

PLAY

BOB MARLEY
REDEMPTION SONG

*Rockschool version

RUSH
LIMELIGHT

PEARL JAM
JUST BREATHE

MASON HILL
AGAINST THE WALL

*Video lesson



"It's in my blood!"

WOLFGANG
VAN HALEN

TOTAL Guitar

PLAY BETTER NOW!

VAN HALEN

THE NEXT
GENERATION

HOW EDDIE IS STILL INFLUENCING
MODERN GUITAR

With Yvette Young, Weezer,
Tyler Bryant & more

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EVH RIFFS!

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REVIEWED
EVENTIDE
MICROPITCH DELAY
VAN HAGAR-ERA TONES



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Welcome...



On October 6th, 2020, the world lost a legend of the guitar. I'm talking of course about one Edward Lodewijk Van Halen – a player whose influence extends far, far beyond just the fans of the band he happened to play in. Eddie invented a new language of rock guitar. It's almost churlish to talk about his tapping technique, whammy bar divebombs, his

trademark 'brown sound' and so on – Eddie's playing was greater than the sum of its groundbreaking parts!

Of course, Van Halen's heyday was back in the 80s, but that influence is still felt by a generation of young rock and metal guitarists today. So this issue we've spoken to Yvette Young, Tyler Bryant, Plini, Nili Brosh, Periphery's Mark Holcomb, and many more, all of who were keen to share their stories of the inspiration they've drawn from Eddie's music. There's also a more poignant reason to tell our 'next generation' Van Halen story this month, as June sees the arrival of the long-awaited debut from Mammoth WVH, the project of Eddie's son, Wolfgang. In our exclusive interview, Wolfgang reflects on his father's influence, but insists he's forging his own path.

Elsewhere, we catch up with session ace Steve Lukather who gives us his top guitar playing tips, Danish post-punk act Iceage talk in depth about the gear they used to record their latest album and Greta Van Fleet's Jake Kiszka tells us how he's refining and rethinking his art on the band's latest release. Enjoy the issue, and I'll see you next month!

Chris Bird Editor

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Download your audio files at
bit.ly/tg345audio

Words Stan Bull Photo Fin Costello/Redferns

HALCYON 'GAZE

O

n *Loveless*, Irish-English shoegaze trailblazers My Bloody Valentine give the listener approximately one second to prepare before launching into the first of many dizzying sonic assaults. With opener *Only Shallow*'s iconic intro, four quickfire hits of the snare pave the way for an onslaught of effects-laden

riffing, so unique in its overall sound that it would leave many questioning whether the songs were played on guitars at all.

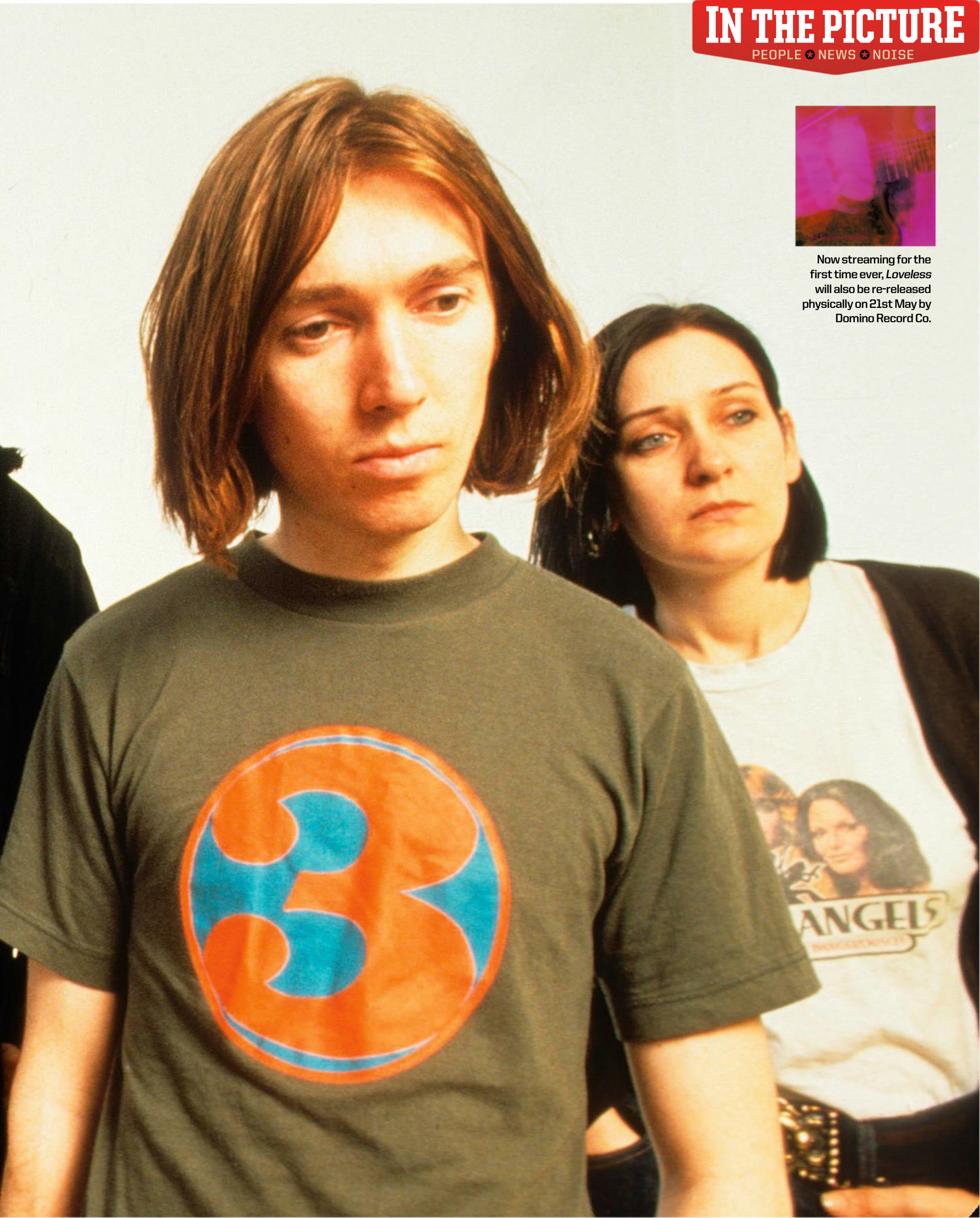
It's common in music journalism to exaggerate the impact of a particular song or sound, but in the case of *Loveless*, nothing before (and very little after) had ever sounded this *otherworldly*. Such is bandleader Kevin Shields' genius, that his obsession with stacking previously unimagined amounts of fuzz, delay, chorus, pitch shifters and wah resulted in changing the perception of modern guitar tones forever.

Released 30 years ago this November, *Loveless* suffered from a notoriously long and difficult recording process, with months passing between takes on individual songs. The perseverance paid off, though, and while the band initially failed to create a follow-up (at least until 2013's reunion album *mbv*), *Loveless*' unique sound and composition would go on to inspire the likes of The Cure, The Smashing Pumpkins, Spiritualized, Deftones, Wolf Alice and more.

Now, for the first time ever, the entire My Bloody Valentine discography is available on streaming platforms, with their new label Domino Record Co. releasing remastered versions of albums *Isn't Anything* (1988), *Loveless* and *mbv* alongside new compilation ep's 1988-1991 and rare tracks (2021) on 21st May.



Now streaming for the first time ever, *Loveless* will also be re-released physically on 21st May by Domino Record Co.



SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

ALBUM

A MODERN-DAY PIONEER AT THE PEAK OF HER POWERS

IN HER BRILLIANT NEW ALBUM, ST. VINCENT'S ECLECTICISM AND LEFTFIELD APPROACH TO GUITAR HAS ECHOES OF JONI MITCHELL, PRINCE AND DAVID GILMOUR



Clark as St Vincent, with artwork for new album *Daddy's Home* above

There's nobody quite like Annie Clark. Since *Marry Me*, her striking 2007 debut as St. Vincent, she has captivated an ever-growing audience with her experimental, melodic blend of art rock, hip indie and electronica. An artist of rare integrity and vision, she reinvents herself for every record with a boldly individual and hyper-fashionable look; like Lady Gaga, like Bowie. This Bowie comparison comes up a lot, as cultural commentators seek shorthand for her broad, progressive range (Kate Bush is also predictably mentioned).

Clark's numerous accolades include the Grammy for Best Rock Song for the title track to 2017's *Masseduction*, and she's a real polymath, too. She's a versatile, emotive vocalist, bassist, keyboardist and percussionist, and her approach to guitar is leftfield, imaginative and richly textured. Ernie Ball even invited her to design her own Music Man guitar, and the quirkily-shaped St. Vincent signature model can also be found in the axe racks of Dave Grohl, Beck and Taylor Swift.

There's a pervasive 70s, New York soul vibe to *Daddy's Home*, her sixth record, beautifully produced by Jack Antonoff. The title track features some gloriously laid-back and simple flanged guitars, wah-wah and – one of the album's signature sounds – electric sitar. This exotic twang evokes the soundworld of soul acts like The Delfonics and Stevie Wonder, and is present on *Down And Out Downtown*, a funky, Lydian-flavoured piece with some unpredictable chord progressions, languid bassline and evocative electric piano.

The psychedelic *Live The Dream* is a proggy trip comparable to Pink Floyd at their most swimmy – Clark's tasteful, spare guitar solo is packed with woozy bends, and she gets modal with a tone-rich exploration of the solo's cycling C-A chords, switching between Lydian and Mixolydian respectively to jazzy effect.

Previously, she supplied her own backing vocals, but this time Lynne Fiddmont and Kenya Hathaway (daughter of soul legend Donny) bring a rootsy, girl-group counterpoint to the whole record. Case in point is *The Melting Of The Sun*, a tune ripe with clavinet and – another *Daddy's Home* trademark – lap steel guitar. The song celebrates Clark's female heroes, Nina Simone, Tori Amos and Joni Mitchell, and there's a hint of Mitchell in the acoustic guitar of *At The Garden Party*, with Clark's nimble arpeggios driving the beautiful *Somebody Like Me*.

Even when she uses a clichéd chord progression it's with artistic intent: *My Baby Wants A Baby* rests on the poppy C/Am/Dm/G, but it's a dark song about crippling apathy (“I want to play guitar, make all my meals in microwaves...”). And with jazzy major-seventh chords and Gilmour-esque lap steel slides in *The Laughing Man*, Prince-like funk in *Pay Your Way In Pain*, and shades of both Trent Reznor and Steely Dan in *Down* (complete with auto-wah guitar and, yep, more sitar), St. Vincent's latest adds up to another high-protein musical experience.

The most organic and soulful work of Clark's career, *Daddy's Home* is the sound of a modern-day pioneer at the peak of her powers. There really is nobody else quite like her.

Grant Moon



PEDAL

KEELER TONES!

Celisse Henderson announces signature fuzz pedal

Keeley Electronics has partnered with blues-rocker Celisse Henderson for an all-new Artist Series edition of its Monterey Rotary Fuzz Vibe. Boasting eye-catching psychedelic artwork by Dominican graphic designer and illustrator Lia Sued C, the new stompbox houses the same circuitry as Keeley's original Monterey, with a rotary speaker simulation and a Fairchild Semiconductor transistor-powered fuzz, each with its own independent footswitch.

Like the original Monterey, a three-way switch on the pedal's front face toggles between Rotary, Vibe and Wah modes. Coupled with its fuzz section, this allows players to experiment with a rainbow of 60s psychedelic, Hendrix-esque tones.

For added tonal manipulation possibilities, the pedal also features internal dipswitches, which allow players to reverse the order of the fuzz and modulation sections. While fuzz is conventionally placed before modulation, swapping them around leads to a host of ring modulation-type sounds.

The Artist Series Celisse Monterey is available now for \$299, limited to 50 units. For more information, head to <https://robertkeeley.com/product/monterey-celisse-artist-series> – a portion of sales will go towards helping musicians struggling as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keeley kicked off its Artist Series in December last year, teaming up with Nashville six-stringer Daniel Donato for the Cosmic Country Phaser. Back in June, Celisse dropped her most recent single *Freedom* in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Sam Roche





ALBUM

“MY HEROES WERE ALWAYS THE RHYTHM GUYS”

THIN LIZZY AND BLACK STAR RIDERS FRONTMAN RICKY WARWICK ON HIS LATEST SOLO ALBUM, *VINTAGE GEAR* AND COVERING BRITNEY SPEARS

After leading Scottish hard rockers The Almighty in 90s, Ricky Warwick joined Thin Lizzy in 2009, and now fronts splinter group Black Star Riders. His current solo album *When Life Was Hard And Fast* is a celebration of no-frills, rock’n’roll...

What exactly are we hearing on your solo album?

We used my Gretsch guitars, plus a lot of [producer] Keith Nelson’s vintage Teles and Gibsons. There was a Rickenbacker 12-string on a few tracks too. They were fed through some Bogners and Marshall JCM800s. It was all old valve amps and vintage guitars. There were no plug-ins or any crap like that. I don’t care what people say, they’re okay for demos, but when you’re making a record digital stuff is a big

no-no for me. And I don’t really use much in terms of effects. If you’ve got a great sound, you’ve got a great sound. Keep it that way!

And what about for acoustics?

I’ve got an Avalon acoustic – they’re a company based in my hometown of Newtownards in Northern Ireland and they make beautiful hand-built guitars. That’s what I have at home and use for writing, along with a Gretsch Falcon. Ultimately, I need something that can take a lot of battering, fitted with 13 gauge strings. It has to be heavy duty... I need the barbed wire ones! Over 90% of everything I’ve written has been on acoustic. It’s an old cliché but if it sounds great like that, it will sound great no matter what.

The solo also comes with your *Stairwell Troubadour* covers set.

I wanted to do Dead Or Alive’s *You Spin Me Round* as an Irish folk punk song! I like going to songs that were part of my youth and looking at them differently. And I learned *Oops!...I Did It Again* when my youngest daughter was mad about Britney Spears, so I could sing it to her. You take this bubblegum pop song, change the progression and it starts getting pretty dark and sinister. As much as I loved covering Iron Maiden and Johnny Cash, I dug the fact people might go, ‘What the f*ck is he doing covering Dead Or Alive or Britney Spears?’

You’ve been a member of Thin Lizzy, alongside the band’s legendary guitarist Scott Gorham, for over a decade. What has that taught you?

Everything they wrote was memorable! It was all built out of great melodies and standalone

"MY AMP ALWAYS HAS THE REVERB ON TEN!"

AGED JUST 16, TOBY LEE IS A RISING BLUES ROCK STAR WITH DEBUT ALBUM *AQUARIUS*



ALBUM

parts that were instantly recognisable as hooks, from the vocals to even the drums. There were a lot of cool pushes and pulls, or notes you might not hear initially, but it was all special and all vital. And Scott Gorham's vibrato is second to none. I've never heard him bend a note flat or sharp – it's always spot on. Whenever we've had changes with the line-up, I know the vibrato of that player is very important for him – the vibratos need to match up for the dual leads. That's very high up in his list of priorities.

As for your own style, it's always been more rhythm than lead-based.

I don't have the patience to learn all the scales. It never interested me. The guitar for me is a tool to get my angst and my songs out. My heroes were always the rhythm guys. James Hetfield has one of the best right hands out there. The same applied to Malcolm Young. Players like that are the powerhouse that drives the band. It's not always about the widdly widdly! When I play a lead I like coming at it from a Neanderthal kinda angle, it sounds more cool to my ears.

Amit Sharma

W

ith rockabilly and heavy rock as well as blues, what do you think *Aquarius* says about you as a player?

I think it's a bit of a showcase for me. I've always been kind of known to play blues, that's been the 'thing'. Having the different styles throughout the album was to introduce my influences that have inspired me to be where I am now.

Who inspires you the most?

Most of the amazing blues legends aren't with us anymore but you've got people like Rory Gallagher, BB King, Gary Moore, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Can you let us in on the secrets of your tone?

My amp always, always has the reverb on ten and if it could go any further it would! I use metal picks for an almost 'resonator feel' – it brightens your sound up a bit.

What about pedals?

My Grandad, who passed away in the last couple of years, left me a little bit of money to get something that I would completely adore, so I got a Klon Centaur. There's a huge enigma around them. I'd never played one, never seen one, never been near one. And then all of a sudden, I had one. That thing's really changed my sound!

What's in your guitar collection?

I am kind of a Gibson guy. There's been an association since I was about eight, but it's only recently that it's changed to me being a Gibson Artist. I've been getting into vintage gear a lot lately. I recently sold about 12 guitars to get a '61 SG Special and 1959 ES125. I swapped the Special for a 1976 bicentennial Gibson Firebird, which has had quite a lot of mods. It's been refinished, it's got triple humbuckers – all things it wouldn't have originally had. There was a 1976 Gibson Explorer in the deal as well and that has P90s in it which is a bit weird!

I've heard there's a pretty special 335. What's the story there?

It's a 1961 Custom shop reissue. It's amazing! I basically had this conversation with Cesar from Gibson. We were sat in a hotel lobby having pizza and he said: "If you could spec your absolute dream guitar what would it be?" As every guitarist does, I had the specs in my head in like, a little storage box right at the back. So I just listed off a huge amount of things – from the shape of the neck to the type of wood. When we went back to do some filming at the Custom Shop, I walked in and this thing was just sat there!

Ellie Rogers



Words Stuart Williams Photography Olly Curtis

GREY MATTER

Neural DSP's first hardware modeller has arrived. Here's why you should be excited...



W

hen we clamped eyes on a preview of the Neural Quad Cortex way back at The NAMM Show 2020, we knew we were being treated to glimpse of something special. Fast-forward through a pandemic and Brexit and the QC is now beginning to find its way to these shores. What's all the fuss about? Well, it's a next-gen modeller that is set to rival the likes of Fractal, Kemper and Line 6, brought to us by Neural DSP whose plugins and hardware pedigree (founder Doug Castro also started Darkglass) have wowed tonesmiths since the company began in 2017.

It's loaded with 50-plus amps, over 70 effects and more than 1000 cabinet impulse responses to play with, all laid out on a super-slick-looking 7-inch multi-touch screen. Inside the QC is powered by a pair of SHARC DSP chips giving us a combined 2GHz of processing power from its four cores (see what they've done there?). Neural are claiming it as the most powerful modeller on the market for this reason, with the ability to run up to four amp chains, plus effects simultaneously.

Add in the Neural Capture function which allows you to replicate any hardware amp or overdrive you connect to its dedicated Capture connection via Neural's biometric AI and you'll see why the world is already excited. The 11 footswitches cleverly incorporate rotary controls in their caps too, so everything is kept economical space-wise, with the QC's footprint coming in at just 29x19x4.9cm. To the back of the unit, there's a host of connectivity including dual effects loops for incorporating other hardware pedals, two sets of inputs/outputs, a high-grade USB audio interface and additional foot control sockets. We've got our hands on one and we'll be giving it a full review next month!

UP CLOSE



Design

Not only is it loaded with techy solutions such as a touchscreen and dual-purpose footswitch/encoders, but Neural has kept the Quad Cortex to a gig-friendly size.



Modelling

There are over 50 amps, 70 effects and 1000 cab Irs on board, not enough for you? Keep reading...



Neural Capture

Don't call it profiling! The Quad Cortex has a dedicated socket and engine for digitally lifting the sound of any amp or overdrive you care to connect to it, and Neural reckons its AI technology makes it the most realistic on the market.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Drop B tuning
- ✓ Aeolian mode
- ✓ Slides

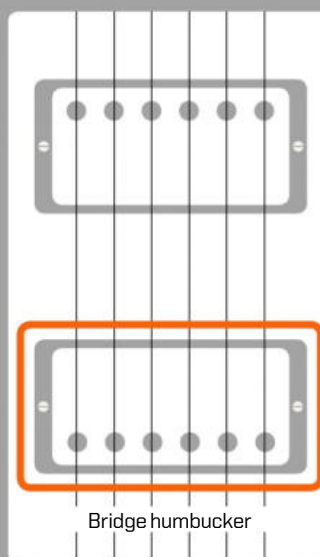


RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO
ON YOUR
CD

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Mason Hill's weighty rhythm sound comes courtesy of Marc Montgomery's PRS Singlecut driving a 100-watt PRS Archon amp matched with James Bird's Gibson Les Paul and Budda amps. Just like the rhythm parts, dial in a medium to high gain modern rock bridge humbucker tone for the solo; just keep the midrange high and boost the drive with an overdrive pedal or high-gain amp channel. You'll also need a pitch shifter set to one octave up, but keep the effect low in the mix.

MASON HILL

Against The Wall

Over five years since their self-titled EP dropped, and after a career path temporarily stalled by an unsuccessful record deal, a "quiet 2019" and the global pandemic, Scottish rockers Mason Hill look set to finally hit the big time, as their debut full-length album recently hit number 1 in the UK rock chart. Citing acts like Alter Bridge, Shinedown and Black Stone Cherry as

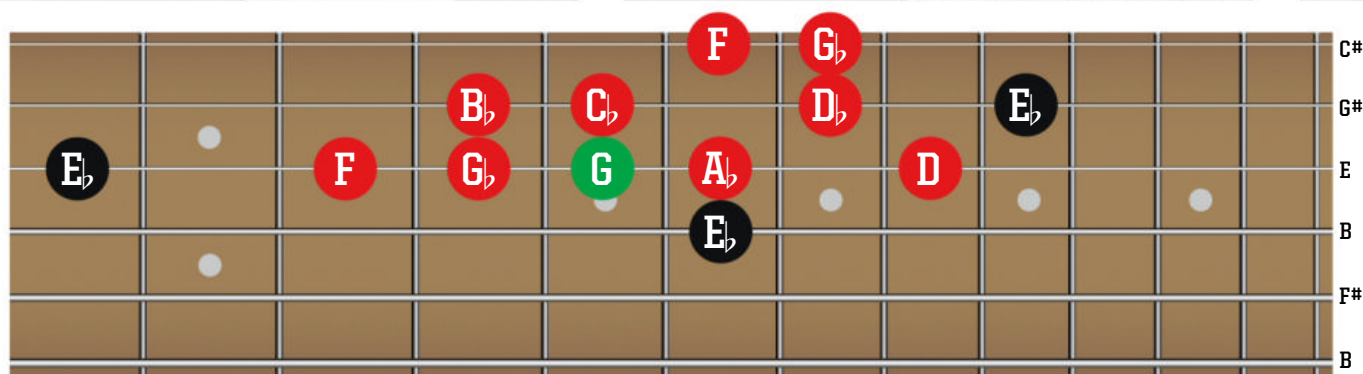
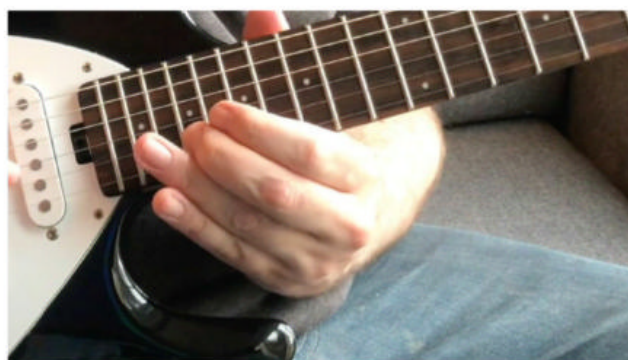
inspiration, the band wear their influences on their collective sleeves – and we're looking at the album title track here, though, in a change to our riff format, we're taking a look at guitarist James Bird's solo.

It's a typically melodic rock offering played in drop B (B F# B E G# C#) and with a dash of an octave-up pitch shifter effect for a contemporary tone. Be sure to follow our slowed-down performance in the video on

your Guitar Skills CD for a clearer idea of how the solo is played.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 2:20–2:35
Tempo: 126 bpm
Key/scale: E_b natural minor scale
Main techniques: Slides, position shifts, vibrato



Most of James Bird's solo takes place between the 14th and 17th frets in the E_b natural minor scale. Some guitarists find it easier 'think pentatonic' and mentally add in the extra notes – it's worth

learning the scale shape if you can though. Note that the 15th fret G (shown in green) is from E_b major, not minor, so it injects a temporary moment of brightness. Think how much brighter a major

chord is compared to a minor one – this note has the exact same effect. Finally, if you want to play along to the solo in standard tuning, simply play three frets lower down the neck.

NEW TECH



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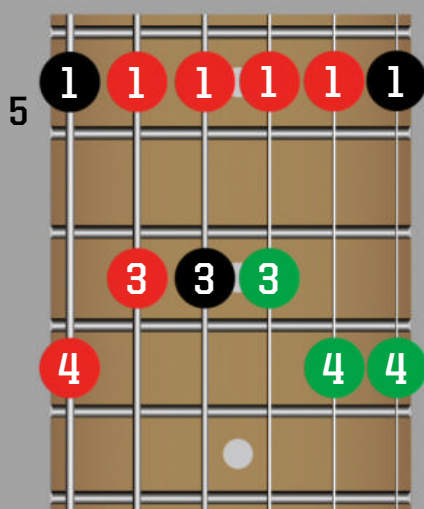
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GETTING STARTED WITH... STRING BENDING

Get to grips with an essential lead guitar technique with TG's easy lesson

SCALE THE SUMMIT

The most useful shape you'll ever learn... And it's great for string bending, too!



