has never sounded better.



Schecter PT Pro

£749

Available in Transparent Blue Burst or Transparent Purple Burst, the new PT Pro models from Schecter are among some of the most eye-catching guitars they've ever produced, and still very affordable. With an alder body, a quilted maple top, a thin 'C' roasted maple neck and Schecter's USA Z-Plus humbuckers, it's hard to see where you can go wrong...



Ibanez AZS2200F Prestige

£2419

The Japanese manufacturer's AZ series has proven to be incredibly popular with modern players who prefer S-style instruments. This year they decided to add some T's to the range, which – like this AZS2200F – feature two Seymour Duncan pickups (a Magic Touch-mini neck humbucker and an Alnico II Pro Custom single-coil bridge) and an Alter Switch for a total of six voices.



Fender Parallel Universe Volume II Troublemaker Tele Deluxe Bigsby

£2199

If Fender's Parallel Universe line proved anything, it's that the American guitar giants were still capable of finding new ways to evolve. This latest version of the Troublemaker Tele feels a lot like a Les Paul Custom, thanks to its trio of humbuckers, block inlays and classic 'tuxedo' aesthetic.



Kiesel Solo Classic S6

£1049

Launched by Carvin in 2015 to handle their instrument lines, Kiesel have since announced signature models for artists like Greg Howe, Andy James and Will Swan. The 24-fret Solo Classic S6 is more of a vintage affair, but with some modern appointments – including an easy-access neck joint with recessed ferrules, dual Kiesel Lithium humbuckers and dual carbon-fibre neck rods.



Reverend Charger 390

£799

With three P90-style pickups, a Korina body, a Roasted Maple neck and a treble bleed circuit, the Charger 390 is certainly an interesting take on the Telecaster. It also includes a bass contour dial, to help effectively revoice the pickup by tightening the low end.



BILLY GIBBONS

Known for having a big beard and an even bigger guitar collection, the Reverend Billy Gibbons isn't one to tie himself to a particular model or make of guitar with religious devotion. In fact, throughout his career, he's played a huge range of guitars. When it comes to Telecaster-style guitars alone, the ZZ Top frontman's inventory is still rather sizeable. He's used a rare early-1950s Fender Broadcaster, a 1963 Fender Esquire and at least three John Bolin custom models with chambered bodies, including one nicknamed "The Peeler" which features a printed finish designed to look damaged by flood water. ZZ Top's third album *Tres Hombres* is a landmark work that exemplifies the band's Southern-rock-meets-blues-boogie sound. Drenched in gain, and slinking along in swing-eighths, you'll hear the Broadcaster on *Jesus Just Left Chicago*.



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Springsteen was quite the monogamist when it came to his road-beaten 1950s Telecaster-Esquire hybrid, bought for $185 and played solidly for 40 years. This guitar features front and centre on the cover of his classic 1975 album *Born To Run* and can be heard on just about every album The Boss has recorded since, although it has now been retired from gigging. It was originally owned by a record company and once fitted with two extra pickups, while the black pickguard hides a hulking great hole in its swamp ash body. This yields two unique traits: a slightly acoustic tone akin to a Thinline, and a feather-light weight – which probably comes in handy if you're partial to playing three-hour shows. Suggesting that Bruce Springsteen would be unrecognisable without a Telecaster slung across his body would probably be going too far, but consider for a second just how disconcerting it would be to see him wielding a Strat instead.

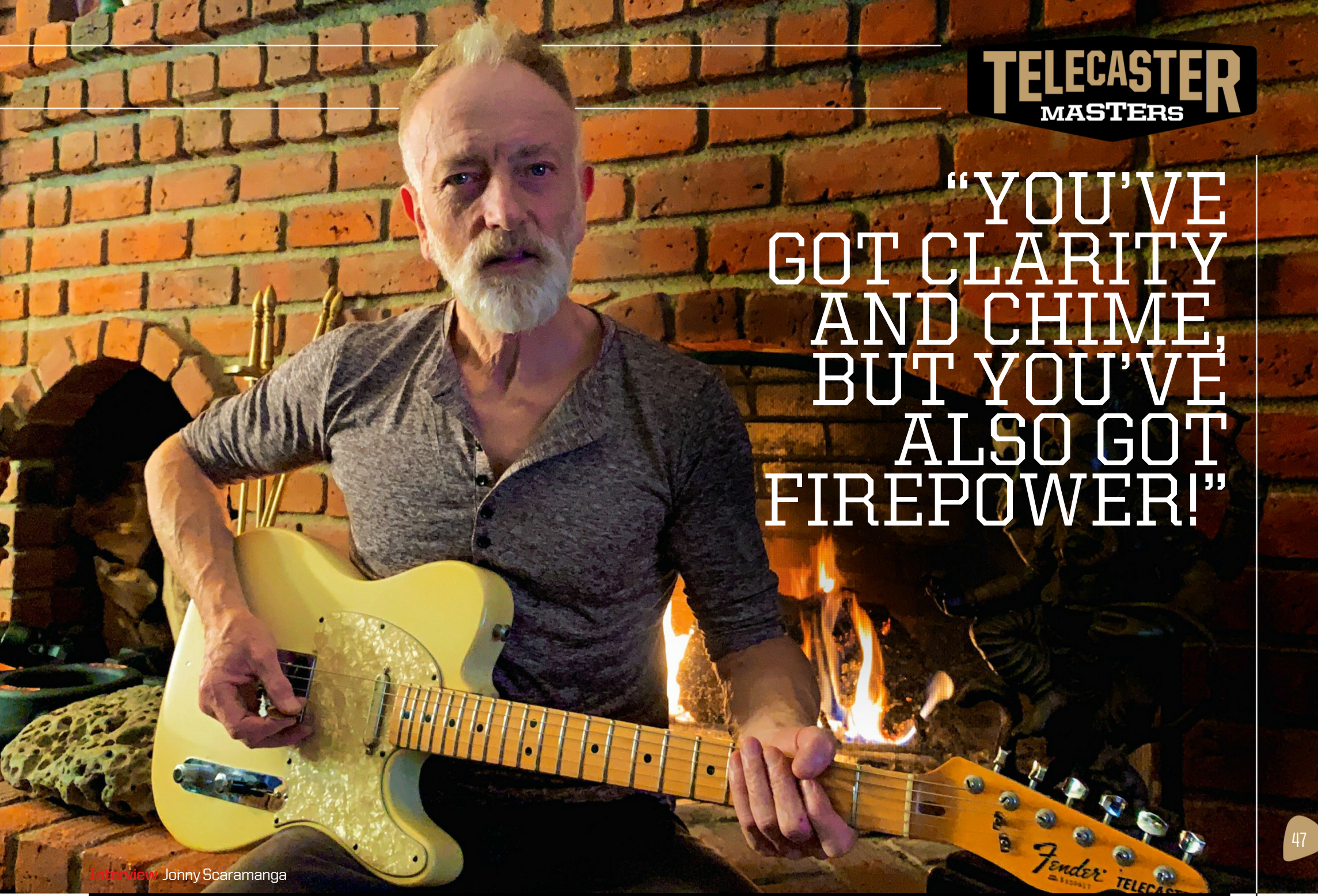
Photos Getty

TOM MORELLO

When we picture Tom Morello with a guitar, it's usually the light blue 'Arm The Homeless' Superstrat in his hands, but a lot of his famous drop-D riffs – most notably, in the definite Rage Against The Machine anthem *Killing In The Name* – had been recorded using his black Telecaster with 'Sendero Luminoso' scrawled above its bridge pickup. In fact, as the man himself once told us, it was the very guitar he discovered the tuning on thanks to some pointers from Tool singer Maynard James Keenan. The rest, as they say, was history. Much like Tool themselves, Rage Against The Machine would go on to typify drop-tuned riffing – Morello often making good use of the pentatonic notes on the fifth string against the low gain 'chug' of his detuned sixth string.

TOM'S FAMOUS TELE

The 1982 'Sendero Luminoso' Tele originally belonged to an old roommate of Morello's and was swapped in exchange for a Marshall head.



Interview Jonny Scaramanga

Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen reveals the role of the Telecaster on the band's multi-million selling albums *Pyromania* and *Hysteria*

Is it true there's a Tele on every track of *Hysteria*?
Pretty much. We always used Telecasters to track stuff. On *Pyromania* you had a Les Paul and a Tele playing the same part to give you the full range. On the latest Def Leppard stuff I'll use a Tele and a Jackson and blend the two.

During the making of *Pyromania*, you played a Les Paul and an Ibanez Destroyer, while Steve Clark also favoured a Les Paul. What led you to use Teles?
We were always searching for this sound, a basic bedrock sound, especially when we were working with [producer] Mutt Lange. We had to compromise, and we'd use a Les Paul and a Tele, or a Strat and a Les Paul. I put a DiMarzio Super Distortion T in about four of my Teles and got the sound we'd been trying to get for years. You've got clarity and chime, but you've also got firepower and balls!

So it was it Mutt's idea to use Telecasters?
I think he got it from working with AC/DC. A lot of rock players get the wrong idea. They think it's all this distorted humbucker thing. Malcolm [Young, AC/DC guitarist] used his Gretsch really kinda clean. The blending of the Gretsch and the SG from Angus [Young, lead guitarist] was amazing. It's like vocals – tenors and baritones blending together. Guitars do the same thing. AC/DC didn't use Telecasters, but it's where Mutt got the idea for the clarity. A lot of rock bands were just a wall of fuzz. You want it to breathe and be a bit cooler. That's where the Telecaster comes in.

Which Def Leppard songs have obvious Telecaster parts?
We did a song with [US country star] Tim McGraw, *Nine Lives*. I used it all the way through that. The intro to *Rock of Ages* was a Tele. That was recorded before I joined the band. The main riff to *Hysteria* is another one. It's actually [bassist] Rick Savage playing that, on a black Tele with a Kahler. When we were making *Pyromania* and *Hysteria*, we had a black Strat and a black Tele floating around as band guitars.

Do you modify your Telecasters at all?
I've got this beautiful blonde Telecaster I got in Dublin when we were rehearsing for *Hysteria*. I changed the bridge. I'm not a fan of the classic Tele bridge. I like a six-saddle. We're so meticulous and we track up so many things, so you need it bang in tune.

How do you set up your Teles?
I use really heavy strings anyway. I have 13s on my Jacksons. With a Tele I can sometimes go a bit higher and harder. At the moment I have 14-56. You can really thrash it, and it gets rid of some nasty frequencies to make it easier for recording.

And what do you use Teles for on tour?
Live I sometimes use a Tele on *Love Bites*, *Too Late For Love*, or *Armageddon It*. I change it up, stuff that's a bit clearer or where I'm not playing the solo. But having said that, now I've got the DiMarzio in there I can play a solo and it sounds killer anyway.

For more, visit: www.leppardvault.com

Words Stuart Williams

"IT'S PROBABLY THE BEST GUITAR DESIGN EVER"

If the Telecaster has made its name as the quintessential country and rock 'n' roll guitar, who better to receive a signature model than modern Americana's premier songwriter and tonesmith, Jason Isbell? An avid collector, Jason took features from two of his favourite Teles to create the template for his new signature Telecaster Custom.

"I've got a Custom Shop Tele that's probably ten years old," he says. "It's got a Twisted Tele neck pickup, and I really like that pickup. I put a black pickguard on it, it's a double-bound body, rosewood 'board and I've used it for hundreds of shows. I very rarely need to tune it! Then I have a 1965 Tele that has the best bridge pickup So we did the bridge pickup based off that '65, and we also used that as the basis for the neck profile, it's sort of a small C."

Jason's signature model is, in fact, lacking a signature. "I didn't sign it anywhere," he says. "But I put my tattoo on the neck plate. I like how the headstock looks as it is so I just left it the way it was designed."

Jason Isbell on classic Teles and his new signature model

For the signature model pickup, Jason deferred to Fender's wind-up guru, Tim Shaw, to perfect the paring. "The neck pickup is like the Twisted Tele, only hotter. That was my only issue with the Twisted Tele, they sound great, but they're usually really quiet and clean. It's difficult to get them to overdrive without blasting the bridge pickup out at the same time, so we balanced them out by making the neck pickup a bit hotter."

Isbell's signature model also includes a three saddle bridge, modified to make things easier for palm muting: "I think they sound better, there's fewer things to slow down the vibrations. We cut the bridge away a little around the part that would have held the ashtray on."

Meanwhile, he's opted for a rosewood fingerboard, telling us "I love maple fingerboards too, but there's something very forgiving about rosewood. Maple's very precise, and if you make a mistake you're going to hear it."

Finally, there's the Road Worn finish. "I think the relic'ing is tasteful. I didn't want to heavily age it because I'm not that kind of player. I don't like to get vintage guitars that are all beat-up because they feel too much like somebody else's guitar at that point."

So, it's a lot more than a decal and a paint job, but what does the Tele mean to Jason Isbell: Guitar Fanatic? "I think about Albert Collins and that ice pick tone, and then Muddy Waters playing slide on a Telecaster. Then there's the thicker Tele tones, like Danny Gatton. Definitely with Keith Richards there's a tradition of that guitar, but it doesn't really apply to anybody else. Without a doubt it's the best rhythm guitar. I think it's probably the best guitar design overall, ever."



Photo Getty

Guitars & backing: Stuart Ryan

COUNTRY LIFE

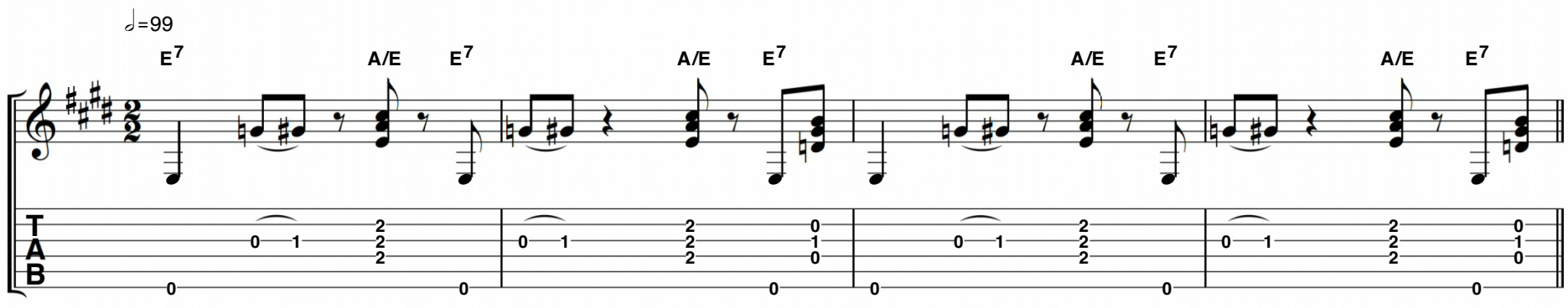
Get to grips with the Tele stylings of eight country guitar greats



The long and varied history of country music makes it a goldmine for any guitarist looking to level-up their chops whilst discovering some new techniques and approaches. There is a long lineage to the genre from the traditional 'twang' of James Burton to the edgier 1970s riffing of Joe Walsh, all the way to today's more commercial radio-friendly pop-oriented country of players like Keith Urban and Brad Paisley. Factor in virtuosos like studio ace Brent Mason and all-round Tele genius Danny Gatton and you'll find a whole new stream of inspiration no matter what genre you already focus on. Country and bluegrass have even crossed over into modern metal thanks to players such as John 5.

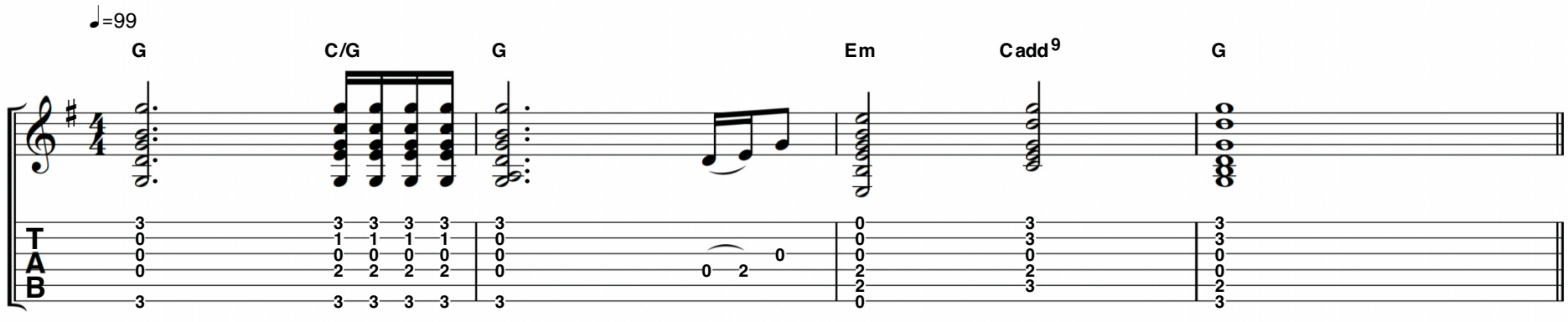
Let's dive in and take a look at the signature styles of these country masters – and don't worry if you haven't got a Tele to hand. Any guitar will do while you learn some signature riffs and licks.

1 JAMES BURTON — TRACK 18



Original Tele master James Burton is a renowned lead player, but you can learn loads from his rhythm playing, too. Check out this move from E to A – a common chord change, let's face it! The hammer-on on the third string gives bags of character, and has been used on countless country hits.

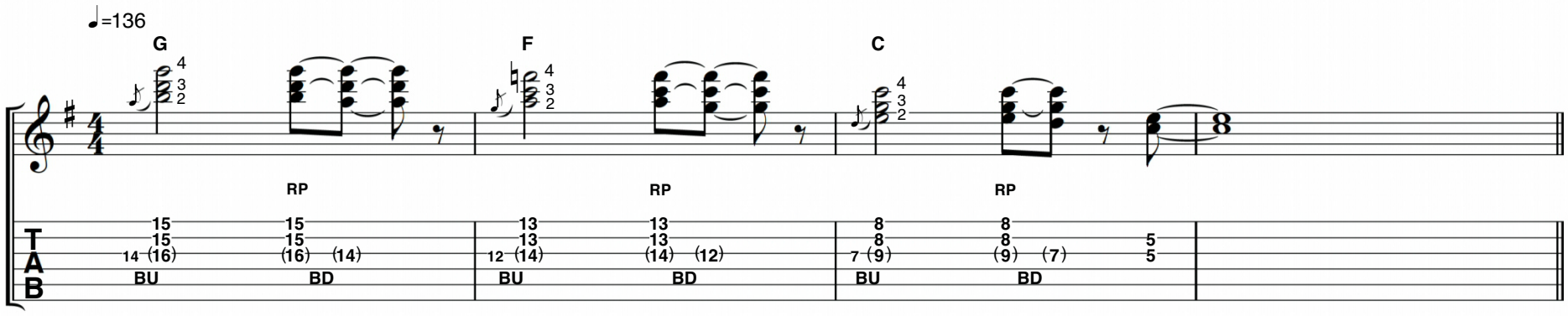
2 JASON ISBELL — TRACK 19



There are many approaches to rhythm within country, and this Jason Isbell-style Americana example shows a classic way of moving from G to C. Check out the subtle country-style fill in bar 2 which adds a bit more interest to a straightforward open-chord approach.

3 JOE WALSH

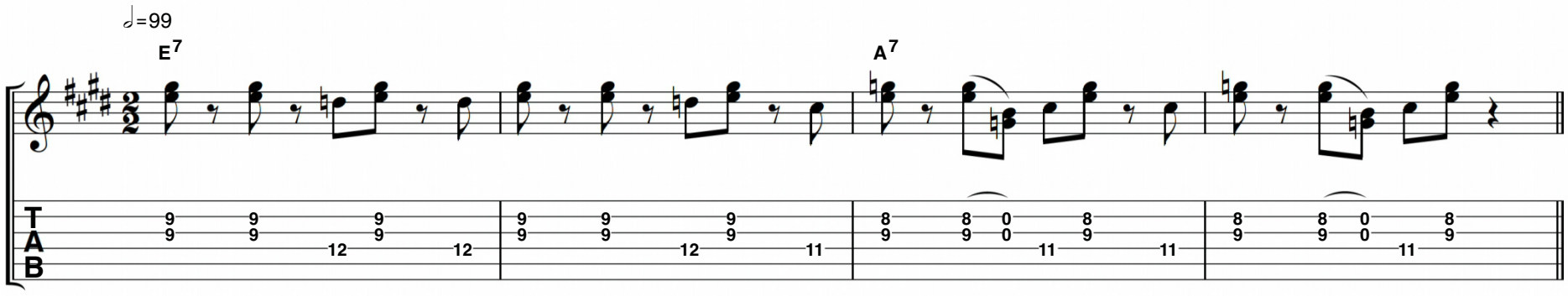
TRACK 20



Country-rock means big, overdriven riffs with simple lead phrases helping to connect it all up. This Joe Walsh pedal steel-inspired lick is all about controlling the string bends against fretted notes. Follow the fret-hand fingerings shown in the notation to keep the bends in place without the notes on the first and second strings moving.

4 BRENT MASON

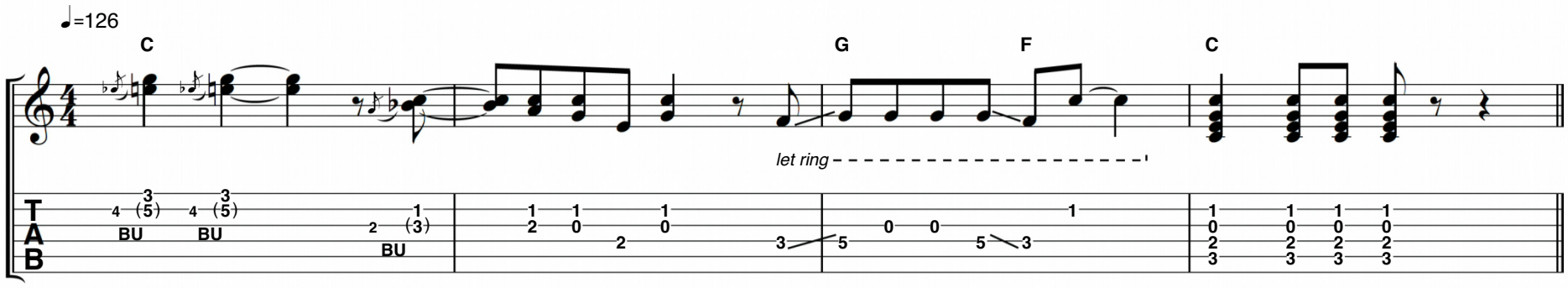
TRACK 21



Doublestops aren't just for solos – they're a great rhythm device too and are often used by Nashville session legend Brent Mason. This lick is a classic example that would sit on top of a simple rhythm base track and falls somewhere in between lead lick and rhythm phrase.

5 BRAD PAISLEY

TRACK 22



Bends within doublestops are a mainstay of country, and Brad Paisley is a melodic master. These licks are fantastic for strengthening the fingers and bends in general, and immediately give you that 'country' sound by loosely emulating the pedal steel.

HYBRID TO HELL

Learn the 'trick of the trade' country picking technique

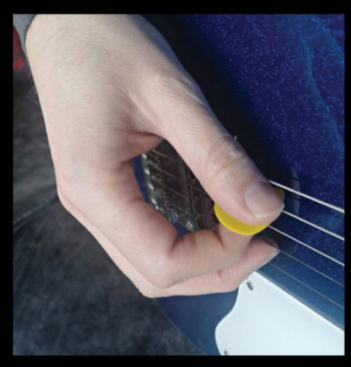
At the heart of that trademark plucky, clucky 'chicken pickin' country sound is 'hybrid' picking – a technique employing both pick and fingers to pluck the strings. Here's how it works, starting with the basics...



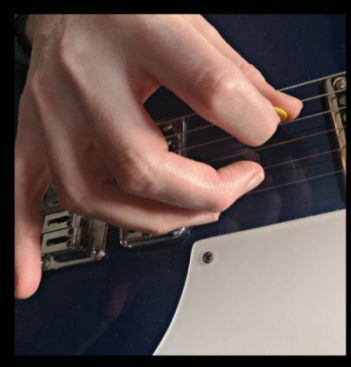
1. STANDARD FLATPICKING
For most standard picking situations you'll hold your pick between your thumb and first finger. Easy!



2. BASIC FINGERSTYLE
Use your thumb for the three bass strings, and your first, second and third fingers for the top three strings.



