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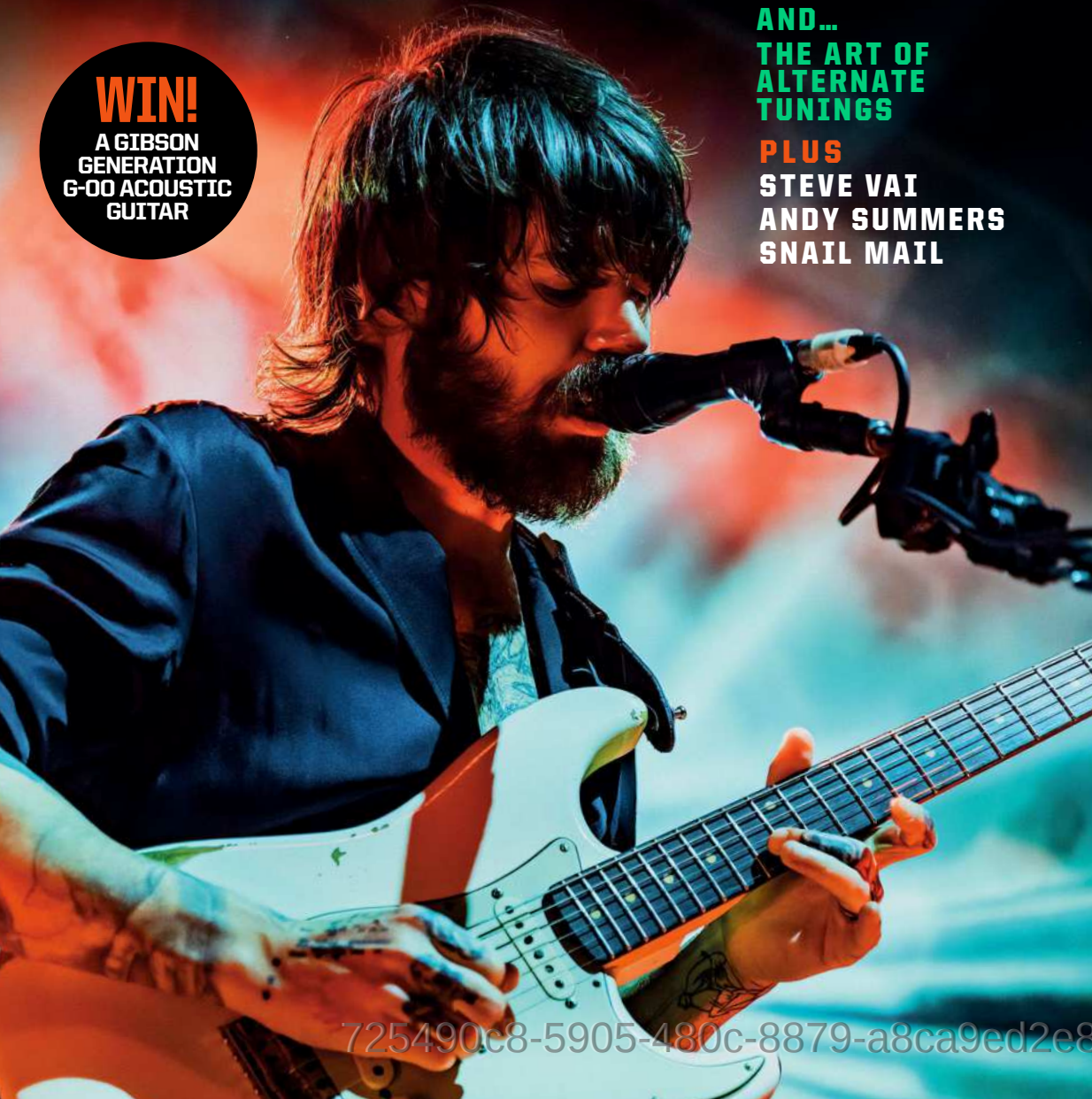
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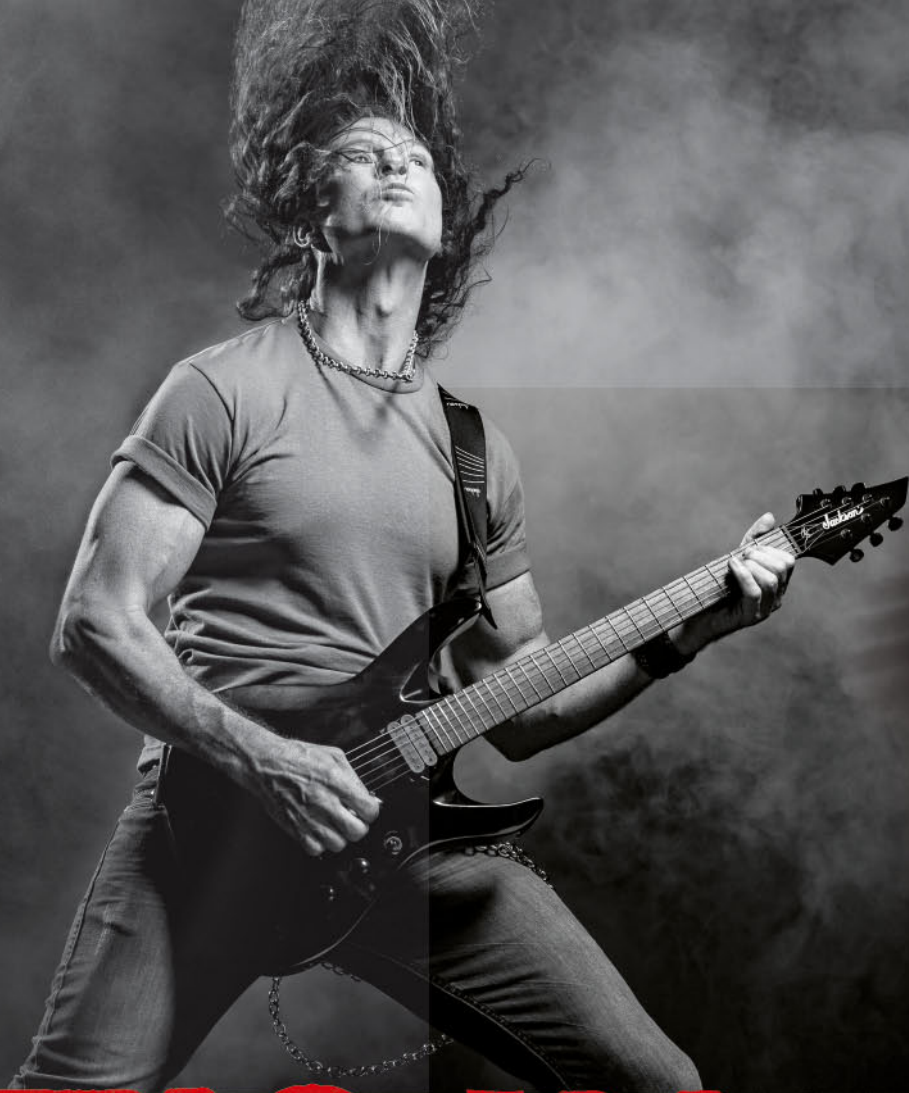
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Welcome...



There's never a bad time to focus on guitar but new year seems to offer a fresh opportunity to double down with renewed focus on our playing. And that's where TG comes in with this month's huge 2022 Guitar Workout. Whether you're seeking creative inspiration for a song you're writing, or if you want to get serious with some technical drills there's plenty

here to help you take your playing to the next level.

To keep you on track and provide you with extra inspiration, we've enlisted the help of a slew of star guitarists. Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil, presents his guide to the art of rock guitar, telling us how he makes his Strats sound heavy, breaking down his approach to writing mathy odd-time riffs and prepping for live shows.

We also interview two incredible technicians of our instrument, John Petrucci and Mark Tremonti. I think you can describe them as eternal students of the guitar, always pushing their own boundaries as players, and the wisdom they offer is invaluable for any player.

Elsewhere, we've lined up the usual mix of tab and gear reviews. And on that subject, Fender's new Acoustasonic Player Telecaster is on test. The Acoustasonic range has always been a talking point for looks and sounds; the cut-price Mexican-made range might just hit the sweet spot on price, too. You be the judge!

Finally, make sure to turn to p45, where there's a chance for you to win a Gibson G-00 acoustic guitar from the company's new Generation Collection.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see you again next month!

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

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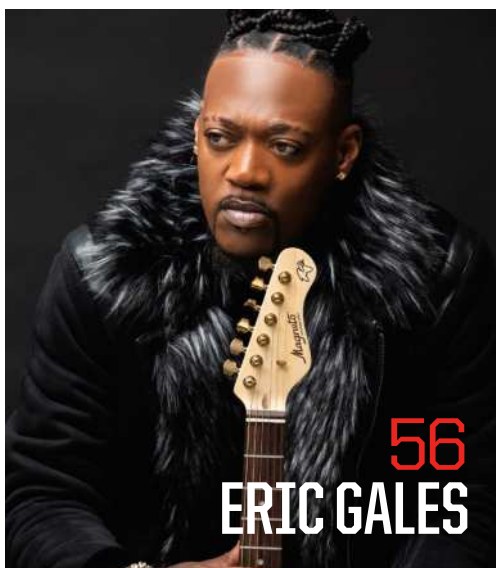
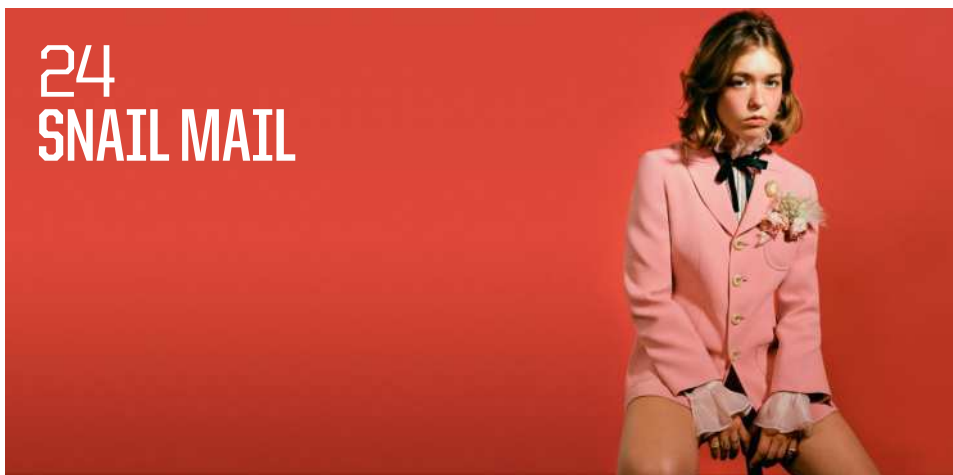


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and you'll be directed to TG's website
at guitarworld.com. Here you'll find all
the audio and video for the issue,
available to download or stream.

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Words Paul Elliott Photo Austin Nelson

THE CAT IN THE HAT

F

February 11 is the release date for the new album from Slash featuring Myles Kennedy and the Conspirators. The album, titled *4*, is the first release on Gibson Records, and as Slash says: “We recorded everything live in five days. Two songs a day. It was the first record I’ve been able to do in my career where we set up

a backline in a big room and just mic’ed it up and recorded it. So it’s a live record, basically. And I’ve always wanted to do a record like that.”

The next issue of *Total Guitar*, on sale February 11, features a full, in-depth interview with Slash – in which the legendary guitarist talks about the new album and choosing the ideal Les Paul, and discusses the past, present and future of Guns N’ Roses.





SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



Photos Amy Huang



GUITAR

FOREVER YOUNG

THE NEW YVETTE YOUNG SIGNATURE MODEL REVEALED



STUCK ON YOU

The YY20 includes a specially-designed sticker sheet featuring art by Yvette

We're big fans of Yvette Young here at TG, and now the Covet guitar virtuoso has unveiled the continuation of her Ibanez YY10 signature model with the introduction of the Ibanez YY20.

As with the Slime Green Sparkle YY10, the YY20 takes the iconic Ibanez outline, and while it's offered in Orange Cream Sparkle, there's a lot more going on than just a colour change.

First up is the electronics, offering a Tele-style two-pickup configuration rather than the YY10's triple-pronged Strat-style approach. In this case the magnets are Seymour Duncan Alnico II Pro single coils,

offering standard three-way switching of neck/both/bridge, and they're controlled with one volume and one tone control. The theme continues with a Gotoh GTC202 hardtail bridge, fitted with six individual saddles, with through-body stringing.

At the other end, we get a maple neck, carved to Yvette's preferred, tapping-friendly YY profile (based on a tapered U-shape), and similarly to the YY10 neck it comes in a smooth satin finish. Unlike the YY10, however, the YY20 is fitted with a rosewood fingerboard which is a 25.5" scale length and is home to 22 medium-sized frets.

To the side of the neck are luminescent side-fret markers, meaning that you'll be able to navigate your way around the 'board on the

darkest of stages. Tuning is kept in check thanks to a set of Gotoh MG-T three-a-side locking machine heads for speedy changes as well as stability.

Of course, this being a signature guitar, it comes strung with Yvette Young's choice of strings – .11-52 gauge – but what's more, it's pre-tuned to FACGBE. As with the YY10, the YY20 also celebrates Yvette Young's love of art, with the inclusion of a specially-designed sticker sheet, featuring four designs drawn by Yvette herself.

The YY20 is available to pre-order now for £999. While you're waiting, head over to Ibanez's YouTube channel and check out the comical promo video!

Stuart Williams



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EFFECT

ALL THE RAGE

Tom Morello might have shunned requests for signature pedals for decades, but following his signature Crybaby comes the new MXR Power 50 Overdrive. This

amp-in-a-box pedal aims to recreate the sound of Tom's famed Marshall 50-watt JCM 800 2205 head, as used throughout his career in Rage Against The Machine, Audioslave and beyond. It's got gain and

master volume controls, three-band EQ and presence controls, plus an integrated FX loop for running your pedals in the same way that Morello does. You can pre-order it now for £189.99.



GUITAR

CHEAP THRILLS

We're not sure how they do it, but Harley Benton has yet again raised the bar for what we can expect from a low-priced guitar, this time with its T-style electric, which is being offered for the frankly measly sum of £126. We get a caramelised maple neck carved to a modern D profile, a pair of Roswell Alnico 5 single coils, maple fretboard, hardtail bridge and mint green-tinted pickguard. It comes in a choice of eye-catching finishes including Shell Pink, Seafoam Green, Lake Placid Blue and Charcoal Frost.

Check out the full range at: www.thomann.com



GUITAR

ED GEAR

With a new Ed Sheeran album comes a new mathematical sign, and this time Suffolk's favourite son has gone with Equals. What better opportunity to launch a guitar via your own Lowden sub-brand too, then? The Sheeran by Lowden Equals (or rather =) Edition is built around the Sheeran W (based on Ed's Wee Lowden) body size, and is limited to 3000 guitars worldwide. As well as packing an LR Baggs EAS VTC pickup system, it comes with a number of special edition features including a maple '=' inlay, butterfly-engraved truss rod cover and neck heel, plus an Equals Edition label in the soundhole.

THE NEW HYBRID

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The ACOUSTASONIC PLAYER TELECASTER shown in Butterscotch Blonde. Iconic acoustic voicings. Big electric tones. One powerful Blend Knob.

MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

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Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

STRUM AS YOU ARE

30 years after the release of Nirvana's biggest album, Fender has reissued Kurt Cobain's Jaguar/Mustang mash-up

It's been over 30 years since the release of Nirvana's *Nevermind*, and while there's been a number of Kurt Cobain signature models over the years (celebrating his love of both the Jaguar and Mustang) Fender chose 2021 to reissue the Jag-Stang.

This design is the guitar that Kurt put together in collaboration with Fender in 1993, receiving and playing a prototype before his death. However it was late 1995/early 1996 before the guitars emerged.

The 2021 version stays true to Kurt's original concept – take a Jaguar and a Mustang shape and mash them together, with a humbucker in the bridge position and a singlecoil in the neck. But there are a few key differences. The original

Jag-Stang body was made of basswood, whereas these are alder.

Fender has introduced its own Jag-Stang custom voiced single coil and humbucking pickups for this run in place of the original's Fender Texas Special and DiMarzio H3 units. These are switched in the same way as the original, giving you four sounds from the slider switches: neck only/bridge only/bridge and neck/bridge and neck out of phase.

Finally, while the first and second-era Jag-Stangs were made in Japan, while these are coming out of Fender's Mexican factory. Elsewhere, the guitar has a maple neck, with a 24" scale rosewood fingerboard, 6-saddle Mustang bridge and tremolo unit and is available in Kurt's originally-spec'd finishes: Fiesta Red and Sonic Blue priced £1249.

UP CLOSE



Shape

Cobain came up with the concept of the Jag-Stang by merging Polaroids of his two favourite Fender designs: the Jaguar and Mustang



Electronics

Fender has fitted the 2021 Jag-Stang with its own specially voiced pickups. There's a vintage-style single coil in the neck and a hotter humbucker in the bridge. The slider switches give you four voicing options.



Body

For this reissue, Fender is producing the guitars in Mexico rather than Japan, and the body wood has been changed to alder from basswood. It comes in the same finishes as the original: Sonic Blue and Fiesta Red.

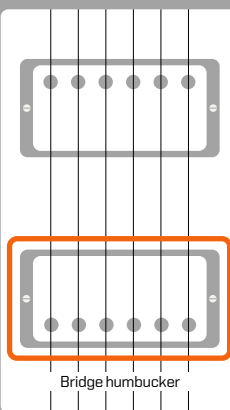
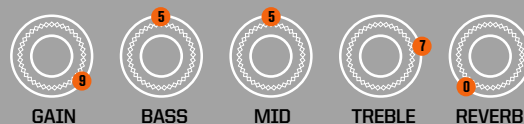
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Drop B₁ tuning
- ✓ C Phrygian mode
- ✓ Easy powerchords



GET THE TONE

CHANNEL DISTORTION



Guitarists Joshua Moore and Lou Cotton are best known for playing Ibanez and ESP guitars into Orange and EVH amps. Theirs is a high-gain sound, so use a bridge position humbucker and a saturated 5150 style distortion, and add more drive with a distortion pedal if your rig doesn't deliver enough. The drop-B₁ tuning is very low, so consider using strings that are two or three gauges heavier than your usual standard tuning set to keep your guitar's setup stable.

WE CAME AS ROMANS

Daggers

We Came As Romans' latest single features heavily distorted, downtuned riffing from guitarists Joshua Moore and Lou Cotton. WCAR blend metalcore with electronic elements and huge production. There is some digital editing on the guitars, but at its core, the part is a brutal drop B₁-tuned riff played with a one-finger barre across the two bass strings. You can use any finger you want,

as long as the pressure across both strings is even, with your finger as close to the frets as possible.

There are four powerchords rooted on the lowest string (B₁, 5, C₅, D₁, 5 and E₁, 5) and an additional regular B₁, 5 powerchord shape built on the fifth string. As you play the riff, focus on letting the powerchords sustain for their full duration making sure to change to the next chord at the last possible moment.

Check out our slow play through in the video to see it all in action.

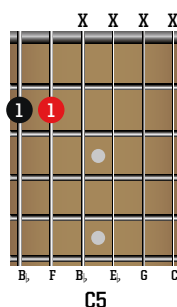
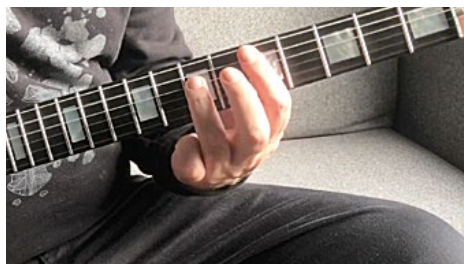
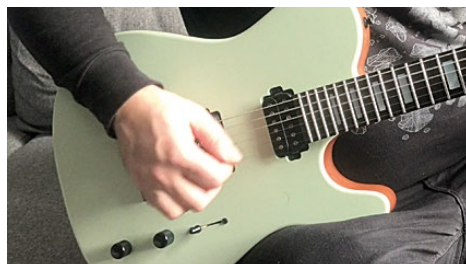
CHEAT SHEET...

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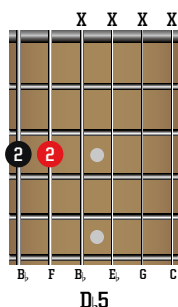
Tempo: 150bpm

Key/scale: C Phrygian

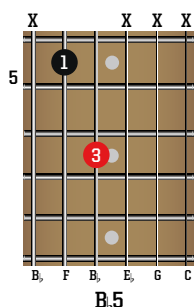
Main techniques: Powerchords, downstrokes, string muting



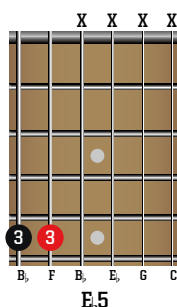
C5



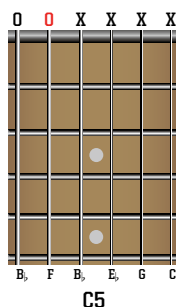
D₁, 5



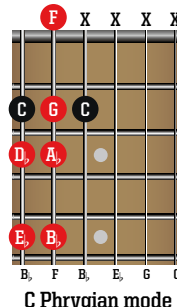
B₁, 5



E₁, 5



C5



C Phrygian mode

In drop B₁ tuning the interval between the fifth and sixth strings is a 5th (seven frets) instead of the 4th (five frets) found in standard tuning. This means that powerchords played on these strings can be played with one

finger – which you can see here in the B₁, 5, C₅, D₁, 5 and E₁, 5 chords. The riff is based in the C Phrygian mode (C D₁ E₁ F G A₁ B₁) which has a dark, creepy sound due to its minor intervals (1, 2, 3 4 5, 6, 7).

ANGEL VIVALDI

ARTIST SIGNATURE



**SAVAGE
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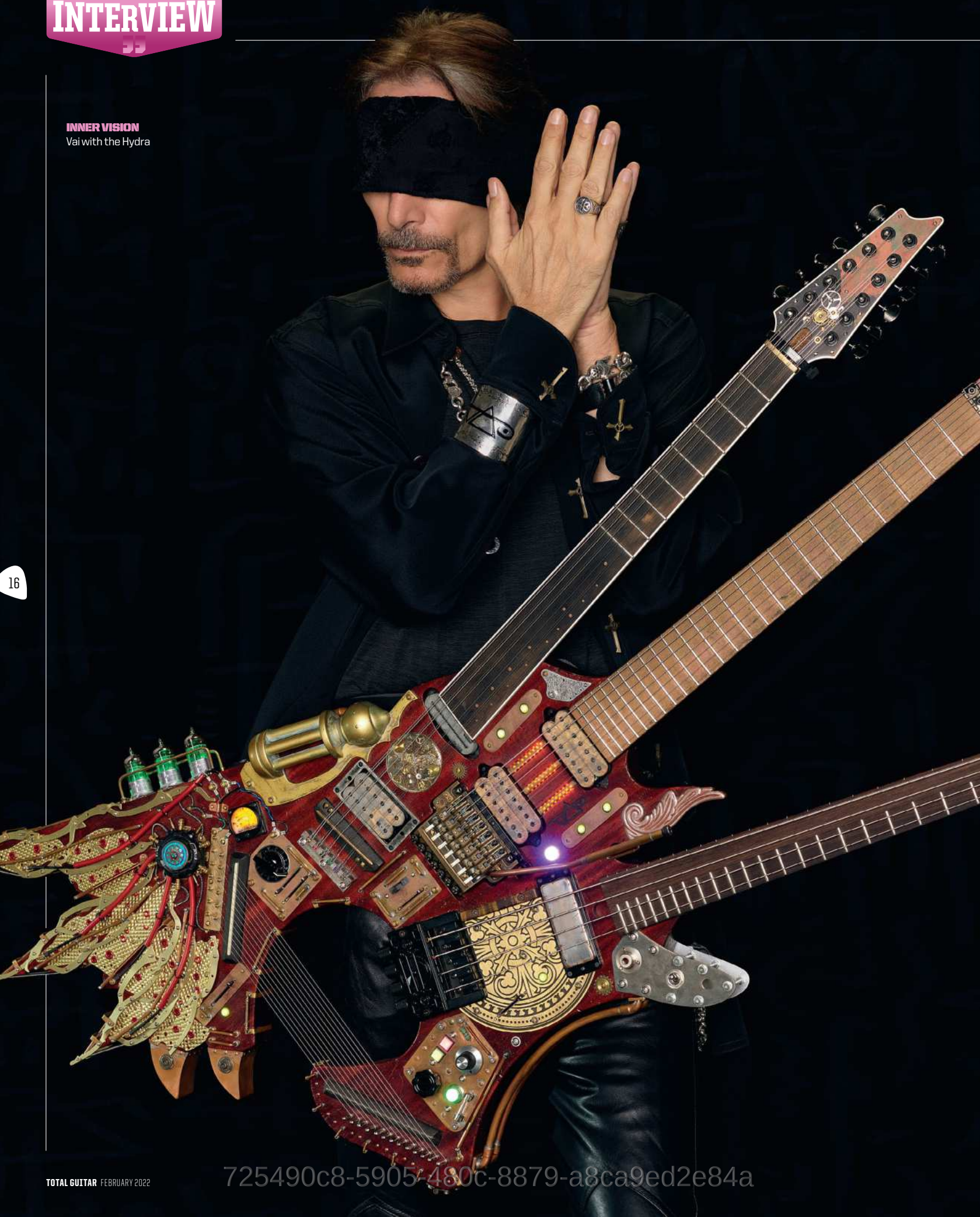
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INNER VISION
Vai with the Hydra



Words Amit Sharma Photos Michael Mesker / Larry DiMarzio



“Some people might see my Hydra guitar and think, ‘Vai, what a joke!’”