A minor pentatonic scale

This shape is every blues, pop, and rock guitarist's number one scale, found at the heart of countless riffs and solos. Its 'two notes on every string' layout make it perfect for string bends too. Technically, you can bend any fretted note, but we've highlighted the easiest ones in green to help you get started. Numbers tell you which finger to use. Black dots are root notes. All others are red.



String bending is probably the electric guitar's most important and unique sound. Acoustic strings are generally too heavy to bend, so early rock 'n' rollers like Chuck Berry used banjo strings until thin enough guitar strings were invented. The sound of bent strings became essential to blues, rock, and almost every electric guitar style since.

If you're new to this technique, focus on bending in tune and using your wrist to power the

bending motion. It is possible to bend by pushing with your fingers, but your wrist will give more strength and control. To check you're in tune, you can play a 'unison bend', as featured in both example licks. Play two notes at once and bend the lower string until it sounds the same as the higher one. Through an overdriven amp, you'll hear a pulsing sound when the two notes are different pitches. This will go away when they are exactly in tune.

TECHNIQUE CHECK...

Get your fingers in prime position and your bends will rock!



1. BEFORE BENDING...
...position your fingers together for extra support, put your thumb over the neck for leverage, and press your first finger knuckle against the neck as a fulcrum.



2. EXECUTING A BEND
The curve and shape of your fingers shouldn't change much from the pre-bent position, because your wrist does the work.



3. FOURTH-FINGER BENDS
Fourth-finger bends are tough - it's everyone's weakest digit! Use as many spare fingers as you can to share the load!



4. UNISON BENDS
In this unison bend the first finger frets the second string, while the second and third fingers are used to bend the third. Both strings are played together.

1 EASY ROCK BENDING LICK

TRACK 08

♩=100

A⁵ G⁵ C⁵ A⁵ G⁵ A⁵ G⁵ A⁵

PM - - - - - PM PM PM

TAB 7 (9) 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 (9) 7 5 5 7 7 5 7 5 7

BU BU

The bend that opens bar 1 is a straightforward one: place your fingers on the 7th fret and bend up until it sounds like the 9th fret note - the '7' and '9' in the tab tell you this and BU just means 'bend up'. In bar 2 you'll be playing the same bend but also holding down the 5th fret on the second string at the same time.

2 UNISON BENDS AND STRETCHES

TRACK 09

A⁵ G⁵ C⁵ A⁵ G⁵ A⁵ G⁵ A⁵

PM - - - - - RP

TAB 7 7 5 7 5 7 5 5 8 (10) 8 8 (10) 8 (10) 5 (10) 5 8 5 (10)

BU BU BU BU

The first two examples in bar 3 are bends from the 8th fret to the 10th. They're fairly easy, so take the opportunity to focus on hitting the right pitch. The closing run is tricky, jumping between unison bends and un-bent notes. Start slowly and practise the lick 12 frets higher where the frets are closer together if you need to.





The members of Iceage were teenagers when their debut album *New Brigade*, a burst of post-punk-infused hardcore, was released in 2011. “When I saw an amp I just turned

everything up to full,” says guitarist Johan Wieth of his early approach. Over three subsequent albums the band’s sound has grown, smoothing rough edges and embracing melody without losing their emotional core. New release *Seek Shelter* takes that a stage further.

Seek Shelter is the first time Iceage have worked with a producer besides longtime collaborator Nis Bysted. On discovering Peter Kember was a fan they headed to his base in Portugal to record. Kember, better known as Sonic Boom of British psychedelic rockers Spacemen 3, was “more a wizard than a producer,” according to frontman Elias Rønnefelt, and his influence finds Iceage treading anthemic, ecstatic ground.

As Johan recalls: “We found this old public radio studio in Lisbon, where they would do symphonies and stuff. It had this really beautiful roof, but it was very worn down so it when it rained, it was literally raining inside the studio.” In just 12 days, the band’s four longest-serving members recorded the basic tracks, but *Seek Shelter* was given another dimension by new recruit, guitarist

Casper Fernandez, who overdubbed his parts in Copenhagen.

Johan explains: “You can’t tell Casper to play something. Well, you can and he will, but he has so much soul and spirit that he’ll make it his own. We quickly realized that was very much a part of these new songs. For me, playing with someone you’re comfortable with opens up your own playing. It makes me a better musician to play with him. You give each other space.”

Guitarists listening to the album will immediately notice killer reverb tones. “That’s my Mantic Proverb pedal,” says Johan. “Everyone’s asking ‘What reverb is that?’ It has such a distinct sound. A friend opened it up and it’s strange, it’s the same plates as in any other new reverb pedal. So we couldn’t really explain why it sounded different.” Johan sets the mix at 9 o’clock. The Numb control, which reduces the clarity of reverb, is on maximum, but the Dwell (decay time) is only at 8 o’clock. “So it’s not really dense, long reverb,” he explains, “but it’s very audible. It’s never off.”

Johan’s favoured amp is somewhat surprising. “We had a two-amp setup for this album, a Vox AC30 and a Marshall JCM800 2203. But mostly I just played the JCM800.” What, the stadium rock amp beloved of Zakk Wylde and Slayer? “When we had to play festivals I always asked for a Fender Twin, and I was always struggling with them. Sometimes they had

Words Jonny Scaramanga Photos Mishael Phillip / Jonas Bang / Fryd Frydendahl

“IT WAS LIKE A GEAR NERD’S DREAM!”

Danish post-punk band **Iceage** recorded their new album with a wizard-like producer, an array of rare, esoteric offset guitars and an amp favoured by metal hero Zakk Wylde. Guitarist Johan Wieth reveals how this strange combination “works out perfectly”

**ABOVE**

Iceage performing at Coachella music festival in 2019, with Johan far left

a JCM800, and I was like 'That's horrible, I hate that sound.' One day we were at a festival and they only had the Marshall. I said, 'Well, whatever.' I think I had been using it wrong, or maybe I ran into some that just didn't sound good. With the low gain input I couldn't get enough oomph out of it, but I switched to the high input and for some reason it just works. I will say that using a Les Paul, it becomes that very familiar sound, but using a Jazzmaster it works out perfectly. You can get a really dense sound and you can get that low end, and you can get that high without it being out of control."

Still, you'd be hard pressed to tell that the amp that defined 80s rock is the same one on *Seek Shelter*. "I think maybe it has something to do with the attack. I used a Guyatone LG-350T which has these really trebly single coil pickups. I did most clean and rhythm stuff on that. Peter Kember has a very large collection of guitars." Among Kember's weapons was a Jack White-style Eastwood Airline. "There's a lot of Eastwood for the denser parts. I played a lot of his DiPinto guitars.

Peter had this Vox Teardrop guitar that is the Spacemen 3 sound, and I played that a bit. My friend has a 1974 goldtop Les Paul that I used for some lead parts. The two guitars that are mine are a Jazzmaster and a Jaguar. It was like a gear nerd's dream."

From this arsenal Johan ran into his pedalboard. "I have the gain on the amp about halfway up because I have three distortion pedals, and if I start pushing it more it becomes a bit much." The two main distortions are a ZVex Distortron and a Wampler Euphoria, while the third is sometimes a ZVex Box of Rock and sometimes a ProCo Rat: "I like the Rat because it's especially extreme. I saw Jason Pierce from Spiritualized. He plays a JCM800 as well, and he was using a Rat, so I tried it." He never has all three distortions on at once, but the Distortron and Euphoria do often run together, volume set high and gain low.

Johan's ever-expanding pedalboard also houses a Catalinbread Echorec delay, Fulltone Tremolo, and TC Corona Chorus. "I have my most prized possession, the Wilson Effects wah.

It's kind of my secret weapon. It's more like this really weird filter, and it has bass settings to boost low end. It just sounds like no other wah pedal. I don't mess around with it too much, I usually just keep it in a fixed position."

As for musical influences, Johan tries to avoid consciously having them. "My idea about going into the studio or even writing an album is that you should be very careful listening to too much music while you do it. At least for me, it has a tendency to become a little too explicit. I couldn't really tell you 'oh I was listening a lot to this'. I think for our records it was not always as much about what kind of music as you were listening to as what was going on in our lives at the time. What books were you reading, what films you were watching. I think I was reading Amos Tutuola's *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*."

Despite the lack of conscious efforts, British critics have unanimously compared Iceage's recent output to the work of Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds. Johan is philosophical. "It's fine if people think it sounds like the Bad Seeds, but you get tired if you're hearing the same the same thing over and over. I think the Bad Seeds are a good band. I haven't listened to them in a long time. We don't write music to make it sound like them. But it's the first thing you do when you hear something. You don't go, 'oh this sounds like a duck crossing the road with a big head,' you go, 'oh this sounds like another piece of music I've heard.'"

Iceage are unbothered, though, instead buzzing from their recent injection of new blood. Adding Casper Fernandez gives Iceage something they've long needed. In the studio, vocalist Rønnenfelt has always played rhythm guitar, and Fernandez's arrival gives them two live guitars. Never a band to settle for less, however, all three guitarists ended up playing on the album – "There's at least seven guitar tracks on each song." Johan handles lead guitar, while Casper takes the slide parts. In opener *Shelter Song*, you hear those two sounds overlapping. Johan is revelling in the new energy this brings to the band. "It's reinvigorating."

"MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION IS THE WILSON EFFECTS WAH - IT'S KIND OF MY SECRET WEAPON" JOHAN WIETH

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“We wanted this album to be orgasmic!”

Words Amit Sharma Portrait Alysse Gafkjen

No modern rock band polarizes opinion like **Greta Van Fleet**. But with new album *The Battle At Garden's Gate*, will they finally shake off the 'mini-Led Zeppelin' label? Guitarist Jake Kiszka explains how they're reaching for a sound that's “orgasmic and cinematic”, and how he is constantly refining and rethinking his art

Greta Van Fleet could very well be the most divisive rock band of the 21st Century. On one hand, there are those who recognise great maturity in the Grammy-winning Michigan quartet and praise their ability to conjure up vintage sounds of the past with staggering accuracy. And on the other, there are the detractors who write the band off as cocky young Led Zeppelin wannabes, lacking both credibility and originality.

Given the influences at play on GVF's 2018 debut *Anthem Of The Peaceful Army*, it's perfectly understandable how they ended up in this position. But this may be about to change with the release of new album *The Battle At Garden's Gate*.

The three Kiszka brothers – singer Josh, guitarist Jake and bassist Sam – and the fourth member of the band, drummer Danny Wagner, all freely admit that Led Zeppelin will always be one of GVF's primary influences. But this time around they have been adding new dimensions to their wall of noise. More varied and expansive than anything they've recorded in the past, *The Battle At Garden's Gate*, should hopefully put an end to the endless debates on their musical legitimacy...

As Jake explains to TG: “We'll still be honoured and humbled by any references to or affiliations with Led Zeppelin,” says Jake Kiszka, when confronted with the negative aspects of being such a popular and yet polarising band. “I mean, it's worth noting that Zeppelin were an influence on many other groups. But I think this album showcases and reimagines the influences we grew up with, especially the blues stuff...”

“It's interesting – the commentary we've had surrounding Led Zeppelin. We don't feel it's something that should subtract from originality. They've influenced us in positive ways. We wanted this album to be orgasmic and cinematic, and also an ode to our childhood as well – moments that were influential musically, philosophically or even pictorially through film. So it had to be really big and broad, with all of those elements going into the creative process. This record is a testament to where we are musically right now.”

The new album's opening track *Heat Above* has a flavour of *The Beatles* and of progressive rock...

Jake Kiszka: Yeah, it's a very strange song with a funny arrangement. The initial idea came about when we were in Michigan three years ago, we went there to write one summer. We walked



into this house that belonged to my uncle and his daughter had this little classical mini-scale acoustic thing for learning on. I just picked it up and played that riff instantaneously, thinking, 'Well, that's a song right there!' It came very quickly, we'd literally just walked in through the door. And so we put it on the shelf. It didn't feel ready to be recorded, I honestly don't know if we had the capability at that time to do it justice and serve the song in that way. Eventually, we pulled it back down and repurposed it with some rearranging, and yeah, that was it!

It definitely feels like you've been discovering more unusual ways of playing simple riffs, with more open strings and inversions...

That definitely comes from the whole university of playing things that sound simplistic and easy to listen to but have these added layers of complexity when you get down to it. A lot of my favourite guitar players have tended to play like that. When I was a kid, I'd say, 'Ah I want to learn that riff or piece!' because I liked the sound of it. And then I'd realised it wasn't easy, asking myself why I couldn't make it sound the way they did. Eventually you learn that's the more tactile aspect of playing. It's something I've tried to bring to my own parts, ideas that sound fun with their own layers of complexity. I'm all about stretching the possibilities with detail and execution, those delicate little nuances that make it come to life.

How exactly did you work on that side of your playing - were you thinking in terms of the CAGED system, studying chordal chemistry or simply just experimenting with shapes?

I think a lot of it has been studious, but I think ultimately over time it's become more intuitive. As I'm playing I start to toy with how to add things in, little twists here and there. Whenever I found something interesting, I'd have to find out why - to fundamentally understand what was making it sound the way it did. Sometimes it's about completely breaking the rules and playing things



ABOVE

Greta Van Fleet: (left to right) Danny Wagner, Jake Kiszka, Josh Kiszka, Sam Kiszka.

that shouldn't sound good or admirable. Some ideas might not be technically accurate musically, but they work well in terms of emotion and feel. They might not sound as intentional, but they sound more emotive. It really comes down to listening to those nuances and trying to replicate what you hear from other players or in your head. Just getting used to that kind of exploration will give you new shapes and ideas to come up with your own nuances. It's an important part of any musician's journey. You need to find originality and independence after experimenting with all those little nuances. It's just like Miles Davis said: 'Anybody can play. The note is only 20 per cent. The attitude of the motherf*cker who plays it is 80 per cent.' I agree with that. It's all about individuality.

Are there any techniques you've been working on specifically over the last few years?

There are some technical things I've picked up from other guitar players just

from being on the road, just little licks or ideas that I've incorporated into my own thing. There's this strange one I picked up from a player called Chris Turpin who is in Ida Mae and he picked it up from Tommy Emmanuel. And Tommy picked it up from Chet Atkins or Merle Haggard or some old country fellow. It's an odd technique I've been using quite a lot, using hammer-ons and pull-offs almost at the same time. You can actually hear it at the very end of *Built By Nations*, that weird scale thing I play.

Age Of Machine and Tears Of Rain have some interesting slapback echoes and ambiences that weren't on the debut - closer to what you might hear on a 70s David Bowie record...

I really got more into slap delays, ambiences and space echoes on this album. We'd use different techniques to create those sounds, like physically delaying one amp against another. One wet and one dry, or both dry or both

"SOMETIMES IT'S ABOUT COMPLETELY BREAKING THE RULES AND PLAYING THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T SOUND GOOD" JAKE KISZKA



wet. I got more into playing around with effects, I had a lot of time to do that and craft away... Which was lucky for me! I think we had two 60s Fender champs and did the whole stereo thing. I loved playing around with delays for that.

Your main pedals for the live shows have been the Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail, the Jext Telez Range Lord and a Cry Baby wah. Has much changed? Those have become pretty standard for me. I have been toying around with

delay pedals, too, but that's pretty much all I've needed so far. The Range Lord is this fuzzy top-ended boost that has this certain kind of breakup to it, which helps me dial in more Hendrix-style sounds. If I ever need any more push or gain or drive, that's what I use. And I like the Holy Grail reverb because it's really simple in design. I tend to be drawn to pedals that have a singular application. It's a straightforward pedal that gives me a very accurate effect, albeit in digital form. I actually have a Fender reverb

tank, so I used that on the record for more of an analogue vibe. But for live shows, I just love the simplicity of the Electro-Harmonix. It's a very pleasant and natural kind of sound. We also used an old POG octaver on *Built By Nations*.

Is the 1961 SG/Les Paul still your main guitar?

Yeah! I used that on a lot of stuff. I did branch out with other guitars on certain songs, many of which have interesting stories and feel kinda fabled as well. But for the solos I really wanted to stick with the '61 Les Paul. It's the main thing I tend to use, so it felt right. I was lent a factory black 1959 Gibson ES-335 for the song *Broken Bells*. A friend of mine from the Chicago Music Exchange dropped it off specifically so I could use it on this record, which was amazing. I think there's only about five or six that are known. I believe Keith Richards has one, as well as maybe Johnny Marr and John Shanks, the Bon Jovi producer and touring guitarist. There were some other really cool guitars too, like a blonde '62 Telecaster and a 60s sunburst Strat for the solos at the beginning and in the middle of *The Barbarians*. It was that Strat with a wah pedal and split with some delay to make it feel really wide. That was fun because I could actually use the whammy bar a bit...

Ah yes, because we'd seen you had the sideways tremolo on your Les Paul blocked off...

Yeah, it's sideways and didn't work for sh*t [laughs]. It's an amazing guitar though, that a friend of mine who owns the Chicago Music Exchange gave me a few years. I saw that 1961 Les Paul in the store and it was love at first sight. He lent it to me for three years. I beat the hell out of it on tour and three years later I bought it! Thank god he lent it to me.

As for amps, was it just those Fenders you mentioned or did you have the Marshall Astoria and Bletchley Belchfire 45 in the mix?

I used the Astoria and some Bletchley amps too – they're a boutique company based in Eastside Detroit. We were coming through there and met the owner, who lent us some amps – a lot of that stuff ended up on our earlier recordings done in Detroit. I love those amps and tour with them, so they really are another aspect of my sound, along with the Astoria. We used a lot of



Photo: Getty



different amps on this album, going with whatever sounded right for the song.

And how about the acoustic sounds on this record?

It was interesting, there were a bunch of different acoustics that we used, but the go-to for me was actually an Epiphone Texan, this 1964 F-79 with a smaller neck. John Lennon used that model too. I tend to like smaller necks, so that was easy to play and really had an amazing sound, so I used it a lot. There was also a Martin 12-string, a Silvertone 319, that Gibson J-15 that I sometimes tour with and a Giannini classical which you can hear in the bridge section of *Caravel*. And I have this Espana double neck acoustic with a 12-string on the top and a six on the bottom... That's what you hear at the end of *Broken Bells*, played on the top neck. It's a really interesting guitar!

You played a lot of Cream covers growing up. It definitely feels like Eric Clapton left his mark on the moments where you employ a faster style of vibrato...

It's a key element of any guitarist's playing – everyone has a different vibrato! I don't really know what mine is or where it came from. It's pretty organic and natural, but I can hear similarities with Clapton or someone like Angus Young – both of whom have been outrageously influential on me. I was actually listening to some AC/DC while we were making this album and it felt like I'd never really listened to his vibrato specifically, which made me want to incorporate it. So in *The Weight Of Dreams*, there's that bluesy melody that gave me the opportunity to really go for it!

A lot of your lead playing is pentatonic-based. How do you

ABOVE

Jake Kiszka takes centre stage: "I'm all about stretching the possibilities," he says.

go about getting more mileage out of that scale?

It's definitely one of my main ones. And there have definitely been times I've felt limited by the pentatonic. All my blues influences were pentatonic-based musicians. It's not like I'll just wake up and say, 'Let's just switch to Dorian today!' and change the framework. And yeah, I've felt really confined by it at times. But I like the idea of crafting your own language and phrases, so what got me around the limitations is sitting down to work out my own complexities and nuances within that scale, which might also go into other frameworks. I might add in a little Dorian flavour here or a blue note there, crafting my own lines that are completely original. Thinking in those terms is very beneficial – inventing your own stock phrases and language will push your playing to a different realm. It will give you a new understanding. As will tuning

your guitar to something completely different. Doing things like that will force you to change how you think.

"I REALLY GOT INTO SLAP DELAYS, AMBIENCES AND SPACE ECHOES ON THIS ALBUM" JAKE KISZKA

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Interview Grant Moon

Steve Lukather

HE PLAYED ON THE BIGGEST SELLING ALBUM OF ALL TIME. HE'S THE DRIVING FORCE IN LEGENDARY ROCK ACT TOTO. AND HE JUST SO HAPPENS TO PLAY IN ANOTHER BAND WITH A BEATLE. IF ANYONE HAS SEEN AND HEARD IT ALL, IT'S STEVE LUKATHER. AND HIS ADVICE TO TG READERS IS SIMPLE: "YOU GOTTA BE CONSISTENT"

W

hen Steve Lukather talks guitar, you take a knee and listen. For over 40 years, the LA-born musician has been the one constant member of multi-platinum rockers Toto, and as a session player his unparalleled CV includes stints with an array of legendary artists including Aretha Franklin, Elton John and Michael

Jackson. On Jackson's masterpiece *Thriller*, the biggest selling album of all time, it was Eddie Van Halen who played the solo in *Beat It*, but Lukather who laid down the song's signature riff.

These days he is also a member of Ringo Starr's All Star Band, and Ringo is just one of the friends appearing on his latest solo album, *I Found The Sun Again*. "I have to pinch myself," he says. "Ringo's a dear friend, we Facetime every week. Yes, he's one of the Beatles, but he's also one of the most intelligent, funny, soulful and spiritual people you could meet. You just wanna be around him. We got half a million YouTube views for my *Run To Me* video with him, and 100,000 views for the title track. If people were still buying singles I'd have a gold record by now!"

As he adds with a knowing smile: "I'm not doing too bad for an old guy!" And this old guy has much hard-earned wisdom to pass on...

Keep your ears and your mind open.

I can listen to Slipknot and The Carpenters on the same day and not be weirded out by it. But I've always loved sweet chords. I wrote the

ballads for Toto on piano. And high school was where it started for me. When I met [future Toto bandmates] the Porcaro Brothers they turned me onto all this new music – jazz, funk, what the studio musicians in LA

were playing – and my musical palette grew. I was the guy always changing stations seeking out new stuff, I was enamoured by jazz and jazz fusion, players like John McLaughlin and Al Di Meola, Larry Carlton, Lee Ritenour and Jay Graydon. They were the big boys, and I wanted to be like *them*. Larry's solo on [Steely Dan's] *Kid Charlemagne* hit me hard. He was a jazz guy playing with a rock sound – it had a little hair on it, and I loved it. I didn't have aspirations to be a 'rock star' or to have a hit record, because that's the needle in a haystack. I just wanted to be a professional musician, a studio player, because that was a more viable job. I wound up on a lot of TV shows like *Midnight Special*, this weird 18 year-old behind all these singers!



STEVE LUKATHER





Be a team player.

I was 19 when I got a gig with Boz Scaggs, and he was great. He made a big deal about me on stage, and that's what sold Jeff Porcaro on the idea I might be the right guy for Toto. So I got a shot, and that's the luck – getting the shot. The trick is getting that second call-back. You have to perform, and if you're good enough to get the call-back you've made the cut. That means you can handle the pressure of the gig, of being creative and coming up with your parts on the spot, with no demos, no rehearsal, no warning of what was coming. When you're given a chart that says G, E minor, A minor, D – what are you gonna play? You get the vibe of the song, the drummer starts playing a little bit so you get the groove, everybody's playing, and you gotta find a part that works, that helps the whole song glue together.

Timing is everything.

What I have that some other, better, players didn't is an arranger's ear. If I'm working with another guitar player I'd better come up with something that works with his part. I've found myself playing with legends like Jay [Graydon], Ray Parker Jr., Dean Parks. Yeah, I got lucky, but you've still gotta bring it. I've seen some incredible musicians fold up under the pressure once they see that red light go on. You gotta be a great rhythm guitar player, have great feel and great time, and you gotta be

consistent. I've had to overdub guys in big bands who could play the solos, but when they played [rhythm] to the click they had no swing, they were stiff and all over the time. I'd be the ringer that came in and played all the dumb parts but play 'em in time! I can't tell you who – I had to sign NDAs! And when you do get a solo you don't have to

ABOVE

Lukather performing with Toto in Oslo, June 20, 2019



WHAMMY BAR

Steve uses the tremolo arm to give blues licks a rock/fusion vibe. Cradle the tremolo arm in your spare picking hand fingers while playing lead. You'll find you naturally dip the bar slightly as you pick, putting a neat scoop on the front of each note. With the tremolo set to float, you can add vibrato by waggling the bar up and down. This can be subtle or, as Luke prefers, more extreme.

show how big your d*ck is in the first two bars, y'know?

Sometimes it's right to play a little out of tune.

When I played on *Thriller*, Quincy (Jones, producer) gave me free rein all the time. For *Human Nature*, he told me: 'You gotta make this funky for me, man – I gotta get this on RnB radio'. I said to Bruce [Swedien, legendary record engineer] 'Let's try something – plug me direct, let's get a weird sound. I came up with the part and double-tracked it, but for the second track we slowed the tape down a bit to make it a little out of tune, like the Beatles used to do. The two parts rubbed against each other a bit, gave it a quirky chorusy feeling, and Quincy loved it. *Beat It* was Michael's riff, and when I changed it a little he started dancing, doing the Michael Jackson thing two feet away from me. I'm 24 years old thinking I'd made the big time! I played the bass and all the guitars on that one, except Ed [Van Halen]'s solo. I'd used all these Marshalls, then Quincy called me back saying, 'It sounds too big! I want to make this a crossover hit – use one of your little amps!' So I plugged in my Fender Deluxe, backed off the distortion and gave him what you hear on the final record.