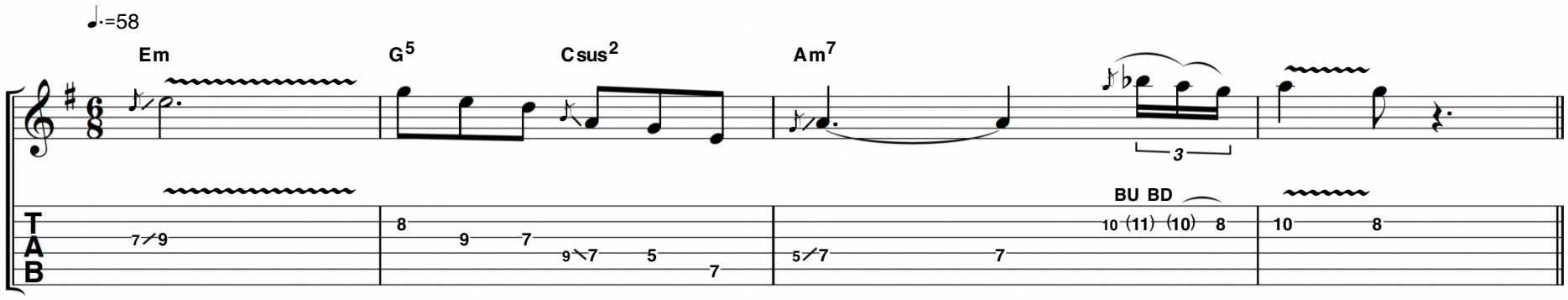
3. HYBRID PICKING: PICK
Hold your pick with a standard flatpicking grip. With hybrid picking, you'll pick the low notes...



4. HYBRID PICKING: FINGERS
...while your second and third fingers pluck two higher strings, fingerstyle.

6 KEITH URBAN

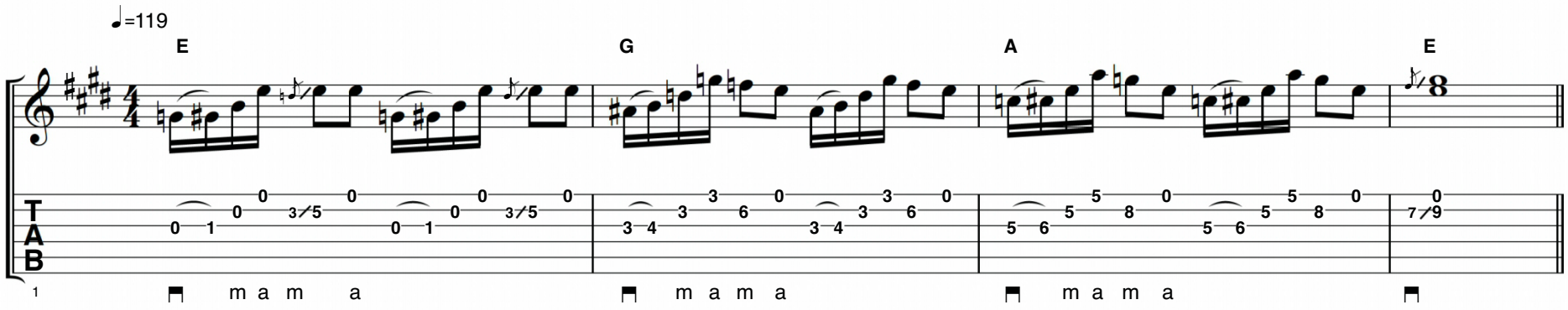
TRACKS 23



Highly-melodic lead work is a mainstay of country, and you'll often find the minor (and major) pentatonic scale at the heart of a solo. Listen to artists like Keith Urban to hear a more bluesy rock vibe within the genre, where the focus is not on shredding licks but tasteful, melodic parts.

7 JOHN 5

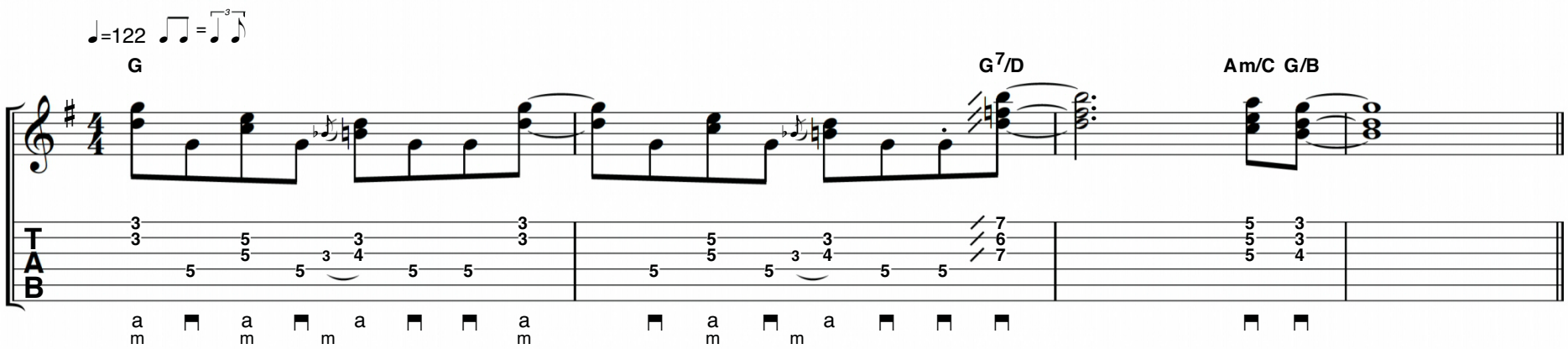
TRACKS 24



Bluegrass is often at the heart of country, and this means banjo rolls! This is a technique where you pick three or four adjacent strings one after the other, usually at speed. Country-metal ace John 5 is a big fan. Use either fingerstyle or hybrid picking to get these rolling phrases down.

8 DANNY GATTON

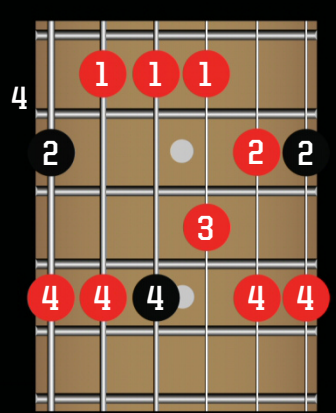
TRACKS 25



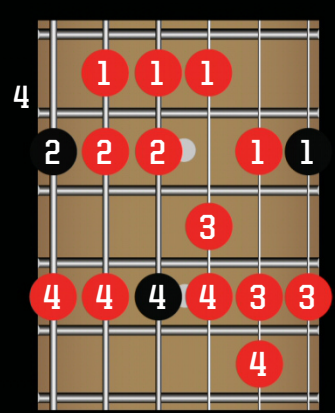
The late, great Danny Gatton was a bona fide Tele legend. This example shows how he brought blues influences into country. Doublestops are integral to both styles and though you can play our tab example with a pick, try using hybrid picking to bring contrast between the bass notes and two-note shapes.

COUNTRY MODES

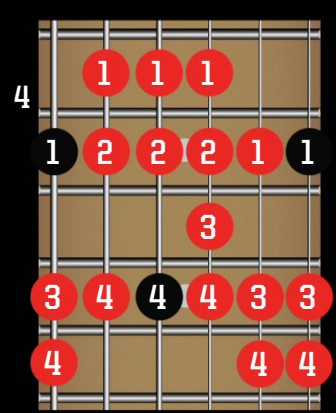
Three essential scales for authentic country guitar



1. MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE
This relative of the minor pentatonic is perfect for upbeat major-key songs.



2. MIXOLYDIAN MODE
Similar to the major scale but with a ♭7. Try it with dominant 7th chords.



3. DORIAN/MIXOLYDIAN HYBRID
Dorian and Mixolydian are identical except for the 3rd interval. Try major and minor 3rds.



Words Amit Sharma

"THIS CLASSIC GUITAR BECAME AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE!"

Country music star Brad Paisley reveals the secrets of his new signature Esquire – and explains why two pickups are better than one

With over 11 million albums sold and countless awards, including three Grammys, Brad Paisley has become one of the modern megastars of country. He's set the record for most consecutive number one singles in the Billboard country chart, been a guest judge on *America's Got Talent*, collaborated with the likes of Demi Lovato, LL Cool J and The Doobie Brothers, ended up in a South Park episode and even had an episode of Robin Williams sitcom *The Crazy Ones* named after him [*Danny Chase Hates Brad Paisley*].

His first signature, a Road Worn Telecaster, arrived in 2017 and at the end of last year Fender announced details of his second model. This time, it was an Esquire featuring his newly launched Seymour Duncan Secret Agent neck pickup hidden underneath its pickguard, offering warmer tones without sacrificing the Esquire tradition of one solitary option in the bridge.

"I don't like really beefy neck tones," Brad tells TG. "I like the Strat-y sound and on my Strats, I set my neck pickup real low for more air. I'm not looking for an ES-335 sound. I want it to still be jazzy but more thin. So we came up with the Secret Agent and it changed everything for me. This is the first time anyone can buy an Esquire with two pickups, just one of them hidden. This classic guitar became an entirely different experience!"

The Secret Agent has now become his go-to neck pickup sound, partly thanks to how its low output makes his bridge pickup feel more like a humbucker in terms of sheer power. "I told everyone at Seymour Duncan that I'd played a lot of Esquires in concert because I love the way they feel without that neck pickup," he continues. "There's something about no magnetic pull on the strings and also the fact that you have to make all your music with that one rugged pickup. It just feels so industrial... Going back to the original designs when Leo was trying to figure out how to make a block of wood sound okay. But with the Secret Agent, immediately in the testing room from the very first prototype, we were all like, 'Holy cow!' I was hoping for something at least acceptable in the neck, but it's so much better. I just recorded something with it the other day, using that as my main neck sound."

Asked about his approach to passing notes in his countrified leads, the singer-songwriter explained how it's often a lot closer to jazz than it sounds, with similar concepts using chromatics. "I've always said that country is jazz on the bridge pickup!" he laughed, noting how a lot of the ghost or outside-sounding notes in both genres often lead to the more traditional ones.

Paisley also emphasises how the overall tone and choice of pickup could place the same ideas firmly into one camp or the other. On a 335 or Les Paul neck pickup through a clean channel it's going to sound very jazzy, he reasons, hinting at the tones made famous by players like Grant Green and Wes Montgomery. "But if you switch to that back pickup on a Tele and start plucking away using hybrid picking, those licks become immediately country," he says. "Add some slapback delay and that's it... You will definitely sound like a country player."

Photo: Getty



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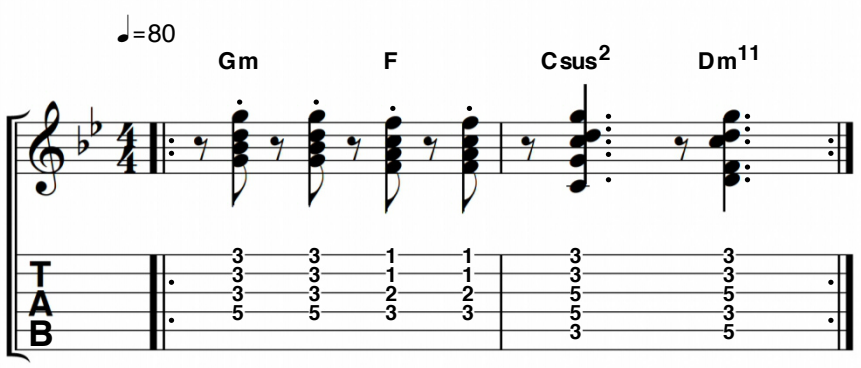
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ANDY SUMMERS

There are few guitarists who have achieved world domination without a catalogue of memorable solos behind them, but as one third of The Police, this is exactly what Andy Summers managed. Characterised by restraint, shimmering tones and lots of tasty sus2 and add9 chords, Summers' sound is unique, albeit understated. With rock posturing off the cards for this player, you might expect him to have a slightly vanilla taste in guitars. On the contrary, his most iconic axe is a wonderful freak: a 1961 Telecaster Custom with maple neck and Gibson humbucker in the neck position. It also has a built-in preamp and overdrive unit, which at one time was Sellotaped to the back, and powered by a 9 volt battery. In addition, the Tele has a switch to place the bridge pickup out of phase with the neck pickup, resulting in ethereal sonic possibilities. Summers didn't mod his Tele himself – he bought it that way in the early 70s, and in various interviews has suggested that regular Telecasters aren't really his thing. Perhaps it was fate, then, that this guitar and this guitarist met, and together alchemised an instantly recognisable sound.

ROCKS-ANNE TRACK **16**



Compression and chorus will get you close to Andy's trademark Tele tone. His reggae influence should be obvious here in our riff. Ensure you're going for tight/short chords by lifting your fret hand as soon as you play the offbeat chords.

Photos Getty

WILKO JOHNSON

As a member of Dr. Feelgood, delivering a uniquely British take on American rhythm-and-blues, Wilko's no-nonsense approach helped inspire the punk scene, not least by prompting Joe Strummer to get his first Tele. The guts of Wilko's plectrum-free guitar style is a constant down-up strumming motion: down on the beat, flicking hard with the fingers, and up off the beat with the thumb. Regardless of what notes he wants to play, he strums pretty much all the strings in both directions, controlling any unwanted notes by damping with his fretting hand. The result is highly rhythmic and percussive, combining rhythm and lead seamlessly. His inspiration was fellow Tele enthusiast Mick Green of Johnny Kidd and the Pirates. The Telecaster bridge pickup faithfully reproduces the aggression of Johnson's fingernails, while the hardtail bridge has the stability to cope with such a constant battering.

WILKO'S FAMOUS TELE

His only Tele is a black 1962 model bought for £90, using his dinner money to pay in instalments.



Masters of the Telecaster
Andy Summers
Contributor: Steve Allsworth
Engraved by DigitalMusicArt.Com



JOE BONAMASSA

It's hard to keep up with the blues superstar's ever-expanding guitar collection – just one glimpse at his Instagram page will easily cost you several hours – though it's no secret he's a big fan of Telecasters. Among his favourites, there's a 1950 Broadcaster ("one of the lightest I have ever played"), a 1952 Telecaster that belonged to Terry Reid ("he installed a patent number Gibson pickup in the front"), a 1960 dubbed The Steve Cropper-Caster ("I wanted one because of him") and a 1951 Nocaster fitted with a PAF ("it's my go-to Tele, so to speak"). For his latest album, *Royal Tea*, Bonamassa acquired a Parsons/White B-Bender Thinline that he'd been chasing for three decades – since the age of 13 – using it to record early single *When One Door Opens*, proving he's the kind of collector that never gives up.

MUDDY WATERS



Muddy electrified the blues, both literally and metaphorically. After growing up playing acoustically in the rural South, his sound evolved in perfect sync with his geographical shift Northwards. Once amplified, his playing still featured the aggressive right hand techniques he'd developed while playing an acoustic loud and hard, but with extra tonal possibilities. Gritty and expressive, records such as *Electric Mud* and *Fathers And Sons* defined the sound of Chicago's electric blues scene. As he ascended to icon status, so did his beloved guitar. Originally white with a maple neck, Muddy's Tele was customised with "witches hat" control knobs pinched from a Fender amp and a new neck – this time with a rosewood fingerboard. He baptised it in Candy Apple Red paint, christened it 'The Hoss' and played the hell out of it until his death in 1983.



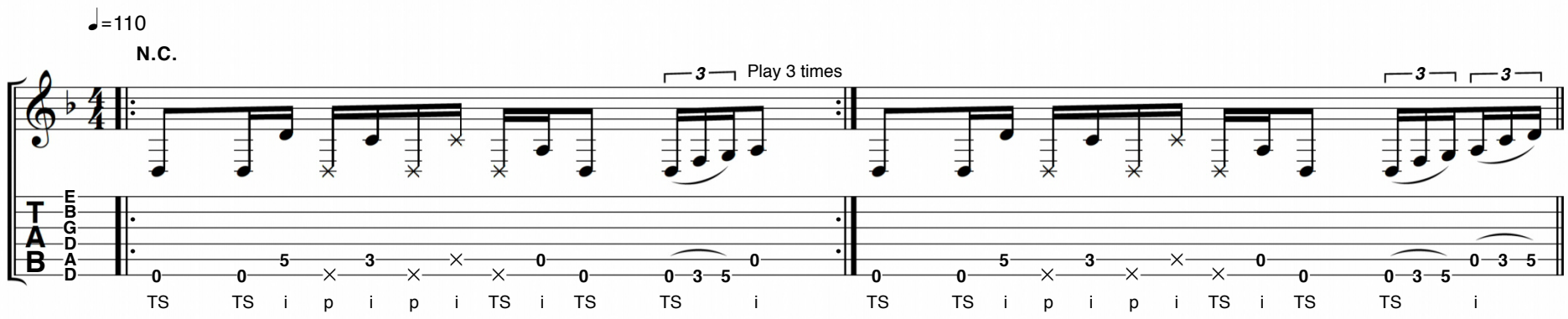
MIYAVI

When TG spoke to Osaka-born virtuoso Miyavi in 2015, he explained why he avoided using typical guitars and tended to favour instruments more original and distinct. Fast-forward six years and his recently announced Arctic White signature certainly lives up those words. There's a Maverick Super Vee tremolo system, which is integrated into the bridge pickup plate itself, as well as three pickups – a Seymour Duncan Little '59 humbucker, a Fender Pure Vintage '65 Gray-Bottom single-coil Strat in the middle and a Sustainer Driver in the neck, the latter offering three different modes. It's certainly one of the more unique models in Telecaster history, but then again Miyavi's fingerstyle 'Samurai' slap techniques are far from typical.

MIYAVI'S FAMOUS TELE
The new signature features an alder body, a maple neck and a rosewood fretboard with a 9.5" radius.

The same can be said of his live rigs – often splitting his signal into Fender and Marshall amps, as well as a bass amp to cover both registers, via pedals like the Boss OC-3 Super Octave, DigiTech Whammy and two Eventide TimeFactors.

THUMB SLAPS AND FINGER POPS TRACK 17



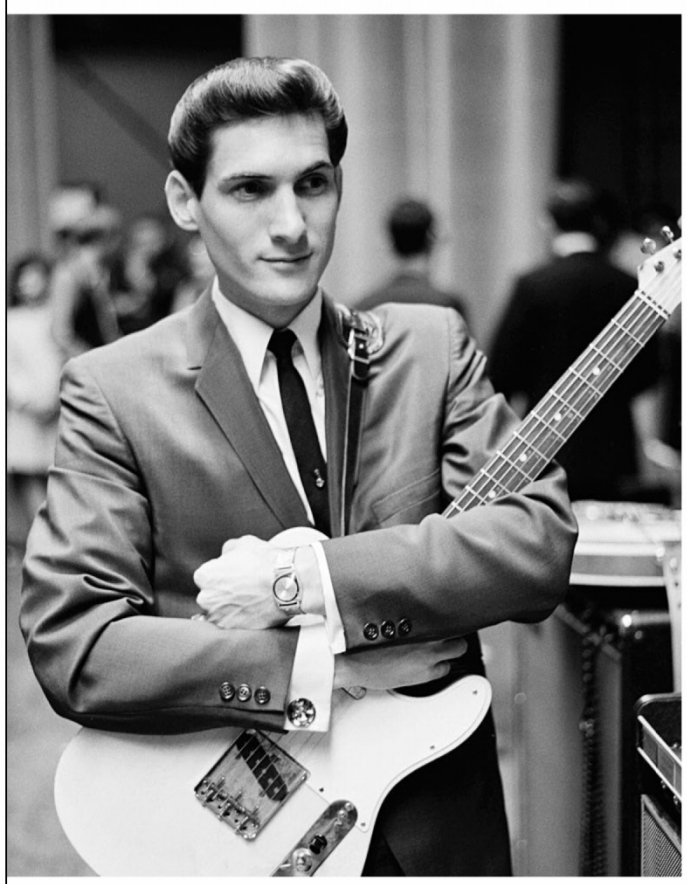
Miyavi's blazing fingerstyle technique is a mixture of crazy slap bass technique and percussive acoustic tippy-tappy style of players like Jon Gomm. Here the thumb joint slaps the low open D and then shifts to fret hand muting for its funky sound. Aim for more 'pop' with your index finger by pulling away from the body of the guitar (so the strings slap against the frets)

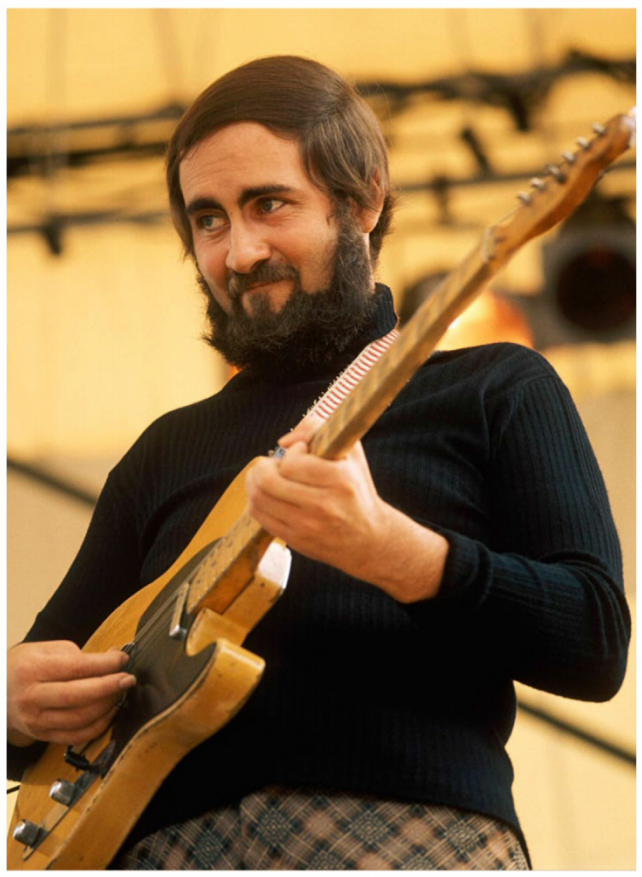
Words Chris Bird, Rob Laing

TELE-OLOGY

Learn the tonal techniques behind five classic tracks by Tele-toting masters









GREEN ONIONS

STEVE CROPPER, BOOKER T. & THE M.G.'S

1956 FENDER ESQUIRE

This soul classic was recorded with guitarist Steve Cropper's 1956 Esquire equipped, as is the Esquire way, with just a single bridge pickup. Amp-wise, *Green Onions*' biting tone was reportedly delivered through a 10-watt Fender Harvard valve amp. There's also a rich echo on certain parts of the guitar track that's most likely to be a plate reverb.

AMP SETTINGS

CHANNEL CLEAN

GAIN	BASS	MID	TREBLE	REVERB
3	6	5	5	3

THE MESSIAH WILL COME AGAIN

ROY BUCHANAN

1953 FENDER TELECASTER

This track showcases the singing emotion Leroy 'Roy' Buchanan could conjure with his Tele 'Nancy'. Flipping between the bridge and middle pickup positions and adjusting volume on the fly, Roy would coax both gentle tones and stinging leads from his guitar. No effects are necessary. Just a Fender Vibrolux amp with volume and tone cranked to maximum, plus reverb and an Echoplex delay unit for ambience.

AMP SETTINGS

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE

GAIN	BASS	MID	TREBLE	REVERB
6	5	6	7	2

CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE

BRIAN MAY, QUEEN

1967 FENDER ESQUIRE

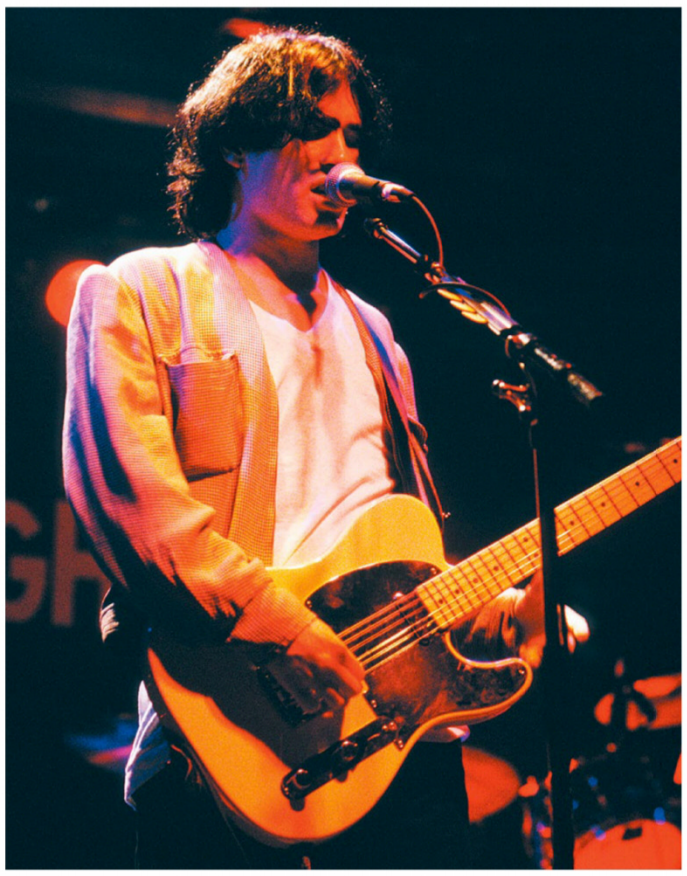
Brian May actually put down his Red Special to use one of Roger Taylor's natural-wood Telecasters in order to nail the '50s throwback style on this song's rockabilly solo. Its status as a wonderful anomaly is further added to by the fact producer Reinhold Mack put May through an unfamiliar Mesa/Boogie for it. Use a neck pickup, a little compression and a low-in-the-mix slapback delay.