Steve Vai reveals all about his three-necked Hydra, how he invented a new technique he calls “joint-shifting”, and how he made a track from his new album using only one hand...

There has always been an otherworldly quality to Steve Vai’s guitar playing. Although he caught his big break in the Frank Zappa band before stints with Alcatrazz, David Lee Roth and Whitesnake, it’s his solo albums that well and truly cemented his crown as the grand master of shred – a virtuosic player with an unrivalled imagination for the deeply unconventional.

His new album, *Inviolata*, showcases yet more breathtaking musicianship and wild reinvention, with Vai using instruments he’s never been seen with before, playing one song completely one-handed, and even inventing a new technique he refers to as ‘joint-shifting’. And that’s not all. He’s also been collaborating with Ibanez owners Hoshino on a new instrument featuring three necks (a seven-string, a 12-string and a semi-fretless bass), floating and hardtail tremolo systems,

sympathetic harp strings and more, as heard on the album’s opening track *Teeth Of The Hydra*. While there are plenty of surprises on this album, it’s also to be expected – breaking personal boundaries has been his calling card for quite some time...

“For me that’s the most enjoyable thing to do,” he says, speaking via Zoom from his Harmony Hut home studio, with all kinds of electric and acoustic instruments hung up around the mixing console. “Frankly, breaking your own boundaries the only thing you’re going to do – you’re not breaking anybody else’s! And that’s the thrill of being an artist. Most players will understand what I’m saying here – life is about being creative.

Everybody’s life is about that, although they may not see it. But specifically for those in the arts, from painting to music, all that matters is creativity.”

As it turns out, *Inviolata* was not the album the guitarist had planned to release. “My original idea,” he explains, “was to do three instrumental records in a trio style. The first record would be all clean,



➔

the second would be the normal Vai distorted stuff and the last one would be extraordinarily heavy. But then things changed..."

He ended up having a major rethink after undergoing surgery for shoulder and trigger finger issues. And a direct result of this surgery was this album's first single *Knappsack* – written, performed and recorded with one hand in a sling.

As he recalls: "When I came out of the painkiller haze following surgery, I received this wonderful Onyx Black PIA I'd been working on with Hoshino. The doctor who did my surgery was called Dr. Knapp, and he invented a sling specific for this kind of surgery he named the Knappsack. So I picked up that beautiful PIA and all I wanted to do was play it, but I couldn't because I didn't have my right arm. So I started fretting with my left hand and figured, 'Well, I am playing it!' So why not write a song with one hand – it's not actually that difficult if you're already used to legato style.

You've always seemed to have this 'anything is possible' approach to guitar...

The fun part when I do anything is when I visualise what it might be. As players we all know when we get an idea, and it's a clean idea of real inspiration, tailor-made for you. And you will know it's the right idea because there's something inside you that says, 'Ah yeah, I can do this, I can't do it now, I have to put the screws to it but I can do it!' So that's what I like, to visualise things I can't do, but only the things I know I could do if I put the time in.

On one of the new album's key tracks, *Candle Power*, you used a single-coil, Strat-style Ibanez. Was that another challenge of sorts?

I like to set up parameters for myself and place myself outside my comfort zone because it always manifests into something different. So *Candle Power* had that little riff and I always wanted to do a song using a different style guitar that's uncomfortable for me like a Strat, though I do like them. There was no whammy bar, which was quite rare

for me, and the overall tone was clean, which I do occasionally but it's a bit like entering a boxing ring. Plus there was no delay and I wasn't even using a pick. That was pretty masochistic! It was a pretty mean demand on myself because I don't fingerpick very well. But I knew I could do it and that's all I needed. I told myself it had to sound like something I'd never heard or played.

Your new joint-shifting technique has a country kind of flavour to it, almost like a B-Bender...

It has foundations in that style. I don't listen to much country music, though I appreciate it. It was a mental visual of pulling strings in different directions while using open strings. It took a while and tears up your fingers! I figured the only way to get some of it to work was to shift the joints in my fingertips, leaving space for other strings to ring out. Try doing that with one finger on the D-string or A-string... It's painful! You have to put in the work. I had no idea the song would have any impact in the little guitar community that likes instrumental music. It's small but it's there and it's ours!

'STEVIE RAY' VAI

"The first scale I ever learned on guitar was the blues scale"

Hearing about you using a Gretsch hollowbody for the new song *Little Pretty* was quite a surprise. What made you realise your Ibanez guitars might not be best suited?

The one guitar that speaks to my style of playing is the JEM or PIA. But they're limited in their scope. They're not going to sound like an archtop, for example. I've always loved the Gretsch sound, though it was never right for me. I've always dug them but I could never play them! I still liked the idea of using one, so I got out this anniversary model I had. They're kinda like these beasts that have a mind of their own, unless you're Brian Setzer! They have a very unique tone, no other guitars sound like a Gretsch. When the riff for *Little Pretty* came, the riff told me it was going to be played on this guitar. So I told the riff, 'How do you expect me to solo, that's not my normal guitar!' And the song just told me to shut the f*ck up and get on with it, so I did!

Did you mainly stick with your signature Synergy module for amp sounds?

Every song was different, but yeah, for the most part I was using my Synergy module. There were even songs I went back and re-recorded with the Synergy. There was a plethora of amps around me. I'm uncomfortable with using the same amp for my main lead tone and background tones. I like different things for my rhythm sounds. There wasn't anything new in terms of pedals. On *Greenish Blues* I used a Whammy on one of my favourite settings where it goes up a fifth. There was some Bad Horsie wah in places. I'll probably be drifting away from that after this record because I've done it enough! That was it, really. The Black Onyx Pia was used on a lot of stuff, plus the Gretsch on a track, the Hydra on another, as well as FLO III somewhere else and EVO for one track.

***Greenish Blues* is the closest thing you've ever done to straight blues – some might even call it Stevie Ray Vai!**

I've heard that one before! But yeah, I would say it's the closest thing I've done to anything that even slightly resembles conventional blues. Obviously I'm not known for any kind of authentic blues playing. Same goes for jazz or classical. I don't even really play conventional rock, you know?

"WHY NOT WRITE A SONG WITH ONE HAND
- IT'S NOT ACTUALLY THAT DIFFICULT!"



I like all that other stuff but never felt good enough to get close to those players. So I accidentally started doing things in my own little quirky way. I guess my comfort zone is the Lydian zone, while blues was Stevie Ray Vaughan's. That said, I love the blues. The first scale I ever learned on guitar was the blues scale and that's frankly all I've used my entire career! I just shift it around, and it's changed over the years, but I see altered notes from the blues that make it something else.

Tell us more about how the Hydra guitar came to be - it's quite an instrument to behold!

That project started about five years ago. I was watching a *Mad Max* movie and this guy was standing on the end of a truck going through this desert and he had this wild guitar. I wanted something cool like that and came up with having three necks. Originally there was a ten-string neck which was half fretless, but when I got the prototype I changed that to 12! Then there's a regular seven-string neck, plus a bass neck that has the E and A-strings fretless, as well as harp strings. I knew I wanted to juggle all of these necks in one performance but I had no idea how it would look... And it's like juggling chainsaws! Owning a guitar like this is like having a 15-inch penis. You can talk about it and show it off, but what are you actually going to do with it? Panic set in, I felt overwhelmed. Again, it's funny what happens when you approach the seemingly impossible and just start going. Things become possible.

It's hard to imagine you suffering from any kind of self-doubt...

I was standing there with all these fearful and insecure thoughts that lasted about ten seconds because another voice came in much stronger. I see it as a voice everybody has, it's your higher-self saying, 'Shut the f*ck up and do it now, you got this and you know it!' That's all it takes. Once you make the decision to listen, good things start happening. You're only ever competing with yourself. You just have to do the things that feel compelling to you. When you do that, there's an energy that flows that others will respond to. Still, some people might see my Hydra guitar and think, 'Vai, what a joke!' You can never predict these things.



Andy Summers

Interview Grant Moon Portraits Andy White, Jay Strauss

FROM JAZZ ROOTS TO WORLDWIDE FAME WITH THE POLICE, HE DEVELOPED A SIGNATURE STYLE THAT DEFINED THE POST-PUNK ERA. "BEING A GUITAR PLAYER," SAYS ANDY SUMMERS, "IS WHO I AM."

By the time The Police hit big with their 1978 debut LP *Outlandos D'Amour*, Andy Summers was already in his thirties, and a seasoned guitar player. He'd got his break as a teenager in the 60s, playing with Zoot Money's Big Roll Band on the circuit, rubbing shoulders with Jimi Hendrix and Pink Floyd. He was once mooted as Mick Taylor's replacement in The Rolling Stones, but instead rose to worldwide fame as

a third of one of the all-time great rock bands.

The Police's best-known songs bear the hallmarks of his guitar style – sophisticated chord voicings, clever lead salvos, percussive rhythm work and inventive use of tone. His much-imitated echo/chorus combo became an era-defining guitar flavour. Outside of that band, Summers has had a long and fruitful solo career, his catalogue rich with explorations of ambient, fusion, world music and more. He's also a writer (his recent short story collection, *Fretted And Moaning*, is all about guitarists, and a great read), and an avid photographer too. This latter passion directly inspired his hypnotic current album, *Harmonics Of The Night*...

Musical inspiration comes in many forms.

I've got a photography show at the Mayfair Gallery in London, and *Harmonics Of The Night* came about because I wanted to create some music for it, instead of having some naff radio program going on in the background as people look at the work. I got this little pedal from

TC Electronic [Brainwaves Pitch Shifter] and it's amazing. It's got this intervallic thing – you play a note and you get a second one with it. I was in my studio and came up with this 20-minute, one-take improvisation I called *A Certain Strangeness*. It was a real moment of inspiration. That will play on a loop during the whole exhibit,

and it prompted the music on the rest of the album. It's like guitar chamber music, I'm really pleased with it.

Improvisation is a valuable skill.

I'm an improviser. I grew up playing jazz guitar, influenced by Wes Montgomery and Kenny Burrell, Jimmy Raney, Miles and Mingus – that was my background, not pop music. And you pick up a lot of things along the way, but I definitely had the skills. I could play the whole solo on [Montgomery's] *West Coast Blues* when I was 16. I learned it all by ear – I just slowed the record down and kept trying to get to the notes until I got the whole thing. That kind of stuff gets right into your soul and stays with you for the rest of your life. In the early days of The Police, there was a lot





of improvisation. People think it was all set out and it wasn't, we were kind of making it up as we went along. We were always stretching ourselves and seeing where our chops could go. In soundcheck, as long as the sound was there we wouldn't have to rehearse Roxanne or the rest of the set. We would just jam and sometimes things would come out of it, and we'd come back to ideas and develop them into something. And we made our albums really quickly – we didn't sit around labouring in the studio for a year at a time. Some bands would take two years to make an album and I'd think, 'Why? Ours are made in five days!'

Playing music is a gift.

Occasionally I've been amazed at the thought – how do you get through life *without* playing music?! And people do of course, but to me, when I got my first guitar in my hands when I was ten, the commitment was there immediately. I never thought about doing anything else except being a guitarist. I'd already played piano for five years as a kid so I was used to reading music, then ultimately I went to university in California and did a four-year music major program. But I absolutely wanted to be a guitar player. It was just who I was, and who I am.

It helps to work with people on the same (musical) page.

Sting and I had very much the same background. We both grew up with pop music, listening to The Beatles and the blues, but we both loved Brazilian music. He played a little bit of classical guitar and I'd just come back from years of playing classical guitar before returning to electric, so I was able to play all sorts of things that he loved – Villa-Lobos, Bach, Sor. The music of The Police became a mix of all these things. The bottom line was we were a rock band, but we could overlay it with more sophisticated harmonies. Sting was definitely able to sing over them, his ears are that good and he has the voice. We'd both listened to [Miles Davis's] *Kind Of Blue* five million times, so he wasn't fazed by my playing, say, a Dm11 in *Walking On The Moon* instead of just a straight, 'folk' D minor. We sounded distinctly different from other bands, distinguished by this combo of Sting's high voice, his ear and his ability to improvise through these kinds of chord changes, and me being able to play all



“ONE OF THE THINGS I LOVED ABOUT PLAYING IN THE POLICE WAS THAT IT WAS ALL GUITAR, ALL THE TIME!”

that stuff. I was a pretty educated guitar player at that point.

Let the songs evolve, and stick at it.

All credit to Sting as a songwriter, but the start of those songs was nothing like what happened on the record. They were transformed by the three of us playing together – Stewart [Copeland]'s unique drumming style, my approach to harmony, and Sting's abilities. What people bought was the sound of the three of us and the way we play together, this kind of heady, intoxicating combination. In a way we were sort of anti-punk. Punk was so prevalent at that time, so we didn't get many gigs. But we soldiered on, and the rest is history.

Three's company.

We were definitely a power trio, and for me the trio is the best format – it's the one I still like to play in today. If you have a keyboard player, that and the guitar are in the same area pitch-wise and you can get in each other's way. One of the things I loved about playing in The Police was that it was all guitar all the time! But it needed someone like me to fill that out. Practical concerns for me

FLYING SQUAD

The Police on stage in 1981 (left), and Summers now

were: how do we get through an hour and a half on stage without it being just the same set of barre chords on every song? I must use things – echo, chorus, different chord voicings. I have to colour this so it's interesting to the audience and gives a definite signature to every song. It's a weird combination of innate, primitive talent and also thinking about it, intellectualising it, and of course being someone who can play music.

Effects, then and now...

In those days the stereo chorus sounded great through a PA system – these big shining chords, it was all fairly thrilling then. Eventually I ended up getting a [seriously high-end] Pete Cornish pedalboard, but I started off with just an amp – a Fender Twin with a little bit of reverb, and then judicious mixing of treble, middle and bass, and that wonderful Telecaster with a naturally great tone. As a guitar player you would always work to get a sound, a tone, because that's all there was – you're searching for the sound that would probably come out of what you've been listening to for years. Then I progressed to an MXR Phase 90, and eventually got the Echoplex, which is wonderful.

I pretty much used that all the way through my career with The Police. I had two, one was stolen – we played in Italy and there was a riot and they broke into our dressing room and ripped off my spare. I was so upset about that! I still have a million pedals, but the Fractal III [Axe-FX III] is the beast with all the sounds now. We run it through a pedalboard, you can change sounds with that, and it's an incredible amp modeling box. They've done an incredible job with it.

Play every day – with a drummer, if you can...

I've got guitars everywhere, and I play every day. I learn things, I'm always moving on. Sometimes it's with a metronome but recently I've been playing five times a week with my son [Anton], who's a really good drummer. It's amazing what it did to my head. It's sharpened me up because, instead of just noodling or fumbling through a tune I've started to learn songs properly – [Thelonious] Monk and Mingus stuff, even my own music, songs which I'm trying to put into a huge compendium right now. It's like we're in a band, but we don't have a bass player. The only thing that's missing at the moment is being out there, playing.

To get really good you need to double-down – and turn off the gadgets...

I'm so glad that when I was growing up I didn't have an iPhone, or 50,000 channels of TV. There's so many distractions today, and to walk the path now, to be a pure musician, it's very difficult for kids. It's a different world – you're not going to have a lifetime of gigs and playing clubs and getting record royalties. Now you have to think about social media, how you get more people to watch. But even then you're not going to make money, because the money from record sales, as we know, is not there anymore. But you've got to do it because you love it, because you really, really love it. Everything has to be genuine, from your feeling – if you can get to it – and your experience. The minute you try and be someone else, it doesn't work so well. I've never done anything I didn't want to do, and that includes in The Police. I was never in it for the money. I was always in it to make art. My life has been dedicated to music – it's always been the guiding thing for me.

GUITARS, THEN AND NOW...

Summers performed most of The Police's hits on his 1961 Fender Telecaster, bought from one of his guitar students in the early 70s for a few hundred dollars. It had already been modified, with a fat neck humbucker, phase switch, built-in preamp and overdrive unit, and Summers loved it from day one. "The actual one is hidden away," he reveals, "because it's so valuable now, but Fender reproduced it perfectly in 2007 [with their limited edition tribute model; Summers used that on the band's reunion tour]. I've got about four of those left."

These days one of his go-to guitars is his signature 'Monochrome' Stratocaster, a custom shop piece made in conjunction with Fender and camera company Leica. It features Leica-designed hardware and is decorated with a collage of Summers' black and white photography. "It's unique," says Summers. "It's a custom shop guitar with a beautiful maple neck, and the headstock's got a great shot of someone diving. It's a one-off, and I play it all the time."

HARP HARMONICS

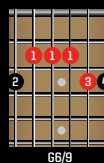
In his solo work as well as The Police hits such as *Can't Stand Losing You*, Summers uses 'harp harmonics'. This subtle, beautiful sound is achieved by a combination of natural harmonics and plucked notes, using closely voiced chords.

Finger an open position G6/9 chord. Now, while holding that chord down:

- Place the forefinger of your strumming hand over the fretwire of the sixth string, 15th fret. Pluck just behind that with the nail of your thumb, to produce the G harmonic.
- With your ring finger, pluck the third string to sound the A note.
- As per step 1, pluck the harmonic of the fifth

string, 14th fret for a B note.

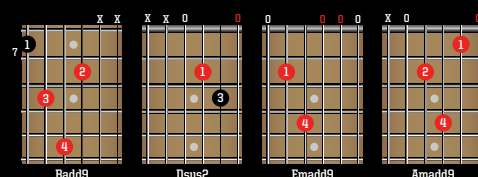
- As per step 2, pluck the D on the second string with your ring finger.
- As per step 1, pluck harmonic on the fourth string, 14th fret for the E.
- Pluck the first string for the G note.



Practise until these notes ring together smoothly. Summers picked this technique up from guitar great Lenny Breau: "Lenny was an absolute genius player, and I was lucky enough to have a lesson with him in Nashville, around 1981. Chet Atkins was maybe doing [harp harmonics] a bit but, with his incredible harmonic ear, Lenny took it into very advanced chords. When you do it, you don't want octaves or repeating notes – the chords that work for this, if you normally struck them with a pick, would sound pretty weird and atonal. But if you do it with this harmonic technique, you get something else, that's very exotic and lovely..."

ADD9 CHORDS

Summers' extensive chord vocabulary adds colour and interest to The Police's sound. For example, on hits from *Message In A Bottle* to *De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da* to *Every Breath You Take* he employs add9 chords – major or minor chords with the 9th scale degree included. Some of these positions can be a stretch, but that one extra note can really spice up your progressions. They sound particularly good arpeggiated, Summers-style:



THE ONES TO WATCH IN 2022

Indie pop, Maori metal, jazz fusion and grime-influenced protest punk. The breakout artists set to shape the sound of guitar music this year...

SNAIL MAIL

Lindsey Jordan, AKA Snail Mail, was just 18 when her debut album *Lush* landed in 2018, drawing comparisons to Liz Phair, Fiona Apple and Sonic Youth. Critics fawned over her lyrics, but we were captivated by the guitar playing. Whether sparkling clean or fuzzed out, Jordan combined inventive chord shapes and deft hammer-on licks, and her fingerstyle technique was enviable. The songs were strong enough to work even with mundane guitar parts, but she blessed them with great ones anyway.

Cut to 2022, and Snail Mail has just released *Valentine*, another immaculate indie rock collection that delivers on her earlier promise. You wouldn't suspect from the synth-driven opening, but this is one of the best guitar albums of last year. Jordan's warm, clean tones are smooth enough to drive entire songs without slicing your eardrums. They're not as effect-soaked as her heroes My Bloody Valentine, but

reverb keeps everything sounding big. By sounding raw, intimate, and epic all at once, she's found the Indie Grail. Don't be surprised if 2022 sees a major boost in reverb pedal sales thanks to this album.

The range of guitar tones on *Valentine* is broader than on *Lush*. Some moments have the old-school warmth of a valve amp pushed to the edge of breakup, and then there are guitars so clean they could be plugged straight into the desk. There are fuzzy single-note lines, and that indie rock trademark: tones that are a bit crap in isolation but work perfectly in context.

Songs such as *Forever (Sailing)*, a deluge of layered guitar, show her range. There's a palm muted melody that could be from an early Michael Jackson record, and a choir of multi-tracked chorused chords. So when she strips it back to acoustic guitar for *Light Blue*, it sounds shockingly intimate. Jordan's folkie fingerpicking could be descended from Paul Simon, and the understated string arrangements only enhance it. The music sounds

nothing like Fleetwood Mac, but we're reminded of Lindsey Buckingham's ability to create spectacular guitar parts that still serve the song.

She might not thank us for using the word 'virtuosity', but there's no denying some Snail Mail riffs take chops, no matter how effortlessly she delivers them. It's exciting to hear guitar take centre stage in such compact, tightly arranged pop songs. *Glory* only lasts 2:20, but she still makes time for a guitar solo, starting with a unison note on the G and B strings before soaring to some climactic arpeggios. Album closer *Mia* puts Jordan's fingerpicking skills onto electric guitar, highlighting her strengths with bluesy diminished and dominant chords.