For extra motivation, get a sh*tty job!

If I were a kid starting out now, I would find a gig with someone with a record deal, a singer who needs a band. That's a viable possibility for when the gigs come back, and they will. If you do wanna be in a band, it is competitive, but if you and your music are good enough you will rise. As a kid I had a couple of sh*tty jobs – no way I was going to clean out dry cleaning solvent for the rest of my life! I suggest every kid have a sh*t job to motivate them to do what they wanna do.

If you want to make money, write songs.

I still talk to [Toto keyboardist] David Paich every day at 6am. He's not medically able to tour, but runs the band with me. We got a new line-up for our livestream show [last November] and it worked. I'm the thread through all 15 incarnations of the band. Dave was a master composer, he wrote *Hold The Line*, *Rosanna*, co-wrote *Africa* with Jeff. He always said that if you write good songs and get great musicians to play

them it's going to sound like dope. He would encourage me to write, then we'd write together, and by *Toto IV* we were all writing. It's more lucrative than not writing, and the more you work on it the better you can get. We do solo stuff in the Toto set now, as a lot of the same people buy the records. But the world has changed. We've had three billion streams with Toto – *three billion!* And where's the f*cking money? I could use some right now!

It's a hard knock life!

It's a simple way of life. When somebody smacks you in the face and knocks you on your ass you get up and go: 'F*ck you – give me another one!' If you can't take it get out, because that's what this business is emotionally, it's a punch in the face. You'll hear 'no' a lot more than 'yes', and there's real pressure. That red light's on – are you gonna deliver, or fold up like a chair? People say 'It's easy being a rock star! Anyone can do it', like people say, 'I'm an actor, I can remember lines, it's easy!' Yeah? Show me! Show me how easy it is next to a Jack Nicholson! For us guitarists, it's much harder and more tedious to learn how to play simple than it is to play ninety million miles an hour. There are levels of shred, and I'm on a low level. I used to learn George Harrison shit and everyone thought I was a badass! Now there's these little kids on YouTube who play like Stevie Ray Vaughan. I was trained for a different era.

Go easy on the effects.

The 80s were famous for too much of everything – chorus, delays. I'd play on a couple of records with these effects, then producers would ask you for that sound. I'd say, 'Well I don't hear that on this song,' but they'd want it. When they hire you they'd say 'You're gonna bring the Bradshaw, right?' because



“THERE ARE LEVELS OF SHRED, AND I'M ON A LOW LEVEL.”

KICKIN BACK

“People say it's easy being a rock star!”

that's the sound they going for. On the first Toto records I'd have the time and money to experiment on layering guitars, but working on other people's music, you had to give them what they want. I get these guys making digital fx patches called things like 'Luke' and it's all this flanging and reverb and it sounds like a wash of sh*t. 'So that's what you think I sound like?!' But I have been guilty of overusing that stuff, shamefully so. The day after I got the Bradshaw rig I did my *Star Licks* [instructional] video [tinyurl.com/vy2azhlh]. It was an era. The clothes, the hair, the drugs, MTV... Those were heady times, bro! You had to be there.

Find your own sound...

I know good when I hear it. Snarky

Puppy are one of my favourite bands, and Tosin Abasi [Animals As Leaders] is an alien! Call me a musical snob, but I still like cats who can really play, and not just pretend, like these guys who make a wall of crunchy, quadrupled guitars then play the harmonic minor scale at lightning speed. Maybe it's a thing, a style purposely done, but I'm just saying – when I was a kid you could hear the difference between Jethro Tull and Led Zeppelin. My son Trev's got his own band, Levara, they sound like Toto if we were heavier. He writes his solos out, and he once told me, 'Dad, I'm not gonna just go play the blues for you!' And I'm like 'Great, you found your niche!' And that's important. Find your niche, find your sound, find your place. Not everybody can play everything.



EMBELLISHED BENDS

You can hear Luke's signature move in the *Rosanna* solo at 3:17 and 3:23. Try it yourself: bend the 12th fret of the G string up two frets' worth, using your third finger with support from your first and second fingers. While the string is still bent, add your fourth finger on to fret 13 (which will sound like 15 because of the bend) and repick. To finish like Luke, then repeat the

original bend. Steve says: "I do that with my pinky. I just heard it – 'I need a note! Okay, there it is.' You can't start over-thinking this stuff too much, because you become self-conscious when you do it. If I start thinking about it too much I'll fuck it up! It was just one take, double-tracked. We were jamming, grooving like we always used to. You just improvise."

Words Milton Mermikides

GUITAROVISION

Six guitar lessons of the
Eurovision Song Contest

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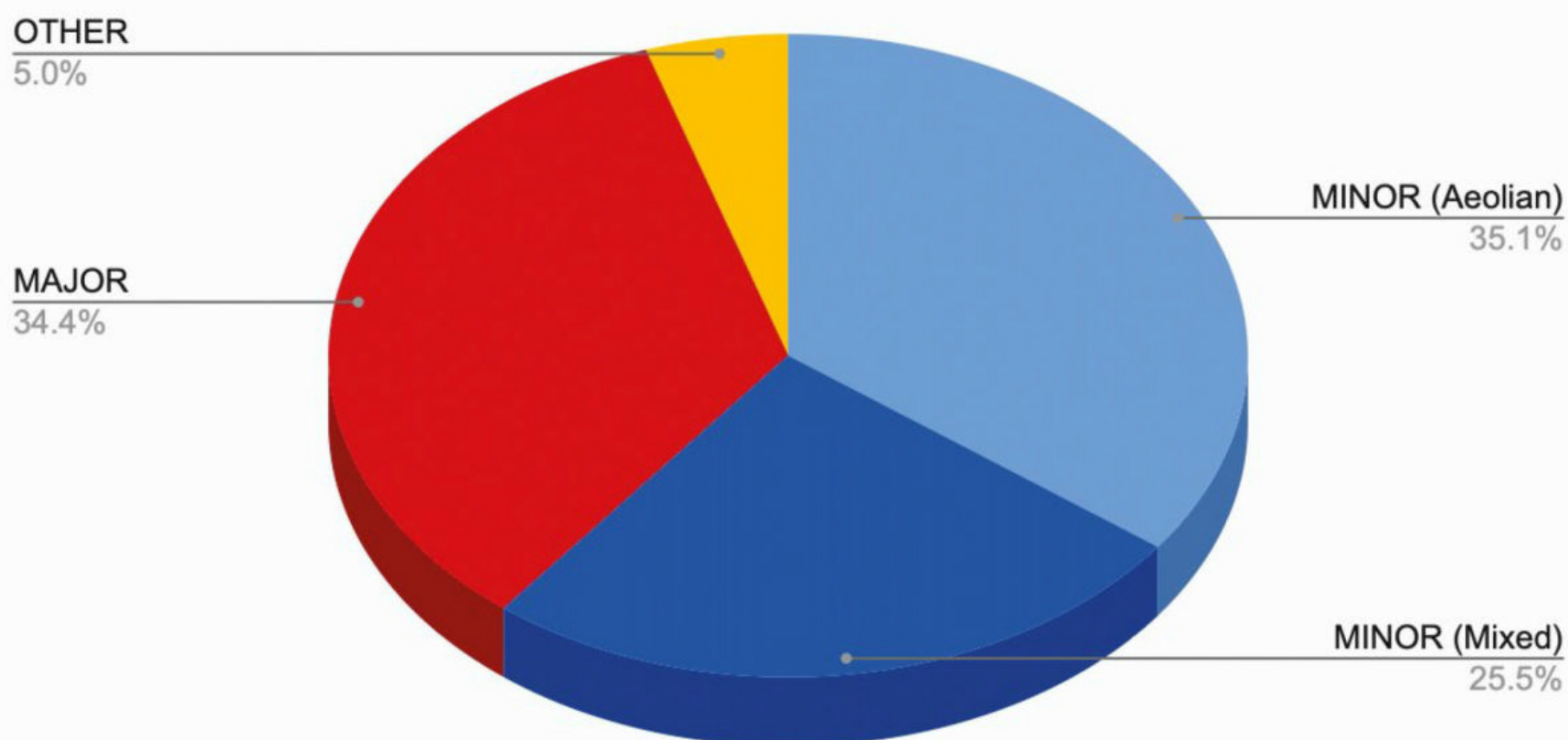
Joe Bennett and Simon Troup's Euro research can be found here: joebennett.net
Data on the Four-chord song is taken from Mark Richards' 2017 academic paper:
'Tonal Ambiguity in Popular Music's Axis Progressions', Music Theory Online,
Volume 23, no. 3, September 2017, Society for Music Theory.

The now 65-year-old Eurovision Song Contest is as divisive as it is glitzy. The biggest party in pop for its fans, a guilty pleasure for some, and the worst thing to happen to music for others! Wherever you find yourself on this spectrum, remember that

Eurovision has at its core a simple musical challenge: to make music that's immediately accessible, yet individual enough to stand out from the crowd. And that means there's plenty for us guitarists to learn.

Here, with the help of TG luminaries Dr Joe Bennett and Simon Troup, who have collected

and analysed vast amounts of Eurovision data, music theorist and Eurovision blogger Milton Mermikides explores the lessons Eurovision teaches us about making music and looks at the contest's more memorable guitar moments. We'll start with a look at some essential scales. Hang on to your extensions!



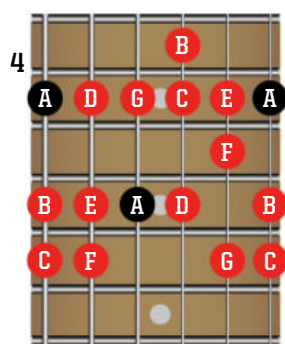
KEYS & SCALES

Lesson 1: Simple minor and major keys rule!

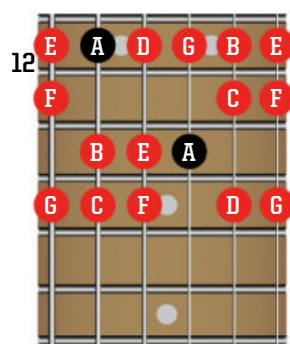
Eurovision's music has two main goals: immediate appeal, and clear emotional signalling. So, regardless of country of origin, tonalities are almost always either 'happy' and major, or 'sad' and minor. In fact, over 60% of the finalists from 2010–19 used only the major or natural minor scales. Another 26% used minor with some variations. Minor key songs occasionally make use of the harmonic minor scale. More rare though are songs entirely in harmonic minor, or the 'exotic' scales of Phrygian, Phrygian Dominant, Dorian, Mixolydian or

other modes. They almost always make some appearance (particularly in entries from Greece, Macedonia and Spain) but are collectively only found in about 5% of finalists in the last 10 years.

Often a mood switch from sad to happy is accomplished by using the 'relative' major scale which shares the same notes. For example, C major (C D E F G A B) and A minor (A B C D E F G) share the same notes and can create a 'sad' verse in A minor and a 'happy' chorus in C major. Just start on a different root note.



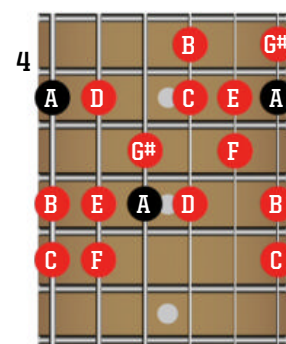
A natural minor scale
(comfy male range)



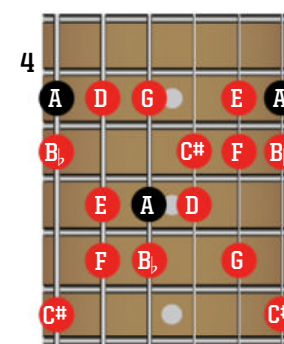
A natural minor scale
(comfy female range)



C major scale

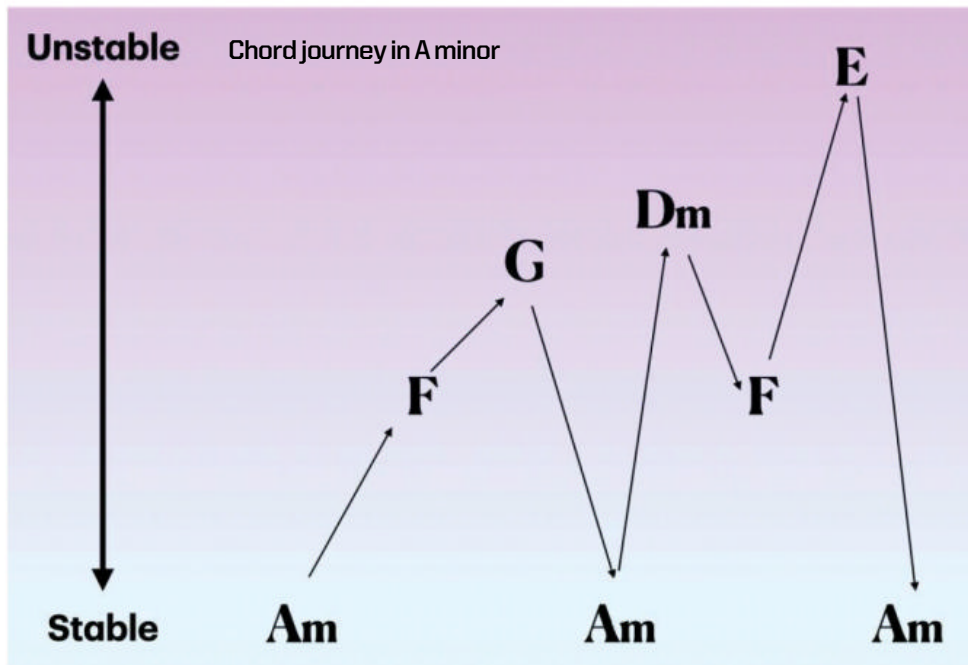


A harmonic minor scale



A Phrygian Dominant mode

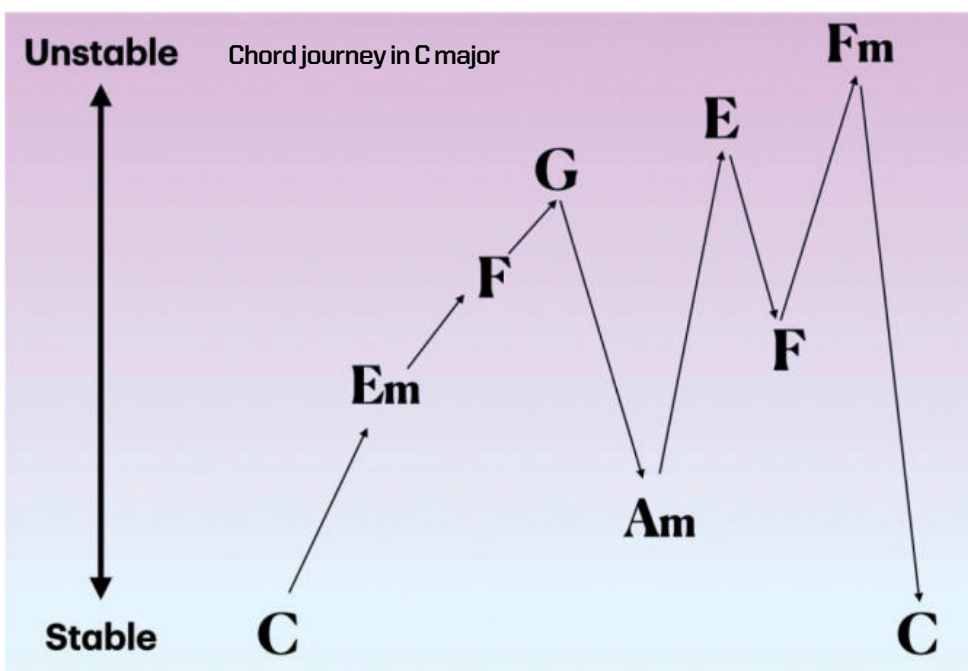
If there ever was a 'Eurovision scale', it's the natural minor scale (aka Aeolian mode), which we've shown here in A, representing the comfortable range for male and female vocalists. Use these as starting points to write your own Euro-pop style melodies. C major is the 'happy' relative major alternative. The other shapes are more experimental options.



PROGRESSIONS: CHORD JOURNEYS

Lesson 2: Return to the root chord

There are two main tactics when writing a Eurovision-inspired, pop-style chord progression. The first we'll call 'chord journeys'. These are sequences that move away from and back to the root chord at 'strong' moments in the song, building and releasing tension as they go. Root chords sound steady and stable; other chords sound less stable. We've outlined a couple of typical chord progression journeys in A minor and C major here, with a guide to how 'unstable' each chord in the progression might sound.



KEY CHANGES

Lesson 4: Don't fear the key change

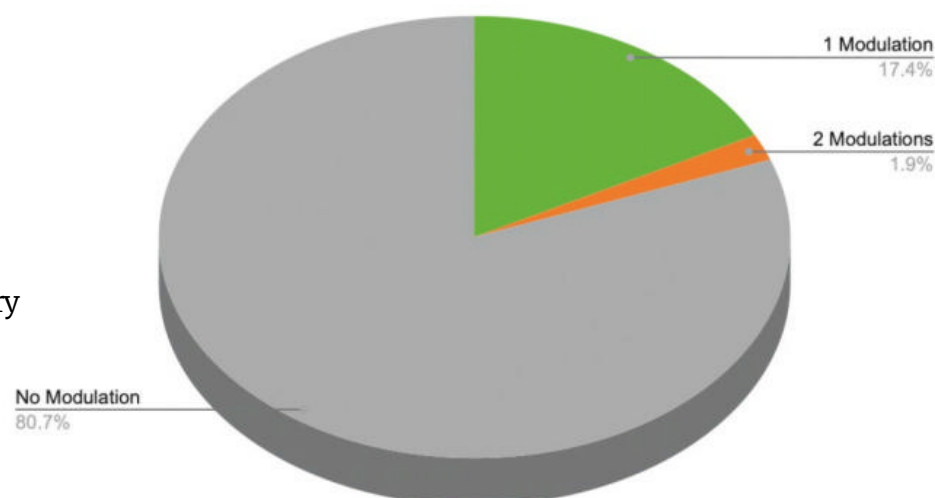
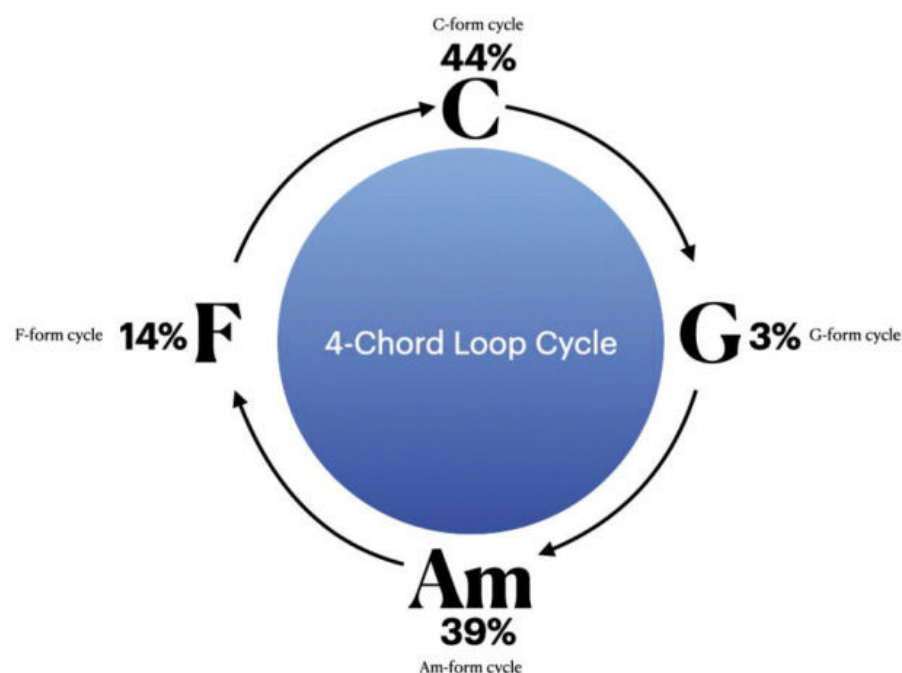
The cliché key change of Eurovision isn't as common as you might think – just under 20% of the finalist songs in the past 10 years featured key changes. Of all these key changes over the years, every single one of them goes up in pitch. No-one wants a downer at Eurovision! The most common modulation is the 'one semitone up' move, closely followed by two semitones.



PROGRESSIONS: CHORD LOOPS

Lesson 3: Try a cyclic chord sequence

Four-chord loops are devised to be repeated indefinitely with 'softer' changes between chords and little sense of ending. A supremely important progression in Eurovision (and commonplace outside of Eurovision, too) is the C-G-Am-F sequence, which can of course be transposed to any key. Switzerland's 2019 entry follows this sequence starting on the minor chord. Australia's 2018 offering *We Got Love* bends the 'rule' by reordering these chords slightly, but it's still a great example of a looped chord sequence. It's most common to start on C or A minor, as you can see here.

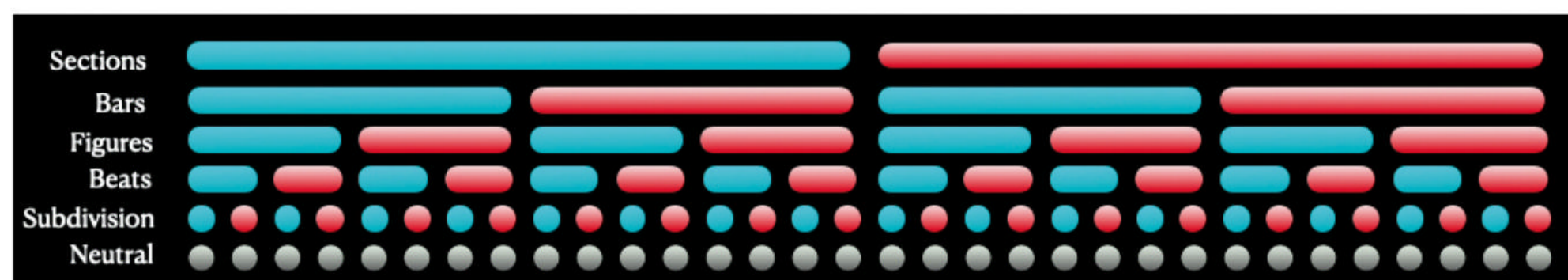


SONG STRUCTURES

Lesson 5: Use predictable patterns for hooks, verses, choruses and more

How come some songs are instant earworms, as if we know what's coming before we hear it? The answer lies in 'binary bias' – the tendency to predict musical events in pairs, pairs of pairs, and so on. It's why the most predictable rhythmic forms follow multiples of two (2, 4, 8, 16 etc). It also explains why hooks, verses and choruses in Eurovision tend to be four, eight, 16 or 32 bars long, why 4/4 and 2/4 time are typical meters, and why beats are subdivided into twos (quavers) and fours (semiquavers). However, occasionally, variations on this Euro-pop formula do occur.

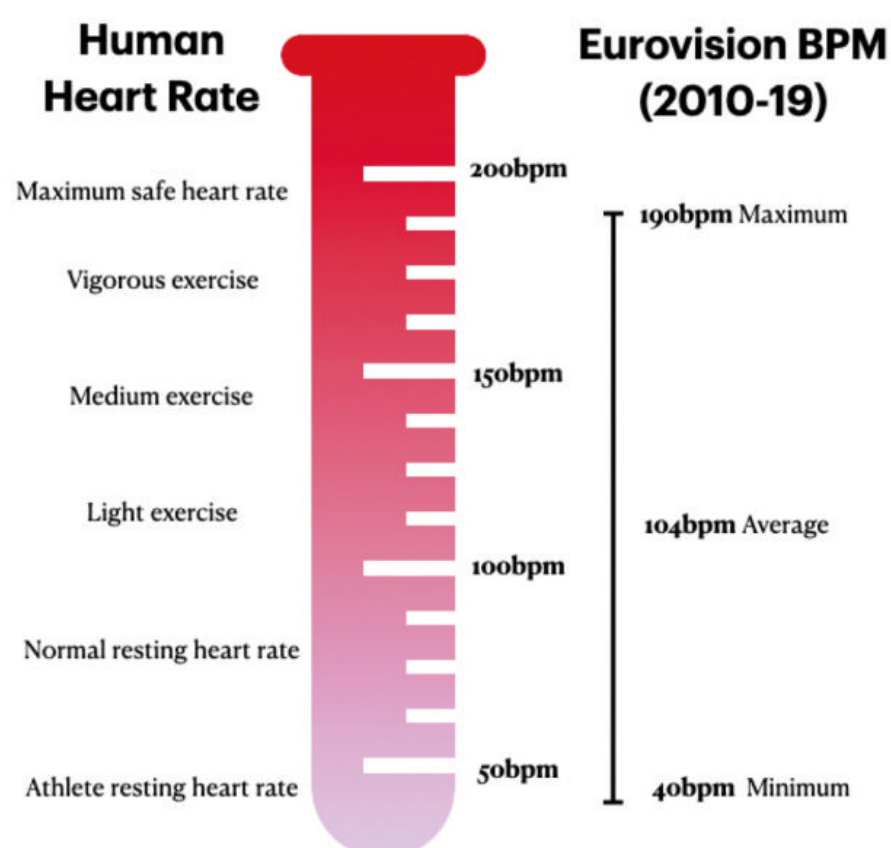
The next most natural grouping number is three – e.g., three quavers per beat, or 12/8 time. Russia have twice done well with this: *You Are The Only One* and *Scream* finished third in 2016 and 2019. There can also be three beats in a bar, as with Spain's entries in 2010 and 2018. Italy's 2017 entry bends the rule with a six-bar pre-chorus (thus divisible by three), as do the six-bar verses in Romania's 2015 entry *All Over Again*. And, though there have been *no* odd-time Eurovision winners, Sweden cleverly implied a changing meter where chord changes don't line up with the binary structure in 2012 winner *Euphoria*.