AMP SETTINGS

CHANNEL CLEAN

GAIN	BASS	MID	TREBLE	REVERB
7	5	6	5	2

Photos Getty



GRACE

JEFF BUCKLEY

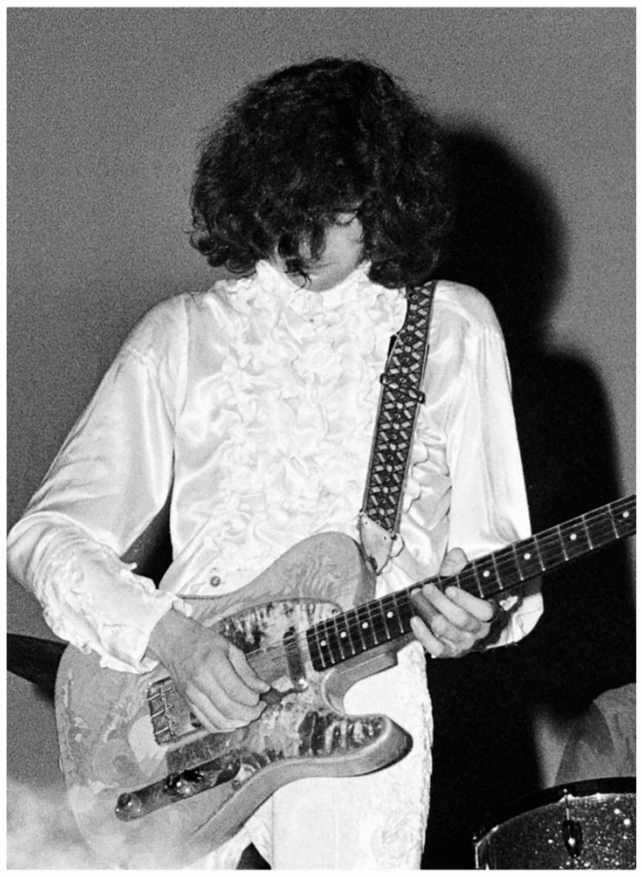
1983 'TOP LOADER' TELECASTER

Proof of how atmospheric a clean Tele can be with creative chord work. Jeff's borrowed blonde Tele (now owned by Muse's Matt Bellamy) was loaded with a Seymour Duncan Hot Tele Lead pickup in the bridge position that he added himself. In the studio he opted for the chiming cleans of a rented Fender Vibroverb '63 reissue with Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier. Switch between the neck pickup for the intro arpeggios, the bridge for the riff and back to the neck for the verses.

AMP SETTINGS

CHANNEL CLEAN

GAIN	BASS	MID	TREBLE	REVERB
6	6	4	7	3



DAZED AND CONFUSED

JIMMY PAGE, LED ZEPPELIN

1959 FENDER 'DRAGON' TELECASTER

You can't talk about Tele tones without mentioning Led Zeppelin's 1969 debut. Page's rig remained the same for nearly every song: 1959 Telecaster into Sola Sound Tone Bender Professional MkII fuzz pedal into Supro Coronado 1690T amp. Simple enough, but *Dazed And Confused* saw Page creating other-worldly sounds with a theremin, natural harmonics and behind the nut bends. Dazzling stuff, but potentially a little confusing if you want to recreate it!

AMP SETTINGS

CHANNEL CLEAN

GAIN	BASS	MID	TREBLE	REVERB
2	6	8	6	3



A 1967 Fender Esquire, as used by Brian May on Queen's *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*

TELECASTERS AND ESQUIRES – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Traditionally, Fender's Esquire, which pre-dates the Telecaster (essentially it was the Telecaster prototype), has just a bridge pickup, but it's a surprisingly complex beast – and very much more than just a single-pickup Tele. Exhibit A: the selector switch. How can a one-pickup guitar have a three-way selector switch? The answer lies with a few under-the-hood tonal options. Typically, the bridge position sends the signal through the volume knob, with the tone control bypassed; the middle position goes through both volume and tone pots; and the neck position goes through the volume knob plus a fixed treble roll-off capacitor. Quite unlike the Telecaster then, but still surprisingly versatile. Fans of the Esquire often describe it as harmonically richer and even brighter than a standard Tele. Routed for two pickups, it's not unusual to see Esquires retro-fitted with a pup in the neck position.

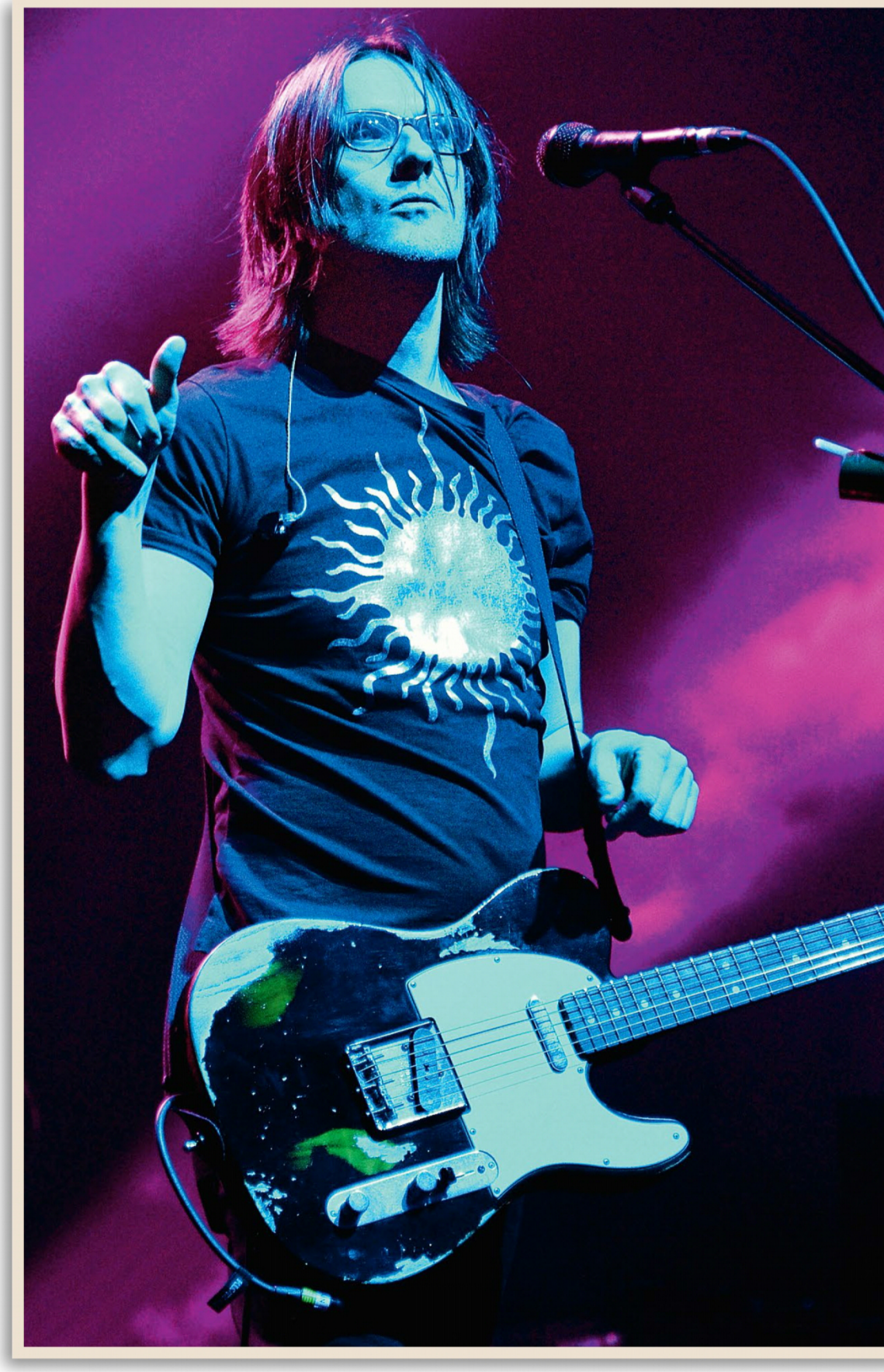


STEVEN WILSON

The English progressive rock mastermind had mainly been known for playing PRS electrics until 2017 solo album *To The Bone*. He found himself in the studio with most of his main guitars still in lockup in between tours and saw his Mexican Tele sitting in the corner – by his own admission where it had been lying for ten years, "completely unloved and unplayed". After changing the strings, he discovered a new sound opening up for him, inspiring ideas he simply wouldn't have come up with on any other kind of guitar, driving the creative process for tracks such as *People Who Eat Darkness*. It soon led to him acquiring his 1963 Custom Tele, used for the live shows of that cycle as well as in the studio for this year's follow-up, *The Future Bites*.

STEVEN'S FAMOUS TELE

He described his 1963 Custom as the most beautiful guitar he's ever owned – with a black over sunburst finish and natural grain exposed.



ALEX LIFESON

Better known for his Gibson ES-355, Rush guitarist Lifeson actually estimates he has written 80% of his songs on his favourite Tele. It's a blonde reissue that he consistently refers to as a '59, although numerous Tele geeks have suggested it looks like a '52 reissue. He played it on *New World Man* and *Kid Gloves*. Like many rockers, Lifeson frequently layers the Tele with fatter humbucker guitars in the studio, often a Les Paul or PRS. Its ability to retain clarity under gain is invaluable in the studio. Live, Lifeson's Telecaster came out for the likes of *Vital Signs*, *Anthem* and *Closer To The Heart*. Lifeson's favourite Tele has six brass saddles replacing the traditional three, but is otherwise entirely stock. He's also sometimes seen with a pink paisley model.

Photos Getty

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Musicians' Union





FRANK BLACK

With the classic 1989 album *Doolittle*, Pixies became one of the most beloved indie rock units of the 80s. Before Radiohead and Nirvana borrowed the idea, no band was as closely associated with the 'quiet/loud' songwriting trick, and much of that dynamic came down to the interplay between rhythm guitarist/Telecaster fan Frank Black and lead guitarist/Les Paul player Joey Santiago. Live, Santiago handled most of the fiddly stuff, with Black often waiting out the verses then weighing in with no-nonsense chords on the chorus – his Tele's bright single coils offering a punky, angular counterpoint to Santiago's thick humbuckers. Black keeps vintage models in his touring rack to this day.

Photos Getty

ROY BUCHANAN

If one guitarist could exemplify the maxim 'It's not what you play, it's how you play it', it would surely be Roy Buchanan. Utilising every piece of the Telecaster's modest anatomy to extract different tones, effects and expressions, Buchanan proved that the Tele could be as versatile as it could be simple. He pioneered techniques like creating tone and volume swells by manipulating the control knobs with his pinky, popularised pinched harmonics, and developed a faux whammy effect by applying above-the-nut pressure to fretted notes. Listen to the climax of *The Messiah Will Come Again* or *Sweet Dreams* and you'll receive a masterclass in all of the above. From a 21st century perspective, these techniques might not seem earth-shattering, but in the context of his time, they were practically witchcraft.



JERRY DONAHUE

As the undisputed god of string bending, Donahue's virtuoso moves include simultaneously bending strings in opposite directions, bending one up while releasing another, behind-the-nut bends, and harmonised bends. Such is his mastery that he was profiled in a 1987 episode of BBC's *Equinox*. "If this looks easy, it's not," intoned the narrator in classic BBC English. "To bend one string requires strength and sensitivity. To bend three, accurately and pitch perfect, takes years of practice." The Telecaster is the perfect vehicle for Donahue's genius. On guitars with flimsier necks or vibrato bridges, the remaining strings go flat when bending. Teles provide a rock solid surface for his pedal steel impersonations. He's played with Fairport Convention, but guitarists know him for The Hellecasters with fellow Tele-men John Jorgenson and Will Ray.

JERRY'S FAMOUS TELE

He's not loyal to one guitar, but Donahue fits Strat neck pickups to his Teles for best-of-both tone options.



GRAHAM COXON

Probably Britpop's smartest guitarist, Graham Coxon picked up the Tele thanks to producer Stephen Street. The Tele was Blur's core guitar from *There's No Other Way* onwards. Coxon gigged with '52 reissues but is best known for using an original '68 Tele with a Gibson humbucker in the neck position. "It's called the Shed, because it had been creosoted when I bought it, and had a hole in the back like it had been hammered, but the neck was so lovely," he tells TG. Some guitarists find a neck humbucker in a Tele unbalanced, with too much contrast from the bridge pickup. Coxon, though, leans into that versatility, sometimes rolling off the tone control for an even fatter sound: "It had that Tele sound for the treble, but if I wanted a thick, bluesy, *Abbey Road* sound, I'd just put it on the Gibson humbucker." In 2011, Fender recreated the Shed as a Coxon signature axe, which earned Graham some stick for not being a Tele purist. Oddly, Keith Richards and Albert Collins got no such flak for their be-humbuckered Telecasters. "A lot of people in America are like [redneck voice], 'Who the f*ck is this Graham Coxon, man?'" he laughs.

SYD BARRETT & DAVID GILMOUR

In the pantheon of Pink Floyd guitars, the Telecaster might not have the same cachet as David Gilmour's Black Strat, but it was there, man. It was there. Well, kind of, because, in the beginning, just as the 60s became base camp for psychonautic misadventures, Syd Barrett's most famous Tele was really an Esquire. Barrett covered his with metallic discs (Jimmy Page would later pay tribute with a similar design on his Tele), and used it extensively as he took us down the rabbit hole on Floyd's reality-warping debut, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*.

Barrett would retire the Esquire and play a 60s white Telecaster, and according to Fender he traded his Esquire for a black Telecaster Custom in 1968. We never saw the Esquire again. And tragically, we would not see Barrett, as his mental health issues left him unable to continue in the band.

Gilmour, meanwhile, might be the archetypal Strat player, but the Telecaster was his first guitar and would play a prominent role on tracks such as *Dogs*. Like Barrett, his most famous 'Tele' was a modded Esquire, one that he acquired from Seymour Duncan in the 70s.

SYD'S FAMOUS TELE
1962 Esquire with homemade metallic finish, covered in reflective metal discs, rosewood fingerboard.

DAVID'S FAMOUS TELE
'The Workmate' – mid-50's Esquire finished in 3-Tone Sunburst that is modded with a Strat single-coil at the neck position.





Words Jonathan Horsley
Portrait Lorenzo Agius / Contour by Getty Images

KEITH RICHARDS

A LIFE IN GUITARS

Micawber, Malcolm, Sonny – in the world of Keith Richards, even his guitars are characters. But there is more to his collection than these famous Teles. Thousands more...

All kinds of rare and special ingredients go into The Rolling Stones' sound. The rhythm is the backbone, Charlie Watts' touch and feel on the drum set binding it all together, tumbling between the sinewy and the edgy, the relaxed and the funky. On top there is Mick Jagger on the mic, that ageless supernova of charisma. Somewhere in the middle you've got the strings, where the mojo is cooked up live. In 2021, that's Ronnie Wood and the ever-present survivor, Keith Richards, whose judicial taste in vintage guitars and amplification is augmented by an ear for alternate tunings and a playing style that summons ghosts from the Delta to shuttle around louche rhythms, layering melody on top, probing then retreating. In the studio, an ever more byzantine recipe is followed; their sound is the room, the recording equipment, in the ancillary percussion and strings and how they work in concert. Richards is custodian of this recipe. He is both the hot sauce and the hand on the spoon, mixing everything.

As a guitar player, what is the first guitar you think of when you think of Richards? For many, it has to be the Fender Telecaster, maybe 'Micawber', Richards' number one, the 1953 Blackguard with five strings and a Frankenstein spec, a battered Butterscotch Blonde forever slung at a 45-degree angle from Richards' hip. Or perhaps it is 'Malcolm', a '54 model in natural finish that has similarly been augmented, five-strings, left in open tunings. Then there is the black 1975 Fender Telecaster Custom, which made its debut – as did Keith's new foil, Ronnie Wood – on the Stones' Tour Of The Americas '75, or Sonny, the '67 Sunburst Tele. But let's take it back to the beginning because the Telecasters only tell part of the Keith Richards story.

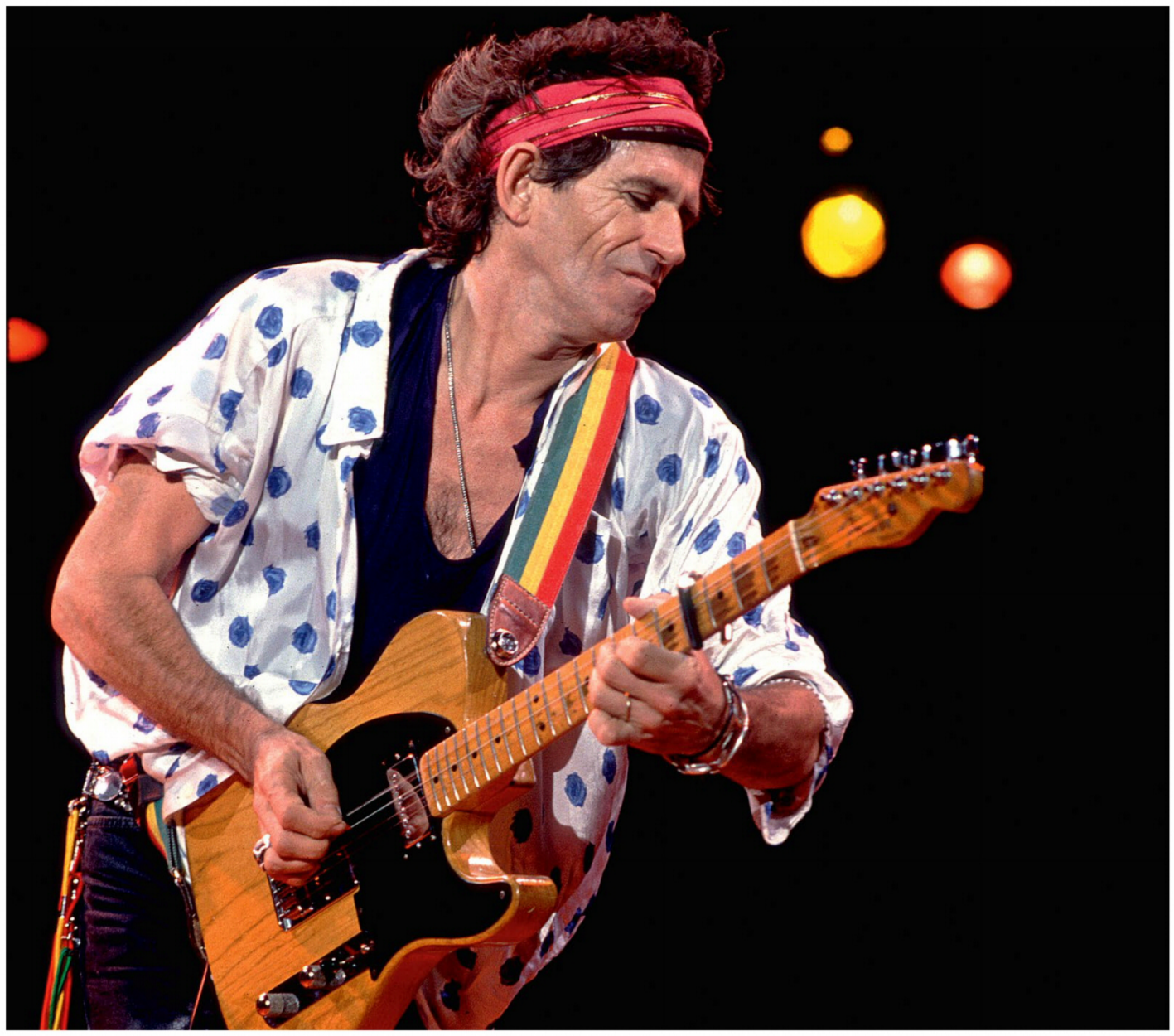


Photo Getty

Keef's collection is estimated to be up to 3,000 guitars...

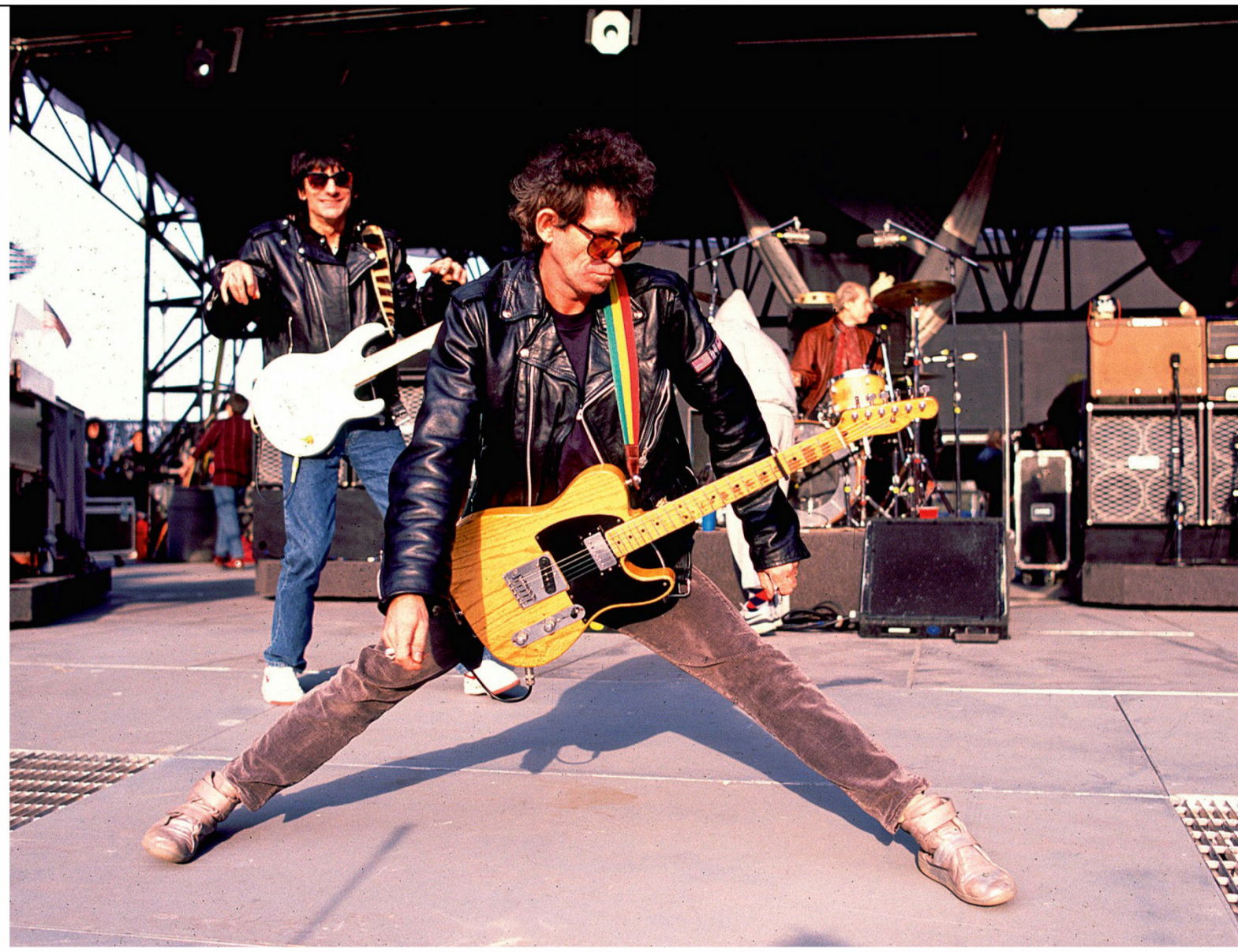
THE EARLY DAYS: 1960-'64

The population of Keith Richards' guitar collection is estimated to range between 1,000 and 3,000 but just like the rest of us he had to start somewhere. His mother got him a Rosetti acoustic when he was around 13. Ten quid was a bit of money in 1959 but it proved a shrewd investment. Just like the rest of us, he was confronted with *Malagueña* early on; taught by his grandfather, it was the first song Richards learned. The acoustic would become key, not only to Richards' playing style but his entire guitar philosophy. He often speaks of the acoustic's purity. Learn to work it, and only then can you appreciate what it takes to use the electric. As Richards says, "The electric guitar? All they did was put a phone in it. But it was the right phone at the right time." For a band with an electric pulse, it is remarkable that so many occasions have called for the acoustic guitar.

