



**PLAY** NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP GREEN DAY WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS AC/DC T.N.T.

\*Rockschool version

# TOTAL Guitar

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HOT TIPS FROM BRIAN SETZER

"WE WANTED THE ULTIMATE HEAVY RIFFS!"

# METALLICA

The Guitar Power Of The Black Album.  
How A Classic Was Created... And Reinvented

**REVEALED!**  
THE ULTIMATE  
"DEEFAKE"  
METALLICA SONG  
FULLY TABBED

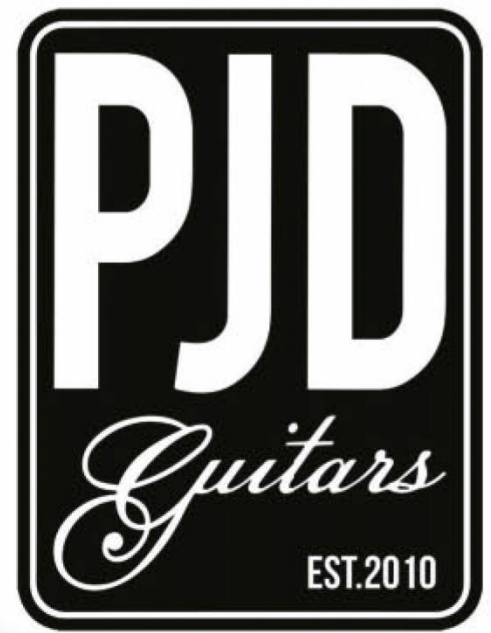


REVIEWED  
**FENDER NOVENTAS**  
THE BIG F'S  
LATEST WORKHORSE  
RANGE ON TEST

**PLUS**  
SAMANTHA FISH  
CAGE THE ELEPHANT  
THE VACCINES

**20**  
CLASSIC ROCK  
LICKS TO LEARN  
BILLY GIBBONS  
BRIAN MAY  
JIMI HENDRIX





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# Welcome...



Few records in history have crossed over like Metallica's self-titled 1991 release, better known simply as *The Black Album*. Heavy metal can, at times, be a tough listen for non-devotees, but a combination of outstanding songcraft and epic layered guitar tone made Metallica's fifth album accessible to fairweather listeners and hardcore metal fans alike. It's the band's biggest success and a heavy metal classic.

Today, 30 years on, the songs have a second life, as 50+ artists of various genres and generations (Royal Blood, St. Vincent, Jason Isbell, The Hu, Miley Cyrus, to name a few) reimagine *Black Album* cuts for tribute album, *The Metallica Blacklist*. It's a lesson for any musician in how to put your own stamp on a cover version, and it rams home the breadth of influence *The Black Album* has had.

In celebration of the anniversary we talk to lead guitarist Kirk Hammett about the making of the album, the gear he used, and Kirk offers up playing tips for some choice cuts. *Blacklist* stars Cage The Elephant and Rodrigo y Gabriela talk us through their cover versions of *The Unforgiven* and *The Struggle Within*. Plus we reveal a surprise 'deepfake' Metallica song from the mid-noughties – and we've tabbed it in full so you can learn the band's trademark guitar techniques.

Elsewhere, we review Fender's new Noventa Series Stratocaster and Telecaster, Line 6's POD Go Wireless goes under the microscope, and we look at the EVH 5150 Series Deluxe. And with songs to learn by AC/DC, Green Day, Bullet For My Valentine and more, hopefully there's something for everyone. Enjoy the issue!

Chris Bird Editor

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Cover image Ross Halfin





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Words Paul Elliott Photo Alan Del Rio Ortiz

# LIVE FROM LOS AGELESS

**N**o audience was present inside the grand old Los Angeles Theatre, but it was quite a show that St. Vincent delivered in her first livestream concert, *Down And Out Downtown*, premiered on August 4th and 5th. Backed by a new eight-piece band, she mixed six tracks from her current album *Daddy's Home* with new interpretations of six older numbers, including the brilliant LA-themed break-up song *Los Ageless*. This month also sees her featured on *The Metallica Blacklist* covers album with an inventive version of *Sad But True*, in which she substitutes the heavy riff of the original with Depeche Mode-inspired electronica, but plays a guitar solo just like Kirk Hammett's.



# SCENE

## YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



# 'THAT MYSTIC PINK FLOYD SOUND'

## INVESTIGATING THE DAVID GILMOUR-APPROVED DAWNER PRINCE BOONAR...

**W**hen Croatian pedal specialists Dawner Prince initially designed their Boonar multi-head drum echo, based on the sound of the legendary Binson Echorec, there was really just one player they had in mind. And that was David Gilmour of Pink Floyd...

"The Binson Echorec added that well-known mystic, cavernous, reverb-ish echo effect to Pink Floyd's sound," explains owner and CEO Zoran Kraljevic. "A lot of important parameters and small details help make the complete 'picture' – which is why the Echorec sounds so special – so I needed to carefully address them all and then find a way to emulate each into the design."

The pedal was first released in 2015. Fast-forward a year later and Kraljevic was watching David Gilmour live on stage making good use of the pedal he'd built and designed.

"One day, out of nowhere, I got a phone call from David's tech Phil Taylor and I won't lie, it was a special day for me!" Kraljevic says. "He asked me about the Boonar and two units were on their way to Phil and David for testing. The feedback was great and after some minor fine-tuning to the design, following their advice, we launched an updated Boonar, which then found its place on David's studio and tour boards. I had the honour of seeing him twice on that tour in Pula and Pompeii."

The Boonar isn't the only Pink Floyd-inspired pedal in the Dawner Prince range, either. Last year they announced the Pulse, a revolving

speaker emulator that could reproduce the sounds of the Doppola and Gibson's Maestro Rover R0-1.

"The Maestro Rover and its beefier successor, the Doppola, sound different to a Leslie," Kraljevic continues. "The tones are more spatial, more spread and airy. Anyone getting seriously into physics of the moving sound source knows how challenging it is to faithfully emulate the rotary effect in pedal form. I had to study a lot of additional science literature, measure every detail on a real physical model and use advanced calculations to emulate the cabinet's complex sound image. It resulted in a very realistic three-dimensional sound that swirls as the speaker accelerates and the feel of the air moving with every spin..."

**Amit Sharma**





## GUITARS

### GIBSON GO BIG

**T**his is a busy year for Gibson. As well as unveiling the Epiphone Slash Collection, we can expect other signature models including the Gibson USA Tony Iommi SG Special and also a Jerry Cantrell 'Wino' model from the Custom Shop. The Alice In Chains guitarist officially partnered up with Gibson at the beginning of last year and has confirmed more signatures are also in the making. The Custom Shop will also be handling the 1958 Korina V and Explorer models, made using 3D scanning technology to ensure they create "the most authentic and identical clones humanly possible". The Collector's Edition will be limited to 19 Explorers and 81 Flying V's – as per the year they were originally made.



## GUITAR

### THE FIRST BOSS GUITAR

**I**n one of the more surprising announcements of the year so far, the Japanese effects pedal giants – who have also enjoyed great success with their amp lines in recent years – will now be making their first-ever electric guitar, which they are calling the Euror GS-1. The instruments may seem a tad minimalistic on first glance, though inside there's a polyphonic synth engine offering a whole range of sounds alongside the tones guitars are typically associated with. Bluetooth connectivity offers instant editing through the GS-1's own dedicated app, as well as the option to connect to Boss' new wireless MIDI expression pedal, the EV-1-WL, to control various parameters and effects.

**Amit Sharma**



## PICKUPS

### NEW PICKUPS FROM GUS G

**T**he company owned by Greek virtuoso Gus G, known for his work with Firewind and Ozzy Osbourne, now has two pickup sets available – the ceramic passive Immortals and the active Alnico 5 Proteus, which can be wired passive too.

"I guess I started my own pickup company out of necessity," Gus tells TG. "Obviously I wanted to continue down the active pickup path that I was known for, but I wanted to offer a passive set as well. Having a signature pickup can be limiting if you want more sounds, you're kinda stuck with one model and that's it. So I decided to go all in! Both are made for hard rock and metal primarily, but they're quite different tonally."

**Amit Sharma**





**ALBUM**

# “HEAVY, BANGING LIVE TUNES!”

**DON BROCO GUITARIST SI DELANEY ON THE BAND’S “ANGRY” NEW ALBUM - AND THE AMP HE WANTS TO BE BURIED WITH**

**W**hile enduring months without gigs, Don Broco hit the studio to create *Amazing Things* – an album that channels the angst of 2020 into stadium-sized riffs and stage-ready anthems. Guitarist Si Delaney discusses his gear and how to create tracks out of “pure gibberish”.

**What did you want to achieve when you started making *Amazing Things*?**

We wanted to keep the theme of heavy, banging live tunes. When we were writing, we were envisioning how it was going to hit live. That was the main focus because what gives us the rush is playing live and feeling the reaction in that environment.

**This record feels angrier than your previous releases. Do the lyrics influence the degree of heaviness you employ?**

It’s actually an interesting one because the lyrics are always the last piece of the puzzle. Normally, I’ll write a load of music, create

a pretty fully-formed demo, send it to the boys and they will top-line loads of different melodies over the music. Then we’ll come back together and listen to tons of melodies – which will be pure gibberish – and then Bobby will put lyrics to it at the very end. So maybe my heavy riffs have informed his angry lyrics – I’ll take the credit!

**In terms of gear, what could you absolutely never be without?**

My absolute favourite amp of all time – if I could be buried with one amp – is the JCM 800. I just think it’s the best all-rounder for my kind of playing. When I got to the point where I could afford a decent amp, it was always an 800 that I wanted because I knew that I could probably do anything with it. It’s such a beautiful clean sounding amp, it sounds amazing driven, and it sounds amazing with any effects in front of it. For me, that’s the building block on which everything can be based. I don’t think there’s a single song I’ve ever recorded that doesn’t have my 800 there.

**And your number one guitar is...**

If the JCM is my staple amp, my staple guitar to pair with it is my PRS Custom 22. It’s a 1997, and it’s a beast. It was my first PRS. It must have been 8th or 9th-hand because it was beaten to sh\*t when I got it, which was the only reason I could afford it at the time – it was like it had literally been dragged through a bush!

**It’s hard to draw comparisons between Don Broco and other bands, but which players have particularly inspired you?**

My favourite guitarist, I think ever – because I’ve always come back to him throughout pretty much my entire life as a guitar player – is Mike Einziger from Incubus. I’m always seeing things in his playing that I haven’t seen before. The way he uses effects and tone in a one guitar band environment – that’s another really big thing for me – I love how he fills the space without overplaying. He’s always been, and still for this record, my biggest guitar inspiration.

**Ellie Rogers**



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# MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

12

Words Stuart Williams

# EPI-TITE FOR DESTRUCTION

Gibson's leading man unleashes an arsenal of affordable signatures



S

ome combinations in life just work, and one of the greatest pairings in rock history is Saul Hudson and his Gibson guitars. Of course, we can't all stretch to a USA model, so the man in the hat's latest guitar releases are

aimed squarely at the more affordable end of the market. The Epiphone Slash Collection is a seven-strong line-up comprising five versions of the Slash Les Paul Standard and two versions of the slash J-45.

Both the LPs and acoustics are based around the same respective themes. In the case of the Les Paul that's a classic mahogany body, capped with hand-carved maple; a mahogany neck and 24.75" Indian laurel fingerboard; Epiphone Custom ProBucker humbuckers (controlled by 2x volume/2x tone and featuring CTS pots with Orange Drop capacitors). Other appointments include a Graph Tech nut, Epiphone LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge and tailpiece, and Slash's signature on the truss rod cover/'Skully' logo on the back of the headstock.

The Epiphone Slash Les Paul Standard is available in five different finishes: Anaconda Burst, Vermillion Burst, November Burst, Appetite Burst and Gold.

Meanwhile, Slash's take on the classic J-45 comes packing an all-solid construction, with a Sitka spruce top and mahogany back and sides. Like the Les Paul, the neck is made up of mahogany - carved to the same Slash Custom Rounded C-shape profile - with an Indian Laurel fingerboard set at the same 24.75" scale length, making this the perfect 'electric player-friendly' acoustic. Slash has chosen an LR Baggs VTC under-saddle pickup/preamp system, with the controls mounted within the soundhole, and of course, the guitar features Slash's signature, Skully logo. It's available in two finishes: Vermillion Burst and November Burst.

**The Epiphone Slash Collection is available now, with each guitar supplied in a hardcase, priced at £899.**

## UP CLOSE



### Les Pauls

What were you expecting, a finely-polished arch top? The concept of an Epiphone Slash Les Paul Standard shouldn't come as a surprise, but if these are anything to go by, it should raise your eyebrows.



### J-45

If lighters were still raised skywards, we'd be striking our flint when one of these gets busted out. Slash's take on the J-45 offers an electric-friendly, LR Baggs-equipped electro-acoustic.



### Seven finishes

There are five Slash-related finishes across the range: four bursts and a goldtop. The J-45 is offered in the red Vermillion Burst or tobacco-style November Burst.



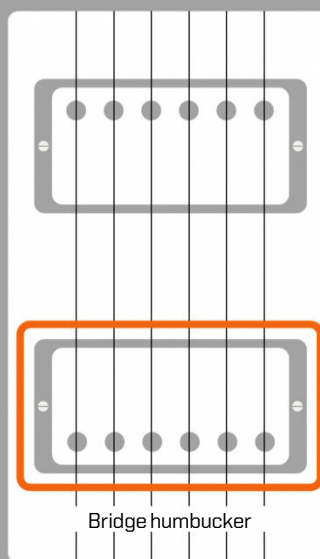
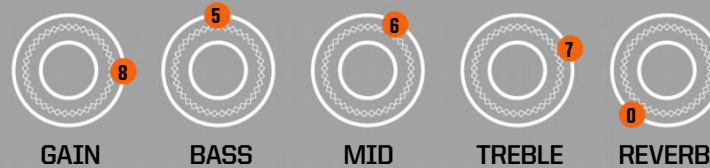
- ✓ Drop B tuning
- ✓ B Phrygian mode
- ✓ Alternate picking

RIFF OF THE MONTH

VIDEO  
ON YOUR  
CD

## GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Matt Tuck has been playing *Knives* on a Gibson Explorer Custom and typically uses high gain amps such as a Peavey 6505 boosted with a Tube Screamer type pedal for a tight, heavy tone. This track is played in drop B tuning (B F# B E G# C#), which means tuning all the strings down by three semitones from standard tuning, then the sixth string is tuned down an additional tone. A heavier gauge set of strings will help with your guitar's setup. So, for example, if you usually use gauge 0.010s, we'd recommend trying out a set of 0.012s.

# BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE

## Knives

**K**

nives, from Bullet For My Valentine's forthcoming self-titled seventh album, features Matt Tuck and Michael Paget returning to their heavy roots with an onslaught of aggressive drop B-tuned riffs.

The song opens with syncopated palm-muted powerchords, followed by a pedal tone riff that'll require your best two-hand

synchronisation. Played slowly, it's not too much of a technical challenge – but the fierce speed of the recording means you'll benefit from a sedate practice tempo. The opening downpicked powerchords are played with a repeating pattern that goes: chord, chord, rest.

Though there are three rhythmic elements, they aren't played as triplets, but are phrased as 16th notes to create syncopation. The melodic part of the riff is played on the sixth string,

following the notes in the scale box below with a steady of 16th notes.

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

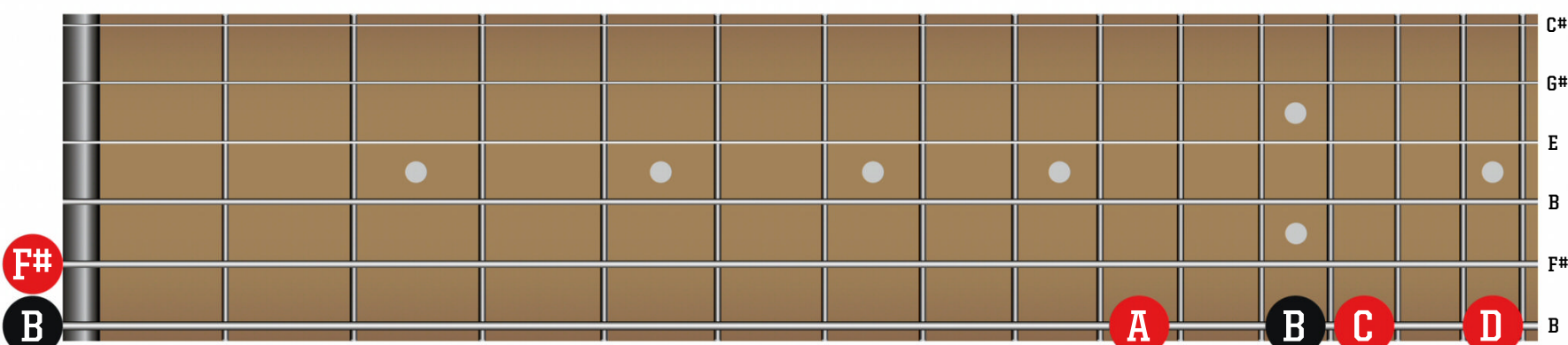
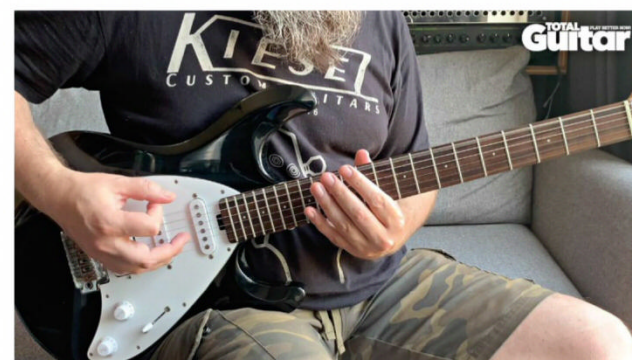
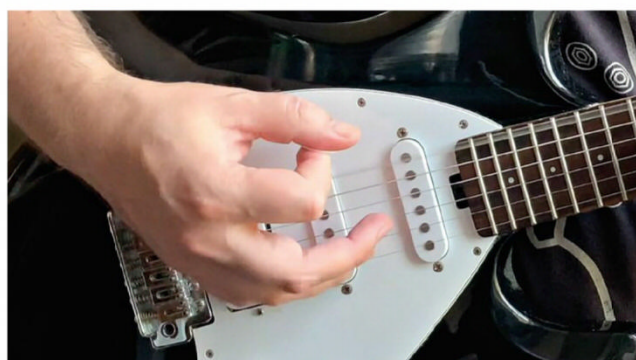
### CHEAT SHEET...

**Appears at** 0:14–0:28

**Tempo** 137 bpm

**Key/scale** B Phrygian mode

**Techniques** Palm muting, alternate picking



The song starts with a palm-muted B5 powerchord on the two lowest open strings. The drop tuning means that both notes of a powerchord (root and 5th) are on

the same fret. The rest of the riff is played on the low B string, using the open string as a pedal note and the melodic notes are A, B, C and D at frets 10, 12, 13 and 15.

This is a fragment of the B Phrygian Mode (B C D E F# G A) focussing on the root, 2, 3 and 7 intervals which give it a dark, ominous flavour.





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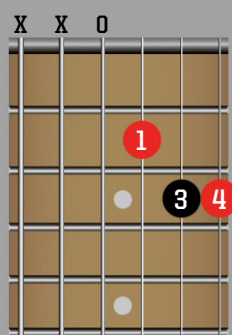
## GETTING STARTED WITH... 16TH NOTE STRUMMING

Take your rhythm guitar skills beyond the basics with this lesson on 16th-note rhythms

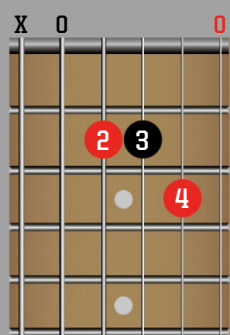
### SUS CHORDS

Four easy shapes to use for your rhythm workout

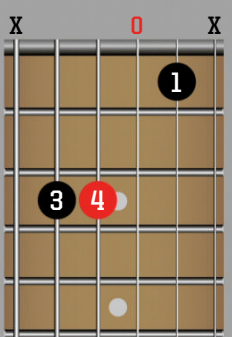
You'll need to keep your focus on strumming and good timing, so these are all easy shapes which shouldn't test your fretting hand too much. Hopefully you already know D, A, C and G major open chords – these are simple variations on those basics.



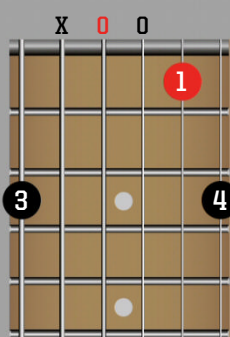
Dsus4



Asus4



Csus4



Gsus4



Chances are you're pretty confident at strumming by now, so this month we're looking at rhythm patterns with a slightly more advanced 16th-note approach. That means every quarter-note beat is divided into four, so we can count the bar by saying "1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a" (ie, in 4/4 time there are 16 strums in every bar).

Count that out loud as you play, alternating between down- and upstrokes; if a strum falls on an 'e' or an 'a', it's an upstroke.

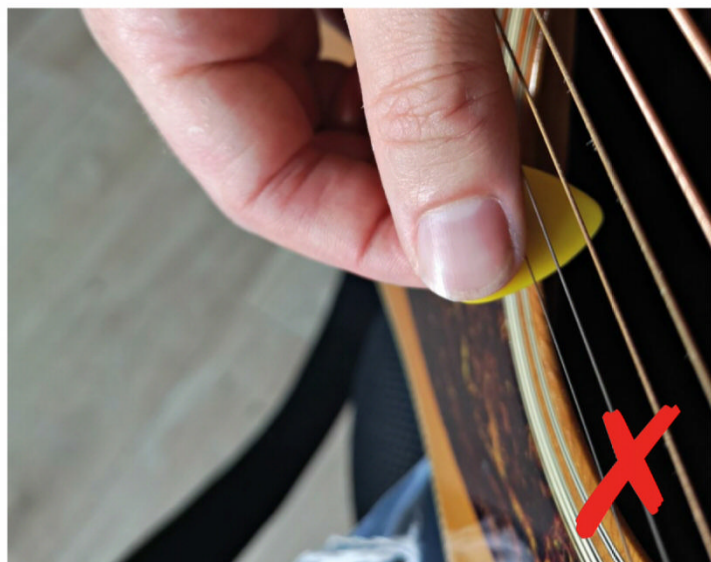
Practise until it's easy and automatic. When that's working well, aim to keep the same motion going all the time, so that your picking hand acts as a metronome. You'll start to feel exactly where in the beat each strum lands.