Snail Mail's live act, honed on tours with Thundercat and Mac DeMarco, is a thing of joy. A 2022 UK tour has been postponed while Jordan recovers from throat surgery, but when rescheduled dates are confirmed, we expect they'll be the last chance to see Snail Mail in small venues for a long time. **JS**





ALIEN WEAPONRY

Handpicked to open for Gojira on their impending European tour, young New Zealand metal trio Alien Weaponry have come a long way over the last few years, inking a deal with Napalm Records for their *Tū* debut in 2018 and more recently turning heads far and wide with the sheer force of second album *Tangaroa*, which was released in September 2021. Fronted by vocalist/guitarist Lewis de Jong and incorporating influences from their Māori background both lyrically and sonically – using native instruments from the Taonga pūoro family such as the pūtātara – their brutal aggression harks back to the 90s groove metal typified by Pantera, Sepultura and Machine Head, as well as the psychedelic heaviness of early Tool. Marrying their detuned riffage with hard-hitting lyrics that confront their home country's colonial history and its on-going repercussions, feeding DBZ and ESP guitars through Marshall DSL amps via Boss and Line 6 pedals, it's a potent formula – and one that will only continue to elevate them higher and higher. **AS**

Photo: Piotr Kwasnik



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BOB VYLAN

Formed by two musicians called Bob Vylan – to be more specific, one Bobby and one Bobbie – this London punk duo are gearing up for a busy 2022 after concluding last year with some of the biggest shows of their career, opening for Biffy Clyro back in October on their intimate Fingers Crossed tour before tackling UK arenas as guests of The Offspring. Their sound isn't easy to categorise, carving out different flavours of grime, hardcore and alternative rock into protest anthems for the modern age, with messages on racial inequality and social injustice backed by fittingly cutting guitars. Last year's singles *Pretty Songs* and *GDP* – the latter featuring Laurent Barnard from UK punk legends Gallows – provided a good taste of the chaos to come, with new album *Bob Vylan Presents The Price Of Life* arriving on April 22 via their own Ghost Theatre label before the duo head out on a UK headline tour. If you like the idea of guitar bands such as The Clash, Rage Against The Machine and Bad Brains sparring with the likes of Wiley, Kano and Giggs, look no further. **AS**



BOB VYLAN'S MESSAGE ON SOCIAL INJUSTICE IS BACKED BY FITTINGLY CUTTING GUITARS

Photo: Derek Bremner



MATTEO MANCUSO

Hailed by Joe Bonamassa as “the one guy who freaks him out” and by Tosin Abasi as “a virtuoso beyond virtuosos”, 25 year-old Sicilian Matteo Mancuso has built a sizeable profile on YouTube and Instagram over the last few years and certainly won some friends in high places. He started playing at the age of 10 thanks to some guidance from his guitarist father, specialising in classical before eventually switching over to electric for more jazz and fusion-based endeavours – as demonstrated by his jaw-dropping covers of works by Guthrie Govan, Allan Holdsworth and Joe Pass. Instead of using a plectrum, however, he chose to continue work in pure fingerstyle, using flamenco techniques to rival Paul Gilbert and Pat Martino levels of speed and leaving jaws firmly locked on floors in the process. More recently, he's been working closely with Yamaha and Line 6, using his custom Revstar almost exclusively since he got it in August 2019, and designing his own presets for Helix Artist Tone Collection. Last year he formed a new trio, who are currently working on their debut album – and if their live cover of *Havana* by Weather Report is anything to go by, great things can be expected. **AS**



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Words Milton Mermikides

BENDODOLOGY...

The evolution of string bending from classic 70s blues-rock to contemporary progressive math-rock

HOW TO READ OUR STRING BEND DIAGRAMS

We've used Celemony Melodyne pitch editor to map out each string bend. Notes are indicated by 'blobs' and note names are shown at the side of each diagram. Thin wavy lines portray pitch variations with greater accuracy

POLYMATH
Polyphia's Tim Henson rocking his Ibanez TH8B10



Some aspects of electric guitar playing are so totally established as orthodoxy that they seem almost immune to change: standard tuning is a de facto, er, standard; open chords, powerchords and 'blues box' scale shapes too. Like a goldfish and the water it lives in, we don't really question their existence.

So it came as a bit of a shock to some in August 2021 when Polyphia's Tim Henson innocently related to music YouTuber Rick Beato that he rejects conventional string bending techniques of the 'Boomer' generation "because it's gonna sound like that era". Henson intended no disrespect (he actually paid homage to his heroes Jimi Hendrix and Black Sabbath) but in a conversation ostensibly about 'modern' guitar, Tim made it clear that he's most interested in new approaches and techniques.

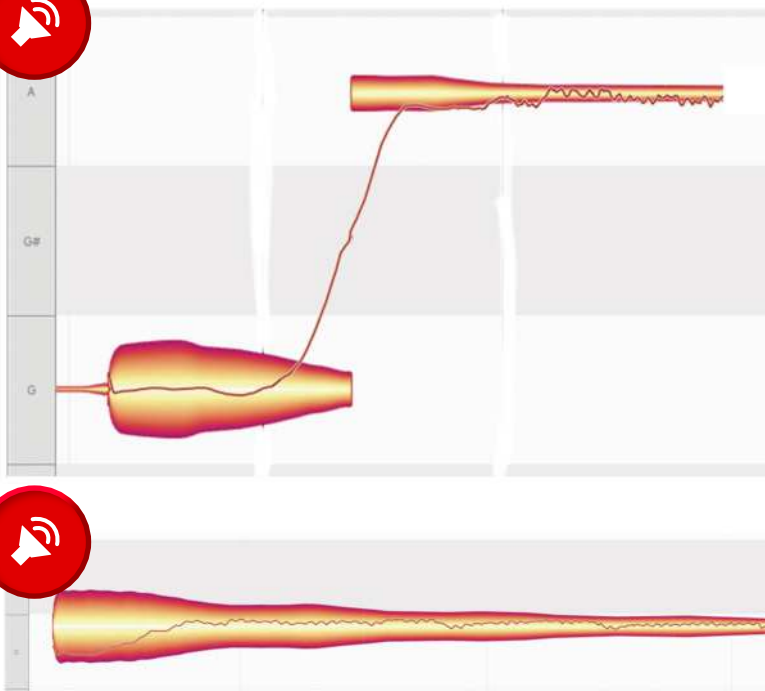
Here at TG we saw in this the opportunity to learn something new about guitar playing. So read on as we provide a taxonomy of key species of guitar bends from classic to contemporary. Learn them all, experiment with them in your own playing and you'll surely become a better guitarist whatever music you're into.

Find your audio at: bit.ly/tg354audio

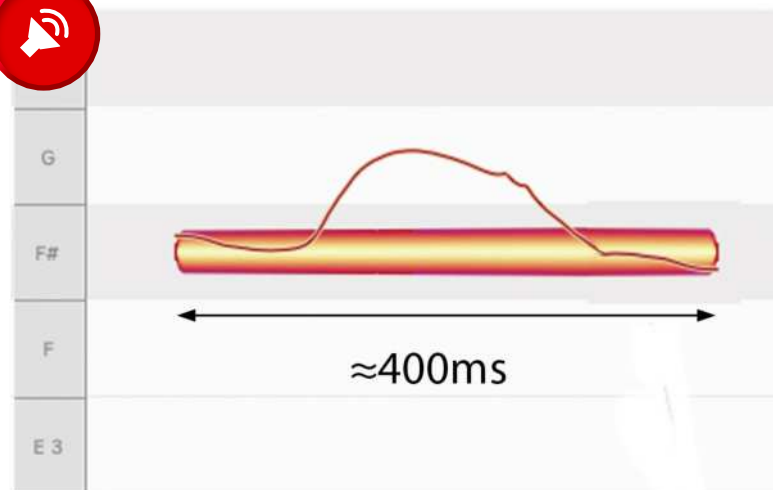


1 CLASSIC BEND #1: BLUES BENDS

A huge core of electric guitar soloing is blues-based, and, though there are many blues bends, most connect adjacent notes in the minor pentatonic and blues scales. For example, in the A blues scale (A C D E_b E G) you'd typically bend from C to D, D to E, G to A, D to E_b, or E, and occasionally the wider bends of A to C and E to G. Equally important are the microtonal 'blues curls' that fall between the frets' tunings – most commonly the 'neutral 3rd' between C and C[#] in the key of A. These are all fundamental to 60s and 70s icons like Tony Iommi and Jimi Hendrix, and are still widely used by countless artists such as Mdou Moctar, Jake Kiszka, Joe Bonamassa and more.



These waveforms show a blues bend from G to A and a 'blues curl' between C and C[#].



2 CONTEMPORARY BEND #1: THE TWEAK BEND

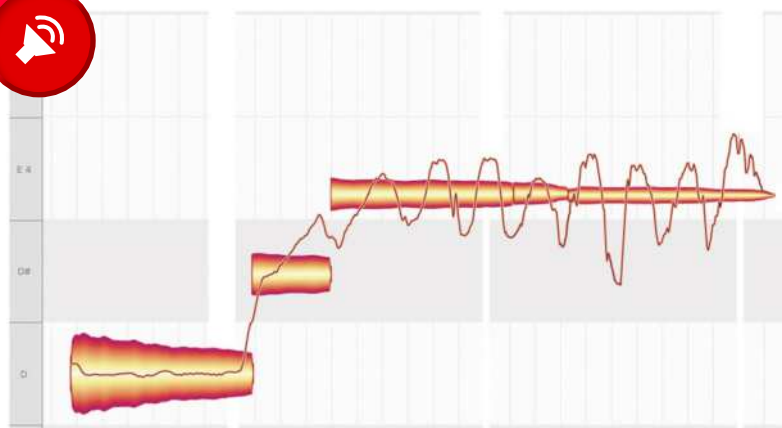
Tim Henson's own intro in Polyphia's *G.O.A.T.* features several of these. We're calling it a 'tweak bend' – it's a rapid up- or up-down bend, usually played quickly and without vibrato between the semitones of a diatonic scale (e.g., F# and G in the key E minor). There's none of the bluesy flavour associated with classic minor blues bends, just a restrained but committed attitude when you get it right. Play it with a light overdriven single coil tone for a Polyphia vibe.

Note the rapid 'hump' profile of a quick tweak bend from F# to G and back.

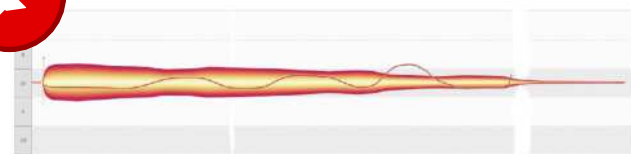
3 CLASSIC BEND #2: BEND AND SHAKE

We're in Angus Young and Paul Kossoff-style blues-rock territory here. Both players turn the electric guitar into a highly emotive instrument, emulating the human voice with their expressive leads. A common technique they both use in doing so is adding vibrato to string bends – reminiscent of a heartfelt blues/soul vocal 'cry' or 'wail'. Whole-tone bends (two semitones) rule the roost here.

The G pitch is held steady then the vibrato starts as the bend reaches A.



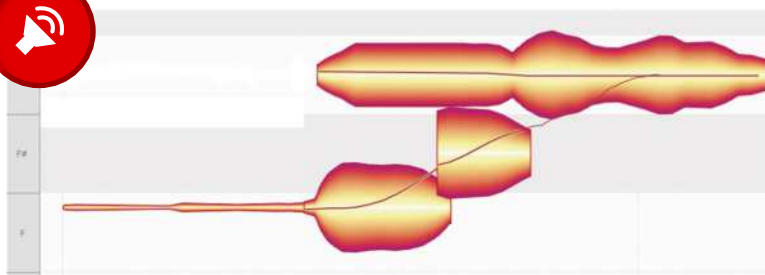
BLUES BENDS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO 60S AND 70S ICONS LIKE CLAPTON AND HENDRIX, AND ARE STILL WIDELY USED TODAY



The slow, wide wobble bend teasing towards but never reaching the adjacent chromatic notes.

4 CONTEMPORARY BEND #2: THE WOBBLE BEND

With a fragile, 'wobbly' quality reminiscent of whammy bar vibrato, this technique can be heard in the opening bars to *Lost* by Ichika Nito. Its microtonal expressivity is reminiscent of the Japanese koto instrument, and, with typically less than a semitone of pitch variation, it exists on the boundary of vibrato and conventional guitar bend. The timing should be synced to the musical metre – almost like the pulsing effect of a chorus pedal.

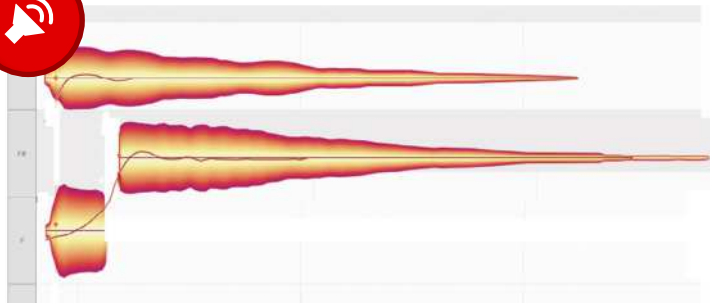


F and G are played together, before the lower note is bent to match the upper note's pitch.

5 CLASSIC BEND #3: THE UNISON BEND

Surely you know this one! The outro solo from Jimi Hendrix's *All Along The Watchtower* is a great reference for a technique which involves a string being bent up to a simultaneously held note of the same pitch. To do it, fret a G on the first string at the 15th fret and an F on the second string (18th fret). Pick the two strings together then bend the F to match the G. The resulting scream and dissonance between the two notes is heightened as you bend, then resolved when you hit the target.

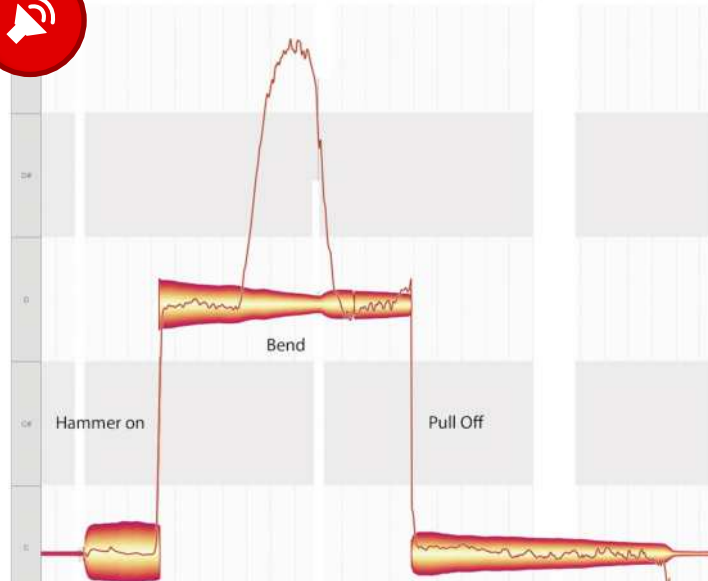
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The lower note bends and stops at a dissonant minor 2nd interval with the upper note.

6 CONTEMPORARY BEND #3: THE CLUSTER BEND

While the unison bend has survived numerous generations of guitar solos, it has also diversified. A notable contemporary example is the 'cluster bend', where the bent note – rather than reaching its unison target – stops a semitone short, goes a semitone above, or targets another deliciously dissonant interval. Hear it in action at 2:04 in *Ulysses* by Alluvial, where guitarist Wes Hauch plays a semitone bend into $\flat$ 5th and $\flat$ 2nd intervals.

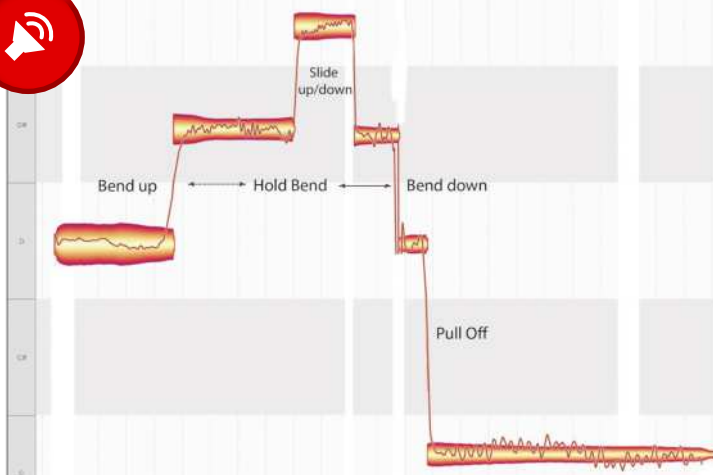


Hammer on from C to D, bend up to E, then down to D before pulling off back to C.

7 CLASSIC BEND #4: THE LEGATO BEND

String bends have long been played alongside other lead guitar articulations. One common approach is to use legato (slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs) on either side of the bend to create a collective phrase. A great example comes between 5:53 and 5:58 during Allen Collins' solo in Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Free Bird*. This sort of slippery articulation is part of the established electric guitar vocabulary and there are countless variations on the theme.

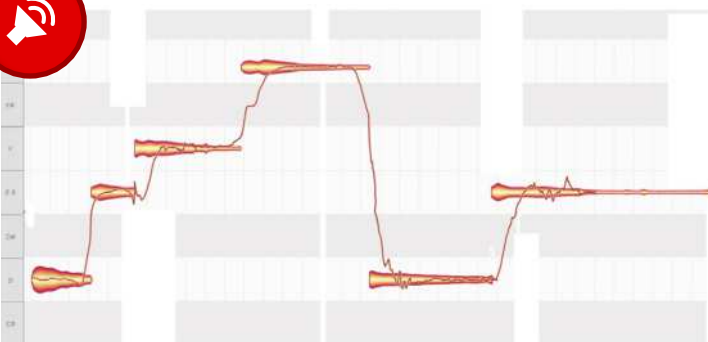
OF TG'S 20 GREATEST SOLOS OF ALL TIME, 14% OF ALL THE NOTES INVOLVED BENDS



We said they were brief! See how quick the D# and D notes are in the downward part of the phrase.

8 CONTEMPORARY BEND #4: THE SLIDY BEND

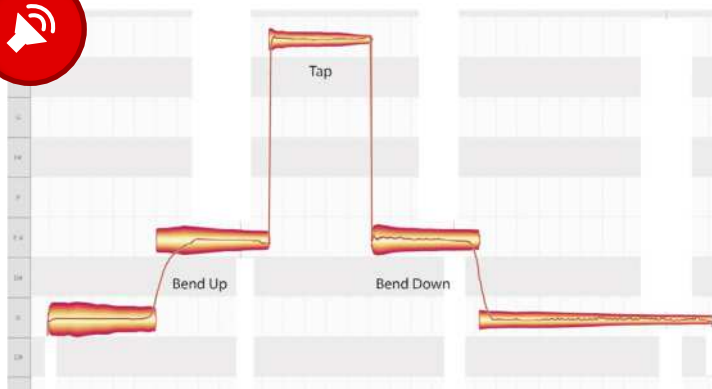
We're homing in on Mateus Asato's solo on Polyphia's *Drown* between 2:14 and 2:16 for this one. He's using a bend in a more complex way, adding intricate slurs and slides to proceedings. It's basically: bend, hold bend, slide up a semitone, slide down again, then release the initial bend and finish with a pull-off. Sound easy? Think again. These are surprisingly challenging to execute in tune, and the virtuosity may well go unnoticed because they're often fleetingly brief.



One picked D note is bent four times to produce a five-note melody. Consider downtuning to save your strings!

9 CLASSIC BEND #5: THE MELODY BEND

Some solos use bends to create complete melodic phrases rather than just as momentary inflections. We're looking at you, David Gilmour – the outro solo in Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall, Pt. 2* features a couple of examples like this. These potentially string-snapping licks are tricky to execute, and demonstrate that the 'classic' era of rock was in no short supply of sage string benders. Save your strings by downtuning by a semitone and playing one fret higher!

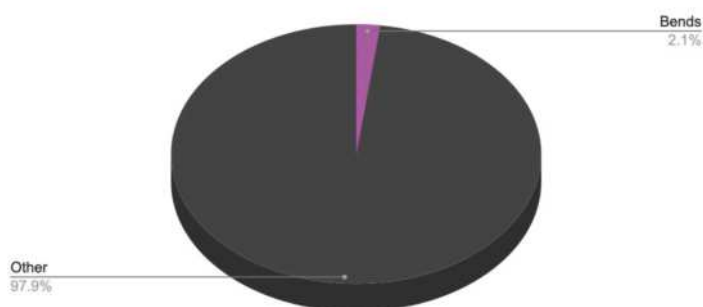


Bend D (third string, 7th fret) to E, then tap the 12th fret to produce A, which is released to the bent E and bent back down to D.

10 CONTEMPORARY BEND #5: THE TAP BEND

Fans of contemporary math-rock acts like Chon, Polyphia and Covet will be no strangers to tapping – the technique is at the heart of these acts' styles. Tapping bent strings expands the available range for bends and allows phrases to continue almost indefinitely – the tap providing additional energy to the string. Though considered a 'modern' rock technique, it was already commonplace by the mid 80s thanks to the influence of players like Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai.

Liftoff



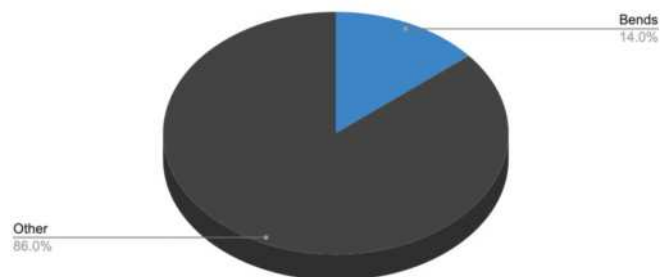
Tim Henson's solo on Skyhaven's *Liftoff* shows a 2.1% bend density. About 7x fewer than a selection of 20 classic solos.

12 BEND DENSITY: SKYHAVEN - LIFTOFF

Let's compare this 14% bend density to the virtuosic solo on Skyhaven's *Liftoff*, which features a heady post-prog blend of rhythmic sophistication, diatonic and borrowed chords, tasteful neo-soul inflections and hyper-shred. Tim Henson's exquisite and intricate 240-note 16-bar solo only has a handful of bends, and even these are generally blues-adjacent and non-unison devices. It has a bend density of just over 2% – a stark contrast to the classic style. Indeed acts such as Chon and Covet have complete tunes with few – if any – bent notes.



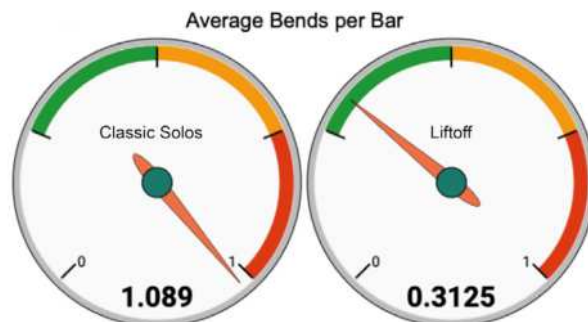
Top 20 Classic Guitar Solos



Of the 20 Greatest Solos of All Time (which had an average release date of 1979), a full 14% of all the notes involved bends.

11 BEND DENSITY: TOP 20 SOLOS

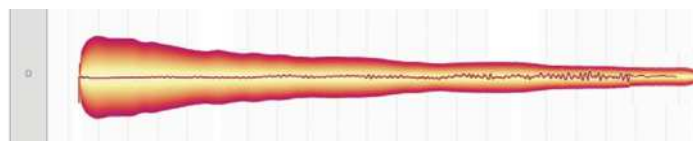
The most significant change to string bends in soloing might just be the simplest – the striking reduction in their number. Back in issue 341, we analysed the Top 20 Greatest Solos Of All Time – which were mostly from the 1970s. We found that close to 14 per cent of all notes in these solos were string bends.



On average there's more than one bend per bar in a classic solo. Tim Henson's virtuosic solo in *Liftoff* has only about 0.3

13 AVERAGE BENDS PER BAR: TOP 20 SOLOS AND LIFTOFF

Another – and perhaps more accessible – way of considering bendiness is in terms of 'average number of bends per bar', as opposed to which proportion of the notes are bent. Here again there is a marked difference: While our classic solos sample had on average over one bend per bar, Henson's solo averages just 0.3 (less than one bend every three bars). This is further compounded by the fact that at 77bpm, *Liftoff* is significantly slower than the 106bpm average of classic solos, and Tim's solo is particularly virtuosic and notey.



Behold, the zero bend!

14 THE ZERO BEND

So perhaps the final and most radical bend we should include is... one that doesn't exist: the 'Zero Bend'. A frivolous inclusion, you say? Well okay, guilty as charged! However, it's not without precedent in the math-rock genre. Yvette Young's work with Covet features barely a single string bend. Who knows if future generations will one day look back at the quaint and dated bending techniques of Boomers and Zoomers alike as they explore AI, robotic and mind-controlled hyper-bends among perhaps a renaissance in CDs, denim and NFTs.

2022 Guitar Workout

Welcome to *Total Guitar*'s 2022 Guitar Workout, where this month we've made it our mission to help you become a better guitarist. We kick off with a huge 11-page technique workout, covering everything from funk rhythms and fretboard knowledge to picking accuracy and playing the changes. Hopefully there's something for everyone.

And if it's inspiration you seek, then let the words of our star interviewees be your guide. Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil talks tone and tells all about making his Strats sound heavy, writing in odd time signatures, and prepping for live shows. Plus, Mark Tremonti, John Petrucci, Eric Gales, Nilüfer Yanya and Tom Dowse of art rockers Dry Cleaning offer musical wisdom and practical tips for you.