TEMPO

Lesson 6: Any tempo can work

The range of tempos in Eurovision aligns curiously well with the human heartbeat. Of the 259 finalists in 2010–19 the tempo range was 40–190 bpm with an average midway point of 104 bpm. An athlete's resting heart rate is around 40 bpm and the maximum safe heart rate for a young adult is 190 bpm; 104 bpm is right in the middle of a sustainable exercising heart-rate: walking or, more importantly, dancing, because 104 bpm is prime funk or gentle disco tempo. So, while all the tempo range is up for grabs, 104 bpm marks a sweet spot. One way that variation occurs is with the use of 'half-time' and 'double-time' feel, when certain musical layers (usually the drums or percussion) play at half or double the 'correct' tempo (see Lithuania 2016).



EUROVISION'S BEST GUITAR MOMENTS

DISTORTED GUITARS AND METAL MECHANICS OCCASIONALLY UPSET THE EXPECTED POP PARADE. HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVOURITES...

2005 Wig Wam – *In My Dreams* (Norway)

Finishing in a creditable ninth place, the 80s glam-metal style *In My Dreams* is a truly epic offering.

2006 Lordi – *Hard Rock Hallelujah* (Finland)

With a legendary win in 2006, the GWAR-like metallers opened the door for Eurovision to embrace hard rock.

2007 Kabát – *Malá Dáma* (Czech Republic)

Scoring only one point in the semi-final, Kabát's track is probably just too good for Eurovision.

2008 Teräsbetoni – *Missä Miehet Ratsastaa* (Finland)

The Finish power-metallers rocked up the 2008 contest, complete with Viljo Rantanen's blazing solo.

2011 Alexander Rybak and Keep Of Kalessin – *The Divine Land* (interval performance)

Folk-pop violin and melodic death metal seem an unlikely combination, but this remains one of the most metal performances ever seen at Eurovision.

2011 Eldrine – *One More Day* (Georgia)

There's an Evanescence vibe here in both the lead vocals and those chugging powerchords. Rock is the new normal at Eurovision.

2012 Max Jason Mai – *Don't Close Your Eyes* (Slovakia)

Neither the cool guitar riff nor Max's soaring vocals could take this metal ballad into the final. He came last in his semi-final.

2018 AWS – *Viszlát Nyár* (Hungary)

AWS deliver earnest 'real' rock that highlights political issues of the day. Though as far from Euro-pop as it's possible to be, AWS still scored 93 points in the final.



Photo Neil Zlozower / Atlasicons



VAN HALEN

THE NEXT GENERATION

Way back in 1978, with the release of Van Halen's explosive self-titled debut album, Eddie Van Halen emerged as arguably the most influential rock guitarist since Hendrix. His genius as a virtuoso, innovator and rule-breaker would inspire countless players across the years, and that influence continues to this day in the wake of Eddie's death on October 6th, 2020...

It is a mighty legacy that TG celebrates in this 33-page special, beginning with an in-depth interview with the legendary guitarist's son Wolfgang Van Halen, in which he explains how he is carrying on the family business with a new album – and how it felt to have the best player in the world for a dad.

In a flashback to the 80s, the inside story of Van Halen's hit album *5150*

is told by the man who co-produced it – Foreigner guitarist Mick Jones. And in a track-by-track analysis, we reveal what made this album a game-changer for Eddie.

Three classic EVH riffs are examined – *Runnin' With The Devil*, *Panama* and the title track from *5150*. Eddie's main gear is detailed, and a timeline of influence is charted – from his roots in 60s rock to his impact on contemporary music.

The new album from Weezer, affectionately titled *Van Weezer*, is reviewed. And finally, ten leading modern players – including Yvette Young, Tyler Bryant and Nita Strauss – reveal what they have learned from Eddie, with a guide to their tones and techniques. With EVH, there is so much to inspire. As Nita Strauss says: "He was so innovative in the way he approached everything about the guitar..."



Interview Jonny Scaramanga Portrait Patrick Bertinelli

AND THE CRADLE WILL ROCK...

His father was one of the greatest guitarists that ever lived, and now **Wolfgang Van Halen** is carrying that famous name forward.

In a revealing interview, he discusses the creation of his new album *Mammoth WVH* – on which he played all instruments, including Eddie's iconic Frankenstein. He recalls what he learnt as a boy from the best player on the planet, and the fun they had performing together in Van Halen.

But as he tells TG:

“I THINK IT'S UNFAIR TO HOLD ME AT THE SAME LEVEL AS MY DAD. I'M JUST BEING MYSELF...”





The buzz for Wolfgang Van Halen's solo debut began in 2015 when Eddie Van Halen told *Guitar World* "It's like AC/DC meets Van Halen meets aggressive pop... It's so powerful that I'm jealous." The project had to wait, as Wolf fulfilled his commitments as bassist in Van Halen and Tremonti, as well as drummer for Sevendust's Clint Lowery. But following the devastating loss of Eddie on October 6th, 2020, Wolf released the tribute single *Distance*. A moving video featuring childhood footage of Wolfgang with Eddie quickly racked up four million views, and the song debuted at #1 on the Billboard Rock chart.

40

W

With the album completed, Wolf has told Twitter "It's important I forge my own path," but that doesn't mean distancing himself from his father. His band name and album title, Mammoth WVH, is a nod to Van Halen's original moniker, and album opener *Mr Ed* features a tapping lick to make any EVH fan grin. But on the preview singles, Wolf shows his own identity, whether it's the bruising slow groove of *You're To Blame* or the stomping shuffle on *Don't Back Down*.

Speaking to TG from his home in California, Wolf explains how he put the album together, and reflects on how his father's influence has shaped him as a musician...

Congratulations on the album. How do you feel about the reaction to Mammoth WVH so far?

We've got four songs out and people are really stoked about it. I really didn't see it winning this many people over so soon, or at

all, really. I just made the record for me. For it to resonate with a bunch of people has been really awesome.

It must be hard performing *Distance* on TV when it's such an emotional tribute to your dad.

Yeah, performing it is a whole different thing. That was very difficult. In terms of releasing it, it just seemed like the right thing to do. I'd been working on my music for so long, and with somebody as important as that in my life not being around anymore, it just seemed right. It certainly wasn't the first song I was planning on releasing. It's a bit to the left of the core sound of the album, but I think it fits still. It seemed right thing to get that out there as a tribute for Pop and have it all go to his favourite [music education] charity, Mr Holland's Opus. There was no ill intent behind it, that's for sure. I know there are some people who are like, "he's just using this," but I love my dad and I just wanted to show everybody. A bunch of Van Halen fans were like, "This was the closure I needed." You can relate the song to any type of loss anyone has ever experienced, so the comments on the video are beautiful and heartbreaking, like "I just lost my dad and

I heard the song on the radio and it really touched me." I didn't expect it to resonate with so many people.

The album has quite a few Easter Eggs for fans. Is the ending to *Don't Back Down* a quote from Van Halen's *So This is Love*?

Yeah, except Dad does the little kink with the pick on the on the strings, and I do a little phaser pick slide. That's definitely the vibe I was going for. I'm surprised at how quickly people caught that. It's the same thing with the back cover of the album, people were like, "Oh my god it's arranged like the first Van Halen album!" I didn't think people would notice that the second they saw it. They're kind of winks and nods. There's nothing bigger behind it.

You're not hiding from the Van Halen connection.

I'm just not milking off the legacy. I'm sure that's up for debate for some people that hate me, but I'm being myself. I'm not sitting there doing covers of *Panama* and going, "If you want Van Halen, come to me!" If you want Van Halen, go over there.

How do you deal with the haters?

It's an up and down thing. Sometimes it's too much, and

sometimes you're ready to take it on the chin and tell them to f*ck off. You kind of go through ups and downs because it's always a constant thing. Sometimes you just need to take a little break and ignore it for a while, but every now and then and some asshole lobs you a really big softball that you could just f*ckin' knock out of the park, and it's really fun.

I was surprised to hear you tapping straight out of the gate on *Mr Ed*.

That's actually why I called it *Mr Ed*. That was the demo title because at the beginning of the riff I do a little harmonic tap. Then I just liked that name so much that I kept it.

The lyrics don't sound like they're about him.

That's the one mistake I think, people are really going to be like "is this about his dad?" Lyrically, it has nothing to do with that.

There's another standout solo in *You're To Blame*.

I think that's a really good kind of core sound of the album. I never wanted to plaster the whole album with solos. It was only if it feels right for certain songs and that song just seemed to really fit. I just kind of went for it.



There's a video online where Paul Gilbert had commented "world-class vibrato, just like your dad". On this album your vibrato is nothing like Eddie's. What were your influences on that?

Nothing in particular. I kind of just do it. I don't really have anything in mind while I'm doing it. I'm sure there's plenty of things that influenced me into doing it, but nothing actively in my mind. I never sat there and went, 'I'm not going to sound like Van Halen.' I'm going to make music I want to hear.

Where was the album recorded?

Some vocals were recorded in here

[Wolf's home studio]. I recorded the vocals for *Distance* and *Resolve*, in this room, but most of it was at [Van Halen's studio] 5150. We tracked almost everything to tape so it just sounds extra crispy. I think Elvis [producer Michael 'Elvis' Baskette] did a phenomenal job mixing it.

What were the main guitars that you played on the album? There's a Fender Starcaster in the *Don't Back Down* video.

Yeah, I never tracked with a Starcaster, I just thought it just would be fun to have. I recorded a lot with the Gibson ES-335 that I play in the video. I have a black

[EVH] Wolfgang Custom that was kind of all over it. It was such a free-for-all really that it's kind of hard to remember everything, but mostly it was that 335 and the black Wolfgang.

Did you play any of your dad's gear?

Yeah a handful of it. I played the original Frankenstein on the solo on *Mammoth* and on *Feel*.

What was that like?

You feel the history. It's kind of terrifying holding it, just because arguably it is the most famous guitar in musical history. It's definitely quite the thing to hold it. When we were pulling it out of its safe, Dad picked it up and he was just noodling with it for a second. He's like "yeah, feels about the same" and he tossed it onto the couch. Everyone just gasped when he did that. To Dad it's just a little piece of junk that he built himself, but to us it's the most famous thing in the world.

What amps did you use?

That was probably the one area that we made a collective effort to not replicate Pop. We did use a bunch of 5150s mostly but there were also Marshalls—a red early 70s 100 watt Superlead, and a '72 Superlead metal panel 1959 model. All the Marshall heads were modified with extra gain stages. We used a lot of cabinet variations, with Celestion G12H-30s, G12M-25s, and G12-EVHs just to contrast the sound.

How about pedals?

If we ever used a pedal it was for an overdub or we plugged in for a certain moment. On *Don't*

Back Down we did use a Foxx Tone Machine fuzz but I can't think of any others.

What about the famous Plexi amp – a 100 watt Marshall 1959 model – that your dad used on the classic Van Halen albums? Do you know where it is now?

Yeah. I'm not gonna tell people where it is, but it's in our hands and it's being kept safe.

I'd heard it was damaged.

I'm sure it was at some point. Dad definitely fixed it up over the years, but he kind of just evolved past the sound. When we were on the 2012 tour, [Pearl Jam's] Mike McCready and Eddie Vedder came backstage. Mike was talking to Dad. He said, "Oh man the first Van Halen album sounded so good." My dad growls, "It sounded like sh*t!" Mike was just like, "Oh, okay. Well... I liked it."

There are entire guitar forums dedicated to reproducing that sound. If they heard that, they'd be crushed!

I think Dad would rather have people not try and sound like him but sound like themselves. You know, tastes change over time. Obviously he was super happy with all the 5150s as he as he kept building on them.

You played all the instruments on the on the record. How did that affect your perspective on the guitar?

I think it was just kind of a collective process between Elvis and I, and Matt Bruck as a liaison for the amps. It was always a conversation of like what would be good for the song. It was never



"MIKE MCCREADY WAS TALKING TO DAD. HE SAID, 'MAN THE FIRST VAN HALEN ALBUM SOUNDED SO GOOD.' MY DAD GROWLS, 'IT SOUNDED LIKE SH*T!'"



“IT’S NOT LIKE HOW EVERYBODY IMAGINES IT. ‘OK WOLF, YOU’RE SIXTEEN. TIME TO LEARN TO PLAY ERUPTION!’”

some static thing we were just kind of happy with. We were always chasing that tone.

What are your favourite guitar parts on the album?

I used a talk box on the solo for *You’ll Be the One*. When we were tracking all the guitar solos, Elvis was like “I got a talk box, you want to fit it somewhere?” It was fun to do but it was really tough because my nose kept exhaling too much so you couldn’t really hear it. I had to tape my nose just for the tracking of it.

You’ve tweeted that *Think It Over* is one of your favourite songs. It’s also Dad’s favourite.

It’s definitely one of the poppier songs on the album. I thought it was important to show where the sound could go. My dad always said something I loved. He always called the solo my George Harrison solo: nothing flashy but perfect for the melody supporting the song.

What age did you start playing guitar?

I’ve always been a drummer first, but [guitar] wasn’t until I was about 12 because I wanted to play [Van Halen instrumental] 316 for my sixth grade talent show. That was the very first thing I learned, and then Dad taught me how to do powerchords. I just kind of

took it from there. People always comment “Well, he had a good teacher!” But Dad wasn’t a very good teacher.

Did you have any other guitar teachers?

No, he just showed me how to do powerchords and I learned from listening to whatever I like and maybe you know guitar tabs here and there, just kind of figuring out how to play. That’s why I feel more like a stronger rhythm player than a lead player. I mean, I can play lead but I’m more comfortable in the rhythm space. Also I really don’t want to try and be Dad. That’s not me. I’ll be the dude playing everything else, but not the shreddy guy. Sure there’s tapping and stuff like *Mr Ed*, but it’s because the song called for it.

What were your influences for this record?

Van Halen always will be a part of it because I can’t really shake that. It’s just in my blood. But I love everything from AC/DC to Foo

Fighters to Nine Inch Nails and Tool. One of my biggest influences is Jimmy Eat World. I think you can really hear that in *Think It Over*. Maybe throw in some Alice In Chains and Queens Of The Stone Age and all those bands kind of represent what compelled me.

I think you can really hear the Alice In Chains influence on *The Big Picture*, on the bridge with the harmonies. I was proud of that.

What was it like learning the guitar in a house with the best guitarist on the planet?

He’s Dad. He’s not Eddie Van Halen first. I was learning whatever and he was there to cheer me on. He was happy to see the process. It’s not like I was doing it to appease him or because I felt like I should be doing it because of my name. It’s because I genuinely wanted to involve myself in music, and I think that’s all he wanted. He never forced me.

He was happy to see the honest obsession rise on its own.

You’ve mentioned it being intimidating having Eddie Van Halen as a dad when it came to learning the guitar. How conscious were you of that?

Growing up, not at all. Looking back on it now, obviously [it is intimidating]. People are always going to hold me to something that’s completely out of my control. I see Van Halen fans say, ‘The kid’s thirty now, and at his age his dad was up to *Fair Warning!*’ I think it’s really unfair to hold me at the same level as my dad.

It was cool to hear a shuffle on *Don’t Back Down*, because Van Halen was always a rock band that could swing.

I love that you say that. If you look at some of the comments on the video they’re like “This is just a rip-off of this or that song!” It’s not even in the same key. You’re misinterpreting it sounding like another song just because it’s a shuffle. The demo title for *Don’t Back Down* was ‘Sabbath’. It was very Sabbath-y, and then my engineer misread it so we ended up calling it ‘Salt Bath’ for a while!

Did your uncle Alex Van Halen [Van Halen drummer] teach you anything about groove and playing behind the beat, or was it all osmosis?

There’s a picture somewhere of me at three or four years old just banging on his kit. Al’s sticks are big anyway but in the hand of a three-year-old they look like two feet long. It was just osmosis. We played together for a long time. Dad, Al, and I rehearsed at the studio so much, at a certain point it’s like the ten thousand hour rule.

Did you get any tips from your dad about how to write songs?

Not really, it was a thing that just happened. I wrote what I wanted to hear, you know. With Dad, I guess it’s another osmosis thing, just being around it, you see how it goes and you’re like I want to do some things this way and some things a different way.

You must have picked some stuff up when you were the bassist on the last Van Halen album, *A Different Kind of Truth*.

For sure. Dad wrote music very differently later in his life. I think some people weren't a fan of that. Take *Van Halen III* for example – Dad's melodic ideas changed over the years. I don't think that's generally a bad thing. I think it's great when artists expand and change, but it was important to kind of go back and look at what made the classic stuff sound the way it did. That's why I thought it was a good idea to check out some of the older demos [recorded for *A Different Kind of Truth*]. I don't think there's a shelf life on ideas. I thought that was a good way of bringing in that classic flavour into it again, and there was definitely some newer stuff on there too.

It seemed like you understood classic Van Halen in a deep way. When the first reunion tour with singer David Lee Roth happened, fans were excited about the set list because there were some deep cuts.

Yeah, one thing I did every tour was the setlist. I was happiest with the 2015 tour because we really got to dig in. We played *Dirty Movies*, *In A Simple Rhyme*. We played *Women In Love* and *Drop Dead Legs*. It's like, "F*ck yeah! I'm so stoked to have played that!" It was really fun to go deep in the vaults and play all those. That was definitely me pushing everyone. We opened with *Light Up The Sky* on that tour, too. That was fun.

It seems like you're a Van Halen fan as well as a family member.

Oh for sure. Before I was in the band I'd listen to it all the time. Now it's kind of... It's a little difficult for me to listen right now, but yeah I was a fan of it all first. I think going into it I really knew what the fans wanted to hear, so I did my best to be like, "Come on guys, let's mix it up!"



How did you discover that stuff? Did your parents play it to you?

I remember when they were recording stuff up at the studio. When they were recording *Me*

Wise Magic [a brand new track with David Lee Roth, featured on the 1996 collection *Best Of Volume 1*]. I remember thinking that was a f*ckin' awesome song. Probably the album I was closest to growing up was *Balance* [1995] because it happened while I was alive, so I still hold that album very close. Diving deep into it, as time went

on it was just fun to go through my dad's history and everything that he did. There's actually some clips in the *Distance* video where my dad and I are sitting at the piano together. It was from a larger 15-minute video I found of him teaching me how to play *Why Can't This Be Love*. It's a really special video.

There's a video online of you playing *Eruption*. Did you figure that out by sitting there with the record like millions of other guitarists?

Not really. I got to watch Dad play it every time we were rehearsing, so it was just like "oh so it's that." I figured out some of it, and Dad

was like "No, you gotta do it that way!" Oh, OK! So I got little points here and there but know it's not like how everybody imagines it. 'OK Wolf, you're sixteen. Time to learn to play *Eruption*!' It's never something I would plan on playing on stage. My dad already did it. Why would I do that? There are plenty of other people who can do it too. I want to be me.

RIGHT NOW
Wolfgang Van
Halen in 2021





Words Paul Elliott

“HE WAS UNCANNILY TALENTED AND DRIVEN BY A NEED TO EXPRESS HIMSELF IN A DAZZLING WAY”

VAN HALEN'S 1986 ALBUM *5150* WAS A GAME-CHANGER FOR EDDIE VAN HALEN AS HE DEVELOPED NEW TONES WITH NEW GEAR. THE ALBUM'S CO-PRODUCER, FOREIGNER GUITARIST **MICK JONES**, RECALLS THE “CRAZY” AND “FUNKY” VIBE IN THE STUDIO – AND REMEMBERS EDDIE AS A GENIUS ON A PAR WITH HENDRIX...

In 1985, when Van Halen singer David Lee Roth quit the band, Eddie Van Halen was left facing the toughest challenge of his career. He was the most famous guitar player on the planet – the guy who had revolutionized the art of rock guitar in the late 70s, and had got the call from Michael Jackson to play the solo on his mega-hit *Beat It* from *Thriller*, the biggest selling album of all time. But with Diamond Dave gone, Eddie had to replace the seemingly irreplaceable, and reinvent the band that had defined American hard rock in the early 80s.

For all Eddie's brilliance as a guitarist, Roth had been his equal in Van Halen – a frontman whose good looks and larger-than-life persona were instrumental in elevating the band to superstar status. In 1983, they had headlined the US Festival in San Bernadino, California before an audience of 375,000, and pocketed a reported \$1 million in the process. The following year, their single *Jump* topped the US chart and its parent album, *1984*, was well on its way to selling 10 million

copies. When the news of Roth's departure was announced – on April 1st, of all days – there were many, fans and media alike, who believed that the band was finished. But by the summer, Van Halen had found a new singer in Sammy Hagar, a successful solo artist who had first come to prominence in Montrose, a band whose debut album, released in 1973, had a profound influence on Eddie, and was produced by Ted Templeman, who worked on every Van Halen album from 1978 to 1984.

Hagar proved a perfect fit for Van Halen. As a big hitter in his own right, he had more than enough self-assurance to replace Roth, and most importantly, as a singer, he had a better range and a more melodic sensibility.

As Eddie told Rolling Stone: “From the first second, Sammy could do anything I threw at him. It just opened up a whole new door.”

As a result, a new Van Halen was born on the album *5150*, named after Eddie's studio at his home in LA's Coldwater Canyon ('5150' was the Californian law code for detention of mentally ill persons). And for Eddie, this album marked a major turning point. Along with the new voice in Van Halen came a new approach to guitar – different tones, different gear. Out was the pin-point positioned mixing style of old and in came huge stereo-panned rhythm guitars courtesy of an Eventide H3000. And while his trusty Frankenstein guitar and Marshall amps





➔

still saw studio action, Eddie was trying out a new six-string: the active EMG-loaded Steinberger GL-2T (in Stripe finish, naturally!), which would appear on *Get Up* and *Summer Nights*. In the wake of *Jump*, the first Van Halen song for which Eddie, a classically trained pianist, played the main riff on synthesizer, *5150* featured even greater emphasis on keyboards. And in the creation of what was a game-changing album for Van Halen, and for Eddie in particular, another famous guitarist played a pivotal role.

Englishman Mick Jones, the leader of multi-million selling rock act Foreigner, was enlisted as co-producer on *5150*. He had written all of Foreigner's hit songs, from riff-driven anthems such as *Urgent* and *Hot Blooded* to power ballads including the worldwide number one *I Want To Know What Love Is*. He had produced, or co-produced, all of the band's albums, including the US number one *4*. And he was no mean guitarist, as illustrated most powerfully in *Juke Box Hero*, one of the all time great rock songs. Long before he formed Foreigner, Jones had also toured in the late 60s as the guitarist for French star Johnny Hallyday, with The Jimi Hendrix Experience as the opening act. And as he now tells TG, when looking back on the making of *5150*, what he heard in Eddie Van Halen was genius comparable not only to Hendrix but to Bach and Beethoven...

Firstly, how did you get the job of co-producing Van Halen?

It came through Sammy Hagar. He and I went back a long way, and we had maintained a friendship over the years. I'd also met Eddie socially several times, but it was Sammy who put my name forward, and then Eddie decided he'd like to work with me.

You were brought in because the band's regular producer, Ted



ABOVE Van Halen celebrating the success of *5150* (l-r: Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Eddie Van Halen)

Templeman, had defected to work on David Lee Roth's solo album *Eat 'Em And Smile*. But Templeman's right hand man, engineer Donn Landee, remained loyal to Van Halen.

Yes, Donn had engineered all of their albums up to *5150*, so I was the new boy. There was some concern from Donn, and that took a little bit of... Massaging, let's say. But it all worked out, and by the end of the recording we were the best of friends. Donn is a great engineer and it was an honour to work with him.

How did you see your role as co-producer?

At the time I was taking a break from Foreigner and I wanted to branch out a bit. So with Van Halen, it was a new challenge to see what I could pull out of them and see if I could change a few things here and there. Not to mess with their identity by any means, but just try to enhance the sound and the arrangements...

What do you remember about your first day working with them?

Sammy picked me up from the airport and he gave me a rundown of what to expect. It was a little scary! He said, 'Mick, we've been through the wars, we've been through a lot of stuff. But

this goes a little bit higher and a little crazier. So buckle your seatbelt!' But when we arrived at Eddie's place, all of the guys were very cordial, very chatty and 'up' and cracking David Lee Roth jokes. So it was a nice warm welcome. And I was a little nervous, but I think that tends to bring out the best in me.

The studio - in a converted garage, and designed by Donn Landee - was the band's HQ and Eddie's man-cave. Can you describe what you found in there?

It was definitely funky. Everybody was smoking like crazy and drinking this high-alcohol content beer. Luckily I didn't really drink beer, so I avoided that. So yeah, it had a vibe. It wasn't the cleanest or most hygienic place I've ever spent time in, but it was acoustically designed and they had developed the sound in there. It definitely had a sound.