If you're up for a challenge, listen to our audio examples and play them with and without a swing feel. Famous songs with 16th note swing (also called a half-time shuffle) include Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke*, Toto's *Rosanna*, and Imagine Dragons' *Natural*.



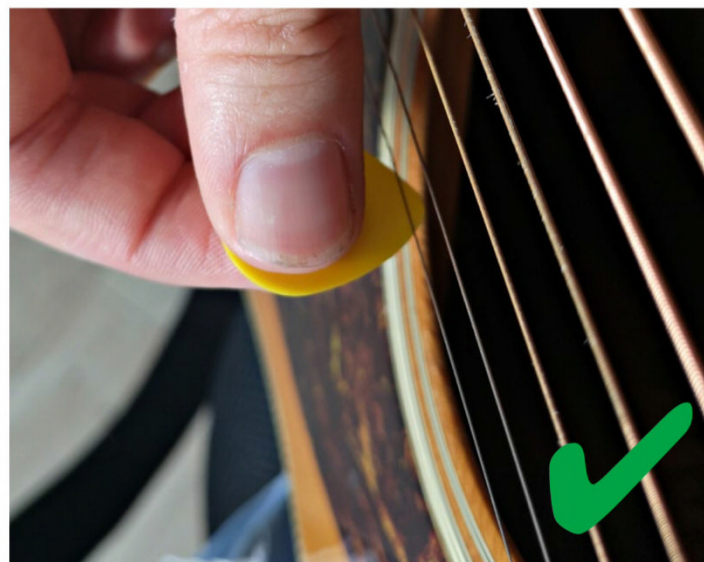
## TECHNIQUE CHECK...

Get your fingers in prime position to make those licks easier



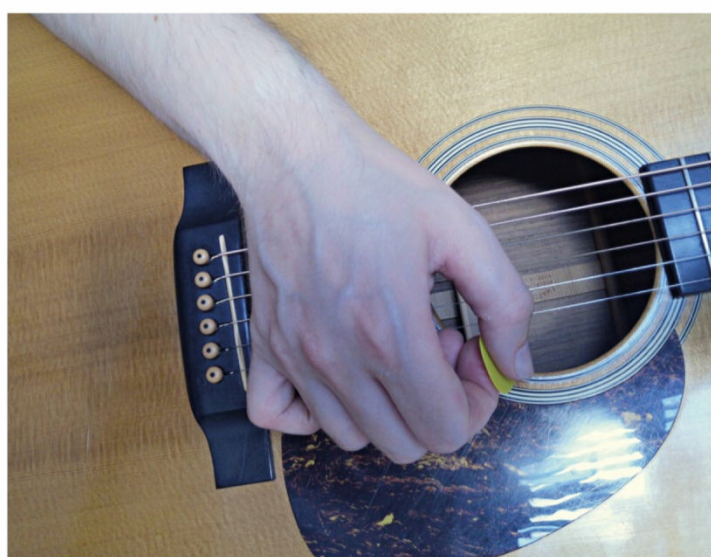
### 1 TOO MUCH PICK

If your upstrokes sound choppy or feel awkward, chances are your pick is digging in between the strings, making it hard to strum evenly.



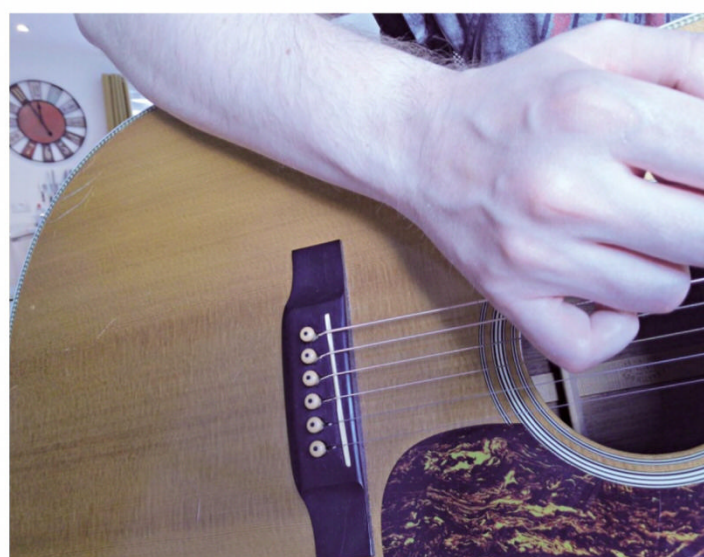
### 2 CORRECT PICK

Instead, imagine your pick gliding over the surface of the strings rather than going in between them. Strumming should feel smooth and easy.



### 3 STRUMMING FROM THE WRIST

Your strumming movement should come mostly from the wrist, and ideally each down- and upstroke will stay close to the top/bottom of the strings.



### 4 STRUMMING FROM THE ELBOW

A little bit of elbow movement is fine, but bear in mind that this is a bigger motion that's likely to throw your timing off. Approach this with care.

## 1 STRAIGHT 16TH NOTES

TRACKS 07-08

♩=120

C Csus<sup>4</sup> Play 8 times

Count: 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

TAB

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

□ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V

Practise this 16th note strummed pattern with any of the sus<sup>4</sup> chords you've learned. The rhythm doesn't change so focus on steady, even timing. If the technique you use sounds good and feels comfortable, it works!

## 2 16THS AND QUARTER NOTES

TRACKS 09-10

G Gsus<sup>4</sup> Csus<sup>4</sup> C Play 4 times

TAB

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

□ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V

We're ramping up the rhythmic complexity here, so follow the picking directions exactly, and keep your picking hand moving down and up constantly, even when you're not striking the strings.

## 3 STARTING ON AN UPSTROKE

TRACKS 11-12

Dsus<sup>4</sup> D Asus<sup>4</sup> A Play 4 times

TAB

3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

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

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

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

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

□ □ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V □ □ V □ V

This one is more challenging because some of the patterns begin on upstrokes. If you're moving your picking hand with a straight 16th note rhythm, you'll automatically be in the right place. It becomes automatic with practice!



# "I WAS THINKING ABOUT ARTISTS I LOOK UP TO - AND PRINCE IS DEFINITELY ONE WHO WAS JUST UNAPOLOGETICALLY HIMSELF"

Her roots are in blues, but **Samantha Fish** is pushing the boundaries on a new album – with influences ranging from Prince to Fleetwood Mac, and a simpler approach to her songwriting and her gear. As she explains: "It doesn't always work to have a 10-minute solo in the studio!"

**S**amantha Fish's seventh album, *Faster*, does just as its title suggests and takes things up a notch or two. The hooks are catchier than ever, the guitar work has yet more fire and, as the slightly provocative album artwork suggests, the record leaves the listener in little doubt that the Kansas City-born singer-songwriter is here to deliver straight-up swagger, with zero apologies. One of the overwhelming characteristics of *Faster* is that it in no way sounds or feels as if it were written in a time of global crisis, anxiety and restrictions. Says Samantha, "This is such a fun, exciting record and I really thought that it might go the other way when I first started the writing process."

As an artist who normally tours hard and writes on the road, the housebound writing process offered a little escapism. "I think we all kind of hit this wall last year," she says, "and I just started writing from this place of where I wanted to be, rather than where I was actually at. I feel like the best thing that came out of that was this empowering, upbeat, confident 'take charge and control' kind of a record."

As the follow-up to 2019's *Kill Or Be Kind*, the new album marks Samatha's first collaboration with producer Martin Kierszenbaum, who has previously worked with Lady Gaga, Madonna and Sting. It's perhaps unsurprising then, that *Faster* has a pop sheen that sits atop the raw, bluesy undercurrents of the material. "I kind of want to push the boundaries of what people consider blues to be," Samantha explains. "But also, I really like to involve different sounds. I listen to an eclectic bunch of music –

I'm into pop and I'm into industrial – so it's just kind of finding these different modern tones to incorporate with the blues and rock 'n' roll."

For this album, she headed to the West Coast for the first time, and cut the record at The Village – the world famous Los Angeles recording complex, housed in a 1920s Masonic Temple. Over the years, Samatha has made much of the way a recording location influences the outcome and character of the end product, explaining, "It shapes your mood when you're in there." Of The Village, she notes, "That place has just got so much history and you're like, 'Okay, this is the mood I'm in while I'm here making this album', and it definitely colours it. It's the backdrop for everything."

Sporting a Fleetwood Mac T-shirt for this interview, she admits, "Knowing



that a Fleetwood Mac record was done there at The Village, I listened to that a bunch” – that record being 1979’s *Tusk*. As for other sonic inspiration, she cites always having The Rolling Stones “on rotation”, and says that gearing up to go into the studio she “brushed up on the famous and legendary records” including those of Lady Gaga, Prince, Elton John, David Bowie, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, and North Mississippi Blues players – particularly the Fat Possum roster. Altogether these artists might make for an incohesive mixtape, but elements of each can be heard on *Faster*, and their influences are expertly balanced with a contemporary feel.

For example, on the track *Hypnotic*, she explains how she considered “What would Prince do?” The result is a bouncy and spacious R&B track, reminiscent of Prince’s mid-80s hits *Raspberry Beret* and *Kiss*. She laughs, “Can I cuss?”, before adding, “I wanted it to feel stylish and to feel like I don’t give a f\*ck. It’s supposed to have this swagger to it. So when I was thinking about the artists and the people who I look up to – Prince is definitely one who was just unapologetically himself – and I feel like that song channels that spirit.”

Elsewhere, tracks such as *Twisted Ambition* boast a frenetic energy and an ethos of female independence with ripping solos, bright lead tones and empowered vocals. With strong hooks and melodies at the core of the record’s sound, she cites *Loud* as having a melodic motif that she’s “super excited about stretching-out live”, and explains: “It doesn’t always work to have a 10-minute solo in the studio – I’m sure some people would argue with me on that – but I have some ideas for how to stretch it out, so I’m really excited about playing that one later.”





on the road and explains that if you want something to sound “Led Zeppelin huge” on a recording, a small amp is the way to go. On previous records, she’s opted for vintage Supros, and explains, “You can get a lot out of a tiny amp – it just has so much character and headroom and it just sounds so good. So I wanted, when I went out there, to have a smaller amp – the Fender Deluxe really worked.”

When touring, Samatha opts for the Texas-based boutique amp brand, Category 5, explaining: “I’m not kind to them by any means, they’re workhorses. They just work for me. It’s all tube, point to point wiring – very simple. And they wail!”

Still, she keeps it adjustable, expanding or reducing her wattage night by night and venue by venue: “I’ve actually got a 4 x 12” out on the road and I run different heads through it, depending on the venue. If we play a really big outdoor amphitheatre, I’ll throw the 90-watt Camille on there and if we’re playing a club, 50 watts is great.” As a pro tip for those just getting into gigging, she adds: “You have to be flexible. If you’re in a different room with a different PA every night – different amounts of people to soak up the sound – it changes things.”

Although much of *Faster* was written in standard tuning, Samantha is renowned – particularly because of her fiery slide work – for playing in altered tunings and frequently opts for open G, drop D, open C and open D. A fan-favourite, her Stogie Box Blues cigar box guitar will always be found in open G but, as it’s missing the top and bottom strings, is tuned to GDGB.

It is by experimenting with altered tunings, she explains, that she finds fresh inspiration. “There’s times when I feel completely uninspired to write and I’ll throw a guitar into a completely different tuning that I’ve never worked with before, and it’ll help [me] write a song. It’ll help you come up with a riff that you wouldn’t have otherwise come up with. I feel like it’s a great tool for learning even more about the instrument.”

#### ABOVE

“I used my SG straight into a Fender Deluxe and just cranked it”

Expanding on her approach to soloing, she notes: “Anything that has a unique melodic motif that you can repeat and make a part all of its own – not just licks to get through a solo, but something that’s memorable – I’m always proud of that.”

As for the tools of her trade, Samantha is known for having an eclectic mix of guitars, but on this record, she pared it back to just three: her favourite white Gibson SG that she ordered online and has kept stock ever since, a Fender Jazzmaster and a Gibson ES-335 for some of the rhythm parts.

Of this uncharacteristically restrained selection, she says: “Usually I’m in there, flipping through an arsenal of pedals and amplifiers, but we honestly used my SG straight into a Fender Deluxe and just cranked it. And once we got that sound, Martin was like, ‘Dude this is the sound of the record!’”

Clearly having high levels of respect for Kierszenbaum’s guidance, she continues: “I personally could go in

there and twist knobs and play with pedals all day long but sometimes there’s something to be said for being like: You’ve found a sound, this is a sound that’s powerful, let’s make it happen and focus on what you’re putting into it rather than, you know, all the effects.”

This being said, outside of the studio, Samantha’s pedalboard continues to expand rather than shrink with some of its regular fixtures including a road worn AnalogMan King of Tone, a JHS Mini Foot Fuzz, a Boss Super Shifter which she says is “kind of fun for dive bombs or shifting pitches really fast”, as well as a delay.

She adds: “I’ve actually been messing around since we stripped-back to a trio last year, during the pandemic. We’ve since expanded the band, but for that time period, I added a synth pedal to my board so I could mimic some of the keyboard parts softly underneath.”

When it comes to amps, she has very different preferences in the studio to

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Words Jonny Scaramanga

# “I’ll write entire songs and I won’t know what any of the chords are that I’ve used!”

The two guitarists in **The Vaccines** make an odd couple. Frontman Justin Young still thinks of himself as “a beginner”, while Freddie Cowan is “a proper gear head” whose homemade pedal is the band’s secret weapon. It’s a strange set-up, but it works...

**T**he Vaccines frontman Justin Young puts it simply. “In some ways this is our most rock record.” He’s talking about *Back In Love City*, a high-tech set of songs that fuse futuristic keyboards and loops with retro rockabilly twang and punk rock powerchords.

It was produced by Daniel Ledinsky, better known for collaborations with Tove Lo and Rihanna. But this is a guitar-driven album, shaped by Justin and the band’s lead player Freddie Cowan. “Eight or nine songs were built around lead guitar riffs,” Justin says. “Freddie was just sending me great riffs that inspired me to write over them.” The result is what



Justin calls “a weird paradox of being more rock but also more pop”. And as Freddie explains, he had an unexpected source of inspiration for these riffs...

“My soon-to-be wife and I lived in Mexico City for a couple of months in 2019,” he says. “In Centro Histórico, the old centre, each street sells a different thing. We just happened to rent an apartment on the street that sold musical instruments. Immediately it’s a really intense place to be living. We did a gig in Juarez. It’s kind of a Tarantino, Mexico-meets-Texas, rattlesnakey vibe. Retrospectively you can say it’s a bit like Brian Setzer and it’s a bit Morricone. The geography, the energy, the whole thing was just really inspiring. I’m still wearing a mariachi shirt, still so absorbed by that whole culture. I’m having this obsession with the great Mexican singers like Juan Gabriel.”

The resulting cinematic compositions were recorded at Sonic Ranch, the world’s biggest residential studio complex in El Paso, Texas. It’s a charmingly old-school way of working in a world of number one albums produced in bedrooms. “It’s one of those pipe dreams you have when you’re learning your favourite songs on guitar and thinking about what it might look like if you were lucky enough to do it for living,” Justin says. “I think we all felt blessed to be in this insular environment where we didn’t leave the studio for weeks on end, and all we were doing was waking up, eating, making music...”

“You could walk from the studio to the border wall that separates Mexico and the US,” says Freddie. “They had border patrol vans driving around. It was a serious vibe. The studio owner would come in with ten guns strapped to him, like ‘Who wants to shoot? This is the gun that won the West!’”

Freddie’s guitar tone resulted from a happy accident. “Earthquaker Devices pedals

are often good at doing things that they’re not ‘supposed’ to do,” he says. “I got The Organizer, which is supposed to make an organ sound. I don’t know how I stumbled across it, but I used it to make the guitar sound like a baritone. You have the sub octave up a tiny bit, use the tone to boost it a little bit, and boost the level so it acts like a compressor. It has this little sub-octave on it and it makes things sound like Link Wray or Bo Diddley. You’re like, ‘f\*ck, that sounds like an old record!’ I use it on everything now.”

He also passes on a tip from a rockabilly legend. “I was talking to the guys at Gretsch about Brian Setzer. He uses a [vintage Roland] Space Echo which gives the compression at the front end, gives it that ping. Now I send everything through the Space Echo whether there’s slapback on it or not, just to get the EQ.”

The amp sounds on *Back In Love City* come courtesy of three Sonic Ranch house amps: A 60-watt Komet head into an old Vox Greenback cab for cleans, a 15-watt ÷13 amp for dirty, and a vintage Fender Champ for filth, all with his two always-on pedals, the Earthquaker Organizer and a ZVex Super Duper 2-in-1 boost. Reverb and modulation come from an Eventide H9. And then there is the band’s secret weapon...

“Our bass player, Árni [Árnason] made me this pedal for my birthday,” Freddie says. “I thought, ‘It’s probably rubbish’, but I used it out of politeness, and it was the coolest sounding pedal. I call it the Bumble Beast because it sounds like a bee in a can but it’s super powerful. It’s vintage but also quite unique and contemporary. That really saved the day because it’s quite difficult to do a fuzz sound you haven’t really heard before.”

Although he’s an obvious guitar nerd, Freddie is philosophical about the dangers of disappearing up one’s own posterior in pursuit

of tone. This is something he’s been thinking about since the making of the band’s 2018 album *Combat Sports*, when he had a memorable exchange with producer Ross Orton, whose clients also include Arctic Monkeys. “Ross got so impatient with me because every song I was like, ‘I wonder what sound we should use?’ He was like, ‘For f\*ck’s sake, it’s just a guitar! What are you doing?’ By the end of that record I thought maybe he’s right. Why should it take two hours every time you want to find a sound? So this time I only took one guitar. I found a luthier, John Shuker, who works in the Peak District and he’s a genius. We designed a guitar together and since then I’ve sold all my vintage guitars. We took a Jaguar-shaped body and he made it the body in layers so it’s chambered but it doesn’t have f-holes. It’s got a P90 in it and a Brian May Tri-Sonic in the neck, and an active mid booster.”

Working in El Paso meant the band also got their hands on some legendary Texas gear. Keyboardist Timothy Lanham tracked additional guitars through a Fender Tweed that used to belong to ZZ Top, while Freddie made use of a prestigious backup guitar: As he explains: “I used an old Fender Esquire that used to belong to Stevie Ray Vaughan to do some double tracking. A lot of the baritone stuff is the Shuker guitar doubled with the Esquire, which has this really sharp sound.”

Not to be outdone in the celebrity guitar stakes, Justin has his own story: “I spent some time in LA, and Daniel Lavinsky owns one of Elliot Smith’s old nylon string guitars. *El Paso* was written on that. I’ve been lucky enough to play a few guitars that have you know been owned by players far superior to me. You feel like it brings you closer to that greatness. You realise that actually there’s nothing standing in between you and that greatness other than

yourself. For me it’s always been less daunting and more inspiring.”

Justin is less forthcoming, however, about the rest of his rig. “I did warn our press people before the interview,” he laughs. “I retain no information about gear whatsoever. Freddie is a proper gear head. After 10 years I’m still a complete luddite and beginner.” Justin thinks this indifference to his gear has freed him up to focus on the creative side, though. And it’s not just equipment: he has a similarly haphazard approach to music theory. “I don’t know any scales. I know a few chords. Sometimes I’ll be writing and I’ll happen across something. I’m like, ‘nothing too discordant in there, sounds like a chord to me!’ I’ll frequently write entire songs and won’t know what any of the chords are that I’ve used!”

“I’m not a great player,” he admits. “But in some ways that’s been really helpful. Every time I pick up guitar I feel like I’m picking it up for the first time again. I’m left-handed as well and play right-handed. I always struggle my way through. Every record there’ll be a couple of lead parts I’ve written and given to Freddie. Once I’ve committed them to tape I’ve completely forgotten how I ever played them.”

But his lack of interest in technical details does not equate to a lack of passion for the instrument. He ends the interview by enthusing about guitars with a fervour TG readers will find highly relatable: “I really love crappy old stuff like American Teisco guitars or 60s Japanese stuff. Growing up there was an aspirational quality to guitars, not in terms of how much they cost but what they looked like. There’s a reason they look like old Cadillacs or spaceships. They have this otherworldly quality. The only guitar I had was a £50 fake Squier. All I ever wanted was anything but that guitar – something as weird and wonderful as possible.”

**"I USED AN OLD FENDER ESQUIRE THAT USED TO BELONG TO STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN" FREDDIE COWAN**





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# Brian Setzer

Interview Grant Moon Photos Russ Harrington

HE'S THE ROCKABILLY TWANGER WHO LED THE STRAY CATS TO GLORY IN THE 80S, AND HE'S STILL SEARCHING FOR NEW SOUNDS - WITH INFLUENCES RUNNING DEEP FROM JAZZ TO BOSSA NOVA. BUT WHEN BRIAN SETZER PLUGS IN, HE ALWAYS HAS ONE THING ON HIS MIND: "YOU GOTTA HAVE THE RUMBLE!"

**B**orn in 1959 and raised in Long Island, New York, Brian Setzer fell in love with the slapback twang of Sun Records artists such as Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins, and soon found his lifelong idols, rock 'n' rollers Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran. He modelled himself on them and their era, styling his hair into an impressive quiff, hunting down his own copy of Cochran's trademark Gretsch 6120.