Turn on, tune up, plug in and let's rock the hell out of February!





FRETTING & PICKING ACCURACY

The core of any technique workout is making your fingers move more efficiently. Our exercises will help

When most people think of a guitar workout, they inevitably think of 'getting faster', but this can be a fool's errand. Winding up the speed on your metronome might not do you any good in the long run if you aren't playing accurately – you'll just end up playing sloppily quickly. It's important to keep in mind that speed is a by-product of accuracy. These exercises will improve your dexterity and accuracy, which will in turn allow you to play faster. Work through the examples slowly and only increase the speed when you can play an exercise ten times without error.

1 SPIDER EXERCISES

This classic four-finger workout spider exercise is probably already in your practice routine – the idea is to play notes at consecutive frets using all four fretting fingers. You'll be honing your alternate picking technique too. The most common approach is: first finger, then second, third, and fourth, but try these variations too.

1. 4-3-2-1 1-2-3-4
2. 4-2-3-1 1-3-2-4
3. 3-2-4-1 1-4-2-3
4. 2-1-4-3 3-4-1-2



2 LEGATO WORKOUT

$\text{♩} = 85$

A fret-hand technique, legato refers to the use of hammer-ons and pull-offs instead of picking every note. It can seem easy, but it's important to be able to make every note roughly the same volume, whether picked or not. Try our exercise taking careful note of which notes are picked.

3 FINGER ROLLS

$\text{♩} = 85$

Playing the same fret on adjacent strings is a tricky move – especially if you don't want the notes to bleed into each other. Play the first note here with the pad of your finger then 'roll' onto the tip to play the second note. Do the opposite for the second half of the exercise.



FRETBOARD KNOWLEDGE

Map out the notes on the guitar and you'll be flying round the fretboard before you know it!

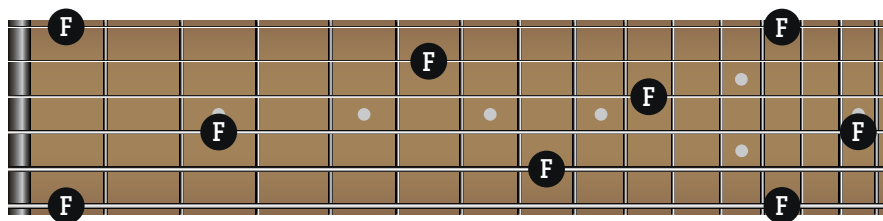
Moving freely around the fretboard is a goal many guitarists share. Knowing which note you're playing at any time, where you can move to next or which notes will sound

good against a song's chords will help you take your playing to a new level. We'll start here with some essential info to help you improve your fretboard knowledge before moving on to some practical applications of this new knowledge.

While we have demonstrated some concepts here, it is not enough to just play through them. The idea is for you to create your own licks and solos to build these skills so they integrate seamlessly into your playing.

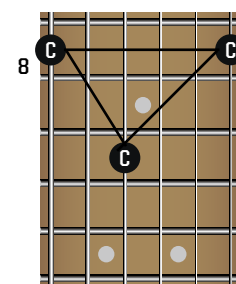
8 LEARN THE NOTES ON THE FRETBOARD

Lots of people learn notes by moving up a single string. This doesn't really work as you only learn the notes as a sequence rather than identifying them in isolation. Instead, select a note (we've gone for F) and find it in every location in the neck. Make sure to explore above the 15th fret too and repeat the exercise with different notes. For instance, try finding all the G notes.

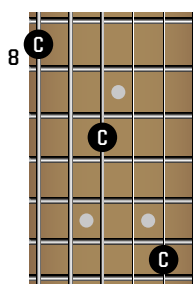


9 IDENTIFY OCTAVE SHAPES

Once you've covered individual notes, it's time to move to octaves. This will help you move licks and phrases into different registers. Lots of people like the triangle method shown here. This is good for helping find root notes, but not so great for transposing licks, so we've shown an alternative – it doesn't have a fancy name, but is worth memorising.



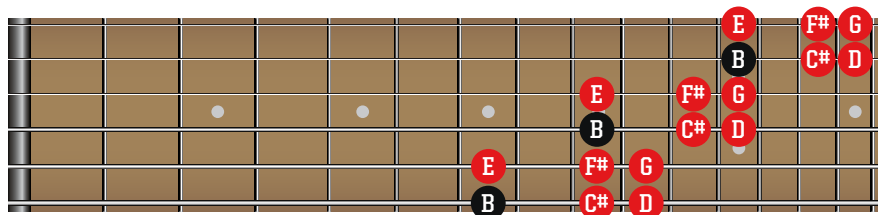
Octaves: triangle method



Octaves: alternative method

10 MOVING OCTAVE LICK: SCALE PATTERN

The lick below shows how easy shifting a sequence into different octaves is. It is the perfect device for building a solo from low notes to a high melody. This scale box gives you a visual representation of how we pieced our lick together.



10 MOVING OCTAVE LICK

♩ = 91

B⁵ D⁵ E⁵ B⁵

Playing the same fret on adjacent strings is a tricky move – especially if you don't want the notes to bleed into each other. Play the first note here with the pad of your finger then 'roll' onto the tip to play the second note. Do the opposite for the second half of the exercise.

JAM TRACKS

Test out your lead guitar skills over our rock and indie backing tracks



11. KILL THIS!

VERSE

||: G /// | D /// |
| G /// | A5 B5 D5 / :|| x4

BRIDGE

||: C5 /// | G/B / D5 / :|| x3
| C5 /// | G/B / D5 B/D# ||

CHORUS

||: Em /// | C /// |
| G /// | D // B/D# :|| x3
| Em /// | C /// | G /// | D /// ||

The verse and bridge are both based in G, but approach each section differently to add variety. For example, you could try playing rhythmically in the verse, before exploring some melodic licks or short hooks as you reach the next section. As ever, make sure to experiment and just enjoy playing.

12. LIZZY'S TWIN SISTER

INTRO/INTERLUDE

||: A /// | /// G5 / :|| x4

VERSE

||: A5 A6 A5 A6 | D5 D6 D5 D6 |
| A5 A6 A5 A6 | D5 D6 D5 D6 :||
x4

CHORUS

||: Am /// | A m7/G /// |
| F#m7,5 /// | Fmaj7 /// :|| x4

Once you've listened to the track, try mapping out how to play over it from start to finish. The intro and verse rely on the A minor pentatonic scale. Switch to the A Dorian mode in the chorus, but be ready for a brief move to the A natural minor scale as you reach the Fmaj7 chord.

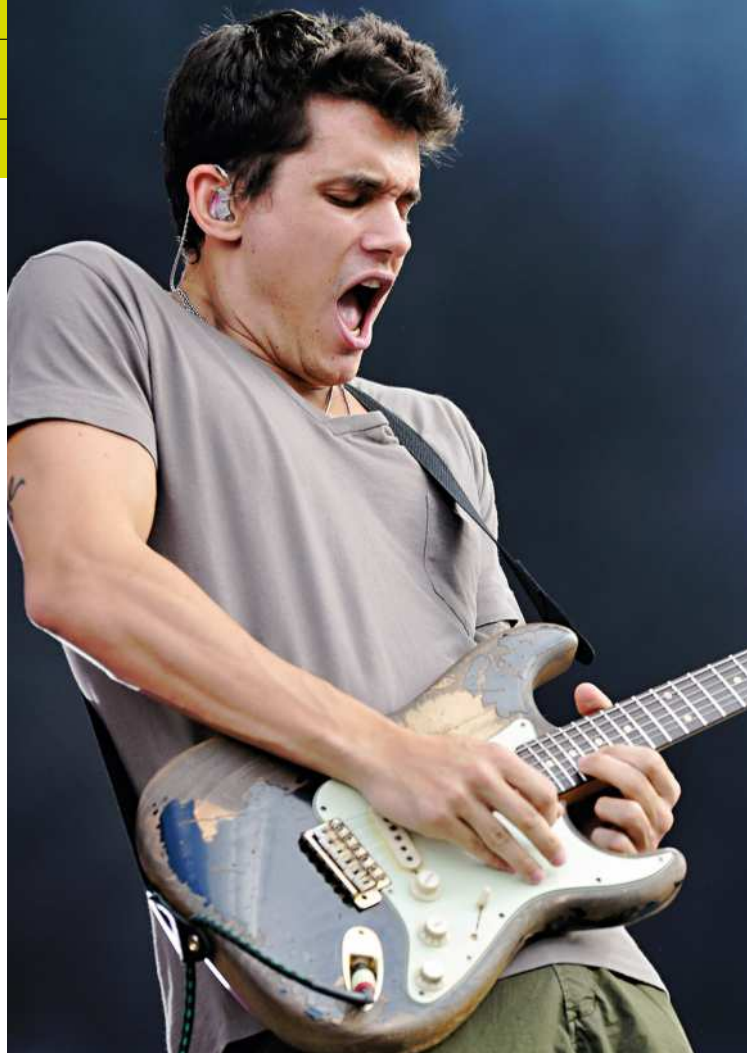


PLAYING THROUGH CHANGES

Follow these shortcuts and find the right notes for your solos every time you play

Most people know the scale's root note is a good place to finish a phrase, but wouldn't it be great if you could play something that effortlessly fits against whatever chord is playing? This is called playing through the [chord] changes. Getting started can be an intimidating task,

especially if you've ever witnessed a jazz virtuoso ripping it seamlessly over fast, complex chords. Like every skill it can be built over time from simple concepts that anyone can understand and use. We're going to take you step-by-step through the basics so you can think on your feet and create intelligent, considered solos.



13 PLAY THE ROOT NOTE AS THE CHORD CHANGES

♩ = 70

Am Dm F G Am

This first step is really quite simple. Simply change note as the chords change. This gives you an idea of when to change (you're following the chords, remember!) and which note to use (the chord's root note). Don't worry if this seems simple. This is a framework that you can build upon.

14 CONNECT THE DOTS

♩ = 70

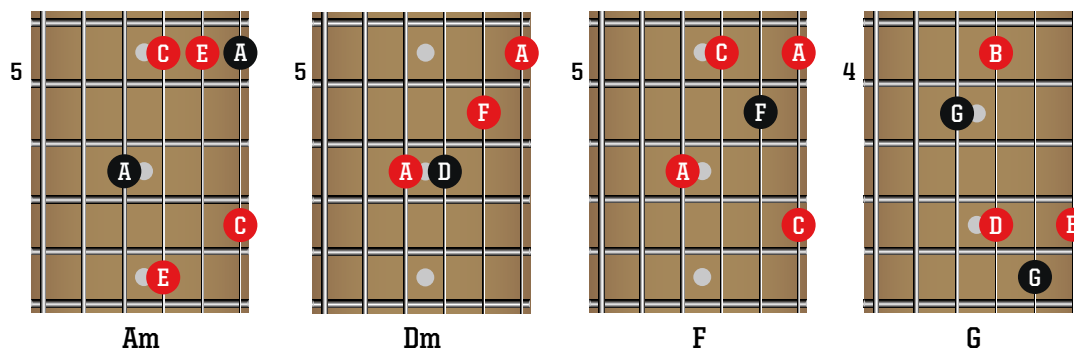
Am Dm F G Am

Next, you're going to make your playing more musical by playing phrases that connect the root notes. It's important that you try this for yourself once you've played through our example. We're in the key of A minor, so we're using the A natural minor scale.

15 USE CHORD TONES

These chord boxes show every note for each chord on the first four strings – even when they can't be played at the same time. So what? Well, it might sound obvious but any note that's in a

chord you're playing over will also work as part of a solo. Learn the chords of the music you're playing and you're instantly armed with loads of usable notes for your solos.



16 SEAMLESS SOLOING

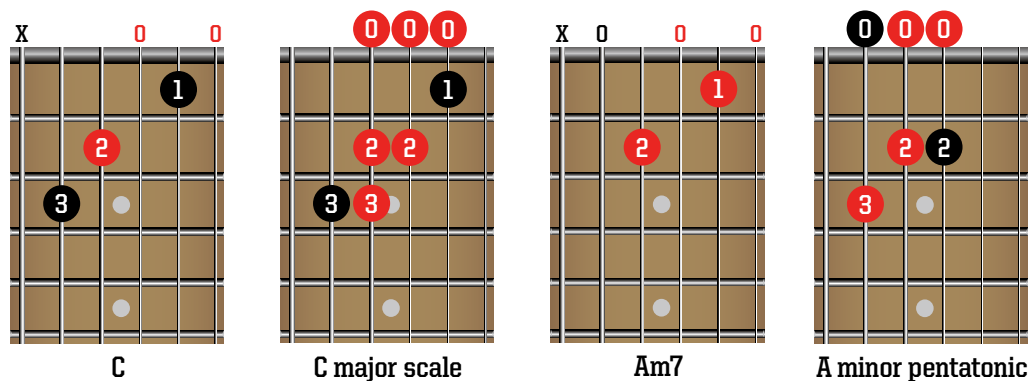
This example uses the other chord tones to stop the phrase sounding mechanical by avoiding big jumps. The first note of each bar is one of the chord tones shown in the diagram above. As before, play this example then try writing your own lick.

17 CHORDS & SCALES

Some chords and scales are almost identical. You can use this to your advantage...

The C major scale shape shown here adds a few notes to the C chord. In fact, they're so similar that you'll nearly always be able to use the scale over the chord and know that they'll

match up. It's the same with the A minor pentatonic scale and this Am7 chord. They share so many notes that you can nearly always make them work together.



LEARN TO READ RHYTHMS

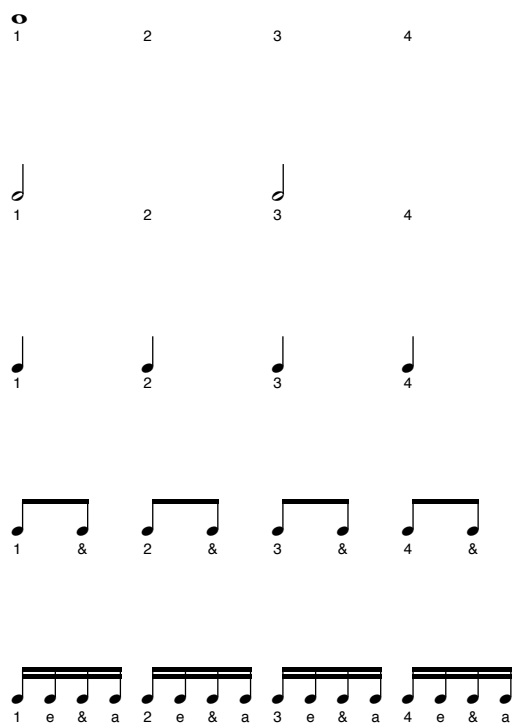
Crack the code of music notation and your rhythm playing will improve. We show you how...

Guitarists are generally not so good at reading music. It's not entirely our fault, though.

As you'll remember from the fretboard knowledge section every note can be played in lots of locations, so it's not as straightforward as it is on, say, a piano – where every note appears

only once. What we definitely *can* be better at is understanding and reading rhythms. This will enable you to read chord charts like the one below and communicate better with other musicians – especially drummers. This section introduces you to basic rhythm notation and gives you a chance to test your knowledge.

18 RHYTHM TREE



This is the rhythm tree. It shows the most commonly used notes found in music notation and how each of the rhythms relate to one another. We've also included how each of the rhythms is counted in a bar of 4/4 time music.



19 COUNTING RHYTHMS

♩=100

This example combines several rhythms but stays on one note, so you can focus your attention on following the rhythm as it's written. We recommend having a go at following the notation without any audio first, to see if you've understood the rhythm tree. Counting aloud as you play will help you stay in time.



20 RHYTHM TESTS

Check your rhythm knowledge

We've prepared three audio rhythm tests. The first is one bar long and uses half and quarter notes. The second is also one bar long and adds eighth notes. The third test is two bars long. Work out which rhythms are being used, and try playing them back on your guitar. Find the answers at: bit.ly/tg353audio.

21 RHYTHM METHOD

APPLY MUSIC READING SKILLS TO YOUR PLAYING

Reading music isn't the easiest aspect of guitar playing. In fact, for some people, the symbols used in music might as well be some alien code. Still, the beams/stems of the notes do at least give you a good idea of *how many* times you need to strike a note or chord. And that gives you a clue as to which picking/strumming approach to use.

1. EIGHTH NOTES

Play these with constant downstrokes for a driving, urgent sound, or use alternating down- and upstrokes for a looser strummy sound.

2. 16TH NOTES

With four notes for every beat, you'll nearly always have to pick/strum 16th notes with alternating down- and upstrokes. They're just too quick to downpick.

22 CHORD CHART WITH RHYTHMS

This chord chart is an excellent way to try out your newly-acquired knowledge. Play through it a few times and count the rhythms, then try it with our backing track. It's ok to have several attempts - sight reading will come later.

FUNK WORKOUT



Get your rhythm skills up to speed as we take a look at the cool, funky sounds of 16th notes

No guitar workout would be complete without at least some attention paid to your strumming technique, and we're looking at a staple rhythm in funk and disco, the 16th-note. Let us oblige you with an explanation... 16th notes are so called because that's how many of 'em are in a bar of music in 4/4 time – 16! Listen to the intro riff

in Deep Purple's *Smoke On The Water*. The guitar part uses quarter notes but the hi-hat is playing 16ths. You can probably tell from this classic rocker then that 16th notes are usually fairly quick, and if you're going to recreate the rhythm with your strumming arm you need a steady, well-timed strumming technique. Our examples will help you develop your skills.



23 ON-BEAT CHORDS

♩=80

Em⁷

Play 4 times

cont. sim.

This line will help you establish a basic down-up strumming pattern. Emphasise the on-beat chords (the first of each group of four strums) then release pressure so that the strings are muted in between.

24 OFFBEAT CHORDS

Em⁷

Play 4 times

cont. sim.

Here the same pattern is 'moved' so the offbeats are accented. You may find this one trickier to play even though it is essentially the same thing. Have a good listen to our version so you can hear how it sounds.

25 SIMPLE FUNK RHYTHM

Em⁷

Play 4 times

cont. sim.

Here we mix up the rhythms and a much funkier-sounding part is the result. Remember, the down-up strumming pattern stays the same – it's just the fretting hand pushing down on the strings that creates the rhythm.

26 CREATING SPACE

Em⁷

Play 4 times

cont. sim.

Finally, we look at how leaving space can break up the monotony of constant muted strokes. Keep moving your picking hand up and down to ensure good timing – just don't make contact with the strings in the gaps.

WORK OUT YOUR EARS

Identify intervals by ear to become a better improviser and songwriter

The ears are one of a guitarist's biggest assets. They allow you to easily identify exactly

what's going on in your favourite tracks, the ideas in your head, and what your bandmates are playing when they improvise and write

songs. Identifying music's raw materials of intervals (the distance between two notes) and chords in isolation is a good place to start.

As you become more familiar with each interval and chord's distinctive sound you'll start notice them every time you hear music.

27 INTERVALS AND A TABLE OF SONGS

Interval	Minor 2nd	Major 2nd	Minor 3rd	Major 3rd	Perfect 4th	Augmented 4th	Perfect 5th	Minor 6th	Major 6th	Minor 7th	Major 7th	Octave
Tab	3-4	3-5	3-6	3-7	3-8	3-9	3-10	3-11	3-12	3-13	3-14	3-15

Here you can see how to play each interval (shown in the tab in the key of C) and we've given you a list of familiar tunes to help you recognise them. Listen to the sound qualities of each interval as you play them and if this all looks a bit scary, just work on the major and perfect intervals first.

Minor 2nd - *Jaws* Theme
Major 2nd - *Happy Birthday*
Minor 3rd - *Smoke On The Water*
Major 3rd - *Oh, When The Saints...*
Perfect 4th - *Here Comes The Bride*

Diminished 5th - *The Simpsons* Theme (root, 3rd, 5th)
Perfect 5th - *Star Wars* Theme
Minor 6th - *The Entertainer*
Major 6th - *My Way*

Minor 7th - *Somewhere* (*Westside Story*)
Major 7th - *Take On Me*
Octave - *Sweet Child O' Mine*

28 CHORDS A TABLE OF SOUND QUALITIES

Chord	C	Cm	Caug	Cdim	Cmaj ⁷	Cm ⁷	C ⁷
Tab	8-9-10	8-9-10	8-9-10	7-8-9-10	7-8-9-10	8-9-10	8-9-10

We've also put together a handy table for chords. Be sure to play through the shapes shown here in the tab and see if you agree with our descriptions of their sounds. If not, create your own - what matters is that you can identify them and use them to create the sound you want!

Major - Happy
Minor - Sad
Augmented - Mysterious

Diminished - Dark
Major 7th - Reflective
Minor 7th - Dark, melancholy

Dominant 7th - Strong, but uneasy

29 EAR TESTS

Track your ear training progress with TG's interval tests

We've prepared three audio tests. The first test uses just major intervals. The second uses minor intervals. The third test uses all the intervals.

See if you can tell which interval is being played in each case. Each pair of notes is played twice. Find the answers at: bit.ly/tg353audio.

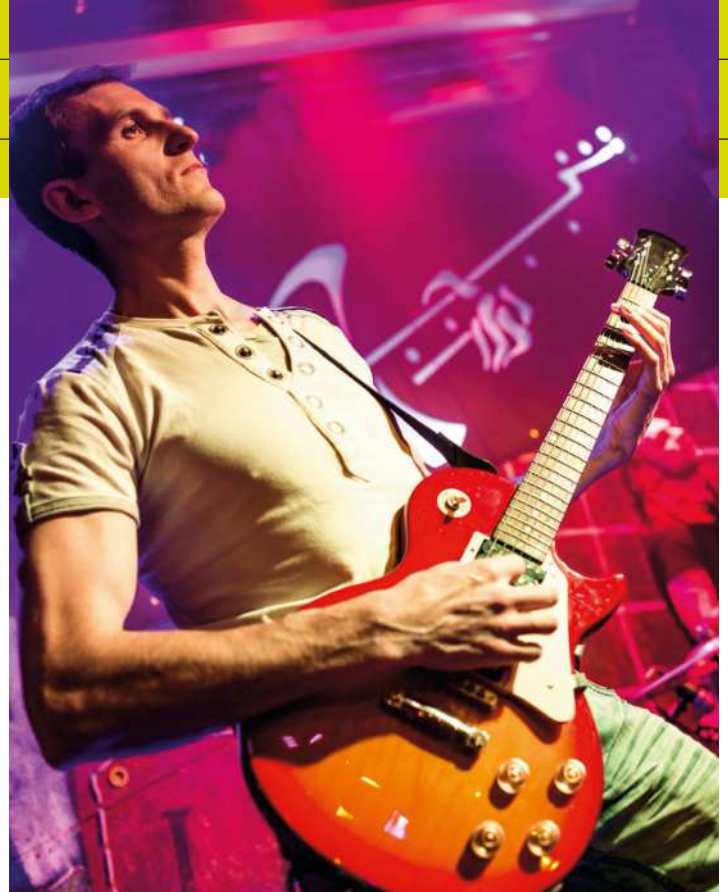


PRACTICE PLANS

You've tried our exercises, now it's down to you to get practising!

The key to improving at all these different guitar playing skills is regular practice. Each area will improve with a small amount of regular practice. How much emphasis you put in each section

depends on your goals as a player and your existing strengths and weaknesses. We've prepared three example scenarios based on different players' goals. Feel free to follow the one that suits you or – better yet – create your own plan.



PLAYER 1 THE ALL-ROUND IMPROVER

For the guitarist who plays a bit of everything, including various styles of music and the odd solo or two...

5 minutes: Notes on the fingerboard

– Find all the F notes, then all the G notes, and so on.

5 minutes: Warm-up

– Play two of the easiest tab examples in the feature slowly.

10 minutes: Dexterity and agility

– Choose two exercises, and aim to play them cleanly.

5 minutes: Write an octave lick

– Try a different root note every time you attempt this.

5 minutes: Playing through changes

– Follow the lesson daily until the 'landing notes' become second nature.

5 minutes: Ear training with intervals and chords

– Try one of our tests.