When The Rolling Stones parked themselves in Regent Street Studios, in January 1964, to record their debut album, Richards' electric of choice was a Harmony Meteor H70 that he had bought the year previous. The Meteor had a thin hollow arch-top body of spruce and maple, and a short scale length of 24". A pair of gold-foil DeArmond pickups gave the Meteor a raw tone that would become part of the soundtrack to the 60s. Notably, The Kinks' Dave Davies playing one on *You Really Got Me*. The Stones' self-titled debut showcased the Meteor, but it was his 1963 Harmony H1270 12-string acoustic on stand-out track *Tell Me (You're Coming Back)* that suggested that the Stones were not just another beat combo. Here, Richards let the 12-string and vocals bleed into the one mic. Using as little separation as possible would become a leitmotif of the Stones future recording sessions. As would the 12-string; its woozy, chorusing quality would jive just as well on the Stones' more psychedelic jams as it did on the bone-dry directness of *Not Fade Away*.

Richards' Meteor was joined by a Kalamazoo-era 1962 Epiphone Casino as the Stones' career took off. The doublecut archtop had a fully hollow build of laminate maple and birch, and featured pair of P-90s, plus a tune-o-matic bridge and trapeze tailpiece. If the first two albums were handled by hollow-bodies, Richards would turn to

ABOVE
Keef with Micawber, his number one



a heavyweight for the recording of *Out Of Our Heads*.

THE KEEF 'BURST, SATISFACTION AND THE ROAD TO '69

The Keef 'Burst ushered in a changing of the guard for Richards' recording guitars. It first made an appearance on the Stones' 1964 tour, popping up on the Ed Sullivan Show. Richards leaned on it heavily for the *Out of Our Heads* sessions, which assumed huge cultural significance as soon as Richards pressed one of Gibson's new-fangled Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone pedals into action for the *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction* riff. He had always maintained that it was a horn part, and kismet played its part with arrival of the fuzz pedal. "The way Otis Redding ended up doing it is probably closer to my original conception for the song," he told *Guitar World*. "It's an obvious horn riff. And when this new Fuzz Tone pedal arrived in the studio from the local dealership or something, I said, "Oh, this is good. It's got a bit of sustain, so I can use it to sketch out the horn line."

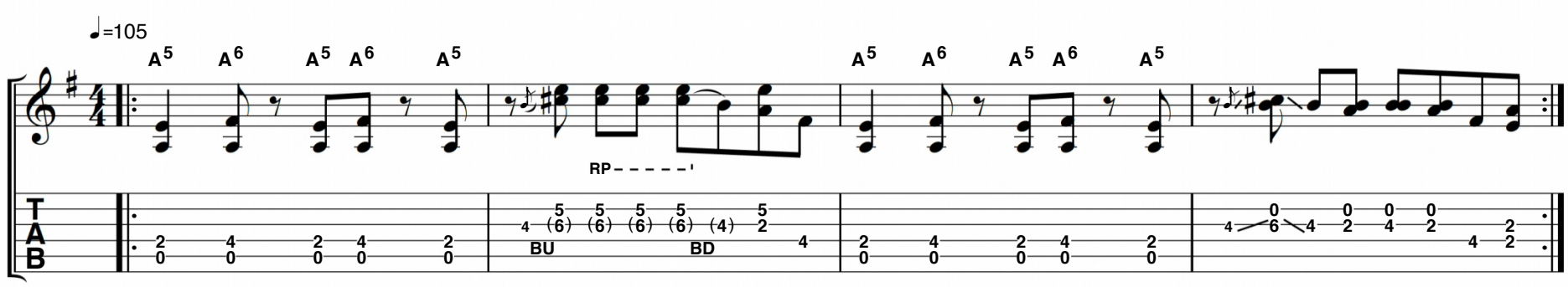
If the band had hitherto mined American R&B, blues and early rock 'n' roll for inspiration – for songs to sing, more to the point – 1966 saw the release of *Aftermath*, the Stones' first album of all-original material. There was now a sense of danger about the Stones. Richards was enjoying an open relationship with his guitars, pursuing new sounds. An electric 12-string appeared on *Mother's Little Helper* – "some gashed-up job" that he played slide on. Richards was pictured on the cover of the April 1966 issue of *Beat Instrumental* with a Guild M-65 Freshman, a lightweight hollowbody with a bound maple top and mahogany back-and-sides. On occasion, he would play a Gibson Firebird and had started regularly playing a 1958 Les Paul Custom with a custom graphic. This, after all, was the 60s, and they were gathering pace. By the time the band were to hit the States for the notorious 1969 tour, which resulted in controversy, craziness, bloodshed at Altamont and one of the finest live recordings in rock history, Richards had a lot to choose from. Live, the see-through but super-heavy Ampeg Dan Armstrong Plexi entered rotation, as did a newly acquired 1969 Gibson ES-355TD-SV stereo. Live, Richards used a 1930s National Style O resonator on *Prodigal Son* and *You Gotta Move*, and a Martin D12-20 12-string with a DeArmond pickup in the soundhole. He would use a korina Gibson Flying V at the free Hyde Park show, but that would soon disappear.

ABOVE
Keef strikes a pose during the Stones' Steel Wheels Tour in 1989

In 1969, there was a sense that ster oblivion was on their trail but, ards

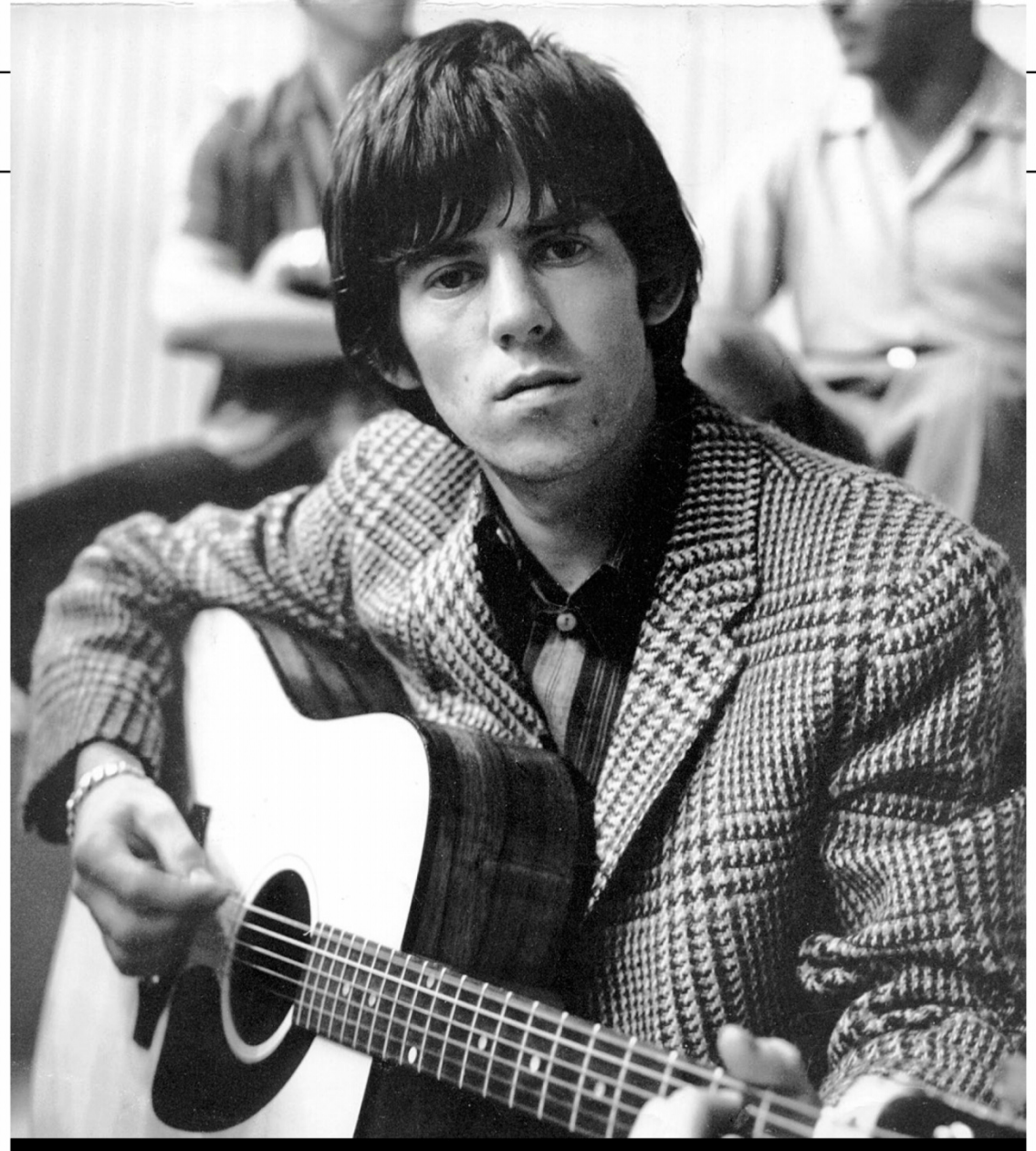
The Keef 'Burst ushered in a changing of the guard...

KEEF STYLE BLUESY RIFF TRACK 11



Get a feel for Keith's bluesy playing style here with a combination of riffs and licks based in and around the A major pentatonic scale (A B C♯ E F♯). Whilst it's useful to see the basic A major chord shape, it can be more helpful to visualise the underlying scale, so you can improvise more freely around the chord. For more definition/staccato and a country blues sound in a bar two, you could try using fingers rather than pick.

Photos Getty



1963 HARMONY SOVEREIGN H1270

Years active: 1963-unknown

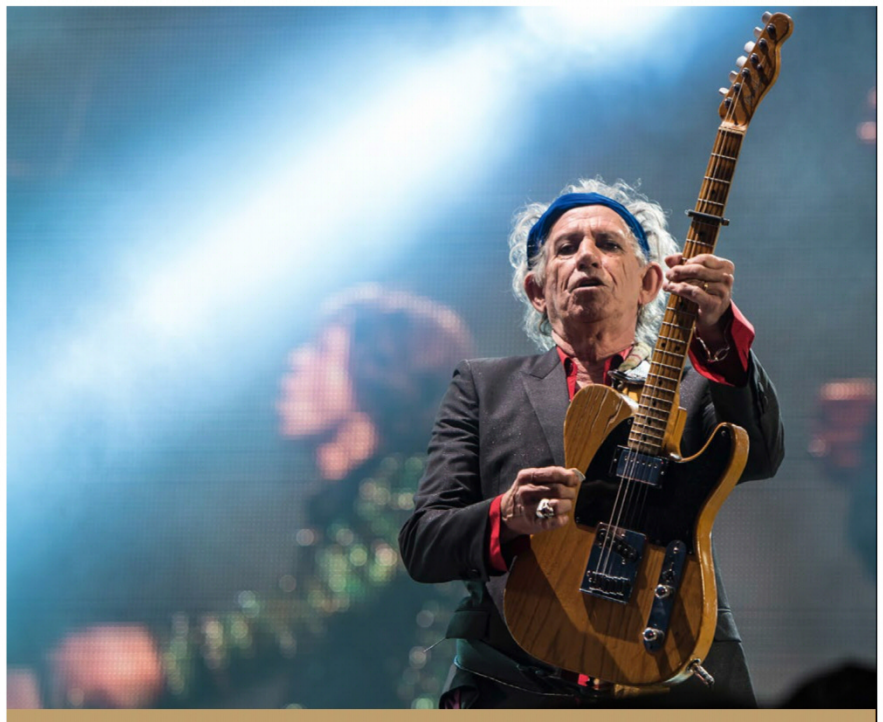
A 12-string jumbo, the H1270 was an early studio star for the Stones. Besides recording *Tell Me (You're Coming Back)* with it, Richards used it on the likes of *Not Fade Away*, *Good Times, Bad Times* and *Play With Fire*. In 2004, Richards' H1270 was sold at auction for $33,460, but if you scour the internet you could pick up a vintage 60s model with an aftermarket L.R. Baggs pickup for 600-odd bucks.

somehow, they held it together. The guitars didn't always. When tracking *Gimme Shelter* during the *Let It Bleed* sessions, Richards used a borrowed a Maton Supreme Electric 777, an ES-150-style electric, and it would turn out to be the last act in its story. "At the very last note of the take, the whole neck fell off," said Richards, in *Guitar World*. "You can hear it on the original track. That guitar had just that one little quality for that specific thing. In a way, it was quite poetic that it died at the end of the track."

THE 1970S AND ERA OF MODIFICATION

Turning 27, a cursed age for any musician of the era, deserved some celebration. It was Eric Clapton who did the honours, gifting Richards the 1953 Fender Telecaster that would be retooled and renamed as Micawber. Others soon followed. Richards sought out new ways of articulating rock 'n' roll in the electric guitar's most primitive dialects. Take the Gibson Les Paul Jr, aka 'Dice'. Finished in TV Yellow, this primordial doublecut would become a regular onstage by the decade's end, using it notably on *Midnight Rambler* – a live highlight that was often performed with the Dan Armstrong before. He would layer play a Junior with a Tele when recording *Start Me Up* in 1981.

Travis Bean guitars, with their aluminium necks, caught Richards' attention. If you don't suffer from motion sickness, you can check out the promo video for *She's So Cold* to see Richards with a black TB500 (one of 351 produced). In 1974, he started using a singlecut Zemaitis with skull-and-bone graphic. As with the Telecasters, Richards nixed the low E. The Zemaitis, aka 'Macabre', housed a single PAF humbucker at the bridge and, again, offered Richards the simple



FENDER 'MICAWBER' TELECASTER

Everyone would like to and many have tried but nobody plays the Telecaster like Keith Richards. He made the blackguard Tele the coolest guitar on the planet. No question. If the Telecaster is the ultimate rock 'n' roll guitar, perhaps it was inevitable that it would find its way into Richards' hands.

It was the late 60s when he discovered the Telecaster. "Around the same time I was getting into Telecasters I was experimenting with open tunings," he told *Guitar World* in 2002. "I don't know why. Maybe it was because around that time, '67, we started having time off that we didn't know what to do with. So I started to experiment with tunings. Most people used open tuning basically just for slide. Nobody used it for anything else. But I wanted to use it for rhythm guitar... Of all the guitars, the Telecaster really lent itself well to a dry, rhythm, five-string drone thing. In a way that tuning kept me developing as a guitarist."

Micawber is his most-famous Telecaster. A 1950s Tele in Butterscotch Blonde, it was a 27th birthday present from Eric Clapton and soon found itself decamped to Nellcôte as the Stones took shelter from the UK taxman under the hot sun in the South of France. *Exile On Main St.* was brewing, and Micawber was there from the ground up. That's when the toolbox came out. The low E string was removed as Richards continued his exploration into open G tunings. Further modifications changed the menu. A Gibson PAF humbucker was installed at the neck, a pedal-steel pickup at the bridge. Fundamentally, it a '54 Tele with a '52 Esquire neck, Micawber (which takes its name from Dickens' *David Copperfield*) is a triumph of Richards' whatever works ethos, but it arguably kick-started the aftermarket for Fender modifications. In the 80s, Richards' tech Alan Morgan sourced a brass bridge plate and saddles to make it more roadworthy. With no saddle for the sixth string, Richards' number one Telecaster is a specialist instrument, a Frankenstein beast tuned G D G B D for songs such as *Brown Sugar*, *Honky-Tonk Woman* and *Can't You Hear Me Knocking*.



ABOVE
Mick Jagger, Ronnie Wood and Keith Richards performing on stage at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium

pleasures of an electric guitar with nothing in the way.

The lesser-spotted Richards has never been a big Strat player, but he has a Mary Kaye Strat, and through the 80s and 90s played the next best thing, a Music Man Silhouette. Some of Richards' guitars rarely see the light of day, such as his Gibson ES-350 – a big-boned jazz-box with a natural finish and with the all-important Chuck Berry connection. "I'd be too afraid to take it onstage," he said during an Ask Keith Q&A from 2003. "I'd be afraid of breaking it by making a silly move, and it's a big guitar. I love it for the studio. I love it in the dressing room. It is such a beautiful all-round sound."

The ES-350 makes rare public appearances, and was used in 1990 to record *Oh Lord, Don't Let Them Drop That Atom Bomb On Me* with Watts, Bobby Keys, Bernard Fowler, Chuck Leavell and the Uptown Horns, a track that turned up on the Charles Mingus tribute, *Weird Nightmare*. Looking at Micawber, Malcolm and Sonny, and seeing the road miles on them, it's understandable that some of that good stuff is saved for the studio. A Rolling Stones show is not the place for tender mercies.



GIBSON HUMMINGBIRD

Years active: 1966 onwards

While a spruce-topped Gibson Heritage had been a regular companion on TV spots, come the mid-60s, Gibson's most brightly feathered dreadnought, the Hummingbird, flew in through his window, and it would leave its mark on wax, most notably on *Jumpin' Jack Flash* and *Street Fighting Man*. "On *Street Fighting Man*, there's one six-string and one five-string acoustic. They're both in open tunings, but then there's a lot of capo work," Richards told *Guitar World*.

The Stones' at their most propulsive, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, was recorded with a Hummingbird sharing the mix with another acoustic in Nashville tuning. Richards used his Phillips or Norelco cassette recorders to compress them, changing their character – it was as though the acoustics were resisting their physical limitations. "I played a Gibson Hummingbird tuned to either open E or open D with a capo," said Richards. "And then I added another guitar over the top, but tuned to Nashville tuning."



KEEF 'BURST, 1959 GIBSON LES PAUL STANDARD

Years active: 1964-1967

The 1959 Les Paul Standard is the Holy Grail for Gibson aficionados – and priced accordingly in six-figures on the vintage market. The Keef Burst, which Richards took receipt of some time in '64, was retro-fitted with a Bigsby vibrato. He sold it to Mick Taylor in 1967, only for it to return to the band when Taylor replaced Brian Jones in 1969. Its final destination is shrouded in mystery, with a collector rumoured to have paid over a million dollars for it, but we do know that 'Burst maven Bernie Marsden owned it, telling *Guitarist*, "You know the famous one I let go because it wasn't as good as The Beast? That was the Keith Richards one. It's not that it was bad. I already had one - The Beast - and I got offered double the money I'd paid for the Keith 'Burst in 1974. I didn't know it would become a million-dollar guitar."

Photos Getty/Alamy

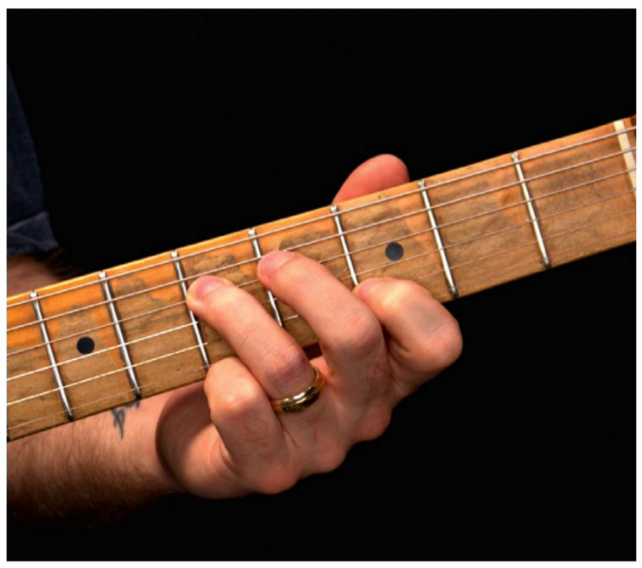
Words & video Jamie Hunt

WHAT'S ON TELE?

Learn three classic Telecaster riffs with TG's video lessons

VIDEO LESSON
Find your video lessons here:
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1 JAMES GANG
FUNK #49

Proof that simple is often best when it comes to tone, *Funk #49* sees Joe Walsh's maple-necked, modified Tele run through a Fender 'blackface' Champ amplifier – so it's just guitar, amp, ears!

The chords are "partial" shapes, which means you'll only be playing three or four strings at a time. Generally that makes 'em easier to play, but you'll need to use fret-hand muting to keep the idle strings quiet. To lock in with the rhythm and land on the correct down- or upstrokes, maintain a constant 16th-note strumming motion. This will act as a metronome when not striking the strings and make it easier to drop those funky scratched notes into the riff.

TG TIP
Get those "scratched" notes right. Simply place your first, second and third fingers on the strings.

After a few bars you'll reach a single-note line and a change of picking approach – still 16th notes but with a more precise picking technique. Keep your initial strumming gentle to begin with so you don't overdo the single notes when you arrive at them.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:06–0:49
Tempo: 88 bpm
Key/scale: A Mixolydian
Main techniques: Fret-hand muting, 16th note strumming

2 RADIOHEAD
MY IRON LUNG

It's the unusual tone that strikes us most in *MIL*'s opening arpeggios, and it's courtesy of Jonny Greenwood's Telecaster Plus running through a first-version DigiTech Whammy pedal set to one octave up. Other pitch shifters are available of course, and you should make use of what's at your disposal, but there's something special about the 'lo-fi' 12-bit tech of the original WH-1.

TG TIP
Clean arpeggios need accurate fretting, so use the very tips of your fretting fingers where possible.

The riff can be broken down into four two-bar phrases. Each phrase begins with the same G5 and G7/F arpeggios, but all four lines have different endings – so just be aware of those changes as you follow our video lesson.

Technique-wise, make sure to maintain a steady, even picking motion so that you hit the right strings. Slow practice is the order of the day here. Finally, accurate string bends are also vital. A bright Tele bridge pickup combined with octave-up harmonising will exaggerate any off-pitch dissonance.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:00–0:20
Tempo: 98 bpm
Key/scale: G Mixolydian, G Aeolian, G harmonic minor
Main techniques: Alternate picking, arpeggios, string bending

3 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
TESTIFY

Like most of Rage Against The Machine's drop-D tuned tracks, this one is delivered on Tom Morello's Sendero Luminoso Telecaster set to its neck pickup. The riff is made up of a D7#9 chord and D minor pentatonic notes, played mostly along the sixth string, so, as a result, there are a few position shifts to contend with.

TG TIP
Nail each position shift by looking ahead to the new target fret a few beats ahead of each change.

We recommend breaking the riff down into short fragments so you can familiarise yourself with the fret-hand position for each phrase.

Once you have all the notes down, cycle through the riff slowly to develop the coordination, muscle memory and accuracy required to bring it up to speed. Take note of the hammer-on and pull-off notes between the 3rd and 5th frets, and the 12th and 10th frets. These articulations add to the groove and allow Tom's phrases to flow. All picked notes are played with downstrokes.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:17–0:34
Tempo: 120 bpm
Key/scale: D minor
Main techniques: Position changes, hammer-ons, pull-offs

DEATH 0:1 ELVIS

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

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

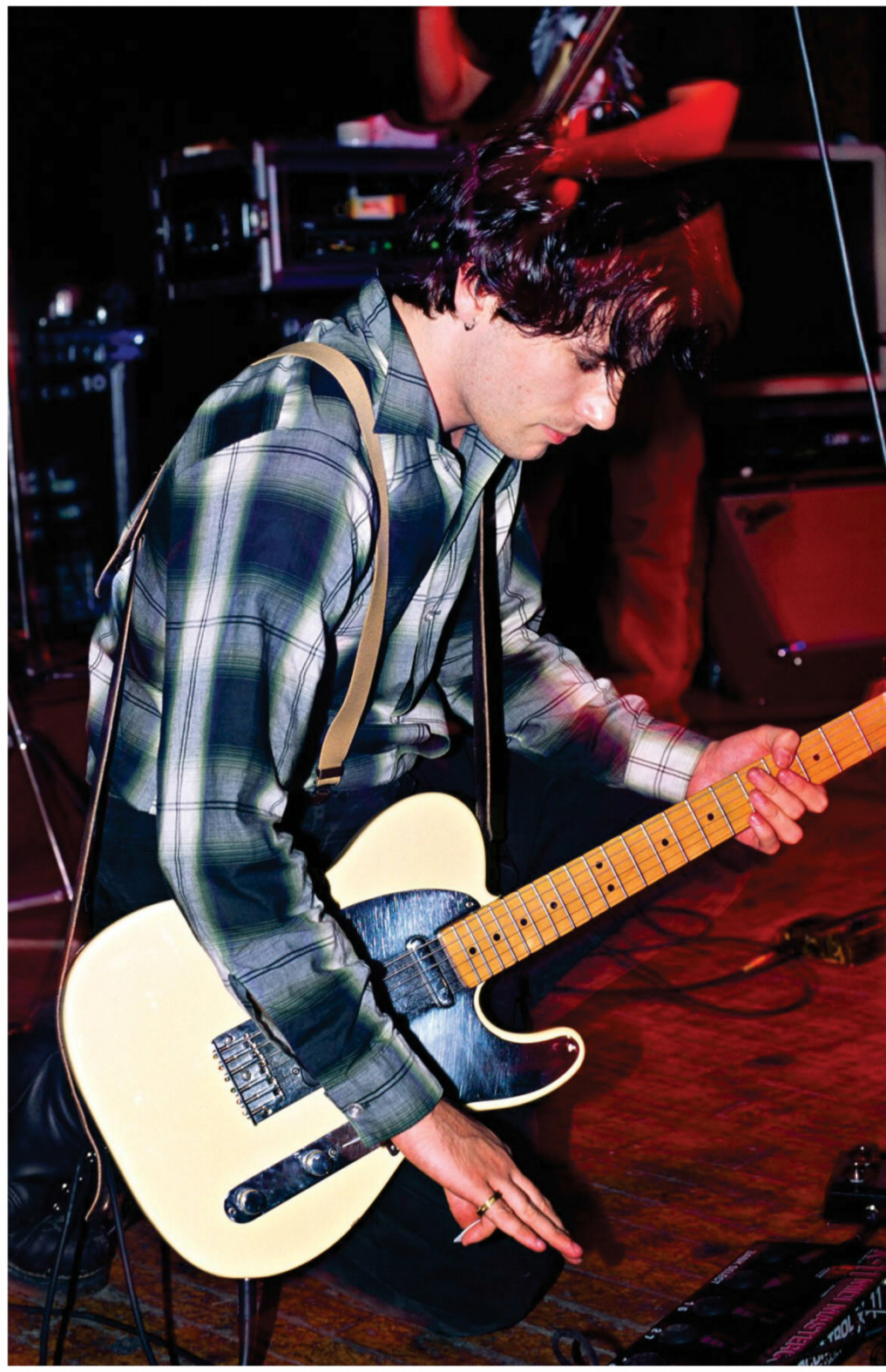
It is his music that made him immortal - along with Janis, Jimi, Wolfgang Amadeus, Freddie and all the others. Many of them lost the battle against drugs, alcohol and their inner demons far too soon. But they all had vanquished death long before.