He has his own signature Gretsch now, but the 6120 is still one of Setzer's main guitars. It's the one he played in his rockabilly trio The Stray Cats. In the 70s, they played venues such as NYC's famed CBGB Club, and when they moved to London their uncompromising attitude and greaser/teddy boy aesthetic chimed with the UK's punk scene. Rocking hits *Stray Cat Strut*, *Runaway Boys* and *Rock This Town* made them pop stars and propelled them into the 80s, and Setzer quickly became a poster boy for a new generation of fans of that retro sound. The following decade - after a solo career and stints with Robert Plant and Bob Dylan - he doubled down on the neo-nostalgia with the Brian Setzer Orchestra. Combining rockabilly with swing and jump blues, this big band won two Grammys in 1998 for their covers of Louis Prima's *Jump, Jive an' Wail* and Santo & Johnny's timeless *Sleep Walk*. And if all this wasn't enough, he has even appeared in *The Simpsons*, as Homer's guitar teacher at summer camp.

Setzer's latest solo album, *Gotta Have The Rumble* is a masterclass in songwriting and rockabilly guitar playing. Songs such as *Checkered Flag*,

*Stack My Money* and standout track *The Cat With 9 Wives* come packed with tasty, twanging licks that draw on blues but also whole-tone,

diminished and phrygian-flavoured scales, while Setzer's clever chords hark back to his early exposure to jazz. But as he tells us, while he's

glad he learned to read and write music, the golden rule of guitar playing is that there are no rules...

## **Theory's useful, but the good stuff comes from elsewhere.**

Growing up in New York, all the local guys who taught guitar were jazz guitarists, so I'm sure a lot of that rubbed off on me. I actually learned how to read and write music from a saxophone teacher, then when I got advanced he said, 'I can't really teach you anymore', and he recommended me to a guitar guy. I would take two buses to get to his house, and he taught me, expanding on the theory I had learned, so I suppose that's where I picked up a lot of my jazz chops. But I don't want to freak people out about theory because, I gotta be honest with you, a lot of this doesn't come









➔ from training, it just pops into my head. So don't despair and think you have to sit down and learn all the theory, because usually it just kind of comes...

## Whether it's rockabilly or rock, throw a little signature in there.

Some of those jazzy chords and theory were there when I started The Stray Cats. Some of our tunes are just right down the middle – *Rumble In Brighton* is a good rockabilly riff that'll stick in your head – Em, G, A then B, then, Am, C, D, E, then back again. But we were also trying to put a little more into it than that. When I wrote *Stray Cat Strut* I was 18, and I had a diminished scale in there that I altered [for the very last lick of the solo]. I put a little signature in it, a little hiccup.

## You've got to think about passing tones.

Nothing makes me happier than when I can put new sounds and new scales into rockabilly music. To me, that's what I do, so when it happens it's exhilarating. On *Cat With 9 Wives* on the new record I took a I/IV/V progression in A and expanded on that. I thought, 'Why not drop the E<sub>b</sub> in and give me a passing tone?' [The line goes: A/C#/E/F#/G/E<sub>b</sub>/F#/E]. And that's how players should think – you've got to think about passing tones. Don't be afraid to play something that's flat or sharp – flat the five, sharp the nine – throw that in, because that's what makes it different. When I came up with that riff it sparked me to keep writing. So to get fancy, get out of the pentatonic thing. Imagine you're in A and going from A to D – before you get to the D chord, play something in E<sub>b</sub>, because that's a passing tone that'll lead you into the D. That's really the hottest tip I can give you. I don't hear many people do it, but it really pops, really bends your ear. And that's making music, you know?

## Know the sound that works for you.

Mine's a fairly clean sound, but it has some muscle behind it. It's mostly about my guitar being hollow, and those FilterTron pickups – [inventor Ray Butts] just got those right back in the day. When I bought my Gretsch 6120, that tone blew me away. It really is about moving the air through the guitar, and I can't get that out of a solid body. So you need some kind of hollow-body Gretsch guitar – doesn't have to be



# "DON'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU HOW TO PLAY GUITAR!"

a top-of-the-line model – and put that through a fairly clean amp. You want to get it to the point where it's just about to break up but it's not breaking up. It has to be a Fender Bassman for me – you gotta have the rumble! [For echo] I use an Echoplex in the studio, but I swear to God every time I go to make an album and plug one in, it stops working! Roland Space Echo units are old and break all the time, but they're built in a box and they're more roadworthy. They have that tape hiss, and there's something about tape, you know. Stomp pedals are missing that. It's a lot of fiddling to get your sound, because it's not only the tone. I've gotten a perfect sound [on the studio floor], got it just where I want it, then you go back in the control room and it seems totally different. A lot of it is down to the engineer and what kind of mics he's using. So once you get that sound set in the studio, you shouldn't have to change it. It's the engineer's job to get to get that sound for you.

## ABOVE

"Mine's a fairly clean sound, but it has some muscle behind it"

## Adapt your guitar playing to the group you're in.

In a band like The Stray Cats, with just a bass player playing the root, you can play whatever you want on guitar. But when you're playing with the Brian Setzer Orchestra, you're not as free. You've got 13 brass musicians and they're making a full chord, and you have to be aware of that chord and play it too. You have a chart with all the chords written out and, you know, they're big-boy chords, so if it's something jazzy like a flat 5, you have to hit that, or there's going to be a clash. Other than that, it's not really that different.

## Remain open to new musical styles...

I'm really intrigued by South American music. I love hearing people like Antônio Carlos Jobim, those players playing samba and bossa nova music. It's incredible to me – those time signatures, and they're all so different. You know, if I went down there and said,

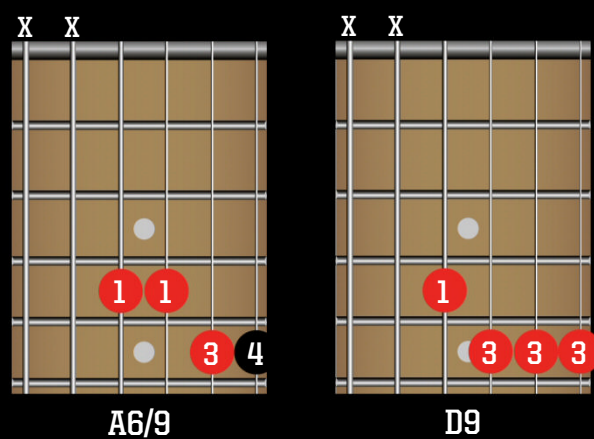




‘Oh I like the samba and bossa nova’, it would be like them coming to the US and saying ‘I like heavy metal and rockabilly’. ‘Well, which one is it? Do you like ‘em both?!’ I’m intrigued by that stuff because it’s so different to me, and it’s fun to explore. I can play a little bit of that Bossa Nova stuff, but there are far better guys than me who can do it.

#### ...And keep tabs on what’s happening within your own genre.

When I’m in my truck I listen to the Bluegrass Channel, but whenever I’m at home I listen to a station called Rockabilly Radio. It just plays rockabilly 24/7, and I love it. It’s so much fun to listen to, and I swear I’ve never heard most of it – there’s so much of it. Rockabilly Radio mixes up the new and the old, and I think I prefer the new bands, because they’re mixing it up more, moving it forward and playing with enthusiasm. Every town seems to have 10 new rockabilly bands, and there are some really great guitar players who have come out of it recently. One of them is Darrel Higham from the UK (Kat Men, with Stray Cats drummer Slim Jim Phantom), Paul Pagit from Canada [Paul Pagit Trio, Acoustic Project], and I love listening to



## 6/9 AND 9 CHORDS

Setzer’s playing on *Gotta Have The Rumble* is stuffed with classy extended chords, notably some sweet, Beatlesy 6 chords, and some 7<sub>b</sub> 9s and 7<sub>#</sub> 9s, too. But when asked for a must-have rockabilly chord, he doesn’t hesitate: “One that you must have would be a 6/9 chord. Let’s say we’re in A, you could just play the F<sub>#</sub>, the B, the E and the A, with the root on the high E. Then you could move that shape all around, up to the D [root on E string, 10th fret], then up to the E [root on 12th] and back. Or, you can move one finger up one fret, the six becomes a nine, and you have a D9 – by just moving your finger up from the B to a C [third string]. That’s a good intermediate rockabilly thing.”

## CHORD INVERSIONS

“Use different inversions,” Setzer suggests. “Let’s say we’re in A again – try the chords in first position [starting on the root, A, in the bass], third position [with the third, C<sub>#</sub>, in the bass], fifth position [the fifth, E], and flat seventh position [G, the flat seventh of A]. Pick those A chords in different inversions, and build up from that. Like I said, it’s whatever pops into your head.”

## FINGERPICKING

Setzer uses his plectrum to play lead lines and to pick out a rockabilly boogie. Then, when he switches to fingerstyle, he holds the pick in the crook of his forefinger and uses a combination of thumb, middle, ring and small fingers to pluck the notes. “There are many kinds of fingerstyles,” he tells TG, “and I just make them up. So it could be something little more Chet Atkins, where you have the thumb alternating [between the bass strings]. Then the other way I hear it might be more Merle Travis, like a rolling thing. If you want to fingerpick, use any fingers you want and just play it. You might hear notes, you might hear jazz chords – it’s anything you want. Remember, there is no right or wrong...”



Jim Heath out of Reverend Horton Heat. They’re all great guitar players.

#### If your aim is to get seriously good, do try to learn the dots.

Being able to read and write music is vital if you really want to go places, because it ties all the loose ends together. Yes, there’s a lot to learn and, yeah, I know it’s like going to school and nobody wants to do it. I listened to a lot of music and shot a lot of pool when I should’ve been going to school! But does it help you? Absolutely. You’re learning so much when you learn to read and write music, because even the information you don’t use helps you tie things together. How could it not?

#### That said, when it comes to guitar, there are no rules.

From the minute you wake up, you got rules. You’ve got to drive a certain speed limit and you’ve got to get to work on time. So when you pick up your guitar, why would you want to have a rule? When you come home and play that thing, there’s no reason to restrict yourself. Throw anything you hear at that instrument, because that’s what makes it, and you, unique. Don’t let anyone tell you how to play that guitar!





# TWENTY ROCK LICKS

# Breakthrough blues-rock lead guitar to take your playing to the next level

When creating licks and guitar solos the major and minor pentatonic scales are a popular starting point for many guitarists, and several of our examples use these as their basis. As you work through the licks, try to identify commonly used shapes. As you get a feel for these well used scales, see if you can come up with licks of your own using these ideas as a starting point. Changing a note here or there, altering the rhythm, using picking instead of legato, or bends rather than straight notes, can colour them in a completely different manner – and it'll take your playing to the next level.

## TRACK 13

We begin with a look at the style of rock guitar innovator Jimi Hendrix. It's worth breaking the challenging E minor pentatonic run in bars 1 and 2 down into shorter phrases – it's a well-known scale, but this lick demonstrates there's a lot of melodic mileage. The repeating line in bars 3 and 4 is a classic Hendrix trick.

## TRACK 14

A Strat's neck pickup sounds great for blues-orientated lead work, especially when a compressor is added. Big string bends are also a key component of the Gilmour-style and your goal is to get the bends sounding musical and in tune.



## 3 JEFF HEALEY

TRACK 15

♩=123

Cm<sup>7</sup>

BU 13 (15) 11 13

BU 11 (13) 8 11 8 10 10 8 10

8 8 8 8

Canadian great, Jeff Healey had a unique 'lap style' playing technique, fretting over the neck with all four fingers *and* his thumb, and achieving formidable vibrato and string bends in the process. Still, his phrasing was largely blues-based, with pentatonic scales figuring highly in his solos, so you don't have to play lap style for our lick!

## 4 JOE BONAMASSA

TRACK 16

♩=140

A<sup>7</sup>

BU 15 (17) 15 (17) 15 (17)

BU 15 (17) 15 13 14 14

BU 13 (15) 13 [13] 10 11 10 13 10

For this example pump up the overdrive and dig in hard. Joe's finger vibrato can be frantic and ferocious, and his string bending is fierce. But he's about as deft all over the fretboard as anyone, so see if you can get near his fluidity and smoothness of execution.

## 5 JOHN MAYER

TRACK 17

♩=100

Dm F G Dm F G

10 12 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10

13 12 13 12 10 12 10 10 12 10

13 15 13 15 13 14 12 10 12 10 12 8

John Mayer's blend of pop and blues-rock has inspired a new generation of guitarists. For this example select a neck single-coil pickup and dial in a creamy blues overdrive. Digging in hard with the pick rewards with a fat, articulate tone, but John plays fingerstyle too, so feel free to experiment.

## 6 ROBIN TROWER

TRACK 18

♩=70

Em<sup>7</sup>

3 3 3 3

BU 2 (4) 2 0 2 0

3 3 3 3

5 7 7 7

Procol Harum guitarist Robin Trower is famed for his Hendrix inspired guitar moments. Our example combines Robin's sought after fuzz and Uni-Vibe tone with an Em<sup>7</sup> played in a similar voicing to the Hendrix 7#9 chord.

## 7 JOE PERRY

TRACK 19

♩=98

C<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>5

5 3 0 0 2 0 3 0 0 2 0 0

5 3 0 0 2 0 3 0 0 2 0 0

3 3 3 3

Open strings can be used as pedal tones for creating riffs that incorporate both legato and picking. This Aerosmith-inspired riff combines pull-offs with picked notes and is a demonstration of the octave interval in action.



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## TRACK 20

The pre-bend is a key part of Brian May's technical arsenal. Pre-bending the string allows the Queen guitarist to apply a vocal-like vibrato that dips below and above the pitch. His vibrato and pitching of bends is exemplary, and he's a master of mixing all this with fast flurries of notes.

## TRACK 21

The Deep Purple and Rainbow guitarist's trademark whammy bar work is a key component of our tab example, so make sure to employ a vigorous shake of the tremolo arm in bars 2 and 4. The 16th notes in bar 3 are a formidable challenge, but practising four-note phrases should help.

## TRACK 22

This example uses a wah pedal as a tone filter. If you turn the wah on and leave the treadle in the sweet spot, it produces a focused tone that cuts through the mix. Bars 3 and 4 outline a typical Santana trademark: the repeated three-note line leading into a fast-picked single note. It sounds more complicated than it is, so just spend a little time studying the tab then dive right in.

## TRACK 23

Mahogany Rush guitarist Frank Marino is famed for his chopsy, Hendrix style lead approach. In this lick we're using unison bends to thicken the sound. Simply bend the note on the third string up to the pitch of the fretted note.



## 12 BILLY GIBBONS

TRACK 24

♩=125

G<sup>5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> D<sup>b5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup>

PH Semi 1/4

TAB: 6 8 3 6 3 BU 5(7) 3 3 6 5(6) [6] (5) 3 5 5 3 1/4 5

Texan guitar legend Billy Gibbons has a beautifully relaxed style, so aim to lay right back on the beat. The phrase in the final bar will sound more authentic if some pinch harmonics are added – let the flesh of your picking-hand thumb touch the string just after hitting it with the plectrum.

## 13 RICH ROBINSON

TRACK 25

♩=125

G<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup> G<sup>5</sup> D<sup>b5</sup> C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>b5</sup>

RP

TAB: 5 7 6 7 5 3 5 6 3 6 3 6 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 (7)(7) (7)(7) (7)(7) (7)(7) (7)(7) (7) (7) (7)(7) (7)(7) (7)(5)(3) 5

† Goes flat

This lick in the style of the Black Crowes' guitarist uses a fast-picked string bend that goes slowly flat to provide a pseudo-doppler effect. The descending run in bar 2 uses pull-offs derived from the minor pentatonic scale.

## 14 LUTHER DICKINSON

TRACK 26

♩=125

G F<sup>sus2</sup> G F<sup>sus2</sup> C/E G F<sup>sus2</sup> C/E G F<sup>sus2</sup>

BU BU BU BD BU BU

TAB: 8 8 8 5 6 (7) 6 (7) 8 (10) (8) 6 8 8 [8] 8 8 8 5 6 (7) 6 (7) 5 8 6 [6]

m m m

The minor 3rd of the G minor pentatonic scale (the B<sub>♭</sub> note) will sound best if you bend it slightly sharp to emulate the North Mississippi Allstars' guitarist. You can either bend it up a semitone to B, to fit in with the G chord, or you can bend it up a quarter tone for a darker, more bluesy flavour.

## 15 BRITTANY HOWARD

TRACK 27

♩=125

G<sup>5</sup> G C<sup>5</sup> D

let ring RP let ring RP

TAB: 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 (3) 2 0 2 0 2 3 2 (3) 2 0 2 0 2 7 (9) 8 (9) (7) 5 9 (11) 10 (11) (9) 7

BU BU BU BD BU BD

a m a m a m a m a m

This lick showcases several different ways of string bending in a country and Americana context. As always when bending strings, good intonation is the key, so start slowly and try to memorise the feel and sound of the target pitches.





## 16 WARREN HAYNES

TRACK 28

♩=125  
Gm<sup>7</sup>

BU 3 3 BU 3 6 5 3 5 5 3 5 3 5 BU BD 5(7) (5) 3 5 3 5 3 3 5 5 5

□ m m

The blues scale sounds great for runs and adds extra flavour to the minor pentatonic base. We're looking at the Gov't Mule guitarist's approach to rapidfire playing here, but the more expressive techniques like string bends and vibrato also need close attention.

## 17 TERRY KATH

TRACK 29

♩=60  
G<sup>5</sup> D/F# Em G<sup>5</sup> D/F# Em

BU hold bend 10(12) 13(12) 8 10 9 8 5-7 5/7-9 9-7 10(12) 13(12) 8 10 9 8 [8] \

Chicago guitarist Terry Kath had bags of 'right on the edge' chops, rather like Jimmy Page. However, in this lick we switch over to ballad mode, with plenty of overdrive and delay helping this melodic lead line to soar over the backing.

## 18 SLASH

TRACK 30

♩=120  
G<sup>5</sup> D Cadd<sup>9</sup> D G<sup>5</sup>

BU BD BU 15 BU 14(16) 14 12 14 14 12 BU BD 11 (12)(11) 14 12 [12] 14 12 BU BD 12 14 12 14 14(16) (14) 12

More ballad playing here – this time in the vein of Gn'R's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* or *November Rain*. The mix of major and major pentatonic scales give a bright, melodic feel. Select a neck pickup and roll off a little of your guitar's tone control for a typical sound.

## 19 JEFF 'SKUNK' BAXTER

TRACK 31

♩=205 ♩=♩<sup>3</sup>  
G<sup>7</sup>

3 4 3 3 5 6 5 3 2 5 3 4 5 4 3 5

This lick adds a Steely Dan fusion sensibility to proceedings. Chord tones outline the G7 tonality, and chromatic passing tones are included for that jazzy touch that was de rigueur for bandleaders Walter Becker and Donald Fagen.

## 20 JOE SATRIANI

TRACK 32

♩=130  
Amaj<sup>7</sup>

9 10 12 10 9 10 12 8 9 11 9 8 9 11 7 9 11 9 7 9 4

Discounting the final slide, there are three different notes on each string here, so you'll need to use three fingers. Known as 'three-notes-per-string technique', it's a key part of Satriani's style.



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Photo: Ross Halfin

# METALLICA

## BLACK GOLD





**I**t was titled simply *Metallica*, but it would forever be known as *The Black Album*. And after 30 years it stands tall as the band's greatest success: one of the biggest selling albums of all time; a heavy metal classic that both defined and transcended the genre; an inspiration to guitar players across the decades.

Released on August 12th 1991, *The Black Album* was a bold reinvention from the band that had revolutionised heavy music in the 1980s as progenitors of thrash metal. They had reached a tipping point in 1988 with *...And Justice For All*, an album so dark and complex it seemed they could go no deeper. But with *The Black Album*, they found the way forward, and simplicity was the key.

As rhythm guitarist/vocalist James Hetfield said: "We wanted shorter songs that were meatier." That remit was nailed in monolithic tracks such as *Sad But True* and *Enter Sandman* – the latter arguably the definitive metal anthem of the 90s. And while Metallica stayed true to their roots with hard-and-fast thrashers *Holier Than Thou* and *Through The Never*, there were two songs with a classic rock sensibility and a heavy emotional weight that would connect with a vast audience – *The Unforgiven* and *Nothing Else Matters*.

*The Black Album* hit number one across the world. To date it has sold more than 16 million copies in the US alone. The first three Metallica albums – *Kill 'Em All*, *Ride The Lightning* and *Master Of Puppets* – had made them the biggest cult band in the world. *The Black Album* made them global superstars.

Marking its 30th anniversary, this iconic album is now being reissued in deluxe formats, and as a measure of its influence and crossover appeal, there is a new sister release, *The Metallica Blacklist*, in which songs from *The Black Album* are reinterpreted by a diverse array of artists including St. Vincent, Jason Isbell, Royal Blood, Biffy Clyro, Cage The Elephant and Miley Cyrus.

In TG's 29-page Metallica special, lead guitarist Kirk Hammett tells the story of *The Black Album*'s creation, James Hetfield discusses the art of the heavy riff and the never-ending quest for ultimate guitar tone, and *Blacklist* stars Cage The Elephant and Rodrigo y Gabriela explain how to cover a Metallica song. Plus, we speak with Ukrainian blogger and Metallica superfan Andriy Vasilenko, who recounts a story about how *Total Guitar*'s very own 'deepfake' track acquired a cult status online in the early 2000s...



# METALLICA

THE BLACK ALBUM



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Photo: Getty Images



Words Amit Sharma

“I WAS JUST SITTING THERE WITH MY GUITAR AT THREE O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING, AND THEN THIS RIFF CAME OUT. AND I THOUGHT, ‘WHOAH, THAT WORKS!’”

A flash of inspiration from guitarist **Kirk Hammett** was the key to the reinvention of Metallica on *The Black Album*. Now, on the 30th anniversary of its release, he tells the story of the album’s creation



It was one simple riff that set the tone for the biggest album of Metallica's career, and it came not from James Hetfield, the band's rhythm guitarist and riff-maker-in-chief, but from lead guitarist Kirk Hammett. The riff came to him during a tour in 1989, as he sat alone in a hotel room. And as he recalls that moment to TG, all of 32 years later, he acknowledges a debt to one of the bands that defined a new form of heavy rock at the exact same time that Metallica rose to superstar status.

"Back in '89 I'd just discovered this new musical movement coming out of the Seattle area," Kirk says. "I was listening to a lot of Soundgarden. I was pretty impressed with the rawness of their sound and how heavy it felt. And one thing we spoke about as a band was how much we all like bouncy riffs. So I was just sitting there with my guitar at three o'clock in the morning, thinking: 'Soundgarden, bounce, flattened fifths...' Almost simulating my mind to those sounds. And then this riff came out, and I thought, 'Whoah, that works!'"