5 minutes: Rhythm reading

– Play any chord, making sure to follow the rhythm tree for your timing cues.

10 minutes: Funk

– Get into a groove and loop one exercise per day.

10 minutes: Jam tracks

– Alternate daily either playing lead or chords over our jam tracks.

PLAYER 2 THE TECHNICIAN

For players who are generally more interested in soloing and improving their dexterity, timing and technique...

5 minutes: Notes on the fingerboard

– Find all the F notes, then all the G notes, and so on.

5 minutes: Warm-up

– Play two of the easiest tab examples in the feature slowly.

5 minutes: Switch between four octave shapes

– Choose four octave shapes and make quick, accurate changes between them.

15 minutes: Dexterity and accuracy

– Try 10 minutes on legato and spider exercises; 5 minutes on anything else.

5 minutes: Playing through changes

– Land on a root note or chord tone on every change.

5 minutes: Ear training with intervals and chords

– Try one of our tests.

5 minutes: Rhythm reading

– Play through the rhythm tree using only the quarter-, eighth- and 16th notes.

10 minutes: Funk

– Choose an exercise and play the rhythm with a) chords, then b) single notes.

10 minutes: Jam tracks

– Apply the 'Playing through changes' concepts, using root notes and chord tones.

PLAYER 3 THE THEORY BUFF

For players who are looking to *understand* the music they play just as much as improve their technical skills

5 minutes: Notes on the fingerboard

– Find all the sharp and flat notes on the fretboard, e.g., G#, B $\flat$, and so on.

5 minutes: Warm-up

– Follow the major scale in 3rds and the string skipping exercises.

10 minutes: Ear training with intervals and chords

– Try one of our tests. Identify the first interval in the melody of any song you like.

10 minutes: Playing through changes

– Create your own progressions and licks, making sure to target root notes and chord tones.

10 minutes: Rhythm reading

– Revisit this lesson daily to digest the information, then move onto the funk workout.

10 minutes: Funk

– Try accenting different notes in each four-note grouping. It's a tough rhythm workout!

10 minutes: Jam track

– Jam over one of our tracks first with chords, then arpeggios, repeating riffs and finally scalar licks.

WIN! A GIBSON GENERATION COLLECTION G-00 ACOUSTIC GUITAR

WORTH
£899

Total Guitar has teamed up with Gibson to offer you the chance to win a G-00 acoustic guitar from the company's new Generation Collection

Modelled after Gibson's small-body parlour acoustics from the 1930s and made in the USA at the company's Bozeman, Montana factory, the G-00 is a top choice for blues and fingerstyle guitar performances. The compact guitar comes well-appointed, featuring a solid sitka spruce top, solid walnut back and sides, traditional scalloped X-bracing, a striped ebony fingerboard, plus third-party appointments including Grover tuners and a TUSQ nut.

Then there's the small matter of that Player Port. Originally conceived as a downward-firing design by Ted McCarty nearly six decades ago, now the port is positioned above the waist of the guitar, piping the sound

unobstructed towards the player's head to give what Gibson describes as a "unique and immersive sonic experience". Our competition gives you the chance to own one of these fantastic new guitars.

All you have to do to enter is go to the web address below, fill in your details and correctly answer the following question:

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Words Jonny Scaramanga Photos Glen Ballard / Euan Robertson

"THE THOUGHT
OF PLAYING ON
STAGE CAN
INTIMIDATE
ME, BUT AS
SOON AS I PUT
THE GUITAR
OVER MY
CHEST I'M
LIKE, 'RIGHT,
THIS IS ME!'"

When **Biffy Clyro** made a triumphant return to the stage, frontman **Simon Neil** felt that he had rediscovered the meaning of life. Now, as part of TG's 2022 Guitar Workout, he presents his guide to the art of rock guitar. How to make a Strat sound heavy. How to write in odd time signatures. How to prepare for playing live. And why there is still one pedal he can't live without...



Dropping an a surprise album is the kind of thing you expect more from Taylor Swift than hard-working Scottish rock trios, but that's what happened when Biffy Clyro's *The Myth Of The Happily Ever After* arrived at the end of October 2021. As guitarist/vocalist Simon Neil says, "There's part of you feels like it's total baller – 'Hey man here's our new album!' Like Beyoncé or something. But it's also extremely terrifying."

He needn't have worried, as Biffy fans made it the band's sixth consecutive Top 5 album. *The Myth...* has big hooks and huge sonics that belie its rapid creation. And in contrast to the band's embrace of pop that peaked with 2016's *Ellipsis*, this album also features complex riffs in odd time signatures. "Moving back to stranger, more esoteric ideas", as Simon describes it.



Making music in times of crisis made the band consider their relevance. “When you’re seeing people going through proper heartbreak every day, you start to wonder ‘Am I contributing to the world? Is this something that needs to exist?’” Simon reflects. But, he concluded, “It’s about trying to bring a sense of joy and togetherness to me and my friends. Just to find that focus and joy was remarkable at this stage of being in a band.”

As well as finding joy in creating music, Biffy Clyro made a life-affirming return to the stage last summer with enormous shows including headline slots at the Reading and Leeds festivals. They also completed the aptly named ‘Fingers Crossed’ tour at the end of the year.

After this hectic period, Simon is in upbeat mood as he talks about the album, the tour and his new signature pedal, and explains his singular approach to playing, performing, songwriting and gear...

Let’s start with *The Myth Of The Happily Ever After*. What was different about the process of making this album?

Normally when I’m writing there’s 18 months of working on the songs. This one felt so spontaneous. I didn’t anticipate writing a bunch of songs but it ended up being the way I was processing. Every week all our realities were changing so I was able to focus my energy and my anxieties into the songs. It was going in to make an album without necessarily knowing how the songs should sound, and that was strange. We did no pre-production. We would normally record ourselves in the practice room. This was like, ‘Here’s a song, let’s record it.’ The growth period to the record was probably about six to eight weeks and then recording it was about eight weeks, and then suddenly it was done. Normally it takes us that long to rehearse. Because of the pandemic, the purpose of the music felt more pure, knowing that we weren’t going to go out on a promotional tour.

Was all of the material brand new?

That’s how I like to work. I like to feel like I’m about to make either the best



BOOOOOOM AND BLAST!

Get Biffy in a Box with Simon's new pedal, built in limited runs by his tech!

"Me and my guitar tech Chard [Richard Pratt] took about two years of prototyping to get it where we wanted. We wanted two channels, an overdrive and a fuzz, and the most options without being overblown. My main aim for Biffy is just the best distortion sound I can possibly have. [For the 'Blast' fuzz] the main aim was volume and just being able to get

that square wave. I love that Jack White fuzz tone, real 60s, everything totally blown out. The Biffy tone is the Boooooom. All my guitar sounds have been based on my very first Peavey Bandit and Boss Metal Zone. Ever since then I've just been trying to sophisticate that sound, add detail and depth to it. That's what this pedal does.

You can put it straight into any amp and it really gives you a level of power. You can have clarity if you want, or you can have the real fuzz and real overblown sound. It was important that if you plugged your guitar in, you were getting a taste of my guitar sound. It's hard to do that in one box, but Chard did a fantastic job.

record we've ever made or the worst. When you've had an idea that's floating around your relationship with that idea can colour any new themes or songs, so I've always tried to clear the decks before we start a new album. If an idea isn't good enough the first time round, why is it good enough six years later? I like to have no starting blocks so that I feel the fear. I want to feel like I have to make music. If it's just a case of 'time for another album, we've got half a dozen ideas let's work on them until they're good enough', why bother?

At this moment in time I have not one song idea for the next Biffy record!

What gear did you use?

I used my Michael Landau signature Stratocaster. I've got a couple of them and they are honestly the best-sounding Stratocasters I've ever found, so that was the guitar I used for pretty much every song. In terms of amplifiers I used a Friedman for the very first time and a Matchless. We didn't really have access to all our normal gear so we were trying a few

different things. The Friedman BE-100 was an absolute beast. I'm definitely thinking of investing in one. I used an Audio Kitchen Flying Squirrel which is just a stunning distortion. You can use it as a head or a pedal. I actually use it as a head. I used some Earthquaker pedals, and the Boooooom/Blast pedal! It was about trying to keep things as simple as possible. Normally when we make a record I feel fortunate to have access to anything. If I want a 1960s Fender amp, I could do it. The restrictions of the gear we had this time really helped push the

"WHENEVER I WRITE SOMETHING WEIRD I STAND UP AND PLAY. EVEN WITH WEIRD TIME SIGNATURES YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE IN WAYS THAT MAKE SENSE"



A CELEBRATION OF TUNINGS

Simon explains how tunings open creative doors

"I'm a man that lives and dies by the drop D! If it's good enough for Helmet it's good enough for Biffy Clyro! DADGAD is a beautiful tuning. That's one of the first ones where I started to come up with some more folk-type songs. With some open tunings you just you start to voice your chords in a different way. One of my favourite tunings is CFGDCF. You never find a chord that sounds like anything you've ever played before. Every place you put your fingers is new. If you have gone through lessons and you learned a certain way of playing, as soon as you detune the guitar you're in a brand new, naive landscape and that's where you discover new things. For me it's very important. Sometimes I'll place my fingers on a chord and just detune certain strings and see what happens. There's a song called *Get F*cked Stud* [from *Puzzle*, 2007]. That sounds like weird tuning but all I changed was the G string down to an F#. It makes everything ring differently. On *Infinity Land*, there's a song called *Pause It And Turn It Up*. I was just going for it. I played this riff, recorded it and didn't write down the tuning. If anyone out there can find the tuning, that would be wonderful! That was the beauty of it, not having an idea of what the guitar was going to tell me."

creativity because we weren't relying on the gear too much. But yeah, there were pedals upon pedals upon pedals. I use the [Jackson Audio] Prism overdrive pedal for on absolutely everything. That just gives the guitar this slight bite and overdrive that that normal clean sound doesn't have.

What about speaker cabs?

I was using the [Universal Audio] Ox Box as a speaker simulator. We were [recording] on a working farm so I couldn't turn the amplifier up as loud as I wanted. I would have loved to have half a dozen amplifiers just cranked to f*ck, but we would have curdled the milk! With this box I'm able to get the head absolutely cranked that golden zone without needing a speaker. The reason I wanted to use the Matchless and the Friedman is they're so crisp, they're so factual their sounds. Especially with the Stratocaster, you can really get shimmer. Sometimes a clean guitar sound can be the most aggressive tone, so it was trying to get that aggressive sound and then not making the pedals do too much work, just letting the pedals tip it over the edge. That's just always been the way I've worked. I feel like an amplifier is its own thing but you need to put it through a pedal to really get it to the next level.

Were you running the Friedman and the Matchless at the same time?

Just using one head at a time. I learned that from working with Rich Costey [producer of *Ellipsis* and 2020's *A Celebration of Endings*]. When I worked with Garth Richardson, we would use a Soldano head, a Mesa head, and a Marshall all running through different speakers to create the one guitar sound. On *A Celebration of Endings*, we managed to get most of my guitar tones just with an amp. If you can make that one tone sound monumental, there's a clarity and power you cannot achieve having lots of amps running at once. So, if I did a main track with the with the Friedman, I would then shift to another

head and do a different part, so never really doubling with different amps.

How do you make a stock Stratocaster sound so heavy?

I guess I'm not I'm not scared of the percussive nature of a Strat or the fact it lacks a bit of bottom end. In our band, James [Johnston] takes care of that bottom end with his bass. If I hadn't discovered a Strat going into a Metal Zone when I was young I probably wouldn't have believed you could get that heft to a Stratocaster. That's why it's taken me this long to find that sound with a Strat and one amp. The way I made it work through the years was a combination of a Peavey, old-school Marshall, and a Fender DeVille. One was driven by the Metal Zone, one just being overdriven itself, and the DeVille sat right on top of all. It took years of experimentation. Sometimes when I hear someone else's Stratocaster I'm like, 'F*cking hell, try to get a bit of bottom end out of that!', forgetting that actually it's a tricky thing to do. It's also the way I play. I have a very heavy right hand. I play with heavier strings as well, Ernie Ball Skinny Top Heavy Bottoms [10-52]. That was a big step in trying to get the muscles on the Stratocaster to show. Every time I rejig my live setup I try and get rid of the Boss Metal Zone. I swear to God I cannot get rid of it. It's the one thing that brings the Stratocaster into that real heavy world. Every time I do a blind test, if the Metal Zone isn't there I hate it. The Metal Zone can give you a real warm and fuzzy bottom end and then everything else just sings and sizzles over the top of it.

You write in odd time signatures like 5/4 and 7/8. How do you approach that?

The key to writing weird or progressive or mathy music is that you shouldn't feel like you're making it weird. It's important that it feels physically right. Whenever I write something weird I stand up and play. Even with weird

"I ALWAYS TRY TO GET MY PINKY ON THE FRETBOARD. SOMETIMES IT WORKS, SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T!"



time signatures you should be able to move and lurch in ways that make sense. Sometimes if I get back to the open string on a strange part of the riff I would then loop that part of the riff. Say you're coming back to the open string on the fifth or sixth note of that riff and start repeating, it's going to be weird but it's still in a regular tempo. That's a simple way: just remove one note from your riff and see how it feels. Add an extra note to your riff and see how it feels. These are the ways you discover things that make sense to you musically but also are satisfying to listen to.

What is your warm-up routine?

A lot of my warming up involves playing Biffy songs. On a gig day, I'll normally play guitar for about an hour before the show. I actually feel my most confident when I have my guitar strapped on. The thought of playing guitar on a stage can intimidate me, but as soon as I put the guitar over my chest I'm like, 'Right, this is me!' I learned the hard way about going on cold. Hand cramping is the

worst f*cking thing. You feel like a lobster trying to play guitar! The fear can sometimes make your body tense, and it can really play on your mind. Constantly picking up your guitar takes away that stress. The shows really feel perfect for me when I feel my guitar is just an extension of who I am and I'm not even thinking about what I'm doing.

How did you prepare for Biffy's massive comeback shows last summer?

It was tough! An aspect of it was just hoping that muscle memory would kick in, hoping that things would make sense once we stepped on the stage. The big step for us was just even getting in a room and playing live together. That was the first time where things made sense. It was probably only two weeks before we did the shows that we thought, 'We can do this!' There's a level of fear that builds just having not engaged with more than three people for the last 18 months. We were very rusty, my voice was really was just out of practice and it was tough to sing to

TONE ZONE

"Every time I do a blind test, if the Metal Zone isn't there I hate it!"

our shows. It was a real worry but I think that led to something truly transcendental happening at the shows. We all felt changed when we came off after those gigs, like we discovered the meaning of life again.

And finally, what is the best advice you have for guitarists?

If you're starting out or if you're creating something, don't worry about not being able to play what other people can play. Don't worry about having a style or a technique that means you can't play like Eddie Van Halen or Bert Jansch or whatever. I wanted to make a racket! I came from playing violin which gave me a slightly different angle. I was always trying to make four finger chords. I always try to get my pinky on the fretboard. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. By putting it on there you're giving the opportunity for an idea to grow. Find a way to express yourself through your music. And don't worry about limitations of gear. You will take your identity to whatever instrument you have.

Guitars and backing Charlie Griffiths

The Guitar Techniques Of Simon Neil

chords that define the band's sound. Simon is adept at disguising those well known open and barre chords, often preferring to add open strings to closed position voicings, or using partial chords in lieu of predictable sounding fuller shapes.

Several Simon Neil trademarks are on show here in our riff inspired by *Wolves Of Winter* and *That Golden Rule*. Drop C tuning (one of Simon's favourites) takes our riff down low. Octave shapes and sixth-string root notes ensure we're covering a wide pitch range (a great way for a lone guitarist to fill out the sound). And the syncopated offbeat timing is typical Biffy Clvro fare.

Back to E standard tuning now as we take inspiration from *Who's Got A Match?* and *Bubbles* here. The first half of our riff uses the E minor pentatonic scale (E G A B D) starting at the 7th fret. The open strings fit within the scale too - we've added them to create some trademark Biffy-like unusual chords. The second half of the riff is powerchord-based, but still with those open strings.

Our final riff demonstrates how Simon Neil plays in the epic choruses of songs such as *A Hunger In Your Haunt* and *Many Of Horror*. The weight of drop D tuning is key as you reach the low note in bar 2, and the 'let ring' approach gives the chords and arpeggios a sweetness.

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Words Amit Sharma | Portrait Scott Diussa

"A LEGATO WORKOUT CHANGED MY LIFE"

Mark Tremonti of Alter Bridge on the secret to fast picking, and the best fretting-hand exercise he ever learned

THINK LIKE A CAVEMAN!

I remember when I was diving deep into theory, I was asking [Alter Bridge frontman] Myles Kennedy a lot of stuff.

He's a very studied guitar player with a very theoretical approach. And he told me he wasn't sure if I really needed to learn much more, because I'd already found ways to create on my own – thinking outside of the box because I didn't know what I was doing. He basically told me that coming up with my own rules had given me my own sound. Looking back now, that was great advice. I didn't need to become a jazz guy and learn about every chord voicing and mode in every scale. Of course, everyone should know some theory. It can only help you get to where you want to go as a guitar player. But finding your own voice by thinking like a caveman – 'what is this thing and what am I going to do with it?' – is what helps carve your sound.

YOU CAN PICK FAST FROM THE ELBOW

You read a lot of stuff online about how picking should only come from the wrist, not the elbow or forearm. When it comes to one or two strings, I completely disagree. I can play twice as fast and clean if I'm using my arm instead of my wrist. I sat down with

Michael Angelo Batio one time and asked him about his picking. He gave me some great advice, saying I cannot play anything faster than just one note. He told me to sit on one note and tackle it in as many different ways I could think of. The fastest I can do that is when it's coming from the elbow... But then again, I don't know if I would give that advice to someone starting out because that might ruin their overall picking if that's how they did it all the time. Just know it's a weapon in your arsenal that you can use.

EVEN OUT THE ODDS

Another thing that's helped with my picking is keeping even patterns on strings. When you do three notes per-string, you have to reset your ups and downs through the lick. But if you play them twice, you then have six notes per-string which makes it way easier for string crossing. Learning those Yngwie patterns of six are very important: you can fly through the strings because you are always starting each string on a down and the numbers are even. There is no flip-flopping! In the last few years, I've been working on patterns of five with two notes on one string and then three on the next. When you pick those patterns it feels like there is no ceiling to how fast you can get.

DON'T EXPECT OVERNIGHT RESULTS

I'd say it takes about nine months

SECRET WEAPON
"The best players use more than their pick in those shreddy sequences"

of hard practising and focusing to get a technique down to the point where it's under your fingers at all times. The big question is figuring out what's worth it for you, with that much time involved. You will have to love doing it, and need to have some sort of use for it. When I hear players like Eric Johnson or Joe Bonamassa or Eric Gales using those five-note pentatonic runs, it twists my ear. It throws the one, which suddenly goes flying by. That really impresses me, so I had to try and learn it. I've also learned a version which involves no sweep or economy – because that stuff is great if I'm sitting with the guitar in my lap at home or in the studio, but as soon as I've got some adrenaline going on stage, all of my economy picking goes out the window. So now I pick those patterns of five broken into twos and threes.

FOCUS ON ALL FINGERS

The best fretting-hand exercise I ever learned came from Rusty Cooley. He had this legato workout that completely blew my hand up! I remember the first time I went through it, my hand felt better than ever afterwards. So I got into this habit of doing the entire workout, which is about 80 minutes long, before every show. And, again, it was a nine month thing. After that point it just stayed forever and changed my life in terms of left hand strength. It starts with simple chromatic hammering up the neck and pull-offs going down, but then you start changing the fingers on your fretting hand through every combination. Then you spread it out from a chromatic jump to a full tone stretch, and beyond. It gets harder and harder. After that I noticed my legato was much stronger, I was flying up and down the neck.

A LOT OF THE MAGIC IS IN YOUR HANDS

If you can only use a pick, you're kinda limiting yourself. A lot of the best players are definitely using more than their pick in those shreddy sequences – it's another secret weapon to take advantage of. One of my favourite players is a guy called Shawn Tubbs. His right hand is insane. I'll watch him doing something that I know I could never do, and then notice he's sneaked in some fingers. It's the only way you can pull off certain things.

"IT TAKES NINE MONTHS
TO GET A TECHNIQUE
UNDER YOUR FINGERS
AT ALL TIMES."

Words Jonathan Horsley Portraits Katrena Wize

"95 PER CENT OF TONE IS IN THE PLAYER"

How **Eric Gales** is taking one of electric guitar's oldest art forms and reimagining it for a new generation

The blues has been appropriated by every style of popular music but maybe it's time for pop culture to repay the favour. Maybe it's time for the blues to consume

those styles and put them in a different context. If so, Eric Gales is the man to do it. Born in Memphis, Tennessee, he is a player of catholic tastes and an uncanny ear for incorporating alien styles back into the realm of electric blues. With each passing release, it's like he is redesigning the future of the art form, augmenting it with licks and phrases gleaned from funk, jazz, rock, Eric Johnson, Andrés Segovia – from whomever catches his attention.

Gales' new studio LP, *Crown* – produced by blues-rock's premier production duo Joe Bonamassa and Josh Smith – is an eclectic piece of work that torpedoes the received wisdom that blues exists only inside a I-IV-V progression. It's iconoclastic. There's a hip-hop sensibility to how Gales deploys his styles, like he has a channel switcher. This is the record you play to those who say the blues is an archeological musical endeavour, that the best music has already been made. But what goes into a style like this?

RAW INGREDIENTS

If mastering Eric Gales' flamboyant playing style is a task akin to scaling

Everest in a pair of Dunlop Green Flash, it is some consolation knowing that amassing a rig to give you a Raw Dawg tone is eminently more achievable. Gales' sound on record is all spanky Strat-style cleans, meticulous, detailed, with a raunchy, juicy overdrive when he engages blues-rock mode and takes aim for the centre of the sun. Crown was recorded with his signature Magneto RD-3 S-style electric going into a tried and trusted setup.

"I used my signature amps, the DV Mark Eric Gales Raw Dawg model, 250-watts," he says. "[A Dunlop] Cry Baby, distortion, Xotic boost/drive, MXR Raw Dawg boost, Tech21 [Boost D.L.A. Analog Delay Emulator] delay, and that's it. It's been pretty much the same for the past few years."

All of this is readily available. Okay, the Magneto is niche, but any Strat-style guitar will do. The DV Raw Dawg head retails for £399, the stack for £859, but pick any US-voiced amp with sweet cleans, plenty headroom and a nice reverb and you're good to go. Like B.B. King before him, Gales has gravitated to solid-state amps in recent times. Certainly, cheaper than the Tone Kings he used to run, and also better for any of us looking to get a good tone at home without having to crank a tube amp and send the cat into hiding.

Once you've found a bouncy elastic clean, add some boost or drive to taste. Again, nothing on Gales' pedalboard is too niche, and his signature MXR

FAST AND LOOSE
"Everything is spontaneous," Gales says. "Nothing is rehearsed..."

overdrive is medium-hot on the gain scale with a pronounced midrange.

"I use my overdrive as a boost, and just to give me a little bit more edge," says Gales. "That's it. Tone is important. It goes with all of it. But I believe that ninety-five per cent of tone is in the player, so there are things that are out there that can help enhance, and there are some things out there that can take away. It's about finding that happy medium."

THE UPSIDE DOWN

All that talk of gear is one thing, but we can't let it pass without mention of something more fundamental to how Gales approaches the guitar; that is, he is a left-handed player who plays a right-handed guitar flipped over. Wait, what's the big deal, you ask, but bear in mind, Gales doesn't restring it for its alternate dexterity. His high E is where we'd normally find our low E. That won't necessarily affect his note choice but it is sure to factor in how he is connecting with those notes.