What tracks did they have ready at that stage?

They had demos of all the tracks that made the final cut, pretty much. The only one that wasn't demoed was *Dreams*, and I would say that was the one I had most involvement with from an arranging point of view. I think I really brought something to that song,

"EDDIE WAS COMPLETELY OUT THERE - NOT DRUG-WISE, HE JUST WENT INTO THIS TRANCE STATE AS HE PLAYED"



especially Sammy's vocals. I worked very long and hard with him on that, and he told me it was one of his all time favourite performances. He was singing so high that he was hyperventilating. He almost passed out! I really pushed him. But we got it.

With *Dreams* and other songs such as *Love Walks In*, Eddie played the riffs on synthesizers...

He developed his own style of keyboard synth stuff. It was a slightly different direction, but it was still rock. It really felt good when I first heard the songs. And they made it pretty easy for me. They gave me a great drawing board. Gradually as we got to know each other, things really gelled.

Eddie was also experimenting with different guitars.

Of course he was playing that famous red Strat with the cream gaffer tape

around it, but also a Steinberger. I used a Steinberger for a while at that time.

Did you hear this as Eddie reaching for something beyond the classic Van Halen 'brown sound'?

I didn't really dissect what it sounded like. I just knew that it was powerful. And I felt that we captured the spirit of what was going on. I think they really wanted to show David Lee Roth that he wasn't indispensable – let's put it that way.

Certainly there was a different tone in *Get Up*, a really fast and furious track.

I'd never heard anything like it in my life. It sounded like four guys fighting inside the speaker cabinets, beating the sh*t out of each other!

Presumably you didn't feel the need to coach him as one guitar player

ABOVE

There's only one way to rock: Sammy Hagar and EVH on the *5150* tour

to another?

He was so talented, so there wasn't a lot I could add or suggest from a performance point of view. And he had a unique style, obviously. I didn't want to say things for the sake of it. I thought seriously about what I was saying, what I was contributing.

But he would look to you for approval, for feedback?

Yeah. I think he respected my songwriting, he knew I could write songs, and that was a plus for me. Some of the songs needed a bit of tailoring, and I think I provided that, as well as feedback. I wasn't afraid to speak up about how I felt, which was a little risky, I guess.

It seems strange to ask, but were there moments when you said, 'Sorry Eddie, that I don't think that solo is good enough'?

There were several times that happened – and then I would sprint out of the door and run into the forest at the back of the studio! But I think we respected each other, and we both had the experience to be able to sensibly exchange opinions.

So you and Eddie had a strong connection?

We got very close, especially when we were doing guitar overdubs and solos. He was completely out there – not drug-wise, he just went into this trance state as he played. I'd be sitting there on the left side of the console and he would come over and lean on me while he was playing. And it was kind of weird – it was like it was coming through me. It was coming down, let's say, from above, and we really got very close in those moments.

Did you and Eddie find time to jam together?

Yeah. We had a few fun moments. Eddie tried to teach me the tapping thing. It was a hilarious hour or two.

There wasn't any tapping on subsequent Foreigner albums.

No. I didn't latch on to that at all.

Brian May told TG that when he and Eddie worked together on the *Star Fleet Project* album, he had some fun playing Eddie's Frankenstein Strat. Did you?

Yeah. But I remember the fretboard



was quite wide, and I haven't got really big hands, so I had a little difficulty covering the size.

What was Eddie like as a person?

Eddie had an irresistible grin, almost constantly when we were working, and outside the studio, too.

Did you feel that this was a musician completely dedicated to his art?

Yes, he was a very musical person, always picking up new things, and very aware of the art of it all. You could compare him perhaps to Bach, Beethoven – uncannily talented and driven by a need to express himself in a dazzling way. So he was a complete musician.

And as someone who witnessed Jimi Hendrix performing at his peak, did you view Eddie as a genius comparable to Jimi?

Yes, I think there are some individuals that are kind of chosen to be the carriers of the feeling and the spiritual side of things. I've always tried to fathom where and how that comes through. It happens with guitar players, it happens with singers... It does separate people. It separates the men from the boys. It's a gift. And it's such a powerful gift that sometimes it destroys the messenger. But I remember them both as very sweet guys, so charming, radiant and so super-talented.

The making of 5150 took a lot out of Mick Jones. "I was completely exhausted at the end of it," he says. "We were running a bit late – and the band had a tour booked. So there was pressure." But in the end, the album proved a huge success.

Released on March 24th, 1986, 5150 was the band's first US number one album. And that victory tasted even sweeter when David Lee Roth's Eat 'Em And Smile, featuring rising star Steve Vai on guitar, only made it to number four.

5150 turned out to be one of the most important albums Van Halen ever made. And Mick Jones is proud to have played a part in it. "It was a pretty intense experience," he says. "But we achieved something very special."



Mick Jones on stage with Foreigner in the 80s

"HE TRIED TO TEACH ME THE TAPPING THING. IT WAS A HILARIOUS HOUR OR TWO"

5150

TRACK BY TRACK

THE TECHNIQUES BEHIND THE TRACKS ON 5150

1. GOOD ENOUGH

Just five seconds in and you'll immediately know something is afoot, tonally speaking. The first recorded moments of the Van Hagar era mark a new sound for the band, as producer Mick Jones dials in the fat stereo tones courtesy of an Eventide H3000 processor on the guitar. A stereo guitar rig is the only way to truly recreate the sound.

2. WHY CAN'T THIS BE LOVE

One of *5150*'s synth-driven tunes (played on an Oberheim OB-8), *WCTBL* represents an easier introduction to Ed's guitar playing with plenty of simple chords to rock out with. Eddie's solo is uncharacteristically funky, but trademark whammy bar scoops keep it on point.

3. GET UP

5150's heaviest offering proved that VH could still deliver guts and glory – and more tremolo dips than you can shake a wang bar at! Moving between open A and D5 chords, the trick is to keep the whammy bar in your hand, dipping it as you strum each change.

4. DREAMS

Eddie's low-in-the-mix rhythm tone supports the synth tones throughout most of the song before he smashes out a typically fiery solo. Hybridised techniques like sliding taps (tap a note, then slide up the neck still pressing down on the string) and tapped bends were Eddie's stock in trade but are all part of the rock guitar lexicon now.

5. SUMMER NIGHTS

Like *Runnin' With The Devil* or *Panama* before, the rhythm parts in *Summer Nights* are an example of Ed covering an awful lot of harmonic ground – this time by fingerpicking the intro before switching to a plectrum for a more standard approach.

6. BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Eddie switches between strumming and fingerstyle in the intro – a neat textural trick. But it's the solo which is the ace up *BOBW*'s sleeve, and the trick is in Ed's near constant string bends. Only letting up on fast legato licks, almost every note is bent or adjusted with the whammy bar. It's enough to make even the bluesiest lick sound alien.

7. LOVE WALKS IN

Not just synth-driven, pop ballad *Love Walks In* contains no rhythm guitars at all – just a couple of solos. A sign of the times perhaps, especially for a band seeking credibility and a new direction. Still, the solos are marvellously melodic. Listen out for the *Jump*-esque closing lick played on the 7th, 8th and 10th frets at 2:55.

8. 5150

Get Up may be the heavier track, but title track *5150* rivals the former for good old fashioned riffing. And riffy though it may be, listen closely and you'll hear that the intro is based around fairly simple D, E and A chords (technically D_b, E_b and A_b, as Ed down-tuned by a semitone).

9. INSIDE

Eddie's solo elevates this oddball tune into something special. Listen out for that final tremolo picked lick seemingly reprising Ed's efforts on Michael Jackson's mega-hit *Beat It*.



**“THE FIRST MOMENTS OF
THE VAN HAGAR ERA”**



EARN YOUR STRIPES

Plug in and rock out as TG gets hot for teaching Eddie Van Halen's trademark riffs and techniques

Fact: Eddie Van Halen reinvented rock guitar for generations of players, and there's no doubt the word 'virtuoso' applies. With a large arsenal of techniques at his disposal, he'd constantly move his pick hand around the guitar body to make adjustments to

the volume knob and pickup selector, to use the whammy bar or kill-switch, and to find the sweet spot for his signature harmonics and tapped notes. That's a lot of work for the right hand – and, let's face it, it's the fretting hand that usually takes up most of our practice time. Point is, you may need to think a little

differently when you try our EVH-inspired riffs and licks. Break each one down into shorter bite-sized phrases and think about joining it all together later. There's always something to learn, even if a lick is just too damn hard to play all the way through. For now though, you might as well jump right in...

TALKIN' 'BOUT RIFFS

Learn three classic Van Halen riffs with TG's video lessons



Runnin' With The Devil

Despite the relaxed feel, Eddie marks out the rhythm here with absolute precision, largely achieved by quick pick-hand mutes. After each chord, Eddie gently bounces the side of his pick hand against the strings, momentarily muting the strings and creating a brief pause. The result is a cruising, mid-tempo riff that intros one of the band's best loved songs.

Listen out for the 'scratched' pick strokes that lead into each four-chord phrase – these dampened notes set up the groove of the ensuing changes and are a key part of the riff. The D to G chord change is played as a hammer-on, so play a firm barre with your first finger at the 7th fret and be ready with your second and third fingers at the 8th and 9th frets.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:17-0:38
Tempo: 96 bpm
Key/scale: E Mixolydian [E, on the downtuned original recording]
Main techniques: Hammering chords, pick-hand muting, scratched notes

TG TIP

Ditch the slides along the sixth string while learn the main chord changes



Panama

This riff has an eighth-note feel and features chord stabs on both downbeats and offbeats. This makes the rhythm quite tricky, so use the pedal tone notes (the lowest note of each chord) to form landmarks within each phrase. If you get the pedal tones in the right place, the chord stabs should land at the right time.

To get the right feel, palm mute the fifth-string notes and leaving the chords to ring out cleanly. It's important that each sustained chord lasts for its correct duration – so you'll need to use fret-hand muting to bring each chord to a stop. To do this, simply, relax the pressure from your fretting fingers, while staying connected with the strings. This should bring each chord to a silence.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:00-0:30
Tempo: 140 bpm
Key/scale: E major [E, on the downtuned original recording]
Main techniques: Offbeat rhythms, chord melody, pedal tones, harmonics

TG TIP

Quickly lift your fretting fingers away from the string to keep harmonics clean



5150

Eddie's intro features palm-muted eighth notes throughout most of the sequence. Place the side of your picking hand on the strings where they meet the saddle and be prepared to adjust your position depending on which strings you're muting. There are several arpeggios and melodies in the riff so practise each phrase slowly to ensure the string changes become familiar and the synchronisation between fret hand and pick hand stays accurate throughout.

Strike the strings from the tip of your pick. This'll help you to avoid picking too hard, and to maintain the steady thrum of the downstrokes. The arpeggios also need a light touch.

CHEAT SHEET

Appears at: 0:00-0:37
Tempo: 155 bpm
Key/scale: A major [A, on the downtuned original recording]
Main techniques: Palm-muting, arpeggios, drop D tuning

TG TIP

Remember to tune down to drop D. The original recording was a semitone lower in drop C#

1 PEDAL-TONE RHYTHM STYLE

TRACK 10

♩=150

A E/A G/B D/A A E/A G/B D/A Play 4 times

PM --- PM PM --- PM --- NH ---

cont. sim.

As the only guitarist in the band in their early days, Eddie learned to switch between rhythm and lead effortlessly, often combining the two. Here we're looking at how he'd do this, with a palm-muted, open-string bass note underpinning a handful of three-note chords and some occasional melodic phrases.

2 PALM-MUTED ARPEGGIOS

TRACK 11

♩=140

E⁵ Em D⁵ Dsus⁴ D Dsus² D E⁵ Play 4 times

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

In *Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love* Eddie plays an open-chord arpeggio with palm-muting. It's an approach he weaves throughout his riffs and rhythms but *ATBL* sums it up best – and we're aping the idea in bar 2 here. A slapback echo is the icing on the cake.

3 TAPPING

TRACK 12

E⁵ Em

hold bend BU BD

10 (12) (17) (12) (10) 8 (19) 12 15

† tap 15th fret

D⁵ Dsus⁴ D Dsus² D E⁵ Play 4 times

6 6 6 6

20 12 15 22 12 15 20 12 15 19 12 15 20 12 15 19 12 15 17 12 15 19 12 15 19 17 19 15 12

Eddie is synonymous with tapping. The technique is simple enough. Just tap on a fretted note with a picking-hand finger instead of plucking the string. Tapped notes are shown in circles here in our tab. Watch out in bar 2 where you'll tap on the 15th fret, but, thanks to a string bend, it should sound like the 17th. A typical EVH trick.

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, and a bass part with a bass clef. The guitar part features various chords (E⁵, E^m, D⁵, D^{sus}⁴, D, D^{sus}², D, E⁵) and techniques like "Scoop" and "Play 4 times". The bass part includes fret numbers (5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 19, 15, 17, 17, 15, 17, 17, 15, 17, 17, 15, 17, 15, 5) and a "TAB" label. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format with a light gray background.

There are two distinct licks here, the idea being to showcase two of Eddie's techniques. Tremolo picking is fast, but not too strictly timed down-up picking (bars 1 and 2). The whammy bar scoops in bars 3 and 4 are the kind of articulation Eddie seemed to drop in almost anywhere.

5 LOW-STRING RIFFING

TRACK 14

♩=120

E⁵ N.C. E⁵ Em¹¹

Play 4 times

TAB

Eddie's trademark touch and feel are ever-present, even in simple low-string rock riffs like this. The muddy Em11 chord at the end is also a Van Halen trademark.

6 TAPPED HARMONICS

TRACK 15

♩=140

C#m

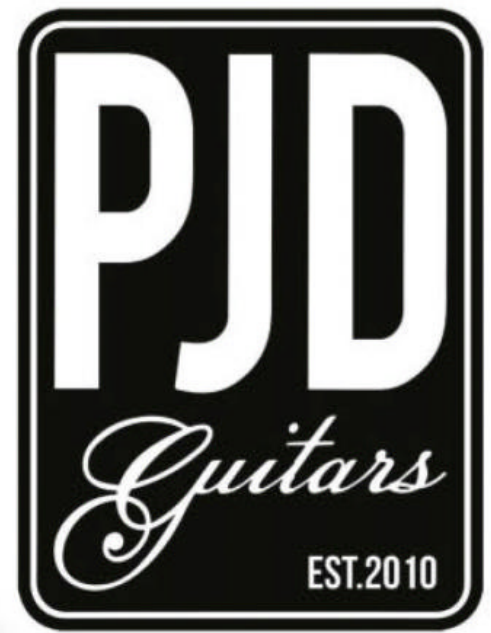
B⁵

A⁵

Play 4 times

TAB

This is one of Ed's trickier trademark techniques as heard on tracks like *Girl Gone Bad*. The idea is to fret a note then lightly tap the string 12 frets farther up the neck to sound a harmonic one octave higher. Hold down a C#m chord in bars 1 and 2 and focus mainly on tapping the notes marked TH16, TH18 etc.



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Words Jonny Scaramanga

THE ICONIC GEAR EDDIE USED TO REVOLUTIONISE THE GUITAR



The Magic Marshall Plexi Amp

For the first eight albums, Ed relied on a 100-watt Marshall Super Lead. Speculation about its unique tone has never ceased – and EVH wasn't keen on giving away his secrets. At one point he said it had been modified by Jose Arrendondo, but he later retracted this (though not before every guitarist in LA visited Arrendondo's workshop). Amp guru John Suhr serviced it in the 90s. He said it was almost entirely stock, with minor variations from the Plexi schematic that were not unusual for Marshalls of the time.

Dunlop Echoplex EP-3 Delay

This tape unit gave 300ms of delay which, when run into the front of the amp with a single repeat, created the rhythmic echoes on 1978 single *Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love*. But its magic was its preamp, which warmed the tone even when the effect was switched off.



Variac Variable Power Transformer

Ed once said that he used a Variac to increase voltage to his amp, but this will do nothing good for your tone and will likely blow your mains transformer. He later admitted using it to lower voltage, creating more power tube saturation at manageable volumes.

Frankenstein Guitar

Ed's iconic homemade guitar originally had a brass nut, Fender tremolo, and a Gibson PAF humbucker. Ed just about kept it in tune while divebombing, sometimes reaching behind the nut to tug the B string into place. Seymour Duncan later rewound the pickup with more output, and Ed later installed a Floyd Rose tremolo.

ED'S BROWN SOUND EXPLAINED

There's much myth around the subject, but 'brown sound' is simply the term Eddie used to describe his classic drive tone. You know, the sound on almost every solo he recorded. That tone! Ed originally coined the term to refer to Alex Van Halen's 'woody' snare sound before applying it to his own sound. The Marshall Plexi, Variac, and EP-3 Delay are core ingredients, with the Phase 90 often used too. The amp and phaser are much imitated by digital modellers. To recreate the tone, dial in as much gain as you'll need and roll off your guitar's own volume for cleaner sounds. The rest is in your fingers!

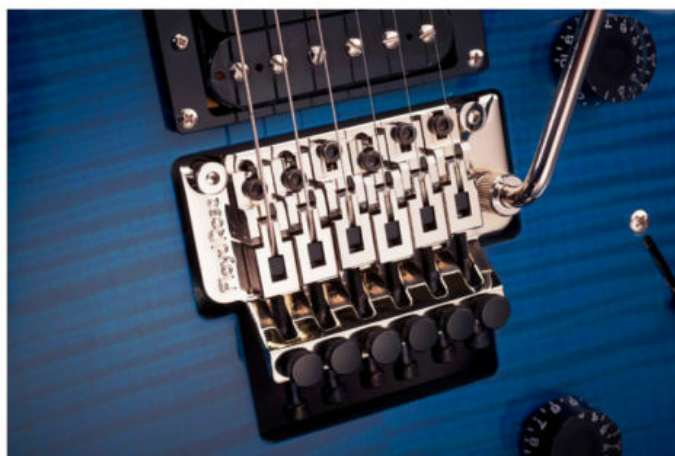


MXR Phase 90

Most of the solos on *Van Halen* [1978] are goosed by a script logo Phase 90, set at around 9 o'clock. The phasing sounds cool, but the real secret was how it boosted mid frequencies, helping solos stand out.

Floyd Rose Locking Tremolo

While Floyd Rose was developing his locking tremolo system, he brought prototypes to Eddie for feedback. The 'bumblebee' guitar pictured on *Van Halen II* [1979] had an early Floyd Rose without fine tuners, which were Eddie's idea. Ed was frustrated not to be named on the patent.



MXR 117 Flanger

In [1981 single] *Unchained*, EVH kicked on his flanger for the chugging low notes of the riff, and on *Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love* he uses it just to emphasise the C-B-C phrase. The EVH signature flanger has a button that reportedly gives Eddie's exact settings.

5150 Amp

As Ed tired of the Plexi's tone, he tried hot-rodded Marshall designs from Suhr and Soldano. He ultimately developed the 5150 with Peavey (and later Fender), which boasts five preamp valves for vastly more gain and 'American' sounding 6L6 power valves.



Wolfgang Guitar

The Frankenstein was Ed's early attempt at combining the features of Les Pauls and Strats. He wanted a guitar that wouldn't 'fight' him at all. The Wolfgang was his final effort. With arched maple tops and twin humbuckers, they have a contemporary Les Paul vibe and are generally super easy to play.





Words Jonny Scaramanga

THE INFLUENCER

Eddie Van Halen took inspiration from Clapton and Page and in turn influenced generations of guitarists. TG charts the timeline...

1966

Eric Clapton

The young EVH used to slow down Cream albums on his record player to figure out Clapton's solos note-for-note.

1969

Jimmy Page

Seeing Page reach behind his fretting hand to bend strings on *Heartbreaker* gave Eddie the idea to try tapping.

1984

The Early 80s LA Scene

Every guitarist in Hollywood wanted to be Eddie. Dokken's George Lynch and Ratt's Warren DeMartini did it best.

1982

Allan Holdsworth

Van Halen called this Bradford-born genius 'the best'. His alien legato inspired Eddie's stretchiest licks, like *Ice Cream Man* and *Beat It*.

1978

Van Halen's debut

For rock guitarists, nothing would ever be the same again.

1985

Bay Area Thrashers

Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, Anthrax and Testament all recognised Van Halen as the benchmark, and stole a whole pile of licks.

1986

Steve Vai

Employed by the solo David Lee Roth as the heir to Eddie, Vai elevated the virtuosity and whammy abuse...

1987

Joe Satriani

Satch took Eddie's fluid hammer-ons and made a whole vocabulary. Almost the entire shred genre can be traced to *Eruption* and *Satch Boogie*.

1987 **Jennifer Batten**

Michael Jackson recruited Batten because she could do justice to *Beat It*. She took Eddie's technique further, developing eight-finger tapping.

1988

The Hair Metallers

Winger's Reb Beach and White Lion's Vito Bratta saturated MTV with the EVH combination of tapping and melody.

1990

Nuno Bettencourt

The Extreme guitarist's entire style is somehow original, yet unmistakably descended from Van Halen, as Nuno will happily admit.

1994
Weezer

Long before *Van Weezer's* announcement, Weezer toted VH-style wings on their logo and appeared on magazine covers with Frankenstrats.

1992

Dimebag Darrell

Dime's wide stretches were straight from EVH's songbook. He was buried with the bumblebee guitar from *Van Halen II*.

1991

Jerry Cantrell

After Alice in Chains supported Van Halen, Cantrell and Eddie became friends. Jerry was the second highest profile 5150 user.

**"EVERY GUITARIST IN HOLLYWOOD
WANTED TO BE EDDIE..."**

1995 **The Smashing Pumpkins**

Even in the 90s, when everything 80s was verboten, Billy Corgan was quick to praise Van Halen's influence and importance.

2003
**The Noughties
Shred Revival**

DragonForce, Trivium, and Avenged Sevenfold raided EVH's lick stash - and amp warehouse - to bring back high-octane guitar solos.

2009
Djent

Tosin Abasi wrote an actual essay on the greatness of EVH - and he might not even be djent's biggest VH fan.

2009
Steel Panther

Satchel started as a VH tribute and never really stopped. Proved there was still a market for Roth's 'big riffs + jokes' formula.

2008
Dillinger Escape Plan

Covering *Hot for Teacher* on tour in 2008, Dillinger showed their respect for another band that changed heavy music.

2020 **Jack White**

The Van Halen influence isn't always obvious, but Jack appeared on *Saturday Night Live* tapping on a Wolfgang in memory of Eddie.

2021
Yvette Young

Along with Ichika Nito, the Covet guitarist is taking EVH's tapping techniques into a new decade and a new sonic universe.



LEFT
Weezer's new album,
the rather fittingly
titled *Van Weezer*

Words Grant Moon

“AIR-GUITARING WITH YOUR HEADPHONES ON!”

On the new Weezer album – knowingly titled *Van Weezer* – the alt-rock stars are channelling classic Van Halen, working the whammy bar and recycling riffs from *Crazy Train* and *Enter Sandman*. As TG’s Grant Moon notes: “They’re turning the gain up full here...”



Led by singer/guitarist Rivers Cuomo, alt-rockers Weezer first made their mark with their 1994 self-titled album and college radio hits such as *Buddy Holly*, *Say It Ain’t So* and, later, *Island In The Sun*. Theirs is a glossy, crunchy and highly listenable hybrid of pop and rock, with Cuomo a naturally talented performer and songsmith. And yet, for all their indie-cool, Weezer are an eclectic bunch. Their proud affection for the harder rock they grew up with is there in the fuzzy tones of 2002 LP *Maladroit*, and their irony-free versions of Toto’s *Africa* and Black Sabbath’s *Paranoid* on their 2019 covers album, titled simply *Weezer* but better known as ‘The Teal Album’. And while the band’s first new album of 2021, *OK Human*, is a beautiful and mellow masterclass packed with strings and piano, they’re turning the gain up full here on *Van Weezer*.

Despite its title, this album is not simply homage to Van Halen

– more a celebration of the strand of 80s rock that Eddie and the boys ignited. Cuomo, co-guitarist Brian Bell, bassist Scott Shriner and drummer Patrick Wilson still sound like Weezer, but pump up their work with some 80s guitar tone, heft, and attitude. That said, the opener definitely *does* channel VH themselves: *The End Of The Game* features an E major tapped guitar arpeggio and a joyfully clichéd metal-style riff, the low E string chugging away in 4/4 as a pedal tone, as the band play power chords E/A/A/C#m/B above it. That progression’s topped off with some very-Eddie natural harmonics over the wire of the fifth and seventh frets, with the last note divebombing out via whammy bar. The verse itself is standard Weezer – incredibly catchy and sweet, all about adolescent love (‘I know that you would crank this song/Air-guitaring with your headphones on’). Hints of *Panama* here, from Halen’s smash 1984 album, especially in the pre-chorus – the E/D#m/B guitar figure outlines Bsus4 like Halen’s track did, just in reverse.

All The Good Ones is set to a beat reminiscent of Weezer’s hit

Beverly Hills, itself not too far from Joan Jett’s *I Love Rock N Roll* (‘I just love the way she plays guitar/When she dives down on the whammy bar’). The upbeat *Hero* contrasts reality with childhood dreams of saving the world ‘swinging on a web, flying in the sky, shooting lasers from my eyes’. Some really nifty major-pentatonic lines here, but on this tune and throughout the album, producer Suzy Shinn keeps the guitars big, but – despite the rawk premise – there are surprisingly few widdly moments from Bell or Cuomo.