From this riff, a classic was created. *Enter Sandman* was, in every sense, the pivotal song on Metallica's fifth album, officially titled *Metallica* but more commonly known as *The Black Album*. It was the opening song on the album, the first single, and most important of all, it defined a new direction for the band when they most needed it.

By the end of the 80s, the kings of thrash metal had outgrown the genre they had done so much to create, and it was *Enter Sandman* that unlocked their future.

As drummer Lars Ulrich explained: "With the first four Metallica albums, it was a journey that sort of got more and more progressive, more and more crazy and kooky and long-winded. With the fourth album [1988's *...And Justice For All*] it's like we hit a wall. So when we got together to write the next batch of songs, the mission statement was: simplify. And the first song we wrote, on day one, was *Enter Sandman*."

Metallica's choice of producer for *The Black Album* was a shock to the band's diehard fans, for Bob Rock had made his name working for hair metal stars Mötley Crüe and Bon Jovi. But he proved a perfect fit for Metallica, and after an eight-month stint

at One By One studios in Los Angeles, a masterpiece was completed – the measured power in *Enter Sandman* and *Sad But True* contrasting with thrash throwbacks such as *Holier Than Thou* and the classic rock feel in *The Unforgiven* and *Nothing Else Matters*.

Released in August 1991, *The Black Album* would become one of the highest-selling albums of all-time, transcending heavy metal and earning its place in mainstream popularity alongside the likes of Michael Jackson and The Beatles.

On its 30th anniversary, the man whose riff started it all has plenty to say about the making of this legendary album. But first, Kirk Hammett reveals how, in the last two years, a certain magazine has helped him develop those flattened fifths that served him so well for *Enter Sandman*...

"I've always enjoyed *Total Guitar*," he says, "but my appreciation for your magazine has really grown since the lockdowns. I've had a lot of time to go through all my issues and there's so much great stuff in there. I've been learning how to use the flattened fifth as a substitution for seventh chords, and I love sh\*t like that!"

## "PLAYING MUSIC IS ABOUT MOVING PEOPLE PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY..."

Let's start in 1990 and where your heads were at going into *The Black Album* after *...And Justice For All*. We'd come off that album and our mantra afterwards was very much: 'Let's not make another album like *Justice*!' We wanted to start writing shorter songs, and that was a reaction to playing the songs from *Justice*, which were long and had all those changes. You have to understand that when that album came out and we went on tour, we were playing to an audience who hadn't really digested the album, and we were seeing yawns, people looking up at the rafters or at their watches... It was a good thing we had pyro at the end of the songs to wake everyone up and bring them back around! So after seeing the reaction to that – the general progressive nature of the album – we wanted to put out something on the other side of the coin.

And so, as you said, the focus was on shorter, simpler songs...

Yeah. A song like *Battery* [from 1986's *Master Of Puppets*] has a gallop to it, and *Blackened* [from *...And Justice For All*] has the open chords in the bridge. They're good examples of bouncy riffs. So we were all trying to write bouncy stuff. The one riff that was around, that we were jamming on because it was fully realised, was the riff to *Sad But True*. There's a heavy bounce to it.

And, of course, there was your riff for *Enter Sandman*...

I really wanted to find my ultimate bouncy, heavy riff. That was kind of the impetus for *Sandman*. And even though I kinda accomplished it to a certain extent, I'm still trying to find the ultimate catchy heavy riff, like [Deep Purple's] *Smoke On The Water*. That riff is so powerful. There's something about the silence you hear before it comes in...

Have you ever noticed that? You put the track on there's two or three seconds of silence before it comes in. That silence makes the riff so ominous to me, in the weirdest way. And yet when that riff comes in, you're there instantly. Within a tenth of a second, you're already in – moving your head, your body feels it and gets into the motion. It's so instantaneous. It's like crack! It's audio smack! I don't know how else to put it. When you write a riff like that, it's the ultimate. You know you'll get people dancing, moving, energised and inspired... So many things. For me, playing music is about what I hear but also moving people physically, mentally, emotionally. I like the idea of writing riffs that connect with people on a different level. And it means more to me now than ever before, going into my fortieth year of being a musician. I look at my instrument and think, 'F\*ck, man, there's still so much I need to

**RIGHT**  
Kirk with  
James Hetfield







learn and do!’ There’s so much I have yet to accomplish. But, you know, writing *Enter Sandman* allowed me to pursue other things in the light of it. And thank god!

### When did you realise that this song was something really special?

Well, it was written pretty much exactly as everyone knows it. I put it down on a demo tape and five or six weeks later we all got together and started trading riff tapes. I went over to Lars’ place and he said, ‘There’s a riff on this tape that’s f\*cking great!’ He played it to me and I was like, ‘Oh yeah, I remember that one!’ And then he told me to start playing it, so I picked up my guitar. He really liked the opening part so asked me to repeat it before getting to the next bit, which is how that all came about.

**Talk us through the main gear used on the album. From what we’ve seen on the documentary *A Year And A Half In The Life Of Metallica*, you were mainly using your black ESP guitars, plus a blonde Gibson ES-295 and a black Les Paul Custom through various Marshalls and Mesa/Boogies...**

For *Enter Sandman*, it was mostly my black Skully ESP. Actually I used it for the entire song. I had that Gibson ES-295 that I did a few overdubs with here and there. I also used my Jackson occasionally. There was a blonde 1961 Strat for some of the clean parts in *The Unforgiven*. I think I used that Skully ESP for most of the guitar solos, if not all of them. I might have broken out my Gibson Flying V here and there. At one point my spider ESP showed up so I used it for one of the last things I recorded during the sessions, which was the solo for *So What!* [a cover of the Anti-Nowhere League’s punk classic, which became the b-side to the *Sad But True* single]. That took like 45 minutes. I was really happy about that!

### What about amps?

This was at a time when we were all focusing on the EMG and active pickup sound. I remember we had a bunch of amps in mind. We had the Jose-modded Marshall, plus Mesa/Boogies. We stopped using the ADA preamps that I’d been using up to that point. We also had a Matchless in there, plus a Wizard, and this was for all the lead stuff. I believe there was a Fender Vibroverb in the mix as well. And they were all combined. I don’t think it was as many amps as James had for this rhythm sound! We had a pretty big combination of stuff, and it was mostly Bob Rock’s amps except for the Boogie ones and the Vibroverb, which was mine. I remember getting a Matchless amp right after the recordings because I liked the sound so much.

### And you generally stuck with a Tube Screamer for extra drive.

Yeah, there was always a Tube Screamer somewhere in there. I know at one point we were using a lot of different gain and distortion pedals. We were messing with the Tone Bender but it didn’t sound good at all. I had my standard Cry Baby wah. I think for the solo on *The Unforgiven* we used a real Echoplex, which added the slapback on that part. At one point we talked about using a sitar for one of the solos in *Wherever I May Roam*, but we got rid of that right away because we couldn’t get a good distorted lead sound out of that sitar. Once I got my lead sound, I just went with it. We didn’t change it too much. On previous albums I might have switched different wah pedals or guitars. I didn’t do it that much on *The Black Album*. I really stuck to that ESP for my solos, and maybe I did *Sad But True* with a Jackson...

***Sad But True* has quite a deceptive riff that’s a lot harder to replicate in feel because of its behind-the-**



## PENTATONIC POWER

As Kirk explains, he tends to use a pentatonic framework as his base for a lot of the classic Metallica solos and then incorporates other notes from the modes, or the flat 5th from the blues scale, to capture more moods. If you’re in E minor pentatonic on the 12th fret, for example, the flat 5ths can be found on the 13th fret of the A string, the 15th fret of the G string and the 11th fret of the B string. He might also include major 2nds and major 9ths – found on the 14th fret of the E strings and the 16th fret of the D string – and these intervals will work in most major and minor contexts. More consideration, however, needs to be applied to 3rd, 6th and 7th intervals – which can sound wrong when used incorrectly. As the man himself tells us, looking closely at the riff you’re playing over will help you find out what works best where...

## DOMINATE WITH PHRYGIAN DOMINANT

There’s a reason why Phrygian Dominant tends to be one of the most popular modes of the harmonic minor scale with metal players. Much like its cousin from the major scale family, the Phrygian mode, it features a minor 2nd – and is therefore well-suited to riffs that use powerchords one fret up from the root. In the case of *Wherever I May Roam*, it’s the dissonance between the E note on the 7th fret of the A string and the F on the 8th fret right next to it. What makes the harmonic minor mode sound more dramatic or exotic is its major 3rd in place of the minor 3rd found in standard Phrygian, and this usage of major 3rds against minor 7ths is typical of dominant chords – hence why it’s known as Phrygian Dominant. Phew!

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# METALLICA

## THE BLACK ALBUM

### ➔ beat drag...

You have to be so behind the beat. Because if you're in front, you'll lose the whole groove and power of it. And yes, it's a riff that sounds easier than it is. There are little things you have to get right and the drag is one of the most important. The same goes for the bit where we hang on one note and bend just before the verses. And, to be honest, we haven't used that technique much since – we generally play fast...

### ***Holier Than Thou* has some frenetic triplet rhythms. What's the secret to getting those thrashy rhythms so tight?**

The trick to getting those triplets right is really just sitting down and repeating those up-down-ups, starting slow and then getting quicker. Or you could look at them more like a fast gallop. Or, if you want, you could just play along to *Whiplash* (from Metallica's debut album *Kill 'Em All*). One of the exercises Joe Satriani showed me when I started taking lessons was double and triple picking on open strings, as well as tremolo picking... And that's *Whiplash*, right there! I would do that across all six strings and back. It was a really good exercise. Later on, I started looking into other exercises I could do to improve my wrist picking and found out that one is pretty much the best one you can use. It improves the velocity of your picking on one string. Then you can break it up into triplets, quarter notes, all sorts of stuff. I'll usually pick the most difficult single-string chug and use that to warm up before we go on stage... And, you know, it works! There are some rhythms or riffs that you might feel you can't play, but after a couple of weeks or months you can play them in your sleep. You absorb them and they become a part of you, if you practise enough.

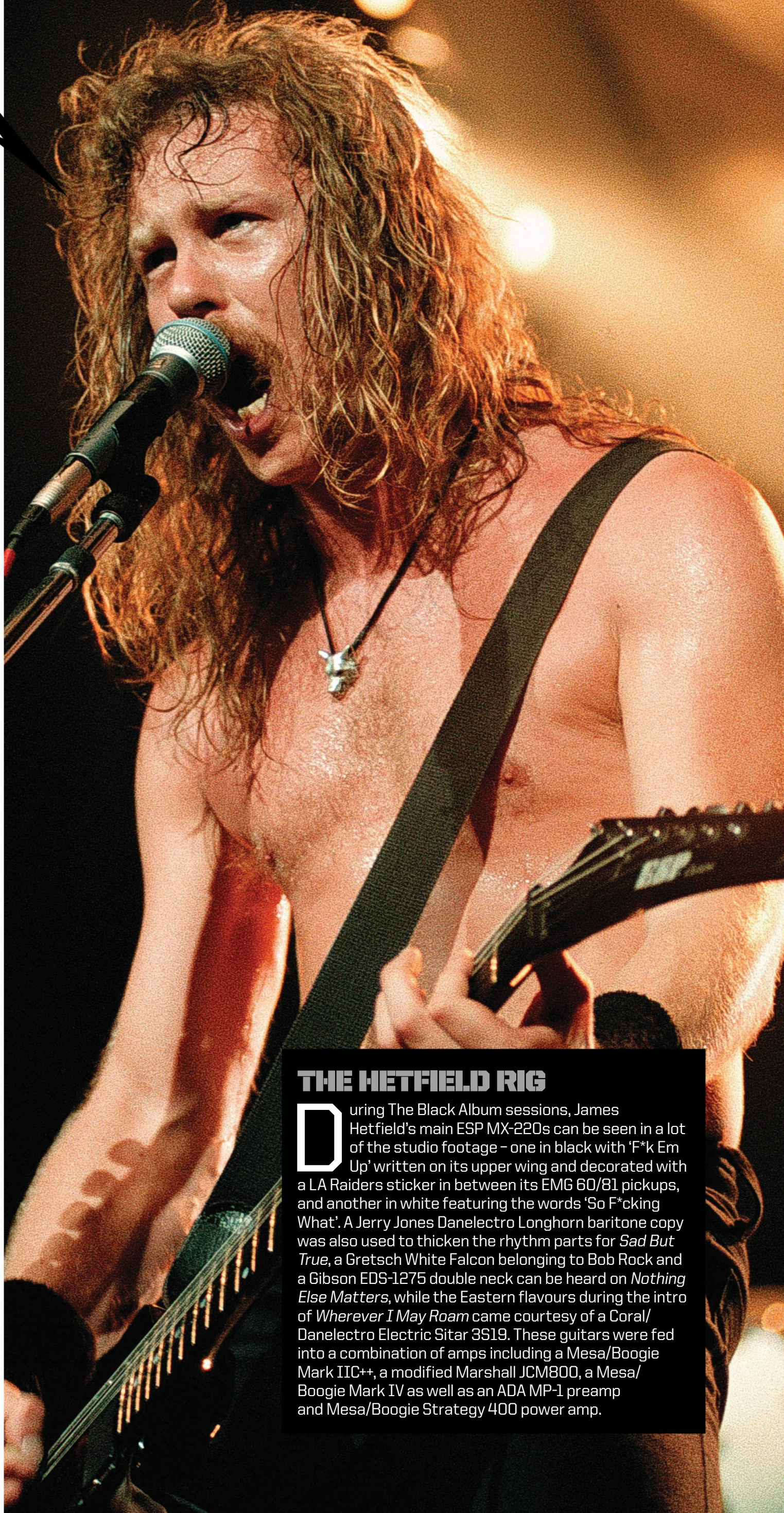
### ***Don't Tread On Me* has a very grand opening symphony, almost reminiscent of bands like Queen.**

That all goes back to our love of harmonised guitars. Brian May did it in such a cool fashion. Thin Lizzy harmonised the hell out of everything. Then there's Judas Priest. We always loved the sound of that. It can add a different sort of mood or colour, and felt appropriate for this intro.

### ***The God That Failed* is very Thin Lizzy at points.**

### THE HETFIELD RIG

During The Black Album sessions, James Hetfield's main ESP MX-220s can be seen in a lot of the studio footage – one in black with 'F\*k Em Up' written on its upper wing and decorated with a LA Raiders sticker in between its EMG 60/81 pickups, and another in white featuring the words 'So F\*cking What'. A Jerry Jones Danelectro Longhorn baritone copy was also used to thicken the rhythm parts for *Sad But True*, a Gretsch White Falcon belonging to Bob Rock and a Gibson EDS-1275 double neck can be heard on *Nothing Else Matters*, while the Eastern flavours during the intro of *Wherever I May Roam* came courtesy of a Coral/Danelectro Electric Sitar 3S19. These guitars were fed into a combination of amps including a Mesa/Boogie Mark IIC++, a modified Marshall JCM800, a Mesa/Boogie Mark IV as well as an ADA MP-1 preamp and Mesa/Boogie Strategy 400 power amp.





The way the chords modulate in the chorus is really cool. There's a lot of movement in there, but it never loses momentum. Instead, the power carries through. The guitar solo I played was basically the first riff and then variations of it. I'm basically repeating the riff over and over again but changing it each time. I knew what I wanted to play, I heard it in my head and sang it. Then I sat down with my guitar and worked it out.

***Through The Never* has some of the album's finest riffs, particularly the one three minutes in as James sings "On through the never!"**

That middle part had been around for a while, before the song came about. It was one I would play here and there, warming up for shows. And when I showed it to those guys they were like, 'Great, this is f\*cking heavy!' But when James put on those gang vocals it brought it up to the next level. And I one hundred per cent agree with you – the riff is heavy, but when the vocals come in it all gets even heavier. The intro riff is another thing that had been around for a while on one of my riff tapes. It was me trying to be fast and heavy... Like Slayer! Hey, I love Slayer, what can I say? They're the greatest. Kerry King has such a smooth technique when he plays. He can move from super heavy to super fast to totally jagged, and he does it effortlessly and fluidly. Kerry doesn't get enough credit as a rhythm guitar player. He's a great rhythm player and a great lead guitarist, too. He's always aggressive and I love consistency.

***My Friend Of Misery* is the longest track on the record, similar to the *Master Of Puppets* era in ways.**

Well, it was originally going to be an instrumental and then management told us it was too good to be just instrumental. The vocals were added as an afterthought. So I guess that's why it might feel reminiscent of *Puppets*.

**As far as opening gambits go, the stabs that initiate *Of Wolf And Man* are quite a musical statement.**

The main riff after the stabs is one that I came up with on the *Justice* tour. The interesting thing was I played it backwards... Or we're playing it backwards now! It started with the higher bit on the fifth fret of the E and A strings and then went down to the



## "I LOVE THE PENTATONIC SOUND BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I GREW UP ON. JIMMY PAGE, JIMI HENDRIX... THAT'S THE SOUND, MAN!"

first fret and open chords. Lars heard it the other way round. In hindsight, it was a good idea because we could use the open E chord stabs to ramp up into that main riff.

***Nothing Else Matters* has some beautifully layered acoustic parts. What exactly are we hearing?**

I think James played all the acoustic stuff on that track. We rented some acoustics, and there might have been a Martin in there. We didn't have as much gear back then, but nowadays we have enough for twenty bands! Bob Rock had so much, and then there was this whole multitude of stuff we ended up renting – from compressors and preamps to acoustics and amps, like Marshall JCM. I know the JCM played a large part in the recording of *Nothing Else Matters* and it was our first time using one in the studio.

**ABOVE**  
Kirk and James on stage in 1991, as Metallica toured *The Black Album*

**You ended up using some real choice notes for your solo in *The Unforgiven* – which, as evidenced by the documentary, was perhaps challenging at points.**

It wasn't happening and then Bob Rock accused me of not doing my homework. I don't know what he was talking about, because I arrived into the studio with all these ideas, but they just didn't work! I had to throw them all out. I was bare naked with no idea what to do. Bob told me he would try to tweak the sound for me and when he did that it really helped. They said, 'Just play!' and I was like, 'Arrrrgh!' I had maybe a minute to put myself into a real mood. I just needed to block everything out and go deep emotionally. We hit record and I didn't know what the f\*ck to play but something was going to come out... Something always does. And that's what came out. The cameras caught





## “THIN LIZZY HARMONISED THE HELL OUT OF EVERYTHING, AND WE ALWAYS LOVED THE SOUND OF THAT”

a large portion of what ended up on the record, which is a pretty cool thing looking back at it. But that solo was raw emotion. I had no idea what to do, it all came to me as I played – real improvisation. I was so happy after that, really excited and inspired. I knew I needed to do more of it and ever since that moment, I’ve worked on being better at improvisation and completing music thoughts that are very much listenable. Forming complete solos naturally, if you know what I mean. For *The Black Album*, I came in with eighty per cent of the stuff worked out and twenty per cent was improvised, including *The Unforgiven* solo. Nowadays I prefer to have it the opposite way, with twenty per cent worked out and eighty per cent improvised, because it’s more exciting, more spontaneous and honest. I don’t know what’s going to be on the album as much as anyone else! It feels right doing it like that, it feels better – rather than composing something and making it fit, sometimes forcing

**ABOVE**  
Kirk Hammett,  
a man who knows  
his scales

things where they might not feel right. Pure improvisation is more real and human.

**The big harmonised bends at the end of *The Unforgiven* also add greatly to its overall symphonic weight.**

Now I think about it, I remember wanting to double those parts in the studio. It’s been so long, it’s hard to remember.

**You used the Phrygian Dominant mode of the harmonic minor scale for parts of the *Wherever I May Roam* solo, really capitalising on its exotic feel.**

Yeah, I used some Phrygian Dominant in that. What I always do when I get to where the solo is look at the rhythm chords. You need to look at the notes in the riff and apply the necessary scale. Find the one with the most amount of notes that the chords do and co-ordinate them. In this case,

it was a lot of Phrygian and Phrygian Dominant. I’m more inclined to use harmonic minor these days than the straight major scale modes because I feel you can get away with more! I recently played with Kamasi Washington, he covered *My Friend Of Misery*. The tonality of the chords during my solo worked well for harmonic minor because it had some similar chromatic notes. When I played pentatonics over that bit, it sounded in but it didn’t really jive in the same way as it did modally. I tried harmonic minor and I was in. I tried harmonic minor with even more chromatics and I was even more in. Which is how I came up with the solo for *Wherever I May Roam*, looking at the chords in the riff and what kind of scales they’re suggesting. The whole song is in Phrygian when you look at it. So Phrygian Dominant would definitely work! I have a strong knowledge of scales and modes, if I didn’t I wouldn’t be able to reach the same melodic conclusions. Knowing your theory definitely helps!

**And it’s interesting how you have continued to use the trusty pentatonic scale as your launchpad for other tonalities, mixing in seconds, sixths and beyond...**

The trick is to add notes when you want to. I might play in E minor pentatonic and then add in a C sharp, and suddenly I’m in Dorian. Then I might go back to the pentatonic and go down to the seventh fret and use the E minor shapes there. Then I might go up two frets and find a relative minor there [Editor’s note: the C# Locrian mode here would mirror E Dorian]. I just add notes when I feel like it. Sometimes people might not notice this – I think you’re the very first person to actually point it out – but I might go from pentatonic to modal for just three or four seconds before going back. I love the pentatonic sound because that’s what I grew up on. Jimmy Page, Jimi Hendrix... That’s the sound, man. For me it’s not about the completely modal thing, like Eric Johnson or those kinds of players. I still love modal stuff and the European sound of it, so I tend to write melodies and compose using modes but when I’m improvising it’s about pentatonics and chromaticism. Those are the notes I like to play.