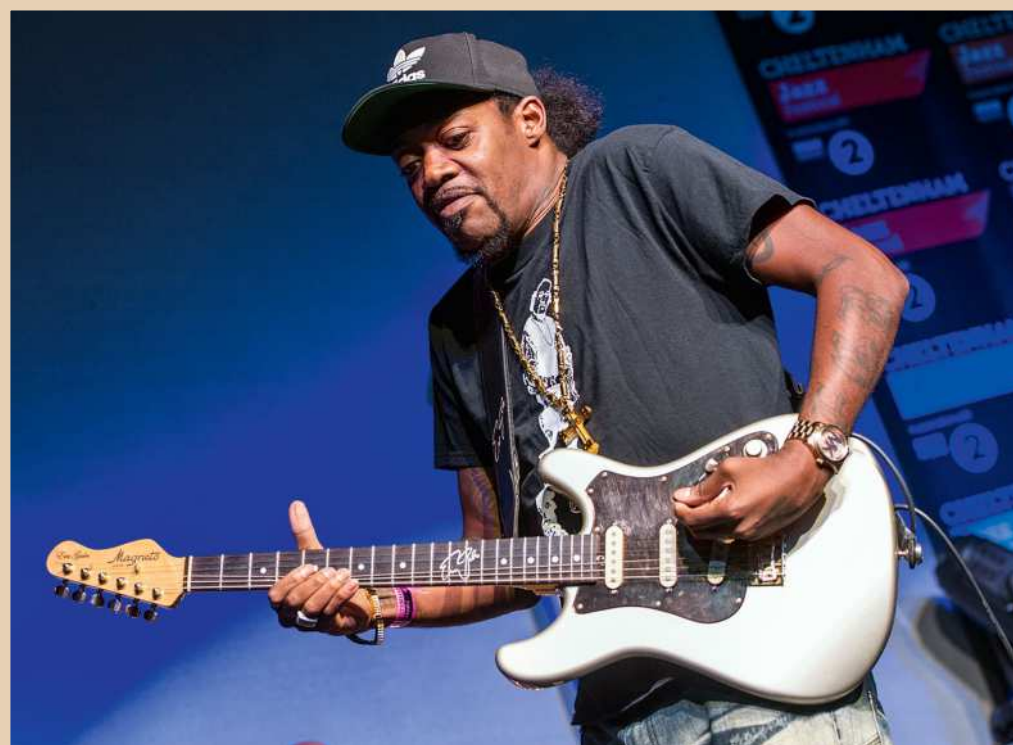
YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

There's no great secret to Gales' polyglot guitar style, but there is a little mystery. When asked, he tries to put his finger on it. In the past he has described himself as a guitar player who just happens to be good at the blues, and that seems an accurate description. But what is key is how his understanding of









THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL

There's no style of guitar that is more dependent on a player's stylistic fingerprint than the blues. Often it's not what you play, it is how you play it. As with his note groupings, Gales will take familiar elements of the blues – minor pentatonics, blues scales – but make them his own with a trick back full of bends, vibrato and ingenious slides that not only shift the pitch but also the rhythm of the lick.

"You just have to find yourself, man, and that's a search that's individual to your own DNA," says Gales. "There is an element of the blues that I think is going to be incorporated with everything that I do, and that's just who I am. What I think makes me who I am is all the different influences that I throw in there on top of it. That's it, man. It's each individual finding their own particular DNA. No one can copy anyone else's DNA. Once you submit yourself, you are on the way."

PLAY ON THE EDGE

If you have watched Gales' recent solo when jamming *When My Train Comes In* with Gary Clark Jr. onstage, you'll know what we mean by playing on the edge. And you'll know what Gales means when he says those different styles and the way he expresses him is simply what comes to him in the moment. That solo is the Rosetta Stone to understanding Gales' style. It's like he is challenging the guitar to find a wrong note, to throw him off the track. But there's a casual virtuosity to his playing; as though he recognises the danger but deep down trusts his chops.

When you position yourself like that, not knowing what's coming next, then neither does the audience, and that can make a performance transcendent.

"I like that," says Gales. "Everything is spontaneous, spur of the moment; soloing, songwriting, performing, showmanship... Nothing is rehearsed. I have found a comfortability with not knowing what's going to happen until it happens. That's the type of model that has become very comfortable for me, and this is not something that works for everybody but it works for me."

"You've got to be confident. It is not the time to be afraid or hesitant, so once you have acquired all the influences that you feel have formed who you are, then you can do whatever it is that your heart is telling you to do."

different musical styles is brought to bear on his songwriting. Gales will listen to anything, and when inspiration hits him, he'll go home and learn that style until it is part of his vocabulary.

"It doesn't matter what style of music it is," he says. "If I am inspired, I'll go home and start working on whatever it was, and then, later on, it'll manifest itself in a show or something like that. It's a combination of everything that I like, and that is definitely going to come out in everything that I do. The more you learn, the more you can expand."

As a result, you'll put on a track like *I Want My Crown* and he'll be working a funk guitar part, while *Death Of Me* has a classical interlude that sounds like it could have come from a Danny Elfman film score. "Due to my knowledge that I have gained through the years of many different styles, I am able to tap into any given style at any given time," says Gales. "It all just depends on what kind of feel that I have got going on in that day."

FREE SPIRIT

"The more you learn, the more you can expand"

TAKING BLUES BEYOND THE BOX

Gales might be a maverick but there is no blues-rock player on the planet who doesn't put the minor pentatonic scale to work. The question is how you do it without it sounding stale and predictable. Gales' approach might be instinctive but there is a method to it. He will break up predictable note patterns, and play fast groups of five and alternate them with groups of four. This keeps it unpredictable, but it also gives his flashier lead guitar breaks a vocal quality, with those note groupings assuming a similar rhythm and meter to a soul vocal line.

Besides splitting up his phrasing into different patterns, Gales will alternately run up and down the same scale shape, building tension and occasionally throwing in a passing note before resolving it in a gigantic bend. Those bends can be hard to execute but he tunes down half-a-step and that can make your guitar a little slinkier. "There's a little bit more wiggle," says Gales. "And it's easier on my voice."

"I AM ABLE TO TAP INTO ANY GIVEN STYLE AT ANY GIVEN TIME"

Words Amit Sharma

"INSIDE PICKING WAS A BIG DISCOVERY FOR ME"

Dream Theater's John Petrucci on game-changing exercises and creating a solo that "feels like you're floating"

HIGH DRAMA

"We play that tension-and-release game a lot in our writing," Petrucci says.

DON'T OVERTHINK IT You'd be surprised, out of all the progressive and technical moments in our music, the

favourites for the audience are usually the big, simpler riffs that grab your attention. You have to show restraint and not overwrite or overthink your parts. You'll come up with something good and then that voice will start running in your head – 'how many times have I done this, is this too typical, am I repeating myself?' And you have to shut off that voice and carry on. Sometimes you will stumble on something that just has that special thing... if it feels good, keep going!

EMBRACE THE AMBIGUITY OF NINTHS

I've used ninth chords in old songs like *Pull Me Under* as well as more recent stuff like *Invisible Monster*. I actually stole the chord from [Rush guitarist] Alex Lifeson, who was the first person I remember hearing use that kind of sound. It felt cooler than a powerchord. It didn't really have a major or minor thing. It's basically two fifth intervals stacked on top of each other, which always seems to resonate really well on a guitar. You can easily turn a ninth into a minor third, or a major third, so it's quite ambiguous – which leaves you

more options for melody as a songwriter. It's very different to, say, the flat five chord which I use a lot in *The Alien*, which is more doomy and ominous. I guess we can all thank Tony Iommi for that one, right?

USE CHROMATIC EXERCISES TO BUILD SPEED

If there was one alternate picking exercise that helped me most – my desert island exercise, if you will – it would be the classic four-note-per-string chromatic run, which I actually learned out of a magazine. I just drilled that thing and even to this day it's still a great exercise for me, as well as variations of it. Obviously it has an even amount of notes on each string, so every time you change to the next string it's always a downstroke. You should be able to practise things that vary, so here's how you can get around that – you just reverse the picking and start on an up. Honestly, if one exercise helped my picking the most it's the simple chromatic thing... It definitely works!

GET USED TO INSIDE PICKING

That was absolutely a big discovery for me. I was wondering why certain runs were giving me trouble and why certain licks felt more comfortable than others. Once I discovered that 'pick being trapped' thing, it made me understand what to work on. If you took that

chromatic picking exercise: four frets in a row on the low E-string but adding one note on the A-string, you will encounter some inside picking there on your way back. It's important to know things like that because you might be able to wail through that exercise but the inside picking from that extra note might slow you down. Or maybe it will feel easier!

KNOW WHEN TO SLOW DOWN

It's a great compositional technique to create some release. *The Alien* has a lot of tension in it, rhythmically and modally. We're playing in 17/8, which is weird and not a normal signature people can tap their feet to. That creates tension because the listener is trying to wrap their head around the feel of it. And there's a lot of flat fives there, which creates tension modally – it feels very dark and mysterious. So when the first solo comes in one minute in, it's like a compositional breath of fresh air. It switches to 12/8 which is really comfortable. It feels like you're floating because the melody and time signature lifts you up and gives you a sense of conclusion. We play that tension-and-release game a lot in our writing. It helps take the listener on a journey and make the song more interesting. You never know what's going to happen, so when it does, there's an emotional effect.

UNDERSTAND HOW SCALES AND CHORDS RELATE TO EACH OTHER

The first time I became aware of harmonic minor was when I heard Yngwie Malmsteen. I was like, 'Oh wow, that's a cool sound!' And then I went back and started listening to other music, identifying it being used in all kinds of different places. I still think in terms of the parent key – so E Phrygian Dominant would lead me back to A harmonic minor – because that's how I learned all my scales. It was more about how the scale was related to whatever chord I was playing. Not everybody thinks that way, but that's what works for me. If I'm in E Mixolydian, I will be thinking in A major. And I even take it a step further, where I'm more comfortable with the relative minor of a key... So I actually think of A major like F# minor! In my mind, E Mixolydian is F# minor with an E under it!



"MY DESERT ISLAND EXERCISE IS THE CLASSIC
FOUR-NOTE-PER-STRING CHROMATIC RUN"

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"BEFORE I SAW LIANNE LA HAVAS, IT WAS MAINLY
MALE GUITARISTS I WAS LOOKING UP TO"



Words Ellie Rogers Portrait Molly Daniel

"I MAINLY PLAY A JAZZMASTER – AND THAT'S IT!"

Singer-songwriter **Nilüfer Yanya** on beating the lockdown blues – and why one guitar can be enough.

COLLABORATION CAN UNLOCK CREATIVITY

For my new album [*Painless*, released in March 2022], I worked a lot more with one co-writer and producer – Wilma Archer. We did work together on the last record [2019 debut *Miss Universe*], so it was kind of a development of that. I actually couldn't write during lockdown. I did write some things but I didn't write a lot. So it was just completely necessary otherwise I wasn't going to have anything. It was also kind of bringing me down, not being able to write stuff and not making music, so it was really nice when these songs just happened the way they did.

LOOK BEYOND MUSIC FOR INSPIRATION

In the past couple of years, I was maybe looking to music to inspire me and it wasn't really working in the same way it had in the past. That's literally because we were being told we couldn't leave our house. I think I'm a person that finds inspiration from music but also other things. I would like to live somewhere else – maybe learn new instruments. I would like to produce. I'd like to learn more languages. I think coming out of Covid, everyone's felt quite boxed-in and there's a whole world and so many things I need to do!

BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE OVER TIME

I started learning guitar when I was about 12, when I started secondary



school. From then I just really enjoyed learning and playing in school bands with my friends. I started putting the voice with the guitar maybe when I was 14 or 15 because before that I didn't have the confidence to even try properly. I was still writing songs but I was way too terrified to think about singing them out loud.

FIND ARTISTS THAT SPEAK TO WHO YOU WANT TO BE AS A PLAYER

I remember when I was 18, I saw Lianne La Havas. That was really impressive because I think up until that point it was mainly male guitarists that I was looking up to. I don't think I'd even listened to anyone who wasn't a guy, and she was really, really good. I loved her arpeggiated, fingerpicky style – it was different.

SOMETIMES YOU REALLY ONLY NEED ONE GUITAR TO GET THE JOB DONE

I don't really have many guitars. I mainly play a Jazzmaster and that's kind of it! It's nice when you walk into a guitar shop or you see someone playing a really cool guitar but it's more about how you're playing it at the end of the day. It could be the most amazing guitar in the world, but it only matters how you're playing it.

EXPERIMENT WITH GEAR AT A PACE THAT MAKES SENSE TO YOU

When it comes to pedals, I still only know what I'm trying out. I've actually been really getting into the fuzz pedal I've got – a Big Muff. I'm almost at the point where I need a different fuzz now because it's too much of one thing. Before that it was mainly distortion or overdrive. I really like delays. I've also got a looper where you have to make your own patches and mix it in from your laptop or computer and then add it, so I'm getting my head around that.

TAKE LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED IN THE STUDIO TO THE STAGE

There's a few songs on the new record that use the looper pedal, so it'll be a different experience when it comes to playing them live. I'll be playing something really simple and the pedal will be doing all the work, but I'll be focusing on the singing in a way that I wasn't before.

KEEP PRACTISING AND KEEP LEARNING

What I definitely took for granted before was knowing the music so well that I didn't have to think about it too much. We'd change things around every now and then but I wasn't learning things. So I'm actually looking forward to that. I've got a whole new batch of songs and I just want to make sure everything sounds right.

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Words Jonny Scaramanga Photo Steve Gullick

"I'VE NEVER BEEN INTERESTED IN BEING TECHNICALLY GOOD!"

Tom Dowse of art rockers **Dry Cleaning** plays by his own rules. His specialities: improvisation and guitar abuse

I**FAIL THE GIBSON SG**
I just gravitated towards SGs when I was a kid, just the shape of them looked the most metal. I'm a huge fan of Greg Sage from The Wipers. He played an SG with a Bigsby, and when he was strumming he was always bending the Bigsby as well, so it had this really warped sound. That's something I do with the SG a lot. I like to bend the neck. I treat it quite badly to be honest. I switched from a Silvertone 1478 back to my SG again and it was so much more indistinct, almost like an ocean. There's more space for the texture and weirdness I was going for.

TWELVE STRING GUITARS ARE UNDERRATED

I've got a Burns Double Six which I really like playing. I'm a bit addicted to twelve string guitars. If I had the money, I'd start collecting 12-strings. I have a Roland JC-30 amp with built-in chorus, and sometimes I have a chorus pedal as well as the chorus on the amp so it's really crazy. That's one of the reasons I like 12-strings – it's like natural chorus.

HARNESS THE POWER OF IMPROVISATION

We write by jamming. When we listen back to the jam there'll be something interesting in there. The song *Leafy* – we literally improvised that. It was a seven minute jam and what you hear on the album [*New Long Leg*] is a three-minute

section of that, even down to the lyrics. It came out one time and just worked.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW THE RULES

I don't really think of myself as a guitarist. I play all day and I love it, it's a big part of my life, but I just can't think of myself as one because I've never been interested in being technically any good! I've just tried to find my own language. I've always gravitated towards guitarists that sound a bit more abstract. I quite like not knowing too much about the guitar so it's always exciting.

LEARN BY EAR

I don't really know the names of chords. I naturally made my own path, not because I wanted to do something different, just because I'm not very good at learning technical things. I never really learned other people's songs or looked at tabs. Use your ears instead of looking at a tab because then you'll end up with a bad version of that original thing, but maybe something good of your own.

MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN THE BAND KNOWS THEIR JOB

I think one of the reasons why we work quite well is because there isn't really any overlap. It leaves a lot of room for me to do melody. When I'm jamming at home I'm always looking for hooks, then that's what I bring to practice. We all have distinct roles. Sometimes I'll do the rhythm and Lewis [Maynard, bassist] does the melody, but we're never all doing the same thing.

WEIRD SCIENCE

"I've always gravitated towards guitarists that sound a bit more abstract," Tom says.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S OPINIONS OF YOUR GEAR

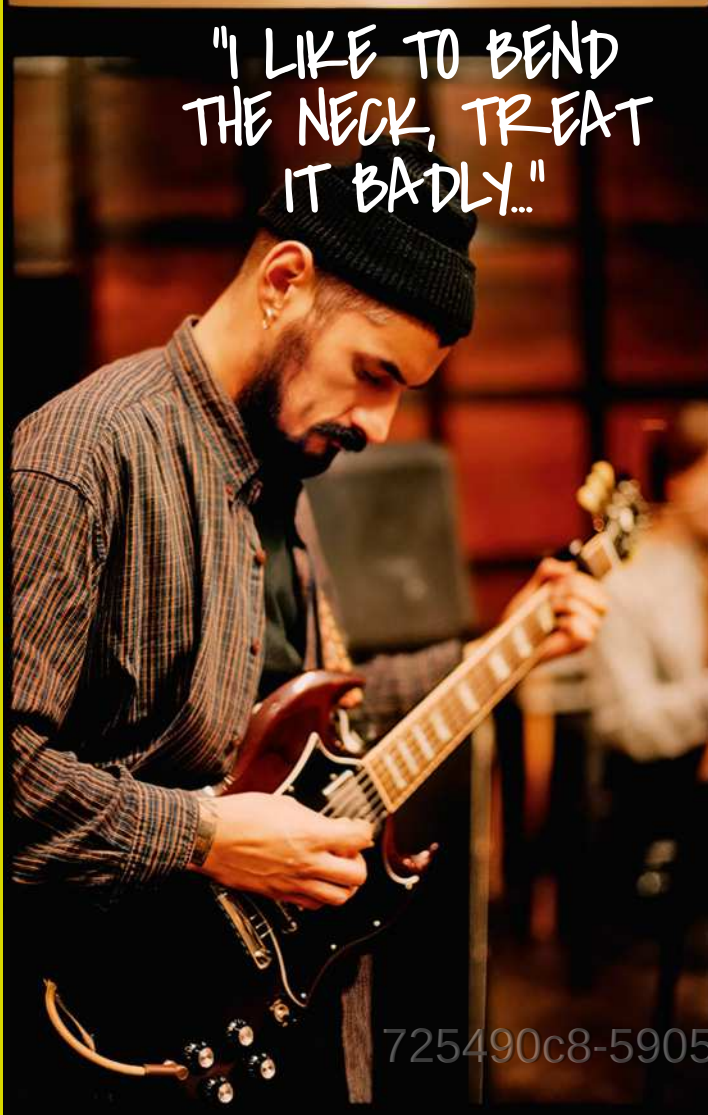
I've got a Fender [Hot Rod] Deville 4x10. Most sophisticated sound people are horrified when they see that. As soon as [producer] John Parish saw it he just shook his head, like, 'Oh no, not that again!' I really like them. I play live with the Deville and an AC30, with a different chorus pedal on each. One is a Boss CE-5, the one people don't like. The good thing about the CE-5 is you can set the lower and higher frequencies separately. When I'm doing something lower down and more rhythmic you don't get a lot of chorus, then if I want to go higher up it's much more apparent.

LEARN YOUR GEAR INSIDE OUT

When I first started using the ZVex Fuzz Factory I had loads of problems. It was just unplayable at times. We have an understanding of each other now. On the record I turned the gate right up at one point and just had it screaming. It's really cool if you have it really hard gated so you get these really weird crunchy noises. I don't put anything on the pedalboard unless I know it really well. With the Fuzz Factory I know what not to do. You have red zones you just don't go in. Everything else I like to vary depending on the feel of the night.

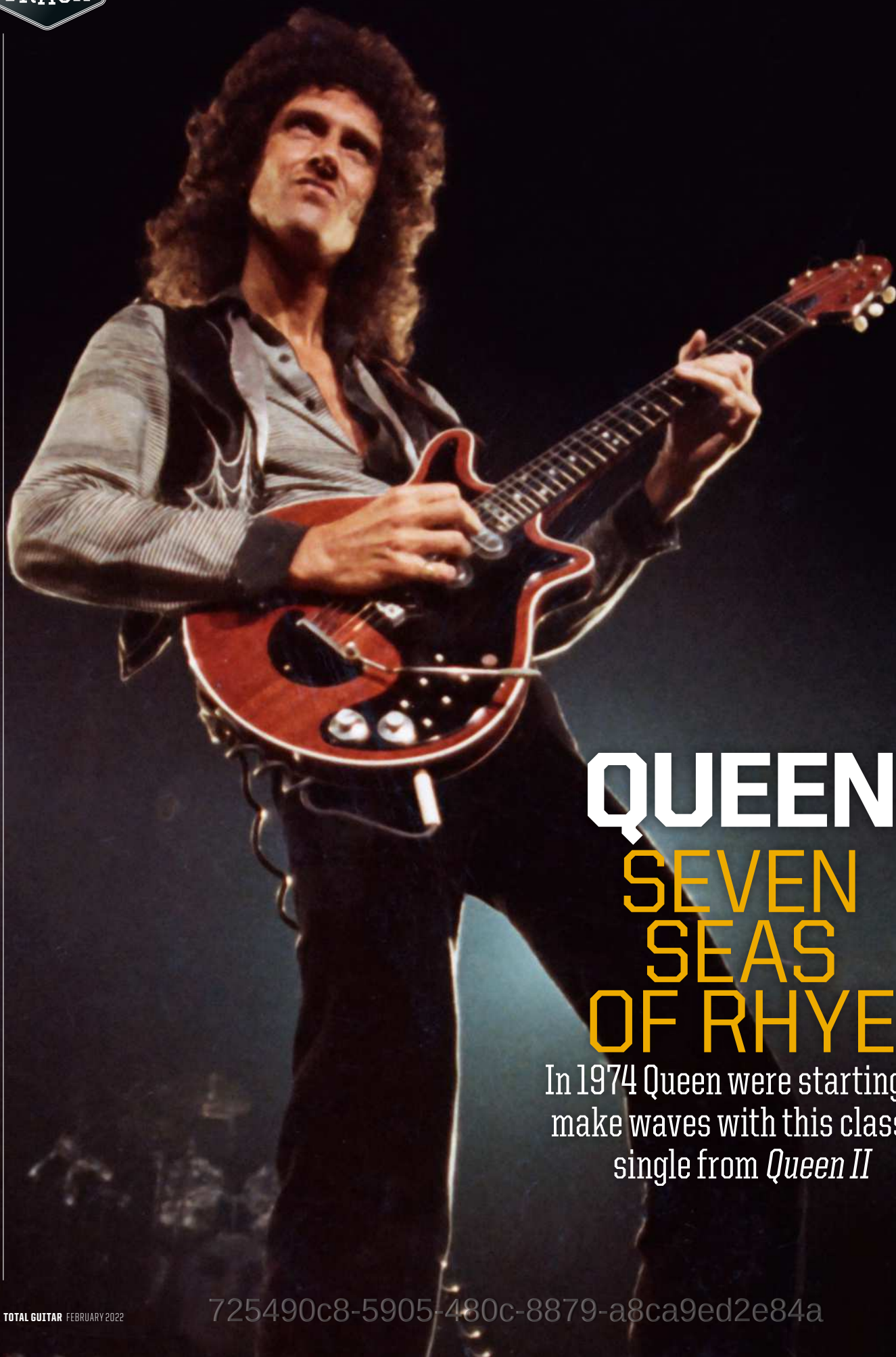
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A STYLE OF MUSIC, DON'T LISTEN TO THAT STYLE OF MUSIC TOO MUCH

I think it's interesting to build influences in from other genres. When you get that balance right, you end up with something quite interesting. *Unsmart Lady* was me trying to do a Dry Cleaning version of a metal song. It doesn't sound like that, but that's what's cool about building in these different influences.



"I LIKE TO BEND
THE NECK, TREAT
IT BADLY..."





QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE

In 1974 Queen were starting to make waves with this classic single from *Queen II*

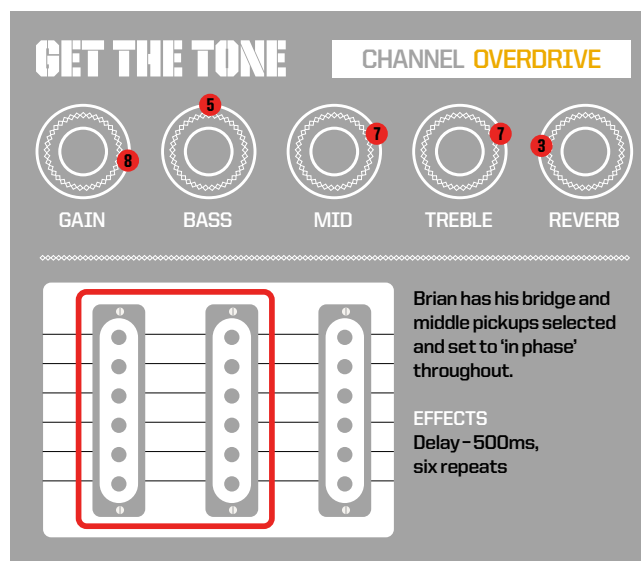
The origin of this song dates back to Queen's 1972 debut album, which closes with a shorter, instrumental version of the track. After some contributions from guitarist Brian May, the song's final form appeared on *Queen II* and was released as the band's third single, garnering them their first top 10 hit.

This track features multi-tracked and layered guitar parts, with two slightly different rhythm parts following the piano chords held down by frontman Freddie Mercury, as well as extra lead guitars with panned harmonies, licks and fills all overlapping and interlocking perfectly to form a guitar orchestration. Our tab represents an amalgamation of elements from all the guitars to create one single playable part, with the additional harmony parts on the backing track.

Brian's expressive and vocal sounding vibrato is a huge part of what makes his melodies sing and the harmonies blend, so consider the speed and depth of your vibrato technique to be sure it complements the section you are playing.

GET THE SOUND

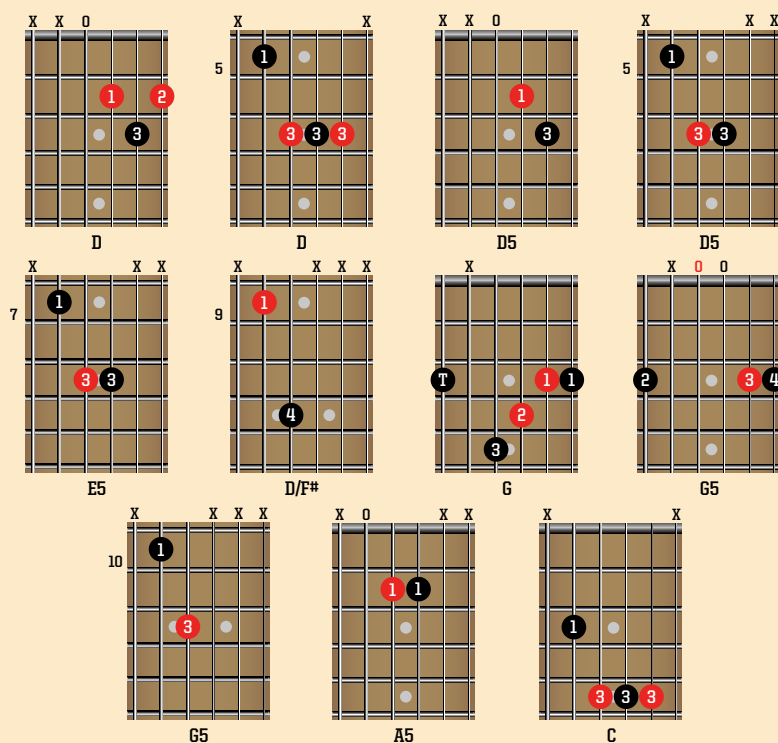
Everything you need to know before playing 'Seven Seas Of Rhye'



As with almost every Queen song, Brian used his homemade Red Special guitar and Vox AC30 amps with a Treble Booster pedal for added gain and sustain. The old serrated edges of the old English sixpence which Brian uses as a pick has a very big influence on the sound and is worth finding one, or something similar in size such as a modern 5p or an American dime. The song uses a straight ahead rock sound throughout, with the exception of the solo ending, which has a specific time based delay at 500ms (a quarter-note repeat) with the feedback set high to achieve five or six repeats.

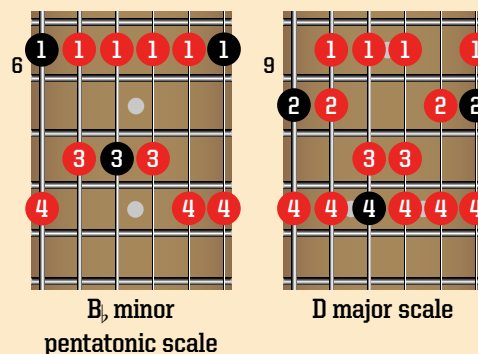
CHORDS

The song is mostly based in the key of D major, but has some key changes in the bridge and guitar solo. The intro and verse sections are largely based around the I and IV chords. D and G are used in verses 1, 2 and 4, but verse 3 changes key to G, so the I and IV chords here are G and C. Brian moves between open shapes and barre chords depending on the part. In the bridge, Brian uses three powerchords from the key of G: D5, C5 and G5. The guitar solo is in yet another different key - B_b, with Mercury playing the B_b and E_b chords on piano throughout.



SCALES

Brian plays the solo up at the 18th fret and uses shape one of the B_b minor pentatonic scale (B_b, D_b, E_b, F A_b). As the backing piano chords are B_b and E_b major, the B_b minor scale works perfectly, giving the section a cool bluesy sound. The melodic licks, fills and outro solo are based in the key of D major, so Brian uses the D major scale (D E F# G A B C#) for these sections, though he does briefly switch to the bluesy D minor pentatonic scale in the outro solo. This looks just the same as B_b minor pentatonic, but played at the 10th fret.



QUEEN

SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE

SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE
Words and Music by Freddie Mercury
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QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Intro

♩=119

D⁵

0:04

G⁵

8^{va}

BU

1 18 (20)

D⁵

Em

A

BU 14 (15)

RP BD (15) (14)

12

5

After the piano intro, the song begins with sustained open position powerchords with some percussive 16th note mutes. Use your third finger to play the big slide from the 1st fret to the 18th, then bend up a tone. Finally bend the 14th fret up a semitone, re-pick, then bend down. Try to match your vibrato to the guitars on the backing track to help the harmony blend.

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Verse 1

♩=123

D

G⁵/D

D

G⁵/D

D

A

G⁵

0:20

D

E⁵

A⁵

D

BU BD

10 10 10 10 10 10 10 12 (14) (12) 10 12 10 12

6

For verse 1, we stick to outlining the general harmony with long, sustaining chords. The chords are essentially G and D major, but sometimes Brian strums fragments of the shapes rather than the whole chord. The final melody is based in D major scale and starts with a staccato attack, followed by a smooth succession of notes.



QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Verse 2

0:38

D G D G D A G

8va

10 10 12 10 11 17 (19) 17 15 17 15 14 15 17 (19) 17

1

G D Em

8va

15 12 12 15 10 12 (14) 12 (14) 12 10 12 12 14 15 14 12 15 14 12

5

A D

8va

14 7 7 7 12 (13) 12 10 10 12 10 8 10 7 10 7 10 9 (10) (9) 7 9

8

For this verse we play a single note D major-based melody, which, on its own, sounds a little strange, but when played in context with the other harmonies, creates that rich Queen sound. Focus on playing each note as cleanly and expressively as possible, using vibrato to bring the longer notes to life.

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Bridge

♩=127

D⁵ C⁵ G⁵

0:57

PM

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 3

1

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Bridge (cont'd)

Chords: D⁵, C⁵, G⁵, N.C.

Tab: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4

3

Chords: D⁵, Em, F^{#m}, G⁵, D/F[#]

Tempo: ♩ = 121

Tab: 7 5 5 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 12 10 12 9

5

Chords: Em, D

Tab: 7 2 3 0 12 (14) 12 10 12 10 12 11 9 12

8

Play this powerchord riff with 16th note alternate picking. If you are using a sixpence as a pick, hold it loosely and allow it to wobble between your fingers so it doesn't get stuck on the strings. Lightly palm mute the strings at the bridge just enough to control them, but not so much that the notes get choked.

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Solo

Chords: B^b, E^b, B^b, E^b

Tempo: 1:18

Tab: 18 20 18 20 18 20 18 21 (23) 21 18 (22) (20) 18 20 18 21

1

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Solo (cont'd)

3

5

7

Quickly shift your first finger up to the 18th fret and visualise shape one of the minor pentatonic scale. Brian often uses pre-bends which are played by bending the up by a tone at the 20th fret, then picking it so it sounds as if you are playing the 22nd fret. In bar 7, shift down to the 7th fret and play the 16th-note D major melody with your delay pedal engaged, then finish with D5 play with a volume knob swell.

QUEEN SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE Verse 3

1:37

5

For this key-change verse, play the G chord with your thumb over the neck and your first, second and third fingers playing the triad shape. Play the C chord as a regular barre chord. After playing the single note root notes, strike the low E string and dive the whammy bar down.

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DJANGO REINHARDT MINOR SWING

29

E⁷ B^b7 Am

7 7 10 9 9 8 7 8 7 5 4 7 5 5 5 7 10 9 8 9

33

Am⁶ Dm⁶

8 9 7 10 9 7 10 9 8 9 10 9 BU 11 (12) 10 9 12 12

37

E⁷ Am⁶

11 14 12 12 11 14 12 15 13 12 15 13 14 7 10 8 5 8 5 5 5 5 8

41

Dm⁶ Am

10 7 7 8 5 7 4 7 5 6 7 5 4 5 (6) (5) 7 7 7 7

45

E⁷ B^b7 Am F⁹ E⁹

7 6 7 8 7 6 7 7 7 8 8 8 8 8 7 8 8 8 8 7 7 7 7 6

DJANGO REINHARDT MINOR SWING

Am⁶ Dm⁶

49

E⁷ Am⁶

53

Dm⁶

56

Am⁶ E⁷

59

B^b7 Am⁶ E⁷

62

DJANGO REINHARDT MINOR SWING

Am⁶ Dm⁶

cont. sim. Develop idiomatic chordal comping

65

E⁷ F⁹ E⁹ Am⁶ A⁷⁵ Dm⁶

69

Am⁶ E⁷ B^b7 Am⁶ D.C. al Coda ⊕

75

⊕ Coda

Esus² D[#]sus² Esus² Fsus² F[#]sus² Gsus² G[#]sus² Asus² Am(maj⁹)

p *f* *sfz*

81

Bars 67 to 80 offer an opportunity to 'develop idiomatic comping'. This means play your own accompaniment part ('comp' coming from the word 'accompaniment') in keeping with the style. 'Chopping four' is a good approach - this technique is shown in bars 65 to 66, with a chordal stab on each beat, more heavily accented on beats 2 and 4. You can take this forward following the chord symbols shown above the blank bars.



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OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

WEEZER ISLAND IN THE SUN

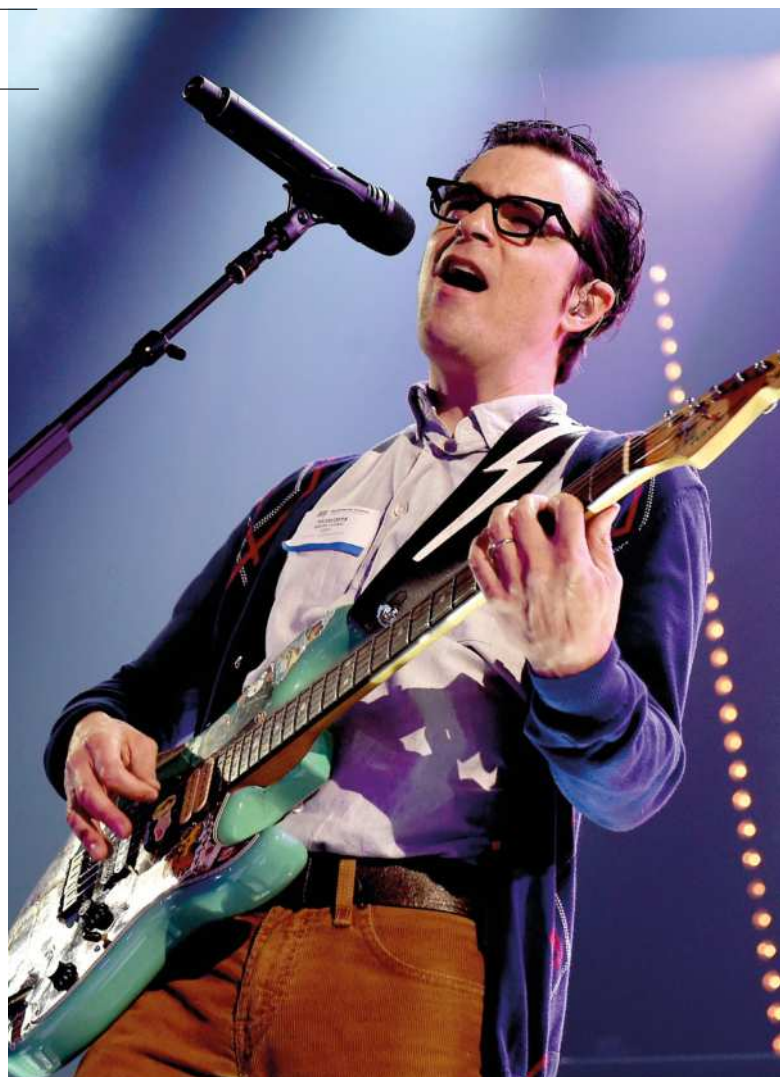
Banish those winter blues with catchy chords and a fuzzed-out solo courtesy of Rivers Cuomo and co

30 years and 15 albums into their esteemed career, Weezer remain the darlings of their own self-styled genre, part alternative, part geek-rock and part pop-punk. The track we're looking at this month takes us back to the band's third studio release, 2001's *Weezer*, aka *The Green Album*, and *Island In The Sun* is one of the band's biggest hits.

We've tabbed the main riff, chorus, and solo, all played by

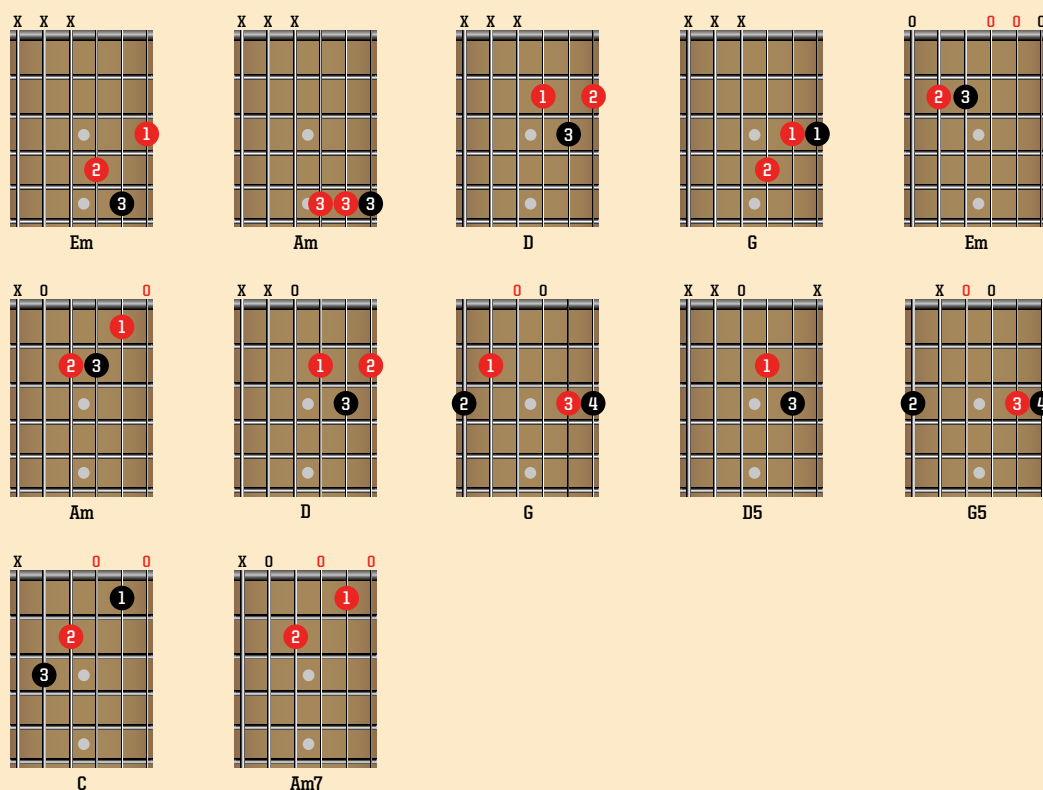
frontman/lead guitarist Rivers Cuomo. There's also a basic strum pattern throughout and some fat powerchords in the bridge to add into the mix – the chord shapes are below.

The parts gel together nicely with some interesting 'pushing and pulling' on the original recording between the basic strum pattern and the syncopated main riff, making it a fun song to play guitar-duo style. Why not get together with a guitar-playing pal and give it a go?



CHORDS

The intro/main riff is played entirely on the top three strings so you'll need to avoid hitting the lower strings. To achieve this, use careful strumming bringing your pick away from the strings slightly on each upstroke. It also helps if you stub a fretting finger up against the fourth string to deaden it. Cuomo positions his thumb around the back of the neck to keep the lower strings muted. The 'strum-a-long' chords and the bridge section chords are the shapes played by rhythm guitarist Brian Bell.



ISLAND IN THE SUN

Written by Rivers Cuomo
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SONGSHEET

Island In The Sun

Intro

Em Am D G
Hip, hip

x4

Interlude

Em Am D G
Hip, hip

x2

Repeat Interlude

Verse 1

Em Am D G Em
When you're on a holiday
Am D G Em
You can't find the words to say
Am D G Em
All the things that come to you
Am D G Em
And I wanna feel it too

Verse 2

Em Am D G Em
When you're on a golden sea
Am D G Em
You don't need no memory
Am D G Em
Just a place to call your own
Am D G Em
As we drift into the zone

Guitar Solo

Em Am D G x4

Repeat Chorus & Bridge

Outro

Em Am D G
We'll never feel bad anymore
Em Am D G
No, no
Em Am D G
We'll never feel bad anymore
Em Am D G
No, no

Chorus

Am D G Em
On an island in the sun
Am D G Em
We'll be playin' and havin' fun
Am D G Em
And it makes me feel so fine
Am D G
I can't control my brain

Repeat Chorus

Bridge

D5 G5
We'll run away together
D5 G5
We'll spend some time forever
C Am7 D5
We'll never feel bad anymore, hip, hip

WEEZER ISLAND IN THE SUN Intro

♩=114

Em Am D G Play 4 times

Use the alternate picking indicated throughout for the main riff, ghosting your strumming hand above the strings for sustained chords.

WEEZER ISLAND IN THE SUN Chorus (arpeggios)

Em Am D G Play 4 times

0:33 let ring throughout

Use your second and third fingers to fret the diads in bar 1. Your first finger will be free to form a partial barre across the 7th fret in bar 2.

WEEZER ISLAND IN THE SUN Solo

TRACK: [BIT.LY/TG353AUDIO](https://bit.ly/tg353audio)

Em Am D G Em Am D G

1:57 w/fuzz NH

The solo is played almost entirely along the third string. Use the fingering indicated for smooth position shifts.

TAB GUIDE

Get more from TG by understanding our easy-to-follow musical terms and signs

What is tab?

This is where the key signature and time signatures are shown

♩ = 72 — This is the beats per minute (BPM)

2nd string 3rd fret 2nd string 1st fret 3rd string 2nd fret 4th string Open

CD time (where the part occurs on the original CD)

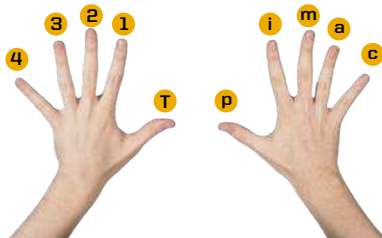
Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the

guitar, from the sixth (thick) string at the bottom to the first (thin) string at the top. On these lines, numbers represent which frets you place your fingers. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string, will be shown as a number '2' on the third line

down on the tab. Unfretted strings are shown with a '0'. The key and time signatures are shown in the notation. TG also includes a timestamp to tell you where in the original track you'll find each example and tempo expressed in beats per minute.

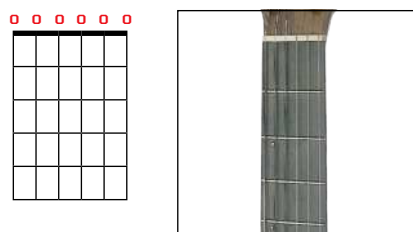
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



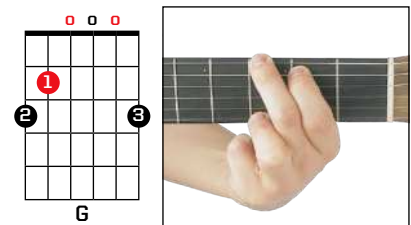
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: 1, 2, 3, 4, [T] Picking hand: p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)

NUT AND FRETBOARD



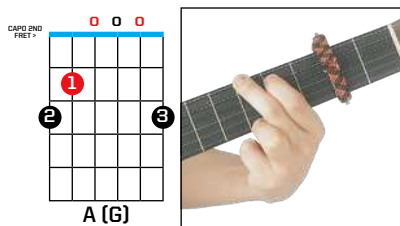
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



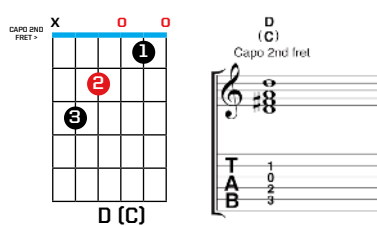
This diagram represents a G chord. The '0's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black '0' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



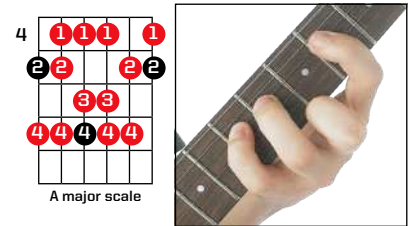
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo - for this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION



Here the chord looks like a C in the tab, but the capo on the 2nd fret raises the pitch to make it a D. The 2nd fret capo'd notes are shown with a '0' in the tab as if they were open strings.

SCALE EXAMPLE



The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale using black dots for root notes and red dots for other scale tones. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with the first, third and fourth fingers.

GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

DOWN AND UP-PICKING



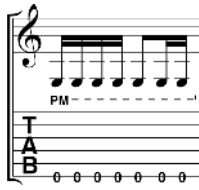
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



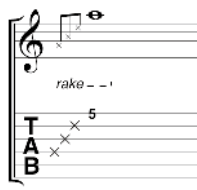
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING



Palm-mute by resting the edge of your picking hand palm on the strings near the bridge saddles.

PICK RAKE



Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. This is often used to augment a rake's last note.

APPREGGIATED CHORD



Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.

FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF



Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS



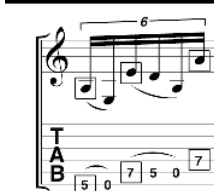
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



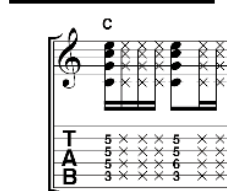
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering-on/tapping with your fret hand fingers, instead of picking.

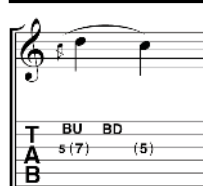
FRET-HAND MUTING



X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by your fret hand when struck by your picking hand.

BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND



Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

PRE-BEND



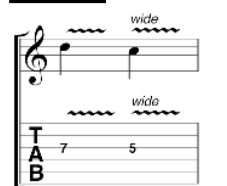
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND



Pick the note then bend up a quarter-tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a 'blues curl'.

VIBRATO



Your fretting hand vibrates the string by small bend-ups and releases. Exaggerate this effect to create a 'wide' vibrato.

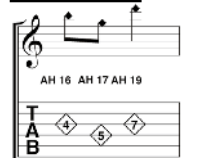
HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS



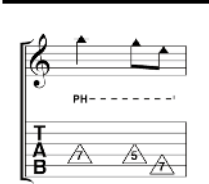
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



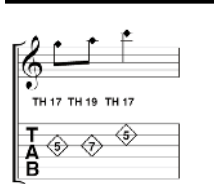
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'X' fret (AH'X') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



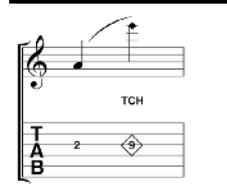
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



Place your finger on the note as shown, but sound it with a quick pick hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

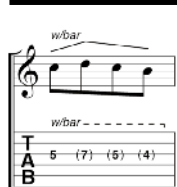
TOUCHED HARMONICS



A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg, TCH 9) for it to sound a harmonic.