Cuomo can write fluff like *Sheila Can Do It* and *She Needs Me* in his sleep. Stronger are *I Need Some Of That* – a nostalgic, harmony-rich slice of power pop with a dash of The Cars circa *My Best Friend’s Girl* – and *Beginning Of The End*. There’s a hint of The Darkness in the multi-tracked symphonics here; cue more deftly-executed tapping in E major, with some Phase 90-alike treatment, too. Strummy acoustic ballad *Precious Metal Girl* alludes to that mecca of 80s hair metal, LA’s Sunset Strip, and two of its typical bands – LA Guns and Faster Pussycat. The album’s packed with such rawk references.

The opening riff of the galloping *Blue Dream* is a faithful rendering of Randy Rhoads’ classic hook for Ozzy Osbourne’s *Crazy Train*, transposed to C from the original F# and played on Weezer’s fuzzy, fat, gleamingly modern guitars. The riff may be borrowed but the song’s fantastical lyrics about undersea adventure and lost love are all Cuomo’s own.

Metallica’s influence bubbles up in the deceptively troubling *One More Hit*, about drug withdrawal. The E minor intro/verse riff is a cousin of *Enter Sandman*, the chorus moving into the brighter territory of that key’s relative major, G. With the thrashy middle-eight harks back to metal giants Slayer, the song ends with a darkly clever musical joke: as the subject requests ‘one more hit and then I’ll quit’, the song modulates up to G#, itself getting higher.

It’s just one highlight on an album rich in melody, detail and solid guitar work. Weezer’s journey back to the stadium of 80s rock is affectionate, highly accomplished, and great fun. They’re enjoying rocking out, and that’s catching.

WEEZER’S JOURNEY BACK TO THE STADIUM OF 80S ROCK IS AFFECTIONATE AND GREAT FUN



Interviews Amit Sharma / Jonny Scaramanga

“EDDIE WAS BEYOND REALITY. BEYOND LIMITATIONS OF GENRE, PLAYING STYLE AND TECHNIQUE...”

Ten of the best guitarists in modern music salute the genius of Eddie Van Halen – and explain why the legendary guitar hero’s influence is still as strong today as it ever was

Photo: Howard Chen



1 YVETTE YOUNG

Recent TG cover star Yvette Young is one of the most dazzling guitarists we’ve seen on the rise in recent years.

Perhaps what connects her to Eddie Van Halen most is her sheer inventiveness with two-handed approaches, using open strings and altered tunings to bring her creative exploits to life in the most unusual of ways...

How important was EVH’s role in the evolution of guitar playing?

I always loved his attitude towards music. He was exploring the guitar and pushing the boundaries of both genre and instrument out of necessity and compulsion in order to realise what he heard in his head. He definitely expanded upon the vocabulary of guitar and really didn’t pay attention to rules! He did whatever he wanted and wouldn’t think about it too much, and I think that’s what helped push him to not only rethink the way guitar was played, but also even the instrument itself! He did what he did because he needed to be himself. He didn’t care too much about what other people thought and that’s why he stood out. Also, as

a pianist myself, I can really deeply respect his piano roots and how he found a way to treat guitar like a piano with his two-handed tapping style...

It’s interesting how close the guitar can feel to piano when you explore wide intervals with two-handed techniques...

Oh, for sure! I have mad respect for his piano-based technique but also I love how he could be really spontaneous and at other times really well composed and thought-out. And I admire that kind of versatility on the instrument. Be it jazz, classical, or rock... He could play it all and still put it in his own voice. Finally, his ability to write riffs that you could dance to was very special. I’ve always aspired to do that in my own playing and writing as well.

And if you had to pick one favourite EVH piece, what would it be?

Gosh, there are so many bangers! 5150 is a personal favourite of mine because it’s just so climactic and upbeat. That song is just sick riff after riff after riff. But I guess you could say that about a lot of Van Halen songs!

“HE DID WHAT HE DID BECAUSE HE NEEDED TO BE HIMSELF”



2 NITA STRAUSS

Modern shred heroes don't come much more impressive than Nita Strauss. Over the last decade, she's played in The Iron Maidens, become a member of Alice Cooper's band, performed in supergroup Metal Allegiance and released her own fret-burning compositions in the form of 2018's *Controlled Chaos*. Here the world's first female Ibanez signature artist explains what Eddie meant to her...

What struck you most about EVH's playing?

He was so innovative in the way he approached everything about the guitar, from technique to tone. I always loved how he made two-handed tapping and whammy tricks feel so seamless in his lines. There are so many things that came from him that most guitarists probably don't realise. It's like automatic transmission on a car... These days most people just take it for granted without realising that somebody had to do it first. And more often than not, that person was Eddie.

Which tracks of yours do you think his influence shine through the most on?

I'd say Eddie's innovations are all over

my tracks, certainly those techniques in particular. In fact, I think you'd be hard pressed to find one of my solo songs that doesn't incorporate all of the things he did, like three note per-string scale runs, tapping and dive-bombs. He played in a way that just made sense with this rare gift for finding the most economical way to get extremely cool sounds out of the guitar. I always loved Eddie's use of hammer-ons and pull-offs with open strings, that's another thing I find that I use often. It's just such a cool contrast between the hard tap on the fret and then the beautiful ringing sound of the open string. There are a few tracks on my upcoming solo album that will really feature an open string hammer-on melody.

And what would be your personal pick out of the EVH catalogue?

It's not the most guitar-heavy track in the world, but the song *Dreams* has always had a really special meaning for me. It was a song that I heard at a really young age and lyrically hit home. I still get emotional when I hear 'We belong in a world that must be strong, that's what dreams are made of'. The way the solo gives a nod to the song's melody before hitting that impeccable tapping is just perfection.

"SOMEBODY HAD TO DO IT FIRST. AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THAT PERSON WAS EDDIE"

Photo: Jeremy Saffer



3 TYLER BRYANT

Having supported the likes of AC/DC and Guns N' Roses across various stadiums around the world, 30 year-old Texan Tyler Bryant now stands as the blues-rock hero for a new generation. But, as he explains, some of his more ambitious ideas were inherited from the late, great EVH himself...

What made EVH's take on the blues so powerful?

To me, Eddie was one of the most lyrical and melodic players of all-time. He knew when to 'go' and when to leave space. I imagine that if Eddie walked into a blues jam, he could undoubtedly get on stage and fit right in. He'd definitely have turned some heads, though!

In many ways, those blues licks were what made his faster guitar lines feel even more mind-blowing...

That's the thing. Eddie always served the song. He would come up with the most interesting chord voicings, but he also knew when to keep it simple. For me, bluesier stuff is about space and feel. When he would leave space before burning again, it would make the 'burn' that much more exciting. Even if it was just for a short breath. He knew how to pick his spots to make for the perfect moment.

Which tracks of yours channelled him the most?

A long time ago, I learned one of his bend and tap tricks and you can hear that on the *Shape I'm In* solo. You can also hear his influence on the *Holdin' My Breath* solo. I was trying to make a melodic solo that built to something. He was the king of that.

And finally, what song would you pick to epitomise Eddie at his most magical?

The slide work on *Could This Be Magic?* is exactly that, magic. I also love *Take Your Whiskey Home*. The riff is heavy and the short solo breaks are perfect. He had the vibrato, the slinky bends, and a deep well of licks to pull from. What a legend.

"HE KNEW HOW TO PICK HIS SPOTS TO MAKE FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT"



➔ 4 Plini

On his 2016 debut *Handmade Cities*, Australian prodigy Plini established himself as one of the most tasteful progressive rock players of the modern age – earning praise from far and wide. Last year’s follow-up *Impulse Voices* took that to new limits, showcasing his technical wizardry in a way that avoided the usual traps of self-indulgence...

What did you first become aware of Eddie Van Halen?

I started listening to him at the start of my journey down the rabbit hole of insane guitar playing, probably around the age of twelve. That was only 16 years ago, so I had a good few decades of EVH history to catch up on! But what stood out to me when I first heard his playing, and what still stands out to me, is how he managed to play with all the attitude and charisma of a classic rock 'n' roll guitarist, combined with the technique and musical vocabulary of an absolute alien.

In what ways did his techniques and tones influence you most?

I love his vibrato a lot, but more and more, Eddie’s biggest influence on me is simply how much enjoyment comes through in his playing... And in his smile. I’m not sure if this is necessarily obvious in my playing, but it’s definitely a life-long goal. There are very few guitarists I can think of whose playing exudes so much joy and raw excitement, while also being filled with technical and harmonic ideas that are mind-boggling when you try to analyse them. And then you have to factor in his contributions to the world of gear. It’s frankly hard to imagine what sort of guitars we’d be playing or what kind of amp sounds we’d be dialling in if not for him.

So what's your favourite guitar moment in his extensive discography?

It’s not particularly obscure, but *Good Enough* is definitely up there. The dialled-back crunchy riff around two and a half minutes in is incredible, even more so when you hear that ballsy tone fifteen seconds later. He was too good!



“IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE WHAT SORT OF GUITARS WE’D BE PLAYING IF NOT FOR HIM”



5 JUSTIN DERRICO

Best known as the axeman for P!nk and house guitarist on *The Voice* [USA], Justin Derrico has also shared stages with Beyoncé, Tina Turner, and the Pussycat Dolls. He gets his shred chops out for JamTrackCentral, and 2021 will see his long awaited second solo album.

Where did you discover Van Halen?

I used to hang out at this music store where I grew up. There were a few guys locally that really had the Van Halen thing down. They'd come in and start tapping and my mind exploded.

What did you learn from Eddie?

I didn't get into transcribing and learning like the licks until later, but the vibe of it grabbed me. I really liked the way he'll bend in to a note

and then slide up and bend into the next, and keep going with that. For me more than anything with Eddie, it's his sheer attitude. It's just so sassy. There's so many dudes that are burning shredders, and they're great, but Eddie just had this ballsiness to his to his shredding. He was super melodic as well, and he had that gutsy flair where he'd hit a note and it kicks your ass. Then there a bunch of crazy sh*t in between, like a sparring match. Even the more melodic stuff still had that gusto.

What else did you like about his playing?

His rhythm playing. His groove is just sick! A friend of mine showed me the isolated guitar track from *Hot For Teacher*. Even if you listen to it on its own, it's got a groove to it. He was the greatest.

He was the first person with a high gain tone straight from an amp, too. Yeah, and it changed the game really. He was such an innovator in so many respects, his tone for one, his playing, the creation of the Frankenstein guitar, and all his you know crazy acrobatic whammy bar stuff. The guy was just straight up creative. He was such a great musician that on any instrument he would have done something like that. It was inside of him.

What's your favourite Van Halen song, then?

It kinda changes, but right now it's *Hot For Teacher*. It sounds like someone friggin' started up a Harley, and then the tapping madness at the beginning. The riff is so badass and the rhythm playing is awesome. It's the pinnacle of rock 'n' roll guitar.

Photo: Lisa Skarell/Schulman

"EDDIE JUST HAD THIS BALLSINESS TO HIS SHREDDING..."



6 JARED JAMES NICHOLS

The 32 year-old Wisconsin fingerpicker recently unveiled his Gold Glory Les Paul Custom signature model through Epiphone and was recently featured on Joe Bonamassa's *Live From Nerdville* podcast. It's easy to see why – his blues power catchphrase, adopted from Albert King, has become the motto he lives his life by...

Guitar legends don't really come much larger-than-life than Eddie. Eddie was beyond reality. Beyond limitations of genre, playing style and technique. Eddie embodied the instrument alongside everything he played. He had the ultimate touch, tone, and feel because he understood the deep roots of the blues and emotion in guitar playing. It shined through in him in every note he

played. Eddie and I share similar massive influences, such as Eric Clapton and Leslie West. There are moments in his playing where you can clearly hear him taking such influences and going elsewhere, breathing his own spirit into them.

That Leslie West connection doesn't get talked about enough!

Yeah! And I think that connection was evident is everything Eddie played, especially on the first Van Halen album. You can hear Leslie's influence on the tones throughout the record, starting with *Runnin' With The Devil*. Also he was using one pickup... He definitely learned that from Leslie. One pickup is all ya need! As for Clapton, I think that was more foundational for Eddie. Listening to things like *Crossroads* and *Spoonful* must have been very big in teaching

him the language and vocabulary of blues-based rock 'n' roll.

When you put it like that, it's crystal clear Eddie had this ability to talk through his instrument...

Technically speaking, that's what it was... Speaking. Of course he has his bases covered as far as technical ability, using things like fast runs, bends and vibrato, but there was so much more to him as player. There was also something special about his timing, coming down to how he attacked the instrument and where he would place his notes and phrases. All in all, his tone had enough overtones to kill and was always dripping with sweat and soul. It blows my mind to think that he was creating his own musical language less than a decade after Jimi [Hendrix]. What a visionary.

"HE WAS A MASTER OF LEARNING THE RULES, AND THEN BREAKING THEM"

7 NILI BROSH

Nili Brosh's CV is a testament to the remarkably talented and versatile guitarist she is. The Israeli-American Berklee graduate has played in The Iron Maidens, Dethklok and Tony MacAlpine's touring group to name but a few, and she also starred in Cirque Du Soleil's Michael Jackson ONE residency in Las Vegas. "I got to play the *Beat It* solo ten times a week while shooting an arc fire out of my guitar," she told TG...

What made EVH such a unique and forward-thinking guitarist for his time?

I think it's a combination of several things. Aside from the obvious innovations to tapping and other techniques we now consider commonplace, I usually like to focus on his lesser-talked about rhythm playing. Many guitarists find that to be one of the more underrated yet extremely important aspects of his playing, and I agree, for an even more specific reason – he wasn't just a great improviser on his leads, he was extremely musical and spontaneous in his rhythm playing, very noticeably treating his role like a true accompanist to his various singers. He had such a clear sense of how to perfectly phrase his riffs, with fills in-between and this ability to do it all on the fly with such unique ideas and unparalleled touch. Throwing in all of those little clutch moments that are hidden in every riff, always doing something a bit different on every repeat, and always so effortlessly. That to me is the real Van Halen swagger.

In what areas do you think he influenced your playing the most?

Strangely enough, I think for me it's his blues licks. It might be considered kind of cliché when talking about Van Halen, but just like everything else he did, he did it in his way. When I went and dug into that aspect of his playing deeper, a direct connection to how he influenced the lines of his successors suddenly appeared. All of a sudden it became so clear as to what the generation of great players that came right after him took from him... And how. I will also say that studying his music really helped my 'transcription ears' get to a new level in the art of guitar. Many solos I've since transcribed – like Nuno Bettencourt's, for example – of a sudden seemed much easier to figure out and comprehend.

Finally, what is your favourite EVH track and why?

There's so much classic Van Halen in *Hot For Teacher*. I'm a sucker for his swing and time feel, and in a way I like that this is the song that everybody knows. There's quite a bit of legendary playing – both lead and rhythm – while still being super accessible and easily loved by many. If anything, he brought back guitar hero-ness to the masses, and this is such a great example of that. Additionally, any song that sounds like there's a huge party going on and everyone's having fun is classic VH to me, so I can't ignore that either! It's also extremely fun to play.



“HE HAD SUCH A CLEAR SENSE OF HOW TO PERFECTLY PHRASE HIS RIFFS”



8 SOPHIE LLOYD

With 576,000 YouTube subscribers and 387,000 Instagram followers, Sophie Lloyd is the UK's best-known new shredder. Videos of her original compositions have racked up 20 million views and her covers millions more. In 2020, Keisel released a Sophie Lloyd signature model.

How did you get into Van Halen?

My dad would drop me to school some days and have it blasting in the car. I was playing acoustic, and that was when I really made the switch. I was like, 'I gotta get an electric guitar!' Then my guitar teacher at university, Jim Clark, was the biggest EVH fan in the world. Every lesson he was like, 'Here's a Van Halen lick'...

One of your first popular videos was your cover of Panama.

Yeah, that was really fun to play, but challenging as well. The harmonic stuff he does was new to me when I started learning that, so that was a really big turn in my playing. The timing – it's a split second thing but it takes a couple weeks to really nail it.

You also did a cover of Billie Eilish in the style of Van Halen...

It sprung from Billie Eilish saying she hadn't heard of Van Halen. I was like, 'What if she had?' I like Billie Eilish and all the new stuff so it was fun for me to be able to combine that song with all the crazy Van Halen techniques. I think it sounded pretty good!

Are the chords in that video inspired by Unchained?

Yeah, those triads! Eddie often used them alone but I love layering it over power chords. It adds such a cool effect, especially when you're playing a pedal on the A string. It's really driving and it makes you want to get up and dance.

What aspects of Eddie's playing inspired you the most?

I attempted to learn *Eruption* when I was 11. Now the majority of my solos have a tapping lick in them. I think a big part of is the emotional side. You can't listen to a Van Halen solo and not smile. Sometimes they're crazy and they're silly, and it's awesome! I want people to listen to my solos and smile as much as I do when I listen to Van Halen solos.

What's your favourite Van Halen song?

Probably Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love. That just gets me hyped whenever I hear it.

“YOU CAN'T LISTEN TO A VAN HALEN SOLO AND NOT SMILE”

“I LOVE WHAMMY, AND WHEN EDDIE DOES IT, YOU REALLY FEEL IT”

9 HANNAH STAPHNILL (HAWXX)

Hawxx are among the fastest-rising new metal acts. Their international line-up boasts members from the UK, Greece, and Bahrain. 2020 saw them winning the PRS Women Make Music Award, releasing the EP *Deadlands*, and performing at the Heavy Music Awards.

How did you get into Van Halen?

Van Halen is one of those forces that's just always been there. I got really into the 80s Bay Area thrash scene, so I was reading all these interviews with people like [Testament's] Alex Skolnick, and they all referenced Van Halen. I was like 'OK, I need to go back and investigate'.

What did you discover?

My first instrument was piano so I grew up with Bach, Mozart, and Schubert. A lot of Eddie's tapping has maybe a harmonic minor edge that's classically influenced. I never got into learning solos; I didn't have the patience for it. I mainly listened for techniques and watched live clips, analyzing what is actually possible on the guitar. If there was something I didn't understand, I'd work that bit out. It's kind of born out of laziness but it's a good upshot if it's helped develop my own thing!

There's a lot of Van Halen-ish whammy stuff in Hawxx.

I love whammy to the point where I might be overusing it, but no one's complained yet! Van Halen does all this intricate guitar and then it'll just be a kind of wail. I like the contrast. I like screaming and wailing and that kind of chaos, and the whammy does that for me. I think it feels more sort of emotionally connected as well. When Eddie does it you really feel it. He's obviously showy, but it's not at the detriment of melody. I think melody's king, and the melody going through his playing is really strong.



10 MARK HOLCOMB (PERIPHERY)

Since Mark Holcomb joined Periphery in 2011, the band have released six albums, defining the djent genre and earning a Grammy nomination. PRS released his signature guitar in 2016, with Seymour Duncan producing his Alpha/Omega pickups the following year. Mark is currently recording a new Periphery album.

What were your favourite aspects of Eddie Van Halen's playing?

Even before I grasped his technical prowess I remember latching onto the sound of his guitar. It's like the first time you hear Freddie Mercury's voice. It sounded as clear as an acoustic guitar but it had this edge to it. When he was laying into it, it sounds *metal*. If you pick hard it's angry, but if you lay back, roll the volume down, you can sound like you're playing through a clean channel. Just by how you play,

you can sound like a different player, and let the attitude shine through.

How has that sound influenced Periphery?

He pioneered an entire style of guitar tone. Without him it's hard to imagine where even good metal tone was. Look at Periphery, or 90 per cent of modern metal bands – without a 5150, what would metal sound like? The genre probably wouldn't exist in its current form without Eddie.

What techniques did you learn from him?

When I first picked up guitar I went back to the first Van Halen album. I became obsessed with learning some of those tricks. Everything was fluid, unpredictable, and off-the-cuff sounding. That level of virtuosity always felt otherworldly to me. And the fact he would pair it with these insanely well-written songs that

even my mom knew, it was crazy. They had all these chart-topping songs but he was also the best guitar player in the world. It's such a weird pairing, especially compared to 2021.

What EVH trademarks do you use in your own writing?

One of the biggest things was spontaneity and just having fun. He would just throw in something because he felt like it, and you could envision the smile on his face as he did it. On stage with Periphery, I'm smiling all the time and throwing in things that don't belong. Sometimes I get weird looks from my bandmates but that's just the way I was raised!

And what's your favourite Van Halen song?

Dance The Night Away. I always loved when Van Halen would dial it back for a ballad. Eddie's rhythm tone is unreal.

“HE PIONEERED AN ENTIRE
STYLE OF GUITAR TONE”

Photo: Getty



RIGHT NOW!

You've heard from a slew of guitarists flying the Van Halen flag, now TG looks at the playing styles of today's EVH disciples

Eddie Van Halen was an innovator in how he played the guitar and with the tools he used to do so. He tore up the guitar playing rulebook on his 1978 recording debut, and legions of guitarists subsequently followed his lead, aping both technique and tone.

Today, his influence is just part of the backdrop of rock, extending far beyond those who directly cite his influence. As Plini related to TG: "It's frankly hard to imagine what sort of guitars we'd be playing or what kind of amp sounds we'd be dialling in if not for him." We would be inclined to agree...

For now, we're looking at some of today's guitarists who are taking Eddie's trademark techniques into new musical territory. Progressive math-rock and shred feature highly, but remember that the joy and excitement of pure rock 'n' roll are at the heart of Ed's playing.

1 ICHIKA NITO: CLEAN TONE TAPPING

TRACK 16

♩=110

Em D C

Play 4 times

Eddie set the clean-tone tapping template on tracks like *Women In Love* and *Cathedral*. Today, contemporary players like Ichika Nito and Polyphia's Tim Henson and Scott LePage are taking this approach into new progressive math-rock territory. Try out our example, and aim for accuracy on the two-finger tapped notes.

2 TYLER BRYANT: BLUES-ROCKER

TRACK 17

♩=90

Am

1/4

Play 4 times

It's all too easy to think of Eddie as a virtuoso shredder, but he was a rock 'n' roller at heart, equally at home reworking Chuck Berry riffs or slamming out Page-esque hard-rock pentatonics – and this influenced a young Tyler Bryant. Try out our Bryant-style blues-rock riff.

TIPS FOR TAPS... ED'S TRADEMARK TECHNIQUE EXPLAINED

1 For tapping and kill-switching, Eddie tends to use his first finger, preferring to hold the pick between thumb and second finger.



2 Sometimes he holds the pick in the 'instep' of his middle finger and rests his thumb on the neck to keep his hand steady as he taps.



3 JARED JAMES NICHOLS: PENTATONICS

TRACK 18

♩=120

N.C.

E⁵

N.C.

Play 4 times

T
A
B

5 7 5 7 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 5 7 5 7 3 3 5 6 7 5 6 7 5

As with Tyler Bryant, Jared James Nichols is another modern blues-rockers who has taken inspiration from Eddie Van Halen. Here we're looking at a pentatonic/blues scale idea with additional chromatic notes – the kind of idea you can hear in *I'm The One*. Take care on the change from single notes to powerchords in bar 2.

4 YVETTE YOUNG: TWO-HANDED TAPPING

TRACK 19

♩ = 120

Am Asus^{2/4} A^b A^b6sus^{#4} Play 4 times

The musical score is written for guitar in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into measures with chord changes: Am, Asus^{2/4}, A^b, and A^b6sus^{#4}. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for each note.

Am Asus^{2/4} A^b A^b6sus^{#4} Play 4 times

This example homes in on one aspect of Yvette Young's two-handed tapping approach with a tapped fret-hand powerchord and a two-note shape for the pick hand. Yvette will often mix this kind of idea in around more conventional fingerstyle lines and jazzy chords.

5 PERIPHERY: EXTENDED LEGATO

TRACK 20

[illegible]

Eddie often cashed in on the extra facility, speed and fluidity that pick-hand tapping allows. For the less tap-obsessed, you can use the technique to facilitate wide-interval legato leaps, as you can hear in *Periphery's Racecar* for example. Our lick is primarily based on slides, but with those occasional taps extending the pitch range.

6 PLINI: WHAMMY BAR LEAD

TRACK 21

♩=130

D⁵

8va

A⁵

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

Doop

w/bar

Scoop

Play 4 times

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

Doop

w/bar

Scoop

19

17

16

19

18

17

16

14

[14]

14

16

14

16

14

16

14

12

Here we're looking at a whammy bar example in the style of Australian virtuoso and EVH disciple, Plini. The trick here in our lick is to depress the whammy bar before striking the fretted note. This results in a 'scoop' into the note. The whammy bar can also be used to add a vocal style vibrato to the notes.