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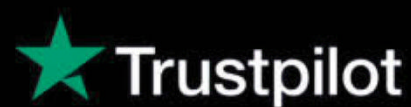
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# METALLICA

THE BLACK ALBUM

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Interviews Rob Laing &amp; Paul Elliott Photos Ross Halfin

# “THE NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF GUITAR SOUNDS!”

Metallica frontman **James Hetfield** on guitars, tone, riffs, tuning - and the journey from Lars Ulrich's bedroom to *The Black Album*

## THE DREAM

The first concert I saw was in 1978, Aerosmith with AC/DC opening. I was a big Aerosmith fan, but I had no idea that AC/DC was that cool. I dug AC/DC, but when you go to see your favourite band you don't really want to see anybody else. Some Metallica fans are like that. I went with my older brother, and I remember him saying (about AC/DC lead guitarist Angus Young), 'That little guy running around was annoying!' You look at Angus and you'd think that guy would've just fallen apart or something - his head would fall off, it's swivelled so hard! Going to a big arena rock concert was a pretty eye-opening experience, just the whole feel: the lights going out, the anticipation, the crowd, the smells. Every sense was just soaking it in. And I wanted to be the guy up there on the stage.

## RIFFS

Making an album, you start with 800 riffs and you whittle it down to 50 with the help of others in the band. Then you pick ones you want to jam on. Once you open that Pandora's box of riffs, you don't want to stop. You start picking out stuff. It's all springboarding. You narrow it down and start making

some songs. My take usually is shorter, more muscly songs and Lars (Ulrich, drummer) has a more organic approach where there's no limit and you just keep writing. So between the two we get a little of both.

## THE ODD COUPLE

Lars is very important if I've got 800 riffs and they're all great so I need some kind of filter. And he'll come in and he'll pick out the stuff. He's a good finder of riffs and he hears things different than I do. When we go to do certain songs he'll be playing on the offbeat in my mind and he's on the offbeat in his. So it's a great problem to have that we hear things differently. There's a very creative grind that happens with that and it can go off the rails but most of the time it's extremely worth it because you're coming up with some really cool stuff. And we'll go out and jam on it. What happens next? We just let it happen and then usually a feel happens. He plays it on drums or I do it with a riff and I'll tell you, we help each other a lot. He wants to be the singer and guitar player, I want to be the drummer, so it's really kind of odd but cool where we make little suggestions that the other wouldn't even think of.

## METAL UP YOUR ASS!

The original band name Lars wanted was Thunderf\*ck. 'OK, pretty cool!' The story might have been a little different with a name like Thunderf\*ck... But Ron Quintana, an early metalhead up in the Bay Area, had a list of names for a fanzine he was getting together, he ended up choosing 'Metal Mania', and Lars saw that list, and 'Metallica' was on there, so Lars 'borrowed' it. Forever. And then he did a pencil drawing of a toilet with a sword sticking up and the words: Metal Up Your Ass. Like, that's it, that's gonna be the logo!

## WORLD DOMINATION

In our minds, we were gonna surpass everything! We were gonna be huge. We really were! Lars had a poster in his bedroom: 'DIAMOND HEAD', in these huge, huge letters, and then below it 'Silverwing' (NWOBHM glam rock act). And then Lars put under Silverwing, 'AND Metallica', in a very small logo! It's weird, I can't really describe our thoughts back then. But every time we moved forward a little bit, it was a feeling of, 'My God, we've made it!' We did our first gig - yes, we've made it! Ooh, we got our first cheque, \$14 - we've made it! We've got our following, we've got five fans

“FOR ME IT'S GOT TO BE PERCUSSIVE. IT'S GOT TO PUSH AIR. IT'S GOT TO BARK!”



# METALLICA

## THE BLACK ALBUM

and they've drawn Metallica on the back of their jackets – check it out! And on it goes, making a demo, making the album. We knew we were out for world domination. We didn't know what that meant, but we were gonna do it!

### CLIFF BURTON

I remember when Cliff was in Trauma [his pre-Metallica band], Lars and I seeing him headbanging at the Whiskey A Go Go and saying, 'My God, we gotta get this guitar player... Oh sh\*t, he's playing bass! Wow!' His f\*cking hair flying, this skinny dude, with big bell-bottoms, and he's playing a wah solo on bass. Holy sh\*t! This is very unique. He can't be in Trauma, he's gotta be with us! Cliff was a pretty strong personality. He wouldn't let Lars get away with sh\*t, and the other guys (Kirk Hammett and Burton's successor Jason Newsted) always let him get away with a lot of sh\*t. Cliff was my ally in the battle. The end of Cliff Burton's time with Metallica, his time on Earth... Things changed for sure after that.

### TWIN HARMONY

I love harmonies. Cliff Burton planted a seed in me that continues to grow. And I love it. I always loved Thin Lizzy and bands that pull off these really cool harmonies. There's so many cool voicings that you can do and it just interests me a lot.

### PLAYING FAST

The white Electra V [used on Metallica's debut album *Kill 'Em All*] is really good for the faster songs. Saying 'this guitar is really fast' sounds stupid, but it is.

### RIDE THE LIGHTNING

There's a lot of great songs on *Master Of Puppets*, but I prefer *Ride The Lightning* [the group's second album, released in 1984]. That felt to me like the giant that Metallica has produced.

### AMPS

The guitar sound is a work in progress still from *Kill 'Em All* on, and the Crunch Berries amp that we've used, I think, since *Ride The Lightning* or at least *Master Of Puppets* for sure, that Mesa/Boogie C++ Simul-Class is a very integral part of the sound.

### tone

The never-ending quest for the Holy Grail of guitar sounds! For me it's got to



**ABOVE**  
James Hetfield (left)  
and Kirk Hammett.

be percussive. It's got to push air, what we call bark. It's got to bark. But I don't want it really abrasive, so any fake fuzz to me really just takes away from the sound. And it's tough because when you turn guitar sounds down, you really hear what they sound like and when you push them up it sounds a different way. So trying to find that balance of enough mid push while still sounding big, what I've found is the wider and bigger you make it sound the thinner it becomes in a way, at least depth-wise. You've got to find your space. Elbow your way in there and sonically make some room. And it varies throughout certain songs, the guitar is really important in this song but this one, maybe it's all about groove.

### WRITING

If I play a riff and hey, we've got this complicated little thing, then I think,

'Oh sh\*t, I've got to sing over it!' I'll want to make it really easy and I don't like that. I'll challenge myself to slow the whole thing down and sing over whatever I've played. And make it as close as possible to it. Over time when we rehearse these songs, yes the vocal changes a little bit because you want to impact a certain hit on your guitar or vice versa so it's like a stew, you throw all these things in and you think it's going to taste like this and then it ends up like something else so the singing and the playing is its own thing.

### DOWNPICKING

Once you start digging in harder your strings are taking abuse, your pick takes abuse. I would say digging in is a positive thing. It gives it a little bit more dynamic, and it's not so compressed and saturated that there's

# "ONCE YOU OPEN THAT PANDORA'S BOX OF RIFFS, YOU DON'T WANT TO STOP"





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no dynamic to it. But most of it was for facial value – wanting to cut through. It's about finding that right blend. Sometimes I feel it's too clean and I'm working too hard. Other times, it's too saturated and I can't actually hear the note and it kind of messes with my vocal a little bit. If I can't hear the note clearer, especially with fast stuff, I want to be clear so you can feel the percussiveness of it.

## THE BLACK ALBUM

Writing in the studio, I couldn't help but think, this is very easy to understand, this is very sing-able – without making it corny anthem-y, where everyone and their brother's is gonna be singing all the time everywhere. We wanted shorter songs that were meatier.

## NOTHING ELSE MATTERS

What is it about not wanting to write a love song? That's pretty easy: you're in Metallica, this is hardcore, what the f\*ck are you doing? It's a sign of weakness; a huge sign of weakness. But that song was for me. It's about being on the road,

missing someone at home, but it was written in such a way, it connected with so many people, that it wasn't just about two people, it was about a connection with your higher power, lots of different things. I remember going to the Hell's Angels Clubhouse in New York City, and they were showing me a film that they'd put together of one of the fallen brothers, and they were playing *Nothing Else Matters*. Wow. This means a lot more than me missing my chick, right? This is brotherhood. It's pretty powerful.

## HEADS-DOWN HEAVY METAL

On the tour with Guns N' Roses [co-headlining in 1992], Lars was very open to the LA scene. He'll get obsessed with somebody and want to learn everything about them. That's putting it nicely! Following Axl [Rose, GN'R singer] around was kind of his thing. 'He's actually really a nice guy!' But what they represented... Here's the battle: heads-down heavy metal versus LA pomp and glam. That's what it was. Bling versus dirt.

## ABOVE

"I always loved Thin Lizzy and bands that pull off these really cool harmonies..."

## TUNING

With tuning down it's easy to make it sound dark and sinister. There are definitely bands that stay in that tuning all the time and that can become limiting as well. But I think sonically it makes it less lively. I know there are bands that do it extremely well. Certain songs call for it and certain songs don't. It's not challenging because I think when the strings are tighter and you're up there, it's a little easier to play faster or get a tone, a clearer tone, out of it.

## CLEAN SOUND

The Ken Lawrence [Explorer] guitar that I have has always been the best sounding for clean, though since I've done the [EMG signature] Het Set, that neck pickup is really, really clear. So any of the guitars would sound okay with it. But it's a blend, that [Roland] JC 120 has been the go-to forever for me. That is my favourite clean amp, but mixed in with a few other things. But the clean sound is just as important as heavy, at least in my rig.

Photo Getty

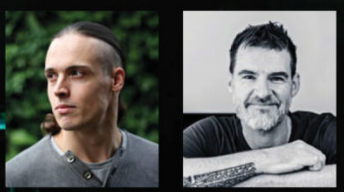


# METALLICA

THE BLACK ALBUM



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Andriy Vasylenko [youtube.com/AndriyVasylenko](https://youtube.com/AndriyVasylenko) / [andriyvasylenko.com](https://andriyvasylenko.com)  
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Interview Chris Bird Photo Ross Halfin

# APOCALYPSE DAWN...

## THE TOTAL GUITAR METALLICA DEEPPFAKE TRACK

How a TG 'Play like' track accidentally achieved mythical status amongst Metallica fans the world over...

**W**e know what you're thinking: 'What's a deepfake'? Well, bear with us as we tell you a story that'll explain all, and why it's relevant to *Total Guitar* this month...

Back in March 2002, TG printed an edition of the magazine featuring James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett on the cover – though between album cycles, Metallica were a big deal back then, just as they are today. Emblazoned across the cover appeared the words: 'Play Like

Hammett & Hetfield' – a coverline referring to a lesson written by fresh-faced TG tutor, Steve Allsworth, who had created a four-minute instrumental track in the style of the band entitled *Apocalypse Dawn* and tabbed it out for readers to learn.

So far, so normal, then. 'Play like' lessons are standard guitar lesson fare, and TG has always been jam-packed full of 'em. However, what happened next was not so normal. Fast forward nearly two decades to 2021 and Ukrainian blogger Andriy Vasylenko, a Metallica geek and

fansite owner, would contact Steve (who still writes for the mag!), informing him that his track had acquired notoriety online in the mid-2000s. Many had believed it to be a genuine unreleased Metallica studio demo. Others labelled it (perhaps more accurately) a deepfake – an intentional aping of the Metallica sonic likeness.

Though the myth was busted, Andriy posted a video to his YouTube channel this year recounting the story. Read on as Andriy relates the facts about TG's unintentional online hit...

### Please tell us a little about yourself, your YouTube channel and your love of Metallica.

I'm Andriy Vasylenko, 29, musician and blogger, born and living in Poltava, Ukraine. My main instrument is bass, but I've always been a big fan of guitar riffs. In 2014, during my final year in university, I started posting Metallica bass covers on YouTube. And over the years it grew from just a cover channel to a sort of Metallica fan encyclopedia. Now the bass/guitar stuff is taking over again, not least thanks to the guys I've collaborated with, including Steve Allsworth.

### How did *Apocalypse Dawn* first come to your attention?

It was late 2009, I guess. The Internet was still pretty much [a] Wild West, so you often could come across faked stuff that nobody could verify. Most would believe [these tracks were] real, because why not? Like so-called 'Unreleased Metallica Demos', *Apocalypse Dawn* was among the

most convincing ones. The programmed drums could evoke some doubts, but most still didn't hear the difference back then. Plus the near-radio sound quality concealed the fakeness even more.

### And can you tell us a bit about how the track initially rose to prominence on the internet?

It began not long after *Apocalypse Dawn* had appeared in *Total Guitar* in 2002. The track spread across the Internet within the following couple of years, and everyone was wondering if it was really Metallica. [Certain] conditions overlapped that made it so believable. Firstly, it's an instrumental track – no James Hetfield singing. Secondly, it was the *St. Anger* era, when Metallica was in a sort of information cocoon. Thirdly, it actually sounded quite close to Lars and company.

### How did it compare to the other "fake" Metallica tracks you'd heard?

Other 'fakes' were mostly actual songs by actual bands that people just retitled as 'Metallica' and uploaded online. And then the Internet machine did the job. Most were way off, but wishful thinking reinforced by the lack of info is a powerful thing. *Apocalypse Dawn*, on the other hand, was intended to be as close to Metallica as possible. All the band's trademark features were there. You would think that the creators of such a masterful imitation would have done it for exposure, to promote their band or something. But almost nobody could trace its origin. So there you have it, a perfect 'fake' Metallica track.

### As the huge Metallica fan you are, which songs do you think Steve's track evokes the most?

Firstly, the ballady stuff. As an admirer of James Hetfield's arpeggios, I find the licks Steve wrote were spot on, without sounding forced. *Fade To Black*, *Sanitarium*, *One*, *To Live Is To Die*, *Nothing Else Matters* – you can feel

them all in only the first minute of the track. And then the *Sandman*-ish and *Battery*-ish sections completed the essence of Metallica.

### From your perspective, how did the YouTube community react to *Apocalypse Dawn*?

It was a recurring topic online in the 2000s. People asked on forums 'Did you hear of *Apocalypse Dawn*?' or 'Is it really Metallica?'. And a lot did agree that [it really was] Metallica rather than not! Now the generations [have] changed, and most of my YouTube audience [have] never heard of the track and the mystery around it. The millennial viewers, however, do remember it, which gives them that bittersweet nostalgic feeling. It was funny hearing Steve say that he had no idea *Apocalypse Dawn* had become such a myth among Metallica fans. He did a fantastic job and served the community big time, in both teaching the guitar and (unintentionally) giving food for fun speculation.



## APOCALYPSE DAWN

TG's very own **Steve Allsworth** guides you through a full tab of his unintentional online hit

### 1 ACOUSTIC INTRO

TRACK 33

♩=100

Acoustic Guitar

Em<sup>9</sup>

1. Dsus<sup>4</sup> D/F# 2. Dsus<sup>4</sup> Asus<sup>4</sup>

**STEVE SAYS** This riff is effectively an amalgam of all the great Metallica ballads. I based it mainly on *Welcome Home (Sanitarium)* from *Master Of Puppets* and *Fade To Black* from *Ride The Lightning*, which both feature emotive minor arpeggios like this.

### 2 KTULU-ESQUE ARPEGGIOS

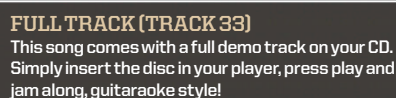
Electric Gtr.

Em B C<sup>5</sup> B D#dim

Em Am G/B C D

**STEVE SAYS** This riff was loosely based on the electric arpeggio ideas in two songs: *The Call Of Ktulu* from *Ride The Lightning* and the middle section from *Master Of Puppets*. Both of these tracks hint at harmonic minor with the addition of the diminished 7th chord. I also borrowed the vibe and 12th fret harmonics from *Nothing Else Matters* (from the Black Album) and the diatonic chord movement from the intro to *Fight Fire With Fire*.





### 3 CHUGGING POWERCHORDS

**STEVE SAYS** This section is typical of some of Metallica's classic mid-tempo riffs such as *Enter Sandman*, *Seek And Destroy* and *Ride The Lightning*, which all feature plenty of chugging powerchords against the open bottom E string. It also features the extra beat in the final bar, which is a nod to the changes of time signature in *Blackened* (from *...And Justice For All*) and *Master Of Puppets*.

#### 4 EARLY-PERIOD GALLOP RIFFS

**System 1: 165**

**Guitar:** N.C. C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>5</sup> N.C. F<sup>5</sup> N.C. E<sup>5</sup> N.C. B<sup>b5</sup> A<sup>5</sup> N.C. G<sup>5</sup>

**Bass:** PM w/distortion PM PM PM PM PM

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**System 2: 100**

**Guitar:** N.C. C<sup>5</sup> B<sup>5</sup> N.C. F<sup>5</sup> N.C. E<sup>5</sup> N.C. E<sup>5</sup> N.C. G<sup>5</sup> N.C. G<sup>5</sup> E<sup>5</sup>

**Bass:** PM PM PM PM PM PM

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Tempo:** 100

**Instruction:** Play 4 times

**STEVE SAYS** I based this riff on some of Metallica's early, faster thrash metal songs such as *Battery* and *Fight Fire With Fire* that rely heavily on the forward gallop rhythm (eighth, 16th, 16th) and reverse gallop rhythm (16th, 16th, eighth). It also targets the classic tritone (B, 5 in the key of Em) from songs like *Enter Sandman* and *Of Wolf And Man*.







# 6 WAH WAH SOLO (CONT'D)

**STEVE SAYS** Epic, wah-laden solos don't come much better than in *Enter Sandman*, from which my opening idea is borrowed here. It also makes a nod towards Kirk's Michael Schenker-inspired legato ideas and pentatonic scale sequences used on the outro to *Fade To Black*.

# 7 SINGABLE MELODIES

**STEVE SAYS** This offering was a nod to Kirk's tasteful melodic neck pickup soloing from such tracks as *Welcome Home (Sanitarium)*, *Master Of Puppets* and, to a certain extent, *The Four Horsemen* from *Kill 'Em All*. These solos tend to be crafted around singable melodies and slower rhythms (usually the calm before the storm!).

# 8 HARMONISED LEAD





### 8 HARMONISED LEAD (CONT'D)

**STEVE SAYS** This is another melodic solo, but this time based on the classic harmony ideas heard in *Master Of Puppets*, *Fade To Black* and *To Live Is To Die*. The twin guitar solo idea is classic Thin Lizzy, although here the use of E harmonic minor gives it a neoclassical twist.

### 9 PHRYGIAN LICK

**STEVE SAYS** I based this fast solo around some of the fast open-string pull-off licks featured in parts of solos in *Whiplash* and *One*. This also uses the Spanish-sounding E Phrygian mode (E minor with a ♭2), which Kirk helped to popularise in tracks such as *Wherever I May Roam*.

### 10 MALMSTEEN INFLUENCE



10 MALMSTEEN INFLUENCE (CONT'D)

Sheet music for guitar, measures 3-4. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 3 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 4 continues the melodic line with a Bb5 chord indicated above the staff. The bass line includes a 6th fret barre and a 12th fret barre. The guitar is tuned to standard tuning (E2-A2-D3-G3-B3-E4).

Chords: E<sup>5</sup> (8va), B<sup>b</sup>5

Tab: 15-12 13 12 13 12 15-12 15-12 13 15-12 13 15-12 19-19 19-17 17-17 15-15 15-14 14-14 17-17 17-15 15-15 14-14 14-12 12-12

Sheet music for guitar, measures 5-6. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 5 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 6 continues the melodic line with a G5 chord indicated above the staff. The bass line includes a 6th fret barre and a 12th fret barre. The guitar is tuned to standard tuning (E2-A2-D3-G3-B3-E4).

Chords: E<sup>5</sup> (8va), G<sup>5</sup>

Tab: 15-15 15-14 14-14 12-12 12-10 10-10 10-12 BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24)

Sheet music for guitar, measures 7-8. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 7 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 8 continues the melodic line with an E5 chord indicated above the staff. The bass line includes a 6th fret barre and a 12th fret barre. The guitar is tuned to standard tuning (E2-A2-D3-G3-B3-E4).

Chords: E<sup>5</sup> (8va), B<sup>b</sup>5, E<sup>5</sup>

Tab: BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24) BU 22(24) 24-22 20-19 22-20 19-17 20-19 17-20 19-17 20-19 17-20 19-17 17-19

**STEVE SAYS** An Yngwie Malmsteen influence often reared its head in Kirk's early guitar solos. Tracks such as *Creeping Death* and *Leper Messiah* were the inspiration behind this idea, featuring C, D and Em sweep arpeggios in full flight as well some fast triplets and descending scale sequences. Kirk frequently used the full range of his guitar with frequent bends up from the 22nd fret (and often beyond) that allowed him to break up the flow of relentless fast picking.





60

Words Jonny Scaramanga

# 50 SHADES OF BLACK

Celebrating 30 years of *The Black Album*, more than 50 artists have contributed to the biggest tribute album ever recorded – *The Metallica Blacklist*. TG speaks to Cage The Elephant guitarist **Nick Bockrath** and **Gabriela Quintero** of Rodrigo y Gabriela about the art of covering a Metallica classic. Plus: St. Vincent does *Sad But True* – and other key tracks analyzed



Few records in history have crossed over like *The Black Album*. Not only was this the defining metal album of the early 90s – it also had the melody, hooks, and polish to influence artists across the genre spectrum. And to mark its 30th anniversary, there is the *The Metallica Blacklist* – on which more than 50 artists from all over the musical map have

contributed cover versions of this iconic album's 12 tracks.

Unexpected participants include Miley Cyrus (aided by friends including Elton John) taking on *Nothing Else Matters*, and Pharrell Williams' outfit the Neptunes, who tackle *Wherever I May Roam*. It's not limited to the Anglosphere either: Metallica's global reach is underlined by artists from France, Mexico, Mongolia, South Korea and India.

For guitarists, the *Blacklist* is a chance to hear some of the world's greatest talents stretch their imaginations on the best metal songs of the 90s. Jason Isbell, Rodrigo y Gabriela and Chris Stapleton show wholly new possibilities for these songs. Disappointingly, two of the best current guitarists featured, Phoebe Bridgers and Sam Fender, betrayed the cause by leaving their guitars at home. Happily, homegrown talent IDLES and

Biffy Clyro brought *all* their guitars. And pedals.