Elvis
th•mann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION

JEFF BUCKLEY
HALLELUJAH

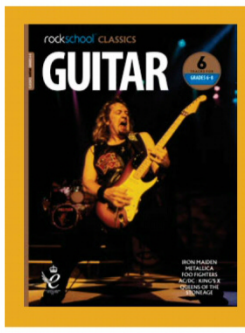
TG and Rockschool take a look at the late singer-songwriter's seminal cover in this Grade One duo arrangement for acoustic guitar



Leonard Cohen penned *Hallelujah* for his 1984 album *Various Positions*, reportedly labouring over some 80 draft verses in the process. Jeff Buckley's acclaimed cover was inspired by a John Cale version, and features Buckley's astonishing vocal along with the lush, reverberated Fender Telecaster tone that appears throughout his 1994 album, *Grace*.

Rockschool's Grade One arrangement for acoustic guitar gives a nod to Buckley's arpeggiated intro, and also showcases the vocal melody from the verse and chorus. Whether playing fingerstyle or with a pick, the main challenge is sounding the chords clearly at the beginning of bars 1 to 4, before switching to separate notes at the end of each bar. The chord change is easy – but the change of picking technique may take practice, so make sure to take it slowly at first.

We've also tabbed out the accompaniment, which focuses more on the arpeggios. It's a step up from Rockschool's Grade One part, so it'll suit more experienced players.



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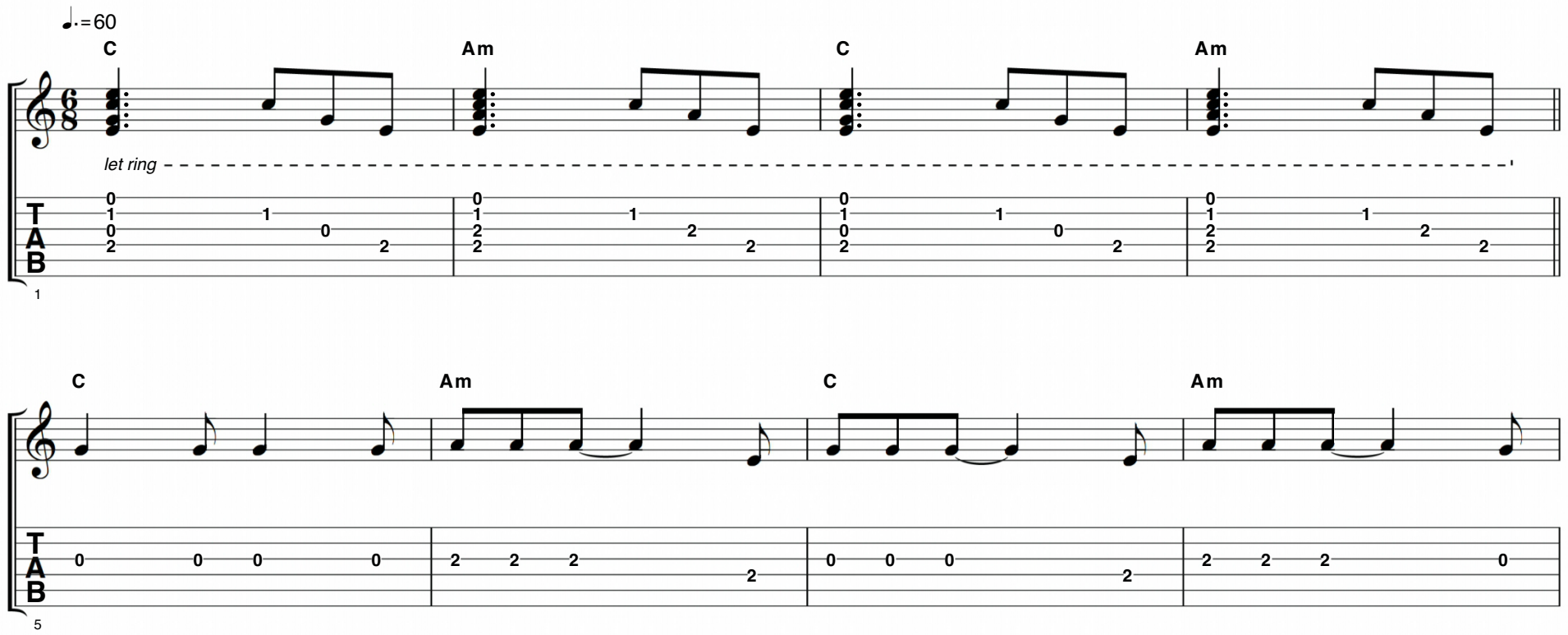
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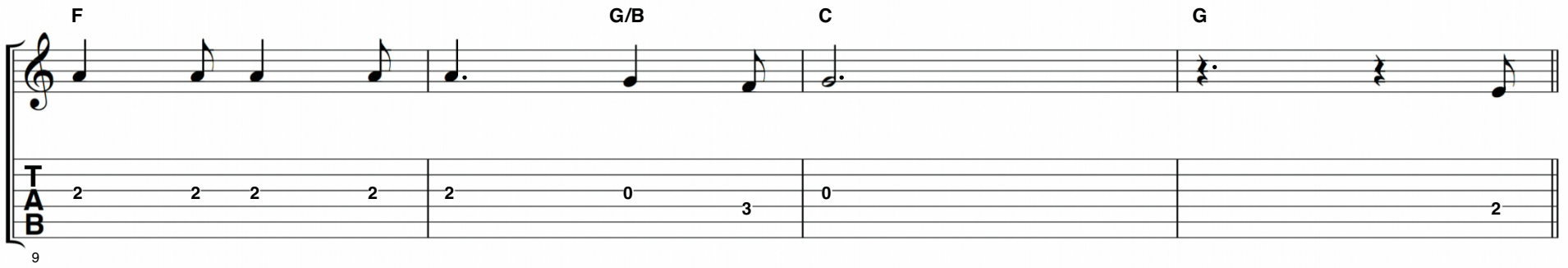
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Photography: Getty

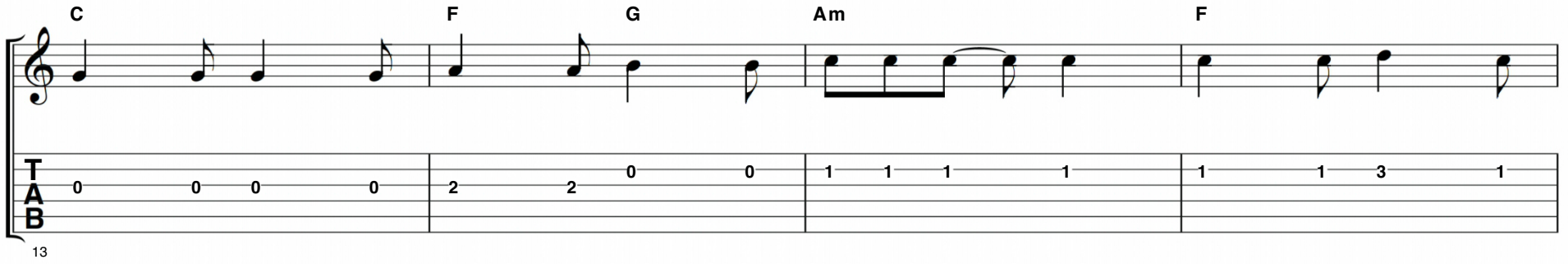
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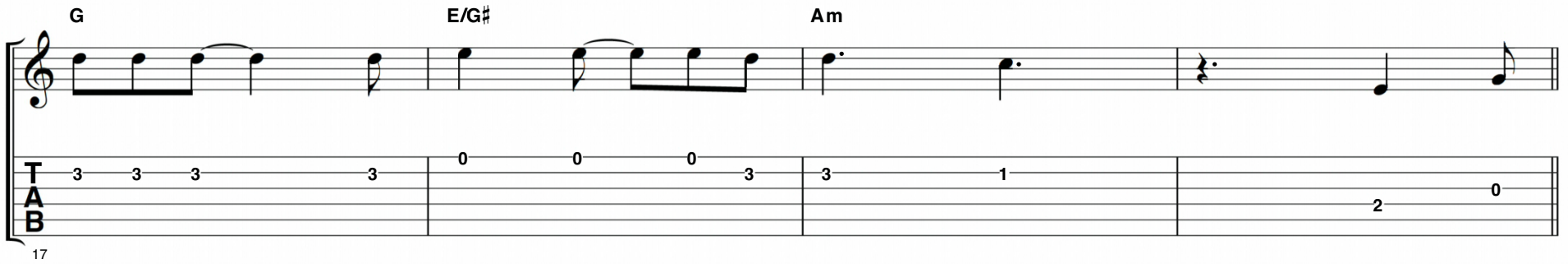
JEFF BUCKLEY HALLELUJAH Intro Arpeggios & Vocal — TRACKS **26-27**

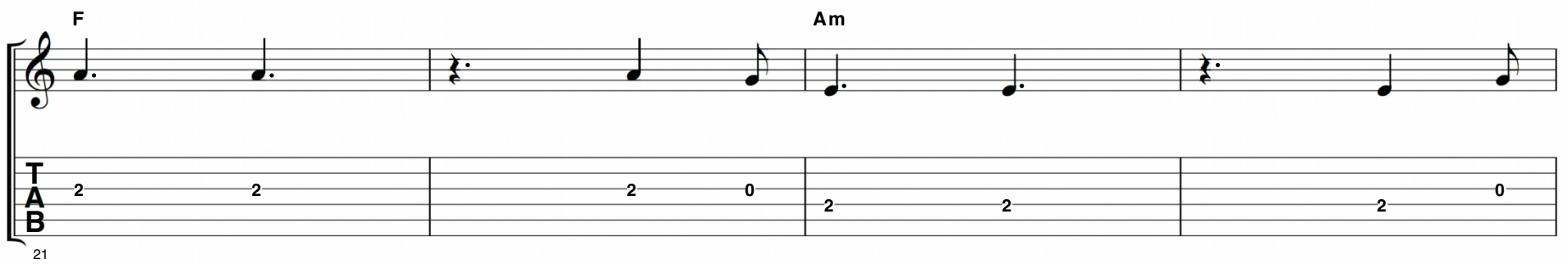


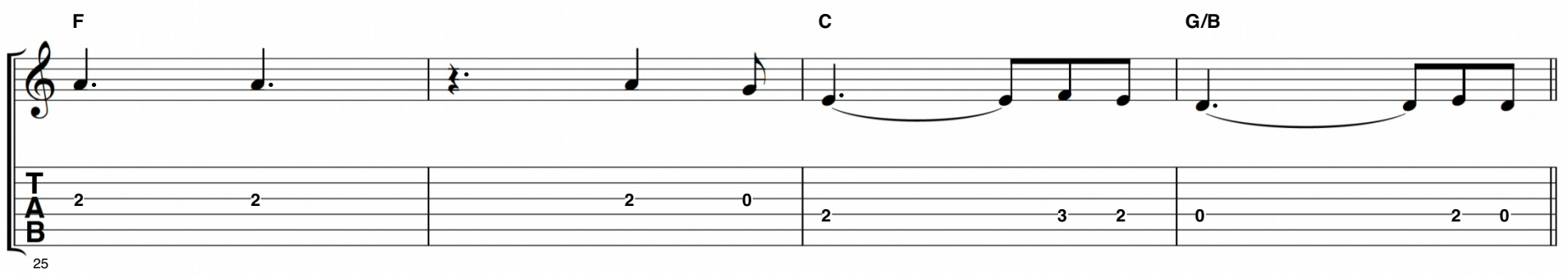
JEFF BUCKLEY HALLELUJAH Intro Arpeggios & Vocal (cont'd) TRACKS **26-27**



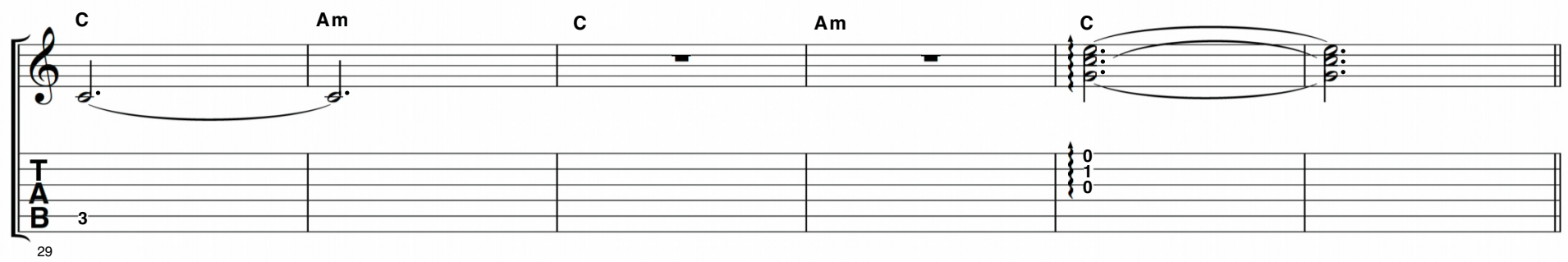






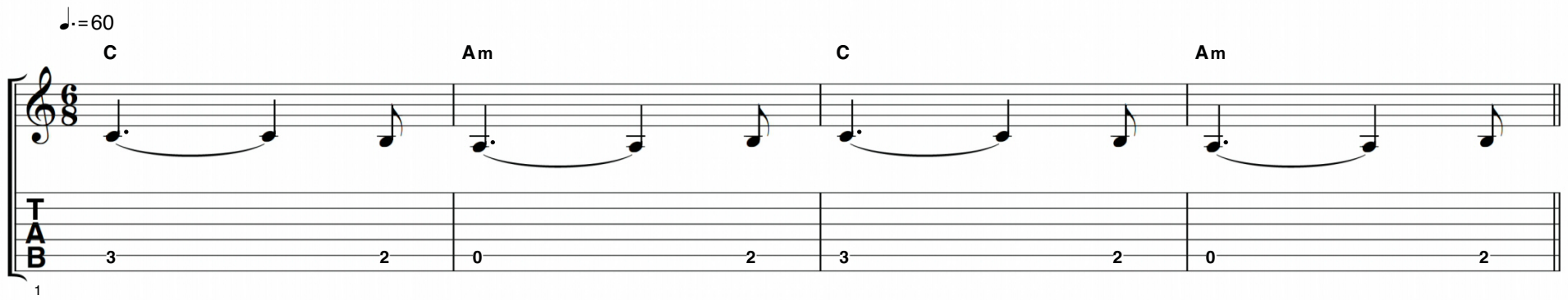


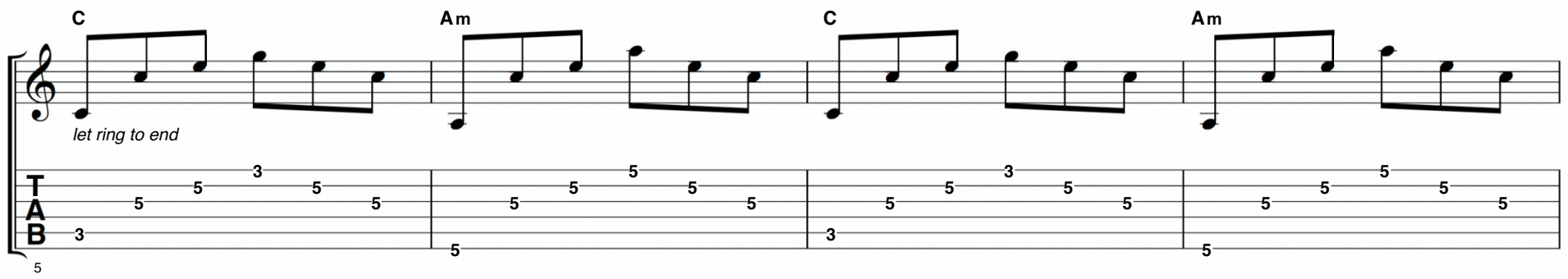
JEFF BUCKLEY HALLELUJAH Intro Arpeggios & Vocal (cont'd) TRACKS 26-27

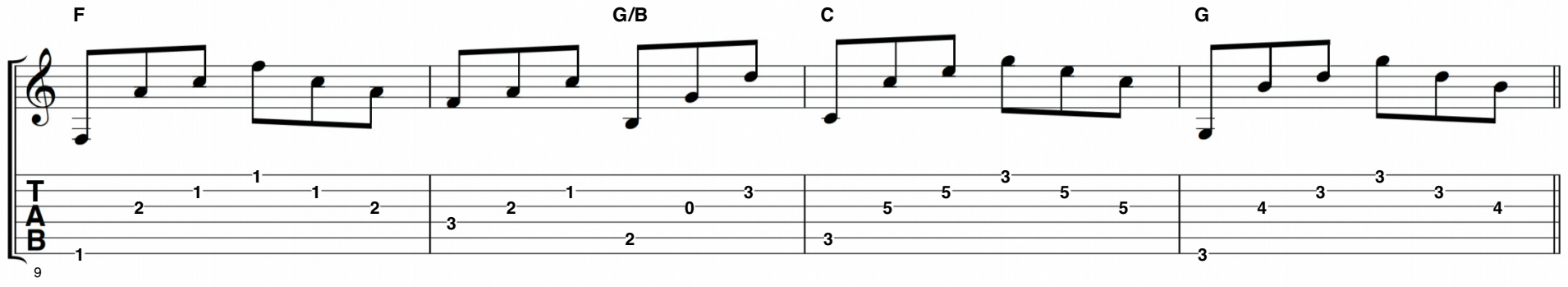


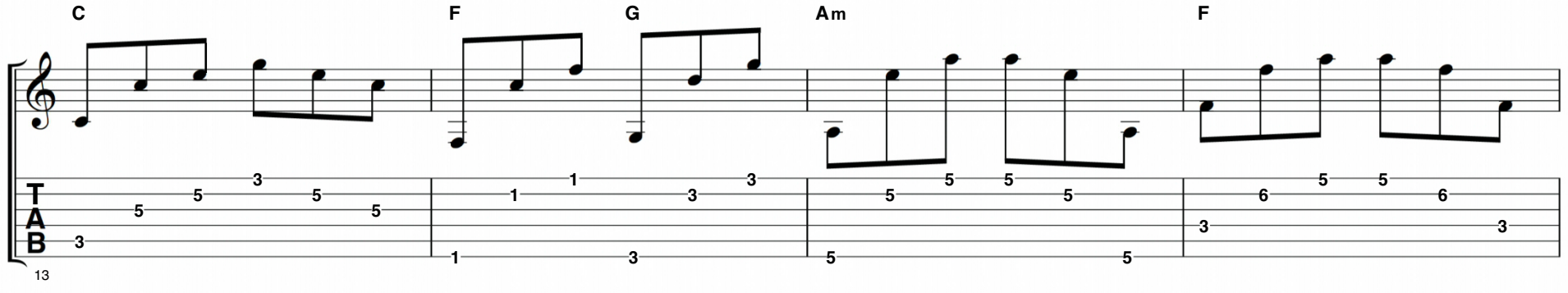
This is Rockschool's assessed part for guitarists taking their Grade One exam. For the changes in bars 1 to 4, keep your fretting hand in one position and simply move your third finger to change between the C and Am chords. Practise this change first, then turn your attention to picking the single notes at the end of the bars.

JEFF BUCKLEY HALLELUJAH Arpeggios TRACKS 26-27

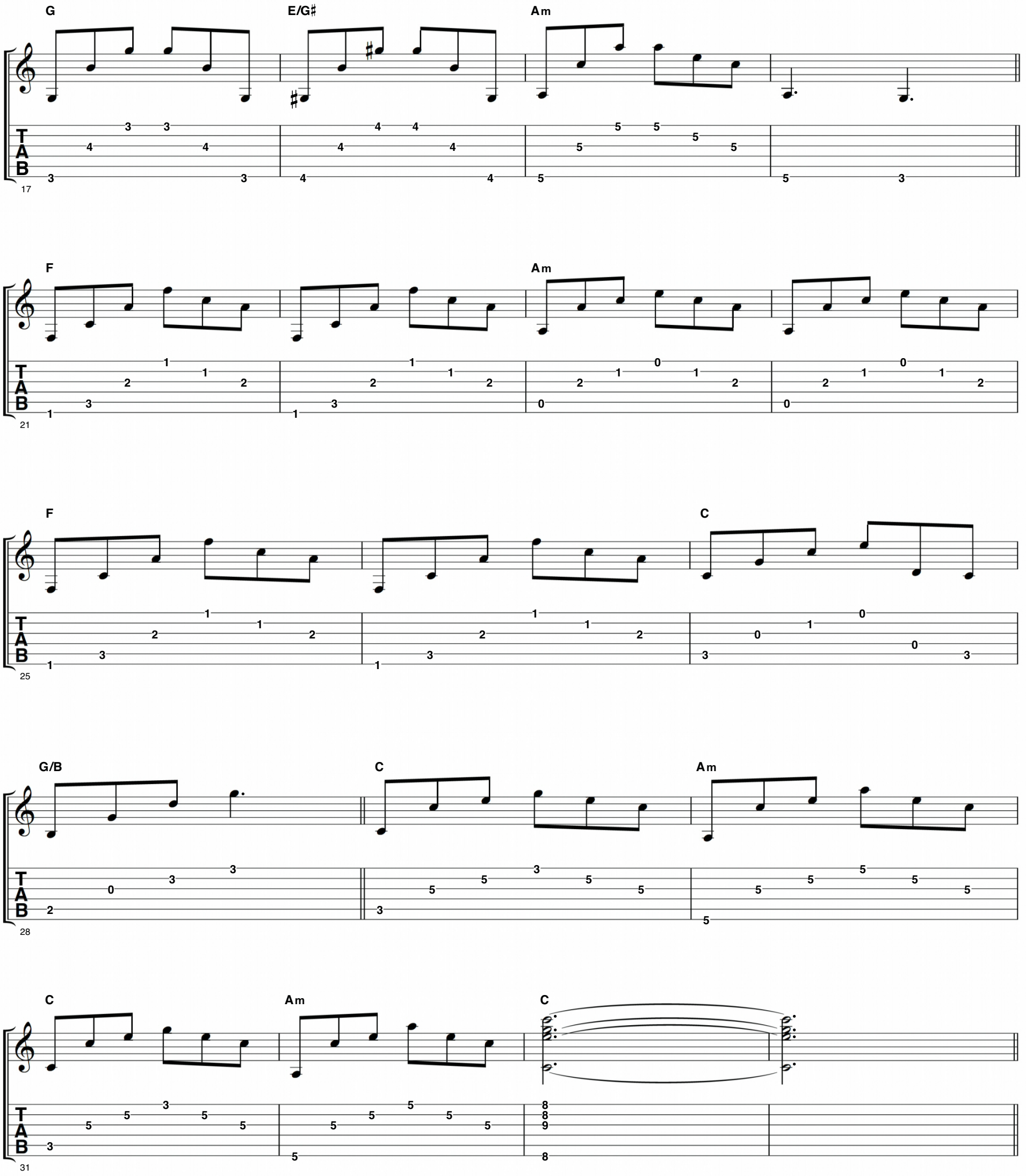








JEFF BUCKLEY HALLELUJAH Arpeggios (cont'd) TRACKS **26-27**



You can keep your fretting hand in one position for the C chord and place your third finger on the second fret of the 3rd string for the A minor. Practise the position changes slowly, just with the fretting hand at first, then bring in the picking hand, keeping any movements smooth and economical.