INSEPA

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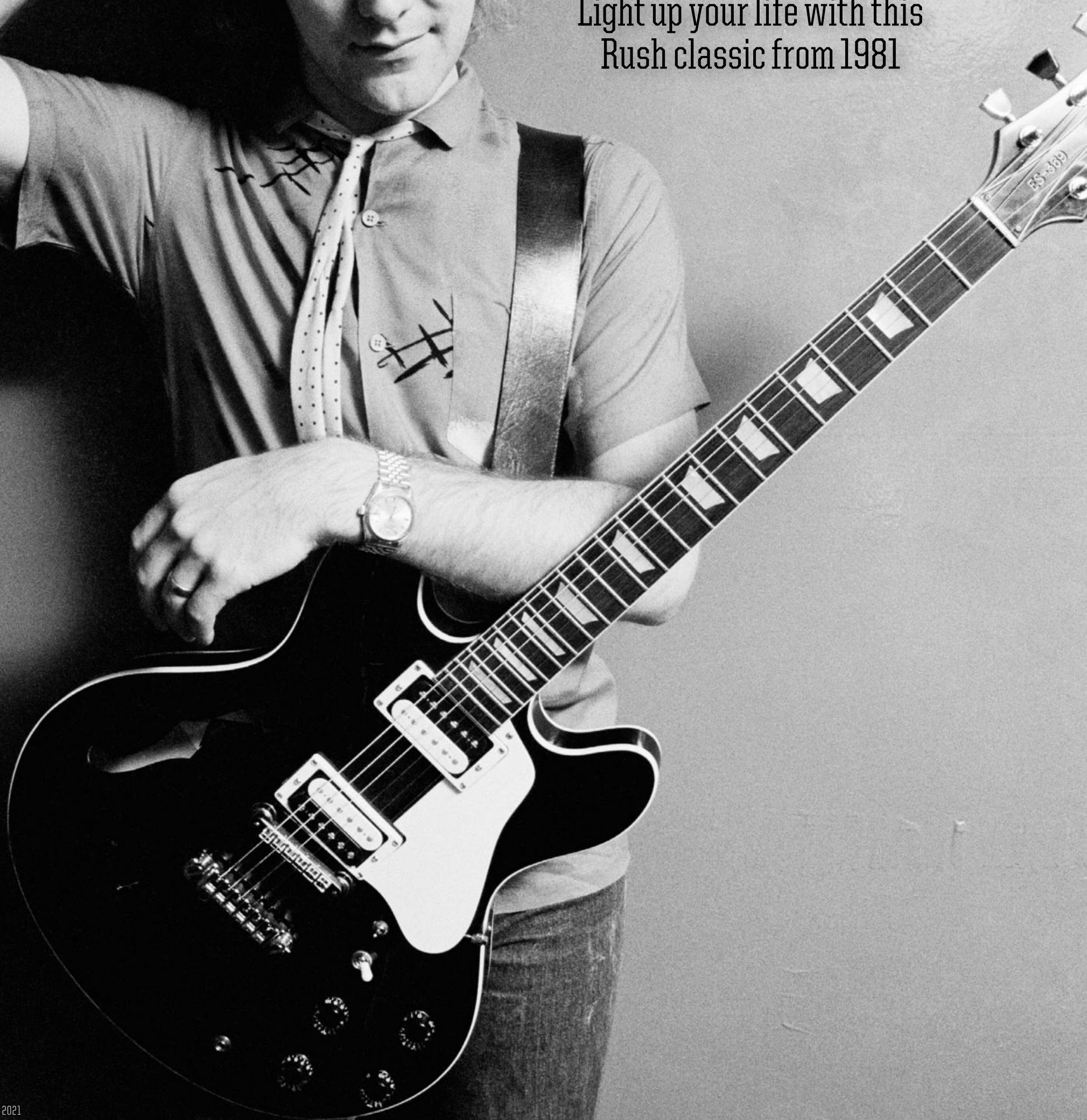
ARRABBLE

th•mann

RUSH

LIMELIGHT

Light up your life with this
Rush classic from 1981

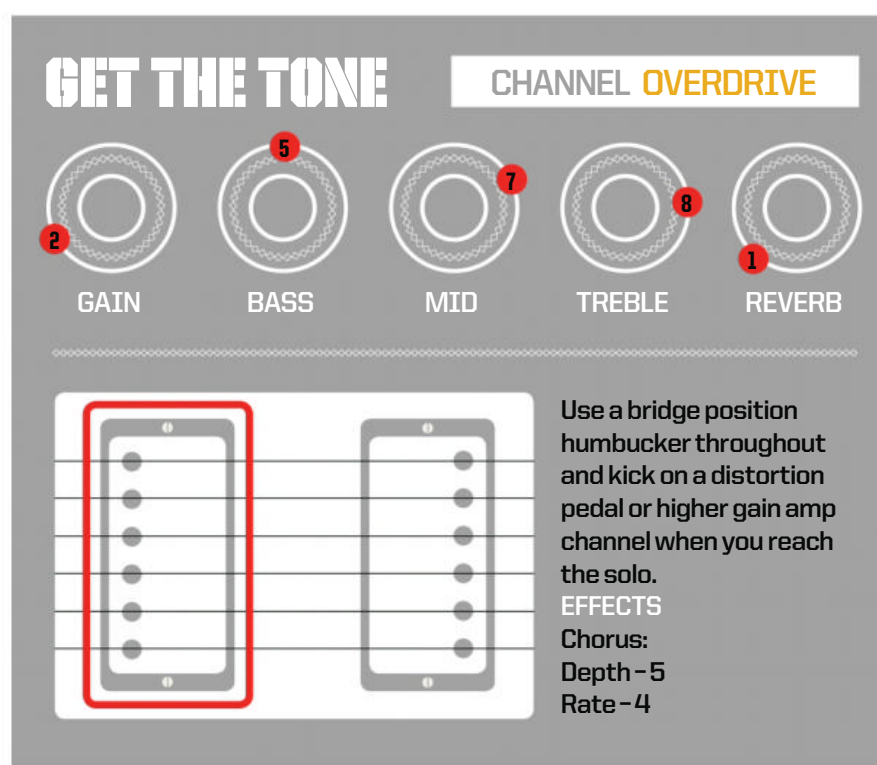


Limelight features on Rush's 1981 album *Moving Pictures* – an essential album in the band's back-catalogue, featuring classics like *Tom Sawyer*, *Red Barchetta* and *YYZ*. As one of the band's best known tracks, *Limelight* features some of guitarist Alex Lifeson's most recognisable trademarks such as lush suspended chords and those signature open-string shapes.

Lifeson has described the song's solo as one of his favourites, and features some of his trademark melodic playing, peppered with Floyd Rose whammy bar vibrato and dive-bombed natural harmonics. Hint! These require a light touch when you come to them. The notes should sound pure with plenty of sustain. The song features four time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 7/4 and 7/8. The first three of these have four, three and seven downbeats in each bar of music respectively – so stomping your foot will help you keep time. 7/8 is trickier to understand (there are seven eighth notes in every bar) but these sections can be picked up by 'feel'.

GET THE SOUND

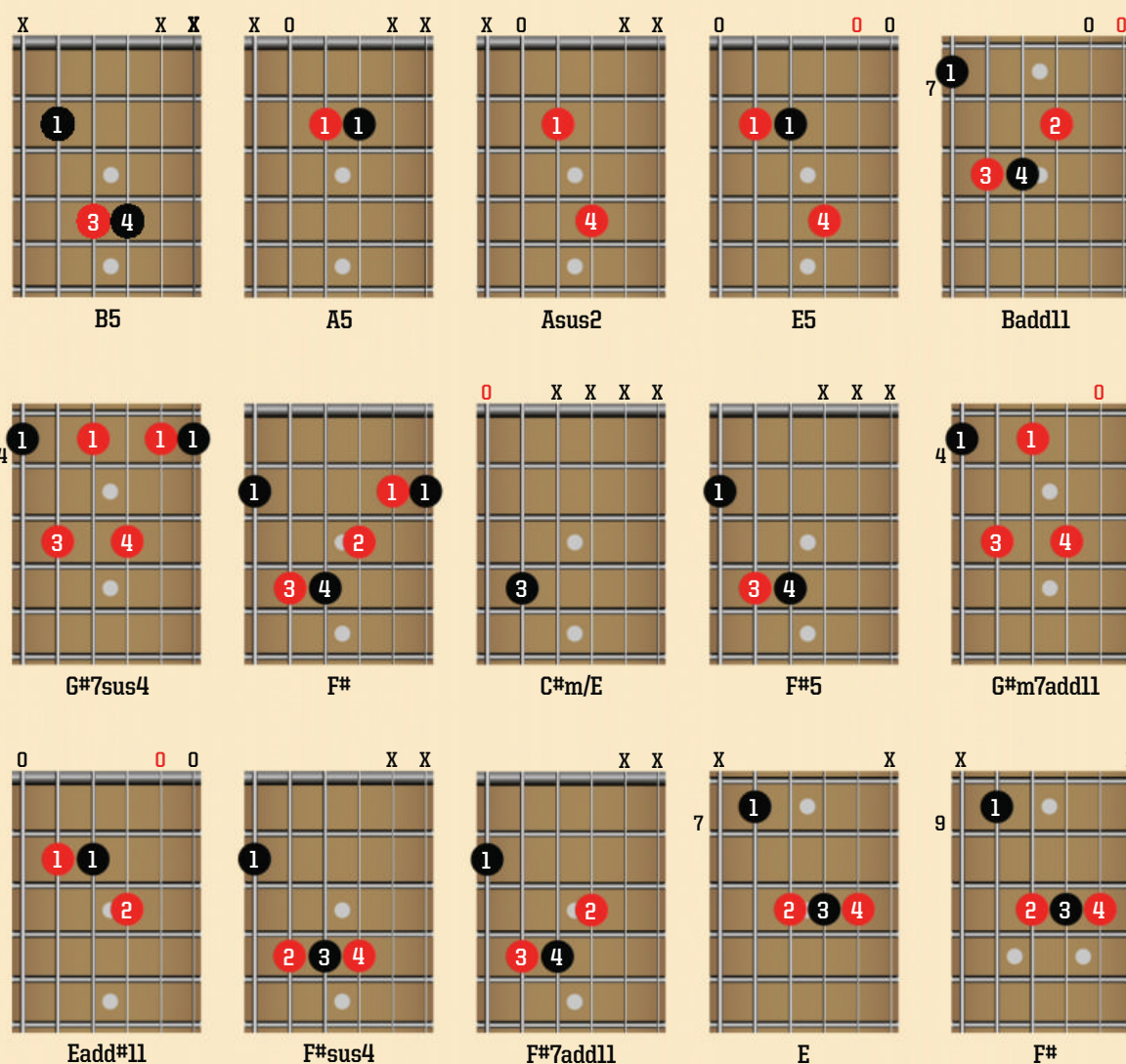
Everything you need to know before playing 'Limelight'



Taking a break from his usual Gibson ES-335 of the time, Alex used a black Fender Stratocaster equipped with a Gibson PAF humbucker in the bridge. For the solo he used a Floyd Rose-fitted Strat dubbed the 'Hentor Sportscaster'. Amp-wise he used a Marshall Club and Country 50w combo and the all-important Boss CE-1 Chorus Ensemble. Chorus is a big part of Alex's tone, giving breadth and dimension, and helping Rush sound bigger than a three-piece. Aim for a tone somewhere in between clean and crunchy, with plenty of chime during the arpeggios.

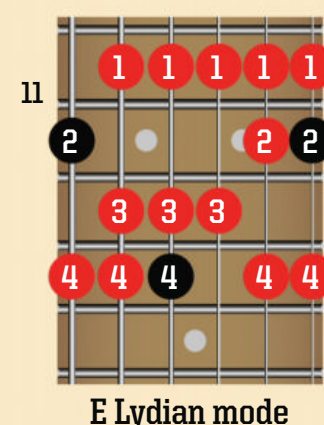
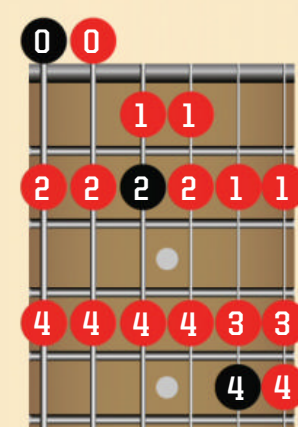
CHORDS

There are a lot of complicated sounding chord names here, but most of the shapes are fairly easy to play. Badd11 and F#7 are trademark Lifeson shapes, major chords with two open strings included, and are easier to play than the barre chord equivalents.



SCALES

Though played in different octaves, these two scales differ only on one note: the 4th interval, which is either an A (in the case of E major) or A# (E Lydian). It's just one note, but the #4th interval of the Lydian mode has a more ethereal, grander and cinematic feeling than the simpler sounding major scale. In *Limelight*, Alex uses the standard major scale for the main riff, but employs the Lydian mode for the solo.



RUSH LIMELIGHT

LIMELIGHT
Words and Music by Alex Lifeson,
Geddy Lee and Neil Peart
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RUSH LIMELIGHT Intro

♩=135

N.C. B⁵ A⁵ N.C. B⁵ A⁵

TAB

1 0 4 0 4 2 4 4 2 4 0 0 4 0 4 2 4 4 2 4 0

5 0 4 0 4 2 4 4 2 4 0 0 4 0 4 2

The riff starts on the offbeat, so count '1 & 2 &' to set your internal tempo, and play the first note on the second '&'. Start with an upward pick stroke and keep your hand moving down and up throughout the riff.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Bridge 1 & 2

Bridge 2: play 2 times

B⁵ Asus² E⁵ N.C. E⁵ N.C.

1.2.3. 4.

0:12 1:28

TAB

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

B⁵, Asus² and E⁵ all have a 4th fret B on top, so fret this crucial note throughout in order to make your chord changes as economical as possible. This bridge happens twice in the song. The second time (at 1:28 in the original track) is half the length of the first, so play only the first and fourth endings this time.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Verses 1 to 4

Badd¹¹ G#⁷sus⁴ F# C#m/E F#⁵ E⁵

0:25 0:44 1:34 1:54 let ring

TAB

0 0 8 7 9 9 4 6 4 6 6 3 4 4 2 0 2 4 4 2 0 0 4 4 2 0 0 0 0



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 22-23)
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!

RUSH / LIMELIGHT

RUSH LIMELIGHT Verses 1 to 4 (cont'd)

Chord progression for Verses 1 to 4 (cont'd):

Verse 1: F^{#5} C^{#m/E} F^{#5} E⁵ Badd¹¹ G^{#7sus4}

Verse 1 ending: F^{#5} B⁵ Asus² N.C. B⁵ Asus² N.C.

Verse 2,4 ending: B⁵ Asus² N.C.

Verse 3 ending: B⁵ Asus² N.C.

Let ring instructions are provided for the Verse 1 ending and the Verse 2,4 and Verse 3 endings.

Tablature (TAB) is provided for each section, showing fret numbers and string positions.

The verse is in 3/4, but the drum part disguises this quite cleverly, so keep tapping your foot on the downbeat to stay in time. The first nine bars of all four verses are the same, with a mixture of ringing open strings and tight stops which rhythmically match the drums. The end of each verse switches to 7/4 time - that's seven beats per bar instead of three.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Pre-chorus 1 & 3

Chord progression for Pre-chorus 1 & 3:

Pre-chorus 1: G^{#m7add11} Eadd¹¹ F^{#sus4}

Pre-chorus 3: G^{#m7add11} Eadd¹¹ F^{#sus4} G^{#m7add11}

Let ring throughout instruction is provided for Pre-chorus 1.

Tablature (TAB) is provided for each section, showing fret numbers and string positions.

This beautiful progression uses three chord shapes played on the lowest four strings, which are tied together with a ringing open second string throughout. Make sure each string is cleanly fretted, and use relaxed, even picking across the five strings.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Chorus 1 & 2

1:10 2:19

E⁵ F[#] G^{#7}sus⁴

TAB

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

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

E⁵ F^{#5} F^{#7}add¹¹ G^{#7}sus⁴

let ring

TAB

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6

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

E⁵ F^{#5} F[#] G^{#7}sus⁴

Chorus 2 only

2:33

TAB

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

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

In contrast to the rest of the song, the chorus is straight ahead rock guitar played with constant eighth-note downstrokes. Of course, Alex adds his trademark suspended notes and open strings. Notice that the second chorus is one bar longer than the first.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Pre-chorus 2

1:23

G^{#m7}add¹¹ Eadd^{#11} F[#]add¹¹

let ring throughout

TAB

0 6 0 3 0 3

4 6 4 2 4 4

4 6 4 2 4 4

0 2 2 3 0 3

This short three-bar section is a shortened version of the main pre-chorus, but actually comes directly after the first chorus. It only happens once in the song and if you've learnt the earlier part, this'll pose no problem.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Solo

2:36

N.C. *w/bar* $G\#7sus^4$ E Doop F# Scoop

TAB 0 NH 12 [12] 4

1

$G\#7sus^4$ *w/bar* Scoop E F#

TAB 6 4 2 2 4 [4] 11

5

$G\#7sus^4$ E F#

TAB 12 14 11 12 14 11

9

$G\#7sus^4$ E

TAB 14 13 11 12 11 14 11 12 11 12 11 14 11 12 11 14 13 11

13

F# $G\#7sus^4$ 8^{va} *w/bar* E

Doop Doop

TAB 11 11 13 11 13 0 17 (19) 14 16 BU

16

RUSH LIMELIGHT Solo (cont'd)

20

23

The solo can be broken into in three sections, each of roughly eight bars: the opening whammy bar melody, then the B major arpeggio licks and finally the climb up to the 21st fret bends. Practise each section slowly and methodically before joining it all together.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Pre-chorus 4

let ring throughout

This section comes directly after the solo and is played in a similar fashion as before. Make sure you fret each chord as a full shape, then use your pick to articulate the relevant notes.

RUSH LIMELIGHT Outro chorus

3:28

E⁵ F[#] G[#]7sus⁴

TAB

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

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

E⁵ F[#]5 F[#]7add¹¹ G[#]7sus⁴ Play 4 times

let ring

TAB

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

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

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

E F[#] G[#]7sus⁴

let ring

TAB

9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

E⁵ F[#] G[#]7sus⁴

TAB

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

4 4 4 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

2 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

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

TAB

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

The third and final chorus finishes the song and gradually builds in dynamics more so than the previous choruses. After four repeats of the E-F[#]-G[#] progression, Alex moves the chords up an octave before building up to full six-string shapes for the finale.

BOB MARLEY

REDEMPTION SONG

TG and Rockschoo! explore this acoustic classic from Bob Marley And The Wailers

Bob Marley's 'anthem of emancipation' sees the reggae pioneer moving away from his roots and harnessing a folk sound more reminiscent of Bob Dylan. The track was released in 1980 as the twelfth cut from the Bob Marley And The Wailers' *Uprising* album, and was performed on solo acoustic guitar – though a band version was later released.

For Rockschoo!'s Grade One arrangement, the chords employ only the top four strings (with the exception

of the final G chord). This is great for beginners starting to master open chord fingerings, with very little movement needed between each shape. Try to work through these in isolation before linking together, and listen out for the syncopated strumming (the strums that land in between the strong beats). Rockschoo! have offered some strumming patterns to help you get the right feel: it can be helpful to emphasise the strong beats with downstrokes, alternating with the lighter upstrokes.



ACUSTIC

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

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RSL Awarding the Contemporary Arts

REDEMPTION SONG
Words and Music by Bob Marley
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All Rights in North America Administered by Blue Mountain Music Ltd./Irish Town Songs (ASCAP) and throughout the rest of the world by Blue Mountain Music Ltd. (PRS)
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Words Jono Harrison
Photography Getty

BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS REDEMPTION SONG

TRACKS 24-25

♩=120
N.C.

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

G Em C G/B Am

3 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 0 0 0 0

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

0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 0 0 2 2 2 2

5 V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V



FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 24-25)
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar solo style!

BOB MARLEY / REDEMPTION SONG

BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS REDEMPTION SONG

TRACKS 24-25

Chords: G, Em, C, G/B, Am

9

TAB

Chords: G, Em, C, G/B, Am

13

TAB

Chords: G, Em, C, D

17

TAB

Chords: G, C, D, G

21

TAB

Chords: C, D, Em, C, D, G

25

TAB

Chords: C, D, G, C, D, G

29

TAB

Play Marley's iconic intro riff in bars 1 to 4 with clean and precise fretting and check out the original track for Bob's subtle inflections if you want to take it further and add some vibe. If you're a more experienced player, use the full five- and six-string open G, Em, Am and C chord shapes.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

PEARL JAM JUST BREATHE

Learn the folky left turn from the Seattle grunge giants that took them to new heights in the 21st century

Some will say you need to look back to Pearl Jam's early output for their most iconic material. We'll let you make your own decision on that thorny subject, however, *Just Breathe*, the second single from 2009's *Backspacer* album, marked a massive Stateside success for the Seattle grunge pioneers, subsequently becoming their only US platinum-certified song to date. Not that we care too much about that. More important than its commercial success, *Just Breathe* is simply

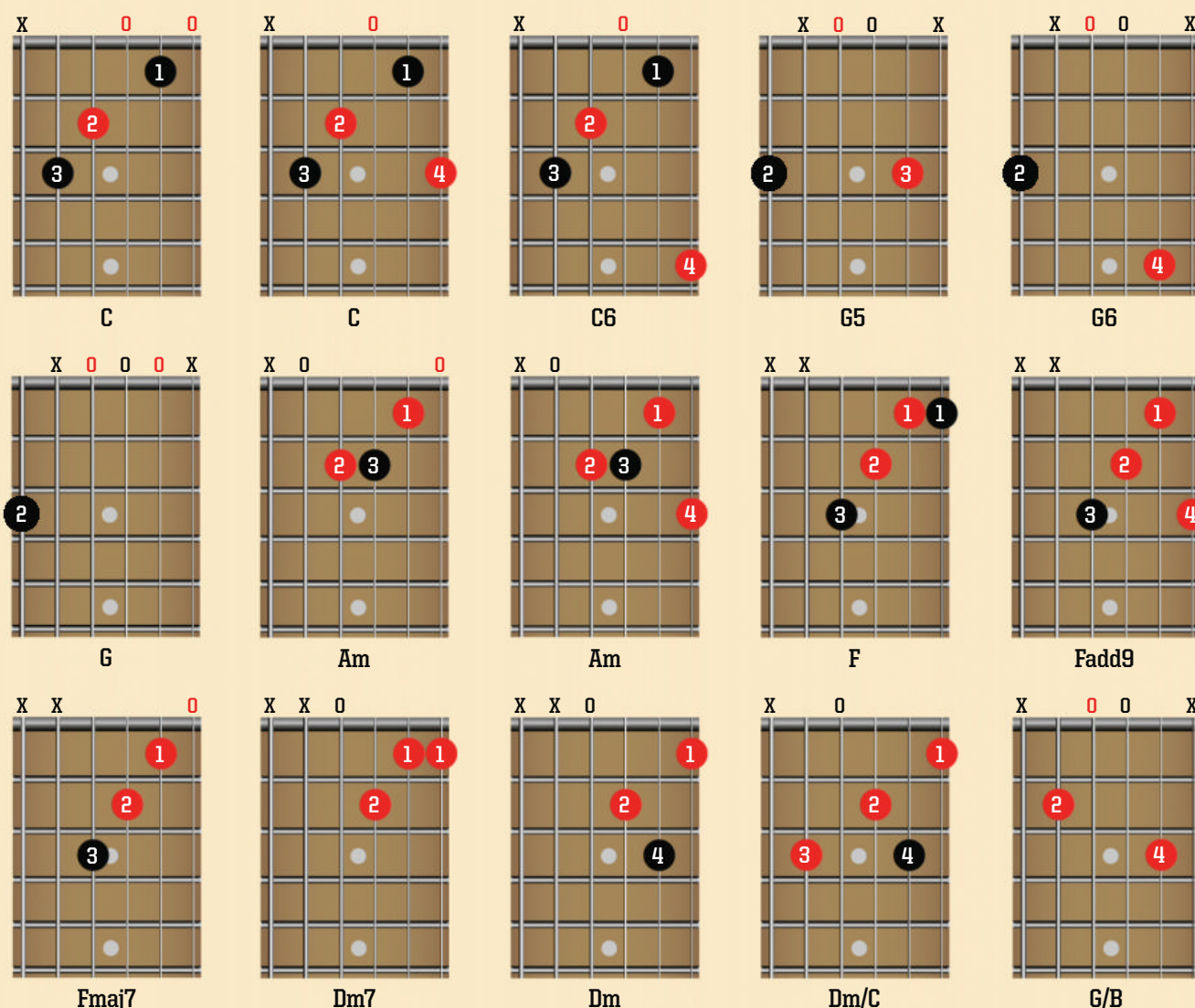
a beautiful song, showcasing the emotive vocals and Travis picking talents of frontman Eddie Vedder.

Typically, this fingerstyle approach is characterised by a constant alternating bassline played with the thumb, while melody notes are dealt with by the first and second fingers. If you've never attempted the technique, we advise practising the thumb-picked line first (the arrangement of our notated section should help!). From there, you can gradually introduce other notes, assembling the part piece by piece.

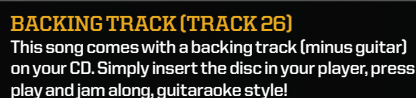


CHORDS

You'll need to get your fingers around quite a few shapes here. However, they're easy open chords in the main, which allows you to focus on Eddie Vedder's tricky fingerpicking pattern. The biggest challenge is that huge fourth-finger stretch on those C6 and G6 chords! If you can't manage the stretch on the C6, we recommend staying on the standard C chord – that's what Eddie does in the verses. On G6, try picking the open first string instead of stretching to the 5th fret.