A notable contribution comes from Cage the Elephant, whose look at *The Unforgiven* sounds like it could be a Cage original until a note-for-note recreation of Kirk Hammett's solo pops up. With a laid back groove, Cage the Elephant trade powerchords for acoustic guitars, and whispery vocals harmonised an octave apart. Guitarist Nick Bockrath told us how they did it...





The rationale for choosing *The Unforgiven* was simple: “That song just spoke to us all the most,” Nick says. “We felt like we could pull it off. We had looked at *Don’t Tread On Me*, but really *The Unforgiven* was the obvious one.”

Although the decision was easy, Nick’s energy for the song was a driving factor in choosing *The Unforgiven*. “That song – it’s almost like their *Stairway To Heaven*. They were this ripping thrash band, and they come out with this mellow acoustic song. It’s a simple thing, but I think it opened the sound up a lot. It opens up a lot of possibilities. If you go and see Metallica [live], they’re going to do a bunch of rippers and then there’s this moment where the energy’s brought down with this acoustic guitar. That’s a whole new sound.”

Whenever you record a cover, there is a dilemma between showing respect for the original without simply repeating what’s already been done. Nick was well aware of those competing pressures. “It’s such a classic that we wanted to make it our own, but I was reverent, especially to Kirk’s parts. It’s so iconic that I wanted to make sure that all the melodies were exactly like the song, but kind of filter it in our own way.” Nick felt he couldn’t just replicate Kirk’s approach to the intro, though. He pauses to sing the main theme. “His version? It’s perfect. He killed that.”

To this end, Nick crafted his own arrangement of the intro, incorporating the memorable opening guitar melody into a fingerstyle acoustic arrangement. The verses have a laid back, primarily acoustic sound, unlike the original crunching power chords. “Well, you’re not going to out-rock Metallica,” explains Nick. “I find that sometimes with intensity it doesn’t have to be all distorted. It’s kind of fun in our recording that when the solo does come, it just rips up because that level of dynamic hasn’t been on yet.”

That solo, however, retains the song’s rootsy vibe. A lot of that is thanks to the band’s distinctively organic groove (“that right there makes it feel like a Cage song”, Nick notes). It’s also thanks to his raw guitar tone, delivered via a ’71 Gibson SG Custom into a stereo mix of a 50s Fender Harvard and 70s Fender Champ amps. Then Nick has a trick of his own to produce clarity: “If you listen again you can hear an acoustic

guitar doubled with the fuzzy electric. You still get the articulation of the pick from the dry acoustic. I thought that would be a cool sound.”

Part of making a song your own is to recognise your strengths, and Nick had a signature sound he wanted to use from the start. “I felt pretty strongly I was gonna play pedal steel. That’s kind of a Cage signature. We have a lot of slide guitar leads.” The pedal steel was recorded with the same amps as the SG. It doubles the lead melodies in the chorus along with a vintage Gibson J-45 acoustic Nick borrowed from the studio. Surprisingly for such a well realised version, the band didn’t experiment with different arrangements. “We just sort of built it and ran with it,” Nick sums up. Making the song their own was partly intentional, but it’s also a by-product of having a diverse group of musicians who are used to playing together. “Everyone brought their own contribution. You can be reverent to the

sections. I remember that being really mysterious and amazing to me, like, how do they remember all that? How do they come up with it? That really spoke to me. And then *Enter Sandman*, these are the classic riffs. When you learn to play them, you play it over and over and over whenever you get together with your buddies. I was a fan when we were starting out. We all were. Matthan [Minster, guitar/keys] used to have a legit Metallica cover band. That’s in all of us. We’ve been lucky to open for them and hang with them. Seeing that live, it’s just absolutely powerful.”

That fandom meant there was no shortage of pressure when recording for the *Blacklist*. “I was really like, ‘Kirk’s gonna hear this!’ I wanted him to think it was awesome. It’s a very surreal thing to be recording a song from a band that inspired me to play, and they’re definitely gonna hear it.”

Listening to the *Blacklist* rams home the breadth of influence The Black

## “YOU’RE NOT GOING TO OUT-ROCK METALLICA!”

### NICK BOCKRATH

song and play the parts, but if you have six guys doing their thing eventually it’s gonna sound like us.”

Nick’s passion for Metallica is obvious as he talks about the process of recreating Kirk’s parts. “It was sort of like my love letter to Kirk. I was like, ‘I’m gonna learn this solo exactly’. For a couple of days before recorded, I really dug in on it. One of the great things about Kirk’s playing is he’s a ripper but he’s also an excellent composer. A lot of his solos are melodies. This solo is really integral to the song, so I learned it all.”

The Metallica influence is not always obvious in Cage the Elephant’s songs, but it’s not for lack of passion from the band. “When I was learning to play they were one of the first bands that really spoke to me,” Nick enthuses. “I first heard *Master Of Puppets* in a skate video, and I was like, ‘Whoa, this song is incredible!’ A lot of music that I loved actually came from watching skateboard videos. I loved the guitar harmonies. Even when I was young I loved bands that went off onto instrumental

Album has had. Once you’ve heard Chris Stapleton’s *Nothing Else Matters*, it makes total sense as a country song. The Neptunes’ look at *Wherever I May Roam* suddenly makes sense of all those Phrygian pop tunes Pharrell has produced, and after you hear Australian punks The Chats tear through *Holier Than Thou* you’ll notice it was always a punk song. The Black Album’s genius was in being all things to all people without sounding like a weak compromise. Nick argues that the acoustic guitar on *The Unforgiven* is an essential part of it speaking to people.

“There’s something about acoustic guitar that brings it all back. It’s just recognisable to everyone. Electric is more stylised, you listen to it and hear a region or an era, especially with distortion. Acoustic is just very raw and in that way can communicate to anyone. Everywhere in the world, a lot of people have like an acoustic guitar lying around. I imagine a lot of people heard that song and went, ‘Damn, I wanna know how to play that.’”





## “METALLICA IS INGRAINED IN US”

Gabriela Quintero – one half of **Rodrigo y Gabriela** – on capturing the intensity of a Metallica song and developing her own technique for metal on nylon strings

### How did you come to cover *The Struggle Within* on *The Metallica Blacklist*?

Honestly, we love *The Black Album*. Any tune would have been great. They requested that we do *The Struggle Within*. We are Metallica fans. In our starting period back in Mexico City we had a metal band and we used to play Anthrax, Slayer, Metallica, Megadeth, Testament, all those bands. We had that ingrained in us. I guess when you love something so much it comes easily to figure it out. Metallica have a lot of melodies and harmonies. It's very musical, so it was easy to adapt. We started off doing the ballads like *Welcome Home (Sanitarium)*. Progressively we started to put in all the rhythms and beats.

### The riffs sound heavy when you play them even though you're using classical guitars. How do you do that?

The instruments are classical but the techniques are not. Rodrigo plays the riffs with a pick and does all the mutes like on an electric. I concentrate on the drums and the harmonies, and play the full chord, not just powerchords. Then I add the rhythmic elements, which is not classical guitar! We do it like that because then it sounds intense. It's important to capture the intensity and aggressiveness of metal.

### What have Metallica said to you about your covers?

Robert Trujillo (Metallica bassist) invited us

to play with him in Chicago. We played *Orion*, and that night he took us to House of Blues to meet James and Kirk. We were completely breathless, because to us they're heroes. James said he'd seen us on TV, and said "You guys were amazing." Sometimes when you meet your heroes you're disappointed, but not this time.

### How do you go about arranging a song in your own style?

The secret ingredient is that you really have to love the song that you're going to re-arrange. They gave us *The Struggle Within*, which is the most non-commercial track on *The Black Album*. It's got a great riff, great drumming, it's very groovy, and to translate all that without losing the beat was a challenge. There are some changes that are not obvious. I came up with an arrangement, and then Rod played the riffs with all downstrokes. Some guitarists use alternate picking but in metal that loses the power. If you watch flamenco or Mexican folk guitarists, you can see they do a lot of percussion on their instruments. I didn't know how to do that, so I came up with an idea and thought I'd figured it out. Then when we lived in Spain I watched the flamenco guys, and I played nothing close to what they were doing! So this sound made me discover another different style.





## "ST VINCENT OFFERS AN INSPIRED TAKE ON SAD BUT TRUE"

The best of the *Blacklist* – featuring Nile Rodgers-style funk guitar and tremolo-soaked country!

### ENTER SANDMAN

#### BY GHOST

Ghost's take on *Sandman* seems to be "What would we have done if we'd written this song?" They boldly scrap the entire intro, instead performing the opening verse and chorus with just piano and vocal. They've reharmonised these sections, adding chords that appear nowhere in the original, so the melody takes on a new aspect. From verse two, the band kicks into a more faithful cover, but even then there are new chords in the pre-chorus. Whichever Nameless Ghoul delivered the guitar solo should take a bow, too, because we momentarily forgot Kirk Hammett's altogether.

#### BY JUANES

While Mac DeMarco and Weezer offer largely by-the-numbers renditions of *Enter Sandman*, Colombia's Juanes has a clever arrangement.

His staccato, choppy approach sees him strategically leaving out most of the notes from the main riff, leaving just a few stuttering stabs and the signature sliding powerchords. The result is funky and effective. The pre-chorus and chorus are more conventional, but Juanes' middy overdrive tone is nothing like the infamous Black Album scoop. Similar to Cage the Elephant's take on *The Unforgiven*, Juanes's solo sticks close to Kirk's licks but sounds quite different thanks to an organic, vintage overdriven tone.

## SAD BUT TRUE

#### BY JASON ISBELL

Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit have entirely reimagined *Sad But True* as a country rocker. The sledgehammer riff gets the boot, replaced by slide guitars, and the groove is a double-time train beat. The melody remains largely faithful to the original except where Isbell sings the title, which takes liberties to fit the style. You might doubt whether all

this will work, but it's one of those covers that sounds like the song could have been written this way. We'd have liked to hear more of Isbell's chops in the instrumental section, but the song doesn't need it.

#### BY ROYAL BLOOD

By contrast Royal Blood stick close to Metallica's template in their *Sad But True*. Mike Kerr's use of octave effects mean that the trill on the intro is harmonised, which sounds awesome. There are also some cool whammy effects and the usual Royal Blood wall of sound. Kerr sticks largely to single notes though, because they work better on his bass, but at times we do miss the crunch of powerchords. The angular, Whammy-pedal fuelled solo works perfectly though. Royal Blood are tight as hell, and at times this grooves – dare we say it? – even harder than the original.

#### BY ST. VINCENT

Who would've predicted *Sad But True* would be a bottomless mine of potential reinterpretations? Not us, but St. Vincent offers an inspired take unlike any of the other versions. Her dark, spare approach has echoes of Depeche Mode and a brooding atmosphere. With so much electronic instrumentation, the lyric sounds robotic and chilling. Surprisingly, this guitar solo is the closest to Kirk's original, but it sounds totally different in this context. The guitar has an organic and gritty neck pickup tone that sounds super fresh amid all the digital sounds, almost like hearing SRV on David Bowie's *Let's Dance* album.



# NOTHING ELSE MATTERS

BY CHRIS STAPLETON

The antithesis of Mac DeMarco's identikit take on *Sandman*, Stapleton only nods towards Metallica's original for this tremolo-soaked country take. He eschews the famous intro and takes liberties with both melody and chords, leaving only the skeleton of the original track. His guitar sound will have you checking your bank balance to see about buying his signature amp, though, especially when it gets dirty for the choruses. Those sections are delivered more closely to the original, because some things are sacred. It's a good job that guitar sounds so good, because the last three minutes of this version are one epic guitar solo.

# HOLIER THAN THOU

BY BIFFY CLYRO

Biffy's synth-soaked approach sees the guitars supplying a series of well-judged stabs. Where the original is full-throttle riot of anger, this is a world of dynamic contrasts, dropping to pianissimo keys before an assault of dissonant distorted guitars in the middle-8. While Simon Neil never conjures James Hetfield's rage, it's an atmospheric and emotional version and it's cool hearing these riffs delivered with single coil tones. After 3:30, a sea of feedback explodes into a fuzzy, doomy half-time outro. Here Biffy are not channelling Metallica so much as Sabbath, and it's fascinating to hear one pioneering metal band reimagined in the style of another.

# DON'T TREAD ON ME

BY VOLBEAT

At first listen, this sounds much as you'd expect a Volbeat Metallica cover to sound. Then you realise that by some clever sleight of hand, they've made this slow, grinding shuffle into an anthem. The tempo's upped slightly, there's a melodic keyboard counter melody in the chorus, and some of the crunchier guitar riffs are evened out into steady powerchords. These small changes add up to a pumping feelgood rocker. Rob Caggiano breaks out *all* the chops for his solo, and in deference to Hammett, he delivers it all with a wah pedal.



# THE GOD THAT FAILED

BY IDLES

It takes some detective work to discover what, apart from the lyrics, IDLES have actually retained from the Metallica version. Metallica's is 76 bpm; IDLES play it at 215. The guitar riff bares little resemblance to any of James', and the vocal melody is binned in favour of Joe Talbot's signature shouted delivery. It has all the energy, passion, creativity and anger we've come to expect of IDLES, but this is better thought of as a tribute than a cover. It's cool, but Talbot is more convincing when he's spitting his own lyrics.

# THROUGH THE NEVER

BY THE HU

Now this is cool. If you haven't heard The Hu's combination of metal and traditional Mongolian folk instrumentation before, a reimagined Metallica track is a great place to start. The drums and guitars have all the heaviness of the original, but the folk instruments add atmosphere all the time. Somehow it's mixed so everything is clearly audible. There are occasional dynamic drops to acoustic instruments only, so when the rhythm section kicks back in it's thunderous. A violin takes the guitar solo with aplomb. We didn't know we needed this, but we're not sure we can go back now.

# DON'T TREAD ON ELSE MATTERS

BY SEBASTIAN

French musician/remixer SebastiAn has previously rewrought artists like Daft Punk, Beastie Boys, and Bloc Party. This inspired remix sees Hetfield's original *Don't Tread On Me* vocal placed over Nile Rodgers-style funk guitar and later vintage funk horns. It works ridiculously well, although it sounds happier than anything from the Black Album ever should. The shift to *Nothing Else Matters* at the halfway point is fairly abrupt, and we never get the mash-up the title seems to promise. Still, the horns, strings and drum loops edit of Metallica's biggest ballad is a total success.



Words Johnny Scaramanga

# WE GOT YOU COVERED

Inspired by The Metallica Blacklist and more, TG presents ten tips for successful cover versions

## CHANGE THE KEY TO FIT THE VOCAL

Making the singer sound good is job #1. No one wants to hear the singer straining, or mumbling without reaching the powerful part of their range. It's an art, though, because every key has its own flavour. Find a place where the song sounds right *and* the vocals are strong.

## THE CHORDS ARE NOT SACRED, BUT THE MELODY IS

Jazzier Miles Davis pioneered reharmonisation, changing the chords under classic songs to cast new light on them. Ghost did it with *Enter Sandman*. As long as the strongest notes in the melody appear somewhere in your chord, it'll work. Leave the vocal melody intact though, or it'll just be a different song.

## TRY DOUBLE-TIME OR HALF-TIME FEEL

Make any song feel radically different by doubling or halving the speed of the drums while leaving everything else the same. Thrash classics become deep grooves, and doomy Sabbath riffs sound like uptempo romps. This is part of how Jason Isbell made *Sad But True* into a country barnstormer.

## MESS WITH THE TIME SIGNATURE

If the original has a weird time

signature, you can make it accessible by putting it into 4/4, as U2 and Limp Bizkit did with their versions of the *Mission Impossible* theme (originally in 5/4). If you're brave, you could put a 4/4 groove into odd time – see Al Di Meola's warped take on Steely Dan's *Aja*.

## OLD RIFF ON A NEW INSTRUMENT - NEW SOUND

When Otis Redding gave the Rolling Stones' *Satisfaction* riff to his horn section, he turned a rock classic into a soul tune. Funk basslines on guitar make great RHCP or Extreme riffs; piano arpeggios can become neo-classical workouts – see, er, Yngwie Malmsteen's assault on Abba's *Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)*.

## SOMETIMES A NEW GUITAR TONE IS ENOUGH

Weezer's *Blacklist* version of *Enter Sandman* largely plays things pretty close to the Metallica playbook, but with Rivers Cuomo's distinctive fuzz tone. Guitar tone can be a genre marker all by itself. Try playing The Police's *Every Breath You Take* with a high gain sound if you doubt this.

## RIFFS ARE OPTIONAL

It might be blasphemy, but Sheryl Crow left out Slash's iconic intro when she covered *Sweet Child O' Mine*, and Jason Isbell ditched the riff to *Sad But True*.

If those versions can work, anything can. We await your versions of AC/DC hits with the riffs left out...

## INVERT THE HEAVINESS

Whether it's the Ramones turning *Wonderful World* into a punk belter or Apocalyptica's cello interpretations of Metallica, taking songs to the opposite end of the heaviness spectrum makes you look like a genius. And if critics don't love your sensitive ukulele approach to *Raining Blood*, at least you'll probably end up soundtracking a supermarket commercial.

## TUNE DOWN

Whether subtle or extreme, downtuning is a reliable way to add heaviness. Guns N' Roses gave *Live And Let Die* an edge by tuning down a semitone, while Periphery gave Michael Jackson's *Black Or White* the full djent treatment. Still looking for the right key? It might just be a twist of your guitar's machineheads away.

## THE GUITAR SOLO

With most of your arrangement in place, the big question: do you duplicate that classic solo, or (gulp!) attempt to play something better? We suggest carving your own path. You'll never play *Bohemian Rhapsody*'s break better than Brian May, but you can be the best version of you in the world.

**YOU'LL NEVER PLAY *BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY* BETTER THAN BRIAN MAY, BUT YOU CAN BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOU...**





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# AC/DC T.N.T.

Learn the iconic riffs,  
driving feel and blistering  
lead work on this dynamite  
AC/DC classic



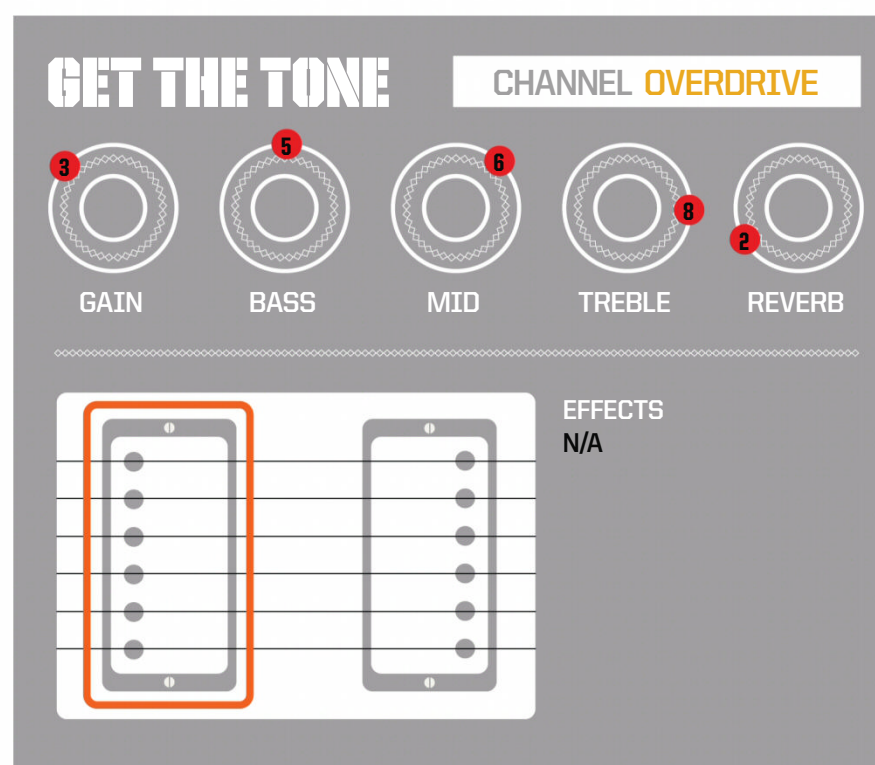
**T**his month's classic song is the title track of AC/DC's second studio album in Australia and was included on their first international release, *High Voltage*. One of the band's most popular songs, *T.N.T.* features trademark 'DC open chords and rock 'n' roll riffs from guitarists Angus and Malcolm Young, with a stinging solo courtesy of the former.

Rhythm guitar-wise, this is an easy song to play. It's all about rock-solid timing delivered with all the attitude you can muster – so make sure to dig in and rock out! Angus' solo features a raft of rapidfire 16th-note licks that'll require a little more of your practice time though! We've outlined the scale shapes below, suffice to say that Angus himself rarely plays a note for note copy of the recording. Improvising around the shapes with your own ideas is fine.

Our transcription and audio track feature a performance of all the rhythm guitar, fills and lead work from AC/DC's original recording. In terms of pitch, the original track is slightly off key, but we've recorded our backing track at concert pitch for your convenience.