ZZ TOP
LA GRANGE

Master the Reverend Willy G's shuffle riffs and trademark leads with TG's tab of the Texan trio's boogie-rock classic

In 1973, *Tres Hombres*, ZZ top's third album, would give the Texan trio their first sniff of success, reaching the US top 10, where its predecessors had barely broken the top 100. Lead single *La Grange* was largely responsible for the surge in the band's popularity, receiving substantial radio-play at the time.

At the heart of the song is guitarist Billy Gibbons' blues shuffle riff – a key part of blues vocabulary and well worth a little of your practice time. Gibbons and co took inspiration from John Lee Hooker's *Boogie Chillen* (they were even sued by the publisher, albeit unsuccessfully) and the history of rock is awash with variations on this theme. Norman Greenbaum's *Spirit In The Sky* has a broadly similar riff, and you could say AC/DC's *Whole Lotta Rosie* is a 'straightened' adaptation at a stretch. Even Oasis got in on the act in 1995 with *The Swamp Song*.

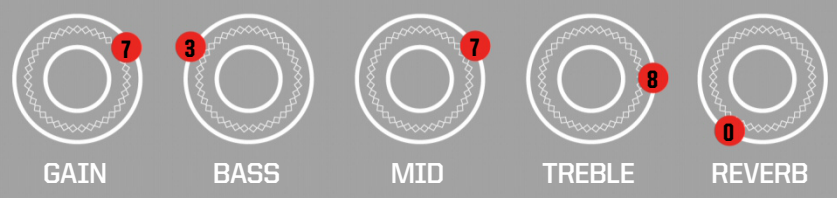
Read on as we take you step by step through ZZ Top's boogie-rock classic.

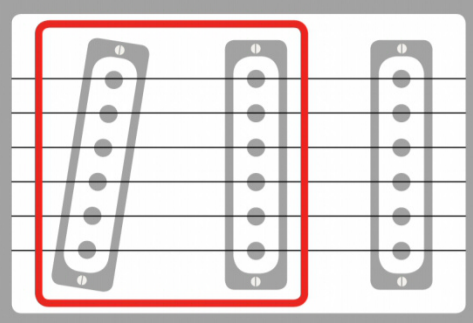
GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'La Grange'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



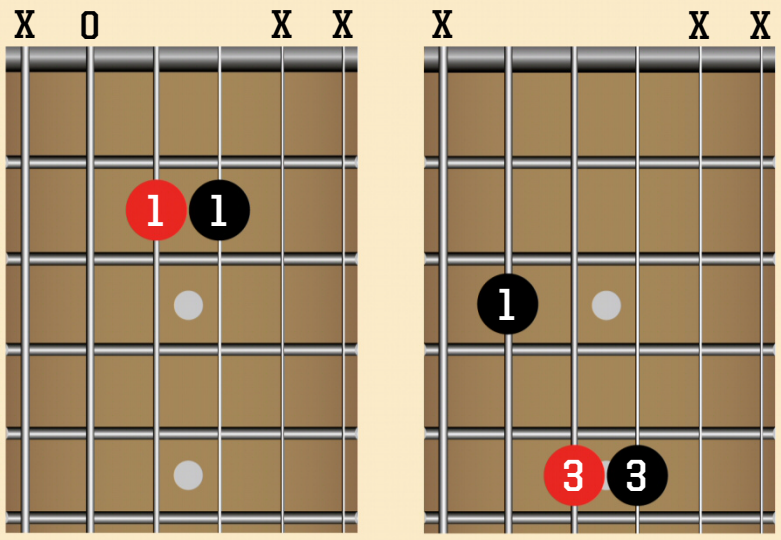


Use a Strat's 'in between' bridge/middle single-coil pickup for the main riff, select the bridge pickup to open solo 1 then switch to a neck pickup in bar 16.

Although *La Grange* was recorded with a 1955 Fender 'hardtail' (fixed bridge) Stratocaster, Gibbons regularly plays the track on other guitars, notably, Gibson Les Pauls, Gretsch Jupiter Thunderbirds and T-styles too. That tells us the guitar type isn't necessarily crucial here, as long as you aim for a medium-gain blues-rock tone with plenty of treble dialled in. Whether you're using your amp's overdrive channel (Gibbons plugged into a 1969 Marshall Super Lead 100 and Celestion Greenback-loaded cabs), a pedal or virtual amp software, the approach is the same: turn your guitar's volume up full, but keep preamp gain a little over halfway. Too much gain will over-saturate the sound.

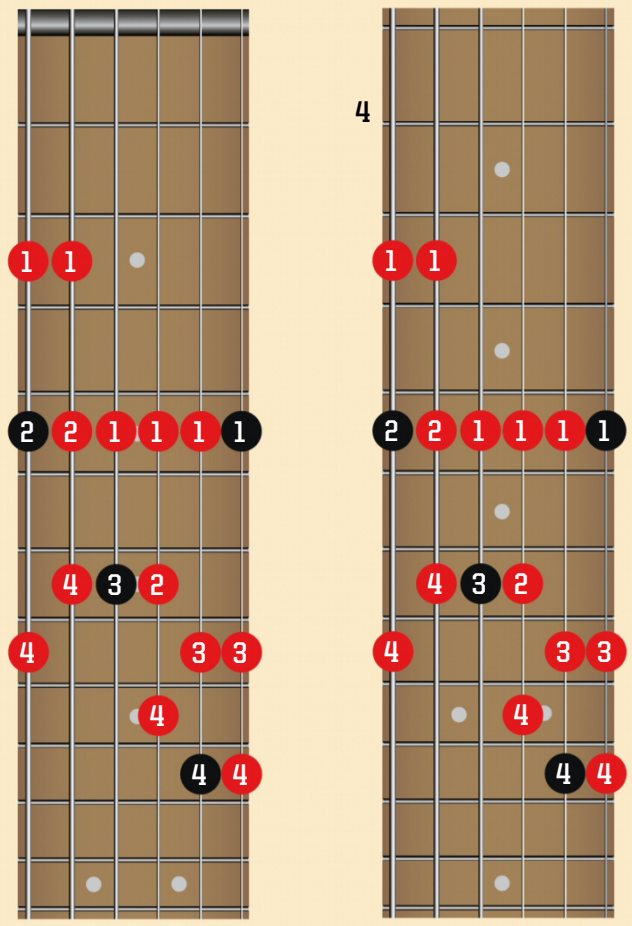
CHORDS

Just two main chords are played in *La Grange*: A5 and C5. Aside from the solos, the rest of the track is riff-based, using variations on the two chords to generate the groove. Fret the A5 using your first finger to barre across the 2nd fret; this makes it easy to add the riff notes with your second and fourth fingers. Use your first and third fingers to play the C5 chord to leave your remaining fingers free to play the other notes.



SCALES

By using extended shapes of the minor pentatonic scale, Billy Gibbons adds higher notes on the first and second strings and lower notes on the fifth and sixth strings. This a common technique used by blues players – it expands the range of the original scale, while keeping your position shifts to a minimum.

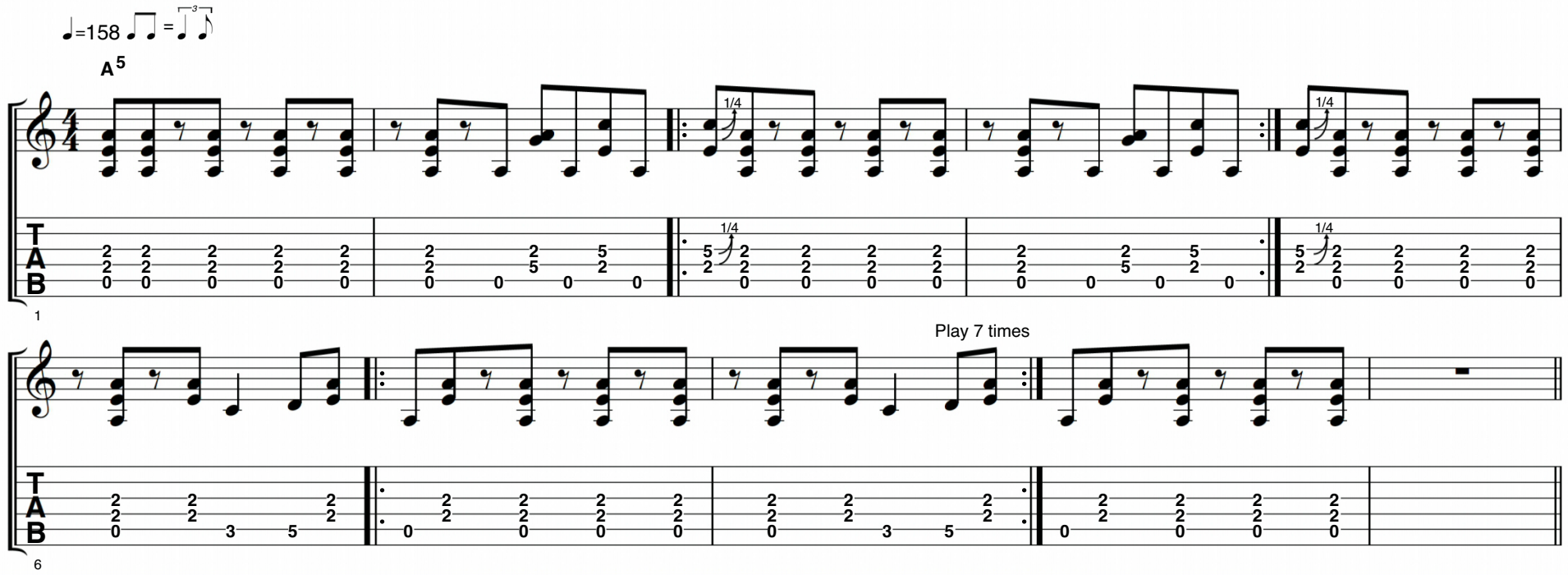


Guitars and backing: Phil Capone Photo: Getty

ZZ TOP
LA GRANGE

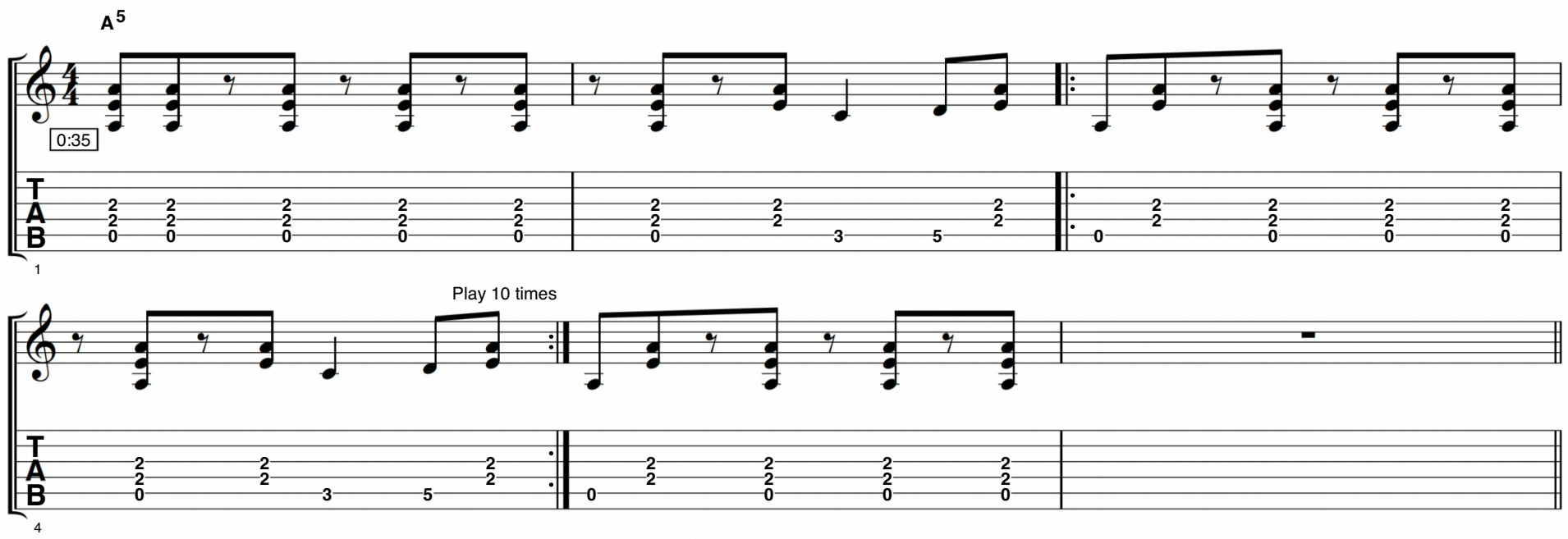
LA GRANGE
Words and Music by Billy F Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Lee Beard
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ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Intro / Verse 1



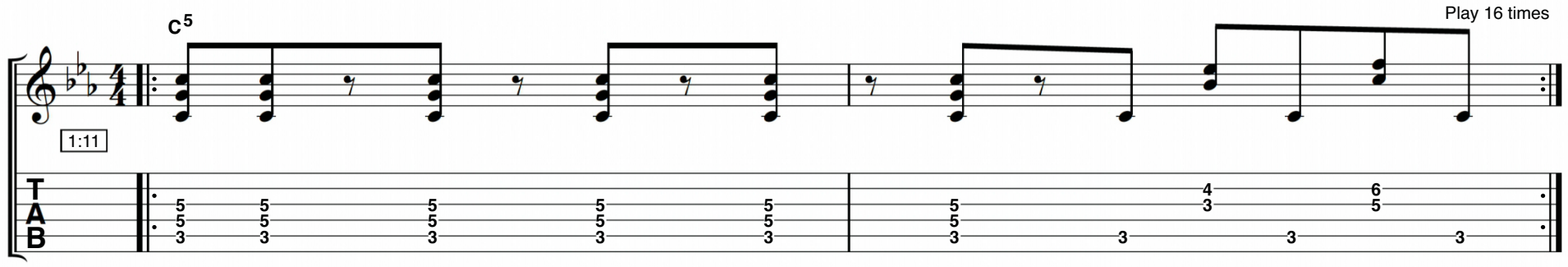
Use hybrid picking to recreate the feel of Gibbons' riff. This means you use your pick to play the bass notes on the fifth string and your second and third picking hand fingers to fingerpick the third and fourth strings. It's a long section, but if you can master the song's main riff in bars 3 and 4, the rest should fall into place.

ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Verse 2



This is a similar variant of the previous riff. Once again, use hybrid picking and barre across the 2nd fret with your first finger to play the A5 chord. This keeps your second and fourth fingers in place to play the rest of the riff. This section is all about getting the feel of those offbeat chords and sync'ing your picking motion with it.

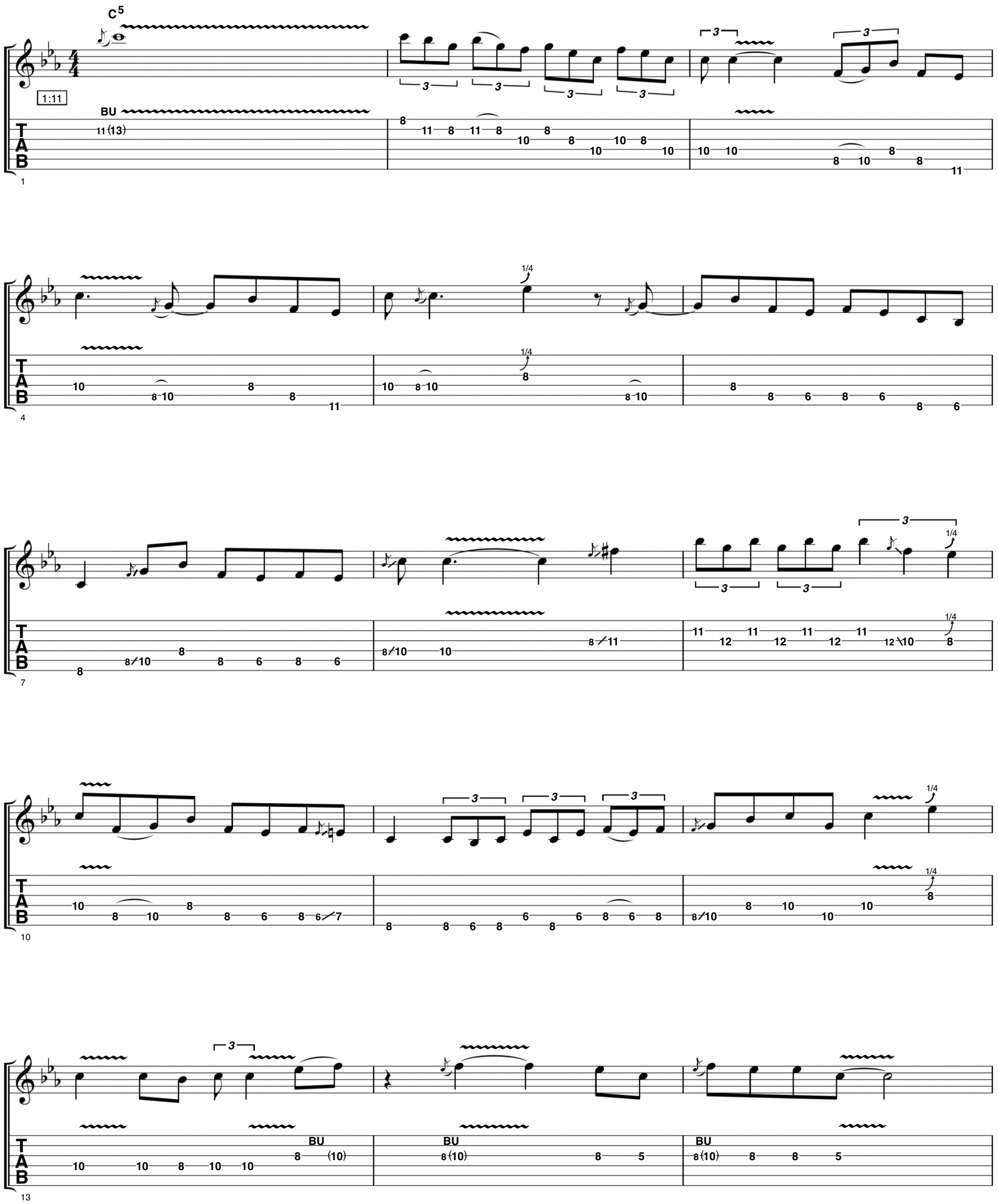
ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Solo 1 (rhythm guitar)



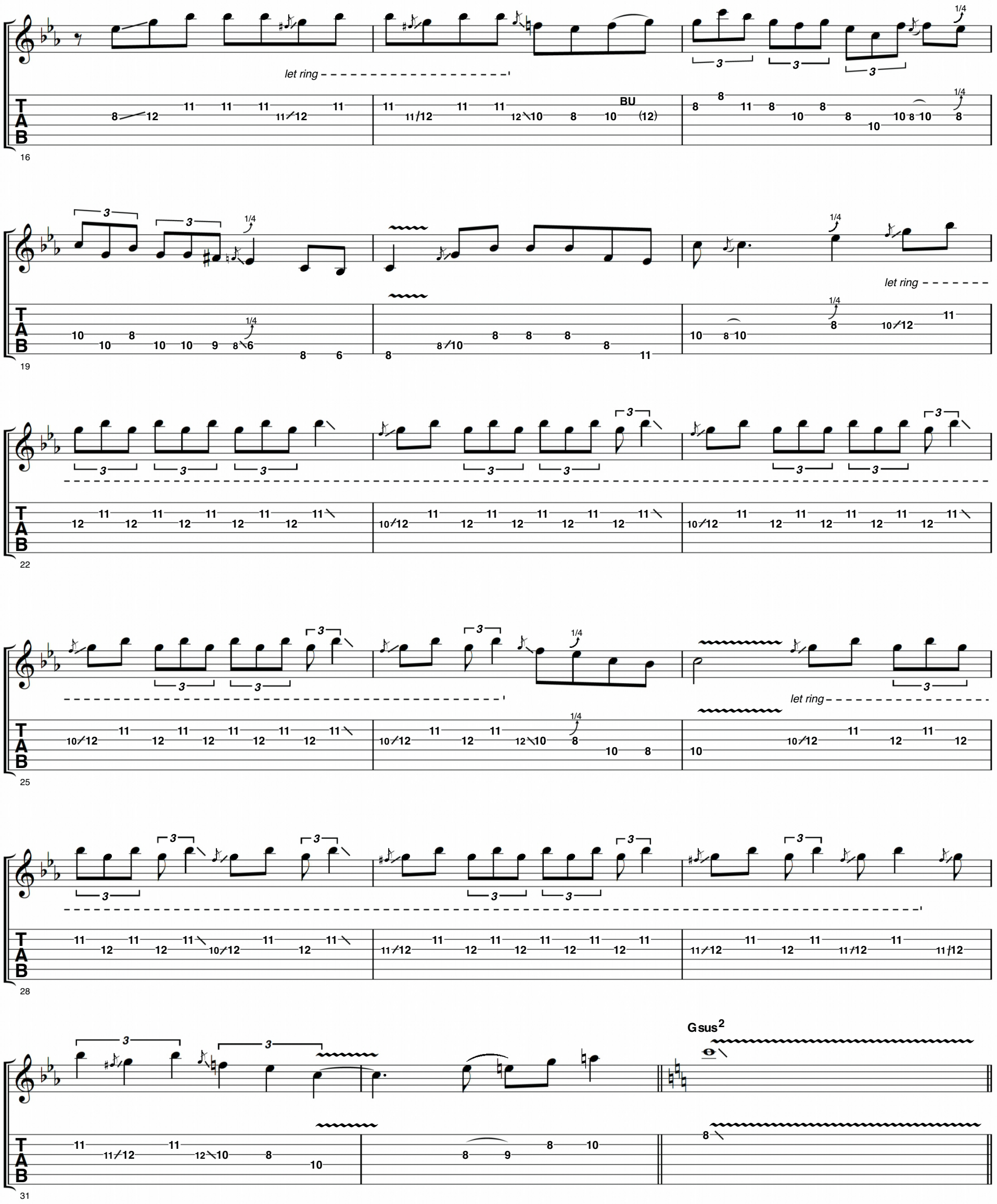
Play this riff by barring across the 3rd fret with your first finger, then add the higher notes with your remaining fingers, keeping the barre in position throughout.

FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 28-29)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Solo 1 (lead guitar)

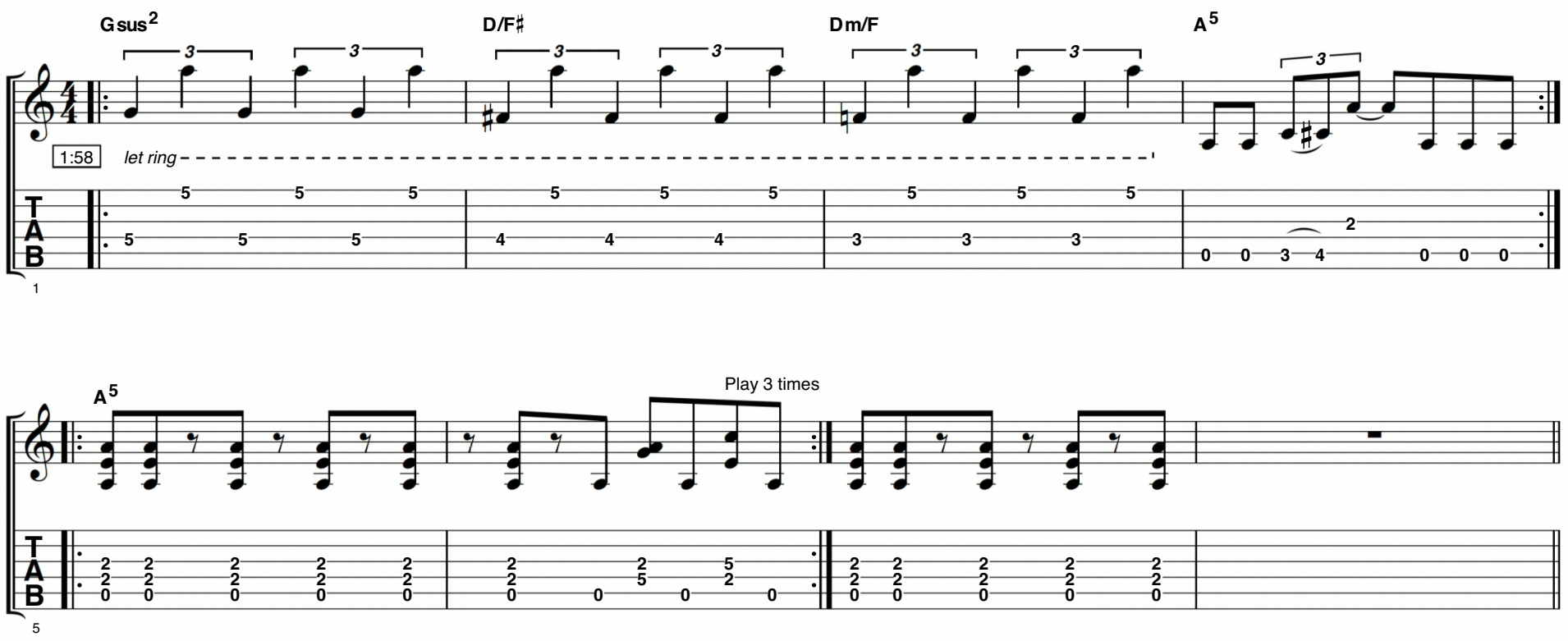


ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Solo 1 (lead guitar cont'd)



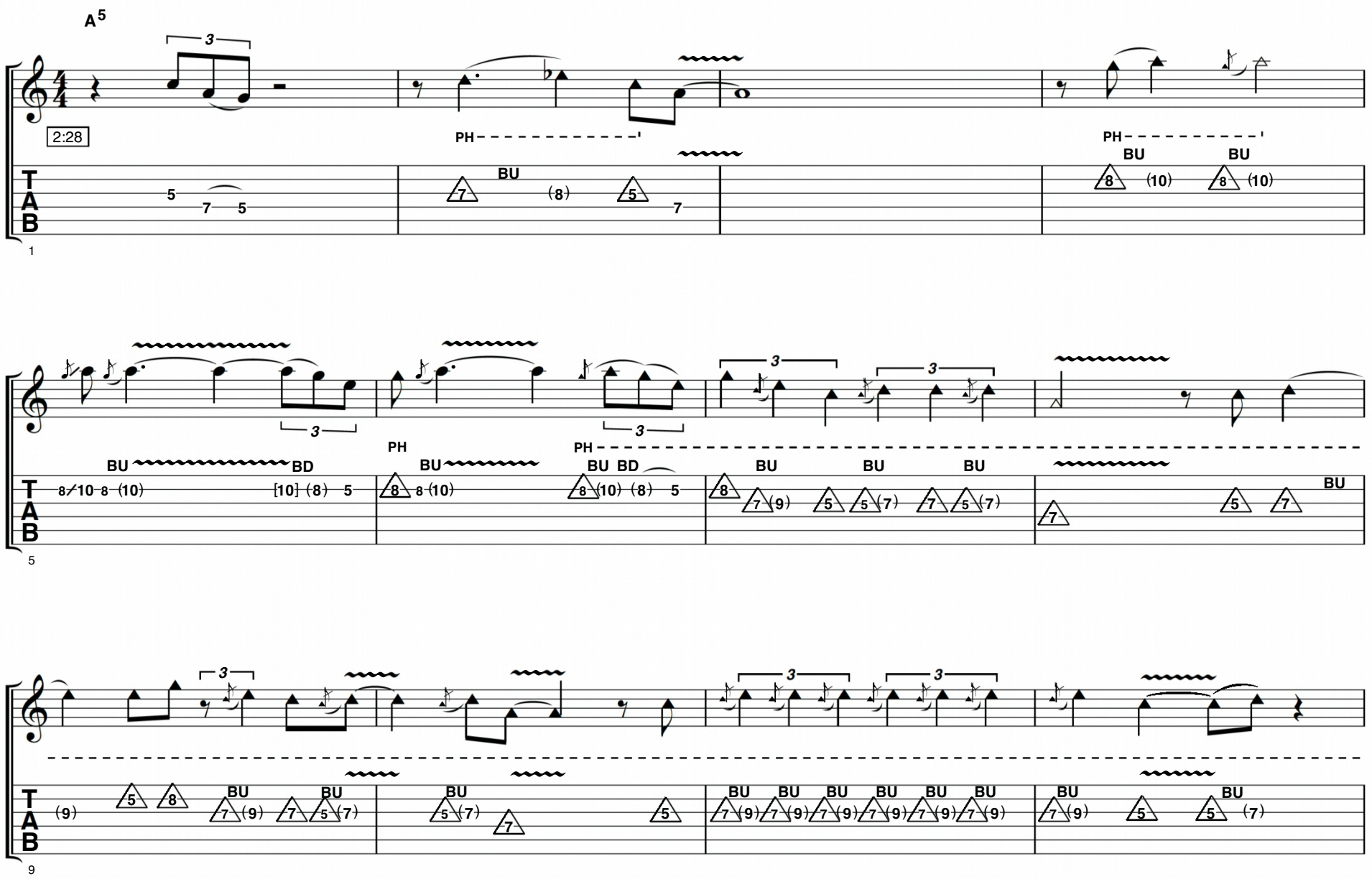
In bar 16, the first of several two-note phrases is played (look at bars 22 to 31 for more of the same). This idea extends the basic 8th position C minor pentatonic shape (C $E_{\flat}$ F G $B_{\flat}$) up to a higher register, but sticks to the same scale notes. So what? Well, playing a scale with a different shape opens up new phrasing options.

ZZ TOP LA GRANGE *Interlude*

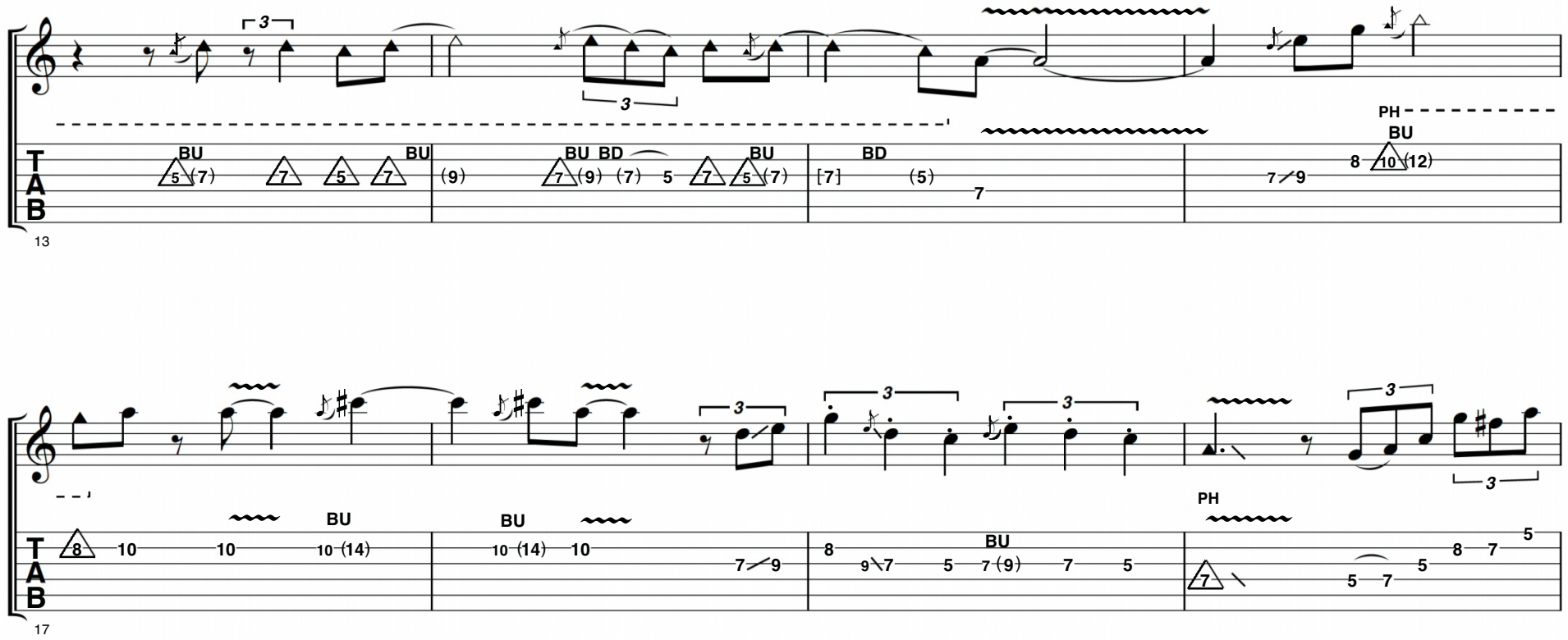


Play bar 1 by fretting the first string with your fourth finger and the fourth string with your third finger. This may feel awkward at first, but once you get used to it you'll find it's easy to add the lower notes on the fourth string with your first and second fingers. Repeat the main riff/verse 2 for four bars before moving on to solo 2.

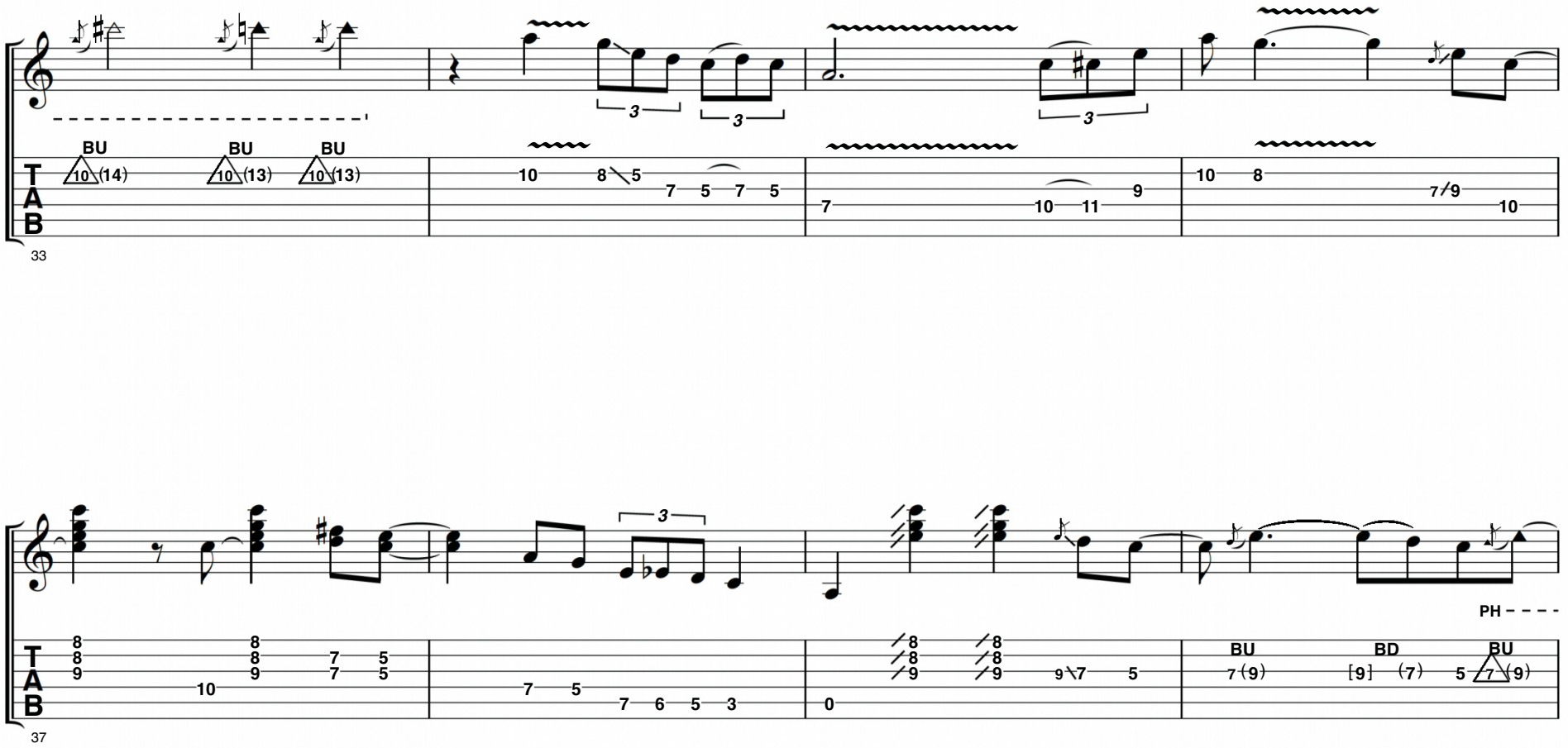
ZZ TOP LA GRANGE *Solo 2*



ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Solo 2 (cont'd)



ZZ TOP LA GRANGE Solo 2 (cont'd)



This solo is all about pentatonic phrasing and Gibbons' trademark pinched harmonics, which are peppered throughout. It's a tricky technique – you'll need to touch the string with your thumb as you downpick, the aim being to generation a 'squeal'. It's almost impossible with a clean tone, so practise with as much drive as you need, then wind it back as you get the hang of it.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

FLEETWOOD MAC
GO YOUR OWN WAY

Dust off your 12-string acoustic and take a look at this huge hit from Fleetwood Mac's chart-topping *Rumours* album

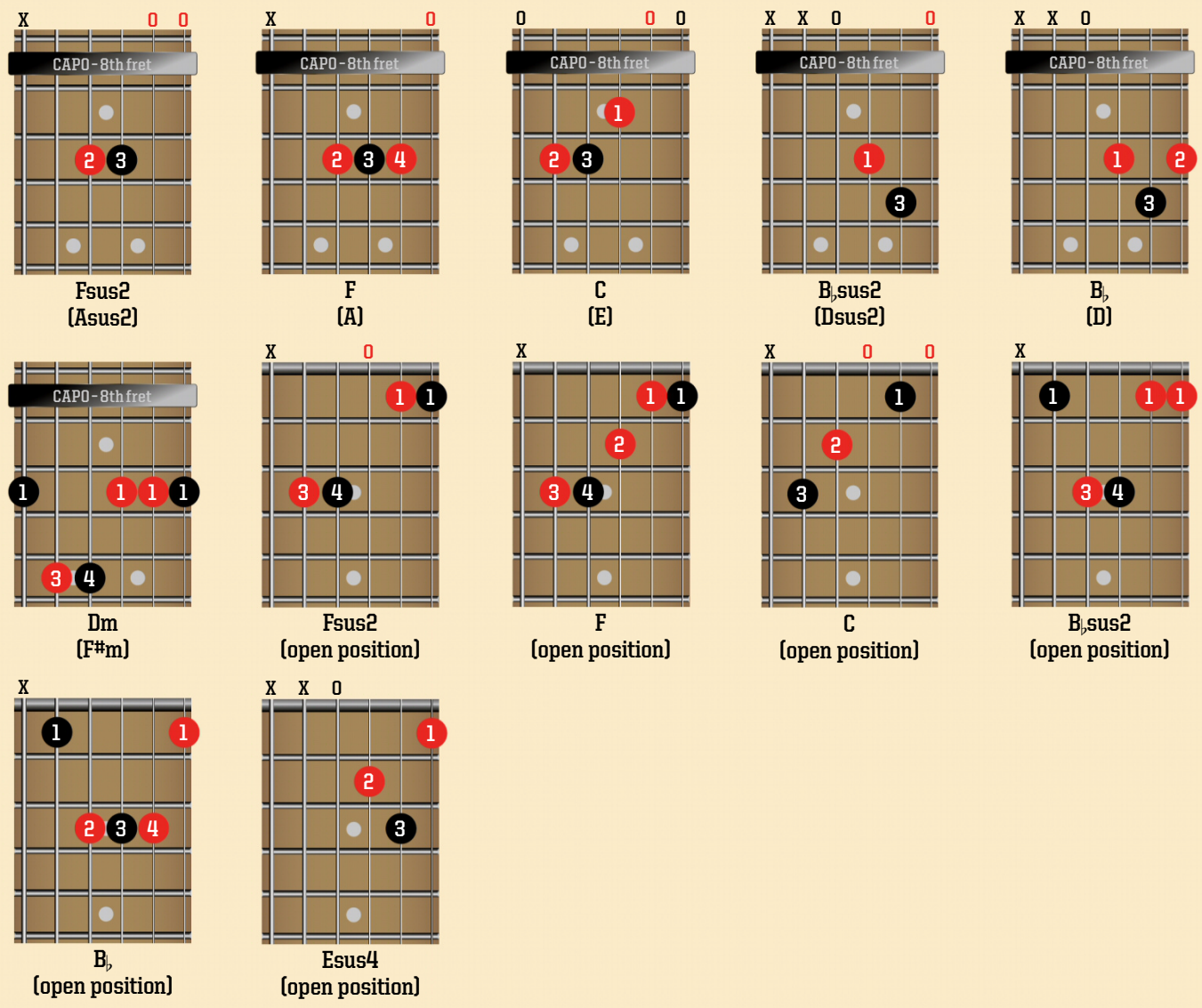
This classic tune was a huge hit for Fleetwood Mac back in 1977, featuring on their mega-selling album *Rumours* of the same year. Lindsey Buckingham played all of the guitars here, but the part we're focusing on here is the bright, chimey 12-string acoustic that kicks in at bar 3. If you've not listened to Buckingham before, he's well worth further investigation – a classy player, equally adept at lead or rhythm.

You'll need to use a capo at the 8th fret to play the part exactly like the original. The pitches of the capo'd chords are F, C and B♭, but these are easy to play because the shapes are the same as open A, E and D; only a brief Dm chord requires you to play a barre. It can be a little cramped this high up the neck, so if you find it uncomfortable you may prefer to jam along without a capo using open chords.



CHORDS

The upper chord names here are the actual pitches of the chords used. The symbols in brackets denote the names of shapes that you'll recognise from open position. Notice that the A chord is played with the second, third and fourth fingers; this makes it easier to fret the chord when playing high up the neck. We've included some open-position chords if you want to join in without capo-ing up.



GO YOUR OWN WAY
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Guitars and backing: Phil Capone Photo: Getty

BACKING TRACK (TRACK 30)
This song comes with a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

SONGSHEET

Go Your Own Way

Verse 1
F
Loving you
C
isn't the right thing to do
B♭
How can I ever change things
F
that I feel?

Verse 2
F
If I could
C
maybe I'd give you my world
B♭
How can I
F
when you won't take it from me?

Chorus 1 & 2
Dm B♭ C
You can go your own way
Dm
Go your own wa – a – ay
B♭ C
You can call it another lonely day
Dm B♭ C
You can go your own way
F
Go your own way

Verse 3
F
Tell me why
C
everything turned around
B♭
Packing up
F
Shacking up's all you wanna do

Verse 4
F
If I could
C
baby, I'd give you my world
B♭
Open up
F
Everything's waiting for you

Repeat chorus

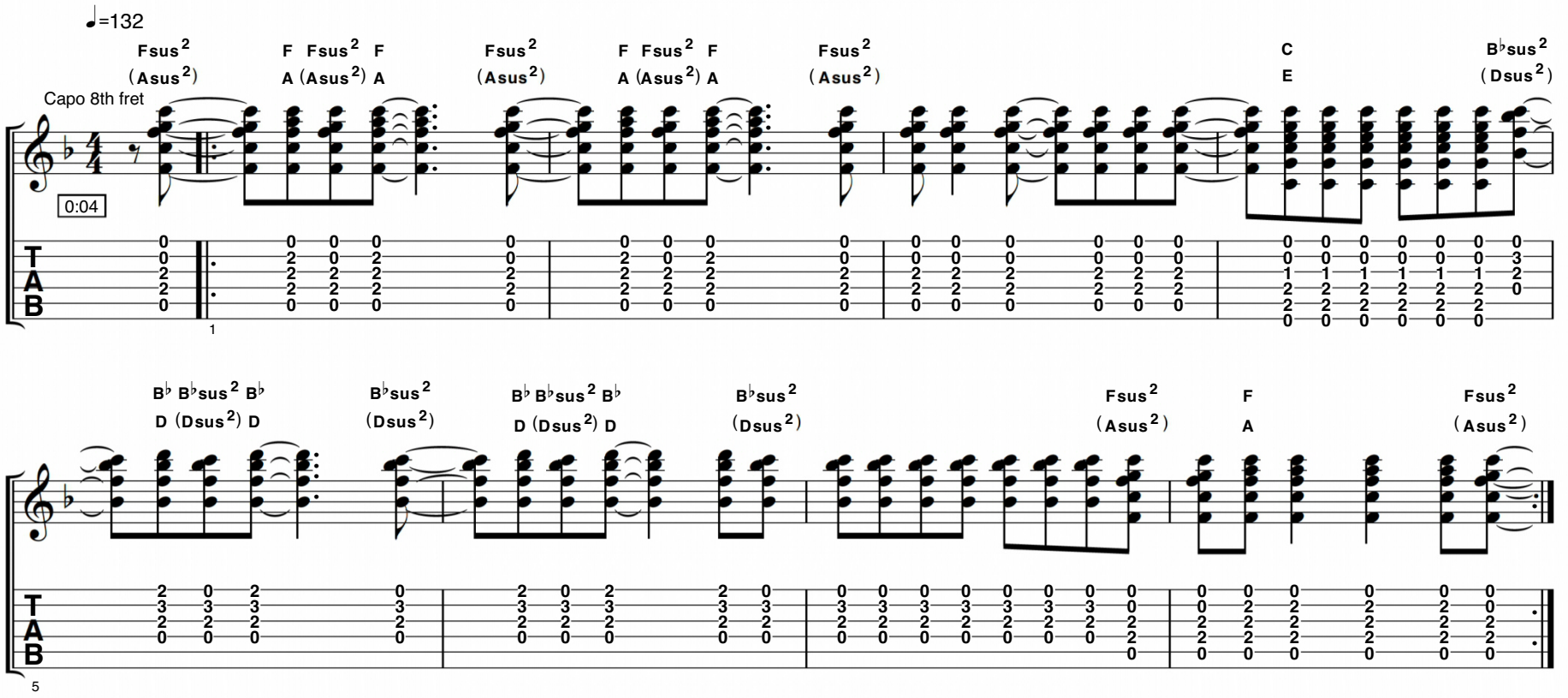
Instrumental verse x2

Chorus 3
Dm B♭ C
You can go your own way
Dm
Go your own wa – a – ay
B♭ C
You can call it another lonely day
Dm B♭ C
You can go your own way
Dm
Go your own wa – a – ay
B♭ C
You can call it another lonely day

Guitar solo
Dm / / / B♭ / / /
C / / / / / / / x5

Repeat chorus to fade

FLEETWOOD MAC GO YOUR OWN WAY Verse — TRACK 30



Each chord change is 'pushed', ie, it comes on the last eighth note of each bar, instead of the simpler standard beat 1 change. It's particularly tricky because the bass and drums *do* change on beat 1, without this accent. Note that the songsheet doesn't include sus chords (we couldn't fit them in!), so make sure to practise the tab first.

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

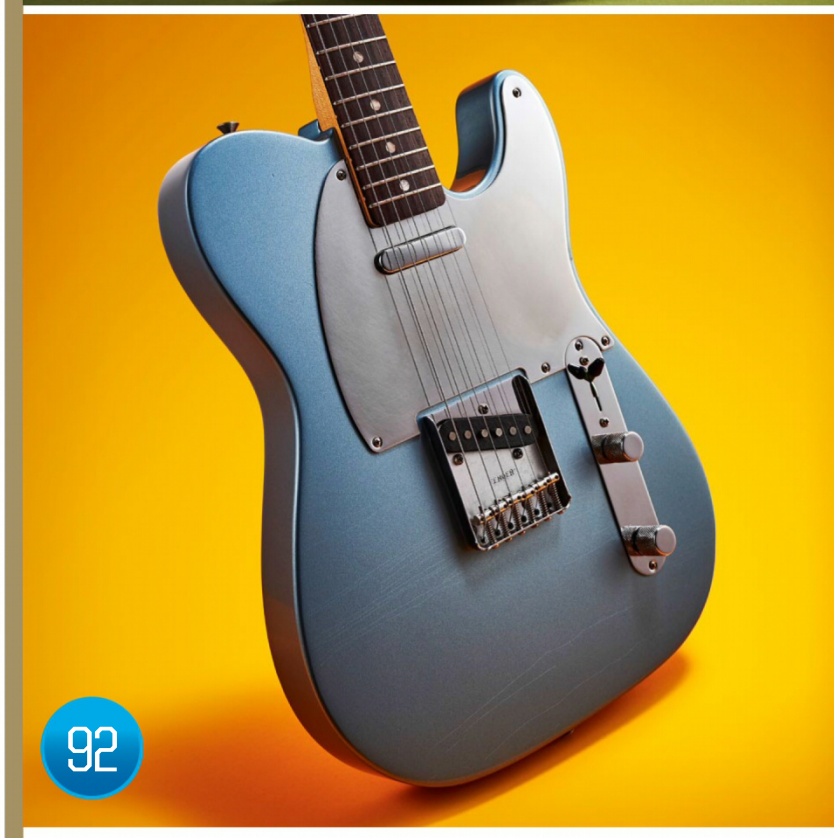
Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

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

Total Guitar BEST FOR...