JUST BREATHE
Words and Music by Eddie Vedder
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Just Breathe

C // // // // G // // // // x2

C
Yes I understand that every life
G
must end, uh-huh
C
As we sit alone, I know someday we
G
must go, uh-huh
C
Oh, I'm a lucky man to count on both
G
hands the ones I love
C
Some folks just have one
G
Yeah, others they got none, uh-huh

Am Stay with me
F Ah... Let's just breathe

C // // // // // G // // // // //

C
Practised are my sins

G
Never gonna let me win, uh-huh

C
Under everything, just another human

G
being, uh-huh

C
Yeah, I don't want to hurt, there's so

G
much in this world to make me bleed

Am
Stay with me
F
Ah... You're all I see

G **Dm7**
Did I say that I need you?

G **Dm7**
Did I say that I want you?

F **Am**
Oh, if I didn't, I'm a fool you see

Dm **Dm/C** **G/B**
No one knows this more than me

G
As I come clean

C
I wonder everyday, as I look upon
G
your face, uh-huh

C
Everything you gave and nothing you
G
would take, uh-huh

Am
Nothing you would take
F
Every - thing you gave

C / / / / / / / G / / / / / / / x2

Am
Nothing you would take
F
Every - thing you gave
Am
Hold me till I die
F
Meet you on the other s

TRACK 26

♩ = 110

C C⁶ G⁵ G⁶ G⁵ G G⁵ *Play 6 times*

let ring throughout

TAB

1 m p i p m p i m p i p m p i m p i p m i m i cont. sim.

Am Am⁷ Am Am⁷ F Fadd⁹ F *molto rit.* Fmaj⁷

TAB

5

JUNE 2021 **TOTAL GUITAR**

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE
BEST NEW GEAR

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

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

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

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

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

*WHAT IS GAS?

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

NO SNAKE OIL

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

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

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



BEST FOR...

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



86



92



85 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

86 CORT G300 PRO

A modern classic in the making?

90 PEAVEY INVECTIVE MINI HEAD

The Misha Mansoor signature, in lunchbox form

92 JACKSON DINKY JS24 DKAM DX

A budget speed machine for tomorrow's shredder

94 EVENTIDE MICROPITCH DELAY

A powerful, iconic studio effect encased in a pedal



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



2



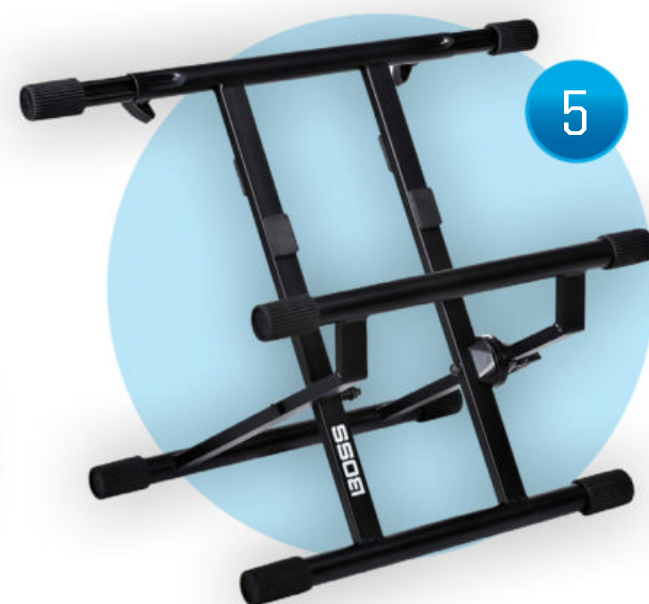
1



4



3



5

START ME UP!

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

FENDER SQUIER AFFINITY SERIES STRATOCASTER HH

1 A refresh to the Affinity line has brought new finishes and models. Alongside a new Tele Deluxe and single-coil Jazzmaster with tremolo, there's this Stratocaster HH – but look at that finish! Charcoal Frost Metallic has been rarely seen outside Custom Shop models but here it is, on an ideal beginner, back-up or mod project guitar. The body is poplar, neck maple and fingerboard Indian laurel. **£239, www.fender.com**

UNIVERSAL AUDIO UAFX GOLDEN, STARLIGHT AND ASTRA

2 Universal Audio has entered the effects pedal market and its opening gambit is the impressive trio of the Starlight Echo Chamber, Golden Reverberator and Astra Modulation Machine. They come at premium prices and there's no MIDI connectivity but you get UA expertise in delivering modelling of classic studio analogue tones. The lush curated sounds of 1960s reverb tanks, bucket-brigade goodness and iconic tape echoes await. **£355 each, www.uaudio.com**

FENDER MUSTANG MICRO

3 Has Fender created the perfect travel amp here? Bluetooth audio streaming from your mobile device, four hours playing from a rechargeable battery, USB-C output for recording... Oh, and the Mustang series' proven track record for quality modelling tones, of course. There's 12 amp models and 12 effect models so no excuses for a lack of inspiration wherever you find yourself with a guitar. **£89.99, www.fender.com**

ORIGIN RD COMPACT HOT ROD

4 Origin's RevivalDrive series of pedals are not cheap but are testament that sometimes quality is really worth the investment and a possible destination in that quest for the ultimate overdrive. They really can deliver the character of vintage Marshall tones. Here the Hot Rod model is scaled down in size and controls, still channelling classic modded head space to bring Plexi back with some of the most impressive tone-shaping controls we've heard on drive pedals. **£320, www.origineffects.com**

BOSS BAS-1

5 We're guessing an amp stand isn't on your wishlist of exciting gear purchases for 2021 but wait just a moment, it could be the best investment you make if you plan on playing gigs when they return. Think about it – the sound from your amp is usually hitting the backs of your legs. Not exactly efficient. The steel, foldable BAS-1 elevates and angles your combo (providing it's under 21kg) towards the place that matters; your lugholes. **£62, www.boss.info**



CORT G300 PRO

£749



A modern classic in the making?

Cort has been making guitars for many decades but mainly for other people. While many brands prefer not to admit the exact factory that makes their guitars, many do, like PRS who happily extol the virtues of their Indonesian partner in crafting their SE electrics. A few years back legendary British luthier Hugh Manson – who never minces his words when it comes to guitar construction – chose Cort to partner with for the rather good Matt Bellamy guitars. And slowly, not least with increased presence in the UK, Cort's own-brand instruments are gaining rightful respect.

Why? Well, if the name itself has little draw, it's all about quality and price. This new-for-2021

places. That contouring includes a nicely rounded heel where four inset screws hold the neck snugly in place.

And what a neck it is. With a deep caramel colour the roasted maple is very lightly matt finished that'll burnish to a low gloss with playing and a slim but not skinny depth with quite a full shouldered D profile. The separate fingerboard is made of the same material with a very contemporary compound radius (12-16") and 24 very well-installed stainless steel jumbo frets. An increasing popular wheel-type truss rod adjuster means any slight set-up tweaks are quick and easy and although like some modern brands, Charvel for example, there's no graphite rod reinforcement we do get those glow-in-the-dark

“ JUST AS RELEVANT FOR MODERN METALLERS AS COVERS BANDS ”

G300 Pro, for example, has the sort of specification that a few years back would only come from a high-line or Custom Shop maker. Turning its back on the vintage obsession of many, the G300 Pro is progressively forward-looking yet remains the sort of instrument that's equally at home with high-octane shred as it is with pristine pop/funk, classic rock and hair metal.

But there's not a hair out of place here when it comes to the build. Yes, there's a rather generic 'modern electric' look to the elongated Strat-based body but it's far from over stylised; it's basswood with a 6mm maple top that helps to keep the weight well below 8lbs and we have curves and contours in all the right

Luminlay side dots.

Hardware is just as impressive: the two-post vibrato really nods towards Gotoh's modern classic 510 with its push fit, tension adjustable arm and block-style stainless steel saddles with steel baseplate and block. Thanks to a slight back rout there's plenty of travel but tuning stability proves excellent, helped by the well-cut and slippery Graph Tech nut and the rear-lock tuners which have staggered height posts so only one string tree is necessary on the top two strings.

But it's the pickup set and the switching that elevate this to the next level. While the majority of Far Eastern axes at this price-point will feature often perfectly good pickups you really can't

1 FINGERBOARD & FRETS

The combination of the compound radius fingerboard and the very well fettled stainless steel frets means you can set a low, fast action. As supplied, at 1.3mm on the treble and bass-side at the 12th fret, it was actually *too* low for us!

2 PICKUPS

Seymour Duncan call this JB and Jazz their Hot Rodded set: "Seymour created this classic humbucker combination while in England in 1974, and it remains his favourite set of pickups to this day. One of the most timeless and versatile humbucker sets ever built."

3 VIBRATO SYSTEM

With its steel block and baseplate plus its stainless steel saddles this is an exceptional vibrato. The back route extends up-bends while the well-cut Black Tusq nut and rear-lock tuners maintain excellent tuning stability.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Basswood with 6mm maple top

NECK: Roasted maple, bolt-on

SCALE: 25.5" (648mm)

FINGERBOARD: Roasted maple/12-16" radius

FRETS: 24, jumbo stainless steel

PICKUPS: Seymour Duncan JB (bridge) and Jazz (neck) humbuckers

CONTROLS: Master volume and tone, 5-way lever pickup selector switch

HARDWARE: Cort CFA-III two-post six-saddle vibrato, Cort staggered-post rear locking tuners – chrome-plated

FINISH: Vivid Burgundy metallic (as reviewed), Black

CONTACT: 440 Distribution

www.cortguitars.com





In The Oven!

Roasting isn't just for your Sunday lunch

'Roasted', 'caramelised', 'baked' are all terms for wood that has been torried, or thermally cured, a relatively new process of heat-treating wood to change its structure. Wood has to be dry before it can be used on any musical instrument, not just for stability but for sound too and instrument makers have long used a combined process of air-drying and kiln-drying to reduce the moisture content: the last thing you want is for your guitar neck and fingerboard to dry out or warp when the strings are on. Many believe torried wood also emulates the time-aged wood of vintage instruments, not least when used for the top and bracing of an acoustic guitar. Oh, and it looks cool, too!



argue with the classic Seymour Duncan JB and Jazz set-up here. Don't forget, these designs go back to the birth of Seymour's tenure as the world's number one passive pickup maker: these aren't copies or clones, they're the real deal. Fire up a crunchy amp, switch to bridge and that's pretty much everything covered from classic rock to the present day. If Cort made a single pickup version of this guitar we'd still be raving. The JB kicks with its throaty raw that's as current now as it was in the seventies. But that's far from all we have here. From that full JB in

position one on the 5-way selector we get the screw single coils of both humbuckers in parallel, both humbuckers together, the slug single coils of both in parallel and, finally, the neck humbucker. The single coil mixes provide two shades of Fender-y funk while the full Jazz at neck sits between those and the full bluster of the JB with a beautiful clarity that allows a gained solo poke through a dense mix. The dual humbucker mix might be less useful in gained settings but on a cleaner amp it's a pretty classic, snappy combination.

The G300 Pro is exactly the sort of guitar that doesn't get in the way of the player and it's just as relevant for the practising student or modern metal merchant as it is for those diverse and covers band gigs. Track one down before someone realises they've cocked up the pricing. It really is that good.
Dave Burrluck

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

ALSO TRY...

STERLING BY MUSICMAN MARIPOSA £689

This Sterling version of the high-end Music Man guitar is definitely worth a look with similar on-paper spec of roasted maple neck, dual humbuckers and classy vibrato.



SCHecter C-1 EXOTIC £800

Another feature laden axe with roasted maple/purpleheart neck with carbon fibre reinforcement rods, Wilkinson WVS50IHK vibrato, Schecter Diamond '78 humbuckers and again 24 jumbo frets.



CHARVEL PRO-MOD SO-CAL STYLE 2 24 HH 2PT CM £1009

This upscale Tele-inspired model packs in active Fishman Fluence Open Core humbuckers and plenty of tricky switching, too!



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TOP 40 AND FUNK with Jason Sidwell



This course is for guitarists that desire strong abilities to suit being in a band. This will include picking approaches and band relevant chord voicings to modes for soloing and exciting repertoire analysis with a bias towards funk and RnB legends like Chic, James Brown and Michael Jackson.

JUMP BLUES with Chris Corcoran



Referencing the big sound of '40s & '50s R&B and Jump Blues guitar, this course will give a fresh perspective on how to add drive, style and invention. Licks, riffs and phrases will be covered as well as the styles of guitarists like T-Bone Walker, Lonnie Johnson, Tiny Grimes and Barney Kessel.

BLUES SONGS with Neville Marten



The aim for this course is to cover a range of blues tunes from classic to more modern. The onus is on great blues songs that everyone will know and enjoy playing. Guitarists of every level will be able to join in, whether you can improvise full solos or just play chords and a few licks.

ACOUSTIC SONGS with Chris Quinn



This course focuses on roots based music, ranging from folk to blues songs. You will study guitar techniques used by some of the greats of popular songwriting and also touch on useful fingerstyle methods and open tunings.

CLASSIC ROCK & INDIE ROCK with Jon Bishop



This course will cover many of the main components that guitarists use, ranging from scales and chord riffing through to string bending and use of harmonics. Lots of classic rock and indie riffs will be looked at with iconic songs.

MODERN ROCK with Tolis Zavaliaris



The focus of this course will be on relevant techniques, from picking to legato, and to improve and supercharge your rock guitar playing. Guitarists covered will range from Randy Rhoads to Paul Gilbert, Yngwie Malmsteen to Steve Vai.

JAZZ with Gianluca Corona



This course will cover the basics (extended chords, simple diatonic licks, swing feel, blues) through to more advanced concepts and devices (chord substitution, modal phrasing, outside playing).

GYPSY JAZZ with John Wheatcroft



This course will help to get your playing 'campfire jam' ready, with a hands on look at the fundamentals of this inclusive and engaging style – from using the correct chords and mastering 'La Pompe' to adding authentic licks and lines.



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PEAVEY INVECTIVE MINI HEAD

£769



The Misha Mansoor signature, in lunchbox form...

If there's anything Misha Mansoor is known for, it's precision. The Periphery guitarist was at the very forefront of the tech-metal revolution – at the time commonly referred to as 'djent', a term which he himself helped coin – and stands today as one of the scene's key figures. His 120-Watt Peavey Invective signature, introduced in 2018, was designed with the modern metal player in mind, but also proved itself more than

here than your average metal amp. Which, ultimately, is what this beast is. And given that the Invective line is partly inspired by the 6505 sounds which made Peavey synonymous with ultra high-gain players, it should come as no surprise that there is a *serious* amount of distortion available on the Lead channel. Even more so when you factor in the footswitchable boost, based on Mansoor's favourite TS-style circuit and staggering in its ability

therefore in need of servicing or replacing. There are three power modes, going from 20 Watts down to five or one, adding further to its practicality. You get a two-band EQ for the Clean channel and a three-band for the Lead, with master Resonance and Presence controls allowing for even more tonal sculpting and fine-tuning. At the back, there's a headphone out, plus mic-simulating XLR and USB connections which – with the speaker defeat engaged – allow for silent recording.

All in all, you're not just getting one of the most functionally versatile lunchbox heads out there, you're also getting one of the best-sounding. The Lead channel with the boost engaged offers the kind of experience shredders yearn for – endless sustain matched by astounding harmonic depth. Need a practical mini-head for modern metal? Look no further.

Amit Sharma

ONE OF THE MOST VERSATILE LUNCHBOX HEADS OUT THERE

capable of handling tones across the board. This mini-sized take on that head, however, feels just as impressive – perhaps even more so – repackaging a lot of the main features into a very small amount of space indeed.

Though the Clean channel doesn't have its own overall volume, the gain control can leave you anywhere in between crystal clarity and well-rounded crunch, which is certainly versatile enough. Thanks to the buffered effects loop it can also take pedals very well, so there's more to enjoy

to accentuate the harmonic overtones in your leads. More rhythmic players will appreciate the built-in Gate and Tight controls, ideal for all manner of chuggy staccato lines, the sharp silences only intensifying the head-crushing punches that follow.

The clever features don't end there, however. The Tube Status Indication circuit helps diagnose problems with the two EL84 power tubes, indicated by two green LEDs that switch to red when a tube is either over or under-current, and

1 TSI
Tube Status Indicator: two small LEDs found above the Standby and Power switches will tell you when your valves aren't performing optimally.

2 SWITCHES
The channel selector, Boost, Gate and Tight functions can be controlled from these buttons on front panel or via the footswitch.

3 MASTER CONTROLS
The Resonance and Presence dials give users even more control over their frequency range, which is ideal for cutting through in a band setting.

AT A GLANCE

- POWER:** 20/5/1 Watts
- CHANNELS:** 2 plus boost
- VALVES:** 2x EL84, 3x 12AX7/ECC83
- EFFECTS LOOP:** Footswitchable and buffered
- OUTPUTS:** 1/4 jack, Headphone, XLR, USB
- FOOTSWITCH:** Yes (Channel Select, Gate, Tight, Boost)
- NOISE GATE:** Yes
- CONTACT:** Peavey, peavey.com

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



JACKSON DINKY JS24 DKAM DX

£275

A budget speed machine for tomorrow's shredder

Speed is a quality often sneered at as though public displays of Roman candle lead guitar were somehow immoral or lacking emotional complexity. But speed can be essential. Where would heavy metal be without an uptempo rhythm figure, or a helter-skelter solo? The Jackson brand was built for speed, and its high-performance ideals have matured to the point that its entry-level JS series includes guitars such as this.

This is classic Jackson. The Dinky body is a familiar arch-topped take on the S-style, sporting more aggressive cutaways with chamfered edges, opening up the full fingerboard. The JS24 comes with a solid mahogany body and a caramelised maple neck and fingerboard – materials we don't always see at this price.

The neck profile is described as a "speed neck" and it's a slip of a thing, satin-smooth and bolted to the body. The JS24's extends its go-faster feel via a 12" to 16" compound radius fingerboard, as found on all contemporary Jackson six-strings. The black Shark Fin inlay is another signature move, reprising the sharp angles of Jackson's classic six-in-line headstock.

There are two high-output ceramic humbuckers at the neck and bridge positions, with a three-way blade selector switch and control knobs for volume and tone. Jackson has equipped the JS24 with a two-point Fulcrum vibrato, and while we might imagine a little disappointment that it's not a double-locking Floyd Rose, this stable and tidily engineered vibrato is nonetheless perfect

for learning whammy bar techniques without the faff of balancing the unit. That's just what you need when learning; more time playing.

High-output ceramic pickups can be a little shrill, but when mounted in the JS24's mahogany body, these Jackson-branded humbuckers reveal some character, enough muscle and teeth when played through a high-gain amplifier to cover most metal styles. The neck pickup rolls off the high-end sting, offering a smoother voicing for legato arpeggios, while teasing pinched harmonics out of the bridge pickup is child's play.

Tight and articulate, the clean tones are not bad either. Like the best Jackson guitars, the JS24 has an automatic quality, as though the guitar were guiding your hand. This instrument is aimed at beginners but it's great fun for all, and it makes a great candidate for modding.

Fit a Seymour Duncan JB at the bridge, a Jazz at the neck, and perhaps some low-friction pots and you've got a serious instrument. Some might find the neck joint clunky, but that's splitting hairs.

It's easy to overplay on this. Wait – overplay? Hey, didn't we agree that some songs call for spectacular styles? Well, this little Dinky is just the thing to get your chops up, to express yourself at any tempo, to be spectacular.

Jonathan Horsley

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

1 SPEED NECK: The compound radius fingerboard is built for soloists, flattening out as you go further up the fretboard.

2 CERAMIC HUMBUCKERS: These Jackson pickups have enough juice to see you through on your *Master Of Puppets* tab book, but upgrading them would make the JS24 a keeper for years to come.

3 DINKY BODY: A modern classic, the arch-top design is compact and ergonomic. Unlike the Jackson Soloist's neck-through build, the neck is bolted onto the body.

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: China
TYPE: 24-fret electric guitar
BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Caramelised maple (bolt-on)
SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")
FRETBOARD: Caramelised maple, 10"-12" radius
FRETS: 24, jumbo
NUT: 42.86mm, black plastic
PICKUPS: 2x Jackson High-Output Ceramic humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume and 1x tone, 3-way blade selector switch
HARDWARE: 2-Point Fulcrum Tremolo, Jackson Sealed Die-Cast tuners,
FINISH: Red Stain[as reviewed], Black Stain
CONTACT: Jackson, jacksonguitars.com





EVENTIDE MICROPITCH DELAY

Pitch perfect?

The MicroPitch is an algorithm found on Eventide’s landmark H3000 multi-effects but its roots lie with the H910 Harmonizer; producers and players discovered that the slightly unstable clock caused slight deviations between pitch ratios, and by pairing two H910 units they could make guitars sound bigger. Eventide embraced this ‘stereo widening’ to offer precise control over pitch parameters and it’s now become a standalone effect here. However the MicroPitch is no one-trick pony.

Each of the six parameter controls perform dual functions, switched via a small LED button

– and they unlock a huge range of sounds. The five onboard presets here showcase some of the tones on offer (and there’s 50 more you can download via Eventide’s Device Manager software) and exploring takes you from modulated slapback echo to Leslie tones, phasing and far beyond. You really need to spend quality time with these controls to understand the potential here. Preset 1 is where you’ll find the classic H3000 tones that bring can you into Van Halen’s Sammy Hagar era. Here you’ll find 80s rock stadium girth that some will like as an ‘always on’ option. It’s a distinct and addictive sound for rock and you’ll need to spend time

with settings including the overall mix and the mix of the Pitches themselves to find a sweet spot. The pitch A and B controls also allow you to dial in lead tones that will stand out in a mix *à la* the fixed wah sounds of Michael Schenker and Mick Ronson. Further depth is provided by the tone control’s treble and bass boost capabilities, while the Modulation control affects how the pitch effects respond to your playing’s sensitivity. This is a powerful, iconic studio effect encased in a pedal that’s wealth of controls are key to its versatility.

Robert Laing

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



£279

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Pitch-shifting delay pedal with modulation
- FEATURES:** Multiple Bypass options (Buffered, Relay, DSP+FX or Kill dry), MIDI, 5 onboard presets, software editor, Dual-action Active Footswitch for latching or momentary
- CONTROLS:** Mix/Tone, Pitch A/ Delay A, Pitch B/Delay B, Primary/Secondary Parameter LED button, Depth/Mod, Rate/Sens/Feedback, Pitch Mix/Out Level, Tap in seconds or BPM/Presets Select Mode LED Button, Active LED Button to switch between Active Footswitch and Momentary modes, Active and Tap footswitches.
- CONNECTIONS:** Input 1/4" TRS / Mono Tip, Stereo Tip and Ring, Output 1 and 2 1/4" TS Mono / Mono, Expression pedal input 1/4" TRS, Aux Switch or MIDI I/O, Mini USB
- POWER:** Included 9V DC adaptor, 200mA
- DIMENSIONS:** 178 (w) x 121 (d) x 71mm (h)
- CONTACT:** Eventide Audio, www.eventideaudio.com

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Words Amit Sharma Photo Devyn Glista

DIAMOND ROWE (TETRARCH)

For their second studio album, *Unstable*, Los Angeles metal quartet Tetrarch were hoping to strike the perfect balance between nu-metal bounce and groove-based brutality. It only takes a quick listen to songs like *I'm Not Right* and *You Never Listen* appreciate their efforts were not in vain. As lead guitarist Diamond Rowe explains: "When I was learning guitar, I would play along to Pantera and Lamb Of God, but I was also listening to bands like Slipknot, Korn and Linkin Park."

During the album sessions, Rowe and singer/guitarist Josh Fore opted for different versions of the same amp – which, as she explains, was fundamental in their two-pronged attack feeling layered as well as sonically cohesive. She was originally using the standard version of the EVH 5150 III,

fitted with 6L6 power tubes, though after some deliberation Rowe decided that the EL34-equipped model could work wonders for tonal separation.

"When we were using the same heads, my leads weren't cutting through enough," she says. "My rep was telling me about the EL34 version, and mentioned Joe from Gojira had been using it. That amp just gave me just the right frequencies on top of Josh, with the clarity and bite I was looking for."

The similarities don't end there – both players use Evertune bridge-fitted LTD and ESP guitars, Rowe preferring the Eclipse models and Fore swearing by the Telecaster-shaped TE series. Considering their latest cluster of songs were recorded in drop B and drop A, the bridge upgrade helped with tuning stability.

As for her main lead influences, she cites Zakk Wylde, Dimebag Darrell and the recently departed Alexi Laiho as the legends she learned most from. But she's also quick to point out that every guitarist should be striving to carve out their own identity on the instrument...

"There are so many amazing players out there," she smiles. "Look on YouTube – it feels like guitarists have never been better technically. But the best ones always bring their own character."

"You hear Slash and you know it's him. The same goes for Synyster Gates or Kirk Hammett. I had to do the same. And yeah, there was a time where I was really intimidated by it all. It took time but I eventually managed to find my own 'thing' as a guitar player."



RABEA MASSAAD

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