## GET THE SOUND

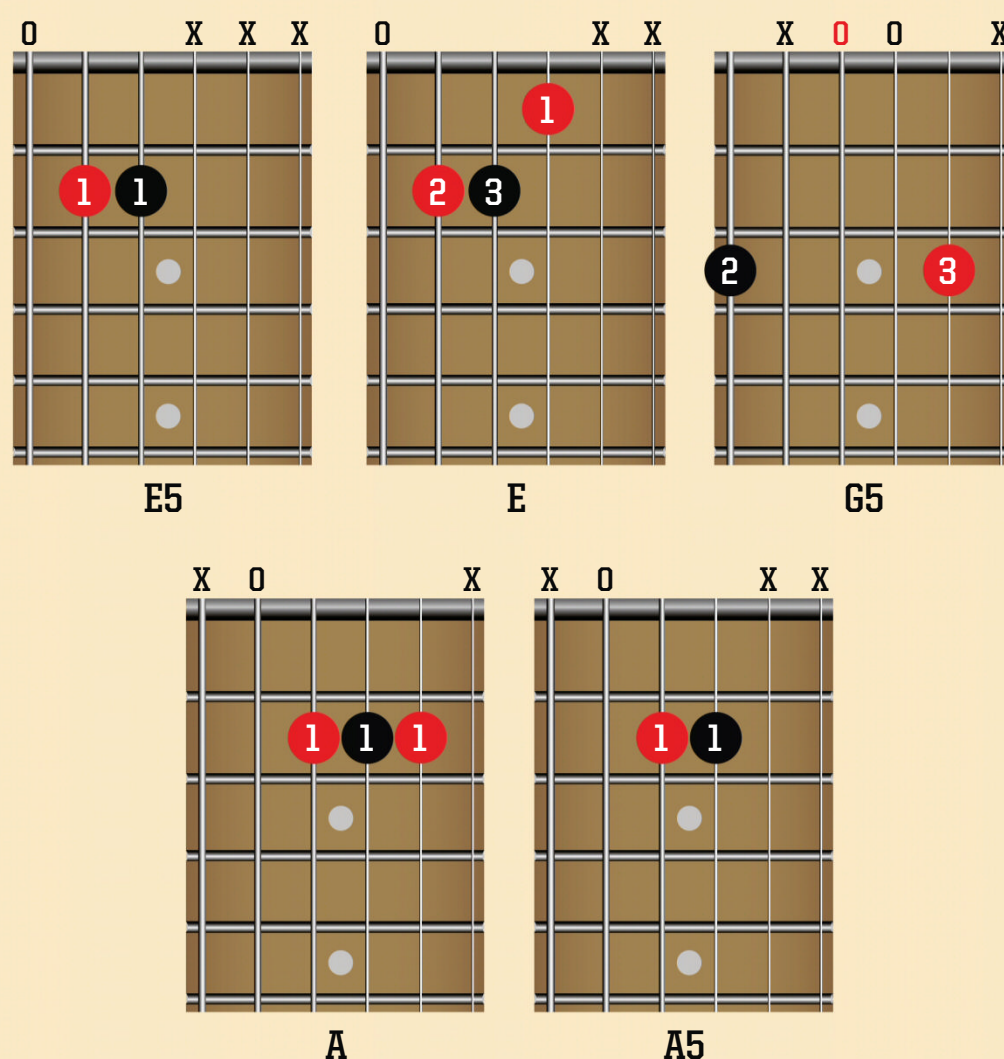
Everything you need to know before playing 'T.N.T.'



**A**ngus and Malcolm Young's guitar tones are pure, hard rock through and through. A Marshall style amp is an essential ingredient as are Malcolm's Gretsch G6131 and Angus' Gibson SG guitars with their bridge pickups selected. For Angus' parts, ideally, turn your amp up as loud as it goes and hit the strings like you mean it and consider using an overdrive or booster for the solo. Playing at neighbour-friendly levels? You may need to raise your amp's gain to generate the equivalent sustain of running the amp at full tilt. If you're playing the rhythm guitar parts, note that Malcolm's parts are surprisingly clean, so keep the gain low.

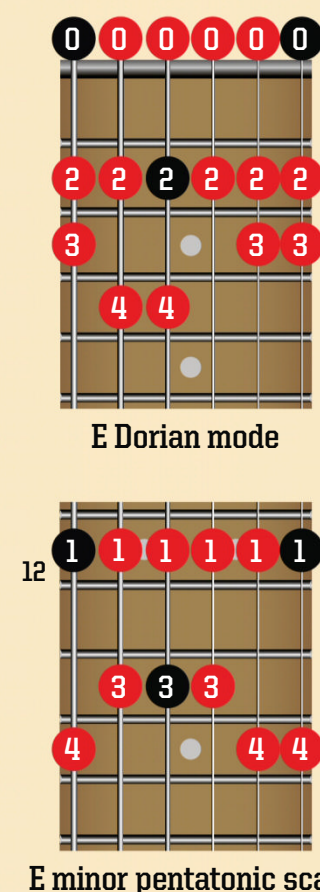
## CHORDS

**T**.N.T. is basically a three-chord trick. The three key chords are E, G and A and the order in which these are played is shuffled around. Sometimes the chords are abbreviated to powerchords (E5, G5 and A5). It's worth noting the G5 has no note played on the fifth string. If you want to jam along to the outro, simply start with the E5 shape and move it up one fret at a time. Just don't play any open strings.



## SCALES

**Y**ou can solo over any section of the song fairly safely using the E minor pentatonic scale. The guitar solo is beautifully constructed, based mainly around the trusty minor pentatonic shape shown here. We've included an open position fingering for the E Dorian mode as Angus plays his opening descending run using this. These fingerings will also work at the 12th fret should you wish to experiment with expanding on the original solo.





**AC/DC**  
**T.N.T.**

**T.N.T.**  
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## AC/DC T.N.T. Intro

♩=126  
E<sup>5</sup>

**TAB**

2  
2  
0

The intro is simply one long E5 powerchord played with a hard down-strum. Listen out for the drums to ensure you're in time when you reach in the next section.

## AC/DC T.N.T. Main Riff

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff is in bass clef. The score is divided into two measures, each with a 0:08 time stamp. The guitar staff features chords E, G<sup>5</sup>, A, and A<sup>5</sup>, with a 1/4 note rhythm. The bass staff features a similar sequence of chords and notes, with a 1/4 note rhythm. The guitar staff also includes a 1/4 note rhythm. The bass staff includes a 1/4 note rhythm. The guitar staff includes a 1/4 note rhythm. The bass staff includes a 1/4 note rhythm.

The iconic guitar riff uses E, G5 and A chords and will sound best if played exclusively with downstrokes. The low G notes are bent slightly sharp to add that bluesy flavour.

**AC/DC T.N.T. Verse 1 & 2**

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel, specifically the guitar and bass parts. The score is presented in two systems, each with a standard musical staff and a corresponding guitar/bass tablature (TAB) staff.

**System 1 (Measures 1-12):**

- Staff 1 (Guitar):** The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody begins with a half note E4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4. This is followed by a measure with a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F#4. The melody continues with a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C4. The final measure of the system shows a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note G3.
- Staff 2 (Bass):** The bass line starts with a half note E2, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G2, and a quarter note A2. This is followed by a measure with a quarter note A2, a quarter note G2, and a quarter note F#2. The bass continues with a quarter note E2, a quarter note D2, and a quarter note C2. The final measure of the system shows a quarter note B1, a quarter note A1, and a quarter note G1.
- Chord Labels:** Above the staff, chords are labeled: E, G5, A, A5, E, G5, A, A5, E.
- Tablature:** The TAB staff shows fret numbers for each string. For the guitar, the strings are numbered 1 to 6 from bottom to top. For the bass, the strings are numbered 1 to 4 from bottom to top. The TAB for the guitar shows: Measure 1: E4 (4th fret, 1st string), G4 (2nd fret, 2nd string), A4 (2nd fret, 3rd string). Measure 2: A4 (2nd fret, 3rd string), G4 (2nd fret, 2nd string), F#4 (4th fret, 1st string). Measure 3: E4 (4th fret, 1st string), D4 (2nd fret, 2nd string), C4 (3rd fret, 3rd string). Measure 4: B3 (1st fret, 4th string), A3 (2nd fret, 5th string), G3 (3rd fret, 6th string).

**System 2 (Measures 13-15):**

- Staff 1 (Guitar):** The melody continues with a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note G3. This is followed by a measure with a quarter note F#3, a quarter note E3, and a quarter note D3. The final measure of the system shows a quarter note C3, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note A2.
- Staff 2 (Bass):** The bass line continues with a quarter note B1, a quarter note A1, and a quarter note G1. This is followed by a measure with a quarter note F#1, a quarter note E1, and a quarter note D1. The final measure of the system shows a quarter note C1, a quarter note B0, and a quarter note A0.
- Chord Labels:** Above the staff, chords are labeled: E, G5, A.
- Tablature:** The TAB staff shows fret numbers for each string. For the guitar, the strings are numbered 1 to 6 from bottom to top. For the bass, the strings are numbered 1 to 4 from bottom to top. The TAB for the guitar shows: Measure 5: B3 (1st fret, 4th string), A3 (2nd fret, 5th string), G3 (3rd fret, 6th string). Measure 6: F#3 (1st fret, 4th string), E3 (2nd fret, 5th string), D3 (3rd fret, 6th string). Measure 7: C3 (3rd fret, 6th string), B2 (2nd fret, 5th string), A2 (2nd fret, 4th string).

The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The guitar part is written in standard notation, and the bass part is written in standard notation. The tablature is written in a simplified format, using numbers 1-6 for the guitar and 1-4 for the bass. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 1-12 and the second system containing measures 13-15.

The verse uses the same chord pattern and techniques as the riff. Just be ready to hit the very last A chord on the offbeat then hold it for two full bars.



## AC/DC T.N.T. Chorus 1

0:55

1

6

10

The chorus is easy to play as it recycles the three chords from the verse - this time played bang on the beat, descending in pitch. Again downstrokes are the way forward. Angus hits a wailing string bend in bar 9. Bend this up to pitch and then let it gradually go flat over the course of three bars.

## AC/DC T.N.T. Chorus 2

1:54

1

6

There's very little difference between chorus 1 and chorus 2 - just the string bend that lasts for one bar instead of three this time.



AC/DC T.N.T. Solo

The E minor pentatonic scale forms the framework of Angus' solo, though the opening descending run does include F# and C# notes from the E Dorian mode. The runs are fairly easy to play once under the fingers, but the tempo is reasonably quick, so slow, methodical practice is recommended. The string bend in bar 7 acts as a climax to the solo. Angus's finger vibrato style is fast and furious here so don't be afraid to dig in!

AC/DC T.N.T. Chorus 3

This time the chorus is a full 16 bars long, cycling through the A-G5-E chord progression, but without the string bend this time.



## AC/DC T.N.T. Outro

3:00

1

5

9

Here Angus plays some striking two-note unison bends (Malcolm plays stinging chords in between each bend). Simply bend the note up on the third string until it is in tune with the fretted note on the second string. From bar 8 there is ad libbed string noise created by scrubbing the strings in a random rhythm with the pick hand while your fret hand lightly touches the strings.



# NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP

Take your techniques to a new level as TG and Rockschoool unpick Newton's hypnotic cut from 2007's *Hand Built By Robots*

**T**rip-hop group Massive Attack conceived *Teardrop* with a view to Madonna contributing vocals, but it was Elizabeth Fraser of the Cocteau Twins whose astonishing performance made the cut. The song's widespread popularity inspired many cover versions, but singer/songwriter Newton Faulkner brings us percussive wizardry, combining the original harpsichord riff, bassline and catchy rhythms into a solo guitar part.

First, aim for a clear tone with the sparse bass notes and drone in bars 1-22, making sure that both strings are free to ring clearly. The 'drum' groove is played by striking the guitar body with your pick hand. Experiment with this to achieve a kick drum and cross stick effect. Then, extend your thumb to strike the bass notes at the same time as the heel of the hand hitting the guitar body, before bringing in the left hand hammer-ons and pull-offs.



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## TEARDROP

Words and Music by Elizabeth Fraser, Robert Del Naja, Grantley Marshall and Andrew Vowles  
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## NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP

TRACKS 36-37

$\text{♩} = 75$

*mp*

**TAB**

1

Tune guitar down a further semitone to match audio

**TAB**

5





**FULL TRACK + BACKING (TRACKS 36-37)**  
This song comes with a full demo track and a backing track (minus guitar) on your CD. Simply insert the disc in your player, press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

## NEWTON FAULKNER / TEARDROP

### NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP

TRACKS 36-37

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Treble clef, key of D major (two sharps). Measure 9: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 10: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 11: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 12: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 9: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 10: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 11: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 12: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 9: 0, 0, 0. Measure 10: 0, 0, 0. Measure 11: 0, 0, 0. Measure 12: 0, 0, 0.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 13: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 14: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 15: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 16: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 13: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 14: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 15: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 16: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 13: 0, 0, 0. Measure 14: 0, 0, 0. Measure 15: 0, 0, 0. Measure 16: 0, 0, 0.

Musical notation for measures 17-20. Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 17: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 18: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 19: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 20: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 17: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 18: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 19: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 20: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 17: 0, 0, 0. Measure 18: 0, 0, 0. Measure 19: 0, 0, 0. Measure 20: 0, 0, 0.

Musical notation for measures 21-24. Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 21: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 22: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 23: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 24: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 21: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 22: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 23: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 24: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 21: 0, 0, 0. Measure 22: 0, 0, 0. Measure 23: 0, 0, 0. Measure 24: 0, 0, 0.

Fig. 1

Percussive notation for measures 25-28. Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 25: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 26: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 27: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 28: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 25: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 26: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 27: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 28: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 25: 0, 0, 0. Measure 26: 0, 0, 0. Measure 27: 0, 0, 0. Measure 28: 0, 0, 0.

Percussive notation:  
H = strike body of guitar above sound hole with **heel** of the hand  
F = percussive hit with right hand **fingers** below sound hole

LH hammer-ons;  
no picking...

Musical notation for measures 29-32. Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 29: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 30: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 31: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Measure 32: D4 (open), A4 (open), D5 (open). Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 29: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 30: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 31: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Measure 32: D2 (open), A2 (open), D3 (open). Tablature: Measure 29: 0, 0, 0. Measure 30: 0, 0, 0. Measure 31: 0, 0, 0. Measure 32: 0, 0, 0.

Continue Fig. 1

sim.

† RH strikes bass note on 1st beat of Fig. 1



31

35

39

43

47

51

LH hammer-ons; no picking...

let ring, hold hand position... w/ Fig. 1



NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP

TRACKS 36-37

Musical notation system 1 (Measures 55-58). The system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes, with a fermata over the final measure. The bass staff shows a single bass line with a forte dynamic marking (*f*) and a fermata over the final measure. The guitar tablature (TAB) is shown below the bass staff, with fret numbers 0, 7, and 5 indicated for the first and second strings.

Musical notation system 2 (Measures 59-62). The system continues the melody from the previous system, with a fermata over the final measure. The bass staff shows a single bass line with a fermata over the final measure. The guitar tablature (TAB) is shown below the bass staff, with fret numbers 0, 7, and 5 indicated for the first and second strings.

Musical notation system 3 (Measures 63-66). The system continues the melody from the previous system, with a fermata over the final measure. The bass staff shows a single bass line with a fermata over the final measure. The guitar tablature (TAB) is shown below the bass staff, with fret numbers 0, 7, and 5 indicated for the first and second strings.

Musical notation system 4 (Measures 67-70). The system continues the melody from the previous system, with a fermata over the final measure. The bass staff shows a single bass line with a fermata over the final measure. The guitar tablature (TAB) is shown below the bass staff, with fret numbers 0, 7, and 5 indicated for the first and second strings.

Musical notation system 5 (Measures 71-74). The system continues the melody from the previous system, with a fermata over the final measure. The bass staff shows a single bass line with a fermata over the final measure. The guitar tablature (TAB) is shown below the bass staff, with fret numbers 0, 7, and 5 indicated for the first and second strings.



75

TAB

[7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7 | [7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7

79

TAB

[7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7 | [7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7

83

TAB

[7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7 | [7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7

87

TAB

[7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7 | [7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7

91

*mp*

TAB

[7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7 | [7] 0 7 0 | 5 0 5 7



NEWTON FAULKNER TEARDROP

TRACKS 36-37

95

99

103

107

This track is a coordination workout! Nailing the parts will involve figuring out how the picking hand percussive effects slot together with the fretting hand. Don't rush into playing everything at once; go as slowly as you need to teach your brain the mechanics of putting it all together. Once you can play the parts accurately and repeat them, you are on to a winner!



## OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

# GREEN DAY WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS

Learn the punk-tastic trio's masterpiece from 2004's rock opera *American Idiot*

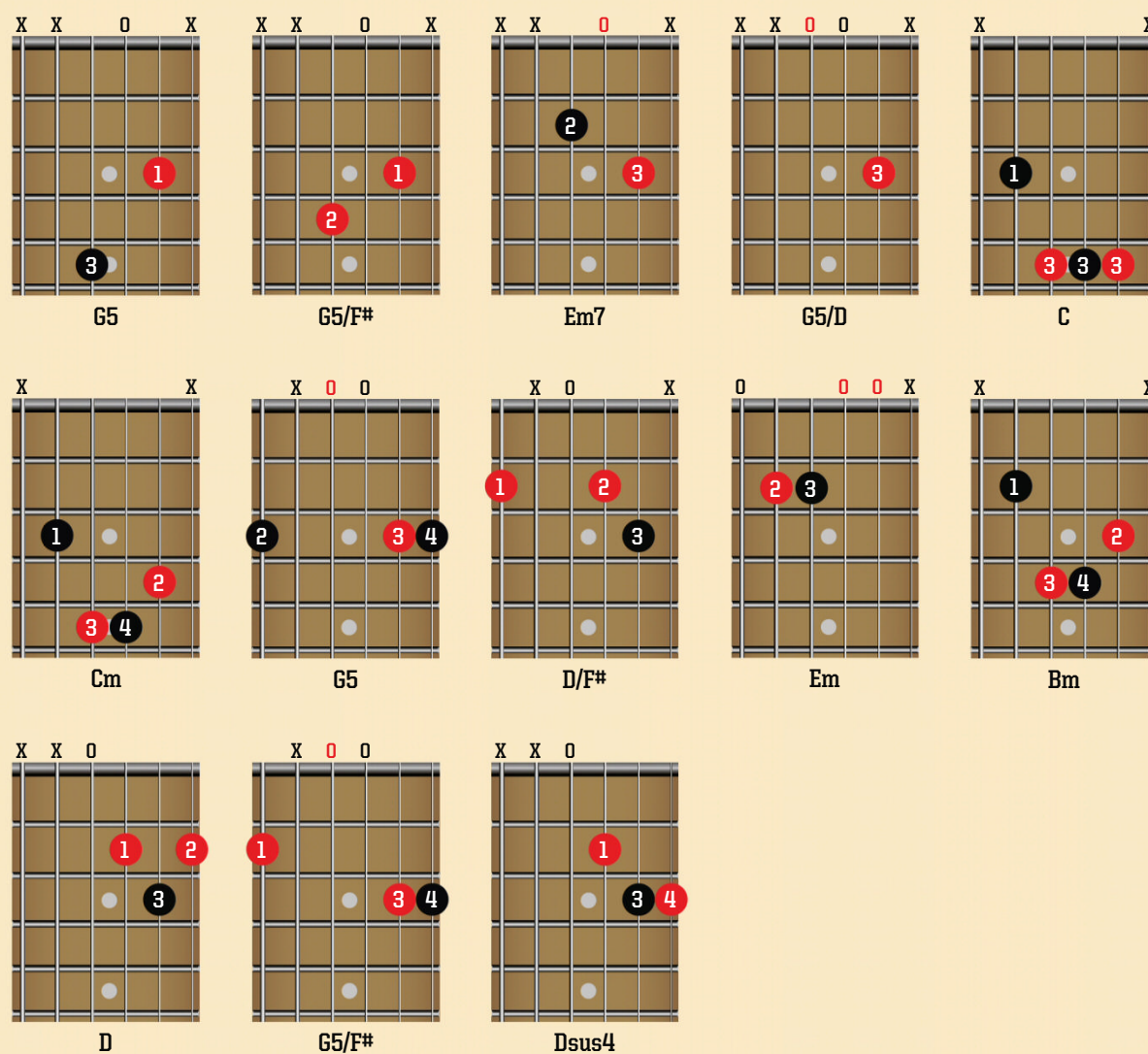
**G**reen Day have always been first and foremost a punk band, but it's also true that the spiky-haired three-piece don't always fit within the genre's confines. 2004's *Wake Me Up When September Ends* is a case in point, showcasing the band's more progressive songwriting skills, bordering as it does on epic rock song territory: the unaccompanied acoustic guitar intro that builds into wall-to-wall distortion and 'big chord' sounds, picking up some additional instrumentation en-route.

Though not too challenging to play, there are still a few potential stumbling blocks here. First of all, there are a full 13 chord shapes to memorise – so it's no three-chord trick. These shapes broadly fit into three categories: arpeggios that make up the verse, barre chords, and open chords, with the arpeggios needing the most accurate delivery. Finally, make sure to follow the songsheet carefully as it's easy to get lost. There are several verses (some of which are repeated) plus a couple of breakdowns to negotiate.



## CHORDS

**W**ake Me Up When September Ends is a relatively simple song but there are a full 13 shapes to learn. The descending pattern that opens the verse should help you memorise a few, and the remainder are commonplace open and barre shapes.



**WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS**  
Words and Music by Billie Joe Armstrong, Frank E. Wright III and Michael Pritchard  
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**BACKING TRACK (TRACK 38)**

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

**SONGSHEET**

# Wake Me Up When September Ends

**Intro**

G5 / / / x4

**Verse 1**

G5 G5/F#  
Summer has come and passed  
Em7 G5/D  
The innocent can never last

C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends

**Verse 2**

G5 G5/F#  
Like my father's come to pass  
Em7 G5/D  
Seven years has gone so fast  
C Cm G5 D/F#  
Wake me up when September ends

**Chorus**

Em Bm  
Here comes the rain again  
C G5 D/F#  
Falling from the stars  
Em Bm  
Drenched in my pain again  
C D  
Becoming who we are

**Verse 3**

G5 G5/F#  
As my memory rests

Em7

G5/D

But never forgets what I lost

C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends

**Breakdown 1**

G5 / / / x6

**Verse 4**

G5 G5/F#  
Summer has come and passed  
Em7 G5/D  
The innocent can never last

C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends

**Verse 5**

G5 G5/F#  
Ring out the bells again  
Em7 G5/D  
Like we did when spring began  
C Cm G5 G/F#  
Wake me up when September ends

**Repeat chorus****Verse 6**

G5 G5/F#  
As my memory rests  
Em7 G5/D  
But never forgets what I lost  
C Cm G5 G/F#  
Wake me up when September ends

**Solo**

Em / / / Bm / / /  
C / / / G5 / G/F# /  
Em / / / Bm / / /  
C / / / Dsus4 / / /  
D / / / Dsus4 / / / D / / /

**Breakdown 2**

G5 / / / x4

**Verse 7**

G5 G5/F#  
Summer has come and passed  
Em7 G5/D  
The innocent can never last  
C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends

**Verse 8**

G5 G5/F#  
Like my father's come to pass  
Em7 G5/D  
Twenty years has gone so fast  
C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends  
C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends  
C Cm G5  
Wake me up when September ends

**GREEN DAY WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS Verse 1****TRACK 38**

♩=105

G<sup>5</sup> G<sup>5</sup>/F# Em<sup>7</sup> G<sup>5</sup>/D

0:09 let ring throughout

TAB

1

C Cm G<sup>5</sup>

TAB

5

The rich, ringing sound of open strings is key here. Avoid accidentally muting these crucial notes by ensuring you fret each chord right on the tips of your fingers. Bars 5 and 6 are closed position barre chords with no open strings so it's doubly important to fret cleanly to keep the smooth ringing sound going.