SUPERB, A BEST BUY | EXCELLENT | ABOVE AVERAGE KIT | SOME ISSUES | POOR





85 START ME UP
Five new products you need to check out...

86 BOSS GT-100 CORE AMP MODELLER/FX PROCESSOR
Boss' flagship GT floorboard in a stompbox.

90 EPIPHONE INSPIRED BY GIBSON HUMMINGBIRD
Inspired By or rival to?

92 FENDER CHRISSIE HYNDE TELECASTER
Is this 60s model finish the real deal?

94 MXR FOD OVERDRIVE
A non-signature Dookie Drive?



02



03



04



05



01

START ME UP!

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

D'ADDARIO XPND

1 An expanding pedalboard! It seems so obvious now but credit to D'addario for recognising our ever-growing pedal collections. But the two XPND options could be just as useful for switching between a compact option and something bigger for gigs. There's also an optional Pedal Riser and Transporter bags for the XPND 1 (one row, two rail) and XPND 2 (two row, four rail) pedalboards. **$79.99 and $169.99, www.daddario.com**

UNIVERSAL AUDIO UAFX SERIES

2 UA is making a suitable grandiose entrance with its debut effects pedals; the Starlight Echo Station, Golden Reverberator and Astra Modulation Machine are premium price but carry the company's reputation for sonic excellence. The Golden Reverberator offers classic Spring 65, Plate 140, and Hall 224 modes, the Starlight offers echo and delay inspired by three 60s units and the Astra boasts a flanger, bucket-brigade chorus and opto-tube tremolo. **£355 each, www.uaudio.com**

DHANI HARRISON SIGNATURE UKULELE

3 Everyone needs a uke in their life, and this looks a beaut. Harrison grew up playing the four-string and it's become a key songwriting tool for the multi-instrumentalist. It's a solid ovangkol build with Fender preamp system featuring tone, volume controls and a tuner. Each Sapphire Blue and Turquoise tenor-sized option has different fretboard inlays and engraved designs on the back for a well-spec'd package. **£229, www.fender.com**

WALRUS AUDIO ACS1

4 Amps just keep on getting smaller... OK, this is an amp and cab simulator but it's promising high end tube tones for your pedalboard with three distinct vintage flavours. Chooses from the Fullerton, which models the Fender Deluxe Reverb, the London, offering access to a 1962 Marshall Bluesbreaker and finally, the Dartford channels a 60s VOX AC30. Six cab impulse responses are also included, with the option to upload your own vis USB. **£365, www.walrusaudio.com**

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE 5

5 Twenty years after its launch, Amplitube is still a leader in amp and effects modelling software and its fifth iteration takes detail to a new level. Building your signal chain is easier with a redesigned drag and drop, which is just as well with the ability to have 57 simultaneous models. Volumetric Impulse Response also allows incredibly fine virtual mic adjustment for thousands of impulse response measurements with over 100 re-captured cab models. **From free to £261, www.ikmultimedia.com**


BOSS GT-1000CORE
GUITAR EFFECTS PROCESSOR
OUTPUT LEVEL
EFFECT
MENU
WRITE
EXIT
LOCK
SELECT
CTL 1
MANUAL
TUNER
DRY
X-DRIVE
PATCH LV
100
BPM
120
TREBLE
50
BASS
50
GAIN
100
OUT
IN
MIDI
OUT
IN
CTL 4, 5
EXP 2
Roland Corporation
MADE IN MALAYSIA



BOSS GT-1000 CORE AMP MODELLER/FX PROCESSOR

£599

Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

Boss put the power of their flagship GT floorboard into a stompbox

They seem like they've been around for ever, but Boss ensures that their GT series of floorboard processors stays bang up to date, refreshed every so often with a new flagship model – currently the GT-1000. Now the GT-1000 certainly has a loads of sonic power under the hood but large all-in-one floorboard processors don't suit everyone, so Boss has put the business end of the GT-1000 into a 3-footswitch stompbox, similar in format to their 500 series. The GT-1000 Core has all the processing power, models and patches of the flagship but has lost some connections, several footswitches and a treadle in the process.

The GT-1000 Core's 250 preset and 250 user patches are each constructed from 24 simultaneous effects blocks. There are a range of series and parallel routing options available, accommodating up to two of the 23 modelled amps in a patch and whole chains of effects. Over 100 effects in many categories are available to populate the blocks – some are familiar Boss pedal effects including plenty that are ported directly from the 500 series, some are emulations of classic stompboxes like the Tube Screamer, for example.

There's also plenty of provision for adding your own physical pedals into the signal chain via two send and return FX loops that can be put under control of the unit's footswitches if desired. A clear display and an intuitive editing system using soft knobs gets you where you want to be pretty quickly when editing patches but it's even easier to use the free computer-based Boss Tone Studio editing program where a few mouse moves can make short work of everything.

> "IT HAS A FLEXIBILITY THAT MAKES IT A PRACTICAL ASSET"

The amp sims here are an eclectic mix of familiar classics and some homegrown Boss ones with a very natural response to playing dynamics. There's a myriad of tones to cover many musical needs and should you want to expand that, you can supplement the onboard cabinets by loading your own impulse responses into the 16 onboard storage slots.

While it could be argued that a full signal chain with amp/cab is using the unit to its full potential, there will be many users that purely want effects and the unit is packed with an excellent range of modulations, delays and reverbs as well as distortions, wahs, pitch effects and many more, such as acoustic guitar and sitar simulators. Whether you want to build up huge ambient soundscapes or use the user patches to create a series of instant pedalboards to suit a variety of tasks, there's everything you'll likely need.

The three footswitches give you practical options for live use. In Memory mode, switching directly between patches can be instant

Photography Olly Curtis

1 SOFT KNOBS 1-5
These knobs offer instant adjustment of whatever is displayed directly above them on the screen and can also select menu options with a push action.

2 FOOT SWITCHES
If you wish to alternate between Memory and Manual mode, it is swiftly carried out by pressing the second (middle) and CTL 1 footswitch simultaneously.

3 SIDE PANEL
The GT-1000 Core's audio connectivity and more is on the back panel, but USB, MIDI and the second control input are located on the side.

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: Malaysia

TYPE: Amp and Effects modelling floor/desktop unit

FEATURES: 250 user and 250 preset patches, 38 second phrase looper (19 in stereo), 6 in / 6 out USB audio interface, software editor with USB connection, mono or polyphonic tuner, metronome, IR loading capability

CONTROLS: Output Level, Select, footswitches x 3, soft knobs x 5 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Select knob, buttons x 6

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (R/Mono, L), Standard outputs (R/Mono, L/Phones), Standard Sends 1 and 2, Standard Returns 1 and 2, CTL 2, 3/EXP1, CTL 4, 5/EXP2, MIDI In, MIDI Out, USB

POWER: Supplied PSB-1U power adapter (9V 2A)

DIMENSIONS: 173 (w) x 135 (d) x 65 mm (h)

CONTACT
www.boss.com



Time to tap dance

How to make just three footswitches work for you onstage

The GT-1000 Core's compact footprint means that there are seven less footswitches compared to its larger sibling but there is plenty you can do with them. All are assignable to a host of different functions with either toggle or momentary action but there are a couple of easily toggled straightforward modes – Memory and Manual – straight out of the box. Memory mode is designed for switching from patch to patch – the first two footswitches scroll through and select patches while the CTL 1 footswitch can be assigned to whatever you want in a patch, maybe a specific effect bypass or tap tempo. In Manual mode the footswitches can select functions that are assigned to them in the currently loaded patch and could be used to turn three selected effects on and off. Typically you could set up a different patch (with the appropriate switchable effects) for each song.





and seamless, particularly when making use of delay/reverb carry over, but you may wish to leave the patch switching between songs to select a particular 'pedalboard' and then switch to manual mode for direct access to its most salient effects.

If you'd prefer more switching ability, there are two inputs that can host more footswitches, if you are not using them for expression pedals assigned to effects. There's also loads of MIDI control capability and a 'control out' provision for switching amp channels.

Other GT-1000 Core features are a (38 seconds mono) looper, tuner, and an ability to function as a 6-in / 6-out USB audio interface, something that makes it a great utility for home use, sitting on a tabletop connected to a DAW for recording and re-amping, delivering a huge range of tones. Its headphone output also allows use as a rich source of a fully processed amp/cab plus effects sounds for silent practice. That full effect chain is also there if you need to go straight into the PA at a gig, but, amp sims aside, for standard live use the GT-1000 Core is ideally positioned to live up to its name and be the core that you build a pedalboard around, or a versatile chameleon-like source of effects to add to an existing board, massively expanding its range. Whether for home use or onstage, it has a flexibility that makes it a practical asset for any guitarist.

Trevor Curwen

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

ALSO TRY...

LINE 6 HX STOMP £399



What Boss has done with the GT-1000 and the Core bears a strong resemblance to what Line 6 did with the Helix and the HX Stomp.

HEADRUSH GIGBOARD £519



This larger 4-footswitch floorboard with a touchscreen has a similar range of potential to the GT-1000 Core but won't easily slot into a pedalboard

MOOER GE200 £329



If you are on a tight budget, this is usually found at street prices below £250, and has a wide range of features including a treadle.



Ashdown Engineering

Ashdown Guitar Magnifiers

ALL VALVE TONE

MADE IN ENGLAND

Designed, engineered and lovingly hand built in the UK custom shop the AGM-5C is designed for genuine tonal purists wanting luscious British valve driven guitar tones but at home/studio friendly volume levels combined with a host of modern player friendly features.



FOR MORE INFO:

WWW.ASHDOWNMUSIC.COM



EPIPHONE INSPIRED BY GIBSON HUMMINGBIRD

£749

Inspired By or rival to?

The Gibson Hummingbird is one of the iconic acoustics; it's been found in the hands of everyone from Keef to Sheryl Crow, Lenny Kravitz and Radiohead and Dylan. With its ornate pickguard depicting flowers and, yes, a hummingbird, there's no mistaking this for any other square-shouldered flight of fancy either. But the Gibson versions have always priced most of us out. So the news last year of a new Epiphone model with the same solid wood back and sides as the Gibson sibling was a welcome feathered friend. Now it's here, does it sing?

First impressions are a little mixed; don't get us wrong, this is a stunner. The dark mahogany grain of the neck, back and sides screams premium; bound in aged ivory. The top's Aged Antique Natural caramel hues bathe in a worn gloss that looks authentically played in. The Hummingbird has history and it shows here.

The neck relief on our guitar needs some significant adjustment before it's playable and the Fishman preamp's 9-volt battery pack is also rattling around in the Hummingbird's body; the weight of the battery has made the velcro pouch holding it come unstuck. We know this issue because we suffered from it on our ten year old Sigma dreadnought. We're disappointed to see this design still being used instead of the alternative that places the battery with its own compartment and jack near the rear endpin.

With those issues addressed, we can get playing. Once the truss rod is adjusted the familiarity of Gibson's 12" radius becomes apparent. It's a playable neck for leads with notes given a muscular projection here. That comes to the fore for a rich and full-bodied chord experience. It's a classic dreadnought character for us ; no boxy dullness here. It's resonant and strong across the spectrum, underpinned by lows that add consistent girth to rhythm work. It's singing rather than sweet in the high end. And with these solid tonewoods, it's only going to get better with age.

The electro side feels more like a sideshow compared – Gibson have used the ubiquitous Fishman Sonitone system, a meat and potatoes, low key piezo system with volume and tone controls (treble roll off) placed inside. The Hummingbird negates the lack of a bass control with its own low-end character, but there's further reassuring/surprising news too; Gibson uses the same £50 system on its Studio 'Bird. All in all, this is a guitar that doesn't feel or sound like too much of a compromise next to a Gibson.

Rob Laing

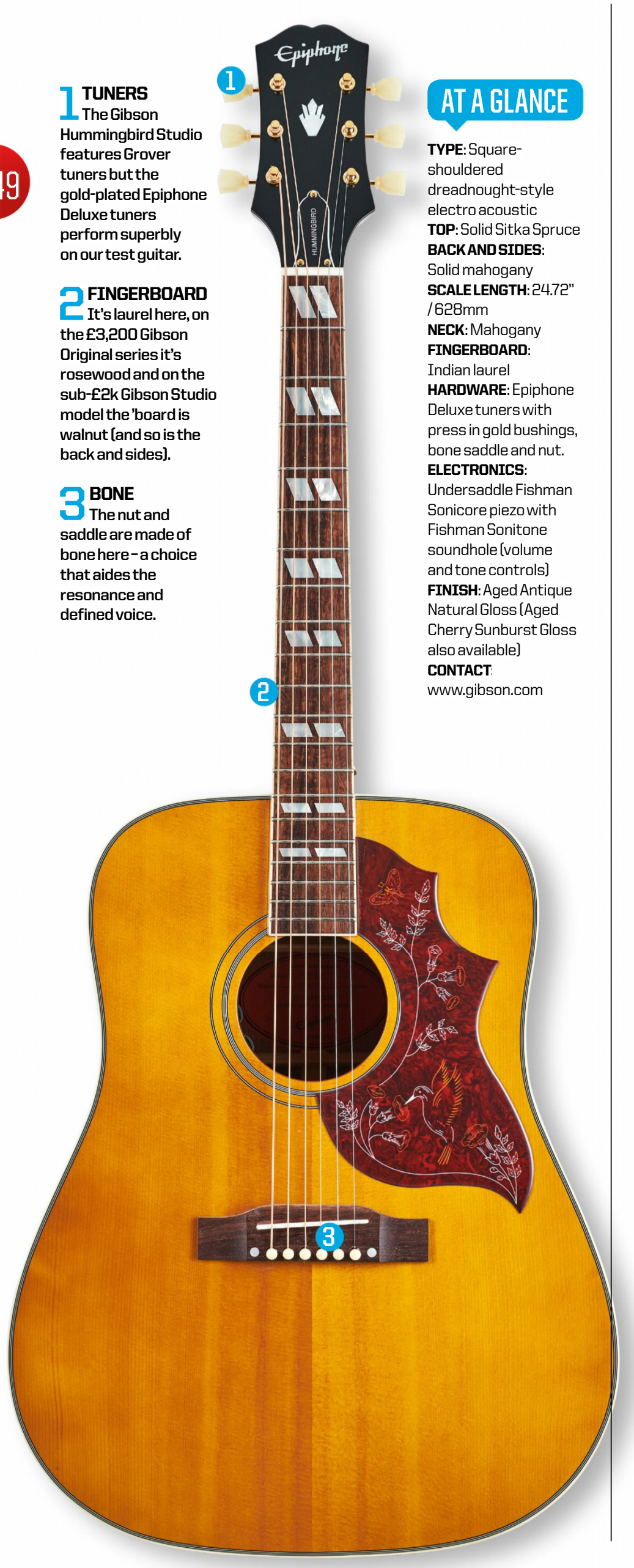
> "THE SOLID TONEWOOD WILL ONLY GET BETTER WITH AGE"

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★½
PLAYABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

1 TUNERS The Gibson Hummingbird Studio features Grover tuners but the gold-plated Epiphone Deluxe tuners perform superbly on our test guitar.

2 FINGERBOARD It's laurel here, on the £3,200 Gibson Original series it's rosewood and on the sub-£2k Gibson Studio model the 'board is walnut (and so is the back and sides).

3 BONE The nut and saddle are made of bone here – a choice that aides the resonance and defined voice.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Square-shouldered dreadnought-style electro acoustic
TOP: Solid Sitka Spruce
BACK AND SIDES: Solid mahogany
SCALE LENGTH: 24.72" /628mm
NECK: Mahogany
FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel
HARDWARE: Epiphone Deluxe tuners with press in gold bushings, bone saddle and nut.
ELECTRONICS: Undersaddle Fishman Sonicore piezo with Fishman Sonitone soundhole (volume and tone controls)
FINISH: Aged Antique Natural Gloss (Aged Cherry Sunburst Gloss also available)
CONTACT: www.gibson.com

Photography: OllyCurtis


FENDER

FENDER CHRISSIE HYNDE TELECASTER

£1249

Is this 60s model finish the real deal?

The Fender Chrissie Hynde Telecaster is a Mexican made replica of the 1965 model that The Pretenders vocalist/guitarist picked up in New York City at the turn of the 1980s.

To match Hynde's number one electric guitar, the 2021 model arrives in a Faded Ice Blue Metallic Road Worn lacquer finish. It looks the part, showing subtle checking and lived-in grime on the Road Worn hardware – most notably on the ferrules on the rear of the guitar, and the chrome mirror pickguard has some city miles on it. With the tuners and the knurled control knobs looking brand new, the effect doesn't quite come off, but mismatched hardware on a gently aged guitar is a little like a bad haircut; nothing that time won't fix.

The pickup pairing is a custom-wound set of '50s Tele single-coils to match those on Hynde's guitar, with a three-way blade pickup selector switch, volume and tone controls. There's a set of Fender-branded locking tuners, and a vintage six steel-saddle bridge replacing the stock three-saddle bridges of the original 60s Telecasters in pursuit of better intonation. Besides a monogrammed steel neck plate and chrome 'guard, the Chrissie Hynde Telecaster conforms to a relatively straightforward spec, with an old-school 7.25" radius rosewood fingerboard housing 21 vintage tall frets, 25.5" scale, alder body, and a bolt-on maple neck that's carved in a shallow shape and described by Fender as a Custom Mid-60s C profile.

Hynde is a devout rhythm player, an auto-didact who developed a unique style playing unamplified, but there's hardly any maple here to get in the way of the fleet-fingered. Compared to a 50s Player Series Telecaster, the neck profile feels Charvel-esque – an almost impolite invitation to play lead.

The rosewood 'board takes a little of the treble off but that bridge single-coil retains enough high-end vinegar to cut through. Rolling back the tone will thicken it up, and it's always surprising how many tones you can get out of the Telecaster's simple setup. At the neck it is bright and articulate, albeit with soothing midrange, while the mix position takes well to a clean tube amp and the gentle bounce of spring reverb. With blues, country, and rock at either end of the three-way selector, there's a lot of room for manoeuvre. Both pickups clean up nicely when you roll the volume back. Some players might want a little more meat on the neck, but this is a fun 60s Telecaster with blue collar pizzazz courtesy of its Motor City-inspired finish.

Jonathan Horsley

> "A FUN 60S TELECASTER WITH BLUE COLLAR PIZZAZZ"

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
PLAYABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

1 TUNERS
Hynde specifically requested locking tuners for more stable performance and quicker string changes. The good news? We hardly had to touch them.

2 ROAD WORN FINISH
This gentle ageing process is not as dramatic as seen on limited edition Vintera models. You will still notice the dings.

3 NECK
The neck profile is an invitation to burn. Like the body, it is finished in Road Worn nitro and if it feels little sticky, it'll wear in a treat.



AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: Mexico
BODY: Alder NECK: Maple (bolt-on)
SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")
FRETBOARD: Rosewood, 184.1mm (7.25") radius
FRETS: 21, Vintage Tall
NUT: 42mm, synthetic bone
PICKUPS: 2x Vintage-Style '50s Single-Coil Tele
CONTROLS: 1 x volume and 1 x tone, 3-way blade selector switch
HARDWARE: 6-saddle strings-through-body Tele with stainless steel saddles, deluxe cast/sealed locking tuners with vintage-style button
FINISH: Faded Ice Blue Metallic Road Worn Nitrocellulose Lacquer
CONTACT: Fender, www.fender.com

Photography Olly Curtis



MXR FOD OVERDRIVE £189

A non-signature Dookie Drive? F-off and buy!

Remember a couple of years ago when MXR reverted middle-aged guitar players back to teenagers with the release of the Dookie Overdrive, then simultaneously broke their hearts by revealing that it cost more than the next instalment on their Audi?

Well! That pedal's appearance was based not only on one of the most recognisable album covers of the 90s, but it also aped Billie Joe Armstrong's tone from the record. This was achieved by blending two modded Marshall Super Lead heads: one scooped with saturated gain, the other set to crunch with a punchier mid range. The Dookie Overdrive offered both of these sounds in one pedal, with a blend control to balance the two sounds.

Now, we're not detectives, but a quick glance at the FOD confirms a few things. It has the same dirty/crunch dual-channel setup. It features the same gain/tone/output/blend control layout, and it shares its name with the final 'proper' track on *Dookie*. There is one slight circuit change, though. Where the Dookie featured a master scoop switch for the mids, the FOD has a three-way toggle offering flat, scooped and boosted midrange options. So, while MXR makes no association between the two, we're taking this as a non-signature pedal for *that* sound.

To give it a try, we took a spin through some of our favourite riffs from said album and can confirm that the FOD will definitely be a lot of fun for fans of the era, nailing tones that aren't always as gained-up as you might remember, but still sounding big thanks to the constant blend of drive and clarity. The gain knob controls the amount of drive on the high gain channel, while there are internal mini controls for the crunch channel's gain and level.

Moreover, it's a versatile overdrive that will be applicable to anyone wanting the same blended tones for alternative, classic rock and blues. It's a savvy move by MXR, not least because it's likely to find its way onto more boards without the graphic, and the more flexible mid controls are a welcome addition. We just wish there were top-mounted controls for that crunch channel.

Stuart Williams

SUMMARY	
	FEATURES ★★★★½
	SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★½
	BUILD QUALITY ★★★★½
	USABILITY ★★★★½
	OVERALL RATING ★★★★½

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Dual overdrive

CONTROLS: Gain, tone, output, blend, crunch gain, crunch level (both internal)

SOCKETS: Input, output, power

TRUE BYPASS? Yes

POWER: PSU or 9v battery

CONTACT: Dunlop, www.jimdunlop.com



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Words Johnny Scaramanga **Photo** Maxwell Grainger

LUKE MARK AND ISAAC WOOD
BLACK COUNTRY, NEW ROAD

Two singles. That's how much music Black Country, New Road had released before an over-excited music journalist called them the Best Band in the World. The band have not let it go to their heads, though. "I think people are used to this kind sensationalism in journalism," laughs singer/guitarist Isaac Wood. "I don't think anyone's really expecting us to be anything like the best band in the world. If they are, then it's their fault for believing it!"

Hype aside, the entire music press agrees that this band is a bit special. Combining post-rock, jazz, and post-punk sounds they've drawn comparisons to other achingly cool experimental acts such as Fat White Family, Squid, and Black Midi, with whom they regularly collaborate. Sounding so different from the mainstream requires unusual gear, and boy do they have it. "We mostly just buy cheap Fenders and aftermarket parts and put together our own guitars," explains Isaac. Guitarist Luke Mark regularly wields a greatest-hits-of-Fender hybrid, with a Jazzmaster body, Tele pickups, and a Strat neck. He also plays a guitar Isaac built from the remains of a Mexican Strat. "It has a Mojo Pickups Gold Foil. It's kind of cool because Isaac's put it between neck and middle position."

Isaac's main guitar is a homemade Tele that is now a double cutaway. "I was a bit inebriated and I cut the top horn off it," he explains. "I came home and the flat was covered in wood shavings, and Isaac wasn't there," laughs Luke. "But now it plays better than ever!" insists Isaac. "There was some sort of mid frequency kept in there that I really didn't like. Now it's gone."

They have an equally DIY approach to pedals, with Luke's favoured boost being one that Isaac built. Second single *Sunglasses* opens with a blast of fuzz courtesy of an op-amp Big Muff, but it doesn't make either of their minimalist gigging boards. Isaac uses a ZVex Box of Rock and Distortion with an Ibanez Tone-Lok delay. Luke has a Maxon Distortion Master, a Boss EQ modded by Adrian Thorpe of Thorpy FX, and an EHX Canyon delay. These go into Orange amps, currently TH30s, but they have plans to go to stacks when bigger gigs are possible again.

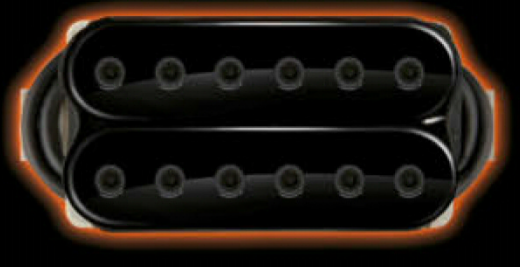
On their debut album, *For The First Time*, guitars are prominent but rarely the centre of attention, sharing space with keys, violin, and saxophone. Isaac explains the writing process. "You build a small skeleton of a song and everyone pulls together. We edit it down and try and make it sound complete, so it's not really guitar at the front nor at the back. It's a level playing field." They both cite Low's Alan Sparhawk as an inspiration for their guitar approach, while Isaac gives a nod to recent Bob Dylan collaborator Blake Mills. Luke explains their role: "It's more textural. There's not too much crazy riffing going on. It's more about the dynamics and filling out another melodic space."



RABEA MASSAAD

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