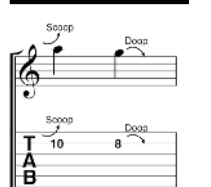
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

SCOOP AND DOOP



Scoop: depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop: lower the bar slightly after picking note.

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



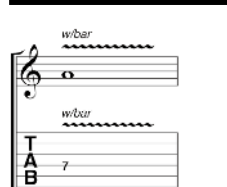
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



Sound the note and 'flick' the vibrato bar with your picking hand so it 'quivers'. This results in a 'gargling' sound!

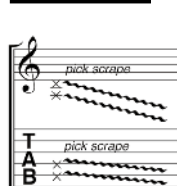
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



Gently rock the whammy bar to repeatedly bend the pitch up and down. This sounds similar to fret hand vibrato.

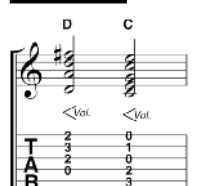
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

VIOLINING



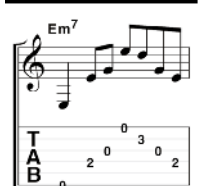
Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

FINGER NUMBERING



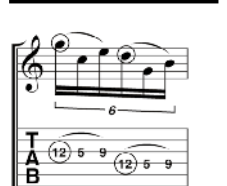
The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fingers required to play each note.

PIMA DIRECTIONS



Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

PICK HAND TAPPING



Tap (hammer-on) with a finger of your picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with 'i' or 'm'.

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 bullsh*t-free opinions on the gear you're interested in.

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

TG Best Buy Awards are reserved for stand-out products that earn a 4.5 star overall rating. This is the most exciting new gear that you need to check out



PLATINUM AWARD

Reserved for the very best of the best, TG's Platinum Awards are given to class-leading, gamechanging products that score a maximum 5 stars in every category.



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84 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

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Has Fender hit the sweet spot on price as well as tone with its hybrid guitar?

90 FRAMUS DIABLO SUPREME

German efficiency meets affordability with this no-fuss six-string

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Bob Marley's songwriting tool reinvented

94 ELECTRO-HARMONIX NANO DELUXE MEMORY MAN

Honey, I shrunk the analogue delay!



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



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02



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START ME UP!

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

HARLEY BENTON DNAFX GIT PRO

1 Harley Benton are doubling down with their multi-effects game here with 51 amp models, 31 cabs and 64 digital and analogue effects. Further potential as a streamlined solution is provided by an onboard expression pedal and the ability to integrate switching for your guitar amp via its AMP CTRL output. An effects loop offers further connectivity, plus specific effects can be placed before or after the amp's preamp circuit.

£244
www.harleybenton.com

ELECTRO-HARMONIX Q-TRON NANO

2 We love the U-HX Nano series; all the goodness in a compact chassis. And we all need an excuse for one more pedal on the 'board, right? Here's your gateway to funky goodness with the Envelope Controlled Filter with added depth from its three modes that control lo, band and high pass ranges. It's great for guitar and bass, pairing with drive pedals well for wah-esque lead tones.

£92
www.ehx.com

MONTY'S INSTRUMENT FOOD

3 The UK pickup and loom gurus also do a couple of superb maintenance products and the new year is a great excuse for some guitar TLC. This 'nourishing' wax conditions and feeds fingerboards made from rosewood, pau ferro, ebony or any other open grain wood. It's all-natural and doesn't contain any solvents that could dry your 'board. The Monty's team use it on every guitar they work on, so that's good enough for us!

£10
www.montysguitars.com

JAMES' HOME OF TONE 4-WAY SOLDERLESS TELE KIT

4 If you're looking to do a little guitar modding for 2022 this solderless kit takes some of the fear out of things, and adds an extra option for running both your single-coil pickups in series. Something we've loved for the beefier tone it offers on some of the contemporary Fenders we've reviewed. UK-based James Gascoigne also offers pre-wired solder versions and left-handed options too in his range.

£65.99
www.homeoftone.co.uk

SOFTUBE MARSHALL 'MURDER ONE' LEMMY SIGNATURE

5 This plugin is modelled on Lemmy's notorious Marshall Super Bass 100W, known by the ominous moniker Murder One. Long-time Motörhead producer Cameron Webb also worked with the Swedish company to capture Lemmy's custom cabinet setup and even tested it with Lemmy's Rickenbacker. The amp icon features Lemmy's favoured settings marked and it's suitable for guitars, too.

£99
www.softube.com



FENDER ACOUSTASONIC PLAYER TELECASTER

£1049

Has Fender hit the sweet spot on price as well as tone with its hybrid guitar?

When it launched at NAMM in 2019, Fender's Acoustasonic Telecaster was a real talking point for looks and sounds. But after we played one we had something else to say; when were going to see a more affordable Mexican-made version? And of course Fender plans this kind of thing *waaay* in advance because here it is. So what's changed and what are the compromises here compared to the California version that launched for £700 more?

First, a quick rewind because there's now a US Acoustasonic Strat and Jazzmaster too; Fender is committed to this concept and we can understand why. You can view these guitars as electrics for acoustic players or vice versa; our experiences so far veer on the side of an electro-acoustic with magnetic flexibility. But the Acoustasonic Jazzmaster's Shawbucker pickup blurred the line the most. All share the same core design; a 'tuned' sound hole that is integral to the acoustic and plugged-in response, a traditional bolt-on electric neck with Fender's Modern Deep C-shape neck profile strung with bronze acoustic strings, and the crucial 'Acoustic Engine' alongside a magnetic pickup.

For the Strats and Teles, this is a noiseless N4 for the electric tones. The digital and analogue 'Acoustic Engine' is a collaboration between Fender and Fishman; active preamp circuitry (the board has over 380 components on it) with pickup/s. Here it's an under-saddle piezo. For the US Tele, there's also the addition of a Fishman Acoustasonic Enhancer

under the guitar's top. That model had five modes and five-way selector with a Blend Knob for blending. Here there's three with six voices in total vs the USA model's 10. Less is more or less is... less? We'll get to that.

This is the first black finish Sitka spruce top Acoustasonic we've reviewed in TG and it's our favourite yet. While the idea of a Tele with a sound hole (or Stringed Instrument Resonance System as Fender calls it) will always turn heads, the finish here gives it a cool, even understated look that looks just right on the Tele curves, complemented by the darker grain highlights in the mahogany on our guitar.

In terms of feel and build we honestly can't find a compromise between this Ensenada-made Player and the US Acoustasonics we've tried. A lovely dark rosewood fingerboard and bridge replaces ebony but that's not an issue for us. The feel of the bevelled arm rest and fingerboard edges says quality and comfort; this is an inviting guitar and that Modern Deep-C neck will feel familiar to anyone who has played the electric Player series models.

As you can imagine from a hollow Tele; it's neck-heavy. It's also a very persuasive guitar without even being plugged in. Despite the 44.5mm body thickness, the SIRS system does a superb job at conveying a lively, boxy tone that you'll be happy to play around the house. It'll be a revelation for some players because even with the increased tension of the .011-.052 gauge Fender Dual-Tone coated phosphor bronze strings, this has a fast electric guitar neck with the

1 POWER

While the US Acoustasonic used a USB rechargeable power source for its active electronics, the Player needs a 9V battery offering up to 20 hours power. A bit old school but rechargeable third party options are available.

2 EXTRAS

We were critical of the underwhelming quality of Fender's gig bag with the recent Player Plus electric models, not so here with Fender's superb FE1225 with 1200 denier polyester and 25mm padding. It retails for £99.99 on Fender.com.

3 TUNED SOUND HOLE

The patented SIRS design here is much more important that it might seem - as well as maximising the acoustic response and output from the guitar's small body cavity, Fender says it informs 55% of the sound you hear from the electro output.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with Solid Sitka spruce top

NECK: Mahogany, Deep C-shape

SCALE: 25.5"

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood

FRETS: 22 Narrow Tall

PICKUPS: Under-saddle piezo, Fender N4 Noiseless single-coil magnetic

CONTROLS: Master Volume, Blend Knob, 3-Way Switch

HARDWARE: Graph Tech TUSQ, Fender Standard Cast/Sealed Staggered tuners



Game Of Tones

The rundown of the Player's sounds

Each position here has A and B voicings you can mix with the Blend Knob. 3A and 3B are a small body mahogany short scale and a boomier rosewood dreadnought. We'd absolutely concur with those descriptions and it covers the main types of tone most acoustic players will want. From there the lines begin to blur and dirt is added to the undersaddle pickup for 2A and 2B's Lo-Fi Clean and Lo-Fi Crunch voices. They're more eclectic and acoustic, respectively, and actually sound like a mix of the two pickup sources even though they're technically not. We found a blend of the two receptive to light Klon-style drive that is useful in a band mix. Voices 1A and 1B are all on the Tim Shaw-designed Noiseless single-coil pickup. A clean and a dirtier 'Fat' tone. This is a warmer, earthier single-coil tone than you might expect but we really like it and actually spent a lot of time blending for blues and Americana there – it also never feels abrupt to switch from the other voices to it.

fret access that comes with it. Our action is low but the resonance is still sweet. It's also great to see that Fender has included the excellent Micro-Tilt neck angle adjustment feature that will help even the fussiest of us to get the perfect action coupled. For all this it's an acoustic guitar that will bring new approaches from your playing you even plug in. So what happens when you do?

First we're going to come straight out with it. We think the biggest compromise here will be anyone who plays percussive acoustic styles. The Fishman undersaddle piezo with its active circuitry here yields fantastic warm and organic acoustic tones with no

brittle piezo 'quack' in evidence, but players who rely on body percussion won't find the same level of sensitivity as the US body's top positioned transducer.

The ten voices could feel generous but somewhat overwhelming for a Tele before – some would argue that's more than most players could ever need. The more streamlined approach here still affords six; the traditional 'neck' position's dreadnought and smaller acoustics to the bridge's full magnetic. You won't get twangsome Tele in the latter, it's more a full-bodied electric tone that blends well. The real dilemma is whether you choose to amplify through a PA/acoustic combo or a

traditional guitar amp. We'd argue the former gets the best from the acoustic detail but our piezo acoustic tone was impressively authentic with both.

Approach this as an electro-acoustic with wider horizons. The active circuitry here provides some of the very best amped acoustic tones we've heard. It's a must-try for anyone who plays acoustic onstage regularly.

Rob Laing

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



ALSO TRY...

FENDER AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC JAZZMASTER

£1749

If money is no object, this is our pick because we just love the bespoke Acoustasonic Shawbucker and the larger body pays dividends with unplugged tone.



FENDER AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC STRATOCASTER

£1749

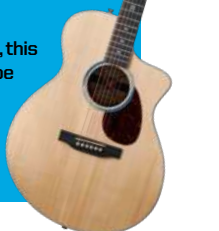
Arriving a year after the American Acoustasonic Tele, this is another guitar that makes sense in your hands as a new approach to how to deliver amplified acoustic tones.



MARTIN SC-13E

£1599

A bold design for the acoustic giant in 2020, this couples an offset shape with enhanced fret access and low action that will please electric players.





FRAMUS DIABLO SUPREME

German efficiency meets affordability with this no-fuss six-string

£719

From acoustics that sound like electrics, to pedals that can emulate any amp under the sun, there's no limit to the options at our fingertips in 2022. But sometimes choice can be overwhelming, and there's a lot to be said for the what-you-see-is-what-you-get approach. What you see here conforms to that concept – the D-Series Diablo Supreme from German guitar wizards, Framus.

The D-Series takes the design ethos of the brand's guitars, played by the likes of Devin Townsend and William DuVall, and places them at a more affordable price point. There are a number of Diablos in the D-Series range: the Diablo Pro, Progressive and the best-spec'd Supreme that we have here. As we were saying earlier, simplicity is at the heart of this guitar's design, offering a classic double-cut body shape, a pair of Seymour Duncan humbuckers, 22 frets and a fixed bridge. On paper it's a meat 'n' potatoes rocker, but as we've learned before, simple doesn't need to mean 'basic'.

Starting with the body, you get a traditional mix of a mahogany, topped with a tasty-looking AAAA maple veneer, in this case decked-out in a transparent Burgundy Blackburst finish. The veneer is well matched, giving the guitar a pricier appearance. The neck is set maple, fitted with a posh looking tigerstripe ebony, which despite the name is actually a pretty solid and dark example on our review model. There are some finishing touches too, including the Warwick (Framus' parent brand) security strap locks, a graphite nut, easy-access cavity cover and sleekly recessed controls.

In use, it's fair to say there's no surprises here. It's a utilitarian rock machine, The combination of the neck – speedy but still substantial – ebony board, jumbo nickel silver frets and medium-level action make it a smooth player. The fret size and finish mean that bends slide without friction, giving you a glassy feel as you go. The back of the neck is glossed, which may or may not float your boat, but we didn't experience too much of the 'tack' that you sometimes get with a finished neck.

Onto the sounds then. Those covered Seymour Duncans are actually the timeless pairing of an SH-1 in the neck position, and an SH-4 in the bridge. Or, to put it in street terms, a '59 & a JB. These two work together with the '59 offering a scoopy clarity, with enough body to make sure you don't get buried, but without the low-end heft of some neck buckers. It's met by the extra cut of the JB, offering thick, mid-rich tones with some extra bite. Here they conform to tradition, offering a set of tones that is capable of covering the rock playing field with ease.

The master volume/tone layout and lack of a coil split could be limiting to some, but there's not a lot to fault with this Framus. It's entered the mid-priced battleground, and it holds its own very well, offering an alternative to some of the more obvious 'bigger' brands.

Stuart Williams

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

1 PICKUPS

There's a classic combination of a Seymour Duncan '59 and JB in the neck and bridge positions, respectively.

2 SCALE

The body suggests G, but the scale length is from the F stable at 25.5", adding a bit of tension and making it more suitable for down-tuning.

3 CONFIGURATION

With a mahogany bod/maple veneer, dual humbuckers, simple controls and a fixed bridge, the Diablo supreme is a no-nonsense rock tool.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with maple veneer

NECK: Maple

SCALE: 25.5"

FINGERBOARD:

Tigerstripe ebony

FRETS: 22

PICKUPS: Seymour Duncan SH-1 (neck), SH-4 (bridge)

CONTROLS: Master volume, master tone, three-way switch

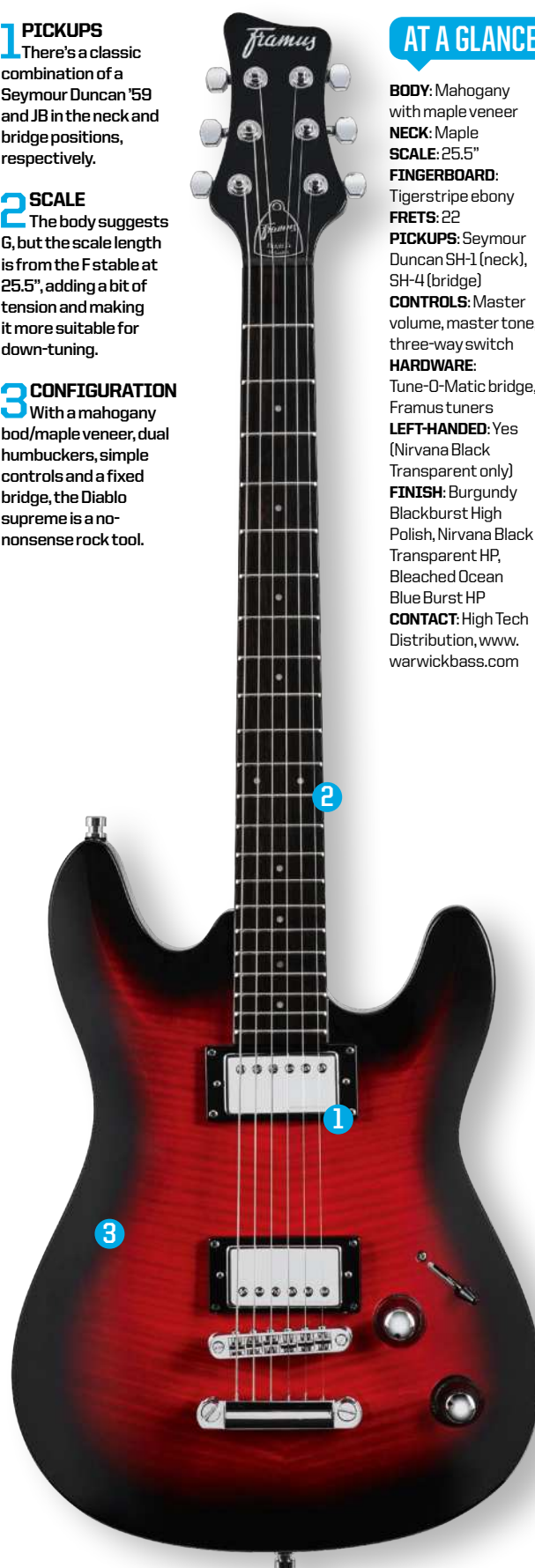
HARDWARE:

Tune-O-Matic bridge, Framus tuners

LEFT-HANDED: Yes (Nirvana Black Transparent only)

FINISH: Burgundy Blackburst High Polish, Nirvana Black Transparent HP, Bleached Ocean Blue Burst HP

CONTACT: High Tech Distribution, www.warwickbass.com





GUILD A-20 MARLEY

£359

Bob Marley's songwriting tool reinvented

Signature models are usually recreations of an artist's most famous instrument, but Guild and the Marley estate here pay tribute to Bob Marley's favourite bedroom strummer. Marley wrote many hits on his Madeira A-20 which he kept to hand around the house. Madeira was Guild's 70s budget brand. Guild based this model on surviving originals, slightly tweaked for modern tastes.

The signature accoutrements are subtle: a neatly-installed 12th fret 'Marley' inlay and a pickguard signature. Marley's original was adorned with a picture of the Rastafari Messiah, Haile Selassie, and a map of Africa beside the words "Africa must be free by

pickguard shape are Madeira originals. Their simple appearance confirms this is an unfussy working instrument.

The satin polyurethane finish reminds us of some of the most inviting electric guitar necks we've played. It's light for a full-size dreadnought, which together with the smooth finish makes it feel deceptively compact. Action out of the box was low with no fret buzz anywhere on the neck and the fretwork was spotless.

Despite mahogany's reputation for full midrange, the A-20 has slightly scooped mids and bright treble. There's no greater joy than bashing out open chords on a dreadnought, especially when they sound bang in tune like this. The low end is more controlled

INVITING AND FUN TO PLAY; A GREAT ACOUSTIC WORKHORSE

1983." Marley diehards will have to supply their own decals though, since Guild omitted them. The included gig bag contains a booklet featuring photos of Bob with his Madeira and a chord sheet for *Three Little Birds*.

We think the few changes from the original spec are improvements. Most importantly, Marley's A-20 was all-laminate, while this has a solid spruce top. Guild opted for a contemporary C-shape neck rather than the original V, and we like it. The profile is chunky enough, but incoming electric guitarists will quickly feel at home.

Rosewood is increasingly endangered, and the Pau Ferro used here is perhaps our favourite alternative. It's dark and attractive, and tonally similar to rosewood. The headstock and

than some, so there's less thump on loud strumming, but plenty of detail for fingerpicking. It performs admirably for every style and technique we could think of, and the dynamic range is huge.

We can see why Bob Marley liked having one of these nearby. It's inviting and fun to play. It's affordable enough to leave on a stand, ready for when inspiration strikes, and because it plays superbly, you're likely to keep coming back. It's a strong choice whether you're a reggae fan or just in need of a great value workhorse.

Jonny Scaramanga

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

1 TUNERS
The open-gear tuners work smoothly and efficiently.

2 INLAY
Tasteful 'Marley' inlay adds character but isn't flashy.

3 STRAP BUTTON
Strap button by the neck joint allows well-balanced standing performance.

AT A GLANCE

TOP: Solid spruce
BACK AND SIDES: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany
SCALE: 25.5"
FINGERBOARD: Pau Ferro
FRETS: 20
FINISH: Natural
CONTACT: Guild, guildguitars.com
Selectron UK, selectron-uk.com





ELECTRO-HARMONIX NANO DELUXE MEMORY MAN

Honey, I shrunk the iconic analog delay!



£179

When EHX melded modulation with analogue delay in a single pedal back in the late 1970s they were definitely on to something. The resulting Deluxe Memory Man, as used by The Edge to craft the early U2 sound and by many other players since, has to be one of the most revered of all delay pedals.

Now, while the DMM and various derivatives have long been in the EHX roster, this latest version may be the most radical revision of it yet as the company has managed to shoehorn its essence into one of their nano enclosures. What's more,

they've even expanded its facilities to include separate rate and depth knobs for the modulation.

With delay times running from 30ms to over half a second, there's plenty of practical applications for the pedal whether you are looking for a rockabilly slapback, Edge-style rhythmic repeats or some spacey background delays to help lead lines soar. This has the typical BBD analogue delay vibe with the repeats sitting snugly with the dry sound and melting away naturally over time but the modulation takes things to another level, whether just adding a whisper of tape echo swimminess, creating a more ethereal and extensive soundscape with some rich chorus

movement, or dialling in deeper rotary speaker and vibrato effects. There's also more variation to be had via the Level knob which does not control output level like you might expect but adjusts the input to the pedal; something which can manifest itself as gritty drive as well as a boost.

Okay, it's mono only, has small closely-packed knobs and no tap tempo facility but the DMM is all about the sound and this mini-me nails those familiar vintage tones while wrapping them up in a practical package that could slot into the smallest pedalboard.

Trevor Curwen

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Analog delay pedal with modulation

FEATURES: Selectable true bypass or buffered bypass with tails, delay times from 30ms to 550ms

CONTROLS: Blend, Feedback, Delay, Level, Rate, Depth, internal Tails switch, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 150mA

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 111 (d) x 50 mm (h)

THIS MINI-ME NAILS THOSE FAMILIAR VINTAGE TONES

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



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Words Ellie Rogers Photo Pooneh Ghana

GEESE

New York post-punk band Geese made a big splash in 2021 with their debut album *Projector* – frenetic, full of energy, with two tangled guitars at the centre of every song. Now, with UK dates scheduled for February, guitarists Gus Green and Foster Hudson explain what makes their unorthodox partnership work.

The band started out as high school friends who were just “screwing around”, according to Gus, who says of *Projector*: “There’s a lot of youthful energy in the record. We were in high

school and just doing our thing. And we’re still babies, we’re still only nineteen.”

Both Foster and Gus were brought up on a sonic diet of Dad rock, with alt-rock stalwarts like Radiohead and Wilco thrown into the mix. Despite this, Gus says: “Foster and I couldn’t really be more different as guitar players.” Foster agrees. “Usually” he says, “we’ll end up playing something wildly different to each other.” The result is what Gus calls “good guitar interplay and driving rhythm instrumentals with some nice abstract melodies on top”.

Foster admits: “I’ve always been envious of Gus’s tone, to be honest.” What Gus says in response is a little more tongue-in-cheek: “With Foster, I really feel like there’s a direct line between what he’s feeling and thinking and then the fingers on the fretboard. But he likes distortion too damn much!”

Foster’s current weapon of choice is a Les Paul Special, equipped with two P-90s. He laughs: “I had another guitar like this that I may or may not have smashed at a show.” Gus, on the other hand, is a little more attached

to a black Reverend Double Agent with a humbucker in the bridge and a P-90 in the neck position. “I was very close to buying a Fender when I was looking for a guitar,” Gus says. “Then I found this in a store and it sounded amazing. It cost about \$500 less than a Fender would, so I got it!”

Asked if there is a second album in the works yet, the pair are wary of giving too much away, but Foster – the quieter of the pair – confirms: “It will be different”, adding with a smile, “we like to be mysterious.”



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