# 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.

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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!

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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



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



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Boss' best-loved metal pedal gets the Waza Craft treatment





# START ME UP!

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

## FENDER CORY WONG SIGNATURE STRATOCASTER

**1** This is looking like a very promising Strat indeed; the Sapphire Blue transparent nitro finish pays homage to the Vulfpeck member's Highway One workhorse but offers a slightly thinner body than usual, and features a set of his Seymour Duncan Clean Machine single-coils. The Ultra series' 10-14" fretboard radius features here with a push/pull pot on Tone 2 that bypasses the 5-way switch and defaults to position 4 – Wong's favourite place. **£2,249, [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)**

## IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR PEDALS

**2** Hot on the heels of Universal Audio's UAX effects, IK Multimedia is channeling its own acclaimed AmpliTube 5 modelling into guitar pedals with the aim to align it with a boutique hardware experience. The X-TIME delay, X-SPACE reverb, X-VIBE modulation and X-DRIVE distortion each offer 16 onboard effects derived from AmpliTube, with the delay and reverb hosting newly-designed algorithms, too. **£299.99, [www.ikmultimedia.com](http://www.ikmultimedia.com)**

## BOSS EV-1-WL

**3** A wireless Bluetooth expression pedal compatible with any device that can receive Control (CC) messages, the EV-1-WL's potential for players is wide open. In addition to Boss's Waza-Air modelling amps, any hardware or music application with Bluetooth MIDI connectivity is potentially open for expression pedal control. You can also connect via wired USB or MIDI TRS, and it's compatible for up to two of the company's FS-series footswitches to build your own wireless pedalboard. **£149.99, [www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)**

## FENDER DUAL PUGILIST DISTORTION AND DUAL MARINE LAYER REVERB

**4** Fender's effects range has been a real success story that continues with these new versions of the original launch reverb and overdrive. The Pugilist may be called 'Dual' but has three stacking modes now; Mute, Series and Parallel with a newly-designed two-band master shelving EQ. The Reverb offers three types (room, hall and modulated) that you can assign to the pedal's two channels. **£179, £194, [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)**

## HARLEY BENTON EX84 MODERN

**5** Harley Benton's EX84 Modern has been a big seller already on Black and Vintage White, now Benton Blue and Shell Pink join the spiky parade with an impressive spec for the prices; mahogany body and neck, ebony fretboard, Grover locking tuners and Graph Tech Tusq nut. There's a nice design touch with the recess for the jack input and pickup options are Roswell humbuckers or a Metallica-esque pairing EMG active 60 and 81. **£406.80, £304.80, [www.harleybenton.com](http://www.harleybenton.com)**





Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

# FENDER NOVENTA SERIES

Single coils, hardware and electronic tweaks offer a different take on classic Fender shapes. Time for something a bit different?





The P-90-style pickup is the sometimes-forgotten middle ground between single coil spike and prime beef of a humbucker, joining the likes of the mini-humbucker as the 'in-between' tone. Once Seth Lover came up with his dual-coil design, it reigned supreme as the go-to pickup for electrics made by Gibson. This left the soapbar finding its home in Junior and Special models, at the same time cementing its place as a versatile magnet. One side of this split personality is a snarling, rowdy gobsh\*te, prototyping punk with its association with garage rock. The other lends itself to clean and overdriven sounds beautifully too, making it a great choice as an all-rounder for clean to dirty rock sounds.

Why the history lesson, and aren't these Fenders? Take a look at the limited edition Noventa series, and you'll notice a few changes. For 2021, Fender has outfitted its Strat, Tele and Jazzmaster outlines with its Noventa pickups. Noventa means '90' in Spanish, giving us a clue to what this is all about. Throw in some additional tweaks unique to each model, and what we have before us potentially present some reimagined, workhorse rock machines.



## WE ARE THE MODS!

First up is the Noventa Stratocaster, which at a glance offers us the familiar shape of a Strat with P-90 pickups. There's the alder body in the classic doublecut silhouette, with a 21-fret maple neck. To traditionalists, that's where the Strat definition will end. It's available in the Daphne Blue of our review model or Surf Green, with both options fitted with a maple fingerboard. However, if Fender's 'classic' colours aren't what you're looking for, it's also available in the more contemporary Crimson Red Transparent, but the fingerboard switches to Pau Ferro – a combination that to us echoes the visuals of Jimmy Eat World's Jim Adkins' signature Telecaster, but in Strat form.

That's not all, though, as there are some pretty major staple spec changes here, too. Gone is the Strat's vibrato, in favour of a six-saddle hardtail bridge, and you'll have already noticed that this Strat only has two pickups. This means that the Strat's traditional five-way selector has been replaced by a three-position blade, and sticking with the stripped-back theme, you get one volume and one tone control.

As with the Strat, the Noventa Telecaster isn't the one your grandad Keef knows and loves. But before you get all sniffy about that lone bridge pickup, let's take a moment to consider that the Telecaster's origins lie in the single-pickup Esquire, making this a more traditional guitar than you might first think! Here though, that revered bridge pickup is swapped for the Noventa model. Fender has

## THESE ARE NOT THE STRAT AND TELE YOUR GRANDAD KEEF KNOWS AND LOVES

also trimmed the Tele's scratchplate, and produced a 'cut' telecaster bridge featuring three brass saddles. Once again, there are two maple 'board versions of the Noventa Tele – Fiesta Red and Vintage Blonde, plus an evergreen 2-Color Sunburst with a Pau Ferro fingerboard. With just the one pickup, everything is kept simple with no switch (obviously), and a regular Telecaster volume and tone circuit.

## THE SOUNDS

This isn't a comparison between the two guitars, we're not pitting them against each other, but that said there are a number of similarities on offer, most apparent in that

neck. It's clear that Fender has aimed straight down the middle with the Noventas: the C-shape profile isn't likely to offend anyone, nor is it a departure from what you might be expecting from a Fender in 2021. It's Classic Coke and it just works. Throw in the traditional scale length and medium-sized radius and you know exactly what you're getting.

There's no right or wrong when it comes to neck finishes, but if, like us you prefer yours not to be heavily lacquered-up, you'll be glad to hear that all Noventa models are finished in a satin seal, with the gloss applied only to the headstock. This combines with the rest of the neck to keep things smooth and easy, although (possibly just owing to a difference in strings) moving across the neck of the Strat feels a little slinkier than on the Tele.

Weight-wise, it's a similar story with both models coming in at around 7lbs, but the Telecaster feels more 'alive' acoustically when we take it out of the box – the type of string resonance you can feel as well as hear from a quick tap of the neck and a few strums.

This translates with both guitars plugged in, too, with the Tele exhibiting a fuller, almost wider output with more body and greater sustain. But of course, it comes with a catch – whatever the tone, it's coming from the bridge position only. This means that where the Tele is concerned, you'll need to live with a set-and-forget bridge sound, or hover around the volume and tone controls. There's a lot of mileage in the latter, with the Noventa's full-bore punch and bite mellowing to a spongier, rounder tone as you roll-back the controls, but a neck pickup this is not, and there's not really any way around that!

The Strat is voiced very similarly, at least in the bridge – not surprising given that the construction of both guitars is largely identical. Under some medium gain, the bridge position Noventa pickups give you a mid-heavy, slightly spikey-but-not-too-abrasive tone that we can see covering a lot of blues/indie/classic rock ground on their own. Flip to that neck pickup though, and it's begging for a clean setting. Like a traditional neck single coil you get the hollow sound of plenty of bass and treble, but here it's magnified and free of any mud. Spanky, snappy, funky clean tones are where we spent most of our time on the Strat neck pickup, because it makes it so addictive. You can also dirty things up a bit, drop the tone a little and yield yourself some beautiful bluesy lead tones. Then there's the middle position, which offers a good balance between the full-bodied bass of the neck, while blending in some more of that bridge punch. If versatility is what you need, the Strat's got your back.









# CONCLUSION

We started this review expecting to see a pair of upper-mid-range workhorse guitars from Fender, and just like the feel of each, we weren't left with any major surprises when we picked them up. Traditionalists will prefer a vibrato and the triple pickup/five-position switching they're used to from a Stratocaster, and the

Telecaster's lack of that famous pickup might be a roadblock from the get-go for those of a similar mindset. But guess what? At the time of writing, Fender produces no fewer than 51 other Strats and 43 Telecaster models to choose from, and that's before we consider Squier. The Noventa range offers some stripped back, slightly different takes on the base

configuration of some classic guitars. The Tele is, to us, approaching LP Jr territory for people who want the same level of simplicity in a Fender format, while the Strat gives you nearly as much versatility as normal, with arguably enhanced tuning stability and a less fussy control circuit. It's meat 'n potatoes, but done nicely, and who doesn't like that?

## FENDER NOVENTA STRATOCASTER

£849



### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Alder
- NECK:** Maple
- SCALE:** 25.5"
- FINGERBOARD:** Maple or Pau Ferro
- FRETS:** 21
- PICKUPS:** 2x Noventa singlecoils
- CONTROLS:** 1x volume, 1x tone
- FINISH:** Daphne Blue (pictured), Surf Green, Crimson Red, Transparent
- CONTACT:** Fender, [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

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

## FENDER NOVENTA TELECASTER

£799



### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Alder
- NECK:** Maple
- SCALE:** 25.5"
- FINGERBOARD:** Maple or Pau Ferro
- FRETS:** 21
- PICKUPS:** 1x Noventa singlecoil
- CONTROLS:** 1x volume, 1x tone
- FINISH:** Vintage Blonde, Fiesta Red, 2-Color Sunburst
- CONTACT:** Fender, [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

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

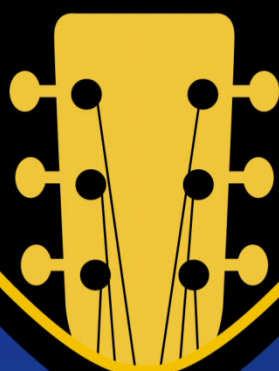


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**2 G10TII TRANSMITTER**  
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**3 TREADLE**  
This Expression treadle controls volume, wah, or a customized combination of parameters. A toe switch, with associated LED, toggles between EXP1 and EXP2.



# LINE 6 POD GO WIRELESS

£499

A do-it-all floorboard that you can use without a cable

Many of you will be familiar with the POD Go, the Line 6 all-in-one floorboard processor that's more keenly priced than the more upmarket Helix models. The company has now brought out a Wireless version of it featuring a built-in version of the Relay G10 system, allowing you to go cable-free onstage and off,

panel slot for storing it when not in use. It's good for about seven hours of playing time from a single charge and you are never in doubt about its charged status as there are good visual indications, including a green LED that flashes red if you've less than 30 minutes power left. The wireless sound is potent, with no detrimental effect on your tonal content and the receiver will pick up a steady

chain of 10 blocks still offers loads of possibilities whether you are looking to create an overall fully processed sound with amp/cab and effects for recording or going direct into a PA, or build presets with amp and cabinet modelling switched off for use as a pedalboard with instantly switchable effects. There are several practical footswitching options to get the most out of the unit in live use including instant switching between 'Preset' and 'Stomp' modes, the former using footswitches to call up presets, the latter to access individual effects within a preset.

With the same ease of use and excellent effects in all genres, this is every bit as good as its cable-only sibling, and is worth digging deeper in your pockets for if being decoupled from your pedalboard offers practical advantages for you.

Trevor Curwen

## EVERY BIT AS GOOD AS ITS CABLE-ONLY SIBLING

although you can still plug in to it conventionally if you wish. One advantage of wireless is that you have no cable to trip over or stand on, and Line 6 have managed to make the POD Go's built-in wireless receiver similar bulletproof with no fragile antennae sticking up, just a raised area near the toe end of the treadle. The transmitter is likewise compact and sits firmly and neatly against your guitar body when plugged in. You charge the transmitter by plugging it into the floor unit, which also has a rear

signal from the transmitter at a substantial distance, allowing stress-free movement to a different part of the stage or even a foray into the audience. Apart from the wireless facility, this POD Go is exactly the same as the original version with USB audio interface capability, looping options and the same collection of classy amp, cab and effects models from the Helix family plus storage for up to 128 IRs. The 256 presets are less flexible in their signal routing possibilities than their Helix counterparts but the serial

### AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Multi-FX pedal with amp/cabs and effects
- FEATURES:** 256 presets, tuner, tap tempo, looper (40 seconds of mono sampling, 20 stereo), MIDI control, USB audio interface capability
- CONTROLS:** Volume, soft knobs x 5, buttons x 4, footswitches x 8
- CONNECTIONS:** Standard inputs (L/Mono, R), standard outputs (L/Mono, R), Stereo Send, Return/Aux In (L/Mono and R), Exp pedal, MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru, standard stereo headphone output, USB
- POWER:** Supplied 9VDC DC-3h adaptor 2500 mA
- DIMENSIONS:** 316 (w) x 120 (d) x 68 mm (h)
- CONTACT:** Line 6, www.line6.com

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







# EVH 5150 SERIES DELUXE



£949

An EVH guitar with crossover appeal

EVH's 5150 amp series transcended its signature model origin to become the top choice for metal guitarists defining their own sound. With the 5150 guitars, the brand aims to repeat that trick, creating reliable rock weaponry with appeal not limited to Eddie wannabes. These guitars also plug a hole in the EVH range. This is the first twin-humbucker superstrat from EVH, offering a major versatility boost over the single-pickup Striped guitars.

Notable features are the momentary killswitch, so you no longer have to destroy your pickup selector when covering *You Really Got Me*, and the body-mounted Floyd Rose with D-Tuna. Mounting on the body means no

The Wolfgang pickups have Alnico II magnets, known for their rich midrange, sweet treble, and softer bass response. Other Alnico II devotees include Slash and Billy Gibbons – it's a top choice for vintage rock and blues. That softer bass response might put off metallers set on downtuned destruction, but it's plenty tight enough for drop C# riffs like *Unchained*.

The pickups are wound hot for a thick, throaty response: this sounds fatter. There's no coil split, but two humbuckers are a highly versatile setup anyway, and the 5150 happily produces all those classic tones. It's a well-judged combination, ideal for any humbucker tone short of the most brutal. A low-friction volume pot

## FLEXIBLE ENOUGH FOR ANY HIGH-PERFORMANCE ROCK APPLICATION

upwards motion with the bar (as Eddie preferred), but it arguably gives better tone because there's greater acoustic coupling between bridge and body, and less wood has to be gouged out to fit the trem. If that combination of hardware reminds you of someone besides Eddie, you're right: with killswitch, humbuckers, and Floyd Rose, there's everything you need for a perfect Tom Morello impression.

Impressively for this price point, the neck is graphite-reinforced quartersawn maple, so it's highly stable despite being slim enough for the most ridiculous shred antics. The 12"-16" compound radius is familiar from other EVH models, but it's extremely effective. Combined with the jumbo frets, this is one of the most satisfying string bending experiences you can have.

makes on-the-fly adjustments easy, and the treble bleed circuit means you can use its full range without ever getting muddy.

The pickup selector isn't quite as positive in use as some we've tried, and the low-friction volume is vulnerable to accidental knocks. Besides those minor complaints, it's hard to see how the 5150 is less than optimal for its intended use. Like the namesake amps, it can impersonate Van Halen if required, but it's flexible enough for any high-performance rock application.

Jonny Scaramanga

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

**1 KILLSWITCH**  
The momentary action is fast and smooth, and not just a novelty. We wish it lit up in use, though!

**2 NECK**  
A SuperStrat needs a fast neck, and the hand-rubbed urethane finish is gorgeous. If you can't shred on this, it's not the guitar's fault.

**3 D-TUNA**  
It's not new, but we can't stop appreciating this engineering triumph that lets you flip instantly between two tunings on a locking trem.

### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Basswood with poplar burl veneer
- NECK:** Quartersawn maple
- SCALE:** 25.5"
- FINGERBOARD:** Ebony
- FRETS:** 22
- PICKUPS:** 2x EVH Wolfgang humbuckers
- CONTROLS:** 500k volume, 250k tone, 3-way selector, killswitch
- HARDWARE:** EVH-branded Floyd Rose, Gotoh machineheads, D-tuna
- FINISH:** Aqua burst, black burst
- CONTACT:** EVH Guitars, evhgear.com







BOSS HM-2W

£159

Boss's best-loved metal pedal gets the Waza Craft treatment

**Y**ou probably recognise the pedal above. That's because the distinctive black and orange visuals of a Boss compact pedal can mean only one thing: some of the most ferocious high-gain tones available.

There have been a few iterations of gained-up pedals with this colour scheme over the years, but none more revered than the Boss HM-2 Heavy Metal. It's the pedal that since its release has shaped the 'chainsaw' sound of Swedish death metal, largely thanks to its association with Entombed's use of the pedal on *Left Hand Path*, released a year before the HM-2's discontinuation.

As many a gear icon, the HM-2 started out life as a relatively affordable filthmonger, before original Japanese versions started to rise in price on the used market, leading to 'boutique' clones and copies. So, with a renewed interest in pedals, and originals becoming more scarce, what was once a pedal that made your dad

spit out his piña colada while listening to *Journeyman*, has now become an elder statesman of tone.

That brings us to the HM-2W, Boss' Waza Craft version of its classic design which not only promises the tone of the original, but aims to surpass it too. It's got two modes (switched from the back edge of the pedal). 'Standard' mode which is essentially the original HM-2 with a lower noise floor and an additional 3dB of output compared to the original. Meanwhile, the Custom mode shifts some of the tonality to give you more gain, more clarity, and more of that all-important chainsaw tone!

It's a relatively straightforward pedal to use, with Dist (drive) and level controls, plus those two Color Mix knobs. As you might expect, one covers the low end, one covers the high end, but with your gain and output set, it's these that really hold the secret to the tones inside. Crank all the knobs to max and that's your chainsaw

tone. The low end control focusses around 100Hz, so it delivers punchy bass without becoming too muddy at any point, while the high control is centred around 1kHz, and boosting or cutting reveals a huge amount of tonal travel, similar to sweeping a parametric mid control.

Move through its range and you're rewarded with everything from that death metal grind to waspy fuzz-like sounds, and most impressively, we never lose our attack. In standard mode it's plenty aggressive, in the Custom mode, it's trying to scratch your eyes out.

If high gain is your thing then the HM-2 Waza Craft is a goblet of connoisseur's distortion.

*Stuart Williams*

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Distortion
- CONTROLS:** Dist, Color Mix L, Color Mix H, Level/Standard/Custom switch
- SOCKETS:** Input, output, power
- BYPASS:** Buffered
- POWER:** 9v battery/PSU (optional)
- CONTACT:** Boss, [www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)

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





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Words Amit Sharma Photo Julia Leiby

# BARTEES STRANGE

**I**t's hard to place your finger on what exactly makes American singer-songwriter Barteek Strange one of the more wildly eclectic guitar stars of the modern age. Perhaps it comes down to how he's able to seamlessly shift his jangly overdriven tones through jazz, hip-hop and filmscore ideas, while also exploring more atmospheric approaches to the six-string, surprising the listener at every turn. As it turns out, a lot of that musical open-mindedness is something he absorbed from Omar Rodríguez-López – the mastermind behind the fretwork in *At The Drive-In* and *The Mars Volta*...

"He's probably my biggest influence," Barteek explains. "I love every project he's part of and would say he's one of the all-time greats. His music just hit me at the right time in my life when I was looking for guitar heroes."

On Barteek's debut album *Live Forever*, released last year, he combined this eclecticism with an autobiographical approach to songwriting. "I think the songs work well because they're real and it's my voice and stories that tie it together," he says. "These are all little snippets from my life, plus I think most people actually like all sorts of music. Why not make a record that sort of accepts and accommodates that?"

He also chose to use vintage gear for guitar tones that matched the honesty and sincerity of his music. The main sounds came from guitars made during the mid-60s fed through amps from the early 70s...

"I used an early 70s Blackface-converted Vibrolux and an early 70s Vibro Champ," he continues. "Most of the overdriven tones were actually from just pushing the amps. It was that old Led Zeppelin trick, getting big sounds through smaller gear and big drums with fewer mics. For the guitars, it was a mid-60s Epiphone Casino and a friend's late 60s Fender Jaguar that sounded so good, I ended up buying a '64 myself. It's the tone you hear on *Boomer* and the heavier parts of *Stone Meadows*."

Interestingly, all effects were added in during the recording process, rather than later in the mixing stage. For Barteek, it was a way of adding to the directness and urgency at the heart of his music – moving fast instead of wasting precious time pondering too long on any given riff or part...

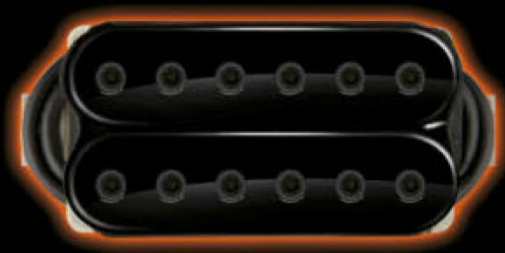
"It's something I do that not everyone does – I like to commit the effects and all my 'wild stuff' when I'm tracking," he adds. "Nearly all of my tones were printed as you hear them, very little was done after with plug-ins. I think that speaks a lot about how I create. I prefer to make decisions and just get rocking with it."





# RABEA MASSAAD

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'I need a pickup with the ability to create glassy, ambient leads and warm, clear chord tones. Equally I need it to sound crushingly heavy and aggressive. The Silo humbuckers give me everything I need and more. I couldn't be happier.'

**Rabea**

*launch your tone into the ambient-sphere*

Photo: Max Taylor-Grant

# Bare Knuckle

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ANGEL VIVALDI

# ARTIST SIGNATURE



**SAVAGE  
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